

**STRATEGIC FIVE-YEAR
UNIFIED STATE PLAN
FOR NEW JERSEY'S
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM**

**STATE OF
NEW JERSEY**

for the period of

July 1, 1999 through June 30, 2004

Chapter One

UNIFIED STATE PLAN FOR NEW JERSEY'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

CHAPTER ONE

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MISSION AND VISION

Work has always been essential to the human experience. Historically, the nature of work has been determined by the nature of the economy. As a new millennium approaches, the nature of work, the workplace, the workforce and the economy are all rapidly changing in unprecedented ways. This dramatic transformation, the full implication of which is not fully known, requires the nation's workforce investment system to adapt. The current environment that necessitates change is characterized by the following:

- Technology is reshaping work and workplace skills, demanding lifelong learning and widening the earnings gap between those with skills and those without.
- Business is reinventing how it functions, creating high performance organizations, flattening layers of management and sharing decision-making with front-line employees.
- Skills such as problem solving, teamwork and communication are increasingly essential for success in the workplace.
- Students, workers and those seeking employment must be served by a system of lifelong learning that offers them the opportunity to continually enhance their skills to keep pace with the rapidity of changes in the skills sets demanded by the labor market.
- Linkages between economic development and the quality of the workforce are more critical in dealing with a work environment so heavily dependent on skills.

The job market now and into the foreseeable future is one where the most important resources workers have are their workplace skills and their ability to learn new skills. Most people will change jobs five to seven times during their careers and, given the pace of organizational and technological change, be asked to upgrade their job skills on a continuing basis. In such an environment, it is crucial that the workforce investment system adapt to this new reality.

Fragmentation in policy, planning and implementation of workforce investment programs cannot address the significant changes to the system. Therefore, in 1995, Governor Christine Todd Whitman responded to these changes in the labor force and the demands of the labor market by creating a statewide system of Workforce Investment Boards, stating:

New Jersey's skilled workforce is our strength as we compete in a world economy;

Investments in training and education foster high skill/high wage jobs, provide economic leadership for the State and offer a better standard of living for our citizens; and,

To remain competitive, New Jersey must develop a State-based and locally delivered strategy for the integrated education and job training system based on current and future State and local area labor market demands.

Executive Order No. 36, May 12, 1995¹

As New Jersey enters the 21st century, it faces an era of enormous change that in some ways is more profound than that of previous generations. Deep changes in the labor market have affected the skills demanded of the workforce, while reduced job security has put a premium on the ability of workers to adapt to these circumstances. New Jersey and the nation must rethink the way the workforce is trained to ensure that dislocations are kept to a minimum and that individuals can attain the quality of life they have come to expect.

New Jersey envisions a future where the employment, training and education systems are finely adapted to the demands of the labor market as defined by the present and evolving human resource needs of the business sector. Furthermore, the State is committed to ensuring that the opportunity to be a productive worker is extended to those members of society such as school drop-outs, welfare recipients, older workers, racial and ethnic minorities, veterans, individuals with disabilities and women, who are too often prevented from reaching their full potential. Achievement of these goals will require a sustained effort to transform the workforce investment system into one that has as its core mission the needs of employers and employees. It is to this end that New Jersey through the State Employment and Training Commission is committed to a Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System.

¹ See Appendix 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

New Jersey greeted the passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 with much enthusiasm because the language of WIA closely parallels the State's direction for workforce investment. Of particular interest to the State planners and policy-makers was the provision in Title V of the Act to allow for the development of a Unified State Plan that would encompass all the workforce investment programs attached to the One-Stop system. The development of such a plan is the logical extension of New Jersey's current planning and implementation efforts as noted throughout this chapter.

In the absence of federal guidelines to develop such a plan, and yet with the institutional desire to do so, New Jersey has elected to take an approach that clearly establishes a common planning framework for all workforce investment programs. This approach will set out a process for weaving programs and service delivery into a cohesive, integrated system. Chapter One of this plan can be seen as the introduction to each of the subsequent chapters that, for all intents and purposes, are the plans for the programs that feed into the One-Stop system under the Workforce Investment Act. Chapter One lays the groundwork to develop one set of policies, one plan, that not only addresses the needs of every funding stream, but also clearly guides and defines the kind of system envisioned in New Jersey. The subsequent chapters will make continued reference to Chapter One.

New Jersey has developed a set of beliefs and understandings that have long directed the course of its various workforce investment programs. Central to this belief system is the State's "culture of cooperation" where State agencies collaborate, partnerships are established between the State and localities, and the public and private sectors work together. It is clear that WIA gives New Jersey the opportunity to meet many of the coming challenges and further the efforts to streamline the workforce investment system. A skilled and educated workforce can only be created and maintained if workers and businesses have access to a lifelong employment, training and education system responsive to the needs of the labor market. Indeed, the economic winners and losers of the 21st century will be largely determined by whether a skilled and educated workforce is developed and nurtured.

The growing wage gap between low-skill and high-skill jobs bears testimony that the acquisition of skills by the workforce is central to the health of the economy and the life chances of individuals. A manufacturing economy that could support a relatively low-skilled workforce with high wages has been replaced by an economy, including modern manufacturing, where literacy and technical skills are more valued. Although the economy needs to produce a range of jobs that provide employment opportunities to workers with varying skill levels, advancement in most occupations will also require additional skills.

A modern, globally competitive and productive economy demands a workforce capable of learning new technologies, new organizational structures and the necessity of working cooperatively in a culturally diverse workplace. The rapid pace of change in these areas means that education cannot end with a certificate of proficiency or even a college degree, but must be integrated into the work-life of individuals. Therefore, employment, training and education

programs must occur in the schoolroom and the workplace; the job requirements in this labor market require that the training of workers be a continuous process.

An America that does not encourage all of its workers to meet their full potential will be an America where a vast inequality of income will dominate. At every level of the occupational hierarchy - computer programmer to secretary, graphics artists to mechanic - all workers need to maximize their skills. To put it plainly; productivity is the key to generating wealth; a skilled workforce is the key to productivity.

1.1.1 Planning and Policy Development – New Jersey has established the State Employment and Training Commission as the State Workforce Investment Board. The State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) was established by state statute in 1989, clearly before the December 1997 deadline prescribed by WIA. The purpose of the SETC is:

To develop and assist in the implementation of a State employment and training policy with the goal of creating a coherent, integrated system of employment and training programs and services which, in concert with the efforts of the private sector, will provide each citizen of the State with equal access to the learning opportunities needed to attain and maintain high levels of productivity and earning power.²

The State Employment and Training Commission was established to meet the challenge of developing a world class workforce investment system for New Jersey. The bipartisan Commission is the nation's first Human Resource Investment Council established by State legislation. The SETC accomplishes its purpose by sustaining a public-private partnership that seeks to eliminate the parochialism that limits the capacity of government to be creative and responsive to the demands of the 21st century. Four Cabinet officers, representing the Departments of Community Affairs, Education, Human Services and Labor are Commission members as are representatives from the State Assembly and Senate. The Commission on Commerce and Economic Growth and the Commission on Higher Education also participate on the SETC. These public officials join with other Commission members from the private sector, community-based organizations, unions and the general public to develop New Jersey's workforce policy agenda. A member from the business community chairs the Commission. The improvement of the employment, training and education system requires this level of participation because developing workforce policies is beyond the scope of any single agency of government or constituency in the private sector.

The SETC serves as the State Job Training Coordinating Council required under the Job Training Partnership Act as a part of its duties. The statutory responsibilities of the Commission are broad and easily encompass the functions of the State Workforce Investment Board called for in the Workforce Investment Act.

Through the SETC, participating workforce investment agencies have established a strong planning process with the private sector. Such an effort is required because the policy issues are so complex and interrelated that they require all stakeholders in the workforce investment system to work in concert to shape the future of worker learning and business productivity.

2 PL 1989, c. 293, s.8, Appendix 2

In close collaboration with its partners, the SETC has served as the catalyst in defining these broad goals of the workforce investment system:

- Create a strategy for lifelong learning that makes it possible to continuously upgrade skills and meet the demands of the changing workplace to ensure a high quality of life for all New Jerseyans.
- Provide students, workers and others seeking employment with the ability to obtain good jobs at good wages.
- Create a statewide School-to-Career system that moves students to employment and enables all students to meet the challenges of the future labor market, linking schools closely with the employer community to provide relevant school-based and career-based experiences.
- Develop a welfare-to-work system, offering comprehensive services, which leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- Provide strategies that can strengthen the capacity of the workforce investment system to offer high quality, effective and valued services to mature and older workers.
- Furnish businesses with programs to improve the quality of the workforce to meet the challenge of the global economy.
- Assist all employers in transforming their sites into workplaces that maximize the skill and earning potentials of their workers.
- Assure that the workforce investment system is closely tied to economic development efforts.
- Create a One-Stop Career Center system that offers universal access, customer choice and integration of services to meet the needs of individuals and businesses.
- Secure equal opportunity for obtaining skills for all citizens, including the economically disadvantaged, persons with disabilities, those for whom English is not the primary language, women, displaced homemakers, and racial and ethnic minorities.
- Provide up-to-date information on local, state and national labor market conditions and occupational outlooks to ensure that the public can make informed choices.
- Create a system that is accountable at the state, local and service provider levels through the establishment of real performance measures that are meaningful to both job seekers and employers.
- Involve local partners to ensure that local dynamics are represented in the State vision.

The SETC assists in maintaining a close link between agencies through all of its various committees and work groups. Interagency work groups make state level workforce investment policy decisions. Through the SETC, state officials meet on a regular basis with Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Directors to develop policies and resolve any outstanding problems. With the passage of WIA, a Core Planning Group was established consisting of a representative from each of the State's workforce investment agencies, Workforce Investment Board Directors, Service Delivery Area (SDA) Directors, unions, the private sector and community-based organizations to develop this Unified State Plan. Groups similar to this have been meeting in some form since the creation of the Commission to discuss key policy issues, offer guidance on the development of the State's strategy for workforce investment and resolve implementation issues. It is this process of consensus building that is the hallmark of New Jersey's approach to decision making on all workforce issues.

1.2 CORE PRINCIPLES

The SETC is an example of how government and the private sector can effectively work together to achieve a common purpose: improving the quality of the workforce and getting people to work. To accomplish this goal, the SETC has developed six core principles that serve as the foundation of New Jersey's workforce investment policies.

1.2.1 First, a successful workforce investment system must be consumer-based and market-driven and, therefore, relevant to the needs of students, workers and those seeking employment, and the employer community. This requires institutions and agencies involved in employment, training and education programs to be guided by the demands of the labor market. It is the primary task of such programs to bridge the skill gap that separates individuals from jobs and employers from productive employees. Such a system must ensure that the labor exchange process efficiently and effectively facilitate the match of workers and jobs.

1.2.2 Second, the workforce investment system must be performance driven and outcome based -- it must be accountable. Therefore, the true measures of success of the workforce investment system must include, but not be limited to, the consistency of employment and the wages paid to the graduates of programs. The purpose of the workforce investment system is to enhance citizens' standards of living by providing employers with productive workers. While certain other outcomes may well result - for example, improved self-esteem for customers - good jobs at good wages are the most important outcomes.

1.2.3 Third, attainment of fundamental levels of literacy and basic skills lies at the heart of the workforce investment system. Creating a seamless web linking literacy programs to occupational educational programs that lead to employment is a crucial priority for the workforce investment system.

1.2.4 Fourth, there must be full utilization of all potential workers. The changes in the demographics of the workforce necessitate changes in the way people are educated. The current and future workforce will be comprised of increased numbers of racial and ethnic minorities, single parents, persons with disabilities, the economically disadvantaged, non-English speakers,

immigrants and women. The system must be fully accessible to these populations by integrating their special needs and concerns into workforce investment services. This will require the development of specific strategies to eliminate barriers to employment.

1.2.5 Fifth, employers and workers must be involved in governance at all levels of the system and in defining the outcomes to be achieved. Decision-making structures at all levels of the system must be redesigned based on the needs of employers and job seekers so that those needs are the foundation of the delivery system.

1.2.6 Sixth, the system must provide access to lifelong learning. The One-Stop system in New Jersey must be a fully integrated system that provides comprehensive services to those most in need, but also provides the link between any individual and the full array of New Jersey's education, employment and training opportunities.

1.3 NEW JERSEY'S ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

1.3.1 Trends - Over the next five years, employment in New Jersey, like the nation, will continue to expand, but at a somewhat slower rate than the red-hot pace of the last two years. The State's employment growth will continue to be led by the service sector. Within the service sector, two industries -- business and health services -- are projected to dominate. Together, these two industries are expected to account for almost half of the State's net employment growth.

State of New Jersey Occupations With The Greatest Employment* 1996-2006

Occupation	1996	2006	Change:1996-2006		Annual Average Job Openings		
	Number	Number	Number	Pct.	Total	New Jobs	Replacements
Systems Analysts	21,900	45,900	24,000	109.4	2,550	2,400	150
Home Health Aides	18,500	32,500	14,000	75.7	1,650	1,400	250
Cashiers	87,800	100,200	12,400	14.2	5,070	1,240	3,830
Salespersons, Retail	113,500	125,800	12,400	10.9	4,840	1,240	3,600
Nursing Aides & Orderlies	39,800	50,400	10,600	26.6	1,600	1,060	540
Nurse: RN,Pract'r,Midwife,Prof'l	63,700	72,800	9,100	14.6	1,790	910	880
General Mgrs & Top Execs	72,400	81,200	8,800	12.2	2,420	890	1,540
Adjustment Clerks	19,300	28,000	8,600	44.7	980	870	120
Reception/Information Clerks	32,500	41,000	8,500	26.2	1,450	850	600
Marketing/Sales Supervisors	71,200	79,600	8,400	11.8	1,980	840	1,140

State of New Jersey
Occupations With The Greatest Percentage Growth*
1996-2006

Occupation	1996-2006				Annual Average Job Openings		
	1996	2006	Change: 1996-2006		Total	New Jobs	Replacements
	Number	Number	Number	Pct.			
Systems Analysts	21,900	45,900	24,000	109.4	2,550	2,400	150
Computer Engineers	6,400	12,300	5,900	91.7	630	590	40
Medical Assistants	6,600	11,600	5,000	76.5	630	500	130
Home Health Aides	18,500	32,500	14,000	75.7	1,650	1,400	250
Customer Service Reps	6,900	10,800	3,800	55.3	520	380	140
Securities/Financial, Sales	13,700	20,500	6,800	49.4	800	680	130
Engineer, Math, Nat Sci Mgrs	14,900	21,000	6,100	41.0	930	610	320
Dealer, Casino	7,700	10,800	3,100	40.8	490	310	170
Bill & Account Collectors	11,700	16,300	4,600	39.6	700	460	240
Dental Assistants	7,700	10,700	3,000	38.7	490	300	190

*Notes: *1996 Employment of 5,000+.*
Totals may not add across due to rounding. Employment is rounded to nearest hundred. Percent changes based on unrounded data. Job openings are rounded to the nearest ten.

Prepared by: N.J. Department of Labor
Labor Market & Demographic Research
Occupational and Demographic Research
September 1998

Two components within business services, personnel supply services (i.e., temporary help services) and computer and data processing services, dominate this industry. Because of especially strong growth, particularly in computer and data processing services, these two industries together are expected to account for about three out of every five new jobs in business services in the next decade. The employment gains in computer and data processing services reflect the proliferation of computer applications throughout the economy. The demand for data processing services will remain strong even after the resolution of the Y2K problem. The growth in personnel supply services is due mainly to continued efforts by business to reduce costs and improve flexibility, often by outsourcing operations once done in-house or by adjusting temporary staff to changing market demand.

Health services should continue to be a significant source of employment gains. Future growth in health services employment, though slower than in the past, is still expected to outpace the

overall projected State growth rate. A number of factors, both positive and negative, will influence the health care industry. Cost containment will continue to dampen growth while an aging population and rising incomes suggest increased demand for health services and employment gains. Continued technological advances should permit new and innovative ways of providing treatment.

Within health services, major shifts, already under way, will continue. Employment growth is projected to shift from hospitals to facilities that provide treatment on an outpatient basis. Employment in traditional hospitals will probably remain flat or decrease while employment in nursing and personal care facilities is projected to increase. Hospitals are countering this trend by taking over outpatient facilities. As a result, hospital employment may increase but the growth will not be in the traditional hospital setting.

A significant employment boom is expected in the Atlantic City hotel/casino industry as the tunnel becomes a reality and paves the way for another round of casino development. This growth spurt follows relatively stable employment over the better part of this decade. This boom in large part is contingent on Atlantic City transforming itself into a "destination" vacation resort. Should any neighboring state legalize gambling, Atlantic City's success in appealing to vacationers and conventioners rather than daytrippers will become more critical. A casino-boom in Atlantic City, of course, would impact industries related to the casino industry and employment growth in neighboring counties.

In addition to the service sector, retail trade is expected to add several thousand new jobs with more than half occurring in eating and drinking establishments and food stores. The remaining private service-producing industries of transportation/communications/utilities, wholesale trade, and finance/insurance/real estate are all expected to have positive but smaller growth.

Within the goods-producing industries, construction should expand payrolls in response to needs for new housing, business and infrastructure investments. Only payrolls in manufacturing, among the major economic sectors, can be expected to continue to decline but at a somewhat slower rate than in the past. Most factory losses will be concentrated in electrical equipment, industrial machinery, and apparel and textile products.

New Jersey does have economic development needs that need to be addressed if the State is to take full advantage of its prime location in the middle of the Boston to Washington, DC megalopolis. This location affords easy access to many of the nation's largest and richest markets. The State's infrastructure, particularly its transportation network, will require significant investment if New Jersey is to maintain its competitiveness. Of even greater importance in a highly competitive work economy that places ever-increasing emphasis on skills, productivity, and overall economic efficiency, is investment in the training and education of the State's workforce. This is critical not only for students readying themselves for the world of work and welfare clients and dislocated workers who may have few or obsolete skills, but for those with jobs who will need to constantly upgrade their skills in a world where lifelong learning is a necessity. If New Jersey is to continue as a high-income state, then its workforce must have the skills to achieve the productivity and growth that will ensure the State a

prosperous future. Hence, the high priority New Jersey has placed on the successful implementation of the Workforce Investment Act.

1.3.2 Implications - Not surprisingly, since all major industries except manufacturing are expected to expand over the next five years, long-term employment growth in New Jersey will occur across a wide range of occupations. In fact, all major occupational groups³ are projected to increase which provides employment opportunities for individuals at varying skill levels to obtain employment. The largest gains are expected in professional and technical occupations, where 36 percent of all new jobs will be added, followed by service occupations⁴, where 25 percent of all new jobs will occur. These two major occupational groups will together account for better than three out of every five new jobs.

In addition, faster than average employment growth is projected for executive, administrative, and managerial; marketing and sales; and the very small category of landscaping and animal care occupations. In spite of relatively fast growth, only slightly more than one out of five new jobs are expected to be added in these three major groups combined. Slow growth is projected for administrative support and clerical; production, craft and repair; and operators, fabricators, laborers. The modest employment gains in clerical and administrative support occupations reflect changing technology, which has reduced the need for many clerical and secretarial workers. Expected continuing declines in manufacturing account for only modest growth in production, craft, and repair occupations, and operators, fabricators, laborers.

The growth patterns described above clearly show that the most growth will occur in two very diverse occupational groups. The majority of occupations in the professional and technical category require at least an associate's degree, with four of the top five job gainers - system analysts, elementary school teachers, computer programmers and computer engineers - requiring a bachelor's degree.

Many of the service occupations have minimal training requirements including the top five job gainers - home health aides, nursing aides and orderlies, food preparation workers, guards and child care workers.

The total number of job openings by occupation - not just openings resulting from employment growth - are the best indicators of employment opportunities. Job openings, even more than new jobs, are available at a full range of skill levels. Approximately two-thirds of job openings (employment opportunities) result from the need to replace workers who retire or leave an occupation for any number of reasons. While professional and technical occupations, for example, account for 36 percent of total new jobs by occupation, they account for only 23

3 The major occupational groups are executive, administrative, managerial; professional and technical; marketing and sales; administrative support, clerical; service; landscaping and animal care; production, craft and repair; operators, fabricators and laborers.

4 Service occupations are not directly related to service industries. For example, service occupations, such as waiters and waitresses, janitors and cleaners, flight attendants, and guards are employed in industries outside the service sector. On the other hand, workers in occupations from all major groups, not just the service occupations, staff the service sector industries.

percent of total job openings. On the other hand, clerical and administrative support occupations, which have slow growth but a high replacement need, account for less than 10 percent of New Jersey's total occupational employment gain but 16 percent of total job openings.

Because of replacement needs, employment opportunities even exist in declining occupations, such as typists and sewing machine operators (garment).

The five occupations having the most annual job openings are, in order: cashiers, retail salespersons, waiters and waitresses, general office clerks and food preparation workers. While skill requirements for these positions are minimal, certain basic skills are essential for all occupations. The ability to read and write, effective listening, problem solving, computer literacy, and the ability to function effectively as part of a team are all skills on which a premium is now placed. People lacking these skills are at a serious disadvantage in today's competitive job market.

In general, skill levels for all occupations are increasing, due to the global economy and the necessity of maintaining a competitive edge. A lifelong commitment to learning new skills and upgrading old ones is not an option but a necessity in the 21st century.

1.4 DEVELOPMENT OF A DEMAND SIDE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

At the direction of the Governor, New Jersey has joined with the National Governors' Association (NGA) and a number of other states to develop a demand side strategy that will be used as the policy foundation for the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act. As the above analysis on the labor market indicates, New Jersey has developed a sophisticated understanding about the fundamentals of the State's economy. The ability to "look over the next hill" at changes in technology, service delivery, manufacturing processes and organizational forms will influence the skill sets needed by workers.

The work with the National Governors' Association has initially resulted in the formulation of an overall policy framework that will guide New Jersey during the implementation of WIA. Three broad initiatives suggested by the collaboration with NGA that emphasize demand side work centered strategies are as follows:

- **Promoting inter-firm cooperation** by helping to build new institutions that provide opportunities for employers to organize collectively in advancing their common human resource development objectives;
- **Building a skill-centered system** that uses skills and competencies as a common language among employers, workers, and training providers, focuses on the workplace as the relevant domain for learning, and makes the system more responsive to employer needs; and
- **Creating new linkages between the supply and the demand side of the labor** that cast states as proactive catalysts for creating a new marketplace for employers and education and training organizations.

These initiatives are congruent by the overall thrust of WIA which calls for an employment and training model that emphasizes “placement, then train” rather than on “train, then place” which typified JTPA. The State has already implemented this model in its Work First New Jersey welfare reform effort.

Additionally, New Jersey has or will take the following steps:

- The SETC has formed a Workforce Quality Committee chaired by a representative from AT&T to develop a demand side strategy for the State.
- New Jersey’s Commission on Science and Technology has begun to work with the SETC to plan a report on the skill sets that will be required by the private sector over the next decade. It is anticipated that a conference on this topic will take place within the next six months. Major New Jersey high tech companies are members of the Commission on Science and Technology including those from the pharmaceutical, telecommunications, and data processing industries.
- Prosperity New Jersey is a private sector-led Commission appointed by the Governor to play the lead role in New Jersey’s economic development efforts. That Commission has formed a Workforce Committee chaired by the CEO of Bell Atlantic New Jersey to assure that workforce issues are closely integrated into the State’s economic development strategy.
- The SETC has contracted with an economist to do a pilot study that matches the labor market demand in a WIA area to the training courses offered by major training vendors including the Vocational High School, the County College, proprietary schools and community-based organizations. The framework created by this study will eventually be used by Workforce Investment Boards to develop policies that match labor market demand to training priorities.
- New Jersey is the recipient of a federal grant to explore the issues around developing job retention strategies. This initiative is currently setting up focus groups with employers about how best to integrate workplace learning into the workday. And, while the emphasis of these particular focus groups is the welfare population, the lessons learned will be applied to other groups as well. A statewide conference on this topic is also planned.

These initiatives all reflect the State’s understanding that there is a new economy in America and New Jersey and that the workforce investment system must adapt to that economy. The commitment to a demand side perspective is grounded in both meeting employers workforce needs and in creating workplaces that employ skilled workers. New Jersey will never win the battle as low wage/low skilled economy – Malaysia and others will win that one every time. Rather, the vision that New Jersey will follow is one that grasps the opportunities of the new economy by adapting WIA to its logic.

A demand side strategy will require a change in the way labor market information is defined and gathered. When New Jersey sought to implement a One-Stop system, labor market information was clarified to include any information an individual or employer might need in order to match the right person with the right job. This incorporates information on childcare, transportation and other supportive services. As an extension of this thinking, the State and WIB areas will need to have a source for labor market information that includes, at the least:

- Employment Statistics as defined under the Workforce Investment Act,
- Data on projected demand occupations,
- Relevant, competency-based skills training,
- Success of training providers, and
- Short term changes in the state, regional or local economic conditions.

Labor market information will be clearly connected to planning efforts at the state and local levels; therefore, it must be timely as well as accurate. The Office of Labor, Planning and Analysis within the New Jersey Department of Labor will, in consultation with the State Employment and Training Commission, its partners and the local boards, be responsible for gathering this information and making it available to the Commission, its members and Workforce Investment Boards.

1.5 DELIVERY OF SERVICES IN A ONE-STOP SYSTEM

New Jersey's One-Stop Career Center system is designed to fundamentally change the way workforce investment services are delivered and is the arena in which the core principles of the Plan are implemented. One-Stop Career Centers integrate services, provide for customer choice and universal access and are performance driven. New Jersey's One-Stop system was designed from the outset to fully integrate all workforce investment programs and services available at the state and local levels. The direction of the One-Stop system is guided by interagency decision-making at the state and local levels.

New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers are best understood as a system within which all workforce investment and related programs function as if they were a single entity. Hence, while the physical location of programs matters, it is their connectivity to each other and adherence to common procedures that truly makes access easier for the customer. And, while there will be at least one core center that provides comprehensive services for all programs established in each workforce area, the hallmark of a successful One-Stop Career Center system is the degree to which those services are delivered in a holistic manner. New Jersey policy calls for the integration, and, where appropriate, consolidation, of workforce investment and related programs through strong interagency collaboration resulting in a seamless delivery of services and the reduction of unnecessary program duplication. The combination of using the most advanced technology to provide information and the development of a common management structure among agencies with disparate funding sources to deliver services are the key ingredients to a successful One-Stop system.

All potential workforce investment services and all possible workforce investment programs are part of New Jersey's One-Stop system, including those defined by the Workforce Investment Act

of 1998, but also those included in the enabling legislation for the State Employment and Training Commission, New Jersey Administrative Code 34:15 B & C. By identifying all workforce investment programs and services as part of the One-Stop system, New Jersey has taken the first step toward defining a universally accessible system that is organized on the basis of services rather than by fragmented programs and duplicative efforts.

The specific programs that currently comprise New Jersey's One-Stop system are:

Adult Education and Literacy
Community Service Employment for Older Americans
Community Services Block Grant
Employment and Training programs authorized under JTPA
Employment and Training programs authorized under Title V of the Older Americans' Act
Employment Service and all Wagner-Peyser activities
Food Stamp Employment and Training
Food Stamp Workfare
Housing and Urban Development
National and Community Service
New Jersey Workforce Development Partnership Program
Post-secondary Vocational Education
Secondary Vocational Education
TANF and Welfare-to-Work
Trade Adjustment Assistance and NAFTA
Unemployment Compensation
Veterans' Employment Services
Vocational Rehabilitation programs authorized under Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act

It should be understood that New Jersey's One-Stop effort is predicated on the idea of putting the "customer first." This means that the delivery of workforce investment services must be adapted to the needs of its customers, rather than to those of the agencies that deliver services. In this sense, New Jersey is following the road already forged by the best firms in the private sector that have transformed the workplace and the marketplace. The One-Stop system provides service deliverers a way to collaborate and create value for their customers in a connected environment.

1.6 STRATEGIES FOR THE FUTURE

New Jersey has identified a set of specific tasks that must be undertaken in the coming months in order to move toward its vision. These tasks are designed to further the implementation of the One-Stop system and the overall workforce investment strategy of the State, and to move the system closer to fulfillment of the core principles. The tasks are listed below each of the corresponding principles.

1.6.1 A successful workforce investment system must be consumer-based and market-driven:

- In the next 6 months the WIA Core Planning Group will identify the specific goals of New Jersey's demand-side strategy and how employment and training funds will be used

to meet those goals. All employment and training funds including those authorized under Title I of the WIA, Secondary, Post-secondary Vocational, Trade Adjustment, Vocational Rehabilitation, Welfare Reform (TANF) and the Workforce Development Partnership Program will support the goals of the demand-side strategy.

- Working with the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University and a statewide coalition of colleges and universities, New Jersey has developed a broad-based curriculum to educate front line One-Stop staff about the creative use of labor market information. This training will begin in 1999.
- Prior to the submission of this edition of New Jersey's Unified State Plan, a team charged with the operational responsibility for each of the WIA partners was formed. The purpose of these teams is to ensure that each of the Chapters of the plan was fully consistent with the principles and policies described in Chapter One and to develop the next steps in development and implementation of a Unified State Plan.

1.6.2 The workforce investment system must be performance driven and outcome based:

- The State will establish the operating system that will allow for the collection of necessary administrative data to support the Consumer Guide on Service Providers and the State's overall Performance Management System. In the next 18 months, New Jersey will put in place a system to incorporate performance information on each of New Jersey's One-Stop partners at the state, local and service provider levels. The vendor evaluation and performance management system will be based on the proposed model developed by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. A demonstration can be seen at <http://heldrich.rutgers.edu/skillsnet>.
- The State's performance measures must also be geared primarily to the needs of employers and employee customers and address the needs of all workforce investment agencies. Performance measures must reflect outcomes such as earnings and job retention, but will be established to reflect skills attainment. It is critical that New Jersey develops one uniform policy regarding performance measures so that those measures can be used interchangeably across agencies and funding streams.
- Information generated by the National Skills Standards Board (NSSB) will be used to establish measures and levels of skill attainment.
- The Consumer Guide will be developed so that information can be obtained according to specific population and demographic characteristics. Regulations are already in place requiring data for use in tracking customers of the workforce investment system.
- Memoranda of Understanding will be developed by state programs and agencies to facilitate the gathering of performance data.
- There must be continuous improvement. Local areas must implement a joint labor-management continuous improvement process using established principles of quality

assurance to ensure that performance goals are translated into meaningful improvements throughout the system.

Additional information on the State's plan for evaluation of the workforce investment system can be found in section 1.7 of this chapter.

1.6.3 Attainment of fundamental levels of literacy and basic skills lies at the heart of the workforce investment system:

- In the next year a team of state and local experts in the field of adult education and literacy will develop a strategy for the provision of literacy services in New Jersey based on the wealth of information generated by the State Employment and Training Commission's Literacy Task Force. The strategy will include identification of service priorities such as basic skills, family literacy, English as a Second Language, as well as target populations including welfare recipients, and will coordinate the use of all available literacy funds.
- Consistent with the logic of WIA and New Jersey's Work First legislation, the basic model of work then train will be used as a point of departure for developing a triage process and establishing priority for services. Hence, workplace literacy initiatives, including English as a Second Language will be given high priority.
- Based on the recommendations of the Task Force on Adult Literacy, the State Legislature introduced and passed a bill to create a State Council for Adult Literacy Education Services. Pending the Governor's signature, the Council will be established within the SETC and charged with developing a broad-based statewide adult literacy plan which is integrated with the overall workforce investment plan.

1.6.4 There must be full utilization of all potential workers:

- New Jersey recognizes that there must be greater emphasis on and attention to increasing the statewide knowledge base about employment retention and advancement strategies, and on learning how best to help individuals, particularly those recently on welfare, sustain their attachment to and advancement in the labor market. The New Jersey Department of Human Services (DHS) has received a grant from the US Department of Health and Human Services to design a targeted employment retention and advancement strategy for the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) welfare reform initiative. The Department of Human Services, in partnership with the New Jersey Department of Labor and the State Employment and Training Commission, will use the grant funds to support a one-day statewide conference and three regional forums, as well as to acquire technical expertise. Through the forums, New Jersey seeks to bring together hundreds of stakeholders (clients, professionals, employers, and local program operators) to discuss employment retention and advancement needs, develop a more targeted policy focus, actively work on employment retention issues and career advancement problems, and begin to remove employment retention barriers for WFNJ participants.

- The State Employment and Training Commission has generated a number of reports that focus on the workforce needs of specific populations. Those reports include the following:

A Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System established the framework for all workforce investment programs in the State of New Jersey. The SETC has taken a leadership role in developing a significant number of workforce investment policy initiatives.

Leveling the Playing Field: Removing Barriers for Women in New Jersey's Employment and Training Programs. This report, developed by the Gender Equity Task Force, identifies barriers to the full participation of females and offers recommendations to remove those barriers. The eight recommendations detail specific steps for state and local agencies to ensure that equity and fairness are an integral part of the workforce investment system.

Adult Literacy in New Jersey: Meeting the Challenge of the 21st Century. This report was developed in conjunction with the release of the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) report. The NALS report and the corresponding State Adult Literacy Report (SALS) outline the severity of the literacy problem at the state and national levels and clearly links literacy to earnings. Report recommendations are aimed at revitalizing programs and policies of the adult education and literacy systems and making them more relevant to the needs of today's families and workforce.

Opportunity for All: Final Recommendations of the Work Group on Persons with Disabilities. The Work Group on Persons with Disabilities was formed to expand the conversation among public officials, advocates, parents, customers, and practitioners concerning philosophical and policy differences. The report defines the appropriate role of the employment, training, and education system and includes recommendations for restructuring the workforce investment system to better meet the needs of persons with disabilities. The focus of the recommendations is on the connection and coordination of programs needed to improve the system.

Youth at Work: Making it in the Global Economy. The At-Risk Youth Task Force of the SETC concluded that a generation of young people is facing under-employment or unemployment as a result of the increased skill demands of the global economy. The recommendations in this report focus on the need to move toward an educational experience that offers students the chance to engage in a number of opportunities, including college, Tech-Prep, apprenticeship, or school-to-career initiatives. Additionally, the report urges that social service supports, like the nationally recognized School Based Youth Services Program, be expanded.

Standing Corrected: Education and the Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders. This report, developed by the Corrections Education Task Force, identifies strategies in the occupational education delivery system within the correctional institutions and explains

how to link these programs to the world of work. There are 37 recommendations in all, addressing issues of administration, inter-governmental cooperation, program development, juveniles, females, and transitions.

The Literacy Connection: Improving Adult Literacy in New Jersey. This report describes the existing delivery system and highlights strategies to improve it. The report calls for state adult providers to enhance accountability, expand the use of technology, coordinate across state and local entities, expand staff development, link school and workplace learning experiences, provide access to the world of work, expand gender awareness, and develop links between providers within the criminal justice system and those in the education system.

Balancing the Equation: A Report on Gender Equity in Education. This report focuses on the barriers to eliminating sex bias in the educational system. It is a companion document to the previous report, ***Leveling the Playing Field***, that addressed the broader issues of equity and fairness within the workforce investment system. This report identified eight barriers and 31 recommendations that address non-traditional occupational programs.

Linking Education and the Workplace: An Imperative for New Jersey's Economic Future. This report provides recommendations designed to ensure a strong, mutually beneficial relationship between the educational system and the needs of the evolving state labor market. The recommendations address four broad areas:

- Connection activities and oversight under the auspices of Workforce Investment Boards;
- Certification requirements, pre-service and in-service training for educators;
- Expansion of the curriculum to accommodate different learning styles; and,
- Institution of a strategy for providing all learners access to technology that will facilitate learning.

There are five SETC active, ongoing workforce investment policy initiatives. The topics are these:

- Workforce Quality
- Unified State Plan
- Public Sector Planning
- General Planning
- Evaluation

The specific recommendations in each of these reports regarding program operations will be reviewed by the Core Planning Group to ensure appropriate implementation of these policies. The goal of these reports was to direct the use of program funds and by incorporating this work

into the Unified State Plan, much as they are in the attached Title I and Vocational Education Plans, they will direct all workforce investment services.⁵

1.6.5 Employers and workers must be involved in governance at all levels of the system and in defining the outcomes to be achieved:

- New Jersey will seek changes to State law that will increase SETC membership. These additions will meet the State WIB requirements under WIA, but more importantly will broaden the SETC's membership to include representatives from relevant employer groups.
- Town meetings involving membership from various groups have been and will continue to be convened on a regular basis to share insights of the stakeholders, obtain feedback and direction for future efforts, and evaluate the level of satisfaction of the consumer groups or satisfaction of needs. These collaborative efforts, involving the SETC and local WIBs, will be used to assess current and projected needs and link them to strategies for the system.

1.6.6 The system must provide access to lifelong learning:

- New Jersey's system will develop career-based learning strategies that combine entry-level jobs with learning to create career pathways and upward mobility. Our demand focus will encourage quick connections to the labor force that get people into jobs quickly and provide post-employment training tightly linked to employer needs. The current system that focuses on entry level jobs will be refocused to include lifelong and continuous learning in response to the needs of workers and employers.
- Under the direction of the Governor, New Jersey has developed a “virtual university” that includes a list of all workforce investment training available through distance learning at the 47 public and private universities and colleges in New Jersey.

1.7 EVALUATION OF THE SYSTEM

In a unified, One-Stop system that fully incorporates all partners, a responsible state must establish an evaluation and performance management system that cuts across all programs and sets a common set of standards for all workforce investment activities, regardless of funding stream or agency affiliation. The State Employment and Training Commission formed an Evaluation Committee more than three years ago to begin looking at how such a system might be established. The Evaluation Committee offers guidance to the SETC and state agencies regarding various evaluation projects for specific workforce investment programs, however the concept of establishing system-wide indicators has been its most complex and time consuming task.

⁵ See Appendix 3

As part of this task, the State Employment and Training Commission contracted with the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development to create a comprehensive vendor evaluation and performance management system. A model for that system can be found at <http://heldrich.rutgers.edu/skillsnet>. Skillsnet will allow customers, policymakers and administrators, employers, and training providers to access the performance management and vendor evaluation system in a user-friendly manner. The internet-based system was designed to meet three specific requirements set out in the Workforce Investment Act: 1) setting performance goals, 2) making information available to job seekers, and 3) establishing a process for determining eligible providers. The model proposed by the Heldrich Center is a powerful tool to deliver high quality information.

Information to be provided through Skillsnet will include progress measures of completion rate for training services for adults and skills attainment for youth and adults. Customer satisfaction measures for adults, youth, recipients of public assistance, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, displaced homemakers, older individuals, dislocated workers, and employers will be included. Finally, the outcome measures of placement in employment, retention and earnings will also be included.

One of the most important features of this evaluation tool is that the information will be drawn from across all workforce investment programs. The data described above will be supplemented by descriptive information about each institution and training program. Appendix 4 contains a sample of the information that will be available through this new system.

In addition, New Jersey will establish performance goals for the One-Stop system that will be tied to the local operating protocols and to the Memoranda of Understanding between the WIBs and their One-Stop Partners. Utilizing the One-Stop system customer satisfaction indicators developed and piloted by Rowan University, the State will continue to measure customer satisfaction with the One-Stop system.

The State will continue to discuss and develop a system-wide evaluation process that is based on real outcome measures, customer satisfaction and continuous improvement. As an initial step, a crosswalk of indicators has been developed for WIA Title I and Perkins Vocational Education funding.

CORE INDICATORS CROSS-WALK

<i>Performance Indicator</i>	<i>WIA Title I Adult Ages 21+</i>	<i>WIA Title I Youth Ages 19-21</i>	<i>WIA Title I Youth Ages 4-18</i>	<i>WIA Title II-Adult Education</i>	<i>Perkins Voc Ed</i>
Placement in Employment	Entry into unsubsidized employment	Entry into Unsubsidized employment	Placement in employment	Placement in unsubsidized employment	Placement in employment
Retention in Employment	Retention in unsubsidized employment 6 months after entry into employment	Retention in unsubsidized employment 6 months after entry into the employment	Retention in employment	Retention in unsubsidized employment or career advancement	Retention in employment

Earnings	Earnings received in unsubsidized employment 6 months after entry into the employment	Earnings received in unsubsidized employment 6 months after entry into the employment			
Secondary school diploma or equivalent	Attainment of a recognized credential relating to achievement or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent... by participants who enter unsubsidized employment	Attainment of a recognized credential relating to achievement of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent...by participants who enter postsecondary education, advanced training, or unsubsidized employment	Attainment of secondary school diplomas and their recognized equivalents	Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent	Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent
Occupational Skill Attainment	Attainment of occupational skills by participants who enter unsubsidized employment	Attainment of occupational skills by participants who enter postsecondary education, advanced training, or unsubsidized employment	Attainment, as appropriate, of work readiness or occupational skills		Student attainment of challenging State established vocational and technical skill proficiencies; student attainment of a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma
Academic Skills Attainment					Student attainment of challenging State established academic proficiencies
Basic Skills Attainment			Attainment of basic skills	Demonstrated improvements in literacy skills levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills	
Postsecondary Education			Placement and retention in postsecondary education or advanced training, military service, or qualified apprenticeships	Placement in, retention in, or completion of postsecondary education, training	Placement, retention, completion of postsecondary ed/ advanced training; placement in military service; attainment of a postsecondary degree or credential

Nontraditional Employment					Student participation in and completion of vocational and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment
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This cross-walk will serve as a model for linking all workforce investment programs to common indicators.

1.8 CAPACITY BUILDING ACROSS THE SYSTEM

Since the introduction of the One-stop system and Workforce Investment Boards, the State has been developing a broad capacity building initiative. Two beneficiaries of recent capacity building efforts have been front line workers in the One-Stop system and WIB members. About a year ago, New Jersey entered into a special partnership with The Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University to raise the quality of capacity building efforts to a new level. The Heldrich Center has formed an alliance with the higher education community to deliver capacity building services to the entire workforce investment system. This arrangement, where state government, the higher education community and locally managed Workforce Investment Boards have joined together in common purpose to improve the capacity of the workforce investment system is unique.

It is clear to policy-makers in New Jersey that a dramatic culture change must take place throughout the workforce investment system for WIA to succeed. Utilizing the Heldrich Center, the Higher Education Alliance and other appropriate agencies, New Jersey will focus on the following areas of capacity building.

- **Workforce Investment Boards** - To organize and train their board members, develop mandated strategic plans, conduct necessary labor market research, and incorporate performance outcomes and consumer satisfaction measures into their business process.
- **Labor Exchange System** - To provide Internet based training on America’s Jobs Bank and America’s Talent Bank, internet-based that assist workers in finding jobs and job seekers in finding employment.
- **One-Stop Career Center Staff** - To design and help implement a comprehensive curriculum aimed at strengthening the capacity of front-line workers to deliver customer focused services.

Additionally, the State and the Heldrich Center will produce specific training for the Workforce Investment Act to educate the various stakeholders about its potential to improve the quality of the workforce and the workplace. A series of Primers is being developed to educate various

constituents of the workforce investment system about WIA. These groups include local elected official, educators, community- and faith-based organizations and the general public.

1.9 NEW JERSEY'S EVOLUTIONARY PROCESS

New Jersey has long discussed the need for a unified operational plan that would better integrate the delivery of services at the local level and allow for maximum coordination of different workforce investment resources. It has been the goal to coordinate planning as much as possible at the state level and encourage coordination at the local level. In fact, much of the operational progress of the One-Stop system has been made at the local level under the leadership of the WIBs and their One-Stop teams.

While One-Stop system operations have moved ahead through local collaboration, statewide bimonthly One-Stop Technical Assistance sessions, and state guidance, the State must now turn attention to state level integration and collaboration. In the absence of federal guidance to create a truly unified operational plan, New Jersey has chosen to outline a course for itself that will establish one set of state policies that will govern the use of all workforce investment resources. This outline will evolve into a single unified plan that will satisfy the requirements established by various funding streams.

New Jersey seeks to establish a system based on needs and services, not based on a patchwork of program mandates. The State stands ready to adopt policies governing education, employment and training services that will hold true for each agency and its related program funds. Much of this has been said before in various ways and the broad policy framework articulated through the SETC is obvious in each of the subsequent chapters of this plan. The State has taken many steps toward a unified workforce investment system and has in place several elements required under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. The remaining operational issues related to Title I will be in transition over the coming year. Some of the requirements under Title I, such as the Consumer's Guide, are being developed so that they will be relevant to the entire system not merely to one segment of the population.

Under the leadership of the Commission's Chair and the Commissioner of the Department of Labor, a Cabinet-level group, comprised of the Commissioners and Executive Directors of the workforce investment agencies represented on the SETC, has been formed. This group will meet regularly to discuss policy initiatives and actions that require the direct involvement of the Cabinet officials and/or the Governor. The chief function of this group will be to ensure that the goals and objectives agreed to in the State Plan are appropriately implemented, thereby reinforcing the leadership and authority of the SETC to serve as the policy-making body for the workforce investment system. This linking of the SETC's policy making and oversight role with the operational role of the relevant state agencies is the next logical step in New Jersey's efforts to streamline workforce investment activities. This Introduction has guided not only the plans contained in the subsequent chapters, but also the planned activities of Unemployment Insurance, Trade Adjustment Assistance and NAFTA, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Food Stamp Workfare, Veterans Employment Services, Work First New Jersey and New Jersey's Workforce Development Program.

New Jersey's operational planning efforts over the next eighteen months will be guided by the core principles stated earlier in this document and by the strategic tasks outlined in the next section. The governance structure for the planning process will be under the leadership of the Cabinet-level group, comprised of the Commissioners and Executive Directors of the workforce investment agencies represented on the SETC. This group will meet regularly to discuss policy initiatives and actions that require the direct involvement of the Cabinet officials and/or the Governor. The chief function of this group will be to ensure that the goals and objectives agreed to in the State Plan and subsequent documents are appropriately implemented.

The SETC has a legislative mandate to draw on the resources of all workforce investment agencies and jointly plan for the optimum use of those resources in providing a high-quality workforce investment system that meets the needs of all those in need of assistance. Private sector leadership has been key to the SETC's efforts thus far and will continue to be into the future. The SETC is expanding its Core Planning Group to include local elected officials and additional private sector and private, non-profit representatives. This group will serve as an ongoing WIA implementation team to monitor day-to-day implementation, guide One-Stop activities and generally oversee the continual changes to the workforce investment system. Barriers to integration and collaboration will be raised before this group and will either be resolved or will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet-level group.

As the State's Workforce Investment Board, the State Employment and Training Commission will take the lead role in ensuring that the planning and implementation of the Workforce Investment Act is accomplished in an inclusive manner. This means that the private sector will play a major role in working with state and local public officials to fashion a workforce investment system that meet the needs of its customers. Major policy recommendations developed by the Core Planning Group and endorsed by the Cabinet will be sent to the SETC to the Governor for endorsement. It is vital to this process that the policy recommendations developed by the SETC and its partners and endorsed at the gubernatorial level be reflected throughout the workforce investment system.

This plan charts the strategic direction that embodies New Jersey's vision for workforce investment. It provides the roadmap for the development of local plans that address local needs. It also provides the foundation for a partnership between the State and localities as well as between the public and private sectors. In the next six months New Jersey will develop the full comprehensive five-year WIA plan and initiate the process of local WIB planning.

This Unified State Plan is a "living document" and, as such, will evolve over the coming five years as New Jersey moves closer to its vision of a truly unified system.

*Strategic Five-Year
Unified State Plan for New Jersey's
Workforce Investment System*

Chapter One, Part II

State of New Jersey

Christine Todd Whitman
Governor

Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System

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Strategic Five -Year Unified State Plan For New Jersey's Workforce Investment System

CHAPTER ONE, PART II

Executive Summary

Chapter One, Part II of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* establishes policies to operationalize the conceptual framework established in Chapter One, Part I. The plan is based on New Jersey's demand side strategy - focusing the workforce investment system on the needs of employers. New Jersey's goal is to fulfill the spirit of the Workforce Investment Act and to continue its course toward a fully integrated system that reflects and incorporates all education, employment and training programs administered in the State.

New Jersey's plan is the result of an open, highly collaborative process involving over 250 individuals from state and local governments, the private sector, organized labor and community-based organizations. Significant policies in Chapter One, Part II include:

- Legislation will be introduced to change the membership of the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) to make it consistent with the membership requirements of a state board as prescribed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
- Through Executive Order, Governor Whitman will establish a statewide Youth Investment Council. This council will be charged with the development of comprehensive youth policy and will serve as a focal point for WIB Youth Councils.
- There will be seventeen Workforce Investment Board (WIB) areas. They are: Atlantic/Cape May, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland/Salem, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson/Jersey City, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris/Sussex/Warren, Newark, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset/Hunterdon, and Union.
- Labor market information, including data on businesses, the potential labor supply and qualified training programs, will be gathered and utilized on a regional basis. WIBs will engage in regional planning and coordination efforts to appropriately respond to this wider scale of labor market information.
- The State will adopt a One-Stop Flow Chart for services that will be the model for service delivery across the State and relevant to every agency in the One-Stop system.

- The establishment of One-Stop criteria will build upon federal guidance and provide for a customer "Bill of Rights" for job seekers and employers.
- A consortium will be established for the design and development of an Internet-based participant tracking system. New Jersey is one of the original three states that has entered this consortium and the One-Stop Operating System will be New Jersey's single source for the administrative data of the workforce investment system.
- New Jersey's consumer report card will be directly tied to the approval of training providers and to the State's overall performance management system. The system will be internet-based and set new standards for performance. In addition, New Jersey is moving from an outmoded, paper-based system for processing information to an up-to-date, computer-based model.
- New Jersey's Career Information Delivery System database will be the central source for career information in the One-Stop system. This database will include links to the consumer report card and the statewide list of approved training vendors.
- New Jersey will issue new guidelines for:
 - The establishment of Workforce Investment Boards,
 - The creation of local Youth Councils,
 - Agreements between Workforce Investment Boards and Chief Elected Officials,
 - Agreements between Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Partners, and
 - WIB planning.

The submission of Chapter One, Part II is another milestone in New Jersey's transition from a fragmented series of programs and services to a fully integrated One-Stop system that meets the needs of employers and job seekers. Given the dynamic nature of this process, plans will be modified and refined as the system evolves.

Summary Of Unified State Plan Work Group Reports

Report #1 - Legal and Regulatory Issues

This work group was directed to consider possible changes to the statute that established the SETC regarding membership. Possible changes could include language covering the role and responsibilities of the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, the role of secondary vocational education in the workforce investment system and the establishment of a State Youth Council.

Recommendations

- Current SETC configuration is similar to WIA requirements for the State WIB; however, it is in the best interests of the State if the membership is broadened to include a requirement for 51% private sector representation. Working with the Governor's appointments office, some changes will be made even prior to amendment of the statute.
- An Executive Order is being drafted for the creation of a State Youth Council.

Report #2 - WIB Membership and Guidelines

The purpose of this work group was to review the guidelines for establishing WIBs and make recommendations for changes to those guidelines.

Recommendations

- Guidelines should include clear expectations for WIBs to have a diverse membership.
- The requirement for public sector representatives to hold a specific title, e.g., president of the county college, should be replaced with the requirement that the individual be in a position of decision-making authority.
- Reference to private proprietary schools should be removed.
- One-Stop Teams should be included as a mandatory subcommittee of the WIB.
- Youth Councils should be included as a mandatory subcommittee of the WIB.
- A listing of statewide business organizations should be compiled for use by the WIBs in recruiting members.

Report #3 - Local Planning Instructions

The WIB membership and guidelines work group also drafted local planning instructions for WIBs. Under the Workforce Investment Act, local areas are required to submit plans to the State. Although they are inclusive of all federal requirements, the planning instructions are organized in a form that reflects the priorities of New Jersey.

Recommendations

- Plans should be organized according to the broad categories of:
 - Introduction
 - Administrative Information
 - Needs of the business customer
 - Needs of the individual customer
 - Assessment of resources
 - One-Stop system

- The emphasis of the local plan must be on the entire one-stop system and not solely on WIA funded projects.
- The plan must address any regional planning efforts being pursued by the WIB.

Report #4 - Funding and Area Designation

The work group devised a configuration for WIB designation under WIA and is considering several allocation formulas that minimizes any adverse impact anticipated by the removal of the hold harmless provision that were in effect under JTPA. The final proposal for allocations and for administrative funding for WIBs as well as the SETC will be considered by the Commission in the draft plan.

Recommendations

- Middlesex County has exercised their right to be designated as an individual WIB area by petitioning the Governor.
- The following 17 areas will be designated as Workforce Investment Boards: Atlantic/Cape May, Bergen, Burlington, Camden, Cumberland/Salem, Essex, Gloucester, Hudson/Jersey City, Mercer, Middlesex, Monmouth, Morris/Sussex/Warren, Newark, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset/Hunterdon and Union.
- Administrative budgets for WIB areas will be developed by the WIB. All funding must be in accordance with WIB plans.

Report #5 - Demand Side Strategy – A Regional Approach

This group is responsible for developing the specific steps New Jersey will take to bring together information on jobs and the workforce with information on skills training, technology and future labor market demands. The goal of this group is to establish clear strategy for matching government programs and services with the real needs of New Jersey's employers. As an initial focus, the group outlined a regional planning strategy utilizing workforce regional area partnerships.

Recommendations

- The regional planning entities must be flexible enough to allow for reconfiguring as needed to address specific issues.
- Regional planning should expand on available labor market information.
- Regional information should be available at each WIB meeting to ensure WIBs are focusing on local as well as regional issues.

Report #6 - Vendor Assessment System/Consumer Report Card

This group proposed linking the Vendor Approval and Performance Management System to the Consumer Report Card System being proposed by the SETC's Evaluation Committee. The Committee has generated a final report based on the initial recommendations made by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Bloustein

School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. This report forms the basis for the State's expectations of a Consumer Report Card System. However, discussions of the Committee went far beyond what just was needed for the Consumer Report Card System and linked that requirement to the development and maintenance of an approved provider list, as well as to performance management tools, such as customer satisfaction surveys.

Recommendations

- The general template proposed by the Heldrich Center should be the basis of the consumer report card.
- Common standards should be established for the entire One-Stop system and the partners.
- Social security numbers will be used as identifiers for participants and vendor reporting.
- Follow-up activities should be in six-month period intervals over a two-year period.
- All partner agencies should adopt the vendor approval and performance process developed by the SETC.
- A chart has been developed to help explain the process. This proposal, if accepted, will require significant changes in the functions and working relationships among relevant agencies.

Report #7 - One-Stop System

This group developed guidelines for operating protocols for the local One-Stop System. The charts in Appendix 2 illustrate the flow of services within the system. The services clearly link individuals to appropriate services, regardless of agency or funding stream. A narrative was developed to accompany the charts.

In conjunction with the One-Stop Technical Assistance project¹, guidance on specific protocols for local areas is being developed and will be released as a template for local areas along with the local planning instructions.

Recommended Flowcharts

- One-Stop Core Services
- One-Stop Intensive and Training Services
- One-Stop Services for Employers

This group drafted minimum service criteria for agencies of the One-Stop System.

¹ Local One-Stop partners have been meeting on a six to eight week basis for about 18 months. The purpose of these meetings is to facilitate discussion on One-Stop implementation strategies.

Recommendations

- All WIB areas will impose operating protocols on the delivery of services in the One-Stop system.
- Agencies whose facilities are not designated as “core” locations will be known as “members” of the One-Stop System.
- WIBs may impose additional criteria for designation.

Report #8 - Youth Councils

This group developed guidelines for the creation of local youth councils. These youth investment councils will plan and oversee each area’s service delivery system for young people. They will plan for a comprehensive service system designed to improve career and employment opportunities for all youth. The planning requirements for the youth councils will be incorporated into the planning instructions for the WIBs. It is important that these plans link federal, state and local youth initiatives into a comprehensive youth strategy and plan.

Recommendations

- Issue guidelines for the design of a system for youth.
- Issue guidelines for the design of youth programs.
- Develop definitions of program elements for youth programs.

Report #9 - Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Between WIBs and One-Stop Partners

The purpose of the group was to further develop the guidelines for the State to the WIBs on the MOUs that need to be developed at the local level. A template for a local MOU between the WIBs and the One-Stop Partners has been developed.

Recommendations

- The MOU must address the following:
 - Expected performance standards and goals for partners, including service protocols.
 - Identification of One-Stop operator(s).
 - Identification of One-Stop partners.
 - Services to be provided to individuals.
 - Services to be provided to employers.
 - Certifications of nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.
 - Funding of operating costs.
 - Duration of agreement and procedures to amend the agreement.

In addition, a checklist for One-Stop Implementation was developed to provide a comprehensive list of items that should be considered in the development of a local

MOU and local plans. It is important to note that not all items on the list apply to every One-Stop. The list provides a menu of services, administrative activities, and possible roles for the partners.

Report #10 - Memorandum of Understanding Between the WIB and the Chief Elected Official

Although not required by federal law, New Jersey is recommending a template for an MOU between the WIB and the CEO to insure a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of each.

Recommendation

- Each local area will have an MOU that reflects the changes in federal and state policy regarding workforce investment activities in the local area.

Report #11 - Individual Training Account Payment (ITAs) System Work Group

This work group was responsible for development of a payment system for ITAs. The ITA Payment System will be linked to the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS). This will integrate the payment of the vendor and the reporting of the individual grant activities. The system will also be linked with the Vendor Approval Process.

Recommendations

- In general, ITAs will be limited to an average of \$4,000 for skill training programs for dislocated workers and adults.
- ITAs for low income individuals will have no state imposed limit.
- The average amount for remedial education, including English as a Second Language, will be \$1,000.
- ITAs must join other financial resources, such as PELL grants, Tuition Waiver Program, and Workforce Development Partnership Program.
- ITAs are awarded with customer choice as a primary focus. In cases with multiple vendors providing the same quality course, the amount awarded will be the lowest amount unless there are other compelling reasons (such as availability of transportation) for selecting another vendor.

Report #12 - Administrative Data System

The group is addressing the development of a new One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) that meets the data collection needs of the Department of Labor. The work group was expanded to include representatives from the various partner agencies. As a result of the input, the system design was modified to provide a mechanism for capturing all data elements necessary for the workforce investment programs as well as sharing information with the vendor report card system.

Recommendations

- OSOS will serve as the administrative data collection system and participant tracking system for all workforce investment activities.
- OSOS ensures linkages to the One-Stop Performance System, the Consumer Report Card, and the Career Information Delivery System.
- Allocations, disbursements/expenditures, fund balance information, tracking reports, and the ability to engage financial holdbacks should be included in the design.

Report #13 - Adult Literacy

This work group was directed to consider recommending changes in the adult literacy delivery system. The recommendations of this group are preliminary, pending the establishment of the State Council for Adult Literacy Education.

Recommendations

- Develop a mission for the adult literacy delivery system.
- Involve WIBs in literacy planning.
- Consolidate literacy resources at the WIB level.
- Revise funding to better support extended and intensive literacy training.

Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System

CHAPTER ONE, PART II

Background

Chapter One, Part I, of this plan has provided the strategic foundation for New Jersey's workforce investment efforts. New Jersey is committed to a workforce investment system that has as its mission a balance between the needs of New Jersey's citizens to be employed to their maximum potential and business to have access to a highly qualified workforce to ensure global competitiveness in an ever-changing world. The system must facilitate continuous development of skills and competencies that enhance the employability of the existing and future workforce; promote sound leadership and organizational growth; and, adjust to environmental changes as it focuses on customer access and choice assuring the highest level of quality.

Chapter One, Part II, is designed to clarify and operationalize how the pieces fit in the large puzzle. To make the process more manageable, the issues are addressed comprehensively from the State to the One-Stop levels. The roles of the various components of the system are defined, as are the specific relationships. Too, this chapter will also provide a schedule and timetable for the implementation for all Workforce Investment Act (WIA) required activities that will insure that New Jersey is fully compliant by July 1, 2000.

Role of the State Employment and Training Commission

Over the past decade, the work of the New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) has focused on developing a comprehensive workforce investment system that serves the needs of employers and current and future workers. The SETC is the first Human Resource Investment Council created by State legislation. The passage of the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) has underscored existing SETC policy and provided new impetus to move forward.

As a public-private partnership, appointed by the Governor, the SETC has the responsibility to play the key leadership role in guiding the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act in New Jersey. This section reviews the roles and responsibilities of the SETC.

State Legislative Mandate

Under New Jersey state law, the State Employment and Training Commission has performed the duties required of the State Workforce Investment Board. It has as its purpose:

“to develop and assist in the implementation of a State employment and training policy with the goal of creating a coherent, integrated system of employment and training programs and services which, in concert with the efforts of the private sector, will provide each citizen of the State with equal access to the learning opportunities needed to attain and maintain high levels of productivity and earning power. The principal emphasis of the employment and training policy shall be developing a strategy to fill significant gaps in New Jersey’s training and employment efforts, with special attention to finding ways to mobilize and channel public and private resources to individuals who would otherwise be denied access to the training and education they need to make their fullest contribution to the economic well being of the State. To the extent practicable, the strategy shall emphasize types of training and education which foster the communication and critical thinking skills in workers and job seekers which will be of greatest benefit for long term career advancement” (Title 34, Chapter 15C, 8).

The SETC serves as the “think tank” for developing workforce investment policies. It has the responsibility for convening the appropriate policy makers to focus on issues

impacting system performance. It is also responsible for bringing together the private and public partners to determine services and direction for the system. Program oversight and evaluation, major roles of the Commission, require convening operational entities in sessions to facilitate discussion, review, and joint planning. The SETC has a critically important function as the leader on State workforce investment policies by ensuring a vision is in place and the interested parties are following the established path.

Statutory Responsibilities

The enabling legislation for the SETC includes the mission and objectives of the Commission. To accomplish this mission, the law requires the following:

1. Establish performance standards for the programs involved,
2. Coordinate initiatives in the educational area between secondary and post-secondary operations,
3. Review state and federal laws and regulations for potential barriers to success,
4. Develop an annual employment and training plan,
5. Perform duties assigned to a state job training coordinating council,
6. Enter into agreements with local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and state departments for planning, policy guidance, and oversight functions for any employment and training programs either funded or administered with state funds,
7. Establish guidelines for planning, policy guidance and oversight functions for local WIB, and,
8. Obtain access to all files and records held by public entities that are needed to perform functions.

Membership

Although the membership of the SETC as established by state law has been approved by the US Department of Labor under a grand-fathering clause as the State Workforce Investment Board, amendments to the state legislation have been proposed to bring the SETC into a fully WIA-compliant body.² This transition will be accomplished to coincide

² Potential members of the SETC are recommended to the Governor by various business organizations in New Jersey, the AFL-CIO, the Council of County Colleges and other interested parties. The Governor nominates individuals based on their qualifications for and potential contributions to the work of the SETC, their party affiliation (which must be balanced), and the geographic region of the State in which they reside. Nominations are approved with the advice and consent of the State Senate.

with the full implementation of WIA on July 1, 2000. The composition of the State Board will be modified to include the Governor, two additional members of the state legislature (one from each house), one new Chief Elected Official, increased union representation and an appropriate number of new business representatives to bring their proportion of the membership to more than 50%. Included in these new business members will be representatives of statewide business organizations, such as the State Chamber of Commerce and the New Jersey Business and Industry Association. Additionally, at least four private sector WIB Chairs will be selected on a regional basis. Finally, new members will be sought from the State AFL-CIO, the Economic Development Authority, and New Jersey Transit. (See Appendix 1)

In order to broaden participation, the SETC encourages the active involvement of a wide range of individuals in its activities. The SETC also has an established practice of forming committees and work groups to focus on specific policies. All committees have representatives from each agency represented on the Commission. This has enabled New Jersey to engage in broad planning across programs and agencies. This inclusive process provides a solid foundation for achieving the State's vision for the workforce investment system. Collaboration has and will continue to be a hallmark of New Jersey's planning efforts.

Cabinet-Level Policy Group

At the direction of the Governor's Office, the Labor Commissioner and SETC Chair have facilitated the creation of a Cabinet-level working group to oversee the development of this plan and its implementation. Joining the SETC in this policy group are the Departments of Community Affairs, Education, Health and Senior Services, Human Services, Labor, Transportation, and Treasury. In addition, the Governor's Office of Policy and Planning and the Commissions on Commerce and Economic Growth and Higher Education are participants. The chief function of this body is to ensure that the goals and objectives agreed to in the State Plan are appropriately implemented.

The involvement of this high level policy group has been essential as the State has moved to transform service delivery to shared responsibility across departmental lines. It was through the consensus of this group that the State embarked on a policy that is consistent with the inclusive policies envisioned by our federal partners. In the end, this group assures that there is an administration-wide consensus on workforce policy formulation and implementation.

Core Planning Group

A Core Planning Group was created under the direction of the Cabinet-level Work Group to develop the major components of this plan and to oversee its implementation. Aside from representatives from each of the agencies enumerated above, Service Delivery Areas (SDAs), labor unions and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are also members of the Core Planning Group. The group met every two weeks during the development of the April 1999 submission of the WIA plan and have continued to meet

on a regular basis to review ongoing work of the various work groups and committees. This group has been expanded to include direct representation from the private sector and local elected officials. This body serves as an ongoing One-Stop team that monitors the day-to-day implementation process, guides the system's activities, and generally oversees the continual changes to the workforce investment system.

State Youth Council

An Executive Order establishing a State Youth Council is being developed for the Governor's signature. This Council, to be housed in the SETC, is a joint undertaking with the Secretary of State's Center for Youth Policies. The Council will play an essential role in determining comprehensive youth policies for the State. The Council will be the State-level entity responsible for ensuring a clear policy direction for creating education, training, and employment opportunities for all youth from ages 14-21, whether in school or not. In addition to articulating state-level policies, the Council will serve as a conduit for local plans and innovations.

Through the State Youth Investment Council (YIC), New Jersey will chart a comprehensive direction for serving all youth, with a specific focus on those who are at risk. This Council will be responsible for developing a youth policy framework, that will serve as the policy basis for WIB Youth Investment Councils. Those councils will be responsible for developing local policies that will create a system to address the workforce needs of all young people.

New Jersey Youth Priorities

New Jersey has several model programs for youth operating across the State that will be emphasized. First is the New Jersey Youth Corps which has set the standard for service learning for out-of-school youth. In developing an overall approach for dropout youths, New Jersey intends to use the policy framework of its New Jersey Youth Corps as a model. The Youth Corps was established in 1985 and serves high school dropouts by offering them both education and work experience. The education component seeks to enable students to attain a General Education Diploma (GED). The community service component of Youth Corps engages dropouts in a wide variety of projects. These include rehabilitating houses for the homeless, working in Alzheimer's wards, and building the Children's Museum in East Orange, New Jersey, among others. The State regards the Youth Corps as one of its most successful initiatives in addressing the needs of dropouts and its goal is to expand the current Youth Corps program and to extend it to every WIB area.

Americorps also provides a model for review. In addition, the nationally recognized School-Based Youth Services program ties essential support services for teen parents to their school experience so that they can stay in school and succeed.

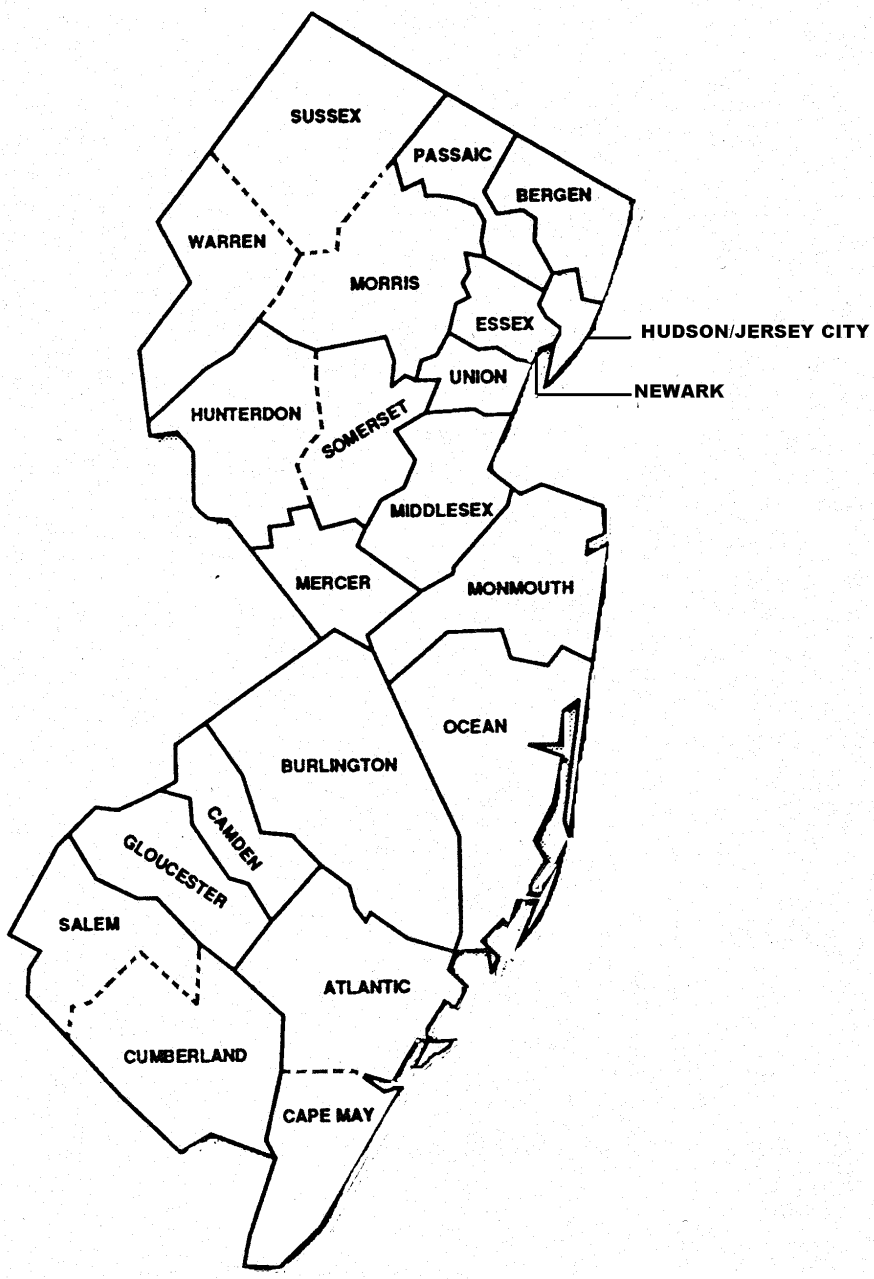
The Abbott v. Burke New Jersey Supreme Court decision, which mandated the State to correct the educational disparities that exist between the 28 most disadvantaged school districts and their more affluent counterparts, will guide youth planning. The State recognizes the importance of the 28 Abbott Districts to its future economy. They represent more than 260,000 students, a significant portion of New Jersey's future workforce. New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards and whole-school reform promises to ensure that these students attain fundamental levels of literacy and basic skills and become full participants in the future economy (two of the core principles of the workforce investment system). The SETC will continue to work with the Department of Education and the Commission's other partner agencies and stakeholders to support these initiatives and to ensure that these districts and their students are fully integrated into the workforce investment system.

Local Areas

Although New Jersey continues to believe that the "county-based" system, endorsed in Executive Order No. 36 and in the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan*, should form the basis for the system, the City of Newark has decided to exercise its right to be designated as an area under WIA. Additionally, the County of Middlesex has opted to be a separate area based on WIA's automatic designation population threshold. Consequently, these areas will receive area designation. In total, New Jersey is recommending 17 workforce investment areas as follows:

- Atlantic/Cape May
- Bergen
- Burlington
- Camden
- Cumberland/Salem
- Essex
- Gloucester
- Hudson/Jersey City
- Mercer
- Middlesex
- Monmouth
- Morris/Sussex/Warren
- Newark
- Ocean
- Passaic
- Somerset/Hunterdon
- Union

Each will be a workforce investment area under the Workforce Investment Act. Within the Hudson County Area, the Mayor of Jersey City will be the Grant Recipient for Jersey City and the Chief Elected Official for the County will be the Grant Recipient for the balance of Hudson County. Each will receive a separate allocation of all WIA funds in accordance with the federally prescribed formula.



While this area configuration appears viable for the present, the SETC will convene a blue ribbon panel to review this geographical configuration of workforce investment areas. The panel is expected to provide recommendations to the Governor concerning local areas. It is anticipated that this panel will convene in the summer of 2000 and complete its work by July, 2003.

Demand Side and Regional Planning

True labor market areas are defined as areas in which a population lives and works. However, given New Jersey's population growth patterns, economic growth patterns, transportation network, and geographic location (between New York and Philadelphia metropolitan areas) identifying single county labor markets is problematic. Therefore, local WIBs have been involved in ongoing regional planning efforts. Economic development of areas has required regional planning - increased employment opportunities in the Atlantic City casino industry, for instance, have resulted in collaborative planning among several WIBs. These efforts have involved a wide variety of programs and services, including those administered by the Departments of Labor, Education, Human Services, and Transportation and the Commissions on Commerce and Economic Growth and Higher Education. Another example of collaborative WIB regional planning is the dredging of the Newark Port and its related economic growth. Indeed, it is the promise of regional planning that it can create an inclusive framework that will connect employment strategy to numerous other services like transportation, child care and housing.

New Jersey will create a workforce investment system in which timely and forward-looking labor market information is the major priority. Historically, much of the information used to guide employment and training programs has been unable to equip the workforce with the "skill sets" they need to adapt to a rapidly changing labor market. Therefore, New Jersey is proposing to regionalize the gathering of labor market information to provide WIBs with the broadly based and timely information they will need to construct priorities and services to meet the needs of students, workers and those seeking employment and the employer community. Generally speaking, New Jersey views the WIBs as having three major concerns:

1. WIBs need to assess the labor supply needs in their workforce area. This involves a clear understanding of the demographics of the labor supply, their skill levels and other workforce related needs, e.g., transportation and childcare. It is critical for the WIBs to understand the local population in order to gain some understanding on how to move them into higher wage and higher skill career paths.
2. WIBs, through their oversight role for the One-Stop Career Center system, have the responsibility of assuring that training opportunities, labor market information, labor exchange and social services support needs are available to those who seek to improve their economic circumstances. In this regard, WIBs serve, especially the private sector members, as a board of trustees for the One-Stop

system with the obligation to ensure that they operate at the highest level of performance. Given New Jersey's relatively small size and strong tradition of local governance, it is clear that these first two functions are best performed at the county or, where a population mandates, the multi-county level. This is true because county government has specific responsibility in New Jersey for delivering many of the key services that people need. Moreover, a plurality of the funding for education and training is derived from county budgets for the county college system and the vocational and technical school system.

3. Precisely because of New Jersey's small size, labor market areas are not congruent with county boundaries. Therefore, New Jersey intends to construct for the express purpose of gathering and using labor market information, workforce regional area partnerships . These partnerships will be responsible for viewing regional labor market information, both for its current labor market demand and to assess the future job needs and to communicate that information back to the WIBs. The WIBs will then be required to plan based on the regional labor market assessment.

One way of viewing the work of the regional planning effort is that it will provide to the WIB decision-makers, a series of information services that will help the WIBs perform their responsibilities. Another benefit of this approach is that it will allow WIBs to do their planning and rationalize their allocation of employment and training dollars on a trans-county basis. For instance, one of the major economic development activities in New Jersey is the deepening of the harbor from Port Newark to Port Elizabeth. Planning at the WIB level beyond respective county boundaries will be required to meet the anticipated 150,000 new jobs over the next decade. This also applies to the southern region where the anticipated expansion of jobs in Atlantic City will require the southern WIBs to work together to develop a common training strategy.

Overall, this approach has the promise of being able to maximize WIB autonomy in their oversight of delivery of workforce investment services at the local level while, at the same time, offering them a larger vision and planning opportunity to respond to the regional economy. Hence, both the need for local authority and the desirability to have the best labor market information available are satisfied by this approach.

Regional planning will improve New Jersey's workforce investment system in the following ways:

- Allow for the acquisition of broader and deeper labor market information.
- Provide WIBs with the information they need to link people living in one areas with jobs in another area.
- Facilitate the development of joint projects among the WIBs including, where appropriate, eliminating duplicative training initiatives.
- Enhance the ability of WIBs to engage in long-range workforce development planning.

- Fully involve the expertise of the business community in shaping workforce development strategy.
- Enable local elected officials to collaborate with each other across county lines to develop joint initiatives.
- Integrate the expertise of county-based economic planning officials into cooperative efforts.
- Ensure that the needs of the workforce are at the center of economic development efforts.

It should be noted that the regional geography must be flexible to allow for reconfiguration as specific labor market needs arise. In this sense, regions should be subordinate to the overall labor market needs that may develop or shift on a regular basis. They are a point of departure for information exchange rather than entities with fixed boundaries. Over the next several months, New Jersey will engage in an exhaustive process to determine the configuration of this regional planning and coordination initiative. As final policies are developed, New Jersey will ensure that there is a widespread consensus to the overall approach to regional planning it selects. In the end, regional planning will not result in the creation of another layer of bureaucracy or in the usurpation of legitimate WIB authority.

One-Stop Protocols

A goal of the April 1999 Plan, Chapter One, Part I, was the establishment of One-Stop Protocols within the first year of WIA. One-Stop interagency teams have developed guidelines for services that clearly link individuals and employers to services regardless of funding stream. The work of these workgroups can be seen in the flowchart in Appendix 2.

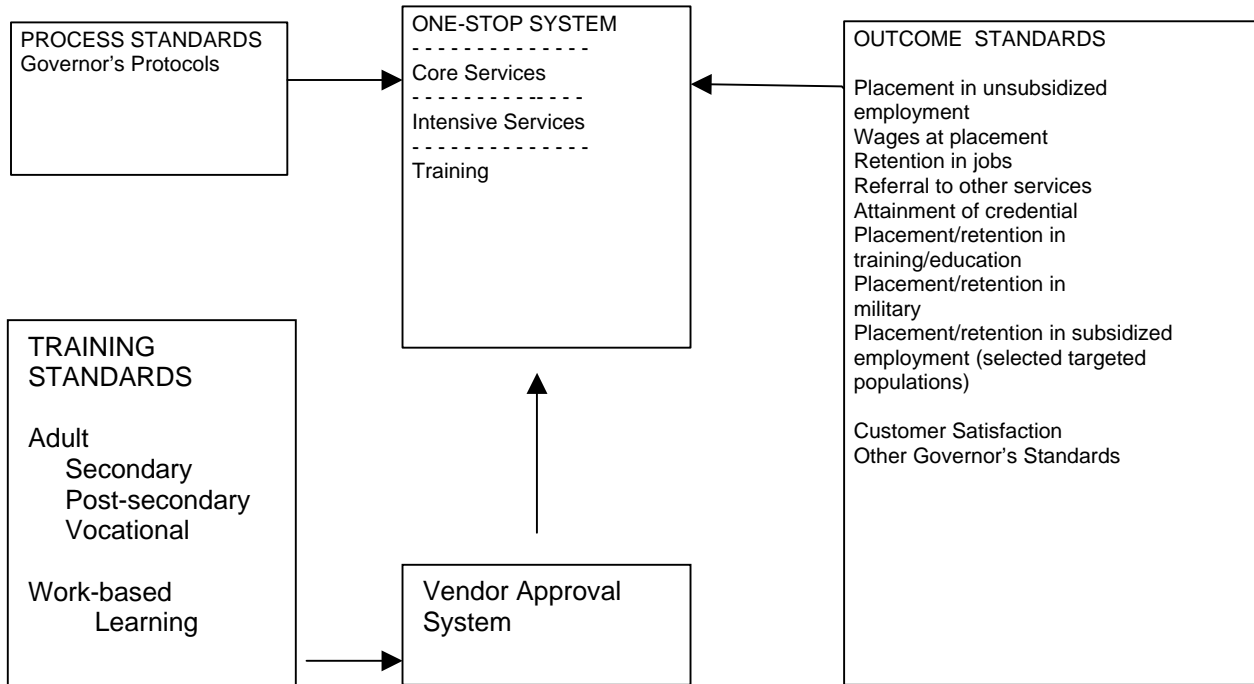
One-Stop Criteria

The One-Stop System workgroup developed the One-Stop Guidelines to supplement Federal guidance for New Jersey's One-Stop Career System. These criteria will also be used as part of local planning instructions and appear in Appendix 3.

Performance Standards

New Jersey's performance standards for the One-Stop system incorporate the standards of all the members of the system. Outcome standards are those prescribed by WIA, training standards are derived from the education community, and One-Stop process standards will be derived from the One-Stop protocols.

One-Stop System Standards



Initially, performance information on training providers will be based on historical data. Performance standards will be developed over time, representing common accepted standards for all One-Stop partners. Information from administrative databases for the Employment Services (including the Workforce Development Partnership Program Management Information System), JTPA, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Unemployment Insurance (UI), the Division of Family Development (DFD), School-to-Careers, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and UI Wage Records will be combined with survey results for customer satisfaction (both employers and training participants) to determine appropriate baseline standards for the One-Stop system.

Rather than collecting information through a follow-up survey on wages, placement, retention and earnings increases, the Unemployment Insurance wage records and the Wage Record Interchange System will, at some time, be used to evaluate outcomes for the measures. This stage of the process will present information based on aggregate data so that confidentiality is maintained. As these evaluations are conducted, program

administrators will be able to determine relative effectiveness of programs for selected populations.

When individuals are enrolled in training, information entered into the administrative data system will assist WIBs in ensuring that certain performance levels are reached before payments are generated. This link will also provide necessary feedback to keep the vendor approval list up to date. Any problem with student participation or vendor performance should generate a notification to the appropriate administrator and also temporarily suspend payments until the issue is investigated.

It is also essential that the results of any program evaluation efforts are shared with program administrators in order that required changes in program administration and content be made, thus ensuring continuous improvement. Combining data sources requires the development of appropriate software. Separate systems that communicate with each other and share common data as needed will be essential in the creation and maintenance of the system proposed.

Administrative data must include social security numbers and basic demographic information as appropriate. All relevant agencies are expected to provide this information, and the SETC will enter into the Memoranda of Understanding with state agencies to ensure the provision of this information in a timely manner.

Methods of obtaining customer satisfaction information will consist of various surveys given to all customers: job-seekers, employers, and vendors. The customer satisfaction study conducted by Rowan University³ will be used as the starting point for development of the customer satisfaction benchmarks for the One-Stop system. As much as possible, customer satisfaction should focus on quantifiable measures such as amount of time spent in a waiting room, number of appointments until services were provided, and number of phone transfers made per call. This will provide a sound basis for continuous improvement.

Additional measures, permitted under WIA to supplement the core measures, are referred to as Governor's Measures. These Governor's Measures are for each of the service categories (core, intensive, and training services) and will be developed during the first full year of WIA. They will be implemented based on a broad consensus of One-Stop partners. Negotiated WIA standards for WIA funded programs will be included in an April 1, 2000 update of this plan.

As standards have been established, there have been many opportunities to involve individuals in and out of the workforce investment system. Public comment periods, conferences, symposia, and focus groups have been instrumental in soliciting input and support. We have built on the work completed by those involved in Secondary and Post-Secondary Vocational Education and in Adult Literacy and Family Literacy to establish system standards that appear in the One-Stop System Standards graphic at

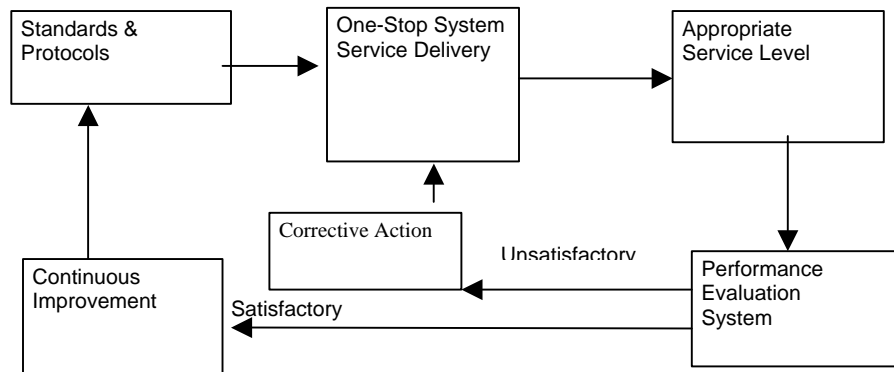
³ Rowan University will not necessarily be the entity chosen to develop, conduct and analyze customer satisfaction surveys.

the start of this section. Training standards will be a vital part of the vendor approval system and process standards derived from the Governor's protocols will guide the day-to-day operation of the One-Stop system. In addition, the outcome standards that mirror the prescribed WIA standards will be used to judge outcomes for all partners of the One-Stop system.

A single agency will be responsible for the identification and implementation of occupational program standards. This was done to ensure that all training programs, regardless of funding source, provide the same skills and competencies. The general requirement is that occupational competencies are based on recognized industry/employer-endorsed standards. Since 1994, the recommendations of the National Skill Standards Board are used for this program where appropriate. The New Jersey Department of Education is also included in the State-level review and approval of training vendors and programs. This is essential for ensuring courses and facilities meet the requirement for training in a demand area and the focus on a demand side strategy for education and training efforts.

Since New Jersey is committed to continuous improvement, the standards will be reviewed at least yearly and new targets will be established because it is a promising method of assuring good services to our citizens. In instances where less than satisfactory performance has been attained, corrective action plans will be required and a more intensive local and state monitoring schedule will be established as part of the corrective action.

The following chart indicates the role of continuous improvement in the ongoing development of the system.



Data Systems

All State partners have agreed to use a single data collection system (currently under development) and reporting process. Design of the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) has included input from all the various partners. Until fully functional, other systems such as One-Ease-E Link will continue to be used and will also be expanded to other partners. A complete description of the system is in Appendix 10.

Approval and Evaluation of Training Providers

New Jersey is developing a comprehensive system for vendor approval and performance that will directly link to the statewide eligible provider list. This approval process is being developed for all One-Stop partners and has the support of the State Departments which send funds to local training providers. Appendix 4 is a graphical representation of the process that will be used to obtain a statewide list of approved training vendors.

The consumer report card system will be an extension of the data collection system for vendor approval. The system will bring together, in a useful format, administrative data on individuals who receive training services under any federal, state, or local funded program. In particular, program performance information will be available for individuals receiving assistance under TANF, Welfare-to-Work, Workforce Development Partnership, JTPA, and the Perkins Act. The consumer report card system will include data on vendors who participate in customized training efforts. Using a single system for data sources will eliminate some redundancy and help ensure consistent application of policies. The State hopes to achieve this single system within the next five years.

There is a clear distinction between the vendor approval process and the consumer report card system. Basic vendor information will be sent to the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) and then through a formal approval process. This information is routed to the Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) and the consumer report card. When the vendors receive approval, they will be placed on the approved vendor list. This information can be accessed through the proposed system.

The performance management and vendor evaluation system will be made available in a user-friendly manner through an Internet website. Use of the Internet will ensure that the information is current, and if hard copy is desired, it can be printed as needed. Reports needed for administration of the programs will be available through a query process.

The consumer report card system will be linked to CIDS and the WNJPIN/NJ One-Stop in order to maximize its usefulness. The CIDS database is an excellent repository of qualitative information on training providers in New Jersey. This database will be used to provide descriptive information on providers.

Individuals seeking information will be able to perform discreet searches that allow for multiple choices. In addition, the CIDS database will be transformed from a series of image files into a searchable database. The importance of developing broad search capabilities cannot be overstated. The latest technology for developing searchable databases will be used.

Since the Department of Labor gathers information through the annual CIDS survey as well as through the vendor approval process, these two processes will be linked for the

purposes of gathering data. Both purposes can be met with a single contact with the training provider and/or WIB.

The WIB is responsible for the initial review of vendors and programs offered in geographic areas governed by the WIB. New Jersey law requires training vendors to be approved by some state agency if they receive public funds. The vendor completes the necessary application process and enters the information into a web-based system. The local review process looks at the demand occupation status, the completeness of the application, and whether the vendor meets the criteria established by the State. The WIB has ten days to approve or deny approval of the training. Decisions are in writing and may be appealed by the vendor through the State appeal process. WIBs may at any time access this appeal process if there is a change in vendor performance.

A provider that does not meet acceptable levels of performance will be removed from the list. The development of the provider list and consumer report card is critical to the education, employment, and training process. Once in place, local administrators will be able to access current data for performance. This will provide an “early warning” for potential vendor issues and allow for intervention prior to removal of providers from the list. The vendor assessment process would involve performance indicators that need to be met. A drop in those standards for any population group would result in a warning and investigation of the issues. Failure of the vendor to correct identified deficiencies within a specific period of time would result in sanctions against the vendor for the populations identified. It is possible that a vendor might perform in a satisfactory manner for one population and not another group. A multi-step appeal process is in development. The removal from the list for failure to meet the standards is the final step in the process. Once the provider is removed from the list, the vendor will not be able to reapply for “Approved Vendor Status” for a 24-month period.

Performance measures for the vendors are linked to the consumer guide and the data collection system being used. Since employment, retention, and wages are critical to determining success, the cross match with the Wage Record Interchange System is believed, at this time, to be the most logical and economical method for follow up. Economies of scale move such follow-up activities to the State level and not the local level.

Local performance measures for vendors in an area will be linked to the outcomes. The local WIB will have the information available through the performance system component of the data collection and consumer guide to monitor performance. If training outcomes are less than satisfactory for a particular vendor, an investigation by the local WIB must be completed. Less than satisfactory outcomes might be indicative of a problem with the system, the vendors, or data collection issues. On investigation of the performance, if the issue is poor performance by the vendor or components of the system, actions must be taken. Minor problems require an action report with activities that must be monitored every three months. Continued poor performance may result in suspension of all activities; removal from the approved training vendor list; or

decertification as a One-Stop partner. Appeals of any negative action will go through the State appeal process.

Guidance to the Local Level

New Jersey has issued policies on the establishment of WIBs, execution of Memoranda of Understanding with Chief Elected Officials and Memoranda of Understanding with One-Stop partners. WIB Guidelines are Appendix 5, Guidelines for the MOU between the WIB and CEO are Appendix 6 and Guidelines for the MOU between the WIB and One-Stop Partners are Appendix 7.

Local Plan Instructions

Local Plan Instructions are attached as Appendix 8. These instructions will be released with the submission of this plan.

Youth Councils

Youth Councils will be established by each WIB and will be responsible for planning and oversight of programs for young people in that workforce investment area. Guidelines for creation of Youth Councils are Appendix 9. The focus on youth issues and the expanded number of partners that will be defining youth needs, and ways to address them, is expected to significantly improve the system's effectiveness. New Jersey intends to strengthen the link between planning and operations for several programs targeted toward youth. The State intends to direct local Youth Councils to coordinate funding and services and maximize available resources.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is a major priority of New Jersey as it implements the Workforce Investment Act. Historically, the SETC has facilitated, with its partner agencies, a number of capacity building initiatives designed to prepare WIBs and One-Stop staff with the understanding they need to perform their responsibilities. These capacity building initiatives have been enhanced by the partnership between state government and the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development and the Higher Education Alliance. Through this partnership, a curriculum has been developed entitled One-Stop Career Development Facilitator that is designed to enable frontline workers to work collaboratively in the One-Stop environment.

As New Jersey continues in its implementation of WIA, the following will be major priorities:

- Develop a 9 credit course for all frontline workers in the One-Stop system.
- Implement broad-based training for all WIB members.
- Provide special training initiatives to educate managers of various programs about their responsibilities in the One-Stop system.

- Provide a series of “Primers” for key workforce investment system constituencies including the employer community, educators, and local elected officials.
- Establish education initiatives to familiarize WIBs and frontline staff on how to utilize continuous improvement to enhance services.

Additionally, the SETC with its partners, will sponsor major state-wide conferences in December of 1999 and April of 2000 designed to inform all stakeholders about the various aspects of the workforce investment system with a particular emphasis on delivering high-quality services through the One-Stop Career Centers. It is anticipated that upwards of 1000 people will attend these conferences.

Timetable

Due	Actual	Task
4-1-99	4-1-99	Submission of Strategic Plan
5-30-99	6-4-99	Establishment and Convening of Workgroups to address policy issues: Administrative Data/OSOS Adult Literacy Demand Side Information Funding Individual Training Account Payment System Legal and Regulatory Affairs MOU between WIBs and One-Stop Partners MOU between WIBs and CEOs One-Stop System Vendor Assessment/Evaluation System WIB Membership and Guidelines and Local Planning Instructions Youth Councils
	7-28-99	Strategic Plan Approved by USDOL
7-31-99	7-31-99	Vendor Assessment System – Consumer Report Card
7-31-99	7-31-99	Legal and Regulatory Issues
7-31-99	7-31-99	WIB Membership Guidelines and Local Planning Instructions
7-31-99	7-31-99	Youth Councils
7-31-99	7-31-99	Funding
7-31-99	7-31-99	Demand Side Information
7-31-99	7-31-99	Adult Literacy
8-31-99	8-27-99	Issue MOU template and guidelines
8-20-99	8-20-99	Issue preliminary legislative and regulatory issues report
8-20-99	8-20-99	Update Cabinet on Unified State Plan
9-1-99	9-1-99	Establish Local Planning Process
9-2-99	9-2-99	Core Planning Group Retreat to Review Recommendations
9-30-99		Town meetings on reports
	9-13-99	Southern meeting – Gloucester County College
	9-23-99	Central meeting – Department of Transportation, Trenton
9-30-99	9-30-99	Develop Customer Satisfaction Priorities Issue Policies on: Guidelines and Operating Protocols for One-Stops Criteria for Approval of One-Stops Service Provider List Approval and Maintenance ITA Process Vendor Assessment System Local Planning Instructions Youth Councils Funding Process Demand Side Strategies

10-1-99		Submission of Chapter 1, Part II Start of Local Planning Process Designation of All WIB Areas
11-1-99		Start Training on Services to Targeted Populations
11-15-99		Customer Satisfaction Recommendations
12-1-99		Establish State Youth Council
12-13-99		Conference with Special Sessions: Faith and Community-Based Services – Place in System Focus on Employer’s Place in WIA Focus on Education for One Day
1-1-00		System Measure Implementation of Vendor Assessment System Implementation of One-Stop Operating System Issue Policies for Customer Satisfaction Measures
2-1-00		Preliminary State Youth Council Recommendations
3-31-00		End of Baseline Study for System Measures
4-1-00		WIB Five Year Plan Submission update including: 15% funds and negotiated performance standards, reallocation and transfer procedures State Vendor Approval Process
4-1-00		Issue WIB Certification Instructions
6-15-00		Establishment of 9 Credit Course for Front Line Workers
7-1-00		Full implementation of WIA SETC configuration to be WIA compliant Certification of WIBs Establishment of System Standards Vendor Assessment System State Approved Vendor List Removal Process for Vendors on List Appeal Process for Denial of Approved Vendor Develop Continuous Improvement into Grants Process Annotated Online Resource Directory Consumer Guide in Operation Operating Protocols Established ITA Program in Place and Functioning Link with Tuition Waiver and WDP Programs
7-1-00	7-1-03	Blue Ribbon Panel on Area Designation Recommendations

Appendix 1

SETC Membership under WIA		
<i>Category</i>	<i>Req</i>	<i>Membership</i>
The Governor of a State	1	New
2 members of each chamber of the State legislature	4	George F. Geist, Assemblyman 4 th District Robert Martin, Senator 26 th District New New
(i) representatives of business in the State, who-- (I) are owners of businesses, chief executives or operating officers of businesses, and other business executives or employers with optimum policymaking or hiring authority, including members of local boards described in section 117(b)(2)(A)(i); (II) represent businesses with employment opportunities that reflect the employment opportunities of the State; and (III) are appointed from among individuals nominated by State business organizations and business trade associations;	51%	John Heldrich Robert Bildner, RLB Food Distributors Harold Burlingame, ATT Jerry Cunningham Henry Henderson, HF Henderson Industries Andrea Karsian Frank Lehr, Frank H. Lehr Associates Jody Levinson, Johnson & Johnson Art O'Neal Julio Sabater, Universal Communications Herbert Whitehouse, Whitehouse Law Firm Harriet Hems Wright, JH Wright Construction, Inc. New – Business Organization, e.g. State Chamber New – Business Organization, e.g. NJBIA New - WIB Chair NE New - WIB Chair NW New - WIB Chair C New - WIB Chair S New New New New New New New New New New
(ii) chief elected officials (representing both cities and counties, where appropriate);	2	Robert Prunetti, Mercer County Executive New
(iii) representatives of labor organizations, who have been nominated by State labor federations;	2	Michael Cantwell, Plumbers & Pipefitters Union, Local 9 Stephen Hornik, United Food Local 5 New - State AFL/CIO New
(iv) representatives of individuals and organizations that have experience with respect to youth activities;	2	Dana Berry, Starting Points for Children Brian McAndrew, Monmouth Co. Vocational School
(v) representatives of individuals and organizations that have experience and expertise in the delivery of workforce investment activities , including chief executive officers of community colleges and community-based organizations within the State;	2	Rev. William Linder, New Community Corporation Carol Novrit, Morris/Sussex/Warren WIB Harvey Nutter, Opportunities Industrialization Centers New - Gail Mellow, Gloucester Co. College
(vi)(I) the lead State agency officials with responsibility for the programs and activities that are described in section 121(b) and carried out by one-stop partners; and (II) in any case in which no lead State agency official has responsibility for		Mel Gelade, Commissioner DOL Michele Guhl, Commissioner DHS David Hespe, Commissioner DOE Jane Kenny, Commissioner DCA Gualberto Medina, Secretary and CEO, Commerce &

such a program, service, or activity, a representative in the State with expertise relating to such program, service, or activity; and		Economic Growth Commission James Sulton, Executive Director, Commission on Higher Education
vii) such other representatives and State agency officials as the Governor may designate, such as the State agency officials responsible for economic development and juvenile justice programs in the State.		New - Executive Director EDA New – Executive Director NJ Transit or Department of Transportation

Appendix 2

ONE-STOP PROTOCOLS

Introduction

The vision of the One-Stop Career system is to provide comprehensive services in a seamless, integrated and efficient manner to both employers and job-seekers. The success of the One-Stop system will lie in the quality of services delivered by knowledgeable and trained staff.

The attached charts detail a sequence of services, not a customer flow. This allows for optimal flexibility in the delivery of services to meet the individual needs of all customers. The charts show the inter-relationship between services and also between the customer and the system. Value-added benefits from the initial interaction with the individual will ensure the overall success and use of the system.

Incorporated into this flow of services are activities funded through all One-Stop partners. Services have been organized according to the terms core, intensive and training services, as defined by the Workforce Investment Act.

Employer/Training Provider Outreach

The development of a marketing plan targeted to employers would create awareness that the One-Stop system is the “One-Stop Center for employers seeking employees.” In addition, employers will obtain information about the system and available services through interaction with their local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). Ideally, employers will be able to access the system electronically, (placing job orders, updating information regarding employment and training opportunities and making matches), through Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN), America’s Job Bank (AJB) and America’s Talent Bank (ATB). Performance data on training providers will be available to employers as well as customers through the consumer report card that will be available via the Internet.

One-Stop staff will assist employers in the development of specific job orders that will provide the One-Stop staff with the necessary information required to appropriately match a job-seeker to a job. The staff will be responsible for reviewing orders and following up with employers to determine if their needs were met. If the job order continues to be vacant, the staff will aid in further searches. Ideally, the employer will obtain employees and continue to use the system.

As noted by the service flow chart for employers (at the end of this Appendix), New Jersey is designing a comprehensive approach to meet the needs of businesses as well as individuals.

Job-Seeker Outreach

The potential job-seeker may become acquainted with One-Stop services through a variety of ways. Advertisements will be in diverse locations and venues in high traffic areas, such as billboards at sports arenas and on highways. Commercials on local television stations and advertisements on NJ Transit and in local newspapers, magazines and newsletters will also be utilized. Brochures detailing One-Stop services will be available in libraries, supermarkets and other public locations.

The Department of Labor is taking the lead in the marketing of the One-Stop system. It is currently in the process of redesigning the web page and renaming WNJPIN as New Jersey One-Stop, making it user-friendly. An advertising firm has been hired to create and oversee all marketing activities, ensuring consistency.

Self-Service

The One-Stop offices will be directly linked to the Internet via WNJPIN making it virtually a 24- hour, self-service system from any personal computer. Job-seekers and employers using the Internet will have access to employment statistics, program performances, availability of support services, UI claims information, labor market information, AJB and ATB. Employers may search resumes of qualified job-seekers for available positions. Job-seekers may directly register for career counseling to determine eligibility for intensive services or training. If the customer does not have a computer at home, they are available at a number of sites in each county for self-service activities.

Core Services

- Orientation and intake to One-Stop system
- Eligibility, career assessment
- Outreach and programs for special populations
- Job search and placement
- Support services
- Referral to training
- Filing for unemployment, welfare and food stamps and student aid.

Registration and Orientation (Triaging)

Customers may enter the One-Stop Career system through a number of avenues. The customer may access through a personal computer, or may walk in to a One-Stop site looking for basic information or may be referred from a community-based organization, a school-to-career program, the Rapid Response Team, or the Reemployment Call-In Center (RCC). TANF recipients are also referred to the One-Stop System. Initial orientation to the One-Stop system will take place by providing general information and distributing a customer Bill of Rights to every individual. This will clearly state the levels

and quality of service that the customer can expect from the One-Stop system. Scheduling of other services may also occur at this level.

The registration process will eventually be through a common intake system that is shared by all One-Stop programs. General information will be asked of the customers to first assess their needs and then direct them to the most appropriate service. Due to the level of information provided and the importance of this initial stage of assessment, the person performing the registration and orientation tasks must be highly trained and possess superior communication and assessment skills. Assistance, as necessary and by appropriate staff, will also be given in filing claims for Unemployment Insurance, explaining rights, obligations and other services.

Group or individual orientation sessions will be available and will account for any special needs populations, such as the visually or hearing impaired. They are to be offered frequently so as to minimize the waiting period and prevent the creation of lines. These sessions will include a menu/overview of all services and will be presented either by a facilitator or in video format. A sign-in log will be collected and entered into the system to begin tracking delivered services.

Career Assessment

Individuals may choose to take advantage of career assessment services in the One-Stop. At this point, more detailed information about the customer might be gathered including: a review of skill levels, apparent barriers to employment, job history and overall qualifications. This information will be used to better direct the individual to placement assistance, career counseling, and/or referral to support services. Assistance with resume writing, in addition to workshops on job search skills, will also be available. Resumes can be posted on America's Talent Bank and America's Job Bank if desired by the customer.

The system will allow for as much flexibility as needed to meet the needs of every customer. If it is apparent early in the interview that the customer is in need of intensive services or training, the professional may send that customer directly into intensive or training services. This will ensure that the individual receives the most beneficial services as soon as possible. Initial eligibility determination will be made at this level.

Placement Assistance

If the customer requires assistance in searching for a job and obtaining employment, the individual may benefit from placement assistance. One-Stop Staff will match job-seekers to job orders. The One-Stop system can serve as an initial screening process for the employer, recommending qualified candidates for each job order. In other instances, the job developer can provide all the necessary information to the job-seeker about jobs that match the person's skills and goals, and aid in arranging interviews. As

part of the overall evaluation of the System's effectiveness, a follow-up survey or interview may be conducted.

Career Counseling

More in-depth career counseling will be available to all customers seeking employment or training assistance. Examples of individuals who might require this type of counseling include, but are not limited to, those in the process of a job change, those desiring additional skills, those recently laid off, or those who have been historically unable to sustain employment. This process will assess what customer needs and how to address specific barriers to employment goals.

Support Services

These services refer to specific activities that are needed to address additional barriers to employment that may be impeding the customer from obtaining or sustaining employment. Examples of such barriers are care-giving responsibilities or physical disabilities. The One-Stop staff will assist customers in contacting agencies that will provide additional services, such as rehabilitative services, childcare, transportation assistance, or mental health services.

Follow-up

One of the main components of the One-Stop system is continual improvement through customer feedback. This is equally important as any of the core or intensive services. Following up on all delivered services will involve the coordination of System staff as a whole, from the local to state level. This will be done through a variety of customer satisfaction surveys and data collection methods, requiring a state-wide approach. Protocols will include expectations of One-Stop staff in guaranteeing the implementation of changes based on gathered information.

Intensive Services

- Case management
- Comprehensive specialized assessment
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Individual employment plans (IEP)
- Short-term pre-vocational services and group counseling.

Case Management

Case management in its broadest sense ensures the comprehensive transmission of information at every stage of interaction with the One-Stop system. Ideally, this process will begin with the individuals' initial one-on-one contact at career assessment during which a client profile is created. The determination to refer someone to intensive services must to be made with careful consideration of the person's needs. Case

management in intensive services may involve linking a customer with a specific organization that provides case management where appropriate.

Case management may also include the development of a plan for long term intensive services or a reassessment of employment strategies. This will include an action plan with any counseling and additional services that are required to meet barriers. The individual may be recommended to other core or intensive services as decided with the assistance of a trained staff member.

Comprehensive Specialized Assessment

The comprehensive specialized assessment reviews the information in the career development folder and all previous employment efforts. Assessment tools will include academic testing such as basic skills tests, an inventory of interests, evaluations of learning disabilities and medical tests and other specialized procedures. Test results will be interpreted in a one-on-one meeting with the customer and the staff member. They will then decide how to continue to meet the needs of the customer by recommending one, all or any combination of the following: participating in a training program; returning to any of the core services; developing an Individual Employment Plan (IEP), or obtaining individual counseling and/or career counseling

Referral to Training

The primary goal is to find a job for every customer. However, if the customer has a career goal or is interested in entering a new labor demand field that requires additional education and training, the individual may be referred to a training program pending an eligibility determination. Eligibility for state and federal tuition programs will also be determined. The customer will then be able to choose a training program most appropriate to meet her/his needs. The One-Stop staff will continually monitor the individual once placed in training to ensure progress in the program. The training providers will be evaluated to ensure that they are meeting set standards. Customer satisfaction surveys will assess the success of the One-Stop counseling, training program, and overall satisfaction of provided services.

Individual Counseling and Career Planning

Individual counseling and career planning will be available to assist the individual in making occupational choices, career changes or adjustments. If necessary, an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) will be created in a one-on-one meeting, assessing and measuring interests, aptitudes, labor market skills and other barriers to employment. Administration of any required tests aiding the process will be done appropriately certified staff. It will identify goals, objectives, time frames and funding sources. The customer may be monitored to see that he or she is progressing according to the agreed upon plan. Ideally, this is to help focus the customer on the best way to obtain and retain a job that will lead to economic self-sufficiency.

Short-Term Pre-Vocational Services /Group Counseling

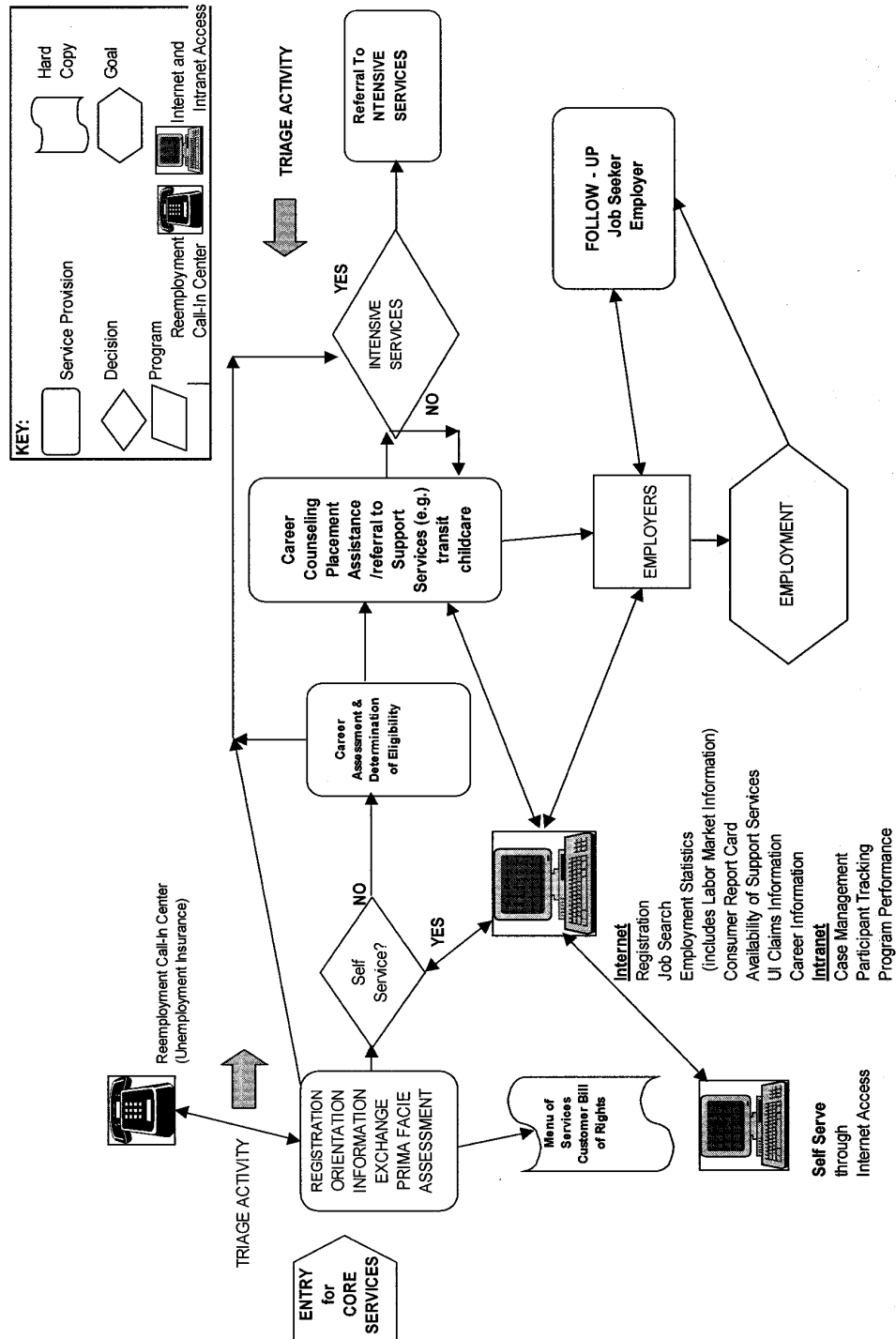
The customer may also require short-term pre-vocational services, which are defined as the skills required to prepare the customer for the work environment. This includes work-ready skills such as punctuality, adjusting for travel time, proper attire, communicating with supervisors and colleagues and basic customer service.

The person may also require specialized group counseling, such as drug and alcohol rehabilitation and workshops on employability skills. Support groups reinforcing work-readiness skills will be available for the customer. It will provide opportunities to react and reflect on their new work experiences with those in similar situations.

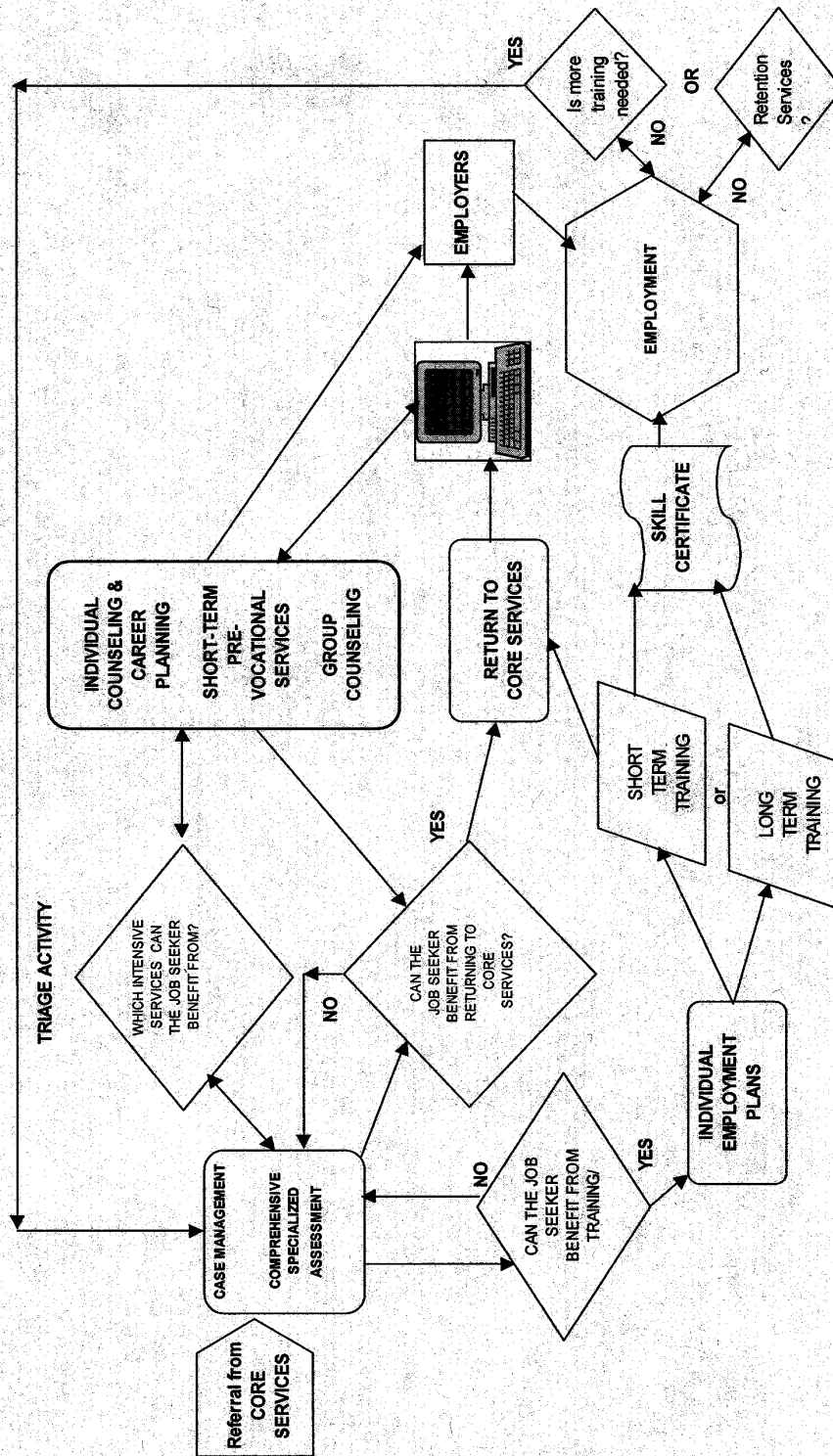
Return to Core Services

When a job seeker has completed any of the intensive services, the individual may return to any one of the core services. When the individual has acquired necessary skills and/or written an appropriate resume, it should be posted on WNJPIN/ATB. This will link the customer to employers in order to make a job match to attain employment as soon as possible, whether they are obtaining core or intensive services. The goal is sustainable employment and economic self-sufficiency for all our customers.

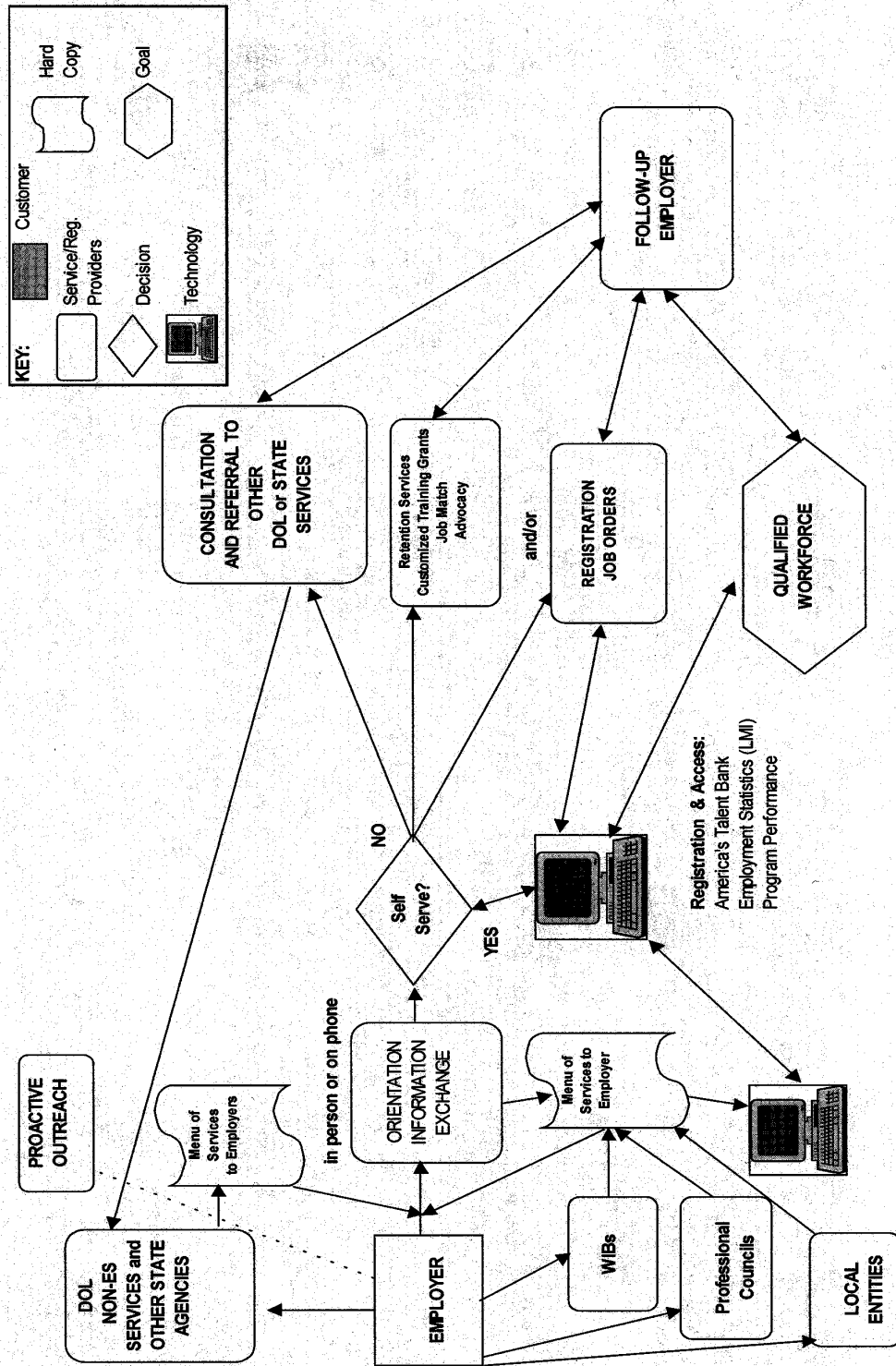
PROPOSED ONE-STOP CORE SERVICES



PROPOSED ONE-STOP INTENSIVE AND TRAINING SERVICES



PROPOSED ONE-STOP SERVICES for EMPLOYERS



Appendix 3

ONE-STOP CRITERIA

One of the tasks assigned to the One-Stop Career system work group was to develop One-Stop Guidelines. After several meetings and considerable discussion the group agreed on the following guidelines to supplement Federal guidance for New Jersey's One-Stops.

Establishment of the One-Stop System

New Jersey has been in the process of implementing a One-Stop system for the past four years. During this time, the state and local areas have generated guidance on required partners of the system, the formation of One-Stop teams, local system building and other issues related to the development of the local system. For the past 18 months, the One-Stop Technical Assistance sessions have been working to define levels of service and criteria necessary for designation as part of the One-Stop system.

Building upon the work of the Technical Assistance sessions, the One-Stop Work Group discussed and proposed a set of minimum service criteria that will be applied to all members of the One-Stop system. During work group discussions, it became clear that New Jersey had to define expectations for the One-Stop system beyond what is contained in Federal law and regulation.⁴

In addition, the work group discussed possible scenarios regarding the number and capacity of One-Stop "sites" in each local area. Each local WIB area is required to have at least one physical core site. Of course, depending on the area, a WIB One-Stop committee may recommend more than one core site in that area. Additionally, there are a number of agencies that are attached to the system that do not have the capacity to be a core site. These agencies can be, at the discretion of the WIB, members of the local system providing they meet the criteria outlined below and in the federal law.

New Jersey has established the following additional criteria:

1. Any entity desiring to participate in the delivery of services in the One-Stop system can be a member of the system if the entity agrees to enter into a MOU to provide services in accordance with the established minimum service criteria for job seeking and employer customers and the established state standard operating procedures for delivery of core and intensive services.
2. Members of the system must agree to provide access to New Jersey's Internet site and must agree to use America's Job Bank and America's Talent Bank.

⁴ Section 121 of the Workforce Investment Act and Part 662 of the accompanying Federal Regulations provides guidance for the establishment of a One-Stop system. Local areas should consult these sources.

3. Members of the system must be able to provide information about the system and demonstrate connectivity within the system to implement New Jersey's "no wrong door" policy.
4. Partners identified as "additional partners" in the law and regulations must be considered as required partners if they operate in the area.
5. Entities representing more than one required partner count as a single entity for purposes of selecting a One-Stop operator.
6. One-Stops must agree to provide the following minimum services to job-seeking customers:
 - The system must be accessible to all job-seeking customers throughout the workforce investment area in a manner consistent with State and Federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements. This may include electronic/automated methods of accessibility.
 - Information and services must be easily accessible to all job-seeking customers in a manner consistent with State and Federal Equal Employment Opportunity requirements.
 - The system must be organized to address the individual needs of job seeking customers on a case by case basis.
 - Services shall be tailored to meet the job seeking customer's employment needs, including labor market information, common intake and eligibility determination for workforce training and services, assessment of needs, continuous and centralized case management, individual referral to education and skill training and supportive services, including child care, with the objective of job placement.
 - Each job seeking customer is provided access to information about current employment prospects for the occupation being considered, the wage level for those that have completed training programs for that occupation, and recent performance information on training providers in the area. Written information provided on request.
 - Multiple methods are in place to provide information that is explained to and understood by the job seeking customer about access to all services, included in the customer's Bill of Rights.
 - The system has available staff with knowledge of all required programs and services with the combined expertise to deliver all required programs and services.

- The system has tiered service capability (levels of increased intensity of service) tailored to the individual job seeking customer's needs. The system's design and customer flow facilitates customer choice.
- The system has standard operating procedures in place to assure timely and efficient movement within the system.
- The system has a resource area that offers access to WNJPIN and other information on occupational choices, demand occupations, jobs, and on other services available in the community.
- The system has adequate staff and has developed clear lines of responsibility and authority.

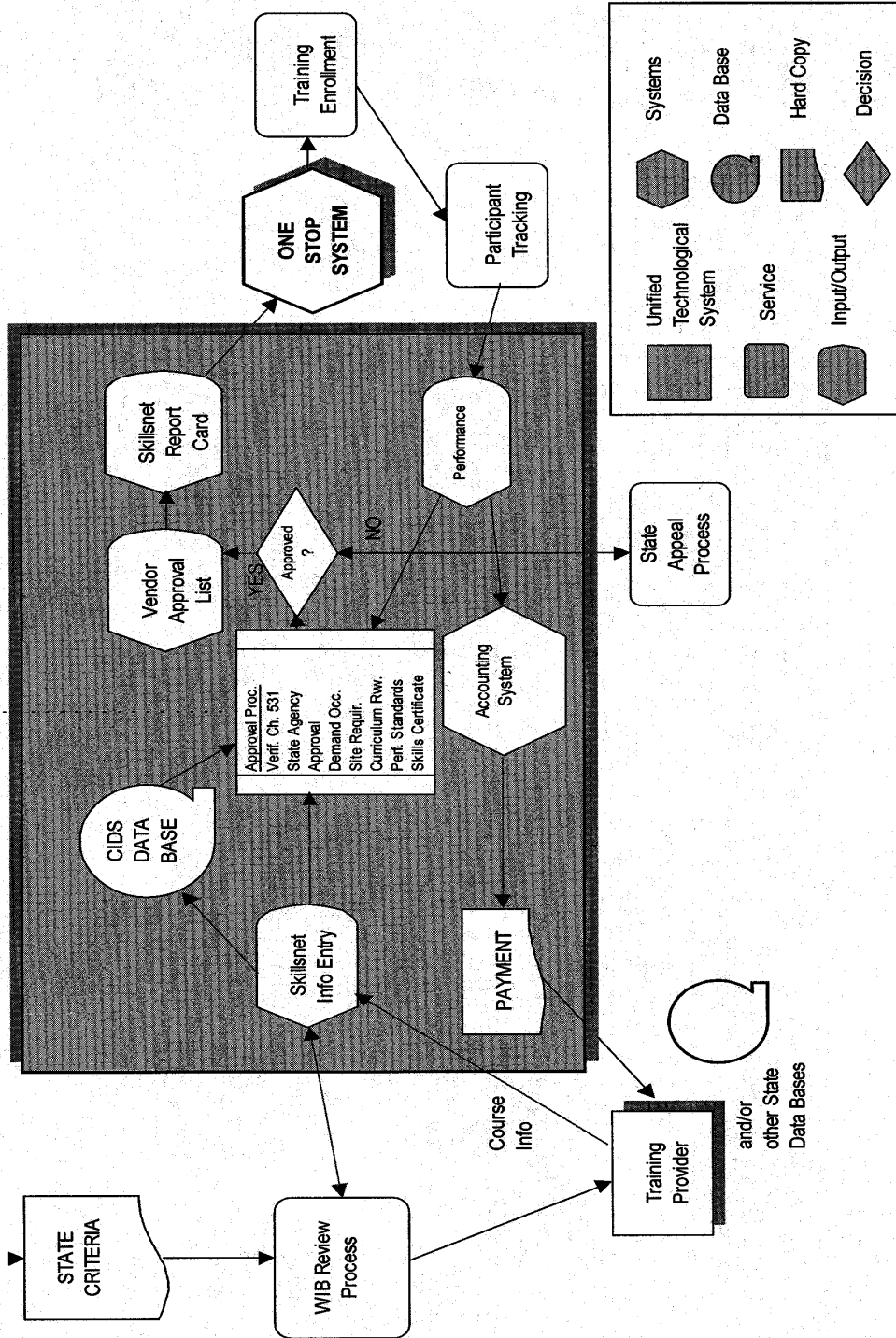
7. One-Stops must agree to provide the following minimum services to employer customers:

- Labor market information, including information about people looking for jobs, is made available to employer customers in multiple formats, such as New Jersey's Internet site (WNJPIN or NJ One-Stop).
- The system offers recruitment, testing, screening, and referral to qualified applicants via America's Talent Bank (ATB) for the employer customer's current or anticipated job openings.
- With the focus of improving the quality of the workforce, saving jobs and improving the productivity of companies, information is available about and access may be provided to:

Skill and aptitude testing for current employees.
 Referral to task analysis and job restructuring/upgrading assistance.
 Referral to education and training services for new and incumbent workers.
 Assistance in making reasonable accommodations to meet State and Federal Equal Opportunity requirements.

- The system assists employer customers with Federal and State employment laws.
- Employer customers will be provided with and understand information detailing available services, and will receive an employer customer's Bill of Rights.
- Information and assistance is provided to employer customers in designing and providing employer-operated work and family support programs (e.g., dependent care, flexible work scheduling).

Vendor Approval and Performance Process



Appendix 5

GUIDELINES FOR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

Overview

On May 12, 1995, Governor Whitman signed Executive Order 36 which formally established local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) as an integral part of New Jersey's workforce investment system.

WIBs plan and coordinate existing federal, state and local workforce investment policies and programs into a One-Stop system that can deliver needed services in response to the local and regional labor market. The One-Stop system brings together all workforce investment programs and services in concert with the State's overall economic development strategy so that all applicable resources are combined and each of the One-Stop partners contributes to the fullest.

In New Jersey, Workforce Investment Boards established under Executive Order 36 will be considered as Workforce Investment Boards as required by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

Workforce Investment Boards are local partnerships of private and public sector participants that will provide coordinated planning, policy guidance and oversight for all workforce investment programs in their designated area. The local plans they produce are consistent with the State's overall *A Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System* developed by the State Employment and Training Commission. WIBs fulfill the next logical step in the implementation of a state-based, locally delivered workforce investment system. That step is being taken based on the core principles of New Jersey's workforce investment policies as stated in the *Unified State Plan*:

- § A successful system must be consumer-based and market-driven and, therefore, relevant to the needs of the employer;
- § The true measures of success of the workforce development system must be the duration of employment and the wages paid to the graduates of programs;
- § Attainment of fundamental levels of literacy and basic skills lies at the heart of the workforce investment system; and,
- § There must be full utilization of all potential workers.

WIBs do not operate programs or approve expenditures. They do, however, influence both program management and resource allocation by analyzing local needs and opportunities and then coordinating federal, state and local resources to achieve defined goals under the WIB plan. Although WIBs influence the allocation of funding, each participating department of government will maintain statutory responsibility for its programs under existing federal, state and local statutes and regulations.

The WIBs serve as a mechanism to communicate local priorities to responsible state and local governmental agencies to influence the allocation of workforce investment resources. At the core of this system of shared authority is a partnership among the various levels of government, the public and private sectors and citizens to develop a common approach, creating a world class workforce investment system for New Jersey.

WIBs are responsible for developing a local system that reflects the needs of both local employers and job seekers. Given the enormity of this responsibility, WIBs must be able to draw on a wide array of talent to bring about the most creative and innovative methods for meeting this challenge. Therefore, WIBs must be diverse groups that represent the characteristics of the local area. Appointments to the WIB should be made with particular attention to gender, race and ethnicity as Chief Elected Officials seek qualified individuals from the community.

WIB Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities, including those in Executive Order 36, section 6, are to:

- § Assess the labor market and develop a local strategic plan to optimize federal, State and local workforce investment resources within their boundaries;
- § Address the concerns of traditionally marginalized populations such as women and minorities, who constitute the majority of new entrants to the workforce by developing specific plans and activities to serve these populations;
- § Act to influence both program management and resource allocation by analyzing local needs and opportunities and coordinating federal, state and local resources to achieve defined goals;
- § Design a consolidated workforce investment plan to replace the current separate plans developed for each applicable federal, state and locally funded program; and,
- § Establish a marketing and development strategy to ensure the local community is aware of the purpose and functions of the Workforce Investment Board.

In addition, WIBs are responsible for fulfilling those duties outlined by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 for local workforce investment boards.

WIB Membership

The WIB is an alliance between the public and private sectors with an emphasis on business leadership. Testimony at public hearings was instrumental in developing this inclusive design for WIB membership. A majority of WIB members are drawn from the private sector and a minimum of 15% are from organized labor and community-based organizations. To fulfill the membership requirements, WIBs are permitted to assign dual roles to individual members who fit more than one membership category. WIBs may confer honorary or special membership status on individuals whose participation would enhance the WIB. This may include, but not be limited to, members who formerly represented a specific organization, but no longer officially fulfill that role.

The chief elected official of each area, with full consideration of the needs of the municipalities they represent, appoints WIB members for terms which are both fixed and staggered. Continued membership is subject to reconsideration. Chief elected officials are encouraged to participate in WIB meetings in order to more fully develop, strengthen and enrich the partnership between themselves and the WIBs. At the discretion of the local area, chief elected officials may take the further step of appointing themselves or their representative to the WIB.

While the formal WIB membership is designed to offer representation to relevant agencies at the decision-making table, other interested parties may participate through the committee structure, work groups, task forces and other mechanisms provided by the WIB. Presidents of four-year colleges or universities and juvenile justice representatives, among others, should participate, whether on the WIB or one of its committees. It is important to remember that the WIB is a vehicle for establishing broad-based consensus at the local level. WIBs are expected to reflect the gender, race and ethnic composition of the customer community. A description of efforts to ensure such broad representation should be included with the submission of WIB membership lists to the State Employment and Training Commission for certification. The State Employment and Training Commission will certify WIB membership once every two years on behalf of the Governor. Instructions to gain certification will be issued by April 1, 2000 and WIBs are expected to be certified before July 1, 2000.

The membership of the WIB will include:

- \$ Business/Private Sector (majority of membership)
- \$ Community-Based Organizations & Organized Labor (minimum 15%, equally divided between the categories)
- \$ The County Economic Development Agency or appropriate Municipal Economic Authorities
- \$ County Vocational/Technical Schools
- \$ County Superintendent of Schools
- \$ County Board of Social Services
- \$ Workforce New Jersey Manager⁵
- \$ Community or County College
- \$ Local Human Services Advisory Council Director/Coordinator or Chair
- \$ Representative from Vocational Rehabilitation
- \$ One-Stop Operator
- \$ Adult Education/Literacy Representative from either Local Education Agency sponsored or other major publicly funded programs
- \$ Abbott School Superintendent, or where there is no Abbott School District, a Superintendent from a K-12 School system. A representative of the appropriate

⁵ This individual represents Wagner-Peyser activities in the WIB area as well as Unemployment Insurance activities.

school district may substitute for the school superintendent.⁶

In an effort to achieve more diversity among appointees from public agencies, chief elected officials may choose to appoint an individual who has substantial policy-making authority within the organization or agency.

Business and industry sector (majority of membership):

Business members who are involved and committed to viewing the workforce system as a whole are necessary in the development of an effective, strategic workforce system design. The WIB gives businesses a forum where they can ensure that their workforce needs are met by a system that is market driven. The Chair of the WIB is selected from among representatives of the business community. Business membership should be drawn from the following groups:

- § Owners, chief executives or chief operating officers of businesses, and other business executives with optimum policy-making or hiring authority,
- § Private sector members of college and school boards,
- § Personnel Managers or Human Resource Directors of major companies.

Business and industry (private sector) representatives on the board are selected by the chief elected official(s) after consulting with business organizations and community leaders in the area. Private sector members must represent the industrial and demographic composition of the business community. Whenever possible, at least one-half should be from small business (500 employees or less) including minority and women owned business. Representatives of proprietary schools may not be selected as business members of the WIB.

Organized labor and Community-Based Organizations (minimum 15 % to be equally divided between the categories):

Labor representatives on the board are selected from individuals recommended by recognized state and local labor federations. Efforts are to be made to select individuals who have been active in apprenticeship programs, including the Apprenticeship Advisory Committee and individuals who serve in an advisory capacity for College or School Boards. The Community Action Agency must be included in this category.

Representatives from Community-Based Organizations should exemplify the population of the area and serve the needs of special populations, such as:

- § Organizations serving individuals with disabilities
- § Adult literacy groups

⁶ It is expected that the County Superintendent of School will work with the WIB to develop a process for selecting the appropriate individual in those areas where there are multiple Abbott District. The WIB may, with the concurrence of the County Superintendent of Schools, develop a special Abbott District or K-12 advisory committee to the WIB that can substitute for formal membership on the WIB.

- § Community Action Agencies
- § Displaced Homemaker Centers
- § Veterans' Organizations

Continuous membership requires renomination at the expiration of a representative's term on the WIB.

Other Individuals:

The chief elected official has the right to appoint other individuals or representatives of entities or other providers of education, employment and training services as they may determine to be appropriate. Chief elected officials may wish to consider appointments from agencies concerned with housing, transportation, child care and other related issues. Where applicable, it may also be appropriate to consider including individuals responsible for the administration of urban enterprise zones.

The State and Employment Training Commission (SETC) will review and the Commissioner of Labor will approve the composition of each WIB. The approval process will allow for flexibility in the specific membership arrangements decided at the local level.

City-Based WIBs:

To meet the membership requirements of the WIB, city-based WIBs must include representatives from the County College, the County Superintendent of Schools and the Vocational-Technical School as well as any other required membership from a county-based entity.

Multi-County WIBs:

To meet the membership requirements of the WIB, it may be necessary for multi-county entities to rotate membership among specific institutions and programs. However, the county college, the County Superintendent of Schools and the vocational-technical School from each county within the WIB geographic area must be represented. To assure the broad-based participation that WIBs require, functional committees related to specific industries may be utilized.

WIB Organization

The WIB must have the following two committees:

Youth Councils: The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 requires each local WIB to establish a Youth Council. Guidelines for the establishment of these councils, their mission and function are described in Appendix 9.

One-Stop Implementation Team: The local team must include a representative from each of the One-Stop partners as described in New Jersey's Implementation grant proposal and in the Workforce Investment Act. New Jersey required the establishment of One-Stop teams in 1997. These teams fulfill the need for representation on the WIB from each One-Stop partner and have the added effect of providing regular and consistent guidance to the local system. These individuals must be in positions with decision-making authority. Their purpose is to continue with the implementation of the One-Stop system, bringing all of the participants together at the local level. One-Stop teams are responsible for identifying the flow of services within the local system and for implementing a team approach to the management of the One-Stop system. While the team is responsible for providing continual oversight and evaluation, the purpose of these functions is to ensure continuous improvement of the system and enhance the quality of services to customers. Because of the composition of the team, it has unique authority to guide and direct the operations of the local system.

WIBs will create an organizational structure to fulfill their planning and workforce policy-making responsibilities in the following areas:

Leadership/Planning: Developing policy recommendations for the overall strategic workforce plan and ensuring continuity of the WIBs' mission in all areas.

Economic Development: Work closely with city, county and state economic development agencies, as well as business leadership, to develop policy recommendations which will coordinate and strengthen all economic development in the WIB area. This responsibility includes developing a strong partnership with local Business Service Representatives from the NJ Department of Labor and other field staff from state agencies who are responsible for making direct contacts with local businesses.

Labor Market Information Exchange: Identify information available, identify information that is needed but not readily available, and develop a methodology to obtain the additional information, disseminate information to users of the system and develop a profile of current and future workforce skill needs. WIBs must also participate in the development of the State Employment Statistics program.

Marketing and Communications: Develop and implement a marketing strategy to clearly communicate the mission, goals and strategy of the WIB and the local One-Stop system to the community at large, in coordination with New Jersey Department of Labor marketing efforts.

Resource Analysis: Review all publicly-funded programs with the ultimate goal of collecting and analyzing sufficient data to direct funding to systems and programs where they will most effectively serve the customers of the workforce investment system.

Literacy: Review all literacy programs and services in the area and make recommendations to better serve the customers.

Other Responsibilities

Other responsibilities to be addressed by the WIB include: administrative functions to ensure that organizational requirements are met; capacity building to support the WIB in the development of staff expertise and member understanding of role and responsibility; a strategy to evaluate the current workforce investment system; and, a strategy for evaluation of how well programs meet the local labor market needs.

WIBs are currently responsible for planning and oversight of welfare-to-work activities. Specific guidelines were previously issued by the SETC regarding the establishment of welfare-to-work subcommittees, their composition and function. WIBs must continue to ensure that these responsibilities will be met under the WIB organizational structure.

WIBs are encouraged to establish subcommittees to deal with issues specific to an individual county or, where appropriate, of a municipality. These subcommittees can be formed, for instance, to respond to a particular county-based or city-based economic development issue that requires targeted workforce policies.

WIBs will impartially represent the interests of each participating agency while developing a system that gets resources to the people who need them. WIBs will have the responsibility of assessing the local labor market and examining programs carefully, to determine if they are relevant in today's job market. Customer service, common intake and assessment, uniform administrative procedures and performance standards, job counseling, mentoring, case management, skill assessment, ease of access and other issues are to be explored with full consideration of all local assets and performance.

Governance

As provided in Executive Order 36, sections 10 and 11, the Commissioner of Labor will act on behalf of the Governor in areas related to workforce investment programs including requesting, accepting and directing the allocation of federal and state funds; assuring that the State is in compliance with all related federal laws and providing for corrective actions when necessary, and resolving disputes arising under these programs. The Commissioner will also coordinate activities with affected Departments, which will maintain statutory authority over programs within their jurisdiction. Guided by Executive Order 36, section 13, the Commissioners of the Departments of Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs, Education, Human Services and Labor will direct workforce investment resources under their auspices in a manner consistent with the development of a unified workforce investment system.

WIB membership composition will meet the guidelines developed by the SETC, which ensures representation from the local business, education, labor, economic development and training interests in the area. The WIBs will direct their efforts to the general oversight and coordination of all workforce investment programs within their jurisdiction.

WIB oversight of the local workforce investment system will be based on the consistency of local programming with the Unified State Plan and the WIB plan. WIBs will not directly allocate funds to individual programs.

The WIB will oversee the local system, including the One-Stop system, for problems and recommend corrective action. In the event the WIB is unable to resolve local problems, it will report these issues to the SETC. The SETC, through its Planning Committee, will report system performance to the Commissioner of the Department of Labor and make recommendations for resolution.

Chief elected officials, working in partnership with WIBs, retain their responsibility for fiscal oversight and accountability. Established auditing procedures will continue to ensure that the larger WIB plan is fiscally responsible and efficient.

The involvement of County Government is vital to the success of the WIB system. County Government is responsible for administering a significant portion of the funding for the key workforce development agencies, most notably the county colleges and county vocational-technical schools as well as for welfare programs.

The Commissioner of Labor will provide administrative support for the WIB system, while the SETC will provide state level policy guidance and best practices direction for each system.

There will continue to be State level monitoring and auditing of resources and evaluation of programs based on statutory responsibilities. The Commissioners and the SETC retain their statutory responsibility for any corrective action that may be necessary as prescribed by their respective statutes.

Dispute Resolution

WIBs must have a dispute resolution process to address issues prior to litigation. Appeals may be made directly to the Commissioner of Labor. The Commissioner of Labor will establish such procedures as are necessary to review the claims of an aggrieved party. Disputes concerning specific statutory programs continue to be subject to the procedures set forth in those programs.

Appendix 6

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS AND CHIEF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Guidelines

Introduction

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), in areas designated as Workforce Investment Areas pursuant to Section 116 of the Workforce Investment Act, P.L. 105 - 220, must enter into a formal agreement prior to approval of the local plan. The work of this committee produced the following instructions for the creation of an agreement between the WIBs and the CEOs.

Instructions

These instructions describe the expected content of that agreement.

- The agreement should identify the functions to be performed by the WIB and the functions performed by the CEO.

The following chart describes the respective roles of the CEO and WIB under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). It can be used to help determine the appropriate amount of funds to be used by the WIB. The bulk of administrative costs are WIB costs.

WIB	Chief Elected Official
Preparing budgets	Approving budgets
Preparing program plans in partnership with CEO	Preparing program plans in partnership with WIB
Negotiating MOUs	Agreeing to MOUs
Negotiating performance levels with agreement of the CEO	Negotiating performance levels with agreement of the WIB
Selecting One-Stop operators with agreement of the CEO	Selecting One-Stop operators with agreement of the WIB
Coordinating audit resolution and incident reports	Administration of grant funds
Negotiating contracts and purchase orders	Disbursal of funds at the direction of the WIB
Oversight in partnership with the CEO	Oversight in partnership with the WIB
Public relations activities	-
Developing systems/procedures including information systems	-

- The agreement must identify who will employ WIB staff and should address their rights, benefits and privileges.
- The agreement must address how funds will be used.
- It should stipulate that all funds specifically designated by the Governor, the Commissioner of Labor or their designee as being for the specific use of the WIB including transition funds, be provided to the WIB consistent with the budget developed by the WIB.
- It must identify the portion of Workforce Investment Act funds to be provided to the CEO to fulfill responsibilities as the grant recipient and the portion of funds provided the WIB to fulfill its responsibilities as the entity responsible for providing planning, oversight and policy guidance to the local One-Stop Workforce Investment system.
- The agreement should state that no part of the agreement should be construed to limit or otherwise infringe upon the WIB or the CEO's ability to exercise options available under the WIA or the regulations.
- The agreement should acknowledge that WIBs may be required to participate in regional arrangements for labor market information, planning and delivery of services.
- The agreement should specify an effective date and a termination date or that it will continue until mutually modified or terminated.
- The agreement must be signed by the CEO and the WIB Chairperson. If the area consists of more than one unit of local government, the units must execute a prior agreement to decide who will sign this agreement in accordance with WIA section 117(c)(1)(B).
- Copies of agreements must be sent to:

Henry Plotkin, Executive Director
 State Employment and Training Commission
 PO Box 940
 Trenton, NJ 08625

Appendix 7

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS AND ONE-STOP PARTNERS

Guidelines

The following guidelines are based on recommendations from the work group. These guidelines supplement the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act and the Federal regulations. The law and regulations should be consulted in preparing the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU).

The MOU should be written clearly with definitions of terms to avoid misunderstandings. It must be understood that it has the effect of a contract with operational, legal, and fiscal ramifications. Delivery of One-Stop services will be the focus of the MOU. The MOU should be the blueprint that establishes a viable framework from which the local One-Stop partners provide services for job seekers and employers. It should also include minimum services for every client to be provided by all partners. Customer satisfaction should be included as part of the overall performance management. Quality customer service is essential at a One-Stop facility. Local efforts to provide cross training in customer service should also be described in the MOU.

The purpose of a Memorandum of Understanding is to develop an agreement between Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and One-Stop centers to describe comprehensively the interaction and expectations that will take place between clients, staff, and WIB Directors. Success of the One-Stop system can only be achieved through teamwork between all One-Stop agencies and Workforce Investment Boards.

The following outline should be used as a guide when developing local memoranda between Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Partners:

Goals

One-Stop will be expected to meet performance standards and each partner will be expected to contribute a fair share. Goals will be distributed in the local plan. Each of the parties must agree to contribute to meeting established goals of the One-Stop.

One-Stop Operator

Identify the One-Stop operator.

One-Stop Partners

Identify the entities entering into the MOU with the WIB. Indicate the funding sources covered by the MOU. *(Each of the One-Stop Partners must agree to their local Workforce Investment Board standards of performance.)*

Provision of Services

Identify the services to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system by the partner. Partners will be expected to deliver services consistent with the service protocols established by the State.

Individual Services

Describe how individuals will be provided appropriate services consistent with state standards and the local plan. It is important that there be a common intake system so that all customers begin the process in the same fashion.

Employer Services

Describe how employers will be provided appropriate services consistent with state standards and the local plan.

Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions

1. The MOU must contain the following Equal Opportunity Assurance: The parties to this agreement and respective staff assure that applicants, claimants, participants of One-Stop programs shall not be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, or belief and, if receiving WIA program benefits, citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I - financially assisted program or activity (Section 188 or WIA and 29CFR Part 37.20 - identifies civil rights laws).
2. Parties to this agreement will agree on a single One-Stop Equal Opportunity Officer who will process local complaints of discrimination and attempt to address same as prescribed by 29CFR Part 37, "Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIA."
3. The parties to this agreement will provide "ongoing and continuing notification (29 Part 37.29)" that "Equal Opportunity is the Law." (See attachment) and also provide the same notice in the form of a flyer.
4. The parties to this agreement will abide 29CFR Part; Section 188 of WIA, and, implementing directive issued by the State.

Operating Costs for the Local One-Stop System

Identify how the costs of the services listed above and the operating costs of the One-Stop system will be funded. The MOU should outline each partner's contributions such as supplies and staff.

Duration

Indicate the time frame covered by the MOU.

Procedures for Amending

MOUs may be amended to add or delete partners based on performance outcomes, and/or changes in client needs. Please describe the procedures for amending the MOU and bringing new partners into the One-Stop system. One-Stop partners should be urged not to fail the 13 other partners. Remedial help should be given for One-Stop centers that are not meeting standards and a high level of service.

Performance

Indicate the resource specific performance expectations and how the partner will keep the WIB apprised of progress in meeting these measures.

Signatures

Please include the signatures, typed names, and titles of the individuals who have signature authority for the partner.

Content

The MOU must meet all federal requirements contained in the Law and Regulations. Regulations - Subpart C, 662.300 begins the explanation and description, together with the requirements of the content of an MOU. Sections 662.250 through 662.270 describe certain types of services that must be spelled out in the MOU. WIA - Law requirements regarding MOUs can be found in the following sections: chapter 1, page 17, chapter 2 pages 6-7, 24.

Appendix 8

State Of New Jersey Workforce Investment System Local Planning Instructions

1. Introduction

These instructions are intended to guide New Jersey's Workforce Investment Boards, in partnership with the Chief Elected Official, through a plan development process to create a comprehensive 5-year local plan. The plan must be consistent with the State plan, be the result of a collaborative process and meet all the requirements of Section 118 of the Workforce Investment Act. This plan must also respond to and be consistent with the guidelines for establishing Youth Investment Councils.

The following is the recommended outline for the plan:

1.2. The Workforce Investment Board

This section describes the local WIB, its composition, and how it functions. This section of the plan should:

- Describe the current composition of the WIB and any expected changes to bring it into compliance with guidelines issued by the SETC.
- Identify what specific steps have been taken to ensure a diverse WIB membership.
- Describe, in detail, the respective functions of the WIB and the Chief Elected Official as contained in the WIB-CEO Agreement.
- Identify WIB committees and describe their purpose and functions.
- Describe the role of each of the One-Stop partners in the plan development process.
- Describe the Youth Investment Council, its composition, and its relationship to the WIB. Identify any Abbott Districts in the WIB area and their role in the process.
- Describe how the general public contributed to the development of the plan.

3. Regional Planning

This section should describe efforts beyond the WIB area's boundary for planning, sharing of information or delivery of service.

- Identify projected growth industries and emerging industries in the WIB area and in surrounding WIB areas, including what information and resources were used to identify the industries. Describe how this industry information will be used for program development.
- Identify the skill needs of these industry changes. Identify the information used to identify the skill needs. Describe how this information on skill needs is being used to

structure service delivery in the WIB area and in coordination with surrounding WIB areas. Be as specific as possible in citing current and future activities.

- Summarize the role of each of the following in the plan development process and in WIB and One-Stop operations: Business Service Representatives, Response Team, Labor Market Field Analysts, Customized Training, Department of Human Services Field Representatives, Community Transportation Coordinators, Economic Development agencies and others as appropriate.

4. Needs of the Business Customer

This section of the plan should describe how planning and service delivery reflect and are consistent with New Jersey's demand-side strategy.

- Describe how the workforce needs of employers will be addressed by the One-Stop system.
- Describe the plans for meeting the identified skill needs. Include a discussion of how core, intensive and training services will be adapted to respond to these needs. Identify any specific examples of where this has already occurred. This may include development of new training programs, business-education partnerships, or other efforts.
- Describe how work-based learning programs (including school-to-career initiatives), customized training grants, on-the-job training and work experience training will be used to support employers' needs and the needs of the workforce.
- Describe how incumbent worker training will be used to support business. This might include post-employment training activities or job retention training services.
- Describe how the One-Stop system will interact with employers to provide post-placement services to individuals.

5. Needs of the Individual Customer

This section must address the projected level of need for services in the local area. In describing services to youth, also refer to the Guidelines for Youth Investment Council.

- What is the anticipated need for One-Stop services? This should be described in terms of core, intensive and training services.
- What are the projected needs for pre-employment/job readiness services, education programs (basic skills, English as a Second Language), occupational training?
- Describe the "special participant populations" in greatest need of services. How will the needs of these individuals be met? Will the One-Stop operator be running specialized training programs to serve these individuals?
- Describe the anticipated need for support services such as transportation, childcare, housing, and healthcare. How will these needs be met? What is the relationship between WIB planning and the local/regional plans for these services?

6. Identification and Assessment of Available Resources

- Identify the resources available from all One-Stop partners. A chart is recommended. The funding source, amount of available resources, and projected service levels should be included.
- For each unmet need identified above, include a strategic plan to resolve the problem.

7. One-Stop System Description

This section should describe the One-Stop system in the WIB area. The following must be included in this part of the plan:

- Provide a brief description of the local One-Stop system established for the area. Describe the comprehensive physical center(s) and any other arrangements such as a network of affiliated sites and specialized centers.
- Describe the process for the selection of One-Stop operator(s), including the competitive process used or the consortium partners.
- Provide a description of how resources of all partners will be pooled.
- Identify the members of the One-Stop, their roles and resources.
- Provide a description of the policy and procedures in place to competitively award grants and contracts for activities and services other than ITAs.
- Describe the role of a continuous improvement process in planning, program development, and staff development.
- Describe the role of the local One-Stop team.
- Describe how the One-Stop system will respond to the anticipated needs of job-seekers and workers in the WIB area. Include all core, intensive and training services. How will the State's flowchart of One-Stop services be adapted in the local area?
- Identify how the One-Stop system will address the unique needs of individuals including welfare recipients, dislocated workers, youth, individuals with disabilities, older workers, non-English speaking individuals, displaced homemakers and others identified as having barriers to employment. What special programs are in place in the area to serve any of these target groups? Are there plans for expansion of these efforts? This should include services available through all One-Stop Partners, including Displaced Homemaker Programs, Youth Corps and Americorps.
- What efforts are being made to provide non-traditional training opportunities for individuals? Have initiatives been undertaken to develop non-traditional training for welfare recipients or other targeted populations?
- Identify the projected levels of education and training services to be provided through the workforce investment system in your area. Describe the levels of service using categories such as: remedial education, English as a Second Language, pre-employment skills training, occupational skills training, post placement training and incumbent worker training. Be certain to include the amount of resources that will be spent on ITAs. Use of a chart may be helpful. How will the area prioritize the use of limited training resources?

- How will youth access the One-Stop system? What additional access points will be available? Are there additional services that you will make available to youth to meet their needs?
- Describe expected performance levels for the One-Stop system.

8. Future Plan

Please provide a five year timeline for the implementation of this plan. Modifications to these plans can be submitted quarterly or when there is an indication of significant change but no less than yearly.

9. WIA Performance Standards

Describe the local levels of performance negotiated with the Governor and Chief Elected Official for WIA funded programs. (Further guidance to be issued)

10. Attachments

The following must be attached to the plan:

- WIB-CEO and WIB One-Stop Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs)
- Certifications

11. Instructions

- The plan must be signed by the Chief Elected Official and the WIB Chairperson.
- **Your WIA Local Plan (an original, five copies, and an electronic copy by E-mail or diskette,) is to be submitted to the SETC 5:00 PM on Friday, March 31, 2000.**
- **Your plan and copies should be submitted to:**

Henry Plotkin, Executive Director
**New Jersey State Employment and Training
 Commission**
PO Box 940
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

- Your E-mail should be addressed to Dave Novak at dnovak@dol.state.nj.us.

Local Plan Instructions Arranged In Order of Functional Content

Introduction and Background		
	• Description of WIB (What is it, Membership, How will it Function)	None
	• Description of Youth Council and its Relationship to the WIB	None
	• Planning Process (How WIB Developed Plan - How Input from CEO, Business, Labor, Other Appropriate Groups, Public Comment, etc. was Obtained)	661.350 (a) (8)
	• How is Regional Planning Currently Being Approached	
Administrative Information		
	• Identification of Fiscal Agent/Grant Recipient	661.350 (a) (9)
	• Procurement Process for Service Providers (including ITA exceptions, if any)	661.350 (a) (10)
	• Description of ITA System	661.350 (a) (5)
	• Service Priority Needs Determination Process	661.350 (a) (11)
	• Designation of an Alternate Entity to Function as the WIB	661.350 (a) (12)
Needs of the Business Customer		
	• Local/Regional Labor Market Information and Projections	661.350 (a) (2)
	• Common Workforce Needs Identified By The Business Community	661.350 (a) (1)
	• Skill Needs for Jobs in Demand Occupations	661.350 (a) (1) & (2)
Needs of the Client Customer (In General and by Adult, Youth, Special Populations)		
	• Work Ethics/Pre-Employment Skill Needs	661.350 (a) (1)
	• Academic Skill Needs	661.350 (a) (1)
	• Job Skill Needs	661.350 (a) (1)
	• Support Service Needs (Transportation, Child Care, Substance Abuse, Etc.)	661.350 (a) (1)
Assessment of Available Resources (Other than WIA) - Chart Format by Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker, Other		
	• Provider/Partner Agency	661.350 (a) (5), 6) (7)
	• Funding Source	661.350 (a)(5), 6) & (7)
	• Types of Activities Funds Can Be Used For	661.350 (a)(5), 6) & (7)
	• How Much Funds Available	661.350 (a)(5), 6) & (7)
	• Projected Service Levels	661.350 (a)(5), 6) & (7)
	• Target Population (if Any)	661.350 (a)(5), 6) & (7)
	• How it is to be a Part of One-Stop System or Otherwise Coordinated in System	661.350 (a)(5), 6) & (7)
One-Stop System		
	• General Description - Where Are You At Now, Where Do You Intend to be by June 2000, 2001, etc.	661.350 (a) (3)
	• Partnerships Developed or to be Developed (Append Copies of MOU's)	661.350 (a) (3) (ii)
	• Description of WIA Services to be Funded/Provided (Core-Intensive-Training)	661.350 (a) (3)
	• Priority Populations to be Served	661.350 (a) (11)
	• Performance Expectations	661.350 (a) (3) (iii)
	• Continuous Improvement Plans/Goals for One-Stop System	661.350 (a) (3) (i)
	• Service Flow	
	• Selection of Operators	
Attachments/Addenda/Appendix		
	• Memoranda of Understanding	
	• Assurances and Certification	

GUIDELINES FOR YOUTH INVESTMENT COUNCILS

Definition

The Youth Council is a new feature of the workforce investment system. As mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, the youth council is a sub-committee of the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and accountable to it. To recognize the importance of the term “investment” in the state’s workforce system and to be consistent with the terminology Workforce Investment Board, the proposed youth council shall be known as the *Youth Investment Council* (YIC).

Mission

The Youth Investment Council has specific responsibility for preparing the youth section of the local plan. The YIC will be responsible for setting a clear policy direction in creating employment opportunities and career pathways for all youth, age 14-21 years, whether in or out of school. As noted in the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey’s Workforce Investment System*, the state has determined that special emphasis shall be directed to pregnant teens, high school dropouts/out-of-school youth, and students residing in Abbott districts.

Objective

The Youth Investment Council, under the auspices of the Workforce Investment Board, will plan and oversee each WIB area’s service delivery system for young people in the local geographic area. It is the State’s intention to direct the local YIC to coordinate funding and services and maximize available resources.

The YIC will plan for building a comprehensive service system that will foster youth employment, training, and education policy that, over time, will directly improve career and employment opportunities for, and employability of, all youth. It will foster collaboration and cooperation among all agencies and organizations serving youth as well as employers who hire them, taking into account a range of issues that can have an impact on the success of youth in the labor market. It will develop strategies to ensure that appropriate education, training, employment, and support services are available to all youth as funds are available. The YIC will also be charged with creating the equivalent of a One-Stop for youth that connects with the larger One-Stop system.

Beyond the broad planning agenda for all youth as delineated above, the local plan will respond to WIA requirements for eligible youth. This will include recommending eligible

providers of youth activities to be awarded grants or contracts on a competitive basis, conducting oversight of said providers, and coordinating youth activities authorized under section 129 of WIA.⁷

Eligibility

Although the State is directing WIBs to extend their plans beyond programs and services supported by the Workforce Investment Act, youth being served through WIA funded initiatives should meet the following eligibility criteria as delineated in the law and be:

1. not less than age 14 and not more than age 21;
2. a low-income individual⁸; and,
3. an individual who is defined as one or more of the following:
 - deficient in basic literacy skills,
 - a school dropout,
 - homeless, a runaway, or a foster child,
 - pregnant or a parent,
 - an offender,
 - an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

Furthermore, the YIC will be responsible for assuring that attention is given to certain groups cited in Sec.129.⁹

⁷ Section 129 of WIA authorizes youth activities that

- (1) provide, to eligible youth seeking assistance in achieving academic and employment success, effective and comprehensive activities, which shall include a variety of options for improving educational and skill competencies and provide effective connections to employers;
- (2) ensure on-going mentoring opportunities for eligible youth with adults committed to providing such opportunities;
- (3) provide opportunities for training to eligible youth;
- (4) provide continued supportive services for eligible youth;
- (5) provide incentives for recognition and achievement to eligible youth; and
- (6) provide opportunities for eligible youth in activities related to leadership, development, decisionmaking, citizenship, and community service.

⁸ Section 101.25 of the Workforce Investment Act provides a detailed definition of the term low-income individual.

⁹ Section 129 indicates that at least 30 percent of local funds shall be used to provide activities for out-of-school youth. Furthermore, WIA states that

Not more than 5 percent of participants assisted under this section in each local area may be individuals who do not meet the minimum income criteria to be considered eligible youth, if they fall within one or more of the following categories:

- (A) Individuals who are school dropouts.
- (B) Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Guiding Principles

Youth Investment Councils will:

- Foster employment, training, and education opportunities that improve the career options for all young people.
- Foster collaboration and cooperation among all agencies, employers, providers, educators and individuals with an interest in career and employment opportunities for young people.
- Bring a youth development perspective to the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs).
- Establish linkages with parents, youth and local youth service organizations to include the full range of issues that impact on the success of youths in the labor market.
- Assess community resources targeting the youth population and establish a plan to assist youths in passing entry-level exams or meeting entry-level employment requirements.

Planning Process Youth System Building

The State will ask each Workforce Investment Board, through its YIC, to develop a comprehensive youth services plan for its area. The WIB shall ensure that the council is empowered to accomplish this task. The comprehensive youth services plan will include, at a minimum, the following:

- An assessment of the targeted youth to be served, including an analysis of relevant characteristics of each segment. Targeted youth served with federal workforce investment funds or state funds must meet any applicable eligibility requirements.
- A determination of the size of the targeted population and the number to be served during the planning cycle.
- An inventory of programs and services that are currently in place in the WIB area to serve youth.
- An assessment of how well the supply of programs and services meets the demands of the target population. This assessment should address both availability and quality of programs and services, with an identification of gaps.

-
- (C) Individuals with educational attainment that is one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the age of the individuals.
 - (D) Individuals who are pregnant or parenting.
 - (E) Individuals with disabilities, including learning disabilities.
 - (F) Individuals who are homeless or runaway youth.
 - (G) Individuals who are offenders.
 - (H) Other eligible youth who face serious barriers to employment as identified by the local board.

- An assessment of labor market area employer needs and expectations. All segments of the employer community, including non-profits should be considered.
- A determination of the skill requirements for entry-level jobs and further education.
- A description of how the WIB area will fill the identified gaps in programs and services.
- A description of how entry-level skills and basic literacy competencies (e.g., reading, math, and computer) will be increased so that youth are better equipped to compete in the workforce.
- A strategy to reach and serve youth. The strategy should be consistent with the state plan, which calls for the development of a One-Stop for youth that connects with the larger One-Stop and all its services. Additionally, the plan should discuss how hub(s) will serve as physical locations to connect youth to services and programs through the One-Stop environment and how schools, youth service providers, faith-based and community-based organizations, etc can link to the endeavor.
- A strategy to disperse WIA resources to providers through a competitive process.
- A strategy for conducting oversight of WIA funded programs.
- A description of how volunteers, including youth that have successfully completed programs will be used to mentor and assist youth.
- A description of how design features and program elements, which reflect both WIA and state requirements, will be built into the youth services system. This includes a strategy to incorporate the elements of the three state model programs (Youth Corps, School-to-Careers, and School Based Youth Services) into the local youth service delivery system.
- A description of how incentives will be used to recognize achievement of youth.

Membership

The WIB in cooperation with the chief elected official is responsible for appointments to the YIC. The WIB should assure that membership on the YIC reflects the gender and racial diversity of the WIB area.

The following categories indicate the required representation for the YIC based on state and federal criteria. Where appropriate, members may represent more than one category. However, the actual membership number should be large enough to ensure representation from a broad cross section of stakeholders. Members should be selected based on their interest and/or expertise in youth issues.

Required Representation

WIB Representatives

1. WIB business employer member
2. Employer profit or nonprofit
3. Vocational school superintendent or county superintendent or representative
4. County college president or representative
5. One-Stop operator

Youth Service Agency Representatives

6. Youth Corps
7. School-Based Youth Services
8. Adjudicated youth agencies (e.g., Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Court Probation Services, family courts, local law enforcement, probation, police departments, etc.)
9. Youth Services Commission representative
10. DYFS
11. Faith based and/or Community-based

Local Public Housing Authorities Representatives

12. Public housing authorities

Parents of Eligible Youth Seeking Assistance

13. A parent or a parent advocacy group, may include a single parent or the PTA representative

Individuals and Representatives of Organizations with Experience Relating to Youth

14. Current or former youth program participant
15. Comprehensive school district superintendent (where applicable an Abbott district superintendent) or representative
16. An advocate for youth with disabilities, e.g., the Statewide Parents Advocacy Network (SPAN)

Job Corps Representative

17. Job Corps (as appropriate)

Other

18. Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services
19. Substance/alcohol abuse services agency, e.g., Substance Abuse Coordinator or Drug Alliance
20. A representative from organized labor or an apprenticeship coordinator

Suggested Configuration for Overall Council

In determining the overall size of the YIC, the WIB should consider both the need for broad representation and the importance of selecting a manageable number to achieve the council's agenda. Although the WIB is required to ensure representation from the above categories, The State recommends that the membership of the YIC range from

24-30 representatives. Multi-county WIBs may want to expand their membership to assure equitable representation from each county. A possible solution may be to rotate membership between counties, in the required categories, to achieve a workable size for the WIB. Discretion for determining the overall size of the YIC rests with the WIB. Beyond the required representation, the WIB should consider additional representation from a variety of other organizations, agencies, and groups such as the following:

- Employers
- School-to-Careers Coordinator
- Subsidized housing
- Youth Transition Coordinator
- Adult High School Principal
- Youth Build Director
- Supported employment agency director
- County Transition Coordinator
- Director of county-wide transportation agency
- Advocate for youth of migrant/seasonal farm workers
- Advocate for Immigrant populations
- County Arts Agencies or cultural institutions that operate programs for youth
- DYFS
- A representative from a local Police Department who specializes in juvenile/youth problems
- PAL
- Recreational Department
- Volunteer youth agency (e.g., Big Brothers/Big Sisters)
- Teen parenting/pregnancy agency
- School-based service learning director

Beyond membership on the YIC, this body should seek other avenues to involve and gain input from interested parties. For example, workgroups and subcommittees of the council should reach beyond the YIC and WIB membership to ensure that other interested parties have opportunities to participate in the work of the council. Public hearings and public meetings also provide an excellent opportunity for broad input.

Elements and Requirements of Local System and Programs

New Jersey policy as presented in the Unified State Plan (submitted to the federal government in response to WIA and accepted) strongly encourages the use of models that include elements that tie academic learning with service and/or workplace learning. Current state supported models that incorporate these elements are the Youth Corps and School-to-Career initiatives. Likewise, the nationally recognized School Based Youth Services program, which ties essential support services to at-risk students while they still attending school, is another model that should be part of a comprehensive service system for youth. As such, the state is asking the WIB through its YIC to integrate these models into their youth services plan.

The Workforce Investment Act delineates program design features and program elements that shall be incorporated into the development of programs for eligible youth. In addition, based on the models delineated above, the state has identified other components that WIA shall include. These federal and state requirements are:

System Design Features

Each WIB shall ensure that the local system:

1. includes in-school youth initiatives that incorporate the school-to-career model, offering opportunities for work-based and school-based learning experiences and activities to connect youth to careers
2. includes connections for in-school youth to School Based Youth Services Programs
3. includes out-of-school youth initiatives that are consistent with the Youth Corp model that integrate solid academic learning experiences with service and/or workplace learning opportunities.
4. includes the equivalent of a One-Stop for youth that connects with the larger One-Stop system and ensures universal access to basic information and services for all youth.

Program Design Features

Programs shall:

1. provide an objective assessment of the academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant;
2. develop service strategies for each participant that shall identify an employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate services;
3. provide:
 - preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities;
 - strong linkages between academic and occupational learning;
 - preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities; and,
 - effective connections to intermediaries with strong links to the job market and local and regional employers.

Program Elements

1. tutoring, study skills training, and instruction, leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. alternative secondary school services, as appropriate;
3. summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to school-to-career initiatives;
4. as appropriate, paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. occupational skill training, as appropriate, involving nontraditional training;

6. leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours, as appropriate;
7. supportive services, for in-school youth, provided by School-Based Youth Services;
8. adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
9. follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate; and,
10. comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.

Additional state and local enhancements may be added to ensure the success of the local youth system and its integrate with the broader state system.

Appendix 10

One Stop Operating System

System Implementation Plan

Preface

While this document contains most of the essential elements of the systems implementation plan for New Jersey's One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), it remains, in some respects, a high level first draft of the task rather than a detailed project plan. This is largely due to:

- a number of policy issues requiring management decisions that arose during its preparation by various OSOS related subcommittees; Such decisions are annotated **[within brackets and bolded]** in the document.
- the fact that states are currently reviewing OSOS user requirements specified to date in an effort to identify gaps in needed data elements and functionality; therefore, the system remains, in part undefined.

Integrated into this document are: 1) technical plan elements developed by the Division of Information Technology; 2) a review of the needed Individual Training Account functionality and a fiscal disbursement system prepared by the Office of the Controller; 3) parts of the Training Account Program Direction Committee's report that are directly related to OSOS system functionality; and, 4) a description of the OSOS system and its interfaces as known to date prepared by the Division of Employment and Training and OSOS System Administrator. All segments of the document were prepared with input from State, SDA, and local level staff representing a majority of the partners in New Jersey's Workforce Investment System.

Not included in the document to date is the initial training plan information.

Executive Summary

New Jersey policy calls for the integration of workforce investment and related programs resulting in seamless delivery of services through a statewide network of One-Stop Career Centers. These centers will provide a wide range of employment, training, education and social services to individuals and the business community. Part of the technology solution to creating this "no wrong door" environment in which all participating agencies work as a team is the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS).

The One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), which is being designed and built by a team of federal, state and local workforce professionals to meet the core WIA business needs common to all states, is an outgrowth and logical extension of prior work performed by the America's Job Bank Service Center (AJBSC) and a 1998 United States Employment and Training Administration, AJBSC, Minnesota, New Jersey and Utah consortium to build a new client-server web-enabled public labor exchange system (WINS) that interfaces seamlessly with the AJB Job and Talent Bank system. Following the passage of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in August 1998, the consortium added to and refined WINS requirements to include the functionality and reporting capabilities required to be "WIA compliant."

OSOS software is available without charge through a license from the New York State Department of Labor, which has a grant to operate the AJBSC. OSOS is being developed with funding from the United States Department of Labor. New Jersey is responsible for installation, data conversion, all hardware, necessary infrastructure and network upgrades, certain third party licenses (i.e. Oracle), and most other system interfaces are the responsibility of the system user states. OSOS may include the interface to the federal Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) under development. Maintenance and core system enhancements will be provided by the AJBSC.

This document describes the planned implementation of OSOS in New Jersey. In addition to the functional overview of the system, it includes: a description of interfaces to other legacy systems necessary to fulfill the requirements of the State's Strategic Five-Year State Workforce Investment Plan; a discussion of ITA and fiscal system interface needs and options; technical requirements; and, an initial project plan.

Introduction

The New Jersey implementation of OSOS will meet the technology requirements of New Jersey's One-Stop Career Center system by including the national core WIA compliant system and custom interfaces to State systems described in this document. To meet New Jersey needs, the system will:

1. Support the delivery of services in the One-Stop system described in the Strategic Five-Year Plan, Chapter 1, Section 1.5.

"... One-Stop Career Centers integrate services, provide for customer choice and universal access and are performance driven... New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers

are best understood as a system within which all workforce investment and related programs function as if they were a single entity. Hence, while the physical location of programs matters, it is their connectivity to each other and adherence to common procedures that truly makes access easier for the customer...

The combination of using the most advanced technology to provide information and the development of a common management structure among agencies with disparate funding sources to deliver services are the key ingredients to a successful One-Stop system."

2. Support the achievement of a workforce system that is performance driven and outcome based as described in the Plan, Chapter 1, Section 1.6.2.

"The State will establish the operating system that will allow for the collection of necessary administrative data to support the Consumer Guide on Service Providers and the State's overall Performance Management System. In the next 18 months, New Jersey will put in place a system to incorporate performance information on each of New Jersey's One-Stop partners at the state, local and service provider levels. The vendor evaluation and performance management system will be based on the proposed model developed by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development.

The State's performance measures must also be geared primarily to the needs of employers and employee customers and address the needs of all workforce investment agencies. Performance measures must reflect outcomes such as earnings and job retention, but will be established to reflect skills attainment. It is critical that New Jersey develops one uniform policy regarding performance measures so that those measures can be used interchangeably across agencies and funding streams.

3. Support the establishment of the Skillsnet evaluation and performance management system that cuts across all programs and sets a common set of standards for all workforce investment activities, regardless of funding stream or agency affiliation as described in the Plan, Chapter 1, Section 1.7.

Skillsnet will allow customers, policymakers and administrators, employers, and training providers to access the performance management and vendor evaluation system in a user-friendly manner. The internet-based system was designed to meet three specific requirements set out in the Workforce Investment Act: 1) setting performance goals, 2) making information available to job seekers, and 3) establishing a process for determining eligible providers.

Information to be provided through Skillsnet will include:

- progress measures of completion rate for training services for adults and skills attainment for youth and adults;
- Customer satisfaction measures for adults, youth, recipients of public assistance, out-of-school youth, individuals with disabilities, displaced homemakers, older individuals, dislocated workers, and employers;
- Outcome measures of placement in employment, retention and earnings.

4. Support establishment of performance goals for the One-Stop system that will be tied to the local operating protocols and to the Memoranda of Understanding between the WIBs and their One-Stop Partners.

System Functional Description

Functional Overview

OSOS consists of new functionality integrated with existing state legacy systems to maximize the "one-stop" experience. OSOS is designed to allow both Self-Service and Mediated modes of operation. OSOS provides planning and tracking capabilities that match customers with services based on the customer's needs, rather than solely on their eligibility for specific programs.

In extending existing services to satisfy the State's WIA initiative, OSOS also provides workforce staff with resource scheduling and funding program accountability.

It is envisioned that OSOS will be an evolving product. Users of the system need to understand that OSOS Version 1.0 may represent some small steps backwards that are necessary to make the envisioned workforce system leap forward. Specifically, some functionality users currently have may be delayed in the overall OSOS project plan. For example, the Employment Service Automated Call-in System (ESAC) may not be available initially. One interface the State will insure is in place on OSOS day 1, as full ITA-fiscal system interfaces are not anticipated then, is the interface needed to WDP.

The consortium of states working on the browser version of OSOS identified three major enhancements needed to be added to OSOS in future versions, if not Version 1.0: Vocational Rehabilitation, Employer Self Service at the State Level, and Financial management and Disbursement System Interfaces. It is envisioned that fixes and minor enhancements will come out in subsequent versions 1.X etc., during the first year, and major new functionality will roll out annually as Version 2.0 etc.

Major Functional Elements (as described in AJBSC's July 1999 OSOS Implementation Guide) Include:

- *Registration for mediated services.* Customers referred from an external system must also possess all applicable registration information.
- *Referrals* - includes accepting electronic and manual referrals from external systems
- *Requesting Services* - Customers can be matched to applicable services based on either a complete set of information gathered for a comprehensive assessment, or on a minimal subset of registration information (when specific needs are known and are being initiated).
- *Comprehensive assessment* - is performed by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing customer information to create an employment plan that matches the specific needs, goals, and aptitudes of customers within a state's current labor market.
- *Development of Employment Plan* - a path to employment that

considers the interests, desires, needs, and aptitudes of the customer (as defined in comprehensive assessment), as well as the current labor market conditions of the desired work location. This process involves developing an employment goal, and determining the steps needed to obtain that goal.

- *Tracking Service Delivery* - OSOS allows states to maintain information about key performance measures on service delivery, and to report on the same.
- *Determining Eligibility* - Eligibility is determined before the customer receives intensive WIA services. Applicable funding sources are associated with each service. Before intensive services are utilized, customers must be eligible for the respective funding programs.
- *Program Enrollment Verification* - In order to verify and audit program eligibility and subsequent program enrollment, OSOS tracks program enrollment.
- *Tracking "Individual Participant Accounts"* - Each customer who receives services that carry a cost has an Individual Participant Account. This account tracks, by funding source, the amount of money obligated for services.
- *Scheduling* – OSOS provides scheduling tools which provide service providers, workforce investment system professionals, and customers with schedules of appointments and services. Service requests that involve scheduling are linked with providers' schedules via customer employment plans. An administrative module provides counselors with their own schedules to track appointments with customers. [Depending on the State's requirements, scheduling services may be offered to customers as part of self-service.]
- *Follow-Up & Monitoring* - Without employment plan monitoring and follow-up, cohesive services and functionality lack long-term effectiveness. The OSOS long-term management tools track a customer's progress within employment plans, and ensure their effectiveness. Follow-up tools gauge the effectiveness of services and/or programs on individual program enrollments.
- *Notification & Correspondence* - OSOS allows administrators to send correspondence to customers, employer contacts, job order contacts, and provider contacts. A workforce professional's inbox allows system-generated notifications to be viewed from within the system.
- *Counselor Notes* - The notation of customer progress and resolution of issues related to customer employment goals is integral to case management. OSOS allows for customer annotations that can be classified into categories for easy access and reporting capabilities.

- *Placement* - For every customer who finds a job, OSOS can track the specifics of their placement. Placement may be linked to a specific activity or to the completion of a program.
- *Performance Measures* - OSOS can measure performance to determine return on investment and help gauge the overall success rates and efficiencies of services.
- *Customer Satisfaction* - Self-service and mediated service customers will have the opportunity to complete automated satisfaction surveys. Optionally, OSOS can connect with states' customer satisfaction survey systems.
- *Service Provider Information* - Accessible and useful information about service providers allows customers to make informed decisions about which provider to utilize. The provider information component can be used as an integrated part of the OSOS system, or as an interface with an external system. OSOS is expected to interface with ALX and ITA national programs when established. Until the national provider efforts are completed, OSOS can collect, maintain, and display data about providers of all services offered within the One-Stop service delivery system.
- *Employers* - OSOS provides for what amounts to an employer case management system for workforce professionals. Staff and employers have access to current information about the status of service delivery.
- *Job Orders* - Accessible and useful information regarding current and historical job orders is provided to staff and employers. OSOS can collect, maintain and display data about job orders, referrals, and the viewing of job orders by job seekers.
- *Reporting* – standard and ad-hoc.
- *Office Administration* - Administrative staff data is utilized by OSOS to assist in reporting the system's efficiency of use. Administrative staff data is classified by office or teams of staff for administrative and reporting purposes.
- *Fund Control* - obligated and expended funds are tracked to the following levels: customer, staff, office, activity, funding source and program year.

OSOS Functional Integration Plan

Merging the "Silos

The "NJ-OSOS Database" diagram (not included) shows the One Stop Operating System (OSOS) with current/proposed program "silo" data included, interfaces with other systems and, in some cases, reflect system options that require policy decisions defined below. Each box or symbol represents a system/database and the lines and arrows the transfer of data.

Public Labor Exchange (ES/WINS)

Current Wagner-Peyser public labor exchange system functionality and data files (ODDS/ENDS) will be converted and included in the core OSOS system. The data includes job seeker, job seeker service and job order records. Labor exchange system capabilities will be enhanced in OSOS by adding an "employer case management" module, which will be seeded and updated monthly with employer records from Tax Redesign databases. Employer services data will be included in OSOS.

The labor exchange databases will be fully integrated with America's Job Bank (AJB) passing resume and job order data between databases using the AJB Agent Server utility.

Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS)

WRIS is being developed in accordance with WIA's Performance Accountability System mandate that states "...In measuring the progress of the state on state and local performance measures, a state shall utilize quarterly wage records, consistent with state law... [USDOL is building WRIS to make] wage records of any state available to any other state to the extent that such records are required by the state in carrying out the state plan..." WRIS is viewed as a critical component of the state's consumer reports system. Once integrated with OSOS by the AJBSC, New Jersey needs to develop a plan for coordinating WRIS inquiries to avoid the potential costly duplication of requests from multiple consumer reporting agencies.

Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) Data Conversion

JTPA training participant databases will be converted and included in the core OSOS system.

Customized Training (CT)

The NJDOL's project to automate CT business will have four main modules: 1) a web enabled module allowing companies or training institutions to interface with CTTS; 2) a Visual Basic Client Server module within the NJDOL firewall replacing the current paper business system; 3) an e-mail routing and approval system; and, 4) the CTTS Oracle database that will be integrated with the OSOS database. Phase II of the project includes the interdivisional interfaces to: the Apprentice Program, the Business Service Representatives, and the Response Teams.

The customized training project has the same software development cycle as the OSOS Project. The business process redesign has been completed and the roll-out is scheduled for first quarter, 2000. This will improve department integration of data and operations..

While the Visual Basic Client Server application to replace the current paper business system lies outside the OSOS system, the "CT database" will use and share common data elements with OSOS.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)

The OSOS user requirements developed to date do not include data elements, functionality and reporting capabilities required by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. WIA includes DVR as a partner and it should be addressed for July 1, 2000 WIA implementation. Although the OSOS data dictionary is not available at this time, using the logical data model, NJ DVR staff have identified 34 potential required DVR data elements that do not appear to be in the OSOS database.

Looking to replace their expensive to maintain legacy system and take advantage of the opportunities that automation offers counseling staff in efficiency and range of options for serving clients, NJ DVR has identified the Client Rehabilitation information System (CRIS) as a potential replacement.

At first review, it appears 80% of DVR data needs are met by OSOS and that the remaining 20% might be accomplished by enhancing the OSOS Employment Plan data collection screen and adding a security feature protected "Disability Assessment" screen to the array of comprehensive assessment screens. The "heavier lift" would be adding DVR business functions and an interface with the State's fiscal disbursement system. For that reason, it is anticipated that DVR functionality will not be seen in OSOS Version 1.0, but will be included in the AJBSC's OSOS overall project plan.

Trade Act/NAFTA

The Trade Act program provides assistance for institutional and OJT training to workers who have lost their jobs due to imports.

USDOL has imposed a new reporting requirement on TAA and NAFTA programs similar to the JTPA Standardized Program Information Report (SPIR). Effective February 15, 1999 (45 days after 1st Quarter of federal fiscal year) TAA/NAFTA services were to be reported on an individual record basis.

NJDOL developed a plan to meet this reporting requirement by establishing a network of computers linked to a central office server. The network would enable field staff to enter participant and contract information in the new TAA database. The TAA database would then be used to create the new TAA SPIR to meet federal reporting requirements.

While TAA/NAFTA appears a logical candidate for inclusion within the OSOS system, it will not be included at this time because the national OSOS project plan is unable to meet the functional need in an acceptable time period

FACTORS

A part of the State's One-Easy-Link (OEL) initiative, FACTORS is a customer case management system and is being deployed in the offices of NJ Workforce Investment System partners. The initial initiative is the computerization of the employment registration and tracking process for applicants and recipients of TANF, Food Stamps, and/or General Assistance. The FACTORS system and database are shared by County Welfare Agencies, Employment Service and job training professionals, and replaces tracking forms like the ES-1A and FS-912.

While OSOS and FACTORS include some common functionality (i.e. case management), both systems appear to meet unique functional needs of NJ's WIA partners and will co-exist.

Commission on Higher Education and Department of Education

OSOS project staff have held initial meetings with representatives from both of these Workforce Investment System partners.

It is anticipated that after the USDOE defines new performance standards for the education community, OSOS, NJ Wage Records and WRIS will all become data and follow-up data sources for evaluation purposes. These interfaces appear at this time to be batch Social Security Number matches producing flat-file data for transmission to education databases such as the Individual Student Record (ISR) system identified in the State's Plan.

An issue raised with education representatives is the potential need for an "intent of training" flag in the database to assist in system evaluation for customers receiving training services. If performance for customers receiving intensive services is evaluated in part on a predetermined salary increase, it might be appropriate to make adjustments to the formula where the *intent* is "career change."

SkillsNet, OSOS, and WRIS should meet most of the data needs of the Commission on Higher Education.

Workforce Development Program

The Workforce Development Program is a NJ program providing dislocated workers employment search and training assistance. The Workforce Development/Profiling System is a complex management information system designed to identify potential participants, track individual participation in various activities, and interface with the NJCFS.

Data is fed to WDP from the Employment Service ODDS/ENDS (services and demographic) and Unemployment Insurance LOOPS (profiling and demographic) systems. This information is used to determine WDP participation and establish training grants. WDP has an automated voucher system, which is used to pay training grants to approved vendors. The WDP system generates contracts and invoices and sends/receives the information to/from NJCFS.

WDP is a mainframe based system of 170 batch programs written in a variety of languages and contains flatfiles, VSAM files and DB2 Tables.

While NJ WDP eligibility questions were added to OSOS requirements in February 1999 and program data needs appear to be satisfied in the OSOS logical data model, until OSOS has the fiscal system interfaces described below and WDP databases can be converted for use by OSOS, an OSOS-WDP interface will have to be built in a timely manner to insure uninterrupted use of the existing WDP system.

Individual Training Account Functionality

Individual Training Account (ITA) functionality is required for the "WIA compliant" system. A couple of initiatives are underway to review OSOS ITA functionality for WIA and other programs and make recommendations regarding system requirements and program implementation. The draft review led by the Controller's Office, "*Requirements for OSOS Interfacing with the New Jersey Comprehensive Financial System and Local One Stop Operator's Disbursement and Financial Systems and Other systems Supporting One-Stop Operations*," follows below intact.

Specific system recommendations regarding an OSOS ITA-financial disbursement system interface from the Training Account Program Direction Committee follow in the next section of this document.

Other Interfaces to be Addressed

- Wage Record and/or the New Hires
- Employment Service Automated Call-in (ESAC) system.
- NJDOP interface that adds NJ Civil Service jobs to the Job Bank.
- LOOPS current online interface may be re-instituted as a batch process to capture common data in a temporary "place-holder" record (MN WINS).
- LOOPS weekly Occupational Code Batch Match requires review .
- RCC and the proposed (grant proposal submitted to USDOL) internet claims/resume interface system.

Requirements for OSOS Interfacing with the New Jersey Comprehensive Financial System and Local One Stop Operator's Disbursement and Financial Systems and Other systems Supporting One-Stop Operations

Overview

In order to provide assurance that the One Stop Operating System (OSOS) is able to provide timely, accurate, meaningful, and verifiable Individual Training Account and related program service cost information, a seamless interface must be established between the OSOS case management and budgeting functions and the one-stop operator's disbursement system. The interface can be established on the basis of multiple one-stop sites/single disbursement site or multiple one-stop sites/multiple disbursement sites. The key is that the interface must provide, at the minimum, for the exchange of disbursement approval data sets between OSOS and the one-stop's disbursement system.

The disbursement approval data sets created by the OSOS must be based on duly authorized and fully executed training services and must be approved by appropriate levels of authority within the one-stop's organization. The disbursement approval data sets must be based on correct eligibility criteria, accurate service cost calculations, organization business rules, and verifiable service delivery information.

In order to be fully integrated, OSOS must be able to receive payment transaction data sets from the disbursement system. The data sets should include at a minimum: payment date, check number (or electronic payment ID), payee, and client reference (i.e., name, social security number, etc.). This data set must be in a format that can be read and processed by OSOS and appended to its database (or data warehouse). This data must be normalized in OSOS' in a way that payment information can be retrieved by client, or in aggregate, by program funding source, training identification (CIP), and program funding year.

What is Needed

The OSOS interface with the disbursement system can be, depending on the Workforce Investment Act model preferred, central, regional, local, or a combination of the three. Ideally, OSOS would provide for the creation and exchange of data sets with the disbursement system. The disbursement system would accept and process the OSOS data set and generate checks and/or electronic automated clearinghouse (ACH) payments directly to ITA training providers.

The required internal controls to ensure the authenticity, integrity, accountability, verifiability, and accuracy of the ITA disbursements would be built directly into the OSOS as a series of interrelated business process functions, or modules. The controls would provide for the appropriate separation of ITA creation, authorization, service review, and payment approval functions.

The controls would expand the case management processes currently defined in the OSOS Staff Assisted Functional Requirements Specification (June 29, 1999) by providing a module that relates to ITA and Fund Management modules. The support for the ITA disbursement approval could be based on electronic (Web application) or paper

attendance and participation records for each client that are submitted by the service providers.

After the attendance and participation information is reviewed appropriate verification entries made into OSOS would create a "recommended for payment" suspense file. The suspense file would be reviewed by an appropriate level of authorization within the one-stop organization for final payment approval.

After the final payment approval is set, OSOS would update its ITA and Fund Management modules to include the payment approval data for each effected ITA. OSOS would also write a data set for transmission to the disbursement system. The release of the data set for disbursement would be predicated on one final approval step within the one-stop organization.

After the disbursement system prepares the checks or electronic funds payments, it would prepare a file which includes, by ITA, the check date, amount, and payee. OSOS would read, process, and compare this return information to the records that it sent to the disbursement system. If all payment details and amounts agree, OSOS would append the payment data to its database. If discrepancies between the files are noted a report citing the details would be printed for the one-stop operator. No checks or electronic payments should be released from the disbursement system until the one-stop operator indicates that all of the details exchanged between the systems are correct.

Correction modules would be able to handle the cancellation of payments prior to release and resubmitting the underlying information back to the case management modules for further evaluation and future payment approval.

The normalization of databases within OSOS would provide for the capability to tie disbursements directly into services by client, by training type, provider, and by inquiry combinations as needed facilitate ad hoc control monitoring and process and impact evaluation data collection activities. The reporting of required ITA performance and expenditure information, by program funding type, would be an integrated system function programmed to generate reports at the required funding based chronological intervals.

A module that captures cost information related to non-ITA activities must be considered. For example, a one-stop operator should be able to enter all administrative, counseling, job search, testing, and other applicable expenses, by program element, funding source, and program year. This feature would replace the current spreadsheet or other subsidiary method of compiling and submitting program cost information.

The inclusion of the capability to accumulate this vast amount of information will not, and should not be intended to, make OSOS a de facto accounting system. OSOS should be considered as a comprehensive subsidiary system that supports and

complements an accounting system's required ledger account maintenance and financial reporting functions. The expense information reported by OSOS should reconcile to the expenses reported in an accounting system's ledger.

The difference is that, with respect to ITAs, OSOS should be able to report the expenses at the client level as well as in aggregate by program funding source and program year. OSOS should also be able to retain data (in its data warehouse) that will provide the ability to produce longitudinal reports of program outlays by client and by program funding source.

Limitations

The OSOS logical data model, as currently being developed by the USDOL and AJB covers an abundance, if not the full gamut, of situations requiring data capturing and decision making capabilities that are relevant and necessary for establishing and maintaining detailed client ITA records. As a point of reference the model includes, and expands on, much of the functionality that is built into the JTPA Micro-based Participant & Services Data System. The model's structure provides the basis for the integration of ITA budgeting by fund source, training authorizations, payment scheduling, benchmark payment options, pro rata payment options, and disbursement approval based on client and provider program eligibility criteria.

The model's current limitations are that it appears to presuppose that all program activities are related to employment training and service ITAs currently funded under JTPA and Wagner-Peyser (which will become WIA core service activities). It does not provide adequate, but required, linkages to Trade Act, NAFTA, Vocational Rehabilitation, and State funded Workforce Development and Welfare to Work programs. There also needs to be a serious case management linkage to account for ITAs supported by Pell Grants, scholarships, local stand-in costs, third-party payments (such as insurance indemnification in the case of Vocational Rehab ITAs).

There also needs to be a clear point of demarcation that defines when one funding source's eligibility begins and another's ends. This is especially true with Trade Act certifications that are rendered after an eligible client is already enrolled in another funding source's program. This situation impacts the flow of the cohort training program's dollar commitments as well as unemployment eligibility streams. OSOS must be able to provide the basis for managing and tracking such changes.

The OSOS model addresses budget and expenditure control capability at the program level. However, as noted, it does not provide for the allocation of local community based funds, capturing in-kind service data, accumulating comparable benefit data (Pell Grants, scholarships, insurance payments, etc.), or accumulating stipend and UI training benefit data. These elements are important for identifying and reporting the component training cost and benefit information that should be derived from OSOS with respect to ITA related process evaluations and cost benefit analyses.

Problem

Currently the State of New Jersey and its local partners perform a wide array of services that must be unified in the one stop operating. Some of these services, which are maintained at the State level, are supported by systems that combine comprehensive client and provider tracking capabilities with an interface into the New Jersey Comprehensive Financial System (NJCFIS). These interfaces provide for the establishment and maintenance of training service obligations and the approval of disbursements against program liabilities. The NJCFIS returns payment data (check number, payment date, payee, and check amount) to the service system.

Not all of the State programs that will become cohorts in the one-stop venue currently have interface capabilities with NJCFIS. At the local level, there may be even a greater disparity between how services are supported by automated systems. Case management systems that interface directly with disbursement and accounting systems are probably nonexistent at the local level. Most of the one-stop operators compile payment information directly from vendor invoices. There is no connection of the payment information back to the ITA local case management system. Reporting expenditures requires an intermediate spreadsheet analysis that is submitted to the State agency while program statistical and demographic information is fed from local LAN databases to the State via remote dial-in access.

In some cases, the local one stop operators have access to a State system, as with the Workforce Development Individual Training Grant System. However, this system consists of self-contained and specialized functions that related only to New Jersey's WDP. The system does not interact, or interface, with any of the other ITA systems. It does interact with PROS and UI, but only for unique and esoteric purposes. None of the one-stop operators have a combined an integrated system that can account for the consolidation of program and service delivery envisioned under WIA.

There is presently no system integrated way to combine performance data from the various components that support the disparate funding authorities delivering ITA services into cogent information that provides up to date and reliable knowledge and decision level information.

A significant problem that stands as a barrier to the development of a comprehensive system to support the delivery of programs in a one stop environment is the issue of disbursement authority. Under the current fragmented system environment, except in the case of Workforce Development funded ITAs, each provider has the ability to authorize and control, through an off-line system, the disbursement of system.

With the emergence of a system such as OSOS, the ability to leverage economy and efficiency is available with the option to have OSOS interface directly with a central "disbursement agent". However, this presents a subset of problems related to whether or not a centralized disbursement agent is the more viable than allowing each one-stop operator to retain its own disbursement agent status. This is especially acute in

program disbursement authorizations involving the use of local community based funds. If all funding used in the one stop consisted of state or allocated federal funds then this would not be a major problem. However, the imposition of local funds raises the question of reverse funds flow. That is, the disbursement agent would disburse local funds under authorized one-stop conditions and then expect a reimbursement from the local entity that authorized the disbursement.

Opportunities

The OSOS platform, as noted, appears to be able to provide the functionality needed for the detailed ITA record keeping, authorizations, commitments, budgeting, and payments by program, funding source, and program year. OSOS needs to take stock of all of the cohort components of the one-stop operations to ensure that all unique program requirements are met in the eligibility and ITA assignment functions. An interface with at least one, and perhaps, several disbursement and accounting systems is necessary.

The actual interface with the disbursement and accounting system(s) must be predicated on the controls built into OSOS to authenticate and approve disbursements. At the point that this occurs, OSOS must create a data set that will be handed to the disbursement system. After checks and/or electronic (ACH) payments are made, OSOS must receive from the disbursement system a data set that includes check number, check date, payee, and payment amount. This data set will be appended to the OSOS data warehouse to provide the ability to inquire about the payment status of any individual training account payment.

Refunds made by training providers must also be in synch with the OSOS at the client, provider, and program funding level. For example a refund made by a provider for an overcharge of services must be included all OSOS tracking and reporting segments that produce program cost information. It must also be added back into the available funds by one stop center. Charge adjustments between programs must also be a function in the system so that ITA funding source eligibility re-determinations can be properly accounted for.

Finally, fund allocations, obligations, disbursements, and refunds must be consistently, and constantly, added to or deducted from a one-stop's budget for a particular program. The functionality would drill down to counselor level budgets if the enterprise opts to go to this level of detail.

It appears, based on the logical data model, that OSOS can provide the level of ITA maintenance and control that can facilitate the needs of the local one-stop operators in managing ITA case load across disparate program funding authorities. OSOS does need to expand so that it includes the several features and can accommodate several related Workforce Investment programs in order to provide for seamless integration for ITA accountability. It also needs to accommodate the capturing of Pell Grant and other training related payments made by third parties. Finally, administrative and support

costs need to be recorded into OSOS system and to ensure proper accountability for all Workforce Investment funding sources.

Conclusion

The use of OSOS will require the settlement of several policy issues. Specifically the issue of [where disbursements will be made (locally or centrally) needs to be clearly defined.]

Information related to certain local ITA case management and disbursement functions has not yet been compiled. Therefore, the basis for beginning a cost benefit analysis is not available. However, it is likely that certain functions that are replicated across all local one-stop sites may be done more economically in a single system environment.

The timing of OSOS' version that includes a financial interface is also critical. Cost information needs to be developed related to the retention and modification of existing systems (especially WDP and DVR) to interface with OSOS until its financial interface is available. The cost of migrating these systems to OSOS needs to be assessed against the cost of continuing the status quo, that is running each system separately.

The strategic use of technology and the open systems environment that OSOS is being designed to operate with appears to make it likely that the functionality to support all ITA program sources and to interface with disbursement systems will be available. It is also likely that OSOS can accommodate the input of administrative and support costs. This will provide the basis for full accountability and cost comparison information across all cohort activities in the Workforce Investment venue.

ITA Program Direction Committee OSOS System Related Recommendations

ITA Payment System

ITA Payments will be housed within one system integrating the finance and reporting of individual training grant activity from all One-Stop Career Center System training programs including Workforce Investment Act block grants, the Workforce Development Partnership Program (WDP), Vocational Rehabilitation, Trade Act, Customized Training, Response Team and On-the-Job Training Contracts and Work First programs. The new system will incorporate or improve upon the most efficient functionality used within existing systems. The One Stop Operating System (OSOS) is one option that appears to have the functionality to accommodate this integration.

The attached chart, "Individual Training Account Options" shows a comparison of the critical functions as applied to the existing Workforce Development Program under "Centralized System" and the existing Job Training Partnership Act capabilities under "Localized System", with the intent of creating a new system, which mirrors or improves upon the most beneficial facets of existing centralized or localized programs. Cost effectiveness, efficiency, ease of communication, flexibility and system control are integral to localizing or centralizing each of these functions. It appears that the OSOS Logical Data Model functionality can accommodate any or all of these functions in a centralized or localized mode.

Committee recommendations for centralizing or localizing funding allocations and disbursements/expenditures is currently under review. The ramifications of a centralized versus localized allocation/ disbursement system are shown below:

A centralized disbursement agent brings the following advantages:

- Uniformity of disbursement data. Payment detail records that are uniform throughout the system, facilitating the retrieval and compilation of client and provider information.
- Economy and efficiency of operations. The use of a single disbursement agent negates the need to maintain several disparate disbursement systems or to spend additional time and money on building interfaces with disparate systems, thereby reducing or eliminating disbursement system maintenance costs.
- Generation of multiple payments to a provider. During daily processing cycles, if more than one payment is approved to a single provider, a centralized disbursement agent could generate a single check to the provider. The details of all items included in the payment would be listed on the check stub.
- Generation of electronic funds payments rather than issuing checks to providers.

- Managing allotments without transferring funds. The central disbursement agent could allot spending authority by program, funding source and fiscal/program year down to the local level, even to the counselor level. Detailed information on budgeted funds, open obligations and available funds would be immediately known. No physical transfer of funds would be necessary.

Centralized disbursement agent brings the following disadvantages:

- The need to guarantee payments on behalf of the local One-Stop operators and to provide assurance that only authorized amounts would be paid.
- Questions of local/central agent liability for unauthorized payments made.
- Possible disputes over allotments of available funds.
- Diminished local autonomy and fiduciary control.

The Committee is recommending that the following critical ITA Payment System functions be localized as shown on the attached chart under “Localized System” under the double line. These critical localized functions are:

- Annual allocation by grant recipient
- Draw downs by the local level
- Benchmark payments for services that have already been provided
- Up-front payments, as appropriate
- Master contracting, drawing on allocations from various funding sources
- On-the-spot error correction at the local level
- Holdbacks to providers until job placement and job retention occur.

Individual Training Account Options

Allocations and disbursements are under consideration. Committee recommends incorporation into new system of all functions under "Localized System" below the space break in the table (3rd row down).

	Centralized System	Localized System
Funding Allocations	Annually or quarterly to State or regional level. Unspent monies can be redirected to other WIBS.	Annual allocation to each grant recipient. WIBs can plan for entire year based on yearly allocation.
Disbursements/ Expenditures	All funds disbursed from centralized agent. No daily financial fund balance.	Funds disbursed locally. Funds drawn down as they are expended.

Fund Balance Info	Monthly Must create local reports to track funding during monthly period.	Daily Up-to-date info on available funding. Local reports sent to the State.
Pro-Rating Funds	No pro-rating	Can pro-rate funds Can pay for services that already have been provided
Complexity of Monitoring	Complex batch process	Local management reports can be run
Master Contract Tracking System	No provision for master contracts	Master contract, automated tracking of participant and funds from enrollment through termination.
Error Correction	24 hour delay	Immediate
Financial Holdback	No provision for	Holdback to providers until placement & job retention occur.



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
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MEL GELADE
Commissioner

CHRISTINE TODD WHITMAN
Governor

June 10, 1999

Honorable Alexis Herman
Secretary of Labor
Employment & Training Administration
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Room C-4524
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Ms. Herman:

On behalf of Governor Whitman, we are providing you with responses to your comments on New Jersey's Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System. These responses address questions, under Section One of the comments, required for plan approval. No response is being provided to Section Two at this time. Response to the suggestions and recommendations will be included, after full consultation with our One-Stop partners, in our October submission.

We hope you find these responses adequate to better understand New Jersey's vision of a workforce investment system that meets the needs of all students, workers, and those seeking employment as well as the employer community. We look forward to your favorable response.

Sincerely,

Mel Gelade, Commissioner
New Jersey Department of Labor

Connie O. Hughes, Assistant Commissioner
State Employment Security Administrator



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**STRATEGIC FIVE-YEAR UNIFIED STATE PLAN FOR NEW JERSEY'S
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM**

Chapter Two

Incorporates responses to USDOL requests for additional information through July 25, 2000

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A NOTE TO THE READER

This Chapter and the ones that follow are based on the strategic direction charted out in Chapter One of this Unified Plan. As these chapters address specific questions contained in the planning guidelines, footnotes will be used to refer back to the specific sections in Chapter One that better address the questions.

I. PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

- A. Describe the process for developing the State Plan (including a timeline) that ensures public comment. Include a description of the Governors and the State Board's involvement in drafting, reviewing and commenting on the Plan. What actions did your State take to collaborate in the development of the State plan with local elected officials, local workforce boards and youth councils, the business community (including small businesses), labor organizations, educators, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and the other interested parties, such as service providers, welfare agencies, community-based organizations, transportation providers and advocates?**

As was indicated in Chapter One of this *Unified Plan*, New Jersey has established a “culture of cooperation” that is exemplified by broad participation in developing major workforce policies for the state. In developing this plan for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), an open and transparent process was established to fully involve all major stakeholders in formulating the strategic direction indicated in this plan. Indeed, planning for WIA actually began even before the legislation was passed by the Congress and signed by the President. Discussions between the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) took place on an ongoing basis as the state began to think through how it would respond to WIA once it was passed. New Jersey officials were and are active participants in a number of national conferences, including a number of telephone forums sponsored by the United States Department of Labor and the National Governors’ Association. The State Employment and Training Commission facilitated New Jersey’s effort in this area. New Jersey undertook the following specific activities to assure broad, sustained and wide spread participation in developing this plan.

- At the direction of the Governor’s Office, the Labor Commissioner and SETC Chair were asked to facilitate the creation of a Cabinet-level working group to oversee both the development of the plan and the implementation of WIA. The following departments are members of this working group: Community Affairs, Education, Health and Senior Services, Human Services, Labor, SETC, Transportation, Treasury, along with the Governor’s Office. Additionally, the Commissions on Commerce and Economic Growth and Higher Education are participants.
- A Core Planning Group was created under the direction of the Cabinet-level Working Group to develop the major components of this plan. Aside from representatives from each of the agencies enumerated above, Service Delivery Areas, labor unions

and Workforce Investment Boards were also members of the Core Planning Group. The group met every two weeks during the development of this plan. This group will be expanded to include direct representation from the private sector and local elected officials. The latter two constituencies were indirectly represented through SETC staff for the former and WIB and SDA Directors for the latter.

- A statewide WIA conference was held in December with over 660 people in attendance, including substantial representation from the business community, state agencies, Workforce Investment Boards, local officials, faith-based organizations, SDAs, educators, among others. Assistant Secretary of USDOL, Ray Bramucci, gave the keynote address.
- Three Town Meetings were held in the northern, central and southern part of the state to obtain public comment on WIA priorities. Over 240 individuals, representing major stakeholders were in attendance.
- A Public Hearing was held to obtain additional input into the WIA Plan with over 80 persons in attendance.
- The Heldrich Center presented an overview of the major facets of WIA to all Workforce Investment Boards and to the State Employment and Training Commission. WIB membership in New Jersey comprises over 500 individuals, over half of who are from the private sector.
- A WIA Primer was developed that outlined the major tenets of the law and was widely distributed.
- The One-Stop bimonthly meetings in the fall focused specifically on the Workforce Investment Act and New Jersey's response to the Act. Key state officials addressed the over 150 individuals in attendance.
- The Workforce Quality Committee articulated a vision for the workforce investment system based on New Jersey's demand side strategy.

Timeline for Development of the Unified State Plan

1998

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| September 15-16 | WIA presentation at Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey |
| September 29 | Unified State Plan Core Planning Group formed
Meeting with AFL/CIO Union Members on the WIA |
| November 16 | Meeting with WIB Business Representatives on the WIA |
| December 1-2 | One-Stop Fall Conference - focusing on the WIA, entitled,
<i>The Workforce Investment System in a Time of Transition</i> |

1999

January 27-28	National Youth Conference
February 11	Overview of WIA presentation to Assembly Labor Committee
February 18	Workforce Investment Board Retreat on the WIA
February 23	Town Meeting on the WIA – Morris County College, Randolph, NJ
February 26	Town Meeting on the WIA – Camden County College, Camden, NJ
	Cabinet-level Meeting on the WIA, State House, Trenton, NJ
March 4	Town Meeting on the WIA – NJ Department of Labor, Trenton, NJ
March 11-12	USDOL training on the WIA – Philadelphia, PA
March 15	Unified State Plan Retreat
March 18	Meeting on the WIA with WIB Chairs, WIB Directors and Local Elected Officials
March 26	Public Hearing on the Unified State Plan – NJ Department of Labor, Trenton, NJ

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

When New Jersey submitted a strategic plan under WIA on April 1, it sought to put on paper the unified vision for the workforce investment system. The State was aware of the need to develop implementation and operational plans for the system, but our commitment to a locally driven system required time for the WIBs to plan. Some time frames have built-in flexibility to allow for tasks to be completed. It was also necessary to have sufficient lead-time to ensure the local WIBs could develop comprehensive plans for their operation under WIA. The following is a list of tasks and tentative due dates.

4-1-99	Submission of Strategic Plan
7-31-99	Recommendations from the following workgroups: WIB-One-Stop Partners MOU WIB-CEOs MOU Guidelines and operating protocols for One-Stop Criteria for approval of One-Stop operators Service provider list approval and maintenance ITA process Vendor assessment system WIB membership guidelines Local planning instructions Youth Councils Funding process Demand side strategies
8-31-99	Issue MOU template and WIB guidelines Issue preliminary legislative and regulatory issues report
9-1-99	Establish local planning process - input from WIBs
9-15-99	Issue policies for reallocation of funds Issue policies for transfer of funds
9-30-99	Issue policies for: Guidelines and operating protocols for One-Stop Criteria for approval of One-Stop operators Service provider list approval and maintenance ITA process Vendor assessment system

	Local planning instructions
	Youth Councils
	Funding process
	Demand side strategies
	Develop customer satisfaction priorities
10-1-99	Start of local planning process
	Designation of all WIB areas
12-7-99	State Conference – "WIA: Putting the Pieces Together"
	Kick-off of State Youth Council
12-31-99	Implementation of Vendor Assessment System
	Issue policies for customer satisfaction measures
2-01-00	Preliminary State Youth Council Recommendations
4-01-00	Local plans due (including Youth)
	Carl Perkins Plan submitted
	Performance standards submitted
7-01-00	WIA fully implemented

Please note that these are internal dates and will be changed if necessary. The commitment New Jersey has made is to fully implement WIA by July 1, 2000.

B. Include all comments received (or a summary), and demonstrate how comments were considered in the plan development process.

See attached Appendix 5. All comments were reviewed by the Core Planning Group.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Comments were received in written form, through testimony at public meetings and through lengthy discussions at planning meetings. All comments received from various sources, either written or verbal, were reviewed and evaluated for inclusion in this plan. Comments from partners were incorporated in the plan where appropriate for a strategic planning document. Some comments were more appropriate for operational plans that will be developed and were tabled until that process was in place. Comments from outside sources were reviewed by the diverse Core Planning Group for inclusion in either the strategic or the operational plan as appropriate.

II. STATE VISION AND GOALS

A. What are the State's broad strategic economic and workforce development goals?

New Jersey's workforce investment system is being built on a set of goals to ensure the economic prosperity of New Jersey and all of its citizens. The State envisions a workforce investment system that serves the needs and demands of the workplace. This includes the needs and demands of employers and students, workers and those seeking employment.¹

¹ These goals are described in Chapter One, Section 1.1.1

The workforce investment system's mission is to ensure a balance between the needs of New Jersey's citizens to be employed to their maximum potential and business to have access to a highly qualified workforce to ensure global competitiveness in an ever-changing world. The system facilitates continuous development of skills and competencies that enhance the employability of the existing and future workforce; promotes sound leadership and organizational growth; and adjusts to environmental changes as it focuses on customer access and choice assuring the highest level of quality.

Local areas will be encouraged to expand on State goals in their local plans.

B. Provide (in a few paragraphs) the State's vision of how the WIA statewide workforce investment system will help the State attain these strategic goals. This vision should address the specific emphases of Title I of the Act and provide a brief description of what the State's workforce investment system will look like at the end of the five-year period covered by this Plan.

New Jersey policy calls for the integration, and, where appropriate, consolidation of workforce investment and related programs through strong interagency collaboration resulting in a seamless delivery of services and the reduction of unnecessary program duplication. These policies are a result of the collaborative planning process that has been ongoing since the genesis of the SETC. They reflect the cumulative consensus of the various planning initiatives and policy documents, the latter of which are included in appendices.

One-Stop Career Centers will function as a single entity capable of meeting the needs of a range of employment, training, education and social services to individuals and businesses. The "no wrong door" philosophy will prevail with all participating agencies operating as part of a team.²

Some specific questions that should be answered by the vision statement are:

- ***In five years, how will services be further streamlined?***

During the life of this plan, all One-Stop Partners and programs will utilize a common data system; common performance measures; common administrative procedures, such as monitoring, technical assistance, communication; and, a common service delivery model that will incorporate all core services of the One-Stop system. Within the first year of this plan, all local One-Stop teams will develop local operating protocols that are to be followed by each One-Stop partner. The protocols will mirror the local Memoranda of Understanding and will form the basis for the Governor's Standards. Local Workforce Investment Boards will continue to guide the implementation of a common process and set of services that will be made available to all those seeking assistance.

- ***What programs and funding streams will support service delivery through***

² A more detailed description of goals is contained in Chapter One, Section 1.6

the One-Stop system?

All of New Jersey's One-Stop Partners will support service delivery through the One-Stop system.³ In addition, the state-funded Workforce Development Partnership Program and the job readiness programs funded through the State Division on Women will also support service delivery through the One-Stop system.

- ***Typically, what information and services will be provided and how will customers access them? How will the goal of universal access be assured?***

Information and services applicable to all One-Stop Partners will be available throughout the system.⁴ Universal access is also achieved through self-service use of New Jersey's Public Information Network (WNJPIN) web site, <http://www.wnjpın.state.nj.us/>. WNJPIN brings together various sources of labor market information including America's Talent Bank and America's Job Bank. Information will be provided through Internet sites and in hard copy. In addition, New Jersey will be implementing the self-service module of Workforce Investment System (WINS), One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), that will allow self-registration and collect information from customers related to the services they request or require. This information on the job-seeker customer will be useful to counselors in assisting the job-seeker and to program managers and WIBs in determining what services are needed by the customer base.

To provide services to persons with disabilities, information will be provided using the appropriate media type or through the use of trained interpreters. Information on services may also be provided in multiple languages to meet the needs of specific segment of the population. Access to bilingual interpreters to assist customers may be available where appropriate.

New Jersey's system is service based; hence, core, intensive and training services authorized under the WIA and the State-funded Workforce Development Partnership Program will be available and supported by all partner agencies. Every effort will be made through state and local cooperation to make the individual program silos appear invisible to the customers of the system. Each local area in the State will have at least one center that provides the full range of core services for all One-Stop Partners. Access to intensive and training services may also be available at this site. In addition to programs designated for the core site, the system has the ability to expand on the options for individuals with special needs. These individuals will be able to learn of more specialized services that can meet their particular needs. They will also be able to receive an appointment for such services at an affiliate center. Some of the identified affiliate centers include adult high schools, community colleges, rehabilitation centers, and community-based organizations.

By adopting a unified planning approach to workforce investment, New Jersey has firmly

³ Chapter One, Section 1.5

⁴ Chapter One, Section 1.5

established that universal access is essential in a One-Stop system and is only truly achieved when all the various workforce investment partners collaborate.

- ***For customers who need training, how will informed customer choice and the use of the Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) be maximized?***

The success of any training program can and will be measured by many indicators. However, to enhance individual choice and help ensure that an individual has the opportunity to engage in training that will put an individual on a career path leading to economic self-sufficiency, comprehensive information on providers, performance data, local labor market prospects, demand occupations and other employment statistics will be made available. This array of and will be utilized by counselors in the system to assist individuals in making informed choices and will be available to customers for better career decision-making.

The State of New Jersey is looking at ITAs as only one part of potential training subsidies. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) will join the state funded Workforce Development Partnership (WDP) grants, PELL Grants, and other funding sources to provide financial assistance to those in need of training. The Tuition Waiver Program, a state program to which all state colleges and universities participate, is another state resource. In addition, the State already encourages local agencies to look broadly at sources of funding for training and maximize available resources.

A comprehensive service provider assessment system that includes performance data has been under development by the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. This system as planned will be Internet-based but also available in hard copy. Information will be available for individuals planning on entering training, counselors assisting in individual assessments, and program administrators at the local and state levels.⁵

- ***How will Wagner-Peyser Act and unemployment insurance services be fully integrated into the system?***

A significant number of customers of the workforce investment system will initially enter the Unemployment Insurance (UI) system. When individuals become unemployed and enter this system, early intervention is needed to minimize duration of unemployment. Exposure to an array of services available in the Employment Services (ES) at the earliest possible date is accomplished in conjunction with the filing of the initial claim. One part of this process will be the linkage of information from customers applying for Unemployment Insurance compensation through the State's remote call-in center process with America's Talent Bank (ATB). Currently, New Jersey is piloting a project with its Rapid Response team to start taking UI claims over the Internet and have the information collected to start building a Talent Bank resume. UI customer information will also interface with WINS/OSOS self-service registration.

In addition, when an individual is profiled for services, it is mandatory that the individuals participate in the re-employment services. New Jersey will build on its profiling and re-

⁵ Please see Section II.C of this Chapter.

employment service system for Unemployment Insurance claimants. New Jersey uses a statistical model to predict a claimant's probability of exhaustion of UI benefits. The model will be reviewed on at least a yearly basis to ensure its continued validity. Additional information on re-employment services for the profiled claimants can be found later in this chapter.⁶

For individuals not profiled, there are services available. These initially start with self-service and proceed through the various levels based on the needs of the individual. When the UI operation conducts its Eligibility Review Program, individuals who appear to need more involved services than those already offered may be scheduled for those services. This encompasses all services in the WIA system including those provided by Employment Service, adult education and literacy and special services for targeted populations.

- ***How will the State's workforce investment system help achieve the goals of the State's welfare, education, and economic development systems?***

Since the issuance of *A Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System* in 1992, New Jersey has viewed this system as encompassing all education, employment and training programs and services. The plan is available at <http://www.wnjp.in.state.nj.us/onestopcareercenter/setc/stplan.html>. New Jersey views education and welfare-to-work as part of the workforce investment system with strong ties to economic development.

The previous chapter sets forth broad goals for welfare, education and economic development. New Jersey's workforce investment partners, the state departments of Community Affairs, Education, Health and Senior Services, Human Services and Labor, along with the Commerce and Economic Growth Commission and the Commission on Higher Education jointly plan for programs and services within this context. This common philosophy is reflected in New Jersey's TANF State Plan, the State Plan for Vocational Education, the State School-to-Career and College Initiative, the Vocational Rehabilitation Plans, and the State Economic Master Plan among others.⁷

As has already been indicated, New Jersey has undertaken sustained efforts to include human capital in planning for economic development. This has gone so far as including workforce investment representatives on the Urban Coordinating Council (UCC) and Urban Enterprise Zones (UEZs). With a reliance on a demand side strategy, it is imperative that employment and training issues are an integral part of economic development strategy.

The Urban Coordinating Council is a major initiative of the Governor that targets urban neighborhoods for economic development. The UCC has the responsibility for coordinating all state initiatives that are designed to benefit urban areas. This process of programmatic coordination stresses both the economic and social aspects of urban revitalization.

The Urban Enterprise Zones come under the broad mandate of the UCC and fully integrates

⁶ See Section IV.B.7 of this Chapter.

⁷ Chapter One, Section 1.1.1

workforce issues. Workforce readiness is central to UCC policy and is reflected in both state policy and in the increasingly close links between UEZs and WIBs.

It is a major priority of New Jersey's policy that the workforce component of economic development be applied to all tiers of the New Jersey economy: from the neighborhood level up to large state level economic projects. Forging a linkage between human resource development and economic development will become an important part of New Jersey's objective for WIB Youth Councils.

- ***How will the youth programs be enhanced and expanded so young people have the resources and skills they need to succeed in the State's economy?***

The newly formed Youth Council, established by each WIB, will plan and oversee each area's programs for young people in that geographic area. The focus on youth issues and the expanded number of partners that will be defining youth needs, and ways to address them, is expected to significantly improve the system's effectiveness. New Jersey intends to strengthen the link of planning and operations for several programs targeted toward youth. The State intends to direct local Youth Councils to coordinate funding and services and maximize available resources.

The Abbott v. Burke New Jersey Supreme Court decision, which mandated the state to correct the educational disparities that exist between the 28 most disadvantaged school districts and their more affluent counterparts, will guide youth planning.⁸ The State recognizes the importance of the 28 Abbott Districts to its future economy. They represent more than 260,000 students, a significant portion of New Jersey's future workforce. New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards and whole-school reform promises to ensure that these students attain fundamental levels of literacy and basic skills and become full participants in the future economy (two of the core principles of the system). The SETC will continue to work with the Department of Education and the Commission's other partner agencies and stakeholders to support these initiatives and to ensure that these districts and their students are fully integrated into the workforce investment system.

New Jersey has several model programs for youth operating across the State. New Jersey Youth Corps has set the standard for service learning among disadvantaged youth and high school dropouts. Americorps also provides a model for review. In addition, the nationally recognized School-Based Youth Services program ties essential support services for teen parents to their school experience so that they can stay in school and succeed.

In developing an overall approach for dropout youths, New Jersey intends to use the policy framework of its New Jersey Youth Corps as a model. The Youth Corps were established in 1985 and serves high school dropouts by offering them both education and work experience.

⁸ Subsequent Supreme Court decisions have accepted the State's Core Curriculum Content Standards as the definition of what students need to learn as the result of a "thorough and efficient education." A year later, the court endorsed "whole-school reform" as an approach that can enable students in the 28 Abbott school districts to reach those goals.

The education component seeks to enable students to attain a General Education Diploma (GED). The community service component of Youth Corps engages dropouts in a wide variety of projects. These include rehabilitating houses for the homeless, working in Alzheimer's wards, and building the children's museum in East Orange, New Jersey, among others. The State regards its Youth Corps as one of its most successful initiatives in addressing the needs of dropouts and its goal is to expand the current Youth Corps program and to extend it to every WIB area. Incentives will be offered to those WIB Youth Councils that adopt the Youth Corp model for serving dropouts.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The state views this as a unified strategic plan whose focus is broader than WIA. To achieve our objectives collaboration must extend beyond WIA funded activities, leveraging the resources and initiatives of the larger system. Both the needs of in-school and out-of-school at-risk youth must be considered. Of particular concern are eligible youth in Abbott districts. The state will encourage WIBs to involve superintendents from these districts on their youth councils and to solicit input from all districts in a WIB area. However, WIA funds will not be used to supplant state aid funding to any school district.

- C. 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. At a minimum, States must identify the performance indicators required under section 136, and, for each, the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal (the "State-adjusted level of performance") for each of the first three program years. States may want to use a chart such as the one in Attachment B. States are encouraged to address how the performance goals for local workforce investment areas and training providers will help them attain their statewide performance goals.***

The State of New Jersey will adopt the performance standards contained in the Workforce Investment Act for the State's entire workforce investment system, including standards to measure outcomes for the local areas, One-Stop Partners and service providers. Each component of the system will have a continued impact on the other components. The One-Stop system will be judged broadly on the basis of the success or failure of all partners and their contributions. Standards set under the Unified State Plan will be the standards for New Jersey's workforce investment system.

It is recognized that each of the participating members of the system may have additional performance expectations relating directly to their specific function. These are most often driven by their funding source. Other standards or evaluation measures intended to measure the process of delivering workforce investment services will be considered secondary to the core measures.

The State will set performance expectations for each of the core, intensive and training services described in the Act. These will be considered Governor's Standards and will be

developed with broad consensus of the One-Stop Partners over the first two years of the program. These standards will be based on protocols adopted by all One-Stops statewide. Process measures will be used to provide management information to program operators and administrators to insure that their program is operating at optimal levels of efficiency and effectiveness. However, they will not be used for incentives or sanctions.

Performance standards will not use terminations as a denominator. In other words, the participant does not have to leave the system for the provider of service to take credit for accomplishments. This new way of measuring performance recognizes that many of our customers who need services beyond core services also require more than one service to retain employment. Because non-termination based measures have implications for the entire system, Individual Service Strategies will be designed to guide the customer through concurrent or sequential activities. Post employment services, such as mentoring and job coaching will become more prevalent and important. Technical assistance aimed at addressing these topics will be developed early in the transition to WIA to ensure that all providers understand the implication of the change and incorporate it into their program design.

New Jersey will adopt the following as core indicators for individuals receiving more than self-services and information:

Youth age 19-21 and adults:

- Entry into unsubsidized employment
- Retention in unsubsidized employment
- Earnings received in unsubsidized employment
- Attainment of recognized credential

Youth age 14-18:

- Attainment of basic skills
- Attainment of secondary school diploma or equivalent
- Placement and retention in post secondary education, or advanced training, military service, employment or qualified apprenticeship

Customer Satisfaction for:

- Participants
- Employer

Core indicators will be applied to:

- The State
- Designated Planning Regions (if any)
- Each Workforce Investment Area
- Each provider, vendor or approved school
- Each program or course of study

Although WIA core indicators currently exclude those who receive self-service and labor market information, New Jersey is committed to the value of these activities; therefore, specific Governor's Standards will be developed to include these activities.

Information on individuals will be grouped by the following constituencies:

- Recipients of public assistance
- Out-of-school youth
- Veterans
- Individuals with disabilities
- Displaced homemakers
- Older individuals
- Dislocated workers

The State Employment and Training Commission contracted with the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development for the development of a comprehensive vendor evaluation and performance management system.⁹

The State vendor/course evaluation system will use the core measures of performance and present them by vendor for each of the seven constituencies listed above. Initially, vendors will be ranked in relation to their performance relative to similar courses statewide. Visual indicators of performance on the "report card" will indicate the quartile of performance. In the longer term, the local adjustment system will be refined to use participant characteristics and local economic conditions in a manner similar to that currently used to measure JTPA performance. The result will be a New Jersey specific model of local adjusted standards. For customer satisfaction, New Jersey will build on some prior work done by the various partners in the system. For example, the New Jersey Department of Labor contracted with Rowan University to develop a baseline measure for the One-Stop Career Center system. This work, completed in November 1997, will be expanded on in future efforts.

Expected statewide levels for the first three years will be negotiated with the USDOL as soon as guidance is received. New Jersey will meet the negotiated levels and make any necessary adjustments to this plan. WIA standards will become effective by July 1, 2000.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Our plan was not written anticipating the narrow perspective that focuses only on WIA funded activities. Our development timetable extending over two years applies to the One-Stop standards that we intend to develop. That timetable may now need adjustment to account for the total absence of a comparable federal effort. One-Stop performance will not be measured using Governor's standards until the standards are developed. These will be Governor's standards and state policy will guide them. New Jersey's One-stop standards will be used to track progress to meet our strategic goals and implement our vision for the workforce investment system. Prescribed performance standards for WIA-funded-only activities only will conform to Federal guidance.

State adjusted levels of performance for WIA funded activities are not included in the plan because there is currently no basis for such adjustment. Negotiated levels for WIA-funded-only

⁹ Please refer to Chapter One, section 1.7 for a more complete discussion.

activities will be submitted approximately three months before full implementation of WIA funded activities. It is our understanding that these levels will be for one year and that sanctions will not apply for that year.

Customer satisfaction indicators will be the three essential questions issued to early implementation states on May 26, 1999 plus other relevant questions determined by the state. The plan was submitted on April 1, consequently they are not included in the plan. The three essential questions will be asked of all WIA-funded-only program participants and employers in accordance with any federal guidance issued. Work already done by Rowan University will form the basis of our system.

Timeframes for WIA-funded-only performance standards will comply with federal guidance concerning timeframes.

III. ASSESSMENT

A. Market Analysis

- 1. *Describe the key trends that are expected to shape the economic environment of the State during the next five years. Which industries are expected to grow? Which will contract? What are the economic development needs of the State? What data sources support the State's market analysis?***

The economic environment affects all parts of the workforce investment system and not just those programs covered under Title I.¹⁰ Public use data has been used in the market analysis. In the future, normal data sources will be supplemented by employer focus groups to provide insight into the actual needs of the employers. This function will be utilized by many parts of the WIA system and assist in the development of new training programs to meet the needs of the employers and job seekers. Analysis of transactional data from various systems will be used to gather information on trends of employer needs and job seeker skill availability.

- 2. *Identify the implications of these trends in terms of overall availability of employment opportunities by occupation, and the job skills necessary in key occupations.***

See Chapter One.¹¹

- 3. *Who are the customers of the State's workforce investment system? States may wish to identify major customer segments. (For example, the adult population might be segmented into dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults, older workers, veterans, migrant and seasonal***

¹⁰ Chapter One, Section 1.3.1

¹¹ Chapter One, Section 1.3.2

farmworkers, Native Americans, persons with disabilities, women, and minorities. The employer customer might be segmented into growth employers, large and small businesses, employers that currently use the workforce investment system and employers that do not.) The youth population might be segmented into in-school and out-of-school youth.

Consistent with the fundamental principles of the Workforce Investment Act and *A Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System*, the primary customers of the State's workforce investment system are broadly defined as all students, workers and those seeking employment as well as employers. New Jersey's customers also include those educators, planners, and counselors who assist those engaged in making adjustments in the workplace.

In reality, the workforce investment system includes all segments of the population who currently are or wish to be involved in "employment" activities. New Jersey's philosophy is that this system is one where "all means all." The workforce investment system will provide to all customers the maximum level of services to which the individual is entitled and wishes to receive. Services will be provided in either core sites or in any affiliate site designated in the local WIB plan. This includes reasonable access in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Beyond this generic identification of the job seeker/worker and employer customers, the New Jersey workforce investment system is structured with consideration of the employment related needs of individuals undergoing transitions from work-to-work, unemployment-to-work, school-to-work, welfare-to-work and home-to-work along with a concern for the lifelong learning needs of employed individuals. Specifically, within these transitional groups and under the One-Stop umbrella, customers include, but are not limited to, public assistance recipients, students and out-of-school youth, veterans, individuals with disabilities, displaced homemakers, older individuals, dislocated workers, job seekers, individuals interested in nontraditional employment, and others with multiple barriers to employment along with currently employed individuals.

In addition to the statewide picture, emphasis is placed on the major industries, growth sectors and the unique labor market needs of individual job seekers/workers and employers within the specific service delivery areas and regions of the state.

4. *Given the projected job skills needed in the State, identify for each of your customer segments their projected skill development needs.*

Each local WIB will be asked to build on their existing needs assessments and labor market analyses to identify the job skill needs in their local areas. Under School-to-Career grants from the New Jersey Department of Education, WIBs have already conducted employer focus groups on skill development needs to assist in directing school-to-career efforts at the local level. The information gained through these focus groups will be expanded through continued consultation with local employers. The local plans will identify job skills, customer segments and skill development needs.

The Department of Labor has also published state-level information on future educational needs.

**Estimated and Projected Employment
By Education and Training Requirements, 1996-2006**

Education and Training Requirements	Annual Average Job Openings								
	1996		2006		Change: 1996-2006			New Jobs	Replacements
	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Number	Pct.	Total		
First professional degree	52,600	1.4	61,600	1.4	9,000	17.1	1,730	900	830
Doctoral degree	30,700	0.8	34,200	0.8	3,600	11.7	1,130	360	760
Master's degree	38,200	1.0	44,400	1.0	6,200	16.2	1,340	630	710
Bachelor's degree, plus experience	220,000	5.8	250,400	5.9	30,400	13.8	7,650	3,060	4,580
Bachelor's degree	505,700	13.2	607,300	14.3	101,700	20.1	20,890	10,260	10,630
Associate degree	132,400	3.5	152,700	3.6	20,300	15.3	4,230	2,090	2,140
Total High Requirements	979,600	25.6	1,150,600	27.0	171,200	17.5	36,970	17,300	19,650
Postsecondary Vocational training	271,700	7.1	283,600	6.7	11,900	4.4	6,980	1,740	5,240
Work experience in related occupation	309,900	8.1	333,600	7.8	23,600	7.6	9,420	3,050	6,370
Long-term on-the-job training	248,700	6.5	269,700	6.3	21,000	8.4	8,180	2,630	5,550
Total Moderate Requirements	830,300	21.7	886,900	20.8	56,500	6.8	24,580	7,420	17,160
Moderate-term on-the-job training	497,600	12.9	518,700	12.2	21,200	4.3	14,930	4,890	10,050
Short-term on-the-job training	1,513,300	39.6	1,689,100	39.8	175,900	11.6	59,410	19,280	40,130
Total Low Requirements	2,010,900	52.5	2,207,800	51.9	197,100	9.8	74,340	24,170	50,180
Total All Occupations*	3,820,600	100.0	4,245,400	100.0	424,700	11.1	135,880	48,890	87,000

*Notes: *For "Total All Occupations" the Average Annual New Jobs will not equal annualized "Employment Change" since, for declining occupations, new jobs are tabulated as zero since no net job growth is projected, while the employment change is based solely on the difference between 1996 and 2006 employment totals. Note that occupational data include estimates of self-employed and unpaid family workers and are not directly comparable to the industry employment total.*

Totals may not add due to rounding. Employment data are rounded to nearest hundred. Percentages and percent changes are based on unrounded data.

*Prepared by: N. J. Department of Labor
Labor Market and Demographic Research
Occupational and Demographic Research
September 1998*

B. State Readiness Analysis

1. Leadership

a. State Workforce Investment Board.

- i. Describe the organization and structure of the State Workforce Investment Board. Did you create a new Board or are you using an alternative entity as the Board? If you "grandfathered" an existing Board, (1) state whether the Board existed on December 31, 1997, (2) state whether the Board was established under the Job Training Partnership Act (as a State Human Resource Investment Council or State Job Training Coordinating**

Committee under JTPA section 122 or Title VII) or is “substantially similar” to the WIA membership requirements, and (3) describe how the Board includes, at a minimum, representatives of businesses and labor organizations in the State.

New Jersey has established the State Employment and Training Commission as the State Workforce Investment Board. The State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) was established by state statute in 1989, clearly before the December 1997 deadline prescribed by WIA. The purpose of the SETC is:

To develop and assist in the implementation of a State employment and training policy with the goal of creating a coherent, integrated system of employment and training programs and services which, in concert with the efforts of the private sector, will provide each citizen of the state with equal access to the learning opportunities needed to attain and maintain high levels of productivity and earning power.¹²

The SETC serves as the State Job Training Coordinating Council required under the Job Training Partnership Act as a part of its duties. The statutory responsibilities of the Commission are broad and easily encompass the functions of the State Workforce Investment Board called for in the Workforce Investment Act. The Commission membership is substantially similar to the membership requirements set forth in the new law. Any proposed changes in the membership of the SETC will be consistent with the overall intent of WIA.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey is in the process of deciding whether to reconstitute the SETC to be fully compliant with WIA by January 1, 2000. Until that time, the SETC as constituted is the State Board. State law establishing the SETC will be amended to be WIA compliant, if necessary.

It is important to note that the Governor's Office has been oriented to the importance of this entity in meeting future demands. Regular communication between the SETC and the Governor's Office has included any areas of deficiency and possible corrective actions. This has ensured active participation by appointees.

There are some additional guidelines provided to the local elected officials on criteria for membership on the local boards. This informational packet as well as the orientation materials provided to the elected officials emphasizes the importance of appointing highly qualified individuals to state and local Workforce Investment Boards.

- ii. Identify the organizations or entities represented on the Board. If you are using an alternative entity which does not contain all the members required under section***

12 PL 1989, c. 293, s.8

111(b)(1), describe how each of the entities required under this section will be involved in planning and implementing the State's workforce investment system as envisioned in WIA. How will this alternative entity achieve the State's WIA goals?

Appendix 6 provides a list of categories of membership for the State Employment and Training Commission. The functions of the State board in meeting the goals set forth in sections 111(a-c), 111(e), 112(b)(1) are in perfect keeping with the purpose and requirements of the SETC as contained in NJAC 34:15C-5 through 34:15C-13.

Additional Response June 8, 2000:

Vocational Rehabilitation is a required One-Stop partner and were a part of all planning for the implementation of the One-Stop Workforce Investment System in New Jersey. Individuals with disabilities arc provided services mainly from the Departments of Human Services and Labor, and the Commissioners from those Departments each have a seat on the State Employment & Training Commission (SETC). Additionally, both the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI) contributed to the development of the Strategic Five-Year State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System.

In order to ensure that the two respective Commissioners will effectively represent the interest, needs, and priorities of the VR programs on the State Board, they along with the Commissioners of Education will name representatives for a new standing committee of the SETC. The SETC will establish this committee to explore issues and concerns of individuals with disabilities.

This standing committee will be chaired by the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation. Membership of the committee will include representatives from the following program areas:

	Labor	Human Services	Education
CBVI		X	
Developmentally Disabled		X	
Disabled Veterans	X		
Independent/Assisted Living		X	
Learning Disabled			X
Participants (teach)	X	X	X
Sheltered Workshops		X	
Supported Employment	X	X	
Vocational Rehabilitation	X		

Although services arc not duplicated between the Departments of Human Service and Labor, there are similar programs in each. The distinction is with the severity of disability or the intensity of the services to be provided. This new committee expands the basic concept of representation of the disabled by ensuring appropriate representation of programs serving this

special population. This will translate into having a representative from Human Services along with one from Labor for similar programs.

The development of strategies to address the special needs of these populations in the current and future workforce will be the initial task to be undertaken by the committee. The group will be expected to develop action plans to assist everyone in maximizing his/her potential regardless of physical or mental barriers. These strategies will be based on the requirements of WIA, New Jersey's Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan and the SETC's already published report on Persons with Disabilities, **Opportunity for All**, which has been submitted to USDOL as part of the State Plan.

New interdepartmental requirements will not be necessary since both the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired will be represented on this new committee.

The Commissioners of Labor and Human Services represent the Client Assistance Program on the State Employment and Training Commission. At the local level, the Vocational Rehabilitation representative to the local Workforce Investment Board represents the CAP.

The Client Assistance Program in New Jersey provides advocacy services for individuals with disabilities through the New Jersey Protection and Advocacy, Incorporated. The Rehabilitation Act provides the funding for this private agency as well as for the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. The purpose of this agency is to handle complaints and problems as reported by the individuals seeking services. The standing committee under the SETC will be a vehicle for the statewide interests and concerns of individuals with disabilities and the agencies such as CAP who serve the clients. Again, the Commissioners of Labor and Human Services are members of the State Employment and Training Commission and will provide representation for the interests for all of the agencies serving individuals with disabilities.

As previously noted, the needs of individuals who are disabled are also represented at the local level on Workforce Investment Boards. Additionally, the One-Stop system includes all of the partners and agencies, such as CAP, which provide services.

Additional Response July 25, 2000:

The grandfathered State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) will involve the Client Assistance Program (CAP) in planning and implementing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) through the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation within the New Jersey Department of Labor and through the Division of Developmental Disabilities and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired affiliated with the New Jersey Department of Human Services. The Directors of these agencies will actively consult with the Director of the Client Assistance Program. In addition, the special committee to explore issues and concerns of individuals with disabilities, chaired by the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and described in our June 8, 2000 response, will be formed immediately. Further, the Director of the CAP will be invited to attend SETC meetings.

The SETC will ensure that individuals with significant disabilities who are seeking or receiving services through the One-Stop system will be notified of the existence of, the availability of, and how to contact, the client assistance program.

Upon passage of the state legislation that will bring the SETC into full compliance with WIA, without being grandfathered, the CAP will be represented as describe in the previous response to this question submitted on June 8, 2000.

- iii. Describe the process your State used to identify your State Board members. How did you select Board members, including business representatives, who have optimum policy-making authority and who represent diverse regions of the States as required under WIA? Describe how the Board's membership enables you to achieve your vision described above.**

Board members are recommended to the Governor by various business organizations in New Jersey, the AFL-CIO, the Council of County Colleges and others. The Governor nominates individuals based on their qualifications for and potential contributions to the work of the SETC, their party affiliation (which must be balanced), and the geographic region of the State in which they live. Nominations are approved with the advice and consent of the Senate.

In addition, current members of the SETC assist in encouraging the active participation of a wide range of individuals from the public and private sectors. The SETC also has an established practice of forming ad hoc committees to focus on specific issues including: the needs of at-risk youth, the concerns of individuals with disabilities, gender equity and workforce training for incarcerated individuals. These committees have SETC members as well as others with subject area expertise. All committees have representatives from each of the State agencies on the Commission. This has enabled New Jersey to engage in broad planning across programs and agencies for the past several years. This inclusive process provides a solid foundation for achieving the State's vision for the workforce investment system. Collaboration has and will continue to be a hallmark of New Jersey's planning efforts.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Various entities make recommendations to the Governor for positions on the Board. The referral process involves businesses, business groups, and organized labor. A review by the Governor's staff as to qualification of the referrals is done to ensure the appropriate qualifications of individual for this group. In addition the SETC staff consults with Prosperity New Jersey, The State Chamber of Commerce, New Jersey Business and Industry Association and others to gain their judgement about the qualifications of the individuals.

- iv. Describe how the State Board will carry out its functions. How will this Board provide direction-setting leadership for the statewide system?**

The SETC has a legislative mandate to draw on the resources of all workforce investment agencies and jointly plan for the optimum use of those resources in providing a high-quality workforce investment system that meets the needs of those in need of assistance. Private sector leadership has been key to the SETC's efforts thus far and will continue to be into the future.

Under the leadership of the Commission's Chair and the Commissioner of the Department of Labor, a Cabinet-level group, comprised of the Commissioners and Executive Directors of the workforce investment agencies represented on the SETC and others, has been formed. The Departments of Community Affairs, Education, Human Services, Transportation, and Treasury, as well as the Commissions on Commerce and Economic Growth and Higher Education and the Governors Office are represented. This group will meet regularly to discuss policy initiatives and actions that require the direct involvement of the Cabinet officials and/or the Governor. The chief function of this group will be to ensure that the goals and objectives agreed to in the Unified State Plan are appropriately implemented, thereby reinforcing the leadership and authority of the SETC to serve as the policy-making body for the workforce investment system.

The SETC is expanding its Core Planning Group to include local elected officials and additional private sector and private, non-profit representatives. This group will serve as an ongoing One-Stop implementation team to monitor day to day implementation, guide One-Stop activities and generally oversee the continual changes to the One-Stop system.

This linking of the SETC's policy-making and oversight role with the operational role of the relevant state agencies is the next logical step in New Jersey's efforts to streamline workforce investment activities.

v. *How will the State Board coordinate and interact with the local WIBs?*

In its unique position as the statewide entity leading the vision for New Jersey's workforce investment system, the SETC coordinates and interacts with WIBs on several levels.

- SETC provides opportunities for local input through regularly scheduled meetings and broad based policy sessions. WIB directors and staff meet each month with the Executive Director and staff of the SETC to discuss relevant issues, provide input to State policy, exchange information and clarify policy direction. These sessions are used to gain valuable local input to policy issues and to provide a forum where WIB staff can communicate problems and technical assistance needs to the State.
- The SETC convenes special meetings to deal with concerns in specific areas. Direct local input is sought during the development of all guidelines and instructions to local WIBs.
- SETC staff frequently reaches out to WIB staff during the policy development process to gain the WIB perspective.
- Local plans are submitted to and reviewed by the SETC in conjunction with an interagency

team. Direct feedback on all plans is provided to WIBs.

- Evaluation and monitoring of WIB performance is a function of the SETC.
- SETC meets regularly with WIB Chairs to discuss policy issues.
- SETC reviews performance and provides or arranges for technical assistance as needed.
- SETC staff is available to attend WIB meetings to ensure policy coordination. Consideration is currently being given to assigning SETC staff to attend all WIB meetings in a technical assistance capacity.
- Consideration is also being given to include a representative from the WIB Chairs on the SETC.
- The SETC will provide oversight for WIB activities and provide recommendations to the Governor concerning decertification of WIBs. Decertification may occur based on fraud, abuse, failure to meet performance standards for two consecutive years or non-performance as defined under WIA.

The SETC is in the process of developing expectations for WIB operations. These expectations will be added to the WIB Guidelines after full consultation with WIB Chairs, Directors and local elected officials. Included will be expectations for oversight, dispute adjudication, creation of subcommittees, staffing, by-laws, meeting schedules and others. This will include performance measures, guidance for the development of WIB parliamentary procedures, and assurance of quality staff. Adherence to guidelines will be a consideration in any formula used to distribute performance incentive awards. Failure to meet minimum expectations may be cause for decertification of the board consistent with WIA Section 117.

In New Jersey's final submission of its WIA plan clear and precise expectations will be prescribed for WIBs.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

This submission is a strategic plan. It is not an operational plan. As such, it provides the broad framework within which an operational plan would be developed. Currently, various workgroups are addressing operational issues. The local WIBs are participating in these endeavors. By October 1, 1999, there will be specific operating protocols, MOUs for the One-Stop partners and MOUs for the WIB and the CEO. A MOU for the SETC and the WIBs will be developed once local input is received.

- vi. How will the State Board ensure that the public (including people with disabilities) has access to Board*

meetings and information regarding State Board activities, including membership and meeting minutes?

In accordance with New Jersey's Open Public Meetings Act, meetings are announced in the major state newspapers prior to date. All meetings are open and the public is encouraged to attend. The SETC routinely holds public hearings and open forums during the development of all major policy documents. Any information concerning the SETC is available to the public by request and is also available through the SETC's web site. The SETC maintains an active mailing list of over 6000 individuals.

All meetings are held in accessible sites and special accommodations such as interpreters for individuals who are deaf are provided upon request. Written information is provided in alternate media upon request.

- b. Identify the circumstances which constitute a conflict of interest for any State or local Workforce Investment Board member, including voting on any matter regarding the provision of service by that member or the entity that s/he represents, and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or his or her immediate family.***

New Jersey is fortunate to have an active Executive Commission on Ethical Standards. Using guidance from this group, standards for the system will be established that include the following:

- No member of any council authorized under WIA shall cast a vote on the provision of services by that member, or any organization, which that member directly represents, or vote on any matter, which would provide direct financial benefit to that member or the immediate family of such member.
- Each local grant recipient and WIB will maintain a written code of standards of conduct governing the performance of persons engaged in the award and administration of contracts and grants. To the extent permitted by State or local law or regulation, such standards of conduct will provide for penalties, sanctions, or other disciplinary actions for violations of such standards by the awarding agency's officers, employees, or agents, or by awardees or their agents.
- Each grant recipient and WIB will ensure that no individual in a decision-making capacity will engage in any activity, including participation in the selection, award, or administration of a grant or contract supported by WIA funds if a conflict of interest, real or apparent, would be involved.
- A conflict of interest would arise whenever a firm or organization is selected for an award and there is a financial or other interest in that firm or organization by:
 - The individual,
 - Any member of the individual's immediate family,
 - The individual's partner, or

An organization which employs, or is about to employ, any of the above.

- The officers, employees, or agents of the agency and WIB members making the award will neither solicit nor accept gratuities, favors, or anything of monetary value from awardees, potential awardees, or parties to agreements.
- The term "immediate family," for conflict of interest, means an employee's spouse, child, legal ward, grandchild, foster child, father, mother, legal guardian, grandfather, grandmother, brother, sister, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and other relatives residing in the employee's household.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) is the State WIB. As such, all provisions included in this sections for WIBs applies to the SETC.

Additional Response June 8, 2000:

Chief Elected Officials appointing members to the Workforce Investment Board certify, in writlm-1. to the State Employment & Training Commissioner that they have made appointments consistent with WIA Section 117(b)(2). Guidelines for establishment of Workforce Investment Boards were submitted as Appendix 5 to New Jersey's October submission of Chapter One, Part II.. Additionally, to ensure compliance, the Division of Employment and Training, under the oversight of the SETC, will monitor local documentation.

- c. Identify the criteria the State has established to be used by the chief elected official(s) in the local areas for the appointment of local Board members based on the requirements of section 117.***

A copy of WIB Membership Guidelines is included in Appendix 7.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

As of the submission date of this plan, the current WIBs authorized under the Governor's Executive Order #36 and the Job Training Partnership Act exist. There has been no split in the Middlesex/Somerset/Hunterdon WIB as of this date. Once this plan is approved and the WIA requirements are effective, the issues of WIB changes will be addressed. If changes are made, appropriate notification will follow.

The local One-Stop Committees described in the plan represent all One-Stop partners. These committees are highly effective as currently constructed. The purpose and intent of maintaining this configuration was described in the Strategic Five-Year Unified Plan.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

Pages 36-38 of Chapter F Part II of New Jersey's plan responds to question III.B.I.c of the USDOL plan instructions.

The following are examples of agencies that may be chosen by the Local Elected Official to represent the One-Stop partner, if the partner agency agrees, for those partners listed in your question:

Partner Agency Representing the Partner	
Older Americans Program	Older American's Program Representative or the One-Stop Operator
Trade Act Program	Trade Act Program Representative or the Workforce New Jersey Manager
Veterans Employment and Training Services Programs and Title I National Programs	Veterans Employment and Training Services Programs and Title I National Program Representatives or the Workforce New Jersey Manager or the One-Stop Operator
Community Service Block Grant Programs	Community Service Block Grant Program Recipients Representative or the One-Stop Operator
Welfare-to-Work Programs	County Board of Social Services Representative or Local Human Services Advisory Council Director/Coordinator or Chair, or the One-Stop Operator
Department of Housing and Urban Development Programs	Department of Housing and Urban Development Program Recipient Representative or the One-Stop Operator

Regarding the suggestion that language be added concerning nomination procedures, these were not included in the State guidelines because they are adequately described in the law.

The State expects that all Local Workforce Investment Boards and their Youth Councils to be operating in full compliance with the WIA requirements by July 1, 2000. All areas have formed or are in the process of completing appointments to their Youth Councils. These bodies are currently assisting WIBs by providing guidance for the youth portion of their local plans.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

New Jersey did not use the alternative formula for Program Year 2000.

d. Allocation Formulas.

- i. *If applicable, describe the methods and factors (including weights assigned to each factor) your State will use to distribute funds to local areas for the 30% discretionary formula adult employment and training funds and youth funds pursuant to sections 128(b)(3)(B) and 133(b)(3)(B). Describe how the allocation methods and factors help ensure that funds are distributed equitably throughout***

your State and that there will be no significant shifts in funding levels to a local area on a year-to-year basis.

Because New Jersey will be transitioning to full WIA implementation during Program Year 1999, funds will be allocated using the JTPA formula of 1/3 unemployment, 1/3 excess unemployment and 1/3 number of disadvantaged adult and youth and the hold harmless provisions prescribed by the JTPA will be used. During PY '99, the WIA formula guidelines will be used for determining the allocation for subsequent years including the exploration of using 30 percent of the funds based on a formula that takes into account factors relating to excess poverty or excess unemployment.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey does not intend to use the discretionary formula at this time because it appears to exacerbate the problem that will be caused by the lack of hold harmless for the first two years. We reserve the option of using the formula if it is determined that its use can produce a more equitable distribution.

ii. Describe the State's allocation formula for dislocated worker funds pursuant to section 133(b)(2)(B).

Again, during the transition of Program Year 1999, New Jersey will allocate dislocated worker funds using the JTPA formula. The JTPA formula is consistent with the WIA formula. The following are the legislated factors and the data used to allocate dislocated worker funds:

<u>Prescribed Factors</u>	<u>Data Series</u>
Insured Unemployment data	Insured Unemployment
Unemployment Concentrations	Total Unemployment
Plant closing or mass layoff	Insured Unemployment
Declining Industries data	# of manufacturing employees
Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardship	No data series
Long term unemployment data	Insured Unemployment

The data series are equally valid, accurate and appropriate consequently they are weighted equally. The formula will be reviewed during PY '99.

iii. For each funding stream, include a chart that identifies the formula allocation to each local area for the first fiscal year, describe how the individuals and entities represented on the State Board were involved in the development of factors, and describe how consultation with local boards and local elected officials occurred.

A table of allocations of Adult, Summer Youth and Dislocated Worker funds for PY 1999 appears in Appendix 8. These allocations are based on the JTPA formula. During PY '99, the formula allocation will be reviewed against WIA guidelines by the SETC, in consultation with

local boards and officials, through a subcommittee of the SETC.

- e. 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.*

At the State level, grants and contracts for activities under Title I of WIA will either be procured through the State's competitive procurement process or through the Request For Proposal process. These processes are contained in the Division of Employment and Training's Procurement and Contracting Manual.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

In keeping with the intent of the Workforce Investment Act, training services for adults and dislocate workers under Title I will be primarily provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts. However, contracts will be used under the following circumstance : (1) when the Local Workforce Investment Board determines that there are an insufficient number of training providers in the area or (2) when the Board determines that there is a training program of demonstrated effectiveness offered by a community based organization or other private organization for special participant populations who face multiple barriers to employment. In these cases the Workforce Investment Act and regulations, the procurement rules contained in 29 CFR Part 97.36 will be used. Such organizations, however, may also apply for approval under the Individual Training Account system.

Youth programs under the Workforce Investment Act will be procured using these regulations. The procurement rules of 29 CFR Part 97.36 are now being used for the US Department of Labor Welfare-to-Work Program.

Where the procurement process is required, the state agency will continue to promote open and free competition that has become a standard model through the Request-for-Proposal system. Local Boards (and administering agencies) will continue to maintain inventories of training and service providers and advertise the availability of the procurement process to promote open competition to obtain the fullest menu of potential program options for customers. In terms of the need to commit to rewarding training and service providers that can show or commit to good outcomes, Local Boards and administrative entities will continue to be required to select such providers and their programs on the basis of demonstrated effectiveness in terms of job placement, wages at placement and follow-up, cost, quality of training, administrative capability and other related criteria. Such criteria will also take into account the new performance standards requirements of the Workforce Investment Act.

The procurement and contracting requirements will be issued to local areas and will center on the Federal procurement regulations at 29 CFR Part 97.36 and the Workforce Investment Act and regulations.

- f. Identify the criteria to be used by local Boards in awarding*

grants for youth activities, including criteria used by the Governor and local Boards to identify effective and ineffective youth activities and providers.

At the local level, grants for youth activities will be procured through a local competitive process as contained in the Division of Employment and Training's Procurement and Contracting Manual.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Youth provider eligibility criteria will be consistent with WIA Section 123. The state will establish performance standards for all service providers. All vendors will be measured against these standards. Performance standards will be used to measure effectiveness or ineffectiveness of providers and activities. The vendor assessment system will capture information on providers that youth and others need. The tentative date for the start of this system is on the timeline as 12-31-99.

- g. If you did not delegate this responsibility to local Boards, provide your States definition regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion at section 101(13)(C)(vi) ("an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment").***

Local boards will be asked to identify the sixth youth eligibility criterion in their local plans.

- h. State Policies and Requirements.***

- i. Describe any State policies and requirements that have been established to direct and support the development of a statewide workforce investment system not described elsewhere in this Plan. These policies may include but are not limited to:***

- . State guidelines for the selection of One-Stop providers by local Boards;***

The local board, with the agreement of the local Chief Elected Official, develops and enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with One-Stop Partners, designates One-Stop service center operators and conducts oversight of the partners and centers. The selection of the operator of a One-Stop center through a competitive process or by designating a consortium of not less than three One-Stop Partners to operate a center.

In order to recognize the needs of the local area to have as much flexibility as possible in crafting local level agreements while supporting a statewide workforce investment system and meeting the intent of WIA, partners must agree to a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOUs will define the role of each partner including the services to be provided, implementation

responsibilities, and how those services will be funded. Additional core areas included in these MOUs will be:

- How operating costs will be funded;
 - How individuals will be referred between services;
 - The terms of agreement as to duration and process for approval and/or modification; and,
 - The definition of local provisions in addition to those that the State mandates.
- In addition, all One-Stop partners will be required to use WNJIN/ATB/AJB and the to-be-developed WINS/OSOS. All job-seeking customers will be encouraged to enter their resumes in ATB by all One-Stop partners; likewise, all jobs developed by all One-Stop partners will be required to be entered into AJB.

The State Employment Service (ES) has been determined at a federal level as the provider of Wagner-Peyser services in the One-Stop operation. In addition, local ES managers will inventory services that they can provide at current levels of funding and in consideration of other state-imposed responsibilities. These inventories will be approved by the Director of the Division of Employment and Training and will become part of the One-Stop Memorandum of Understanding, as well as the local operating protocols. Employment Service can also solicit contracts to provide additional services in local areas where a demand for such services exists. To the extent to which the ES staff cannot provide the needed services, the Workforce Investment Board has the right to designate other entities to provide such services. *New Jersey presumes that ES is not is the exclusive deliverer of any service in the One-Stop system.*

The State guidelines for selection of One-Stops and the required MOUs will provide a framework for WIBs to develop comprehensive One-Stop centers and develop a process for SETC approval of MOUs and operating protocols. These guidelines will be issued prior to October 1, 1999.

- . ***The State's process to work with local boards and local Chief Elected Officials to certify existing One-Stop operators;***

WIA contains a grandfathering provision that allows the Governor, local Chief Elected Official and local board to continue to designate any One-Stop operator that was already designated prior to the enactment of the Act. A local Workforce Investment Board may be certified as a One-Stop operator only with the agreement of the Chief Elected Official and the Governor. New Jersey will approve existing One-Stop operators conditionally until the selection process is further defined. The request will be granted on a temporary basis until the Workforce Investment Act is fully implemented.

- . ***Procedures to resolve impasse situation at the local level in developing MOUs to ensure full participation of all required partners in the One-Stop delivery system;***

Impasse situations will be referred to the SETC. The SETC will refer the issues to an

interagency committee composed of state representatives of One-Stop Partners and local agencies, established by the SETC for review and recommendation.

- ***Criteria by which the State will determine if local WIBs can run programs in-house;***

Workforce Investment Boards will not be permitted to run programs.

- ***Performance information that on-the-job training and customized training providers must provide;***

Information needs for on-the-job training and customized training will be determined prior to October 1, 1999.

- ***Reallocation policies;***

The Governor will reallocate local area funds only if the state is required to make funds available for reallocation to other states by the Secretary of Labor in the prior year. The amount available for reallocation from a local area is equal to the amount of the unobligated balance of the local area allocation at the end of the program year prior to the program year for which the determination is made, if the unobligated balance of the local area exceeds 20 percent of the allocation for that year. The amount reallocated will be distributed in accordance with the federal formula to all areas that obligated at least 80 percent of their allocation in the prior year. The Governor reserves the ability to allocate up to 30 percent of these funds based on the discretionary allocation factors contained in the Act with the agreement of the SETC. Procedures for reallocation will be provided to local areas before October 1, 1999.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

On-the-Job training and customized training programs will be expected to perform similarly to classroom training programs with regard to WIA core standards. That is, customer satisfaction, skill attainment, retention, earnings gain, etc. will be used as core measures for these programs. Training providers, other than employers themselves, must meet all eligibility requirements and be included on the Statewide approval list (see Attachment I - Procedures for Determining Initial Eligibility of Training Providers for Statewide List).

The customized training program is in the process of reengineering its business processes and redesigning its MIS system to allow access via the Internet. As part of this process, all approved vendors will be listed on WNJPIN for review by potential customized training applicants. Any vendor not on the list would have to be approved before participating in the customized training program. A link to the consumer report card system will provide information on expected training outcomes that include specific skills, licenses, and/or certifications that can be expected as a result of training.

The customized training redesign also encompasses employer and worker customer satisfaction assessments of vendors. This evaluation incorporates the three WIA "Required Participant Satisfaction Questions" and the three "Required Employer Satisfaction Questions." In addition to the customer satisfaction surveys, the Workforce New Jersey Office of Customized Training is considering utilizing Rutgers University to conduct a post training "impact analysis" that would include vendor assessment. This component will be coordinated through the State Employment and Training Commission to ensure WIA compliance and uniformity of all One-Stop evaluation efforts.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

The requirements for the reallocation of adult employment and training funds are stated under Section 133 (c) of WIA. A WIB needs to have expended a minimum of 80% of the funds in each program year. Any unspent funds under the 80% requirement from the prior year will be recaptured and distributed to those WIBs meeting the 80% requirement. The distribution of the reallocated funds to those WIBs will be made using the same percentages for the current yearly allocation of WIA funds. Final fiscal data for the prior year should be submitted by the end of September of the next program year. It is planned that any reallocation of the prior year funds will be done within the second quarter of the year. Information on the reallocation procedure will be provided to the WIBs through training and written procedures.

State policies for approving transfer authority (not to exceed 20%) between the Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams at the local level; and,

Local areas may transfer up to 20 percent of their funds between Dislocated Workers and Adult funding streams only if approved by the local Workforce Investment Board based on their assessment of local customer need. The Governor supports the decision-making authority of the WIBs and will impose no further requirement.

Procedures for transfer will be provided to local areas before October 1, 1999.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

New Jersey will allow the local WIBs to transfer up to 20 percent of the funds available in a fiscal year between the adult and dislocated worker employment and training activities. Section 133 (b) (5) of WIA allows for the transfer of funds between these two programs. Procedures to transfer the funds include a letter from the WIB requesting the transfer to be sent to the Division of Employment and Training (DET) for review. The letter should include information on prior obligation and expenditure of existing funds for both programs and documentation of need by the Win. DE T will notify the WIB within 15 working days of approval or disapproval to move the funds. Information on the transfer authority will be provided to the WIBs through technical assistance and written procedures.

Policies related to priority of service for recipients of public assistance and other low-income

individuals under WIA, and veterans or other groups under the Wagner-Peyser Act;

Targeted programs such as Welfare-to-Work, Veterans' Employment, and Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers, where appropriate, will be fully integrated into the One-Stop system. Local personnel responsible for these programs have been and will be involved in the plans developed for the implementation of WIA. All those eligible for such programs will be fully served in the One-Stop Centers. Specific goals for serving the welfare-to-work population have been jointly set by the New Jersey Departments of Human Services and Labor.

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

The State Employment and Training Commission has generated a number of Task Force Reports.¹³ Specific recommendations in these reports regarding program operations will be reviewed by the Core Planning Group and incorporated into the future versions of New Jersey's Unified State Plan. The goal of these recommendations was to direct the use of program funds and by incorporating this work into the Unified State Plan, much as they are in the Attached Title I and Vocational Education Plans, they will direct all workforce investment policies and services.

- ***Policies limiting ITAs (e.g., dollar amount or duration)***

ITAs for occupational skill training, for dislocated workers, will be limited to an average of \$4,000, with exceptions approved by the WIB. ITAs for occupational skill training, for adults, will be limited to an average of \$4,000, except for low income or public assistance recipients, with exceptions approved by the WIB. The state does not limit the duration of training under an ITA.

The \$4,000 amount is consistent with dollar amount prescribed by the state Workforce Development Partnership Program (WDP). The dollar amount for ITAs may be changed to be consistent with any legislated changes in amount prescribed by WDP. No limits will be placed on ITAs under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

These issues will be addressed by work groups to meet the tentative timetable presented as a response to the first question.

13 Chapter One, Section 1.6.4

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

The NJDOI recognizes and supports the complete autonomy of local areas regarding fiscal and programmatic issues. In continued support of the WIB mission, the New Jersey Department of Labor will offer a centralized State Individual Training Account (ITA) payment system for use by all local WIBs, which will provide full fiscal support of the locally driven ITA system. This service will be provided at no cost to the local area. The anticipated advantage of using the centralized system is to relieve local areas from the burden of creating separate systems and to provide a comprehensive platform for the processing and reporting of statewide ITA activity. This will provide nearly real-time reporting and provider assessment capabilities as well as ITA fund availability by local area. Among the collateral benefits expected of this centralized system is a reduction in the administrative costs attributable to ITA payments and reporting.

The activities related to the creation of the ITA obligation and subsequent payment authorizations against the ITA will occur on OSOS. The delegation of authority to create ITAs and to approve payments against them will be vested, exclusively, with each local area. Each local area will be responsible for determining what portion of its allocation will be used specifically for ITA purposes and that amount will be reserved with the State of New Jersey for payment disbursement to service providers through OSOS as authorized by each WIB. Changes to this amount can be made by the local area at any time. The ITA allocations for each area will be segregated on OSOS. Local areas will retain the authority to determine how much of their allotment will be designated for ITAs and will retain the authority for the funds up to the point where they instruct the State to make payment. The NJDOL will assume responsibility for the funds from that point forward.

OSOS will facilitate transmittal of approved obligation and payment transaction data between the local area and service providers to the State Accounting System (NJCFSS) and it will receive updated obligation and payment details from NJCFSS. Working with the NJCFSS, OSOS will be able to provide up-to-date balances on each local area's ITA activity.

ii. Describe how consultation with local boards and local Chief Elected Officials occurred.

As indicated in Chapter One, widespread consultation with various stakeholders of the workforce investment system occurred throughout the process of the development of this plan. Local elected officials and local boards participated in the three town meetings, a special meeting hosted by the SETC and the Department of Labor where County Freeholders, WIB Chairs and Executive Directors participated and at the Public Hearing, among others.

In addition, this plan was posted on the Internet and available for review and comment. The various draft versions of this plan has been accessed over 1500 times via Internet.

iii. Are there any State policies or requirements that would act as an obstacle to developing a successful statewide workforce investment system?

No.

2. *Services: Describe the current status of One-Stop implementation in the State, including:*

a. *Actions your State has taken to develop a One-Stop integrated service delivery system statewide;*

New Jersey has been implementing a One-Stop system for the past four years. The creation of the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN) has been a significant accomplishment in linking various elements of labor market information and traditional workforce/employment data in a sophisticated manner to assist One-Stop service providers, job seekers and employers. As it continually evolves, WNJPIN will be a primary technological tool for the One-Stop system. A Garden State High-Speed Network linking all state offices and JTPA offices was put in place to effectuate communication across the agencies.

Aside from the state-level collaborative planning described elsewhere in this plan, WIBs have formed One-Stop teams of individuals from each of the local One-Stop Partners. These teams have engaged in cooperative local planning, conducted local needs assessments and recommended allocation of resources to support local systems. Further, extensive capacity-building training of managers and frontline staff has been ongoing since 1995. These sessions included computer literacy, using WNJPIN, conflict resolution and negotiation, team-building and cross-informational training. Computers have been widely distributed to One-Stop Partners, including: Employment Service offices, JTPA offices, county welfare offices, educational institutions and community-based organizations, for use by counselors and by individuals who prefer self-service access. In addition, computers were distributed to public libraries.

The New Jersey's One-Stop system is designed to achieve a seamless delivery of workforce investment services while maintaining appropriate partner identity. For instance, displaced homemaker programs need to at once be integrated into the services provided by the One-Stop system, yet also preserve their hard won identities. Indeed, the strength of the One-Stop system is ultimately found in the diversity of the programs that participate not in the submergence of that identity.

The provision of quality services results from careful planning, clear policy, dedication to achieving outcomes and a governance structure that can support the system. In addition, local One-Stop teams meet together with state officials on a bi-monthly basis to work through implementation issues, exchange ideas and discuss policy directions. State and local officials have collaborated in the layout design and client flow of One-Stop sites and are planning together for future joint agency lease negotiations.

This is accomplished by building on a foundation of collaborative policy development process that holds as its major goal the creation of a "state-based and locally-delivered workforce investment system." Contact between and among the various levels of government, workforce

investment delivery agencies and the private sector occurs in New Jersey on an ongoing basis. The institutional reflection of these interactions is found in the State Employment and Training Commission and in the Workforce Investment Boards. The quality of the New Jersey workforce investment system is ensured by these institutional collaborations.

b. The degree of existing collaboration for WIA Title I, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and all other required and optional partners;

New Jersey already enjoys a high level of collaboration between all of its One-Stop Partners. In developing and submitting the 1998-2000 Governor's Coordination and Special Services Plan, all One-Stop Partners participated in the process. The broad goals established in the introduction to that plan serve as the broad goals for all workforce investment programs and activities.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey's high degree of collaboration is described in Chapter One. That Chapter provides the preamble for this plan (Chapter Two) and other Chapters containing the plans of One-Stop partners. Collaboration can also be shown by examining membership and participation in various planning and operational bodies, such as:

- Core Planning Committee
- WIA workgroups
- One-Stop Planning process
- Task force participation - Gender Equity, Literacy, and Corrections
- Planning group for December conference
- One-Stop Technical Assistance Group
- Planning and implementation of Welfare-to-Work program with Human Services, Economic Development, and Labor
- Cooperative efforts with post-secondary for training of unemployed through tuition waiver

It should be understood that over the course of developing New Jersey's vision for WIA well over 1,000 individuals participated in the formation of policy.

3. System Infrastructure

a. Local Workforce Investment Areas.

i. Identify the State's designated local workforce investment areas, including those that were automatically designated and those receiving temporary designation. How do these areas compare in size and number with the Service Delivery Areas under JTPA?

Current WIB Areas were formed in 1995 under a belief that counties or combinations of counties are the appropriate geographic units of the workforce investment system. The "county based"

system is enunciated in Executive Order Number 36 and in *A Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System*. This emphasis will not change with the advent of WIA.

Furthermore, the Departments of Education and Human Services allocate funds according to county boundaries and services generated from those funds are organized and delivered consistent with those boundaries. Consequently, county boundaries have a large influence on the designation of areas. Combinations of counties may be necessary in the areas where size does not generate sufficient allocations to make operation of a program viable.

Six Counties meet the criteria for automatic designation because of population size. These are Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Middlesex, Monmouth, and Camden. Five of these six are stand-alone areas under JTPA. Middlesex County is the exception. Middlesex County has exercised its right because of size to be designated as a local WIA area without Somerset and Hunterdon by making a formal request to the Governor. Somerset and Hunterdon may be by themselves or be joined with another area. Jersey City and Newark have applied in addition to the county and multi-county areas. We expect all current JTPA areas that do not qualify for automatic designation to request temporary designation. Using the criteria established in the Act, no areas are disqualified based on performance or fiscal integrity.

As of July 1, 1999 all current JTPA areas will be grandfathered. By July 1, 1999, New Jersey will begin a transition to recognize Middlesex County's request for automatic designation based on size. All parties have agreed to work cooperatively through this transition period so that the resolution meets the interests of the respective counties and their residents. A transition plan will be developed and agreed to by all three counties with the participation of the Greater Raritan Workforce Investment Board with final approval from the State Employment and Training Commission and the New Jersey Department of Labor. Final WIA areas will be designated by October 1, 1999.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

WIA Area designations will be made by October 1, 1999. All existing areas, meeting the requirements for grandfathering and asking to be grandfathered, will be grandfathered.

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

The SETC recommends local area designation to the Governor based on a consensus developed

among Core Planning Group members and in consultation with local elected officials and WIBs.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey has considered geographic areas and is committed to a county-based system. All major workforce investment services are county-based. Consequently, areas should be county-based. Other considerations will be financial viability, labor market issues and customer convenience. Further information will be submitted on October 1, 1999.

iii. Describe the appeals process used by the State to Hear appeals of local area designations. If any appeals were made, identify them and indicate the status of the appeal.

Appeals will be made through the SETC to the Commissioner of the Department of Labor on behalf of the Governor. Appeals must be in writing and must be received no later than ten working days after notice of designation. Responses to appeals will be issued no later than ten days after an appeal is received. Unsuccessful appeals to the SETC may be appealed to the USDOL only in cases where due process was not afforded or where the area meets the federal requirements for designation but was denied.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Appeals, if any, will be submitted when they are received.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

The role of the State Employment and Training Commission is articulated in section 1.1, 1.2, and 1.9 of Chapter 1 and throughout Chapter 2 of New Jersey's plan. The SETC played a central role in State discussions about the designation of areas. These discussions included considerations of consistency with labor market areas, geographic areas served by local and intermediate educational agencies, post secondary educational institutions, area vocational schools, and all the criteria identified in WIA Section 116 (a) (1). The SETC has articulated a county-based system. Despite this, the provisions of WIA Section 116 (a)(1)(B)(2) governing automatic designation made most of these discussions mute. Because this is the case, the SETC expects to convene a panel to explore the geographic configuration of workforce investment areas and the need for any regional areas before July of 2003. This was identified on pages 7 and 8 of the Plan.

b. Regional Planning

i. Describe any intrastate or interstate regions and their corresponding performance measures.

New Jersey will conduct a comprehensive review of areas in consultation with local WIBs, State agencies and extant Regional Planning bodies to determine appropriate interstate or intrastate

areas for regional planning, data sharing and coordinated delivery of services. Regional areas are expected to support New Jersey's "demand side" focus by anchoring the employment and training system in the labor market. Regionalization of planning efforts will enhance the "county-based" delivery system by providing meaningful geographic boundaries for labor market rationalization. For example, regional areas for transportation services may be very different from regional areas for planning or information sharing. Additionally, regional planning may be particularly appropriate for low incidence populations and for short-term economic changes such as the relocation of a major employer.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Designation of intrastate and interstate regions will be an intense consultative process that will occur throughout the five-year strategic plan. Corresponding performance measures, if any, will be Governor's standards.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

The benefits of using a regional perspective to satisfy labor market needs were articulated on pages 8-10 of the plan. However, the State does not intend to form regions without widespread consensus. The panel, described in the response above, will explore this issue further. At this time, there are no regions or regional performance standards.

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

The purpose of regional planning will be to equalize the labor market. That is, ensure that the labor market demands (e.g. jobs in less densely populated areas, skills needed in the workplace) and the labor market supply (e.g. job-seekers in more densely populated areas, skill levels) match. This includes not only job skill training, but also the matching of the location of jobs with the residence of workers. This assessment will be used to determine whether or not the transportation system is adequate to get the workers to the jobs, and whether or not the training being offered in an area is suitable to the needs of the workplace.

Local WIBs have been involved in ongoing regional planning efforts. Economic development of areas has required regional interdisciplinary planning. Increased employment opportunities in the Atlantic City casino industry have resulted in multiple cooperative WIB planning efforts. Involved in these efforts have been programs under the Departments of Labor, Education,

Human Services, and Transportation and the Commissions on Economic Development and Higher Education. State level representation has supplemented local individuals. Additional regional efforts center on issues relative to the labor market area. The dredging of the Newark Port and its related economic growth is an example.

The SETC will solicit the help of existing interstate and intrastate authorities to help define meaningful economic development planning areas.

iii. For interstate regions (if applicable), describe the roles of the respective governors, SWIBs, and LWIBs.

At the present time, there are no designated interstate regions under study. Interstate regions will be established only after an exhaustive consultation process that clearly establishes the need for and benefit of regionalization.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

No decisions have been made on interstate regions, but we do realize that there is a need for regional planning involving multiple WIBs. Governors, State Boards and Local Boards will be partners to any collaborative/cooperative efforts to regionalize.

When or if regions are established, the roles of respective Governors, state and local boards will be described.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

Potential interstate regions will be addressed as part of the work plan for the SETC panel described in the two preceding responses. No interstate regions will be created without the agreement of the Governor, the local WIBs and the SETC.

c. Selection of Service Providers for Individual Training Accounts.

Service providers identified at Section 122(a)(2) must submit an application to the local WIB containing a description of the program, program performance and cost information (actual if the program currently exists and estimated if new) and a certification that information provided is true and that the provider will meet performance and cost requirements imposed by the WIB. In order to apply, the provider must first have received approval of the cognizant state agency authorized to approve such training. Second, the training must be in a demand occupation as recognized by the Governor.

The State of New Jersey has in place certification processes for training programs. The process is not completely centralized, but there are state bodies that approve vendors and courses. The Department of Education certifies vendors under a 531 process. The vendor must complete an application with necessary documentation to receive such a certification. Credit courses at

higher educational institutions must be approved through the Commission on Higher Education. There are exceptions to this centralized process. The Department of Environmental Protection has the authority to approve certain courses and vendors for training in their area. The Casino Control Commission has the mandate to approve casino related training programs and vendors. The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has the authority to approve work adjustment training, job coaching, and other employment and related services at community rehabilitation programs.

By linking performance standards to the State 531 process, New Jersey will have a comprehensive approach to assuring the quality of outcomes. Additionally, legislation is currently being considered by the New Jersey Legislature to provide state oversight and accountability for Proprietary Schools.

The centralization of approval provides a measure of uniformity. All vendors training in a particular area must provide the same minimum level of services. This also reduces redundancy since not every local entity would need to review and approve a vendor.

Additional Response June 8, 2000:

The New Jersey State list of training providers will be used by all partners of New Jersey's One-Stop Workforce Investment System. The system will identify supported employment vendors that provide specialized services to individuals with disabilities.

Arrangements have been made with the various departments, including the Departments of Human Services, Education and Labor, and agencies, such as New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, that serve individuals with disabilities to incorporate their existing provider lists into the statewide list.

- i. Identify policies and procedures your State established for determining the initial eligibility of local level training providers, how performance information will be used to determine continuing eligibility (including a grievance procedure for providers denied eligibility), and the agency responsible for carrying out these activities.***

WIBs are encouraged to set levels of expected performance for providers that permit them to attain overall program performance. It is anticipated that performance levels may differ by provider in consideration of the kind of service provided and the target group served. Provider performance levels below the performance levels negotiated between the Governor and the WIB for the entire area must be explained, approved by the WIB, and forwarded to the SETC. Upon review and recommendation of a special interagency committee composed of state representatives of One Stop partners and local agencies, established by the SETC, the SETC will recommend to the Governor which programs will be accepted for initial eligibility.

Providers must report information consistent with that required under WIA Section 122 (d) on a quarterly basis. Failure to report verifiable, accurate data will evoke the penalties described

under WIA item (f) Section 122. These reports will be compared to the initial performance and cost information provided by the vendor. Underachievement of more than 10 percent, without action by the WIB, will result in referral of the situation to the SETC's Interagency Performance Review Committee for recommendation. Procedures for submission of vendors for inclusion/exclusion, required information, non-compliance and appeals will be provided to local areas prior to June 31, 1999. Grievance procedures contained in the State Register, pertaining to JTPA, will be modified to include WIA and One Stop partners.

The eligible provider list will be closely tied to the vendor evaluation system described earlier in this plan.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

New Jersey has established procedures for use by the local boards to determine the initial eligibility of a provider for a program of training services. This process will utilize Chapter 531 to ensure all training providers and courses are approved by an appropriate agency of State or Federal Government.

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

The State Employment and Training Commission has worked with representatives of the various departments, the local WIBs, business and labor to shape the policies. Work groups have been reviewing specific areas of concern and addressing the issues. The development of a consumer guide for selection of training has been one example of the integrated planning process. In addition, materials have been distributed to the SETC members and WIB Directors for review and comment.

Representatives of local boards, service providers, business, and labor and other members of the public have participated in various committees convened by the SETC for the purpose of refining the workforce investment system for the future. Community colleges and vocational technical schools are particularly being sought out for their comments. SETC has placed draft copies of the plan on its homepage for review by the constituents. Comments that are submitted are considered for inclusion in revisions to this State plan. The process has been an open one with input from all groups given consideration in developing the eligibility of training providers.

Town Meetings were held for the three areas of the State - North, Central, and South - to solicit comments and ideas. Over 6,000 notices were mailed to a broad range of individuals and groups that are or will be involved in the new system. Over 240 individuals participated in the three Meetings. At each of the sessions, comments from the public were considered for incorporation into this document.

Informational sessions involving the WIB Chairs, WIB Directors, and local elected officials have been held. In addition, the SETC staff has been reaching out to various constituency groups to determine their areas of concern and interest. This has truly been a collaborative process.

Draft policies and procedures have been shared with all interested parties in the early stages of development to allow for their input and gain consensus. As New Jersey moves toward a comprehensive system of evaluating service providers across all workforce investment programs and services, discussion and focus groups are being held with all those who might be affected by the changes. This type of consensus building, while time consuming, is essential for moving the system forward. This discussion will be an ongoing one as the new system takes shape.

iii. How will the State maintain the provider list?

The state will maintain the provider list within the New Jersey Department of Labor, however the list will be drawn from information provided through Skillsnet, described in chapter One. Information submitted by local WIBs will be incorporated monthly as will program information from the participant tracking system. A sample Web page was referenced earlier and is attached as Appendix 4.

New Jersey Department of Labor is collaborating with Utah and Minnesota in the development of the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS). The information available through Skillsnet will, in part, come from OSOS. This system will be used to track all One-Stop customers and will allow for the follow-up necessary to evaluate services. The system will be linked to other systems needed to track participants and finances. Although designed as a system to allow for the extension of the automated job matching system, various reports and tracking for all One-Stop services will be possible. When fully implemented, this system should replace the separate stand-alone systems that are maintained by the different partners. This includes systems at the State and local levels.

iv. What performance information on training providers will be available at every One-Stop center?

Comprehensive performance information about every approved vendor/course will be available at each One-Stop Center. This information will include completion rates, placement rates, wage information and customer satisfaction measures as well as other information about the provider and the specific training course. This information will be provided through Skillsnet as well as by hard copy. Access to the most up-to-date information will be available to every One-Stop partner agency and operator.

v. Describe the State's current capacity to provide customers access to the statewide list of eligible training providers and their performance information.

The State's current capacity is limited to fragmented information from several sources including JTPA, the State's Workforce Development Partnership Program and the Department of

Education's data on Vocational Education and Adult Literacy. However, the State will be streamlining data collection through the One-Stop Operating System. As New Jersey moves to implement the Training Provider Evaluation system, basic administrative data will be collected from each funding stream. Wage record data will be used to fill in the required information on wages.

Whereas much of the information is maintained on paper with some computer support, the process is moving to a computerized list of training providers. Some of this information is currently available on the WNJPIN site for access by the customer through the One-Stop computers.

vi. Describe the process for removing providers from the list.

The development of the provider list and consumer guide is essential to our process. Once in place, the local administrators could access current data for performance. This will provide an "early warning" for potential vendor issues and allow for intervention prior to removal of providers from the list. The vendor assessment process would involve performance indicators that need to be met. A drop in those standards would result in a warning and investigation of the issues. Failure of the vendor to correct the deficiencies within a specified period would result in sanctions against the vendor for that population group. It is possible that a vendor could perform in a satisfactory manner for one population and not another. A multi-step appeal process is being developed. The first level would be an appeal to the local WIB. If the provider is not satisfied with the determination rendered by the WIB, the appeal is moved to a state level interagency committee for review. If the committee upholds the removal, the provider will be removed from the list. There is no appeal to the USDOL. The removal from the list for failure to meet all standards is the final step in the process. Once a provider is removed from the list, the vendor will not be able to reapply as an approved vendor for a 24-month period.

d. What is your State's current capacity to deliver high quality employment statistics information to customers--both job seekers and employers--of the One-Stop system? Your response should address the products that have been developed as part of America's Labor Market Information System, the Bureau of Labor Statistics Federal-State cooperative statistical programs, and other State-generated employment statistics.

New Jersey's ability to deliver high quality employment statistics to customers is both comprehensive and far-reaching. Serving as the backbone of New Jersey's employment statistics system, the internet-based *Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network* is a vehicle that promotes the labor exchange process for both employers and jobseekers. Since its inception in 1995, WNJPIN users have recorded over 1.6 million "hits."

WNJPIN can be accessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week by anyone with a personal computer. Libraries, schools, community centers, colleges and universities, businesses and private residences are now places where jobs can be found and employers can find workers. All

One-Stop offices in the State now have WNJPIN and serve as a focal point for this electronic labor exchange.

Using the worldwide web, New Jersey's Internet system allows users to venture beyond the scope of traditional government job assistance services. WNJPIN provides links to local and regional newspaper want ads and other private sources of job and career information.

No matter where they are, WNJPIN job-seekers can look for openings using *America's Job Bank*, list resumes on *America's Talent Bank*, find day care and transportation services and more. Employers can post job orders, read resumes and find out about government services available to business. Students can learn about the world of work and obtain career and college information.

Another key component in New Jersey's employment information system is *Labor Fast Facts*. Accessed through WNJPIN or separately through its own internet address (www.state.nj.us/labor/lra), the *Labor Fast Facts* Web site contains the entire catalog of labor market data that is produced through the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) cooperative programs along with data from State programs. *Labor Fast Facts* is updated almost daily to provide the latest information to the One-Stop customer. The New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, Bureau of the Census, BLS and other employment statistics web sites can be directly accessed from *Labor Fast Facts*.

Labor Fast Fact users can obtain the latest unemployment rates and track employment and wage levels in New Jersey's nonfarm industries using data from the BLS cooperative Current Employment Statistics (CES), Covered Employment and Wage (ES-202) and Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) programs. Workforce Investment Board (WIB) planners can get 1996-2006 industry and occupational employment projections and the New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee's (NJOICC) *Guide to Demand Occupations* to determine future training needs.

Data requestors can view and download the latest population estimates for counties and municipalities as well as 1996-2010 labor force and population projections. Extensive 1990 census data are also available along with Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) data on personal income. New Jersey employer names and addresses are available to assist job seekers and wage data for hundreds of occupations from the Occupational Employment Survey (OES) will help businesses hire and keep the best employees.

To serve those customers who do not have the electronic means to access employment statistics, New Jersey also maintains a traditional method of information dissemination. More than 25 different monthly, annual and biennial reports are produced each year and made available to customers and staff of the One-Stop system as well as the general public. As required by law, most all employment statistic reports and publications are sent to New Jersey depository libraries. In addition, thousands of publications are mailed each year to interested data users.

While Internet technology may be the mainstay of delivering employment statistics, New Jersey's network for field labor market analysts is critical in maintaining the human element of

quality service to the One-Stop community. These analysts provide technical assistance to WIBs (they are encouraged to be a resource to planning committees) and to One-Stop staff and customers. Serving as resource persons, they routinely conduct training in the use of employment statistics on the Internet. Selected analysts are outstationed at One-Stop offices one day per week and provide employment statistics and related services. This "circuit rider" approach of delivering services has maximized the use of staff.

The field analysts also serve as consultants to the employer community. Companies seeking to expand or relocate often call requesting information on available labor, local wage rates or available sites. As a part of current outreach efforts, the field staff speaks at regional Employer Advisory Council meetings to promote the use of employment statistics.

- e. Describe how the work test and feedback requirements (under Section 7(a)(3)(F) of the Wagner-Peyser Act) for all UI claimants are met. How is information provided to the UI agency regarding claimant registration, claimant job referrals, and the results of referrals?***

The automated systems in the developmental stages will allow for instantaneous responses between agencies. This will allow those who are rendering the work test to inform the unemployment insurance office of potential issues involving a claimant at the time the incident occurs. In a system where the claimants will be accessing the phones for payment and other services, such immediate feedback is essential to ensure proper payments. Investigation into the possibility of enhancing the systems so that such a message raises a "pending flag" on the claim will be undertaken.

Whenever a UI claimant participating in authorized re-employment services fails to meet participation requirements, feedback is provided to UI local office representatives. Technology enables this feedback to be provided on-line and by issuing the appropriate records (i.e. NJES-572, PROS BC350) to UI representatives. A state form is used to alert UI to claimants who did not report for call-in for services, and those who did not report to an employer after referral to a job opening. UI uses this information as part of the work test of active claimants.

As the State's electronic databases are improved and linked more completely all feedback between program elements of the One-Stop Career System will have instant access to all pertinent information held by each other, this will greatly improve the work test and feedback to UI.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey has focused on reducing the duration of unemployment. Individuals are able to access information at all One-Stop sites using personal computers. Providing information over the Internet expands on the availability of information and enables individuals who are able to use the technology to access ATB and AJB immediately, and this frequently happens before the individual filing any form. The information available through the system includes information about careers, job openings, and educational and training courses.

The Department of Labor has an automated batch process in place to transfer basic information collected in claims taking to the ES registration file. This process avoids duplicative recording of information by staff and the public. Additional applicant information, that is necessary to complete a registration, is collected by ES staff on an individual basis as needed.

The Department is currently pursuing Federal automation funding to integrate aspects of the remote initial (telephone) claims taking process with the Talent Bank registration process. This concept calls for an automated link that would result in information obtained in claims taking to become the basis for a resume in the Talent Bank.

The Employment Service conducts Reemployment Orientations (ROs) for claimants who are permanently separated from their previous employer. Employment Service staff provide claimants with an overview of services available through the One-Stop and offer claimants an opportunity to voluntarily complete a registration.

As a condition of eligibility, claimants are selectively directed to complete a registration with the Employment Service when actual or perceivable job demand indicates that the claimants and employers will benefit from mandatory registration. Throughout the course of their claims, individuals may also be directed to complete a registration when it appears that this activity will enhance their availability and active search for work. This requirement generally occurs as a result of an eligibility review after the eighth week of unemployment, or when otherwise directed by the Employment Service.

The Department of Labor profiles all claimants who are permanently separated from their previous employment. Claimants who exhibit the highest probability of exhausting benefits are required, as a condition of eligibility, to participate in reemployment services. These services include aggressive job search, assistance training under the Project Reemployment Opportunity System (PROS). When it is recognized that individuals are in need of employment counseling or support services, agency staff act to link individuals with required services. Individuals who are not reemployed or enrolled in suitable training after eight weeks of participation in PROS are referred to services that are more intensive.

When claimants report to local offices for orientation, the Employment Service staff provide an overview of services available and register any individual who voluntarily wants to pursue that avenue. As a profiling state, selected claimants who are profiled are required to participate in the more intensive services. This process includes aggressive job search training under Project Reemployment Opportunity System (PROS). When it is obvious that the individuals need services of counseling or other personal services, those claimants are scheduled for such services. Individuals who fail to become re-employed or fail to be enrolled in a training activity within eight weeks are referred for additional counseling or assessment.

The use of the OES and DOT coding for UI claimants assists the ES in identifying job seekers who match listed jobs. The Automated Call-in System are utilized to generate automated calls to registered job seekers with messages concerning the availability of jobs, the scheduling of appointments, and the availability of additional services.

Claimants who do not participate as directed in employment services are referred for unemployment insurance adjudication and consequently may become temporarily or indefinitely ineligible for benefits. At present, the Department of Labor uses a manual process to refer individuals for adjudication: however, the development of OSOS will address the need to automate this process.

- f. Describe how the Wagner-Peyser Act staff participate (if applicable) in the conduct of the Eligibility Review Program reviews. Describe the follow-up that occurs to ensure that UI eligibility issues are resolved in accordance with section 5(b)(2) of the Wagner-Peyser Act.*

A major component of the One-Stop initiative is the integrated level of service provided to UI claimants. Work Test services provided by Employment Service staff have been enhanced to include services delivered to claimants beyond registration. This is expected to greatly increase the entered employment outcomes for UI claimants. Currently, UI is a partner in the local One-Stop systems and staffs are co-located with Employment Services in many areas.

Whenever a UI claimant participating in authorized re-employment services fails to meet participation requirements, feedback is provided to UI local office representatives. Technology enables this feedback to be provided on-line and by issuing the appropriate records (i.e. NJES-572, PROS BC350) to UI representatives.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Unemployment Insurance currently has an automated process to schedule eligibility review appointments for claimants either randomly or according to prescribed risk management characteristics (occupational code, duration to date, other high-risk overpayment categories). Unemployment Insurance and WagnerPeyser staff closely coordinate to assure that claimants are aware of and are taking advantage of available reemployment and training services.

C. *Assessment of Strengths and Improvement Opportunities*

- 1. *In sum, how closely aligned is your current system to your vision? Assess your current system's ability to meet the customer and economic needs identified above. What are your key strengths? What weaknesses will you need to address to move forward? Describe any opportunities or challenges to achieving your vision, including any economic development, legislative or reorganization initiatives anticipated that could impact on the performance and effectiveness of your State's workforce investment system.***

The current system is moving in the direction of New Jersey's vision. As with any strategic plan, there will be some modifications along the way. The system has a number of strengths, most notable are the vast number of professionals dedicated to improving the workforce

investment system, the understanding of all partners of the need to move forward, and willingness of all to sit at the table and discuss issues and potential solutions. The collaborative process is well underway. The system has a basic technological infrastructure in place to assist in meeting the goals of the system. Capitalizing on the State's diversity is an asset in the process. New Jersey realizes there is no one solution that fits every area. At the State and local levels, efforts have been made and will continue to include all stakeholders and the general public in the planning process. Overall, New Jersey intends to create a state-based and locally delivered workforce investment system that joins an overarching state policy framework with the diverse needs of the localities.¹⁴

2. *In moving your current system towards your vision, what are your State's priorities?*

New Jersey believes that the elements of our vision that relate to a structural change in the operation of the system, moving it toward provision of more comprehensive, effective and efficient services and improved customer satisfaction, should be undertaken first. Put another way, it is important to continually increase the overall quality of the system and to persuade its customers that the system provides "value added." It is a truism that the workforce investment system is neither as well known as it needs to be nor, to be frank, as respected as it should be. By consciously targeting the needs of its customers, the workforce investment system will be able to gain the esteem that it seeks. Achieving that goal is a major priority for New Jersey.¹⁵

IV. STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

A. *Leadership: How will you overcome challenges to align your current system with your vision? How will you meet the needs of each of the major customer groups identified in Section III? How will the State implement WIA's key principles of, local flexibility, and a strong role for local Boards and for businesses? In your discussion, you must address the following required elements:*

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

New Jersey will continue to improve coordination of workforce investment activities in the following ways:

- New Jersey is undertaking the implementation of a unified One-Stop system that fully

¹⁴ For a broader discussion of the State's current system and vision, please refer to Chapter One.

¹⁵ Please refer to Chapter 1.1.1

incorporates all required and optional One-Stop Partners. Planning efforts are underway at the State and local levels to integrate programs and services as much as possible.

- The performance management system covers all One-Stop Partners and services. In this way, both the State and local areas will be held accountable for implementing a streamlined system.
- The State has and will continue to develop and provide capacity building for the One-Stop system. These staff training activities will be conducted within the One-Stop context.

State level barriers to coordination will be addressed through the State level implementation team and Cabinet-level group, as described in Chapter One. A number of the goals set forth in this Plan will require constant attention to ensure full coordination.

- 2. Describe how the State will assist local areas in the evolution of existing local One-Stop delivery systems. Include any statewide requirements for One-Stop systems, how the State will help local areas identify areas needing improvement, how technical assistance will be provided, and the availability of state funding for One-Stop development. Be sure to address any system weaknesses identified earlier in the plan. Include any state level activities that will assist local areas in coordinating programs.***

The departments represented on the State Employment and Training Commission have been working to ensure input from the local areas in committees that are developing policies, processes, and protocols for the operation of One-Stop Centers. Organizational barriers are being eroded as these participants start discussing "our" programs instead of "my" programs. Common definitions for use in the system are being developed across department lines, using common terminology, and common sense. Buy-in at all levels of the operating system is being supported by state entities. All parts of the system have agreed to the vision and mission statement put forth by the SETC as the starting point of the developing workforce investment system.

The State is assisting local areas in the evolution of the One-Stop system in a multitude of ways. The following briefly identifies them:

- The State has been a leader in the establishment of Workforce Investment Boards and a Human Resource Investment Council.
- The Governor has formed a Cabinet Committee composed of the Commissioners of Labor, Education, Human Service, and Commerce to eliminate barriers and oversee implementation of WIA.
- The State has begun development of a system to provide information about training vendors through the program vendor tables in the current JTPA participant tracking system.

- The State is exploring modification of the vendor voucher payment system established to support the state-funded Workforce Development Partnership Program for use by WIA Areas.
- The State has shared information concerning the leases for local offices and has asked WIBs for suggested sites to open One-Stop Centers where partners can co-locate.
- The State has applied for and received \$11.8M of federal One-Stop technology funds to support the One-Stop system.
- The State has been instrumental in establishing the John J. Heldrich Center to be a focal point in the development and delivery of capacity building and technical assistance to One-Stop Partners.
- The State is one of three states in consortia to be a test site for the implementation of the One-Stop Operating System.
- The State has established a One-Stop Performance Standards Committee composed of representatives of each of the One-Stop Partners including local representation.

The State has established a committee of local WIB staff and program operators to recommend criteria for One-Stop systems. Recommendations from this committee will form the basis of any additional state requirements. The Core Planning Group will review all recommendations developed by this committee.

Overall, New Jersey intends to engage in the most exhaustive and systematic strategic planning process to prepare the WIBs to meet their new obligations. The transfer of One-Stop responsibilities to the WIBs is no small matter. WIBs will need to carefully craft local processes and procedures to both ensure the quality of the One-Stops and the fairness in the allocation of resources. Using the JTPA 2% transition funds, the State will be able to provide WIBs with the resources to develop the planning expertise they will need to effectively coordinate programs. Through the Heldrich Center and the Higher Education Alliance, the State will provide ongoing technical assistance to the WIBs as they undertake this transition.¹⁶ At all stages, State officials will be available to work with WIBs eliminate programmatic and regulatory barriers that may adversely affect this process. Moreover, the State will provide oversight during this transition period including the approval of WIB plans to assure their compliance with the policies developed in this plan as well as those promulgated by the USDOL.

3. How will your State build the capacity of Local Boards and youth councils to develop and manage effective programs?

As was indicated above, the State through the John J. Heldrich Center will design and deliver training for local Workforce Investment Board members, including Youth Councils, and staff.

¹⁶ The Higher Education Alliance consists of a coalition of higher education institutions committed to improving the quality of the workforce investment system.

An initial Primer on the Workforce Investment Act was developed and distributed in 1998. Work is already underway on additional Primers for board members. Extensive cross training for board staff and One-Stop front-line staff is also planned through the Center and other appropriate means.

4. Describe how any waivers or workflex authority (both existing and planned) will assist the State in developing its workforce investment system.

New Jersey is requesting a Work Flex waiver to facilitate implementation of One-Stop workforce investment services. New Jersey is committed to One-Stop delivery of all Workforce Readiness services to New Jersey residents. New Jersey's One-Stop system is designed to fundamentally change the way workforce investment services are delivered. The waivers sought by this request are intended to provide state and local administrators with a level of flexibility to accomplish all that is promised by the One-Stop system

The following are the purposes of New Jersey's request for Work Flex waiver authority:

- Removing artificial barriers to eligibility
- Common performance standards and policies
- Unified planning
- Greater emphasis on capacity building
- Simplified programmatic requirements
- Improved customer choice
- Simplified procurement and financial practices

We expect that the granting of these waivers will yield an overall increase in performance. General waivers approved under JTPA were specific to the Act and will not automatically be renewed beyond July 1, 2000.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey intends all JTPA waivers to extend for JTPA programs into PY99. Waivers are not intended to roll over into WIA because they are specific to JTPA. New Jersey intends to apply for Work-Flex when guidance is received.

B. Services: How will you meet the needs of each of the major customer groups identified in Section III? How will the State implement WIA's key principles of streamlined services, empowered individuals, universal access and improved youth services? In your discussion, you must address the following required elements:

1. Describe the types of employment and training activities that will be carried out with the adult and dislocated worker funds received by the State through the allotments under section 132.

How will the State maximize customer choice in the selection of training activities?

New Jersey intends the new system to be work-centered and to focus on the demand for employment and training. New Jersey's system will be connected to employer needs and local economies. The system will engage proactively with employers, employees, schools, and other providers of service to make workforce investment programs truly responsive to all whom seek assistance. This goes beyond simple employer representation on councils. Local areas will be encouraged to develop work strategies to help employers strengthen internal human resource development functions and to help educators narrow the gap between work and learning. Funds received under Section 132 will be used to fund employment and training activities consistent with Section 134. WIBs will be encouraged to select the optimal mix of services to address the needs of their customers. Local areas will be required to describe this mix in their local plans. This reliance on WIB decision-making in combination with the statewide list of training services will ensure maximum customer choice in the selection of training. The State will maximize customer choice by maintaining the vendor lists and by making all available training resources, both federal and state, available for the WIB use.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The State will determine the intended use of 15% set aside funds by October 1, 1999.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

Dislocated worker funds will be used to provide a number of activities. Capacity building and technical assistance will be included in the activities. Local employment and training activities listed under Section 134(d) and (e) of the Act will be available to the dislocated workers through the One-Stop centers. These services include and are not limited to assessment, job search and placement activities, labor market information, information on training, provision of information on filing claims for unemployment insurance, testing, development of an individual employment plan, occupational skills training, and on-the-job training. Adult education and literacy training will be a major focus of the dislocated worker program. In the past, the State reserve funds have been used to fund projects with the State AFL-CIO, HRDI and PROS. It is expected that similar projects will continue under WIA.

As specified under Section 128, it is expected that the 15% reserve funds will be used for State activities. Working with the local WIB areas, these funds will be used to support Statewide dislocated worker activities, including the provision of additional assistance to local areas that experience disasters, mass layoffs, and plant closings.

2. ***How will the services provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners be coordinated and made available through the One-Stop system? Be sure to address how your State will coordinate Wagner-Peyser Act funds to avoid duplication of labor exchange services.***

The specific services provided by each One-Stop partner will be negotiated as part of the local operating protocols and Memoranda of Understanding. These will vary from area to area depending on the needs and resources available. The State will set broad guidelines for the protocols and MOU's, however they will be locally determined. However, the Employment Service (ES) will be a mandatory part of the One-Stop system in terms of performing their explicit Wagner-Peyser duties. An expanded ES role may be negotiated between the WIB and the State Department of Labor. It is explicitly the WIB's responsibility to assure that there is no duplication of services.

3. ***Describe how the funds will be used to leverage other federal, State, local and private resources (e.g., shared One-Stop administration costs). Specify how the State will use its 10 percent funds under section 7(b) of the Wagner-Peyser Act. Describe and provide examples of how these coordinated and leveraged funds will lead to a more effective program that expands the involvement of businesses, employees and individuals.***

Local WIBs will be encouraged to include selected WIA non-mandatory One-Stop Partners who represent groups with barriers in their MOUs without the responsibility to share One-Stop administrative costs. This is intended to bring needed services of agencies to the One-Stop core site(s) and system that could not financially afford full cost sharing.

The WIB may submit a proposal to the State for funds under 7(b) of the Wagner-Peyser Act (10 percent funds) to enable the local State Employment Service to provide new initiatives which will strengthen the One-Stop system across WIB jurisdictions.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Funding streams will be leveraged and coordinated as part of the local Memorandum of Understanding between One-Stop partners. State guidance on the content of the MOU will be issued after completion of the work of the MOU Work group in accordance with the timeframe included as a response to question one. State recommendations for increasing the involvement of business, employees, and individuals will be the subject of the Work Group dealing with demand side strategies. This is expected to be available in accordance with the timetable in question one.

Wagner-Peyser Section 7 funds will be made available for WIB planning. Acceptable plans for use of these funds would include services to groups with special needs, the extra costs of exemplary models which develop linkages between labor exchange services and other programs and provision of labor exchange services at education sites.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

Customer service flow within the One-Stop system is depicted on the charts on pages 27 and 28 and is described on pages 21 through 32 of Chapter 1 Part II of the plan. It is

expected that all One-Stop partners will fulfill a role in the delivery of services and that the One-Stop operator will be the entity who ensures that the system works. In that context, there are not necessarily referrals between the One-Stop operator and the partners. Movement of job seeking and employer customers within the system, and between the partners, will be through a locally determined process supplemented with use of technology, when appropriate. Local areas have been asked to describe the exact process they will use in their local plans. When implemented, OSOS will provide a means for sharing participant information and scheduling services.

4. *Describe how the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as migrants and seasonal farmworkers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, people with limited English-speaking ability, and people with disabilities) will be met. How will the State ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity?*

As noted earlier, it is a core principle of New Jersey's system that there be full utilization of all potential workers. The needs of diverse groups are as varied as the groups themselves. The State Employment and Training Commission has long recognized that certain populations require specific actions to be taken on the part of local and state agencies in order to make the system more equitable.

Equity will be a Governor's performance measure. As part of the development of service protocols, we will develop, with each WIB, an equity component that includes objective measures and outcomes for performance, recruitment activities, projected retention and placement. The Monitor Advocate will assist in the development of these protocols and development of a monitoring process.

To ensure that unique populations including, displaced homemakers are appropriately served and that non-traditional career opportunities are presented as viable options, provisions will be made for professional development training of all front-line personnel. It is imperative that stereotypical assumptions about women's preferences and abilities not affect the choices made by clients. This holds true for other unique populations as well.

To assist local WIBs in meeting these requirements, they will be provided with national models regarding training women in non-traditional careers and in meeting the needs of displaced homemakers. Local WIBs will be required to provide the opportunity for orientation sessions for all participants regarding non-traditional careers and their benefits. The Department of Labor will provide training to all staff who deal directly with clients on how to increase awareness and opportunities for women in non-traditional occupations. Staff dealing directly with clients will also receive training on sexual harassment. This training will be an integral part of capacity building efforts. The New Jersey Division on Women in the Department of Community Affairs and the New Jersey Department of Education's Bilingual and Equity Office will act as a resource

for local WIBs.

Since women are particularly affected by the need for support services in the area of childcare and transportation, information on these support services are critical elements of the One-Stop system. All workers must know where to get the information needed to assist the customer.

True collaboration is as crucial to serving women as it is to serving all individuals in the workforce investment system. The local WIBs must work to include service providers and community-based organizations that serve women. They possess a wealth of expertise that must be tapped if we are to effectively serve women. Each WIB must develop and implement a detailed plan for activities to increase the number of women in non-traditional training and the number of displaced homemakers served. A portion of funds will be used to fund model programs at the local level to train women for non-traditional jobs.

At the State level, the SETC will pursue an agreement with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to coordinate the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) training for women and minorities for highway construction jobs and the New Jersey Department of Treasury into a comprehensive statewide program supplemented with a portion of the Governor's set aside funds.

Data will be collected and monitored on a regular basis to ensure a detailed analysis by specific demographic characteristics. Outreach to specific groups of clients may be necessary where they either fail to utilize the services or are underserved. This outreach would link the employment and training operations with the community-based and faith based organizations. In addition, special populations with limited English speaking abilities will have those needs addressed through the utilization of bilingual staff. Individuals with disabilities will have services provided in a manner that best serves them. Appropriate accommodation including alternate media will be provided when requested. All sites will be accessible.

The activities described in this and other sections of this chapter do not preclude any of the recommendations cited in SETC reports.¹⁷ Other sections of this plan discuss more specific services provided to special populations.¹⁸

It might be noted that the State Employment and Training Commission will expand its role in assuring that fairness for women is implemented under WIA. Currently the Legislature is considering legislation to create a Gender Parity Council, under the SETC, to provide oversight to the workforce investment system. In a parallel manner, a State Literacy Council is being created under the aegis of the SETC to assure that literacy and adult education services are delivered in an equitable, efficient and comprehensive fashion.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

¹⁷ Chapter One, 1.6.4

¹⁸ See IV.B.1, and IV.B.7 Dislocated Workers, IV.B.8 Persons with Disabilities, IV.B.9 Veterans, and IV.B.11 Migrant and Seasonal Farm workers.

To ensure equitable services, review and oversight of services by the State Monitor Advocate will continue to be an integral part of the workforce investment system. Any requests or concerns raised by the Monitor Advocate will be addressed immediately as they arise.

As part of the One-Stop system, New Jersey Employment Service will continue to provide services to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW). However, MSFWs receive services in all appropriate sites, with attention to employment counseling and support services to help them secure and retain steady employment. Customer service and satisfaction should remain high for MSFW in the One-Stop environment. All the traditional services and programs remain available; in addition, supportive services will be more accessible.

All requirements of the complaint system will be carried into the One-Stop Career Center system (including the display of posters, complaint taking, processing, investigation, referral, and reporting). Information on the complaint system will be included in the One-Stop computer database. Printed materials will be available in Spanish and Cambodian.

Agricultural employers will be provided all employment services and programs of the Agricultural Recruitment System and other services through One-Stop sites.

Full employment and training services to older workers will be available throughout New Jersey's One-Stop system. Local WIBs will be expected to provide services to all who enter One-Stops seeking assistance. Please see references to older workers in our Mission and Vision statement in Chapter One.

The Professional Services Group program, a staff assisted self-help concept, with ten locations throughout the State is uniquely adapted to the dislocated workers, who, very often, meets older worker standards.

5. ***Describe the criteria developed by the State for local boards to use in determining that adult funds are limited and that priority of service applies. Describe the guidelines, if any, the State has established for local boards regarding priority when adult funds have been determined to be limited.***

The State has not yet developed a priority of service for local boards. In this area, it is essential that there be local input and that the priorities are applicable to the area in question. Since there are other resources that may be available in certain areas, a "one size fits all" approach may not be appropriate. We have a number of areas that have access to state empowerment and enterprise monies that can be used to encourage employers to move into areas. Having a hiring priority for the adult population and then training these individuals using state customized training dollars may be very appropriate. In other areas, collaborations may exist which capitalize on local resources to supplement WIA dollars. The leverage on dollars to provide the most services to the largest percentage of the population is what must be developed, and this type of process is best done with local input.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey will expect local areas to comply with WIA priorities when WIA becomes operational in the area. Local MOUs will include language to address this item. The development of a template for a MOU is a work group assignment that is shown on the timeline.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

The State recognizes that limited resources are available and has established guidance for the local WIBs. Through the local WIBs, the one-stop operators will be informed of the following eligibility criteria for serving participants:

WIA Adult programs

-

- A. Economically Disadvantaged individuals (low income)
- B. Welfare clients (TANF, Food Stamp Employment and Training Program and General Assistance) if no other funding is available from other sources
- C. Individuals with documented multiple barriers to employment
- D. All other eligible individuals

WIA Dislocated Worker programs –

- A. (i) has been terminated or laid off, or who has received a notice of termination or layoff from employment;
(ii)(1) is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; or (2) has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered by a State unemployment compensation law; and,
(iii) is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation;
- (B) (i) has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of a permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff, at a plant, facility, or enterprise;
(ii) is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days; or,
(iii) for purpose of eligibility to receive services other than training services described in Section 134(d)(4), intensive services described in Section 134(d)(3), or supportive services, is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that the facility will close;
- I was self employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters; or,
- (D) is a displaced homemaker.

WIA Youth programs –

- (A) Is not less than age 14 and not more than 21;
- (B) Is a low income individual; and,
- I Is an individual with one or more of the following:
 - (i) deficient in basic literacy skills
 - (ii) a school dropout
 - (iii) homeless, a runaway, or a foster child
 - (iv) pregnant or a parent
 - (v) an offender
 - (vi) an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

Additional Response June 8, 2000:

The State of New Jersey and the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) will give priority for adult training services to recipients of public assistance and economically disadvantaged individuals. The local WIBs have identified the needs of the individuals and the priority of services in the local plans, including those eligible for intensive services. Any exception to these priorities must receive approval from the Department of Labor. WIBs are required to establish an "individual training grant process" that seeks, where appropriate, to leverage other training-related funds to supplement WIA funds.

The literacy needs of New Jerseyans are a major policy concern. As has already been documented by an SETC report, **The Literacy Connection**, attached to the Strategic Five Year Unified State Plan, forty percent of New Jerseyans are less literate than the labor market demands. Therefore, the first service priority for WIA funds is to address the literacy needs of this eligible population.

6. ***Describe how the needs of employers will be determined in the local areas as well as on a statewide basis. Describe how services (e.g., systems to determine general job requirements and list jobs), including Wagner-Peyser Act services, will be delivered to employers through the One-Stop system. How will the system streamline administration of federal tax credit programs within the One-Stop system to maximize employer participation?***

In developing a State Workforce Development plan, it is critical that the needs of the business community be identified and met. To ensure the economic prosperity of New Jersey and its citizens, a workforce investment system must serve the needs and demands of its business community to create and retain high skill, high wage jobs in New Jersey as a means of ensuring a productive, globally competitive workforce.

The Business Services Representatives initiative, a joint Department of Labor and Human Services effort, is designed to foster a quality customer service relationship between State government and New Jersey's business community for the purpose of encouraging economic development and job creation. Program representatives will aggressively market the One-Stop Career Center System and its Internet WNJPIN component. In the near future, Business Services Representatives will join local urban redevelopment target teams to help teams to help develop local strategies for maximum utilization of Department of Labor programs and tax credit opportunities in New Jersey's most distressed urban areas.

The Department of Labor's \$40 million Customized Training program is a powerful economic development tool designed to create and retain high-skill, high-wage private sector jobs in New Jersey as a means of ensuring a productive, competitive workforce. A primary focus of this program is to support the manufacturing sector in New Jersey. The Office of Customized Training plans to leverage some of these training dollars to help employers fill existing entry level jobs with Work First clients and to encourage work based learning opportunities for students to meet the future needs of the workforce.

The Department of Labor's School-to-Career program staff encourages employers to participate in New Jersey's School-to-Career and College initiatives. Staff facilitates linkages between employers and school to better prepare youth to make career decisions and begin to learn the skills necessary for success in the world of work. The School-to-Career and College program will expand efforts and financial incentives for employers to provide students with monitoring, work-based learning experience, apprenticeship opportunities, and summer internships for teachers and guidance counselors which will expose them to the various careers and technologies of growing industries and occupations.

At the local level, New Jersey's One-Stop system is designed to fundamentally change the way workforce investment services are delivered to the business community. Under the policy guidance of Workforce Investment Boards, New Jersey will integrate employer services and offer a wide range of services to its employer customers. Business Services Representatives will coordinate employer outreach activities with local One-Stop systems account representatives and job developers to develop a seamless employer relations program.

The Employment Service is a major deliverer of the labor exchange activity through New Jersey's developing One-Stop Career Center System. In addition to traditional processing of potential job applicants and account representative-managed job order options available to the business community, New Jersey has implemented America's Talent Bank to increase the employer community's access to job seekers. New Jersey will implement the merged version of America's Job Bank (AJB)/America's Talent Bank (ATB) system as soon as the option is available. Through the State's existing WNJPIN web site, the resume system is being integrated into the operations of all One-Stop Career Centers. One-Stop staff will be given "employer accounts" so they can use ATB to expand their applicant searches to refer against employer job orders beyond the traditional systems. The ATB service is also being marketed to the education and training communities. In addition, when New Jersey implements WINS/OSOS, it will have an enhanced employer self-service module with greater employer account management functionality than currently available through AJB. And, employers will be able to maintain a

company profile, which will give job-seekers more information about company benefits, missing description of the business and recruitment procedures than usually found on AJB job orders.

The Department of Labor is actively reviewing its options to create ATB resumes and Employment Services work registrations at claimant's first contact with the State's Unemployment Insurance Reemployment Call-in Center. Adding claimant information to these databases at first point of contact will significantly increase employer access to workers.

All One-Stop Career Center Account Representatives and job developers will continue to market the Worker Opportunity Tax Credit Program (WOTC). Last year the Department of Labor issued sixteen thousand WOTC certifications to New Jersey employers committed to hiring workers with significant barriers to employment.

7. *Describe the reemployment services you will provide to Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services claimants in accordance with section 3(c)(3) of the revised Wagner-Peyser Act.*

Unemployed workers accessing the Workforce New Jersey system will be provided with intake and orientation services by the Wagner-Peyser directed labor exchange function in the One-Stop Career Centers. As previously described, when the technology systems are fully operational and integrated, this will be facilitated by linking information collected via the remote cal-in centers to AJB/ATB/WINS/OSOS. Selected profiled claimants may, where appropriate, receive job search under the Project Reemployment Opportunity System (PROS) initiative. This job search can consist of job placement services, employment counseling, testing, occupational and labor market information, employability assessment, job search workshops, and job clubs. At the end of this job search period, individuals who have not been successful in securing a job will be provided with additional assessment and career planning services and referral to training. Employability assessment and career counseling services will begin as soon as it becomes obvious that the job search activity is not appropriate for a job search participant.

Re-employment services, PROS activities, and resources focus on providing the information, knowledge, tools, and group support claimants need to become re-employed. During the PROS orientation, a preliminary service plan is developed which identifies the claimant's next step or activity. The activities an individual is required to participate in are based on an assessment of the individual's needs and degree of job readiness. Services may include some or all of the following:

- Introduction to Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN), including entering resumes into America's Talent Bank (ATB) and accessing America's Job Bank (AJB). This will be included in all group activities;
- Counseling claimants who need assistance in relating their skills to the labor market or need to consider changing occupations;
- Testing as needed;
- Job Search workshops to help claimants deal with job loss and develop job search strategies;
- Job Clubs for claimants to practice their job search skills and receive group support;
- Public Access Resource Centers (PARCs) that provide newspapers, industrial directories,

- career information, and access to personal computers for writing resumes;
- Faxing, copying, and telephoning employers;
- Job referrals to hiring employers; and,
- Referrals to training.

The Wagner-Peyser staff will continue to be responsible for facilitating placement. All active NJES-511 application forms will be coded and filed by appropriate occupational code. OES coding of UI claimants will be used to identify job seekers to match incoming employer job orders, which are similarly coded. The selection and referral of the job seeking applicant is based on automated DOT code match, and O-NET when it becomes operational, text based skill search, and the appropriateness of applicant skills and abilities in relation to employer requirements.

The Employment Service Automated Call-In System (ESAC) has given Wagner-Peyser field staff the ability to generate automated calls to registered job seekers with messages regarding job referrals, appointments and the availability/need for additional services, as well as requesting information to determine work status.

New Jersey has a profiling and re-employment service system for UI claimants. New Jersey uses a statistical model to predict a claimant's probability of exhausting UI benefits. Individuals who are not excluded from the profiling process are assigned a profiling score and are ranked in order of probability of benefit exhaustion. Each week the highest ranked individuals are selected to attend a Project Re-employment Opportunity System (PROS) orientation session, during which program requirements and services are explained. The number of claimants scheduled for the PROS orientation varies at each location based on local One-Stop operations and the capacity to provide re-employment services.

The Re-employment Orientation will ensure claimants are aware of all One-Stop Center services. It will encourage an immediate start of re-employment efforts through access to WNJPIN, including ATB entry, as well as provides exposure to all supportive services including training, job search assistance, Veterans Services and PSG.

8. *Specifically describe the Wagner-Peyser Act-funded strategies you will use to serve persons with disabilities.*

The New Jersey Department of Labor will promote and develop employment opportunities, job counseling, and placement services for persons with disabilities.

Employment Service operations will be coordinated with those provided by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS) and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), the One-Stop partner with the mandate to provide employment services to individuals with disabilities. In addition, the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be promoted by Department of Labor offices to ensure that all One-Stop Partners are educated regarding the civil rights protections in employment accorded to individuals with disabilities.

The linkages between the Employment Service and Vocational Rehabilitation staff have been well defined. Individuals in need of core services will receive those services through the One-Stop system. Those individuals who may best be served by Vocational Rehabilitation will be referred to a Vocational Rehabilitation counselor for services since the intent of the process is to provide the best assistance to these individuals. Collaboration between agencies has been a norm for a number of years and will continue to exist. Individuals who are tested or assessed through One-Stop will not have to repeat that process. In addition, a data processing system being developed for Employment Services will provide the data elements needed by Vocational Rehabilitation without duplication of information or entry. This should assist in reducing costs to both operations, as well as reducing the client's need to complete additional forms.

**9. *How will Wagner-Peyser Act funds be used to serve veterans?
How will your State ensure that veterans receive priority in the
One-Stop system for labor exchange services?***

New Jersey maintains veterans' preference on all job orders. For a 24-hour period from the receipt of a job order, the only referrals that can be made are to qualified veterans. Other groups also may receive priority handling depending on the goals of the local area. At the end of the hold period, those jobs can be released for all individuals.

All Wagner-Peyser staff including veteran dedicated staff are instructed to give veterans priority regarding job openings both at One-Stop Centers and outstations. Veteran dedicated staff will be represented in One-Stop Centers to ensure priority services to applicants who are veterans. If veteran dedicated staff are not available, all Wagner-Peyser staff are trained to give veterans' preference regarding job openings. The State Coordinator of Veterans' Services through on-site reviews, and through staff training and/or meetings monitoring automated reports will monitor adherence to veterans' preference and through staff training and/or meetings. Additionally the veteran dedicated staff will be monitored, reviewed, evaluated by the Director of Veterans' Employment and Training.

In addition to furnishing general employment-related services, greater emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of unsubsidized placements for veterans. New Jersey's veteran-dedicated staff will continue to participate in the planning and execution of Homeless Veterans Stand Down Programs, as well as Job Fairs for Veterans. In an effort to foster good relations with New Jersey employers, the Department of Labor will continue to participate in the Employer of the Year Award Program, sponsored by Veteran Services Organizations.

In order to meet our objective, all persons who served in the military will be encouraged to identify themselves as veterans when they apply for services in the One-Stop office.

The Department will continue to emphasize the utilization of a case management approach when providing services to target veteran groups. The goal of case management is to achieve maximum entry of veterans into significant and sustained employment.

In accordance with the provisions of the Transition Assistance Program (TAP), labor exchange

services will be provided to members of the armed forces and their spouses who are within 180 days of separating from the military. Services will be provided on a regular basis at military facilities designated by the Department of Defense.

The Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN) Home Page provides direct information to veterans regarding job and career opportunities, training opportunities, economic and demographic statistics, and a description of services of various state government agencies.

10. *What role will LVER/DVOPS staff have in the One-Stop system? How will your State ensure adherence to the legislative requirements for veterans' staff? How will services under this plan take into consideration the agreement reached between the Secretary and the State regarding veterans' employment programs?*

A statewide agreement exists between the Department of Veterans' Affairs (DAV), Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling (VR&C) program, United States Department of Labor Veterans Employment and Training Services (USDOLVETS) and our Department. This cooperative agreement formalizes requirements under Title 38 USC Chapter 41 that requires Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) and Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) to provide employment-related services to veterans who are participating in the VR&C programs. Statewide agreements also exist between this Department and the Department of Military & Veteran Affairs (DMVA) to coordinate services to veterans through DVOP/LVER and Veteran Services at the local level. The provisions of the DVOP/LVER grant continue to be adhered to by the New Jersey Department of Labor.

The Employment Service provides preference in employment and related services to veterans pursuant to the Wagner-Peyser Act with priority given to the needs of Vietnam Era and Disabled Veterans. The major objective is to provide job placement, job search training, job counseling, labor market information, referrals to supportive services, job development, and case management services. These services will be provided in the One-Stop with 63 veteran-dedicated staff working in those offices at the point of entry for veterans into the One-Stop system.

The Secretary's Agreement in Appendix 9 will serve as New Jersey's model.

11. *Describe how the State will provide Wagner-Peyser Act-funded services to the agricultural community--specifically, outreach, assessment and other services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers, and services to agricultural employers. How will you provide equitable services to this population in the One-Stop system?*

As part of the One-Stop system, New Jersey Employment Service will continue to provide services to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW). The primary One-Stop Career Center for farm workers will be the Cumberland County One-Stop, which includes the Vineland &

Bridgeton local Employment Services offices, and Rural Opportunities, Inc. MSFW's will however receive services in all appropriate sites, with attention to employment counseling and support services to help them secure and retain steady employment.

Outreach workers will provide clients with information on the One-Stop Career Center services and how to access them. They will now be better able to draw upon the knowledge and experience of the other One-Stop Partners while acting as a resource to them. This will allow all partners to better serve the MSFW client base. Customer service and satisfaction should remain high for MSFW in the One-Stop environment. All the traditional services and programs remain available; in addition, supportive services will be more accessible.

To ensure equitable services, review and oversight of services by the State Monitor Advocate will continue to be an integral part of the workforce investment system and will be accomplished through existing mechanisms. Any additional requests or concerns raised by the Monitor Advocate will be addressed immediately as they arise.

All requirements of the complaint system will be carried into the One-Stop Career Center System (including the display of posters, complaint taking, processing, investigation, referral, and reporting). Information on the complaint system will be included in the One-Stop computer database.

Agricultural employers will be provided all employment services and programs of the Agricultural Recruitment System through One-Stop sites. The employer's need for workers will be matched against the pool of workers seeking temporary agricultural jobs.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The State did not identify all areas where the MSFW program will operate. The paragraph in question states that the MSFW services will be conducted primarily through the Cumberland County One-Stop office and Rural Opportunities, Inc. The paragraph continued with the fact that MSFWs will receive appropriate services through all One-Stop locations.

This is not a new concept developed for this plan, but this was in fact submitted in the Governor's Special Services and Coordination Plan on May 7, 1998. In the section under Transitioning MSFW Services into One-Stop on page 129 of that plan, there appears "The primary One-Stop Career Center for farm workers will be the Cumberland County One-Stop which includes the Vineland & Bridgeton local ES offices, and Rural Opportunities, Inc. Both the Regional and State Monitor Advocates will continue to look at this particular One-Stop as an indicator of services delivered to farm workers under this new system." We will add the Hammonton location by name but want to be clear that all One-Stops will provide services to this population.

The MSFW population in New Jersey is dispersed throughout the state. Many of the seasonal workers reside in urban areas and are transported as dayhaul to the farms. This change in work environment has resulted in an increased awareness of this population in all One-Stop Offices.

The second paragraph in that section relates to semantics. In addition, the State Monitor Advocate reports to the Director for Equal Employment Opportunities as by Civil Service Job Specification. Recommendations and proposals must go through that office as well as to the Office of the Commissioner of Labor.

Paragraph 5 requires reporting of annual assessment plans per a document issued March 22, 1999. It is difficult to believe that on a plan that was submitted April 1, 1999 and in the sign-off process immediately prior to that, that reference would be made to instructions issued on March 22, 1999.

The comment requiring the provision of information on services and materials in languages to meet the population needs is problematic. New Jersey has over 150 languages spoken in the state. It is impossible to provide materials in all languages at all facilities at all times without additional funding from the federal government. More specific guidelines and funding will be required from the federal government if the implications of this question are to be taken seriously. We will continue to provide publications in Spanish and English and will investigate the possibility of providing printed information in other languages based on populations distribution and the available of resources to translate information into other languages.

12. Describe how the Wagner-Peyser Act funds will provide a statewide capacity for a three-tiered labor exchange service strategy that includes (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help service, and (3) staff-assisted service. Describe your State's strategies to ensure that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded services will be delivered by public merit staff employees.

Self-service is offered through the promotion and use of Workforce New Jersey's homepage on the Internet, the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN). Through WNJPIN, job seekers can search through thousands of jobs in New Jersey and access America's Job Bank to search for jobs in other states and to place their resume into America's Talent Bank. They can access a wide array of labor market information as well as information on job training opportunities. Employers can directly place job orders into America's Job Bank through WNJPIN, as well as search through thousands of resumes in America's Talent Bank. In addition, when developed, the self-service module of OSOS will be implemented.

Another specific Employment Services response to applicants with "self-directed" capabilities is the development of self-managed networking and support systems provided by Professional Service Groups (PSGs). These self-help job clubs provide sustained job search tools for the spectrum of job seekers who are committed to conducting their job search in a professional way.

Implementing a "levels of service" concept, the Wagner-Peyser entity will initially assess an applicant's level of need and determine the appropriate level of service response. Some applicants will be able to use a self-directed approach, including use of the Internet/WNJPIN, OSOS and the use of equipment such as phones, fax, copy machines, PCs, etc., for self-assessment, employment preparation, and employer contact efforts.

When “self-directed” job seekers are increasingly encouraged to utilize improved resource areas in One-Stop offices, Wagner-Peyser staff will be enabled to better utilize their time and skills providing various levels of “mediated services” to other job seekers. This will range from minimal help in locating job information and preparing for the employment interview to intensive services for applicants with serious barriers to employment.

Wagner-Peyser Act funded services will be delivered by public merit staff employees.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey has had levels of service in operation since the One-Stop system was implemented. The first level of services uses technology to assist the individual in self-directed services. Those individuals who are able to use personal computers can access WNJPIN at any One-Stop site. This enables the individual to search for labor market information, and information on careers, training, and education. Linkages to AJT and ATB allow for self-directed work search as well as completion of an initial on-line resume. Staff is available at each of these resource centers to respond to questions or provide basic assistance to facilitate the self-service mode.

Individuals who are unable to use these services because of a lack of ability are seen by staff who **will assist the individuals** in determining what services they need. This stage can involve assessment or job referral.

Those customers who need more intensive services are referred to counselors for assistance. This may include referral to training services or specialized services as are provided by other partners.

Local MOUs describe core services to be provided in each WIB area. Part of the MOU is the provision that Wagner-Peyser programs are provided by merit system employees. All local MOUs are reviewed and approved by the SETC to ensure compliance with the law and state policies.

Our deliberate expansion of the workforce investment system to cover all education, training, and employment services requires that "core" or basic services be available to all citizens of the state and not only job seekers. This first level of services includes the functions of:

- Orientation and intake to the one-stop system
- Eligibility determinations as necessary
- Initial assessment
- Outreach to special populations
- Career counseling
- Job search and job placement
- Provision of information on:
 - Eligible training providers
 - Literacy programs
 - Programs for special populations (Voc Rehab, Veterans programs, Commission for Blind, etc.) Program descriptions

- Performance outcomes
- One-stop activities
- Filing for welfare, food stamps, student aid, and unemployment
- Supportive services
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for assistance (student financial aid, tuition waiver, welfare-to-work)
- Employer services:
 - Job orders
 - Positive recruitment
 - Assessment of needs
 - Customized training
 - FUTA tax information
 - Wage and Hour information
 - MSFW program information
 - PROS operations
 - Job Clubs and Professional Service Groups
 - Follow-up services, including counseling, for individuals placed in employment

Much of the information is provided through a self-search processes involving computers provided in the offices or other public access, as well as through Internet sites.

Intensive services are the second level of services. These are provided to the unemployed who are unable to find suitable employment utilizing core services and the underemployed who need additional assistance in order to move into suitable employment that allows for self-sufficiency. Intensive services may be delivered through the One-Stop operators or by other local providers. These services may include:

- Specialized assessments of skill levels
- Diagnostic testing, as needed
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation
- Development of Individual Service Strategy
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management
- Life skills training of short duration

The third level is for those who require training or education to further their employability. Individuals eligible for this level of service are those who qualify for intensive services but have been unable to obtain employment or retain employment through the use of these services. Individuals considered for training must have the necessary qualifications to benefit from such training and there must be employment for the individual in the area in which he/she is willing to accept employment.

13. Describe how your State will provide rapid response activities with funds reserved under section 133(a)(2), including how the State will use information provided through the WARN Act to determine when to provide such activities.

a. Identify the entity responsible to provide rapid response services.

The Response Team is the lead agency in all plant closings and mass layoffs. Rapid response activities begin when news of a plant closure or mass layoff is received by the Dislocated Worker Unit (Response Team office), through phone calls from affected companies, workers, organized labor, the Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act (WARN), or any other source. The Response team contacts the company within 48 hours to ascertain the validity of the information received and to offer readjustment services. Pertinent information is obtained from the company including the type of business, permanent or temporary layoff, number of workers affected, and organized labor affiliations.

A meeting is set up by Response Team representatives with the company to explain services and make arrangements to provide on-site assistance. If time permits, labor management committee services are offered to the employer. Services are provided at the employer's convenience to accommodate all shift-working hours of the employees.

- b. How will your State's rapid response unit's activities involve the local Boards and local Chief Elected Officials? If rapid response functions are shared between your State unit and local areas, identify the functions of each and describe how rapid response funds are allocated to local areas.***

The Response Team coordinates with local Boards, local Chief Elected Officials, Employment Security Divisions, Trade Act, Customized Training and Job Training entities as deemed necessary given the situation. . Local areas are expected to participate in Rapid Response activities with formula funds.

The involvement and participation of state and local areas are structured according to individual company needs, time considerations and the service plans developed in cooperation with employers, employees and when appropriate, organized labor bargaining representatives.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The rapid response system is truly a seamless system. Anyone who receives information concerning a potential "layoff" of any size contacts the Response Team. Based on information secured from the employer and possibly union or worker representatives, a work team is mobilized that is specific for that particular situation. Depending on skill level of affected workers, the team may bring in individuals representing various training or educational entities in addition to the local workforce personnel. In cases where there are individuals with low literacy or English speaking levels, professionals capable of dealing with those barriers are added to the team. When this team appears on site to provide services, it represents the complete "education, employment, and training" area.

Individuals receive services that they need and want. These include core, intensive, and possibly training services. Information on activities is disseminated to local areas for informational purposes and should be included in their assessments. Because significant activities do not occur at the same rate throughout the state, funds are maintained in Trenton for allocation to the various areas as needed.

- c. Describe the assistance available to employers and dislocated workers, particularly how your State determines what assistance is required based on the type of lay-off, and the early intervention strategies to ensure that dislocated workers who need intensive or training services (including those individuals with multiple barriers to employment and training) are identified as early as possible.*

Early intervention strategies are developed as a result of the Response Team's vast information network and the Division of Business Services' Layoff Aversion Unit's ability to meet with employers, management, and human resource executives before a need for rapid response has been established. If it is possible to save job through early intervention, that becomes the primary goal.

The Layoff Aversion Unit is responsible for creating market demand among business and industry by aggressively promoting private sector initiatives and the array of workforce development programs and related business services available through the Department of Labor.

Each representative serves as a primary, direct source of contact for these programs and services to efficiently deliver personal attention, customized solutions, and professional results to our business customers to help them prosper and grow. Workforce development services include recruitment, training, free workplace safety inspections, labor market demographic information, and One-Stop Center System access.

The subject matter focuses on the:

- Available government business services
- Labor exchange function
- State and federal employment incentives
- Business retention and expansion services of other State agencies, specifically the Commission on Commerce, the Economic Development Authority, and our Customized Training program

Each representative is assigned to a local geographic area, typically defined by county boundaries, and out-stationed within that territory. These unique field offices are established within county or local business or trade advocacy organizations such as chambers and urban enterprise zone offices to ensure the local business community easy access to this resource.

If a layoff or closing cannot be prevented, the Response Team then plans services in partnership with the company and union if applicable.

The rapid response assistance available to employers and affected employees as an early intervention and continuing strategy include the following:

- A survey of employee needs
- Conducting effective initial orientation meetings providing an explanation of Department of Labor programs and services
- On-site group employee presentations
- Unemployment Insurance claims completion
- Job Service registration
- Training certification
- Development and operation of career centers
- Job Search Workshops
- Resume Writing Workshops
- Career Counseling
- Testing and Assessment
- Help in forming and operating Workforce Reduction Committees
- Computer access to job listings
- Resume listing service (America's Talent Bank)
- Employer labels for a job solicitation campaign
- USDOL Grant Application Development
- Working with private outplacement agencies engaged by the employer
- Serving multi-lingual (other than English) worker populations
- Effecting a smooth transition to local One-Stop services
- Developing effective working relationships with union representatives

14. Describe your State's strategy for providing comprehensive services to eligible youth, including any coordination with foster care, education, welfare and other relevant resources. Include any State requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities. Describe how coordination with Job Corps, youth opportunity grants, and other youth programs will occur.

New Jersey intends to develop a comprehensive plan for serving the needs of eligible youth. Key to this strategy will be the development by Youth Councils of a local strategic plan to meet the needs of young people. At the State level, a Youth Council will be created under the State Employment and Training Commission to accomplish State goals.

While New Jersey has many excellent youth programs, like other states, it lacks a system to assist youth that have special needs or barriers to employment. As is noted in this plan, New Jersey has made both pregnant teens and dropouts a priority. By creating a system for youth, New Jersey hopes to become more proactive in addressing their needs. Clearly, the Job Corps must be considered in any local and statewide strategy. The challenge in this area will be to collaborate with a program that receives its funds directly from the federal government with little or no state oversight.

It will be New Jersey's goal to work with the Job Corps and other youth programs, including faith-based organizations to make them part of an overall system that addresses the needs of youth. One major priority in this area will be to create the equivalent of a One-Stop for youth where young people who drop out or who are not part of any formal institution can have their needs met. While policy has not been fully formulated in this area, we anticipate a strong link with the One-Stop Career Centers.

It is also important that schools become a full partner in this process as well as a major partner in the continuum of services that will serve the needs of youth. A key to this link is the Department of Human Services School-Based Youth Services Program which offers counseling, both personal and drug, and health services to at-risk students while they still attend school.

By creating a strong partnership with this national award-winning program, policies developed by the Youth Council, it will create a system for serving youth where no young person is ignored.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

New Jersey will establish a State Youth Council as a permanent committee of the SETC (the state WIB). Through this Youth Council, the state will plot a comprehensive direction for serving at-risk youth. By February 1, 2000, the state Youth Council will issue preliminary recommendations, which will include guidelines that WIBs through their local councils will follow in developing plans for linking all required and relevant partners. Local plans will also address how required services will be delivered to targeted groups and how youth services will be integrated into the One-Stop system.

By April 1, 2000, each WIB will submit a plan that addresses how they propose to meet the needs of youth in their area. The plan should link local, state, and federal initiatives. To the extent possible, the plan will incorporate not only WIA directed activities, but a broader configuration of programs and services to serve at-risk youth.

The state indicated, in the Strategic Five-Year Unified Plan, a strategy for working with local WIB and their Youth Councils to expand the Youth Corps network. Although these programs will be responsible to the WIB/Youth Council for meeting provisions in the local plan, the state Youth Corps office will be responsible for assuring compliance with state requirements.

WIBs through their Youth Councils, and based on state guidelines, will include in their April 1 plan how linkages between One-Stops, schools, and school-based programs will occur. The state has convened a planning group to address Youth Councils. Although not fully developed at this point, it is envisioned that within each WIB area hub(s) (homeroom) be established to serve as entry points for at risk youth to link to the One-Stop system and the appropriate services. At a minimum, local Youth Corp. programs can serve as the hub, local plans may include community-based and faith-based organizations and other youth providers. It is essential that these points of entry be linked to the One-Stop Career Center System electronically as well as in other ways that WIBs/youth councils deem appropriate. However, WIBs in their local plan will be required to indicate how One-Stop services will be delivered

through these hubs. In addition, local youth developed homepages through which youth are linked to state and local services through the one-stop may be encouraged.

These hubs will be especially important for out-of-school youth who are not connected to a system of services through the school. The hubs will provide a One-Stop "youth friendly" location.

The relationship between the youth council and the state youth council will mirror the relationship between the WIB and the SETC. State and local youth councils will to the extent possible involve all relevant stakeholders in youth planning. State and local membership guidelines will be developed in consultation with stakeholders. Youth councils will be encouraged to reach out to a broad constituency through public hearings, open meetings, task forces, etc. for input.

As part of New Jersey's plan, the State will describe coordination efforts with foster care, education, welfare and other relevant resources. The collaborative state planning process describe throughout the plans will ensure involvement of all appropriate state agencies and will enhance local delivery of services. State and local the youth councils will develop strategies to forge partnerships with federal programs e.g., Job Corp. and HUD run programs. The state will work with WIB to facilitate applications for Youth Opportunity, which are integrated into the local plan. Likewise, local plan will include how the above resources can be leveraged to meet the needs of eligible youth.

15. *Describe how your State will, in general, meet the Act provisions regarding youth program design, in particular:*

New Jersey intends to meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design by conferring with existing exemplary programs and building and maintaining strong linkages with youth serving agencies and coalitions. The State will integrate youth planning, programs, and activities into its state based, locally delivered workforce investment system. Within the State Employment and Training Commission, a state-level Youth Council will be developed. At the local level, WIBs will establish Youth Councils that will serve as subcommittees of the WIBs. Youth Councils will play an integral role in youth planning, program development, and funding allocation. Youth Council membership will reflect representation from key stakeholder groups, e.g., Youth Services Commissions, the State Juvenile Justice Commission, school districts (including Abbott districts) School-based Youth Services Programs, business, higher education, youth service providers, etc.

Although policy has not been fully developed, schools, which currently serve as a hub for students, are a logical "homeroom" to connect eligible in-school youth to services and programs through the One-Stop environment. A strategy for serving in-school pregnant teens will be a priority. For out-of-school youth, the state anticipates working with local areas to create a network of sites, which include community and faith-based organizations and juvenile justice centers, to serve as the "homeroom" for this population, connecting them to a full array of resources through a One-Stop environment.

The School-to-Career and College model, which provides youth with school-based, work-based contextualized learning experiences, will help make education more relevant and provide links to move into job and post-secondary opportunities. For out-of-school youth, the State in consultation with WIBs will identify required elements of successful youth programs, e.g., creative learning experiences; transferable occupational skills; exposure to positive adult role models, including mentors; leadership development; strong linkages with the community, secondary and post-secondary education and corporations; and other “best practices.”

These elements will serve as the basis for the development of out-of-school youth programs, which will require partnerships with local community and faith-based organizations and strong linkages with local school districts, vocational education, post-secondary education, and the juvenile justice system. When appropriate and possible, a strategy for integrating out-of-school youth back into the regular school track will be explored. However, for those youth that this is not an appropriate option, local out-of-school youth programs will provide and/or link them through the One-Stop system to a full array of services, e.g., academic, occupational/vocational, counseling, job search, drug treatment, etc.

Another priority in the overall strategy to serve youth is the expansion of the Youth Corps model, which has proven successful with out-of-school youth. Current thinking suggests, that within each WIB area, WIBs, based on the recommendations of the Youth Councils and in accordance with identified key elements mentioned above, will select providers to serve youth in the WIB area. These programs will all have in common the key elements, but should include other elements, based on the requirements of the Youth Council/WIB. The Youth Council/WIB would be responsible for local policy, planning, and administrative oversight. At the state-level, the state youth council within the SETC would be responsible for youth policy and planning. The State Youth Corps office would have responsibility for state-level administrative oversight. These “new youth corps” would be required to develop strong partnerships with community and faith-based organizations, school districts, colleges, the juvenile justice community, and business.

- *preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities;*

Since preparation for post-secondary opportunities is a major emphasis for in-school youth and similarly will be for out-of-school youth, it will be a required partner of the local Youth Councils. New Jersey’s School-to-Career system requires strong linkages with post-secondary education. Programs for out-of-school youth will also require strong post-secondary linkages. The state will also encourage community colleges and interested four-year institutions throughout the State to collaborate with administrative entities and service providers to operate summer and year round programs for at-risk youth.

Colleges will be partners in any youth effort. As such, they can operate summer or all year programs. On-campus experiences can be key element of a summer program. A college or another entity in partnership with a college can operate the program. Community college or four-year institutions should be acceptable partners.

On-campus experiences during summer (starting at age 14 and 15) will also be provided to affirm that college is not out of their reach. At a minimum, on-campus summer programs for at-risk youth will include “campus field trip,” seminars geared toward the needs of urban youth. Summer programs will also include community and/or work-based learning experiences that incorporate academic and social learning. Most importantly, workshops should be also presented by successful youth with whom the participants can relate.

- ***strong linkages between academic and occupational learning;***

The State’s School-to-Career system promotes strong linkages between academic and occupational learning. The proposed system for out-of-school youth will place an equal emphasis on this area. Programs will be expected to integrate components such as work-based learning, school-based learning, and activities that connect students with employers and work and community service activities. Opportunities for entrepreneurial learning experiences that integrate academic and work learning and link to real enterprises will also be provided. These programs will offer an opportunity youth to be exposed to a variety of vocations and the academic and vocational skills necessary to be employed in those areas would be helpful in linking academic and occupational learning.

- ***preparation for unsubsidized employment opportunities;***
- ***effective linkages with intermediaries with strong employer connections;***

(The following is in response to both preceding bullets.) Both of these provisions regarding youth program design expand on the ideas presented in the above linking academic and occupational learning. The at-risk youth not only need to know that there is a strong link between academics and the “real world” of work, but they need to be exposed to what “real work” entails and what employers require. In order to hear this first hand employers need to be directly involved with the occupational components of the WIA youth programs. This will be done through their participation on local Youth Councils, School-to-Careers and College partnerships, and out-of-school youth program partnerships. It will be encouraged that the involvement will be from a variety of employers including small and medium sized businesses and large corporations, and especially businesses that are representative of the cultural and business diversity of the community.

- ***alternative secondary school services;***

The Department of Education, through local school districts operates some alternative schools. School-based Youth Services operated by the Department of Human services are also alternate service structure, through they operate within the regular school. Youth Corps and the proposed youth corps system are effective alternatives. For older youth (17 and above, though some 16 year olds with permission) you also have GED and adult high school programs.

Through continual strong linkages with Department of Education and alternative educational opportunities, the State will encourage the placement of youth in alternative secondary schools, when appropriate. This option will be encouraged especially in cases where the traditional high school is no longer an optimum learning environment for the at-risk youth. Local Youth Councils may want to include representation from school guidance counselors and/or child study teams to ensure that the appropriate educational choices for at-risk youth are being explored and chosen.

- ***summer employment opportunities;***
- ***paid and unpaid work experiences;***

(The following is in response to both preceding bullets.) The State will be encouraging the local areas to provide real work opportunities during the summer and also during the school year for youth ready to obtain transferable vocational skills. They will also be encouraged to not only work with the traditional providers of paid and unpaid work experiences that have proved successful in the past but to also collaborate with School to Career and other entities that have may also have best practices or innovative programs. The young people that may not be ready for vocational skills training will be introduced to work maturity essentials such as reporting to work on time, dressing appropriately and working well with other which at the same time introduce them to entry level job skills. Local area employers will be strongly encouraged to provide summer job opportunities in a variety of capacities and locations through their involvement with the Youth Councils and with the workforce investment system. Where appropriate, internships, job shadowing and corporate mentoring should be provided by the private sector.

- ***occupational skill training;***
- ***leadership development opportunities;***

(The following is in response to both preceding bullets.) Learning environments which are not interpreted as ‘traditional’ by the youth will be promoted to encourage leadership development. A strong long-term relationship with an adult mentor has proven effective in this area. Peer mentoring in which the at-risk teenager is a mentor to an at-risk young child (ages 7-9) is another example of a means to promoting leadership development. Activities that directly effect and improve the community are also effective in improving leadership qualities. The State will encourage local areas to include program components that improve and beautify the communities’ parks, schools, playgrounds, buildings, and neighborhoods and renovate and build structures that improve the community.

- ***comprehensive guidance and counseling; and***
- ***follow-up services.***

(The following is in response to both preceding bullets.) The State will encourage the local areas to provide for comprehensive guidance and counseling several times during the youth’s program involvement and for follow-up services after the youth completes the program. A minimum will be established and required for guidance/counseling at the local level and encouraged to be provided by the educational institution if the youth is still in school. The State

will require the local areas to follow a State-approved evaluation checklist and benchmarks to be achieved at each counseling visit.

- *supportive services;*

Where appropriate, youth will be provided with childcare and transportation assistance and other supportive services as necessary.

The School-Based Youth Services Program must be linked to the One-Stop to make a full array of services available to youth. Additionally, youth programs must connect with welfare-to-work services to broaden available resources for teen parents.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Our commitment to collaboration applies to all program areas. Criteria for operations are under development and are noted in the timeline provided earlier in this response. Statewide the youth services system will include all required design features and program elements as described in WIA. The state will issue guidelines based on these design features and elements to assist the WIB/youth council in their plan design. Standards are discussed elsewhere. Strategies to prepare youth for unsubsidized employment and the role of intermediaries with strong ties to the business community in aiding the job development process will differ locally.

Summer activities are not "income maintenance" activities. Summer youth programs will be part of a comprehensive strategy to serve youth. As such, these programs will be linked to year round youth activities. Summer programs, will incorporate state and federal design elements for youth programs. Details about "development goals of each youth" will be included in local plans.

Local areas will describe how intermediaries will be used to link youth to the workplace. Locals will be encouraged to utilize to the extent possible the existing structures already in place. This includes intermediaries established by school-to-career consortia, the Department of Labor job-plus coordinators, and other formalized connecting activities developed through the WIB and its one-stop centers. In the state guidelines for local youth plans, WIBs will be asked to outline their strategies for involving intermediaries. In addition the state school-to-career teacher summer internship has and will continue to train teachers about the labor market and better prepare them to facilitate workplace linkages. The State Youth Council will work to ensure that "structures and activities support the linkage between academic and occupational learning." The Committee will determine the agenda of the Committee after it is formed.

Locals will develop plans on how youth in alternative schools will be prepared for the job market. However, the state's school-to-career and the Youth Corp. models will be instructive in developing state guidelines for alternative schools. Academic learning will be contextually linked to community-based and work-based experiences, which these schools will be required to provide. Performance standards will be the performance goals for youth 14-18.

Youth leadership development activities will be dealt with as part of the agenda for the Youth Sub-Committee. As indicated in section 15 page 58 of our plan, leadership development will be promoted in youth programs. The state youth council will develop broad guidelines for youth programs, which will include leadership development. As part of the local plan

WIB/Youth Councils will be required local plans to address leadership development through a variety of activities, e.g., community service, work experience, social networks, etc. that provide youth the opportunity to experience and engage in positive interactions with their peers and the larger community.

Youth will be provided with not less than twelve months of follow-up after completion of participation, as appropriate.

- C. *System Infrastructure: How will the State enhance the systems necessary to operate and manage your workforce investment system? In your discussion, you must address the following required elements:***
- 1. *How will the locally operated ITA system be managed in the State to maximize usage and improve the performance information on training providers? How will the State ensure the quality and integrity of the performance data?***

The population is mobile and attends class in areas other than home localities. Vendors may provide services to individuals across WIB boundaries. The system for recording information and tracking performance outcomes will be a statewide system. This would allow for all areas to access information on performance of vendors and make for the best training choices. Vendor performance will be for a wide variety of programs or courses as well as population groups.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

Performance data emanating from the state's JTPA data system passes through an automated validation procedure that is programmed into the data system logic. This procedure enables quality control checks both by SDA and state staff. Lists of information related to terminated participants must first be generated on a regular basis. This enables the SDA to review the data for accuracy, make changes where warranted, and ascertain that the changes are addressed by their MIS staff. No data may count towards year-end performance without this enabling process being followed. The entire procedure is subject to review by NJDOL monitoring staff to ensure that all procedures were properly carried out by the SDA. A sample of participants is selected for quarterly review. The information of those sampled from the data system is matched against participant file folders.

Participant data from the data system is submitted to USDOL in the form of SPIR-required reporting data. Programs supplied by the SPIR contractor allow the state to check for outlier data values and unusual data combinations that might point to errors.

This year (PY 1999) our termination data will be compared to wage record data to check for consistency.

2. ***How will your State improve its technical and staff capacity to provide services to customers and improve entered employment outcomes in accordance with section 7(a)(3)(f) of the Wagner-Peyser Act? How will your State use technology such as Jobline, Aswipe card@ technology, a community voice mail system or other methods to build a mediated and electronic labor exchange network? How will the State use America's Job Bank/State Job Bank Internet linkages to encourage employers to enter their own job orders on the Internet?***

This question has been addressed earlier in this plan.¹⁹

3. ***How will the State improve its employment statistics system to ensure that One-Stop system customer receive timely, accurate and relevant information about local, State and national labor markets?***

While the *Labor Fast Facts* Internet site successfully serves a large constituency each month, its current design is dated. Plans call for the implementation of *Jersey Employment Fact Finder* (JEFF), a new, and more user friendly employment statistics homepage. Modeled after the *Oregon Labor Market Information System*, JEFF will use an ALMIS designed Oracle data base to improve the ability of the public to find, use and understand labor market and career making information. The system is being designed to support the One-Stop Career Center and School-to-Career and College initiatives. JEFF will continue to support current *Labor Fast Facts* users just looking for data.

Outreach efforts will be intensified to further develop data, products and services suited to the needs of the One-Stop community, particularly at the local level. The consultation process will reach out to employers, members of Workforce Investment Boards, educators and other participants of the system. This will be an ongoing process, which will result in continuous improvements to the employment statistics system.

With an aim towards ease of use and readability, selected employment statistics publications will be revised. For example, the *Labor Market Review*, which gives readers a comprehensive economic analysis of a region, will be redesigned to better meet the needs of WIB planners and One-Stop customers. Field analysts will meet with WIBs to determine actual need. Revised publications will also make maximum use of charts and graphs for easy use.

Field labor market staff will intensify their efforts to bring better service to the One-Stop community through an expanded circuit rider program. When fully operational, all field analysts will be outstationed at least one day per week at One-Stop offices.

While on location, analysts will continue to provide training in the use of employment statistics in planning along with Internet instruction. They will also serve as employment statistic

¹⁹ Chapter One, Section 1.8

consultants to both staff and customers. Continuing their role as WIB advisors, field staff will seek to play a more active role in the local planning process.

Representing states from Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Region II on the Workforce Information Council, New Jersey will participate in formal consultations with BLS relating to the development of an annual national employment statistics plan and to address other employment statistics issues.

V. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- A. *For each of the core indicators identified in Section II of these instructions, the customer satisfaction indicator and additional state measures, explain how the State worked with local boards to determine the level of the performance goals. Include a discussion of how the levels compare with the State-adjusted levels of performance established for other States (if available), taking into account differences in economic conditions, the characteristics of participants when they entered the program and the services to be provided. Include a description of how the levels will help you achieve customer satisfaction and continuous improvement over the five years of the Plan.***

The state fully intends to respond to this section, however, it is not possible to discuss how New Jersey compares with other states until some guidance and information is provided from the USDOL. Upon receipt of this information, the State will provide anticipated levels of performance to WIBs and schedule meetings to discuss local adjustments to account for differences in local economic conditions, characteristics of participants and services to be provided. When baseline levels are determined, it is expected that local areas will institute program design, administrative or operational changes to effect increased customer satisfaction and continuous improvement.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The adjustments mentioned in the plan refer to adjustments for New Jersey's OneStop standards not to USDOLs WIA-funded-only standards. New Jersey's OneStop standards will be guided by state policy and will be shared with USDOL.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

New Jersey has established performance indicators for the WIA system. With the assistance of Mathematica Research Corporation, baseline measures of performance were established based on state averages of JTPA Title IIA and III participant outcomes using wage records to determine employment and earnings. This project was initiated in December, 1999, with current wage records at that time allowing for the match of participants exiting JTPA programs between the third quarter of PY 1997 and the second quarter of PY 1998. Although this period is one quarter earlier than the period suggested by USDOL for consistency across states, we do not believe that data from a period shifted later by one quarter would impact the results by any degree that would justify redoing the numbers solely for baseline data.

While the indicators established from the JTPA performance data represents the best data available, we believe that this data can provide nothing more than an initial target for performance as measured under the new WIA system standards. The employment and training system is undergoing dramatic changes, from one where local administrative entities brokered training to a workforce investment system where One-Stop Career Center systems provide customers a complete array of services including the counseling of individuals to make appropriate training choices. Consequently, we believe we will have a much better basis for establishing expected performance levels sometime after the system is operational. The State of New Jersey is committed to closely monitoring program performance levels and fully expects to adjust accordingly existing indicators and continuous improvement targets to reflect more accurate reporting after real baseline performance data is available according to the WIA standards.

For measurements related to credential attainment and youth retention (in advanced training) the baselines included in the following table were based on ranges that USDOL negotiated with early implementing states.

Performance Standards for State of New Jersey Unified Plan

Group	Performance Measure	Outyears				
		Baseline	Initial			
		JTPA Data	Indicator Year 1	Year 2		
Year 3						
Adult	Enter Employ. Rate	54%	55%	56%	57%	58%
	Employ. Retention Rate	80%	76%	77%	78%	79%
	Earnings Change 6 Mos.	\$4,693	\$4,500	\$4,600	\$4,800	\$4,900
	Employ. & Credential Rate	N/A	40%	41 %	42%	43%
Dislocated Wkrs	Enter Employ. Rate	62%	65%	66%	67%	68%
	Employ. Retention Rate	89%	80%	81 %	82%	83%
	Earnings Replacement Rate	130%	90°/0	91 %	92%	93%
	Employ. & Credential Rate	NA	40°/0	41 %	42%	43%
Older Youth	Enter Employ. Rate	53%	55%	56°/0	57%	58%
	Employ. Retention Rate	77%	75%	76%	77%	78%
	Earnings Change 6 Mos.	\$3,573	\$3,500	\$3,600	\$3,700	\$3,800
	Credential Rate	N A	30%	31 % ₁₀	32%	33%
Younger Youth	Skill Attainment Rate	NA	65%	66%	67%	68%
	Diploma/Equiv. Attain. Rate	NA	25%	26%	27%	28%
	Retention Rate	48%	48%	49%	50%	51
Customer Satis.	Participants	NA	66%	67%	68%	69%
	Employers	NA	66%	67%	68%	69%

NEW JERSEY

WIA Performance Indicators Explanation

It should be noted that the information received on the national baseline indicators was not detailed. To the degree that detail was available, there are considerable questions with respect to the national averages being appropriate for comparison to New Jersey performance indicators.* For example, the seven states -- Vermont, Texas, Florida, Utah, etc -- that were used to derive the averages are not comparable to New Jersey with respect to socio-economic characteristics. For example:

According to the 1990 Census data compiled by the Progressive Policy Institute, New Jersey ranked 17th in the educational level of its workforce, while Utah ranked 3rd in the nation. According to 1997 BLS data compiled by the Progressive Policy Institute, New Jersey ranked 15th in the percent of managerial/professional jobs compared to 47th for Texas, 39th for Utah, and 32nd for Vermont. According to 1997 Cognetics data compiled by the Progressive Policy Institute, New Jersey ranked 36th in the number of jobs in gazelle companies, compared to 7th for Florida, 15th for Texas, and 4th for Utah. According to 1995-1996 Dun & Bradstreet data compiled by the Progressive Policy Institute, New Jersey ranked 4th in the number of new start-ups and business failures, combined, as a share of all companies in each state. Florida ranked 16th, Indiana ranked 32nd, and Vermont ranked 47th.

These are just some examples of the differences among these states and New Jersey. Without fuller explanation of the national averages derived from the seven state average, it is difficult at best to analyze, assess, and explain variations in New Jersey's performance indicators from the national averages.

It needs to be recognized that New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation and while it does not have cities of the magnitude of a New York City or Los Angeles, it has cities with populations that have significant barriers to sustainable employment. This is occurring at a time when the State is experiencing its greatest post-war economic boom. Job growth, and the concomitant economic success, is occurring in many of the State's counties; all of these are at full (or better) employment. However, in cities such as Newark, unemployment is at about 10% and one-third of the State's welfare caseload resides in Newark. Thus, while the job growth is evident in many areas, it is not occurring to the same extent in areas with the highest unemployment, e.g., Newark. Thus, areas of high employment growth are the same areas where the populations have fewer barriers to employment and areas with populations with more barriers to employment live in areas with slower employment growth.

At the same time, and, in part, because of such urban-suburban differences, performance indicators in urban areas tend to be lower in urban areas than in economically expanding

areas. And, because of the relative size of the populations (e.g., Newark had about 86,000 persons who were economically disadvantaged, according to the 1990 Census, compared to counties such as Morris with 19,300 persons who were economically disadvantaged), significant increases in performance would have to be achieved either in Newark - where there are populations with substantial barriers to employment or all of the suburban areas in order for the overall State performance to increase by 2% or more.

Specific Indicators

Of the 17 performance indicators, five of New Jersey's baseline indicators are higher or the same as the national average. In these instances, the decision was made to project modest improvement for a variety of reasons, among them -- at some point, performance becomes maximized and significant improvement may hinge on factors -severe poverty, substance abuse, etc. - that are outside the arena of the One-stop system; and, more effort for improvement should be placed on those indicators that are below the national average.

For those indicators that New Jersey's baseline indicators are below the national average, the goal was to match the national average if the State indicator was substantially below the national and exceed the national average if the State indicator was just somewhat below the national average.

With respect to the derivation of the younger youth goal attainment, it is difficult to generate an exact State value as defined in *Training and Employment Guidance Letter 8-99*. Data for the period October 1, 1997 to September 30, 1998 were used to approximate an experience for the goal attainment indicator relative to the USDOL performance measures requirements. The data used to calculate a projected baseline for New Jersey used the recorded total number of younger youth who attained competencies against the total number of younger youth who received types of training. Based on this calculation, a baseline figure is projected to be 60%.

With respect to the derivation of the younger youth diploma attainment, a baseline cannot be calculated purely from JTPA historical data (see *Training and Employment Guidance Letter 8-99*). New Jersey's urbanized settings, where the dropout rates exceed 50%, according to New Jersey Department of Education data, combined with the focus on those hardest to serve in these areas resulted in a projected baseline figure of 49%. This was calculated from the total number of younger youth who were school dropouts at registration against the total number of younger youth terminations who attained a major education competency such as high school diploma or GED.

**State of New Jersey
WIA Performance Indicators (Revised 5/19/2000)
Credentials at National Average**

NEW JERSEY	Baseline	PY 2000	PY 2001	PY 2002
Adults				
Entered Employment	69%	70%	72%	73%
Retention	79%	79%	80%	81
Earnings Change	\$3,586	\$3,600	\$3,662	\$3,725
Credential	55%	56%	58%	60%
Dislocated Workers				
Entered Employment	79%	79%	79.5%	80%
Retention	85%	85.50%	86%	87%
Wage Replacement Rate	103%	103%	103%	104%
Credential	63%	63%	63.5%	64%
Older Youth				
Entered Employment	70%	70%	70.5%	71
Retention	75%	76%	77.5%	79%
Earnings Change	\$3,210	\$3,223	\$3,278	\$3,334
Credential	49%	49%	50%	51
Younger Youth				
Goal Attainment	60%	62%	66%	72%
Diploma Attainment	49%	51 %	53%	55%
Retention	48%	51 %	52.5%	54%
Customer Satisfaction				
Participants	NIA	68%	70%	71
Employers	NIA	66%	68%	69%

B. Does your State have a common data system and reporting processes in place to track progress? If so, describe what data will be collected from the various One-Stop partners (beyond that required by DOL), your use of quarterly wage records, and how the statewide system will have access to the information needed to continuously improve. If not, describe the State's timeframe and plans for transitioning from the JTPA to the WIA tracking system, your planned use of quarterly wage records, and the projected time frame for the

system to be operational.

New Jersey Department of Labor is actively working with USDOL to develop a system currently called the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) that would enable automated labor exchange services and the tracking of a majority of clients served by the state's One-Stop system partner agencies. The integrated case management functioning of the system is expected to change the way services are delivered to clients to support their lifelong learning needs through universal access, self-assisted and staff assisted interventions. By providing an automated match of clients with wage record data from neighboring states, the system will also promote accountability by allowing for the consistent measurement of performance by the State, areas, One-Stop Centers, agencies and service providers and the monitoring of their continuous improvement.

The system is expected to be operational by the end of calendar year 1999. Until then, both the Employment Services and JTPA systems are being readied for Y2K compliance for emergency use in case the implementation of the OSOS is delayed.

Presently, a fully functioning off-the-shelf case management system, purchased by the Departments of Labor, Health and Senior Services, and Human Services will be deployed in welfare, Employment Services and JTPA offices in several counties by June 1999. The entire state should be operational by the end of 1999. The case management system will allow for electronic referral between the separate organizations, as well as tracking of client participation in work activities. Part of the State's One Ease E-Link (OEL) initiative, the case management system is one of five key Information Technology tools for electronically linking all employment, health and social service providers together within a local community. The other tools include secure E-mail and directory services (White Pages of participating members), GroupWare (discussion forums and web publishing), provider home pages (Yellow Pages) and benefit screening and eligibility determination. OEL's full suite of tools should be fully functioning within 17 counties by the end of 1999.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

The state will use the current JTPA MIS until OSOS is available.

Access to UI Wage Record information will not violate any Federal or State law regarding confidentiality.

The state intends to use the WRIS system where appropriate. UI Wage record access will be on an as-needed basis and will not violate any Federal or State law.

Additional Response March 24, 2000:

The State of New Jersey has been working with the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) to determine the expected level of performance goals. Through statewide and regional workgroups, meetings and forums, various issues, including youth programs and performance standards, have been discussed between the state and local WIBs and local governmental entities regarding the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). The recommendations of the Youth

Council workgroup were included in the state plan. A statewide planning session on Youth Investment Councils was recently held on March 24, 2000 for interested parties. These types of meetings bring together individuals from the WIBs, government agencies, private sector business, non-profit organizations, community-based organizations and other groups to address youth issues and performance standards. It is anticipated that once the federal level has negotiated the performance standards for New Jersey, we will in turn negotiate the standards with the local WIBs.

The numbers supplied for the youth program benchmarks and goals for New Jersey were derived from data collected for the Job Training Partnership Act Title II B Summer Youth and II C Youth programs. At this time, the levels for New Jersey were not compared with other states. Mathematica Research Corporation, under a federal contract to review wage records, assisted with the compilation of this data. As additional data is made available, it will be used in the negotiations for the performance standards.

New Jersey will be initiating its customer satisfaction and continuous improvement plan when WIA is actually implemented. The customer satisfaction indicators include both employers and participants' satisfaction with the services to be provided through WIA. It will be measured through the use of a survey. The results of the survey will assist the state in assessing the best methods of providing services to our customers in New Jersey. The establishment of the OneStop Protocols will provide a comprehensive service to the employers and the participants which will result in the required achievement of customer satisfaction and continuous improvement over the five years of the plan. The Memorandum of Understanding between the partner agencies will outline the responsibilities and exchange of information to providing the needed services to the youth and adults in the system. By having fully informed participants and partner agencies, satisfaction with the services will increase.

Additional Response April 5, 2000:

New Jersey Department of Labor is currently establishing the necessary linkages for the implementation of the WIA tracking system through the One-Stop Operating System. The WIA tracking system is planned to be operational as of July 1, 2000.

A link with OSOS and New Jersey's wage record system is being developed to capture quarterly earnings data to establish employment status and earnings for required performance tracking and reporting. This is intended to be a temporary source of UI administrative records until the WRIS/OSOS interface is completed. If the State determines that OSOS will not be operational within the first quarter of PY 2000, the current participant tracking system will be modified to accept the necessary data elements required for performance tracking and reporting, including quarterly wage record date.

Additional Response July 25, 2000:

New Jersey Department of Labor has the current capacity through a fully functioning system to disburse vendor payments in compliance with the terms of WIA. The NJDOL, meanwhile, continues to work diligently with the USDOL and its vendors to implement the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) Financial Management Disbursement System for payment of vendors by mid-August.

C. Describe the system(s) by which your State measures customer satisfaction for

both job seekers and employers (beyond those elements required by the Department). How will customer satisfaction data be evaluated, disseminated locally, and used to improve services and customer satisfaction? Describe any targeted applicant groups under WIA Title I, the Wagner-Peyser Act or Title 38 (Veterans Employment and Training Programs) that your State will track. If no system is currently in place, describe your State's timeframe and plan to collect this information.

Some baseline studies on customer satisfaction have been performed in the last few years covering different aspects of the system. These studies will form the base for any future customer satisfaction efforts.

Any training vendor with customer satisfaction measures indicating that less than half of the responders view the training or other service as less than satisfactory, will trigger an inquiry into the practices of the provider by the respective WIB. The findings of the WIB will be documented and reported to the SETCs Interagency Performance Review Committee for recommendations. The committee will recommend a course of action to the Governor. The state believes that good performance will promote customer satisfaction. Consequently, baseline levels of customer satisfaction will be established during the first year of transition to WIA.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

One-Stop customer satisfaction data will be evaluated against One-Stop standards and will be shared with WIBs and program operators for One-Stop performance negotiations. WIA-funded-only customer satisfaction data will be included in these data. Again, the Rowan Customer Satisfaction survey will form the basis of our system.

The participant tracking system will track information about target groups. The OSOS is being developed to produce these data in the future and New Jersey's current JTPA system has the capability of producing the data . There is no more specific date for establishment of baseline levels of customer satisfaction.

D. Describe any actions the Governor and State Board will take to ensure collaboration with key partners and continuous improvement of the statewide workforce investment system.

The SETC feels confident that all key partners will continue to collaborate. On review of collaborative efforts, there is evidence that many of the programs have a long history of working together. Collaboration not only provides good service for those we serve, but it makes good operational sense. Whenever problems are reported, the SETC will take on the role of mediator to resolve issues.²⁰

Additional Response March 24, 2000:

²⁰ Chapter One elaborates on New Jersey's collaborative efforts.

Through the establishment of the State Youth Investment Council and the local WIB area youth councils, there will be collaboration with the key youth partners. As stated above, New Jersey has involved all interested parties in the planning stages of the youth programs. Beginning with the Youth Council workgroup to the most recent statewide planning session on Youth Councils, the state has encouraged the active participation of the groups associated with youth. Under JTPA, the WIBs had youth subcommittees that in most cases evolved to the newly created Youth Investment Councils (YIC). Each WIB area is preparing its WIA plan that includes the official formation of the local Youth Investment Council. These YICs, under the auspices of the WIB, are responsible for building and coordinating the youth delivery system. The WIA plans with the details of the youth council and system are due in to the State by March 31, 2000. As of April 1, 2000, the YICs will be operational in all of our WIB areas.

The New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission is responsible for the development of a statewide system of activities that are funded under the one-stop delivery system. Working with the local WIBs, a statewide system of on-line vendor selection and centralized ITA payment is planned to integrate the provision of training and services to the participants. These improvements will result in a streamlined method of providing the needed services. The streamlining of services will result in higher customer satisfaction rating by the users of our system.

New Jersey
Workforce Investment Act- Youth
State Adjusted Level of Performance
Program Year 2000

Youth Standard	Benchmark	1 Year	2 Year	3 Year
Older Youth Entered Employment Rate	53%	55%	57%	59%
Older Youth Employment Retention Rate	77%	75%	77%	79%
Older Youth Earnings Gain Rate	\$3,573	\$3,000	\$3,150	\$3,300
Older Youth Credential Rate	N/A	25%	27%	29%

Younger Youth Skill Attainment Rate	N/A	25%	27%	29%
Younger Youth Diploma or Equivalent Attainment Rate	N/A	65%	67%	69%
Younger Youth Retention Rate	48%	50%	52%	54%

E. How will the State and local Boards evaluate performance? What corrective actions (including sanctions and technical assistance) will the State take if performance falls short of expectations? How will the Boards use the review process to reinforce the strategic direction of the system?

The State Board is establishing guidelines for minimum levels of performance for each of the programs in the system. The required core indicators and additional indicators will be used throughout the system to indicate performance of programs and operators. The evaluations will look at outcomes and customer satisfaction benchmarks.²¹

Whenever a minimum level of performance is not met, the following action will be taken:

- An early warning process will be built into the system. This will involve performance indicators for outcomes in the area, administrative reports and processes, and other such indicators as determined.
- A drop in performance below the established standards will result in a warning and an investigation of the issues. A corrective action plan from the operation that is not meeting the standards will also be required.
- Technical assistance will be provided by the appropriate State department or SETC.
- Failure of the entity to correct the deficiencies within a specified period of time will result in sanctions against that entity. This could also result in removal from service delivery in that area.
- A multi-step appeal process is being developed. The first level would be an appeal to the local WIB. If the provider is not satisfied with the determination rendered by the WIB, the appeal is moved to a state level interagency committee for review. If the committee upholds the removal, the provider will be removed from the list. There is not appeal to the USDOL.
- The removal from the partnership for failure to meet all standards is the final step in the process. Once removed from the partnership, the entity will not be able to reapply as an approved vendor for a 24-month period.
- If the entity corrects the problem areas when warned, performance will be monitored on a more regular basis to ensure the corrective action is appropriate and effective.

Additional Response June 10, 1999:

During the year, if a local area is potentially failing to meet performance standards, NJDOL

²¹ See Chapter One, Section II, C

management reports alert the area of its performance status and advise it to take corrective action.

If the area has failed WIA-funded-only core performance standards, then it is notified that formal reviews to determine whether technical assistance needs will take place. Customized technical assistance will follow. NJDOL technical assistance teams work with the Area to identify problems, develop potential solutions, formulate a Technical Assistance Plan and implement the first line delivery of technical assistance. Technical assistance plans shall describe:

- Analyses done to determine causes of failure;
- Steps taken (or to be taken) to correct problems;
- A plan for tracking corrective action and technical assistance provided to the Area.

If an Area continues to fail to meet the prescribed WIA-funded-only performance standards for two consecutive program years, the Governor will develop and impose a reorganization plan after intensive technical assistance efforts at the first sign that a second year of failure is about to occur. The Secretary of Labor's definition of failure will be used.

A formal notice is issued to an Area that, in spite of technical assistance efforts, it has failed performance standards for two consecutive years. The administrative entity and Workforce Investment Board Director, WIB Chairperson and the lead elected official, receive notification.

A team of NJDOL staff is assembled to address those areas failed by a particular Area. Their job is to review, analyze, and pinpoint the causes of the Areas continued failure to meet performance standards.

The on-site review methodologies may vary; typically, the methods will include staff interviews, comparison of State-level data with local data, reviews of training sites and reviews of service provider records.

The observations, findings, and conclusions of the team are compiled in a single report. The report when final will be issued to Directors, Local Officials, the SETC and the Regional Office of the USDOL. That report will impose a plan of action intended to assist that Area to correct performance problems.

The reorganization plan will: ○ Be communicated directly to the Area; ○ Specifically identify the persisting problem/deficiency; ○ Provide to the Area an initial statement of the specific steps and corrective actions required; a Include a timeframe for the implementation of the reorganization plan; and, ○ Be confirmed by a final statement from the Governor not later than October 30, 1999 after the end of the relevant Program Year.

A custodial or follow-up phase will determine the level of successful compliance with the reorganization plan. Further decisions may be made as a result of their follow-up phase to impose additional changes and to seek USDOL's assistance.

Additional Response July 25, 2000:

New Jersey Department of Labor has the capacity through modified existing performance measurement and reporting systems to ensure a fully functioning system to fulfill the requirements of WIA, even as the NJDOL works diligently to implement the One-Stop Operating System Performance Measurement and Reporting Systems by mid-August.

VI. ASSURANCES

1. The State assures that it will establish, in accordance with section 184 of the Workforce Investment Act, fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through the allotments made under sections 127 and 132.
2. The State assures that it will comply with section 184(a)(6), which requires the Governor to, every two years, certify to the Secretary, that -
 - A. The State has implemented the uniform administrative requirements referred to in Section 184(a)(3).
 - B. The State has annually monitored local areas to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements as required under Section 184(a)(4); and,
 - C. The State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance pursuant to Section 184(a)(5).
3. The State assures that the adult and youth funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be distributed equitably throughout the State, and that no local areas will suffer significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this plan.
4. The State assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Investment Act, to the extent practicable.
5. The State assures that the Governor shall, once every two years, certify one local board for each local area in the State.
6. The State assures that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of section 136(f)(3).
7. The State assures that no funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.
8. The State assures that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188, including an assurance that a Methods of Administration has been developed and implemented.
9. The State assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of Section 188.
10. The State assures that it will comply with the grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary (pursuant to the authority at section 189(c) of the Act) which are necessary to enter into grant agreements for the allocation and payment of funds under the Act. The procedures and agreements will be provided to the State by the ETA Office of Grants and Contract Management

and will specify the required terms and conditions and assurances and certifications, including, but not limited to, the following:

§ General Administrative Requirements:

- 29 CFR part 97 --Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act)
- 29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133)
--Single Audit Act
- OMB Circular A-87 --Cost Principles (as amended by the Act)

§ Assurances and Certifications:

- SF 424 B --Assurances for Nonconstruction Programs
- 29 CFR part 31, 32 --Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and regulation)
- CFR part 93 --Certification Regarding Lobbying (and regulation)
- 29 CFR part 98 --Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension Certifications (and regulation)

§ Special Clauses/Provisions:

Other special assurances or provisions as may be required under Federal law or policy, including specific appropriations legislation, the Workforce Investment Act, or subsequent Executive or Congressional mandates.

11. The State certifies that the Wagner-Peyser Act Plan, which is part of this document, has been certified by the State Employment Security Administrator.

12. The State certifies that veterans` services provided with Wagner-Peyser Act funds will be in compliance with 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 20 CFR part 1001.

13. The State certifies that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities will be provided by merit-based public employees.

14. The State certifies that Workforce Investment Act section 167 grantees, advocacy groups as described in the Wagner-Peyser Act (e.g., veterans, migrant and seasonal farm workers, people with disabilities, UI claimants), the State monitor advocate, agricultural organizations, and employers were given the opportunity to comment on the Wagner-Peyser Act grant document for agricultural services and local office affirmative action plans and that affirmative action plans have been included for designated offices.

15. The State assures that it will comply with the annual Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker significant office requirements in accordance with 20 CFR part 653.

16. The State has developed this Plan in consultation with local elected officials, local

workforce boards, the business community, labor organizations and other partners.

17. The State assures that it will comply with section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794) and the American ' s with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.).

18. The State assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Act legislation, regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.

New Jersey Reemployment Allotment Plan (PY 2001)

(Re: USDOL TEGL 1-01)

The New Jersey Reemployment Services grant application is a component of the Wagner-Peyser plan and, as such, is a part of the Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System. Funds available for this grant will be used to enhance direct service delivery to Unemployment Insurance claimants through the One-Stop workforce investment system. This will be accomplished through the provision of more intensive, staff assisted services and the development of more effective linkages between information systems.

UTILIZATION OF FUNDS

We propose to allocate the funds in the following manner:

Total Grant Amount	\$1,052,705
PROS Staffing – 12 positions	832,544
RCC/OSOS Interface	170,000
“Career Beacon” Training	50,161

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES

RCC/OSOS Interface

The RCC-OSOS interface (Reemployment Call Center – One-Stop Operating System) is being built to enable data sharing between the Unemployment Insurance and the One-Stop Operating System and to provide enhanced workforce services to a larger number of claimant job seekers. UI Claimants filing claims via the UI RCC system will have their basic contact and work history data transferred to OSOS via a nightly batch process. The nightly batch process will include generating a mailing to the claimants advising them of the advantages of using the New Jersey-America's Job Bank resume posting service with a description of how to initiate the posting process. If they do not have Internet access at home, the mailing will advise them where they can go to create their Internet based resumes using the information on file in OSOS.

In addition to being able to easily create internet-based resumes using data already on file, the OSOS claimant records provide New Jersey's workforce professionals providing service for employer job orders an expanded pool of potential candidates to refer to their employer customers.

Both the Internet resume tool and OSOS claimant records are viewed as vehicles for facilitating the worker's job search and decreasing the time a claimant collects benefits from the UI Trust Fund.

Increase PROS Staffing/Career Beacon Training

New Jersey Project Reemployment Opportunity System (PROS) provides reemployment services to Unemployment Insurance claimants. These services are defined as job search and job placement services such as counseling testing, providing occupational and labor market information; providing job search workshops and job clubs; and referring qualified individuals to employers, and other similar services. Claimants who participate in the PROS program are identified through the Worker Profiling process that identifies claimants whom:

- Are permanently laid off and are unlikely to return to their previous industry or occupation; and
- Are likely to exhaust their regular unemployment benefits; and
- Are in need of reemployment assistance in order to make a transition to new employment.

The Reemployment Services grant will add twelve new positions to our One-Stop Career Centers. The new staffing will assist in enhancing our current services and focusing on intensive services for claimants. We are instituting our "Career Beacon," a series of seven workshops that will be available in our One- Stop Centers. The workshops will include Orientation, Self-Management Skills, Effective Job Search, Labor Market Information Research, Marketing Yourself, Interview Skills and Training Opportunities. We will include PROS clients into the initial One-Stop orientation workshop, the first in our "Career Beacon" series.

This session will explain all the related services and workshops.

- The Community Resources with Partner Presentations.
- One- Stop center resources including a tour of the Resource rooms
- Goal Setting Exercises
- Job Search readiness Inventory
- Overview of Workshop offerings
- Sign-ups for various workshops

Through this initial orientation process customers will be able to customize services that are necessary to assist them in becoming reemployed. With increased staff, additional profiled claimants can be included in the PROS program. Additional staff can assist with the various workshops and intensify services to claimants.

PROGRAM PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

Outcome	Measurement
Increase the number of profiled claimants attending a scheduled orientation to 37,157 (a net increase of 15%)	Each office will increase the number of profiled claimants from the applicant pool. Data to be obtained through the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services Activity Report (source: LOOPS & WDP MIS).
Secured employment goal increased to 19,118 claimants (a net increase of 11%).	Secured employment data obtained from OSOS and the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services Activity Report.

Revised 8/23/01

**STATE OF NEW JERSEY
STATE SENIOR
EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
COORDINATION PLAN**

YEAR 2001

Submitted by:

The New Jersey Department of Labor

STATE SENIOR EMPLOYMENT SERVICES COORDINATION PLAN

Section 1. Plan Participation

The State of New Jersey initiated a broad based, highly collaborative planning process for the development of the Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System. This plan, required by the Federal Workforce Investment Act, documented the One-Stop workforce investment service delivery vision and strategy that the State adopted even before the signing of the Workforce Investment Act. The plan applies to the five-year period between July 1, 1999 and June 30, 2004. Individuals representing State and local agencies on aging, participated in the planning process along with individuals representing all other public and private non-profit agencies and organizations serving older workers and/or providing core, intensive or training services as defined in the Workforce Investment Act. That plan was made available for public comment and no negative comments regarding services to older workers were received.

The Governor's State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), in directing the unified planning process of the Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan, encouraged involvement and input to the plan. A similar plan of participation was encouraged at the local area Workforce Investment Board level to insure the inclusion of Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) concerns in local plans for One-Stop operations.

A major change to the SCSEP program in the last year has been the transfer of the program to the Division of Employment & Training in the New Jersey Department of Labor. This change has promoted inclusion of the program in New Jersey's One-Stop workforce investment system.

Section 2. Organizational Involvement

The New Jersey Department of Labor, Division of Employment and Training, is the State Agency responsible for the administration of the State SCSEP. July 2000 marked the first time in New Jersey's SCSEP long history, that the program administration is not in the aging network, but rather in the "mainstream" employment and training community. As the State SCSEP Grantee, the Department of Labor has become the leading advocate for the older worker and their contribution to today's workforce. The Division of Employment and Training is committed to the total integration of its SCSEP, known as Workforce 55+, with the broad array of Labor's employment and training programs delivered through the One-Stop system. The State SCSEP Director, being part of the Division of Employment & Training family, will continue to use his/her position and Labor's network to lead efforts in coordination among SCSEP contractors and organizations that can be engaged in older worker activities. The Division, via its SCSEP staff, will continue to provide increased awareness of the value of the mature worker in the workforce as well as the unique training requirements of this population.

(a) The State Office on Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging

The State Office on Aging and the Area Agencies on Aging continue to advocate for the older American. Their gerontology specialists provide guidance on training and services for seniors. The State Office on Aging is a direct link to the older population at the local level. The services and needs of the older worker are made available through the 21 county Area Agencies on Aging. These Agencies have become a part of New Jersey's One-Stop workforce investment system. SCSEP clients are comprised of the hardest to serve and most in need. Therefore, many supportive services are needed before employment can become a reality in many cases. Through the referral network of the Office on Aging, seniors receive the supportive services necessary to re-focus on their employment and training needs. Recognizing that Title V SCSEP is the employer of last resort for many older economically disadvantaged job seekers, and that basic needs must be met before job services can begin, the aging network derives significant benefit from being a part of New Jersey's One-Stop system.

The State Office on Aging assists the 21 county Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) in developing comprehensive, coordinated service systems for adults aged 60 and over. Services funded and available through the AAA may include information and assistance, outreach, transportation, case management, homemaker, visiting nurse, respite, telephone reassurance, hospice, escorted transportation, adult day care, legal assistance, education, caregiver support, etc. Meals provided in a group setting and delivered to the home are also available through the Area Agencies on Aging.

The State Office on Aging:

- Works in cooperation with, and refers clients to Area Agencies on Aging for benefits, counseling, outreach, and socialization.
- Provides personal counseling on attitudes relating to age, grooming, appearance, and physical limitations.
- Develops worksites with a high degree of socialization for clients who potentially are, or have been, isolated.
- Refers to displaced homemaker counseling services.
- Refers to family guidance clinics.
- Refers to welfare for program/benefits.
- Counsels and refers alcoholic clients to hospitals and organizations treating alcoholism.
- Visits sick clients at hospitals or at home, assuring them that a program slot will be available when they are able to return.
- Solves problems of personality conflict.
- Refers clients to Human Service organizations for clients support needs.
- Provides companions for older infirm persons.

(b) SCSEP Grantees

There are four National SCSEP Grantees operating in New Jersey. They are: Green Thumb, Inc. (G/T), the National Council on the Aging, Inc. (NCOA), The National Urban League, Inc. (NUL) and The National Senior Citizens Education and Research Center, Inc. (NSCERC).

New Jersey National and State SCSEP sponsors have collaborated on initiatives in the past. These include, National “Hire the Older Worker Week” activities, Job Fairs, Employer Conferences, Older Worker Award Ceremonies, etc. However, with implementation of the Workforce Investment Act and the emergence of the One-Stop system, improved coordination of SCSEP resources is possible.

The New Jersey SCSEP facilitated meetings with the local National SCSEP Directors from Green Thumb, The National Council on the Aging, Urban League and the National Senior Citizens Education and Research Center, in preparation of the Equitable Distribution of SCSEP positions report and to prepare the State Senior Employment Services Coordination Plan. State and National SCSEPs in New Jersey will take a non-partisan approach when addressing the employment and training needs of older job seekers within the One-Stop workforce investment system.

A significant change in operations, based on the collaborative nature of the One-Stop system and the focus on customer satisfaction will permit agencies to receive services from multiple SCSEP programs. We will adopt the posture of serving the clients needs first, our individual program needs second. We know that if the employing community experiences successful older workers hires, it will have positive effects on how mature workers are accepted in the workforce.

The following actions were developed and agreed upon by SCSEP grantees:

- Create a formalized approach for sharing job orders on an on-going basis. This will improve customer satisfaction and performance ratings from our employer customer.
- Joint/universal referral forms to be used by participants receiving services through One-Stop partners and/or employers.
- Joint training of our SCSEP participants assigned to One-Stops to include knowledge of the partners, procedures, use of computers to access information, i.e., One-Stop Operating Systems (OSOS), post resumes, etc.
- State SCSEP to communicate and meet at minimum bi-annually with National SCSEP.
- Keep abreast of new legislation, which may impact negatively or favorably on the quality of life of older workers.
- Collocation of regular Title V SCSEP services at One-Stop Centers and affiliates. SCSEP Directors will coordinate schedules of participants to provide maximum coverage at One-Stop Centers and maximum job opportunities for participants.
- Where there are multiple SCSEP providers in a service area, abolish “duplication of service” rule at One-Stop Centers.

- Coordinate regular SCSEP attendance at local WIB meetings. There will be a cross sharing of WIB meeting minutes.

(c) Nonprofit Providers of Employment Services

The New Jersey Department of Labor has solicited the assistance of the New Jersey Foundation for the Aging to serve on the Senior Employment Services Coordination Planning Committee in the ongoing finalization of this plan.

“New Jersey needs a strong and dynamic workforce in order to have a healthy business environment. Across the country 24 million baby boomers will reach the so called ‘retirement age’ by 2008. It is estimated that less than 10 percent of the Fortune 100 companies are considering the impact that this incredible exit of their workforce will have on their business. Currently in our state 13.4 percent of all jobs are held by adults over the age of 55. New Jersey will definitely feel the impact of this mass exit. This exit; however, creates an incredible opportunity for companies to find effective employees-even for the most difficult to fill positions. The problem has been that everyone looks in the same traditional places for employees, but they fail to take advantage of an obvious and available good source of talent. Mature workers and non-traditional workers remain an untapped resource for New Jersey employers. Only 34 percent of those persons over age 55 are employed. Whether considering new career moves, altering work responsibilities or entering the work force for the first time, this potential pool of employees could positively influence the labor shortage that NJ businesses are experiencing today. A quick look at the annual job openings across the state indicates that there are openings in every educational/training level that adults over age 55 could easily fill. It is important to recognize that the current shortage of labor will only be magnified as the baby boomers in New Jersey reach retirement age.”

Excerpt from Grace Egan, Executive Director of NJFFA

The New Jersey Foundation for the Aging is interested in issues that support independence and autonomy for New Jersey’s older residents. Employment opportunities directly impact quality of life issues that influence the daily lives of persons over age 55. The New Jersey Foundation for the Aging has partnered with the New Jersey Department of Labor along with other corporate and labor sectors to address our mutual interests. With planning we will facilitate job opportunities for adults over age 55 and also provide labor solutions for industry.

(d) Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)

There are seventeen Workforce Investment Boards in New Jersey. Local Aging Agencies have participated in Memorandums of Understanding and in the preparation of local strategic five-year unified plans for workforce readiness. SCSEP programs are fully integrated into the service offerings of each of the One-Stop Career Centers.

The State Office on Aging will continue to work with the WIBs and serve as a resource on older worker employment and training issues.

The new One-Stop environment and the relaxation of the “duplication of services” rule will allow a Green Thumb participant and a WF55+ participant to work the same job; a NCOA participant and an Urban League participant to work for the same supervisor or NESERC and WF55+ share job orders for clients. Our intent is to maximize older worker services to employers and job seekers and to make the One-Stop system older worker friendly.

(e) Other Organizations Including Businesses and Labor

Each WIB is composed of a majority of business members and must have at least two representatives of organized labor. Services to older individuals was a subject dealt with by all WIBs in the development of their local plans.

Section 3. Comments

Senior employment services was included in the Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey’s Workforce Investment System. SCSEP participated in the planning and consultation process for the Plan. New Jersey’s Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan was made available for public comment by way of regional public hearings and no negative comments regarding services to older workers were received.

Section 4. Plan Provisions

(a) Basic Distribution of SCSEP Positions

Annual meetings are convened with the National SCSEP Grantee’s local Directors to discuss problematic overserved and underserved areas. The State SCSEP Director coordinates efforts to increase SCSEP enrollment in the underserved counties. Under no circumstances will an economically disadvantaged older worker be laid-off to accommodate equity in any geographical location.

It is our goal to reach the older adults with the greatest economic need and to achieve equity in the distribution of SCSEP-funded positions. As an attachment, a copy of the March 30, 2001 Equitable Distribution of SCSEP Resources Report is enclosed.

(b) Special Populations

Information for this category was derived from the 1990 Census Data in comparison with Title V SCSEP current enrollment information of all SCSEP Projects in the State as of December 30, 2000. The findings were accumulated by a special consultant hired by the US Department of Labor. New Jersey will undertake increased efforts to outreach to the disabled community for improved employment services to this group. Coordination efforts are underway with such agencies as the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. Similar efforts will be given to other special populations in need of additional services, as indicated on the attached Special Populations Chart.

- (1) Greatest economic need – The SCSEP is serving well over the non-SCSEP population in this category.
- (2) Minorities – Again, the SCSEP serves a higher percentage of minority individuals than is reflected by the same age group of eligible individuals from the census data.
- (3) Greatest social need – The information is not so easily read. It seems to be conflicting. See attached 4.b Special Population Chart.

(c) Type of Skills

For Program Year 2001, this information is not available.

However, we will obtain this information through the New Jersey Department of Labor (OSOS). OSOS is a coordinated technology-supported network to meet the technology requirements of New Jersey's Career Center system as defined in the Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System. The State's performance measures will be geared to the needs of employer and employee customers and address the needs of all workforce investment agencies. Performance measures will reflect outcomes such as earnings and job retention, but also will be established to reflect skills attainment. The SCSEP is a partner program and is being integrated in OSOS.

(d) Community Service Needs

Information, research and/or assessment of how New Jersey will collect, monitor and measure its community service needs for specific populations is not available for Program Year 2001. Again, this information will be attainable through the comprehensive assessment tool of OSOS by collecting, reviewing, and analyzing customer information to create an employment plan that matches the specific needs, goals, and aptitudes of customers within New Jersey's current labor market. Also, the development of an employment plan and tracking service delivery component of OSOS might be utilized for this category information.

(e) Coordination with the Workforce Investment Act

SCSEP inclusion in the One-Stop system, created pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act, significantly increases the opportunities for older workers entering the One-Stop system. With the SCSEP program in the mix of programs accessible through the One-Stop system, One-Stop operators can offer any older worker SCSEP's unique services.

Section 5. Plan Recommendations

The State of New Jersey recommends that any subsequent plan become a part of the Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System.

State of New Jersey

***State Plan for Vocational and Technical
Education
FY 2000-2004***

**David C. Hesse
Commissioner of Education**

**Ellen Schechter
Assistant Commissioner
Division of Academic and Career Standards**

**Thomas A. Henry
Director
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PTM

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***The State Board of Education also functions as the state Board of Vocational Education.**

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Introduction

New Jersey has maintained for many years a cooperative planning structure and process in the development of the State Plan for Vocational Education that draws on the expertise and understanding of local citizens, business, and personnel in the field to create its plans for education. The delivery of vocational education in New Jersey, under the direction of the New Jersey State Board of Education, is based on a continuous process of recommendation, consultation, and collaboration, which finally results in a written plan, coordinated and produced by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), and reviewed and endorsed by the New Jersey State Board of Education, acting as the state's Board of Vocational Education.

The New Jersey State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education set forth here is not merely a plan created in response to federal instructions. It is a stage in a continuing evolution of education in this state. It specifies current thinking in New Jersey about current needs and conditions.

The five-year plan presented here reflects the state's vision for vocational education. To fulfill that vision, the plan describes where we are now in New Jersey and where we are going. We fully expect continuous improvement to take us in different directions. There will be change. Therefore, the plan will be frequently examined and updated yearly as the established structure for collaborative planning moves ahead. Changes in the plan will reflect new directions and thinking about how to educate the state's youth.

Section 1

Planning, Coordination, and Collaboration

1.0 Planning, Coordination, and Collaboration

New Jersey is a diverse state experiencing the challenging effects of changing technology, youth and adult unemployment, and other socioeconomic conditions that affect education for employment. The New Jersey State Department of Education has developed a vocational education program planning model that allows local and state users and practitioners to participate in the development of the *State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education*, which is one part of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, 2000-2004*.

During the past year, the Congress has enacted the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which reauthorizes the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, and redesigns the Job Training Partnership Act. The WIA gives states the option to jointly coordinate all workforce development programs and submit a Unified State Plan that includes Perkins III and the Workforce Investment Act. New Jersey has a long history of workforce planning and coordination through the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC). The Governor has directed all departments to develop a single Unified Plan. Therefore, New Jersey's State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education will be a chapter in New Jersey's *Unified Plan for Workforce Readiness*. The Unified Plan will include chapters on the state's overall workforce planning, coordination, and assessment efforts, the implementation of Title I of WIA, as well as the implementation of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and the Vocational Rehabilitation Act.

To ensure that students will have access to programs that reflect and respond to labor market conditions, the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives (OSCCI) plays an active role in the state's workforce investment system. Occupational education at the secondary and postsecondary levels is viewed as one of the major components in this system, assisting the entering workforce, the out-of-work workforce, and the existing workforce. The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the Commission on Higher Education provide unique services in this system. The state's K-12 and postsecondary systems have the primary responsibility for educating the future workforce, and the postsecondary systems play a vital role in assisting those currently unemployed as well as maintaining and upgrading the skills of the existing workforce.

Continued improvement and coordination of programs among all vocational education providers require a comprehensive planning system. The delivery system for vocational education in New Jersey is managed at the state and local levels. At each level, policies are made, recommendations are given, and programs are conducted. State agencies set New Jersey policy, and the local public and private providers implement educational programs.

At the state level, agencies include the Governor's Office of Management and Planning; the New Jersey State Board of Education; the departments of Education, Human Services, Corrections, Community Affairs, and Labor; the SETC₂ and the Commission on Higher Education. Regional and county coordination is a function of county offices of education, county correctional institutions, county or regional Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), and regional Employment Services offices. At the local level, WIBs are in place to provide

recommendations in matters of occupational demand, occupational competency requirements, and partnerships.

The local delivery system comprises the local educational agencies, including comprehensive high schools, county vocational schools, county/community colleges, private and public four-year colleges. It also includes local general advisory committees, local occupationally-specific advisory committees, community-based organizations, approved private schools for the disabled, and private proprietary schools.

1.1 Formal and Informal Opportunities to Present Views

Staff members of the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives also participate on a variety of task force and development teams. These interagency collaborations with stakeholders in business, labor, and education provide informal and formal opportunities for input and feedback. This year the NJDOE has employed the following input strategies:

Public hearings: This year, under the direction of Maud Dahme, state board president, the New Jersey State Board of Education conducted a separate meeting, acting as the New Jersey State Board for Vocational Education, to discuss the 1998 Perkins Act, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the development of the *State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education FY2000-2004*, and the development of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*. Public hearings, called Town Meetings, were conducted as part of the SETC's planning process for the development of the New Jersey Unified State Plan, as required by the Workforce Investment Act. A formal public hearing was held March 26, 1999, by the SETC on the completed plan. The State Board of Education, which acts the state's Board of Vocational Education, holds regular public hearings on the third Wednesday of each month on any item on the State Board agenda. The State Board of Education heard testimony on the Plan on March 17, 1999. The proposed plan document appeared on the March meeting agenda for discussion and for adoption at the subsequent meeting in April. A draft of the proposed plan was distributed to districts and colleges and was published on the Internet, inviting comment. New Jersey has not had a "Single Point of Contact" for distribution since 1996; therefore, the plan was not distributed through such means.

Public hearing summaries: Town meetings were held on Feb. 23, 1999, at the County College of Morris; on February 26, 1999, at Camden County College; and on March 4, 1999, at the New Jersey Department of Labor. A State Board of Education public hearing was held on March 17, 1999, at the Department of Education.

Taskforces and meetings: Several stakeholder groups meet on a regular basis to provide planning input. The Committee of Practitioners meets quarterly, and this year reviewed and provided feedback on the professional development programs and the process to identify vocational courses and programs. An inter-agency task force evaluated New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers and highlighted the areas of strength and improvement for these centers.

New Jersey Hotel/Motel Association: This statewide employer organization has worked with the NJDOE to develop new occupational titles and new apprenticeship programs for their front desk operations. As a result of this collaboration, they are poised to begin a state-wide effort to work with local schools and business partners to promote their industry, participate in career education, work-based learning, and other related activities.

New Jersey State AFL-CIO: A formal partnership with the AFL-CIO was established through the state's Youth Transitions to Work Partnership Act of 1993. This partnership also includes the state and federal Departments of Labor. The partners make up the New Jersey Apprenticeship Policy Committee, which provides policy recommendations for the state's apprenticeship program.

Hospitality Business Alliance: This national partnership has established a New Jersey chapter to promote the hospitality and culinary industries through school-to-career partnerships. Partners in the local chapter include the New Jersey Hotel/Motel Association; the New Jersey Chapter of the National Restaurant Association; the state's community colleges offering associate's degree programs; the state's four-year, degree-granting institution for hospitality management; the NJDOE; and a representative from the state apprenticeship program.

Building Trades Unions: Partnerships have been established with the state's carpentry and electrical unions to design and promote the department's curriculum certification process, with three more trade unions agreeing to participate.

American Building Contractors Association (ABC): The New Jersey chapter of this national organization, representing contractors from various trades in the nonunion sector, has designed and promoted a curriculum certification process for the building trades.

NJCAR: This statewide organization (New Jersey Coalition of Automotive Retailers), representing automotive dealerships and garages, has agreed to participate in the implementation of the state's Automotive Youth Educational Services (AYES) initiative.

Skylands Machine Trades Consortium: A partnership between the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT), the state departments of Labor and Education, vocational schools, community colleges, and local manufacturing employers designed and promoted a collaborative effort to provide machine trades training and apprenticeships for the northwest sector of the state. The partnership is exploring the use of distance learning, team teaching, and innovative recruitment techniques.

Conferences and Symposia: The state Workforce Delivery System conference, using new audience participation technology developed by AT&T, was able to gather assessment data on the New Jersey WIB One-Stop Career Center Delivery System. The conference also provided an opportunity for the workforce development community to review the work of the Task Force on Education and Workforce

Quality and its report, *Linking Education and the Workforce: An Imperative for New Jersey's Economic Future*.

Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020: On January 1, 1996, The National Council for Agricultural Education inaugurated *Reinventing Agricultural Education for the Year 2020*, a national initiative to reposition and strengthen agricultural and food systems education for the 21st century. The New Jersey Department of Agriculture, through a grant from the Department of Education, is conducting this initiative in New Jersey. The timeliness of this initiative will ensure the positive linkage of agricultural education with the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards.

Through grants available to each county in the state, local stakeholders developed their own visions through multiple local and regional meetings, involving hundreds of stakeholders. This entire process is based on building, from the grassroots level, a sharing of information and ideas on agricultural education. From the local and regional visions, statewide strategies for implementation were formed and are being implemented for the immediate future and into the next century. The project will conclude its planning stage during FY 1999. From that point, the implementation, evaluation, and updating stages will continue well past the year 2000.

1.2 State Level Planning

See Chapter 1 of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2001*, for a description of the state's workforce planning system.

The *New Jersey State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education FY 2000-2001* was developed in cooperation with the SETC and the Statewide Committee of Practitioners. Constituted by the Director of the OSCCI, the statewide Committee of Practitioners is composed of representatives of teachers, eligible recipients, interested community members, and representatives of special populations, at-risk students, correctional institutions, and students enrolled in nontraditional occupational programs. The Committee of Practitioners was originated under the 1990 Perkins Act. The membership is currently being expanded to include representation as outlined in Section 122(b)(1) of Perkins III.

The development of the *New Jersey State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education FY 2000-2004* has been guided by the process to develop and implement a unified state plan that includes Titles I and II of the WIA and the Perkins Act of 1998. This plan links all educational resources to the workforce investment system. The SETC worked with all levels of the public and private sectors through the formation of task forces, focus groups, and public hearings in an ongoing process to produce various task force reports, the 1992 and 1996 Unified State Plans for Workforce Readiness, and ultimately, the FY 2000 consolidated plan. Common themes across all policy documents identified the need to:

- Enhance program accountability;

- Coordinate programs among state and local entities;
- Expand the use of technology;
- Provide staff development;
- Link school and work learning experiences; and
- Provide access to the world of work.

The 1996 plan called for primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, proprietary and public vocational-technical schools, state agencies and community-based organizations, businesses, and government to function as part of a unified workforce investment system designed to meet the needs of both workers and employers. The plan includes seven broad policy areas:

- State level collaboration;
- Local level collaboration;
- New Jersey's workforce delivery system;
- New entrants to the workforce;
- The unemployed, underemployed, and welfare recipients;
- Improvement in the quality of the current workforce;
- Evaluation of the workforce investment system.

The 1996 *Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System* established the framework for all workforce readiness programs in the state of New Jersey. The SETC has taken a leadership role in developing a significant number of workforce readiness policy initiatives. This effort has resulted in eight reports to the Governor and the Legislature. Where appropriate, the recommendations have been incorporated into New Jersey's FY 2000-2004 plan for vocational and technical education. A summary of the reports and a description of the five current task forces and their work appear in Chapter 1 of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*.

New Jersey's plan for vocational and technical education, as part of the state's *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*, results from a complex and continuous system of consultation and discussion and culminates in a written plan, coordinated, edited, and produced by the NJDOE, and reviewed, discussed, and endorsed by the New Jersey State Board of Education, acting as the State Board for Vocational Education.

1.3 Local Level Planning

All local Perkins grant recipients are required to submit to the Department of Education a five-year local assessment and planning document as prescribed by the *Five Year Perkins Planning Guidelines and One-Year Perkins Spending Plan*¹.

These documents provide local grant recipients with instructions on how to inform the state of the intended local use of funds proposed for adult vocational and technical education, postsecondary vocational and technical education, Tech-Prep education, and secondary vocational and technical education.

¹ All documents referenced in this plan may be obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education.

1.4 Assurances

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
E.D.G.A.R. CERTIFICATIONS

I hereby certify:

that the New Jersey State Board of Education is eligible to submit the State Plan for Vocational Education as required by 34 CFR 76.104(a)(1);

that the New Jersey State Board of Education has authority under state law to perform the functions of the state under the program;

that the New Jersey State Board of Education legally may carry out each provision of the plan;

that all provisions of the plan are consistent with state law;

that I, as Commissioner of Education, have authority under state law to receive, hold, and disburse federal funds made available under the plan;

that I, as Commissioner of Education, have authority to submit the plan;

that the New Jersey State Board of Education has adopted the plan;

that the plan is the basis for state operation and administration of the program;

that a copy of the plan was submitted into the State Interagency Review Process; and

that certification of Debarment, Suspension, a Drug-Free Workplace and Lobbying were completed.

DATE

David C. Hesper
Commissioner of Education

ASSURANCES

The State of New Jersey, through the New Jersey State Board of Education, acting as the New Jersey State Board for Vocational Education, hereby submits its State Plan for Vocational and Technical Education FY2000-2004, under provisions of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 and the Education Division General Administrative Regulations (E.D.G.A.R).

The state plan consists of assurances by the State Board and a description of the manner in which the State Board will comply with the requirements of Titles I and II of the Perkins Act.

GENERAL ASSURANCES

The State of New Jersey hereby submits a plan for the use of funds under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 and the provisions of subsection (b) of section 434 of the General Education Provisions Act.

The New Jersey State Board of Education provides the following assurances. Plans for implementing these general assurances are included in the text of the State Plan.

1. That the State Board will adopt and use proper methods of administering each program, including:
 - (i) monitoring agencies, institutions, and organizations responsible for carrying out each program and enforcing any obligations imposed on those agencies, institutions, and organizations under law;
 - (ii) providing technical assistance, if necessary, to those agencies, institutions, and organizations;
 - (iii) encouraging the adoption of promising or innovative educational techniques by those agencies, institutions, and organizations;
 - (iv) disseminating throughout the state information on program requirements and successful practices; and
 - (v) correcting deficiencies in program operations that are identified through monitoring or evaluation (Section 76.101, General Education Provision Act rules and regulations).
2. The State Board will comply with the requirements of Titles I and II of the Act and, where necessary, will describe the manner in which the State Board will comply with those requirements.
3. The State Board will comply with the distribution of assistance requirements as contained in Section 124, Title I, of the Act.

4. Provisions are made for vocational and technical education activities to assist students to meet or exceed the state adjusted levels of performance as prescribed under Title I, Part A, in accordance with Section 122(c)(1).
5. The State Board will develop measures for evaluating the effectiveness of programs assisted under the Act in meeting needs identified in the state plan. Each program year, the state will evaluate the mandated number of projects, services, and activities funded under Titles I and II.
6. The State Board will fund programs fostering personnel and curriculum development to further the goals identified in the state plan.
7. No funds will be expended under this act to acquire equipment (including computer software) in any instance in which such acquisition results in a direct financial benefit to any organization representing the interest of the purchasing entity, its employees, or any affiliate of such an organization.
8. Federal funds will be used to supplement and, whenever practical, to increase the amount of state and local funds that would, in the absence of such federal funds, be made available for the uses specified in the state plan. In no case would federal monies supplant such state or local funds.
9. The State Board will provide for the fiscal control and fund accounting procedures necessary to assure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, federal funds paid to the state, including funds paid by the state to eligible recipients.
10. Individuals who are members of special populations will be provided with equal access to recruitment, enrollment, and placement activities.
11. Individuals who are members of special populations will be provided with equal access to the full range of vocational education programs available to individuals who are not members of special populations, including occupationally-specific courses of study, cooperative education, apprenticeship programs, and, to the extent practicable, comprehensive career guidance and counseling services, and shall not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of special populations.
12. Vocational education programs and activities for individuals with disabilities will be provided in the least restrictive environment in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and will, whenever appropriate, be included as a component of the individualized education program developed under such Act.
13. Students with disabilities who have individualized education programs developed under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 shall, with respect to vocational education programs, be afforded the rights and protections guaranteed such students under such Act.

14. Students with disabilities who do not have individualized education programs developed under the Americans with Disabilities Act or who are not eligible to have such programs shall, with respect to vocational education programs, be afforded the rights and protections guaranteed such students under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and, for the purpose of the Perkins Act, such rights and protections shall include making vocational education programs readily accessible to eligible individuals with disabilities through the provision of services described in section 135.

15. Vocational education planning for individuals with disabilities will be coordinated between appropriate representatives of vocational education, special education, and state vocational rehabilitation agencies.

16. The provision of vocational education to each student with disabilities will be monitored to determine if such education is consistent with the individualized education program developed for such students under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

17. The provision of vocational education will be monitored to ensure that disadvantaged students and students of limited English proficiency have access to such education in the most integrated setting possible.

19. The requirements of the Act relating to individuals who are members of special populations will be carried out under the general supervision of individuals in the appropriate state educational agency or State Board who are responsible for students who are members of special populations.

21. The requirements of the Act relating to individuals who are members of special populations will meet education standards of the state educational agency or State Board.

22. With respect to students with disabilities, the supervision carried out under the Perkins Act shall be carried out consistent with and in conjunction with supervision by the state educational agency or State Board carried out under the Americans with Disabilities Act.

23. All recipients of funds will complete a recruitment, enrollment, retention, and placement plan prior to distribution of funds. The plan will be reviewed and approved or disapproved by the office. The plan must contain current enrollment statistics, projected enrollments, and dates.

24. All recipients of funds will sign a statement of assurance of access that allows students an opportunity to attend programs of their choice and allows representatives of county vocational-technical schools to present information to students on availability of programs.

25. The State Board will, in consultation with teachers, eligible recipients, parents, students, interested community members, representatives of special populations, representatives of business and industry, and representatives of labor organizations, develop a State Plan for Vocational Education as prescribed by section 122 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998.

26. Under the direction of the SETC, the methods for joint planning and coordination will include an opportunity for the entities responsible for planning or administering programs and activities to review and comment on all portions of the State Plan for Vocational Education and the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*.

27. The State Legislature granted approval for the inclusion of secondary vocational education programs and activities to be included in the unified plan submitted under the Workforce Investment Act (PL 105-220, Sec.501(b)(1)).

28. The State Board will comply with the requirements of Title I and the provisions of the State Plan, including the provisions of a financial audit of funds received under the Perkins Act which may be included as part of an audit of other federal or state programs in compliance with the Single Audit Act.

Section 2

Program Administration

2.0 Program Administration

New Jersey administers a system of vocational education that encompasses both secondary and postsecondary programs of education for residents of the state.

2.1 Period of the Plan

This plan includes Fiscal Years 2000 to 2004, with FY 2000 as the transitional year. The new fiscal formula, explained in Section 6, will phase in and go into full effect in FY 2001. New Jersey expects to review its plan annually during this period and revise as needed.

2.2 Vocational and Technical Education Activities to be Assisted

The statewide vocational and technical education programs and activities are determined by the state-level planning process, described above, and the local-level delivery system, described below. At each level, policies are made, recommendations are given, and programs are conducted. State agencies set New Jersey policy, and the local public and private providers implement educational programs.

As a result of the state-level planning process, the performance standards, described in section 3.2, including the evaluation of students' competencies, must be applied. These include the state's five Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards and the use of industry-endorsed certification/licensing examinations and/or the National Skill Standards Board standards. Occupational education courses and programs are to be designed at the local level within one of the following clustered disciplines and linked to the Core Curriculum Content Standards:

- Art and Humanities;
- Business and Information Systems;
- Science and Technology;
- Health and Human Services.

All vocational education programs and/or courses within these clusters as proposed in N.J.A.C. 6A:6-3.3 (b), which includes all the traditional major vocational program areas identified in N.J.A.C. 6:43-3.13, must be reviewed and approved by the Department of Education as prescribed in N.J.A.C. 6:43 8. Thus, the use of the Classification of Instructional Programs (CIP) coding system by local districts continues to be required. This system allows the local district boards of education to identify individual programs offered at each institution and allows the state to report them in the New Jersey Directory of Verified Occupational Programs.

According to the Act, each eligible recipient that receives a grant under the 1998 Perkins Act, Sec. 135, *shall* use the funds provided to improve vocational education programs that:

- Improve the academic and vocational and technical skills of students participating in vocational and technical education programs by strengthening the academic, and vocational and technical, components of such programs through the integration of academics with vocational and technical education programs through a coherent sequence of courses to ensure learning in the core academic and vocational and technical subjects;
- Provide students with strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of an industry;
- Develop, improve, or expand the use of technology in vocational and technical education, which may include—
 1. training of vocational and technical education personnel to use state-of-the-art technology, which may include distance learning;
 2. providing vocational and technical education students with the academic, and vocational and technical, skills that lead to entry into the high technology and telecommunications field; or
 3. encouraging schools to work with high technology industries to offer voluntary internships and mentoring programs;
- Provide professional development programs to teachers, counselors, and administrators, including—
 1. inservice and preservice training in state-of-the-art vocational and technical education programs and techniques, in effective teaching skills based on research, and in effective practices to improve parental and community involvement;
 2. support of education programs for teachers of vocational and technical education in public schools and other public school personnel who are involved in the direct delivery of educational services to vocational and technical education students, to ensure that such teachers and personnel stay current with all aspects of an industry;
 3. internship programs that provide business experience to teachers; and
 4. programs designed to train teachers specifically in the use and application of technology;
- developing and implementing evaluations of the vocational and technical education programs carried out with funds under this title, including an assessment of how the needs of special populations are being met;
- initiating, improving, expanding, and modernizing quality vocational and technical education programs;

- providing services and activities that are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective; and
- linking secondary vocational and technical education and postsecondary vocational and technical education, including implementing Tech-Prep programs.

Eligible recipients *may* use funds:

- to involve parents, businesses, and labor organizations as appropriate, in the design, implementation, and evaluation of vocational and technical education programs authorized under this title, including establishing effective programs and procedures to enable informed and effective participation in such programs;
- to provide career guidance and academic counseling for students participating in vocational and technical education programs;
- to provide work-related experience, such as internships, cooperative education, school-based enterprises, entrepreneurship, and job shadowing that are related to vocational and technical education programs;
- to provide programs for special populations;
- for local education and business partnerships;
- to assist vocational and technical student organizations;
- for mentoring and support services;
- for leasing, purchasing, upgrading, or adapting equipment, including instructional aides;
- for teacher preparation programs that assist individuals who are interested in becoming vocational and technical education instructors, including individuals with experience in business and industry;
- for improving or developing new vocational and technical education courses;
- to provide support for family and consumer sciences programs;
- to provide vocational and technical education programs for adults and school dropouts to complete their secondary school education;
- to provide assistance to students who have participated in services and activities under this title in finding an appropriate job and continuing their education;
- to support nontraditional training and employment activities; and

- to support other vocational and technical education activities that are consistent with the purpose of the 1998 Perkins Act.

2.3 Description of Secondary and Postsecondary Vocational Programs

In May 1996, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards. The standards establish the meaning of “thorough” in the State Constitution’s assurance that all New Jersey children will receive a “Thorough and Efficient” education. The state has approximately 600 independent school districts that exercise local control. The paradox confronting the state is how to ensure that all children receive a “thorough and efficient” education while each district determines its own curriculum.

The standards are the result of the work of panels of educators, business people, and other citizens, who joined in a collaborative effort to define the knowledge and skills which all students must possess by the time they graduate from high school. It is upon the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, that the NJDOE has based its Strategic Plan.

The standards are not meant to serve as a statewide curriculum guide; rather, they define the results expected but do not limit district strategies for how to ensure that all students achieve these expectations. They are further elaborated by curriculum frameworks which are intended to stimulate at the local level discussions of strategies which might be developed to help students to achieve the expected standards.

Specific activities to be offered under Perkins Act support are explained further in the state’s guidelines for Local Plans for Vocational and Technical Education Programs.

Definitions

Vocational-technical course: Subject matter and related learning experiences, organized in instructional units, to develop the students’ career planning proficiencies, workplace readiness skills, and/or occupational competencies. The instructional units are offered on a systematic basis within a predetermined period of time.

Vocational-technical program: An organized sequence of a minimum of three vocational/technical courses designed to develop the competencies for

- *entry level employment (including licensed occupations); and/or*
- *enlistment in the military services; and/or*
- *further education (to include apprenticeship training).*

The program must include occupationally-specific skill training and integrated applied academic instruction. Remedial or pre-remedial basic skills courses may not be included as part of the sequence.

Programs of occupational education, which will be offered by local districts under the Perkins Act, are defined in New Jersey as *any organized program of study directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment or to skills enrichment or retraining for individuals already in the workforce*. Programs or activities delivered at the local level may include these educational disciplines:

- Agriculture;
- Business/office;
- Health occupations;
- Family and consumer sciences;
- Technical and communications;
- Trade and industrial;
- Other: education, law and legal, and parks, recreation, and leisure.

New Jersey provides secondary Vocational and Technical education programs mainly via two delivery systems, the comprehensive high schools and the county vocational-technical schools. On a more limited basis, special services school districts also deliver vocational and technical education. The postsecondary vocational-technical system is delivered by the state's 19 county/community colleges and 21 county vocational schools. The total number of approved occupational programs offered to secondary, postsecondary, and special needs students is 1,584. Twenty-six approved occupational programs are offered at five different special services school districts throughout the state.

The chart that follows summarizes basic information on programs offered through the public schools in New Jersey.

Vocational and Technical Programs Offered

Programs	County Vocational-Technical Schools	Comprehensive High Schools	Special Services School Districts
Number of Schools	21	227	26
Number of Programs	374	877	26
Secondary Programs	233	871	26
Postsecondary Programs	74	1	0
Secondary & Postsecondary Programs	374	5	0

2.3.1 Secondary System

The state's secondary vocational programs are offered by the comprehensive high schools and the county vocational-technical schools. Vocational programs are established in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6:43-8.2.

2.3.1.1 Comprehensive High Schools

Comprehensive high schools are best described as schools from grades 9 through 12 that provide all academic subject material required for a high school diploma, support services to all students, including special populations, and vocational (occupational) programs in selected areas. At present there are 227 comprehensive school districts which offer approximately 877 programs throughout the state.

2.3.1.2 County Vocational-Technical School Districts

There are 21 counties in the state, and each county has one vocational school district. Some of the more populated counties have several school sites throughout their region. The following is a breakdown of these schools:

- 21 County Vocational-Technical School Districts
- 57 County Vocational-Technical School Sites

2.3.2 Postsecondary System

Postsecondary education in New Jersey is delivered by two education sectors: the county/community colleges and the county vocational-technical schools.

2.3.2.1 County/Community Colleges

The county college system is composed of 19 community colleges that serve all of the 21 counties. Each county/community college is authorized to award associate in arts degrees, associate in science degrees, associate in applied science degrees, certificates, and diplomas to students who have completed approved programs.

The associate in science (A.S.) degree is to be awarded to those who successfully complete programs which emphasize mathematics, the biological or physical sciences, business, and allied health programs intended as pre-baccalaureate work. Such programs usually are transfer oriented. The A.S. degrees funded by the Perkins grant include only those which fall within the Allied Health professions or which are determined to be vocational-technical in orientation.

The associate in applied science (A.A.S.) degree is to be awarded to those who successfully complete programs which emphasize preparation in the applied arts and sciences for careers, typically at the technical or semiprofessional level. Such programs are designed to prepare students for job entry at the completion of the two-year program, notwithstanding any articulation agreements with four-year programs that may be in effect for a particular A.A.S. program, as in Tech-Prep agreements or consortia. The NJDOE considers these degrees as

vocational in nature and utilizes the majority of postsecondary collegiate funding for programs such as these, including Tech-Prep programs.

A certificate or diploma program is defined as a course of study which, by virtue of educational content or duration, does not satisfy requirements for an associate's degree program, but which is specifically designed to offer content and skill acquisition and other experience appropriate to the objectives of such a program.

2.3.2.2 County Vocational-Technical Districts

The county vocational school system comprises 21 county vocational-technical school districts located in each county of the state. These institutions offer a variety of postsecondary programs for adults in both a full-time and part-time format with a choice of day or evening classes.

Programs offered are organized programs of study, whether technical or skill-based, directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment or to skills enrichment or retraining for individuals already in the workforce. These programs provide individuals with the skills and abilities necessary for them to become and remain viable, flexible, and mobile in the workplace, and to participate in further training or education as necessary or desirable. Such programs or activities may include agriculture, business, health occupations, family and consumer sciences, technical and communications, trade and industrial education, and other (education, law and legal, and parks, recreation, and leisure).

The Department of Education in the past has emphasized using Perkins funding for the acquisition of equipment, particularly computers, in order to enhance vocational and technical education programs and maintain industry standards. In addition, a state mandate has been issued that all schools receiving funds ensure that students have access to the Internet in order to research various industries and job opportunities.

2.3.2.3 Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship training, as a method of instruction, consists of an arrangement in which an employer and an employee (the apprentice) enter into a relationship in which the apprentice learns a highly skilled occupation. In New Jersey, the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training (BAT), and the NJDOE, Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives, have worked together since 1960 for the joint registration and the administration of the New Jersey Apprenticeship Program. In 1993, the BAT and the NJDOE joined forces with the New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL) to promote and expand apprenticeship and other work-based learning initiatives in New Jersey. Each county vocational-technical school district employs an apprenticeship coordinator who is responsible for working directly with local sponsors in maintaining their apprenticeship training programs. The coordinator also assists new sponsors in setting up apprenticeship programs.

The length of the apprenticeship program depends on the complexity of the occupation. The programs range from one to six years, with the average being four years in length. During the program the apprentice receives both structured, "on-the-job training" (OJT) and related classroom instruction. Each year of the program consists of 2,000 hours of OJT and a minimum of 144 hours of related classroom instruction. Upon completion of the program,

the apprentice earns two Certificates of Completion of Apprenticeship Training. BAT issues the first, indicating that the apprentice has successfully completed the OJT component of the program. NJDOE issues the second, indicating the apprentice has successfully completed the related classroom instruction component of the program. The total number of apprentices in New Jersey is 5,597, with an average of 24 percent minority members and an average female participation rate of 4 percent. The total number of apprenticeship program sponsors currently stands at 1,163.

2.3.3 Role of State Agencies

2.3.3.1 New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC)

The NJDOC is responsible to ensure that all persons sentenced to state correctional institutions are confined with the level of custody necessary to protect the public and are provided with the care, discipline, training, and treatment needed to prepare them for reintegration into the community. The NJDOC is also charged with developing community-based facilities and programs, such as parole, and with maintaining a comprehensive plan for the ongoing operation of the state's correctional system. The NJDOC is responsible for the offenders assigned to the 12 major adult institutions and their satellite units and the 13 district parole offices throughout the state. The NJDOC employs about 9,000 persons, including 5,000 in custody positions, to supervise approximately 27,000 inmates, as well as some 18,000 individuals on parole. Specific programs offered are listed in Section 4.7.

2.3.3.2 New Jersey Department of Human Services (NJ DHS)

The NJ DHS, in concert with New Jersey's nonprofit community, serves more than one million persons a year, or about one of every eight New Jersey residents. The NJ DHS was created in 1976 and is the largest department in state government.

The NJ DHS offers services through six divisions and operates 15 major facilities, seven operated through the Division of Mental Health Services, and eight operated by the Division of Developmental Disabilities. There are four residential centers operated by the Division of Youth and Family Services as well as 18 day training centers and 20 state mental adult activity centers. The Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center is supervised by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The NJ DHS provides the majority of its community services through the purchase of service contracts with private, non-profit community agencies throughout New Jersey.

The NJ DHS serves some of New Jersey's most vulnerable citizens: abused children, troubled youth and families, the poor, elderly men and women, and persons who are mentally ill, developmentally disabled, blind, visually impaired, deaf, and hard of hearing.

In carrying out its work with these vulnerable people, the NJ DHS provides for the efficient and coordinated delivery of social services. It protects those who lack the basic requirements of life: food, clothing, shelter, and medical care. It works to keep families together and to serve people in the communities in which they reside. And it strives to ensure that state-supported services are provided in the least restrictive environment and most appropriate setting.

The DHS State Office on Disability Services maintains a comprehensive information and referral system for persons of all ages with disabilities as a “single point of entry” for those who do not meet the requirements for disability-specific programs.

The DHS Office of Education is responsible for supervising all educational programs for students up to age 21 in the department’s operated and contracted facilities, including those programs in day training centers. The Office of Education also administers the State Disabilities Education Act.

2.3.3.3 The Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC)

The Juvenile Justice Commission was established in 1996 in, but not part of, the New Jersey Department of Law and Safety. The JJC brings together under one roof all state agencies serving youth who have been adjudicated delinquent and committed to the state for incarceration, supervision, or related services.

The educational mission of the JJC is to provide appropriate educational program operations that meet individual student needs and focus on transitional services for successfully integrating students into community schools and/or alternate placement upon release. The goal of the JJC is to rekindle the interest of its students in education, with student literacy as the foundation of all educational programming.

2.3.3.4 Contracting For Educational Services With Eligible Private Vocational Schools

In accordance with specific New Jersey State Board of Education rules (N.J.A.C. 5:43-10.1 et seq.), district boards of education may contract with certain private vocational schools for the purpose of providing vocational education courses to an individual student or group of students. In order to enter into a contract, the following conditions must be met:

- When such courses cannot be provided by the county vocational schools or other districts; or
- A private vocational school can provide substantially equivalent training at a lesser cost as substantiated and certified by the local education agency, subject to the review and approval of the Commissioner of Education. Said course shall meet the requirements of the Public School Education Act of 1970 (New Jersey Statutes, Annotated, 18A:7A-1 et seq.).

2.3.4 Role of the New Jersey Department of Education

New Jersey provides leadership to develop and foster curriculum development and dissemination, personnel development, and standards and measures development, and to provide leadership in other ways. Using the following methods, New Jersey provides services to local education agencies:

- Distributing state and federal funds;
- Creating joint interagency coordination and cooperation among occupational workforce development and School-to-Career programs;
- Developing the State Plan for Vocational Education;
- Providing technical assistance to all local eligible recipients;
- Participating actively in joint planning activities on New Jersey's SETC, including the development and implementation of the *Unified State Plan for Workforce Development*, the internal and external planning committees, and the Workforce Quality Committee; and
- Participating actively with the Committee of Practitioners in the development and implementation of performance standards, state assessment, program evaluation, and the committee's continuing input into the occupational program delivery system.

Leadership activities also support Vocational Student Organizations, partnerships with other organizations involved with vocational education, data collection, Tech-Prep programs, and the infusion of safety and health education and applied academics into the curriculum.

Because of the structure of New Jersey's relationship with its school districts, which enjoy local autonomy, state leadership provides code revisions, Requests for Proposal (RFP), Requests for Continuation (RFC), and Requests for Application (RFA), conferences, interagency agreements, as well as the participation of Department of Education personnel on appropriate committees and nongovernmental bodies.

New Jersey uses a variety of programs and activities to meet the diverse needs of the citizens of the state.

Mission: The primary mission of public education is the enhancement of high student academic achievement through the provision of high quality instruction in an environment focused on learning and the facilitation of closely related services, ensuring that students are prepared to succeed as responsible, productive citizens in a global society.

Structure: The Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives, within the NJDOE, provides the leadership for the workforce investment system. The Director of the Office serves as the state Director of Vocational Education. He represents the Commissioner on all task forces and committees working on workforce development issues. This office also serves as the department's liaison to the state's Business Resource Network.

2.4 Criteria for Reviewing and Approving Applications for Funds

The NJDOE, Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives, will evaluate the five-year plans submitted by all eligible institutions. In order to be eligible for funding, the plan must include all elements as stated in Section 134 of the Perkins Act. Each plan will be reviewed to ensure that it contains the following information, according to state criteria:

- A description of how the vocational and technical education programs will be carried out with the funds received;
- A description of how the vocational and technical education activities will be carried out with respect to meeting the state adjusted levels of performance established under section 113;
- A description of how the grant recipient will
 - Improve the academic and technical skills of students participating in vocational and technical education programs;
 - Provide students with a strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of an industry;
 - Ensure that students who participate in such vocational and technical education programs are taught the same challenging academic proficiencies as are taught for all other students;
- A description of how parents, students, teachers, representatives of business and industry, labor organizations, representatives of special populations, and other interested individuals are involved in the development, implementation, and evaluation of vocational and technical education programs offered through the support of Perkins funding, and how such individuals and entities are effectively informed about and assisted in understanding the requirements of these programs;
- Assurances that the grant recipient will provide a vocational and technical education program that is of such size, scope, and quality to as bring about improvement in the quality of vocational and technical education programs;
- A description of the process that will be used to independently evaluate and continuously improve their performance;
- A description of how the recipient will
 - Review vocational and technical education programs, and identify and adopt strategies to overcome barriers that result in lowering rates of access to or lowering success in the programs for special populations; and
 - Provide programs that are designed to enable the special populations to meet the state adjusted levels of performance;
- A description of how members of the special populations will not be discriminated against on the basis of their status as members of the special populations;

- A description of how funds will be used to promote preparation for nontraditional training and employment; and
- A description of how comprehensive professional development (including initial teacher preparation) for vocational and technical, academic, guidance, and administrative personnel will be provided.

2.5 Transitions to Employment or Postsecondary Education

Programs funded under the Perkins Act will prepare students either for entry into high-skill, high-wage jobs in current and emerging occupations or for opportunities in postsecondary education by adhering to a series of standards established for such programs by the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives. These standards, when integrated into the Core Curriculum Content Standards, specify that the content of vocational instruction must assure soundness and quality by being developed and conducted in accordance with the following:

- The program shall emphasize the academic standards and workplace readiness standards represented by the Core Curriculum Content Standards.
- The program of vocational instruction shall emphasize the most contemporary skills and knowledge required to master the occupational competencies.
- The program of vocational instruction shall be developed and conducted in consultation with employers and other individuals or groups of individuals (such as local advisory committees) having skills in and substantive knowledge of the occupations or the occupational programs included in the instruction.
- The program of vocational instruction shall be sufficiently extensive in duration and intensive within a scheduled unit of time to enable the student to master the occupational competencies.
- The program of vocational instruction
 - Combines and coordinates classroom instruction with field, shop, laboratory, cooperative work, apprenticeship, or other experiences which are appropriate to the competencies of the occupation;
 - Is of sufficient duration to develop occupational competencies; and
 - Is supervised, directed or coordinated by a person meeting teacher preparation and certification requirements according to New Jersey Administrative Code.

In November 1991, the NJDOE began developing competencies for occupations in the following major vocational education program areas:

- Agriculture/agribusiness education;

- Business education;
- Health occupations education;
- Home economics-related occupations education;
- Marketing education;
- Technical education; and
- Trade and industrial education.

New competencies were developed annually and revised on a five-year cycle or more frequently, if the industry required standards revision. The Department of Education disseminated these competencies to all secondary schools offering vocational education programs which prepare vocational students for entry-level employment.

With the establishment of the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB), the state has ceased performing this function. The NSSB recommendations are now used as the basis for upgrading vocational-technical programs.

2.6 Use of Funds for New/Improved Vocational and Technical Courses

Funding will be used to support activities as stated in Section 135 of the Perkins Act. Specifically, the following activities will be supported in order to develop new vocational and technical courses or to improve vocational and technical courses:

- Purchase of equipment to provide students with knowledge of and skills to use current technology in order to obtain entry into a chosen field;
- Personnel training in the use of the new technology;
- Activities to develop, improve, or expand the use of technology in vocational and technical courses;
- Activities to research, develop, or purchase curriculum materials in vocational and technical courses;
- Activities to research, develop, or purchase supplemental materials;
- Activities to provide students with strong experience in and understanding of all aspects of an industry;
- Activities that will strengthen the academic and vocational and technical skills of the students.

2.7 Professional Development Program

On May 6, 1998, the New Jersey State Board of Education adopted the new continuing education regulations that require licensed teachers and educational services personnel to practice ongoing continuing education. The continuing education requirement is a positive initiative which supports and involves teachers in a process that will build upon their capacity to teach in ways that are compatible with New Jersey's Core Curriculum Content Standards and help their students to reach higher levels of achievement.

2.7.1 Preservice Development

Vocational and technical teachers are trained through the Provisional Teacher Program/Alternate Route. Upon presentation of official documentation of at least four years of preservice occupational experience in the specific vocational or technical field in which teaching certification is being sought, a technical teacher candidate is eligible to receive a Certificate of Eligibility. Upon employment by a school district, the teacher candidate receives 200 hours of formal instruction in essential professional knowledge and skills. Concurrently, school-based professionals provide on-the-job supervision, support, and evaluation during the course of 34 weeks. Successful completion of both components, i.e. formal instruction and teaching experience by the teacher candidate, results in a recommendation for a standard license.

2.7.2 Inservice Development

Under the new regulations, each teacher will be required to accomplish 100 clock hours of professional development every five years, beginning in January 2000. The continuing education initiative is an important part of New Jersey's systemic reform efforts which will support teachers as they help students reach the high learning expectations articulated in the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The regulations establish a 19-member Professional Teaching Standards Board, a 15-member County Professional Development Board, and a six-member Local District Professional Development Committee to oversee the implementation of the regulations. Teachers and educational services personnel will make up the majority of each oversight organization. Professional development standards will be developed by the Professional Teaching Standards Board to assure that professional development programs and district-based inservice programs are challenging and meaningful to teachers.

The NJDOE will continue to provide professional development activities, such as workshops and training sessions for counselors. Included will be coordinating presentations with the New Jersey School Counselor Association and the New Jersey Association of College Admissions Counseling. These activities will focus both on awareness and the implementation of the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards. The NJDOE, in conjunction with the New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee, will provide training in the Real Game, an interdisciplinary approach to career education. During the initial phase of this training, the target audience will be middle school counselors and teachers. The training will be expanded to include participants at the elementary and high school levels as the materials are developed and released at the national level.

In Section 124 of the Perkins Act, each eligible agency is required to conduct state leadership activities. While this certainly refers to personnel in the school districts, it must also include training of state-level personnel. The need is obvious; if the state is to maintain any credibility in recommending, developing, and using leading-edge technology to assist local administrators and teachers, the staff at the state level must be informed and skilled. Consequently, over the span of the 1998 Perkins Act and beyond, greater attention must be paid to developing the knowledge and skill base of the staff of the NJDOE.

The professional development activities should include the following:

- Brief internships with business and industry, especially those in emerging technologies;
- Seminars, workshops, and courses in educational technology, or “visioning”;
- Participation in local, state, and national conferences related to educational programs, such as Whole School Reform;
- Participation in credit and non-credit programs offered by the state’s Human Resources and Development Institute (HRDI), or postsecondary institutions;
- Discussions with major state employers, which may include tours of their facilities, whether office, industrial, or scientific;
- Participation and leadership in relevant professional organizations.

2.8 Involvement of Those Affected

Parents, teachers, local businesses, and labor organizations are regularly involved in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of vocational-technical education in New Jersey.

At the most formal level, such implementation is carried out through changes in the New Jersey Administrative Code, with hearings conducted around the state when proposed; as a result of information obtained through these hearings, the proposal is modified prior to being adopted. However, long before these steps, there is formal and informal involvement with those affected by vocational-technical education.

Members of the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives work at the local level in such undertakings as pilot projects to pair students with appropriate professionals in mentoring relationships. As a result of evaluation of a pilot, the program is modified and proposed in broader linkages with members of the business and education communities. Members work directly with teachers and administrators at the local level as they discuss, in technical assistance workshops, for example, changes in the funding and administration of federal funds for vocational and technical education. Members of the staff meet regularly with project directors of grants funded through the NJDOE to discuss implementation and evaluation of funded grant projects in the secondary and postsecondary schools.

Representatives of OSCCI assist school districts in accessing at reduced rates curriculum and assessment materials for particular fields. For example, staff serve as members of consortia which help districts obtain materials through the New Jersey Business Education Association, the Vocational-Technical Consortium of the States (V-TECS), Marketing Education Resources Center, and the Center on Education and Training for Employment. Program improvement is often assisted by OSCCI staff members who participate in the curriculum certification process and have worked cooperatively with such organizations as the American Design Drafting Association, The National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence, and the Electronic Industries Association. Staff members have set up articulation agreements with training programs involving labor unions and businesses. Other staff members function as members of boards or maintain liaisons with boards as diverse as the New Jersey Board of Nursing, Special Education Advisory Committee, New Jersey State Board of Cosmetology and Hairstyling, the New Jersey Apprenticeship Policy Committee, the Eastern Seaboard Apprenticeship Standing Committee, and the New Jersey Nutrition Council.

In all interactions, staff remain open to the ideas, suggestions, and responses of those who must carry out the activities of educating students in vocational and technical fields.

In addition, one of the approaches used to prepare vocational and technical students for opportunities in postsecondary education or entry into high-skill, high-wage jobs in current or emerging occupations is through the collaboration of business, industry, education, and community representatives. These partnerships have helped identify the various occupational needs of communities throughout the state.

Armed with labor market information and collaborative input, decisions are made on how best to approach the interest of the students and the needs defined by the community. A method that has been successful, especially in preparing students for postsecondary linkages, has been through a Tech-Prep model.

Tech Prep is an educational approach which integrates academic knowledge with the skills to apply that knowledge in the Core Curriculum Content Standards so that students meeting the standards will be prepared for the transition from school or from higher education to work.

The purpose of the Tech-Prep program is to form consortia of secondary and post-secondary institutions to implement a defined career path for students seeking careers in various fields. The programs provide technical preparation in an occupational field, build student competencies by offering instruction in applied mathematics, science, and communications through a sequential course of study; and lead to placement in employment.

Traditionally, Tech-Prep programs adhere to objectives that document strategies for private sector representatives in the following:

- Planning, development, and implementation of all programs;
- Development of specific competencies;

- Identification of strategies to ensure the recruitment of students, including equal access for individuals who are members of special populations;
- Distribution of informational materials to students, parents, counselors, and administrators;
- Establishment of opportunities for program participants to have work experience directly related to their areas of interest;
- Implementation of proven strategies to accomplish a seamless and credentialed transition from secondary to postsecondary programs with a clearly-written articulation agreement detailing all the arrangements in place; and
- Implementation of evaluation strategies.

2.9 Skill Improvement

2.9.1 Academic Skills

New Jersey is a state with a 120-year old constitutional guarantee that regardless of residency, its children will receive a “Thorough and Efficient” education. Throughout this same time period, the state has evolved into approximately 600 independent school districts that exercise considerable local control. The issue confronting the state, therefore, is how to ensure that all children receive a “Thorough and Efficient” education while each district develops its own curriculum.

The Core Curriculum Content Standards define the meaning of “Thorough.” They describe what all students should know and be able to do upon completion of a 13-year public education. Sections 2.3, 2.10, and 3.0 describe further New Jersey’s plans for the improvement of academic skills of students participating in vocational and technical education programs. In May 1996, New Jersey officially adopted the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards.

The NJDOE will continue to disseminate frameworks for the seven academic areas of the Core Curriculum Content Standards. These frameworks illustrate the infusion of the five Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards into content area activities. The NJDOE will develop and disseminate sample projects and activities in the area of Cross-Content Workplace Readiness. These projects and activities will be designed to clarify the standards and indicators, as well as emphasize systems thinking and illustrate the interdisciplinary approach.

2.9.2. Technical Skills

The Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives is actively involved in national activities such as those of the National Skill Standards Board and the Building Linkages projects. Staff remains current on the activities of the National Skill Standards Board and disseminates information regarding program information, as it becomes available. The National Skill Standards Act established a national board to serve as a catalyst for stimulating

the development of a national system of voluntary skill standards. In response to the board's various recommendations, the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives established the mechanism to have all local programs obtain curriculum certification. On the state level, grants have been established to enable occupational programs to upgrade existing programs to meet the standards established by nationally-recognized organizations. It is our belief that offering students the opportunity to participate in a performance-based education and training program will

- Enable students to earn portable credentials;
- Prepare students for first jobs in high-skill, high-wage careers; and
- Increase their opportunities for further education.

The NJDOE is in the process of implementing a curriculum certification program to assist schools to upgrade existing occupational education programs to meet the standards established by nationally-recognized industries. As a result of this program, all of the participating schools will apply for and fulfill all conditions to obtain certification from the certifying agencies. The curriculum certification process includes the following elements:

- Establishment of required knowledge, skills, and abilities for secondary occupational education programs by federally-recognized employer/labor organizations;
- Development of a procedure by which high schools can have their secondary occupational education program certified by the appropriate employer/labor organization as meeting their requirements; and
- Development of a process by which successful completers of the approved occupational education program can receive industry-recognized credentials and access to related postsecondary education and training.

Certification has been offered previously for drafting, electronic technologies, welding, and printing. In FY 1999, certification for the building and construction trades is underway. Technical assistance is provided to participating school districts through the certifying agencies. The certifying agencies, in cooperation with the department, provide training to classroom teachers to upgrade their programs, including facilities, equipment and hand tools, texts, and instructional materials.

Compliance with the curriculum certification process affords secondary occupational education program completers a variety of postsecondary education and training opportunities.

In New Jersey, students completing vocational and technical programs must take and pass either the formal licensing or credentialing examination for the field in which he or she is prepared, or, if no licensing examination is available, then either a nationally-validated test, such as the Student Occupational Competency Achievement Tests (SOCAT) from the National Occupational Competency Testing Institute (NOCTI), or, if a nationally-validated test is unavailable or cannot be administered for some reason, a standardized test (based upon

an employer-verified task list) or a test generated from the Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States (V-TECS).

“Building Linkages” is an initiative of the NSSB to build multi-state partnerships that promote linkages between academic and industry-recognized skill standards at the state level. Consortia of states, working in collaboration with local business, labor organizations, and education and training agencies, explore effective methods of incorporating academic and skill standards into statewide systems. The focus of this initiative has been on the following career areas: health, manufacturing, and business management. New Jersey has been a partnering state in both the both the Health Science and Manufacturing Linkages projects. In addition to participating through consortium membership meetings and assignments, New Jersey has provided two pilot sites for the testing of the National Health Science Career-Path Model. This project has partnered educators, health-care employers, and professional organizations to develop and refine a health-care career path model that will result in students’ leaving high school better prepared for immediate employment and/or further education in the health care field. New Jersey is also exploring the opportunity to have local manufacturing programs participate in the Building Linkages Manufacturing Core Responsibility scenarios.

2.10 Ensuring Achievement of Common Academic Standards

The Core Curriculum Content Standards, discussed in Section 2.2 and 2.9, are designed to ensure the achievement of common academic standards for all students. These standards directly result in the new proficiency assessments, the Elementary School Proficiency Assessment (ESPA), the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA), and the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA), which are further described in Section 3 of this plan. The additional standards under which students in vocational education will be assessed are further detailed in Section 3.

2.11 Technical Assistance

2.11.1 Definition

Technical assistance is a service provided to grant recipients whereby programmatic and fiscal guidance is offered. Its primary purpose is to ensure that all available funds are used appropriately. It will be available during all phases of the grant and can consist of assistance in any aspect of the grant, including plan development, application preparation, fund usage, and report preparation.

2.11.2 Operational Plan

Technical assistance to districts will begin with three regional presentations where members of the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives will discuss the history and overall intent of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998, federal and state mandates, and the details of applying for and implementing the grant. State representatives will develop two documents (one for the multi-year plan, and one for the FY 2000 Spending Plan) to be the focus of this assistance. They will be published in hard copy (distributed at the regional presentations) and on the NJDOE website. These documents will

include sections on plan components, budget policies, reporting requirements, timelines, forms, and others, as required.

Plan facilitators are responsible for specific groups of eligible recipients and for coordinating all activities involving or required by the Perkins Act. They will consult as required or requested using the most efficient and effective method for the situation. This could include telephone, surface mail, electronic mail, face-to-face visits at state or district offices, and teleconferences.

OSCCI anticipates making use of state-supported programs to provide assistance to grant recipients. These include the following:

- One-Stop Career Centers
- Curriculum certification
- County apprenticeship coordinators
- Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN)
- State Apprenticeship Policy Committee
- WIBs
- Professional development
- Occupational education safety and health training
- Educational Technology Training Centers (ETTC)
- Health and safety, liability issues, and child labor law regulations.

For FY 2000 and beyond, OSCCI will consider using distance learning facilities. Since the majority of county vocational-technical schools have such facilities, the NJDOE envisions grant recipients gathering locally. OSCCI will investigate the use of existing similar state facilities for participation.

The NJDOE, because of a recent New Jersey Supreme Court decision, will be providing technical assistance in a number of areas to 28 special needs districts, the “Abbott” districts. All of these districts are potentially eligible to apply for and receive Perkins funds. To date, most have been successful, active participants, using Perkins funds to improve the scope and quality of occupational programs, integrate applied academics into these programs, increase the career awareness of the student population, and provide significant occupational programs for special populations.

A particular effort on behalf of these districts was the development of a matrix used for the evaluation of individual schools’ plans for activities. The NJDOE has performed, and will continue to perform, these evaluations as part of the implementation of the Perkins Act.

2.12 Relationship of State to Regional Occupational Opportunities

Like many other states, New Jersey, in the past, has emphasized the preparation of the workforce in reaction to statistics that projected future job openings based on historical data that were used to develop occupational trends. Currently, a multi-year project, entitled the "Demand Side Strategies for Workforce Development Project," has been established under the leadership of the National Governors' Association to assist states in designing and implementing new work-centered, demand-side strategies for workforce development. It is believed that the workforce development system needs to be more closely connected to employers and to the world of work, and that its focus needs to move beyond job placement to include ongoing skill development and career progression.

This project will enable New Jersey to advance its workforce development planning by developing a new approach that is based on emerging industry needs and a progressive system of employee skill identification, development, and certification. The new approach will accommodate the needs of all, including the entering workforce, those currently unemployed (including clients of the criminal justice system, as well as the chronically unemployed), and employed workers.

Participation in this project will enable the state to accomplish the following:

- Work with business and industry to develop a prospective labor information database that will drive all workforce preparation programs;
- Develop a system to profile a person's skills and competencies that can be cross-matched to present and future jobs; and
- Design and implement a system to provide on-demand, real-time training to everyone requiring such training.

2.13 Joint Planning and Coordination with Other Federal Programs

The State of New Jersey has been engaged in a coordinated approach to workforce development since 1988. With the establishment, under Executive Order No. 36 on May 12, 1995, of the SETC, the state has established a public/private partnership to guide all aspects of the state's workforce development system. The state's workforce goals and objectives are contained in Chapter 1 of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*. This plan views the workforce in three segments: the entering workforce, the out-of-work workforce, and the existing workforce. Strategies to address the needs of and to coordinate government services to each segment are the responsibility of the SETC.

Recommendations and actions of the SETC are assigned to the Interagency Planning Group for implementation. The Interagency Planning Group is composed of key executives from each government agency involved with the workforce system. The state Director for Vocational Education represents the NJDOE on the Interagency Planning Group.

Examples of joint planning include:

- Welfare to Work
- Occupational Program Standards.

The SETC, in the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*, has directed that a single agency be responsible for the identification and implementation of occupational program standards. This action was taken to ensure that all training programs, regardless of funding source, provide the same skills and competencies. The general requirement is that occupational competencies are based on recognized industry/employer-endorsed standards. Since 1994, the recommendations of the National Skill Standards Board, where appropriate, are used for this program.

By agreement of all agencies, OSCCI in the NJDOE, functions as the standard-setting and review entity. Through interagency agreements within the state, the NJDOE receives funds from the Jobs Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and state Workforce Development Partnership Act to support staff for this review function.

The NJDOE and OSCCI work cooperatively with other offices in joint planning, coordination, and implementation of federal education programs. In New Jersey, OSCCI is responsible for administering the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. Within OSCCI, program officers are responsible for specific oversight responsibilities. A fiscal officer is assigned to each program officer to handle fiscal questions and procedures. A collaborative atmosphere exists between the OSCCI and the Office of Grants Management and Development (OGMD).

Major methods used for joint planning and coordination include the use of an NJDOE grants long-range plan, dissemination of information, and use of focus areas in planning. Within the NJDOE, the OGMD facilitates the grants long-range planning process. The OGMD has developed a well-defined process used for long-range planning. Procedures are currently in process for grant programs for FY 2001.

After the long-range plan is approved, the department provides for public dissemination of the information to the New Jersey State Board of Education, county superintendents, superintendents of all local education agencies (LEAs), and other individuals upon request. To facilitate the second method, information dissemination, the department produces a directory of federal and state programs released at the beginning of each school year. Once the paper copy is available, electronic copy is available from the department's Internet site. Through the print and electronic distributions, districts are better able to plan instructional and fiscal programs, needs for grant entitlements, and applications for discretionary grants.

The chart on the following page summarizes grant program titles in the long-range plan that meet the department focus listed previously, with grant programs listed under their authorizing acts.

The third method is the use of focus on specific topics to be included in any grant program. The department will continue to focus resources in the following areas:

- Whole School Reform in the Abbott Districts
- Educational Technology
- School-to-Career and College Initiatives
- Professional Development
- Innovative Programs
- Core Curriculum Content Standards and Assessment
- At-risk Populations

As authorization for new or renewed federal grant programs are made available to the state, the program office has a defined process to follow to update and modify the long-range plan.

Summary of Grant Programs

<p style="text-align: center;">Adult Education Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Adult Education basic Skills Grant Program •Adult Interagency Activities •Volunteer-Based Adult Literacy Training Grant 	<p style="text-align: center;">The National and Community Service Act of 1990</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •AmeriCorps •Learn and Serve America-School-based Program
<p style="text-align: center;">Improving America’s School Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Education for Homeless Children and Youth •Emergency Immigrant Education •Goals 2000-State and Local Education Systemic Improvement Grants •Migrant Education-Basic State Formula Grant Program •Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities-Governor’s Portion •Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities—SEA Portion •Technology Literacy Challenge Fund •Title I-Capital Expenses •Title I Grants to LEAs •Title I Program for Neglected and Delinquent Children •Title II-Eisenhower Professional Development Higher Ed Grants •Title II-Eisenhower Professional Development State Grants •Title VI-Innovative Education Program Strategies 	<p style="text-align: center;">Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Perkins—Postsecondary •Perkins—Secondary •Perkins—Corrections •Perkins—Postsecondary Alternative Formula •Extraordinary Standards Incentive Program •FFA Statewide Leadership and Administration Services •Occupational Education Safety and Health Training and Standards Updating •Sex Equity Statewide Career Equity Assistance Center •Tech-Prep Associate Degree Program •Tech-Prep Program in Engineering, Science, and Technology •Vocational Student Organizations Statewide Leadership and Administration
<p style="text-align: center;">National Apprenticeship Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Apprenticeship Coordinator 	<p style="text-align: center;">National Skill Standards Act of 1994</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Automotive Youth Employment Services (A-YES)
<p style="text-align: center;">Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Services for Children with Deafness-Blindness •Special Education-Preschool Grants •Special Education-State Grants •Activities, Programs, and Services for Neighborhood Community Services Centers 	<p style="text-align: center;">The Rehabilitation Act of 1973</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Technical Consultation and Transition Service Delivery to LEAs by DVRS Counselors
<p style="text-align: center;">Workforce Investment Act</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Youth Transitions to Work Partnership Program 	<p style="text-align: center;">School To Work Opportunities Act of 1994</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •School-to-Careers Partnership Cadre I •School-to-Careers Partnership Cadre II •School-to-Careers Partnership Cadre III

2.14 How Funds are Used to Link Secondary and Postsecondary Education

2.14.1 Linkages: County Vocational-Technical Schools

New Jersey has 21 area vocational-technical education schools that function in several capacities in addition to providing vocational and technical programs for secondary school youth. Through their adult evening school divisions, the schools provide vocational and technical education to individuals who have completed high school or left secondary school

and who need further study in preparation for entering the labor market. They also serve as public educational institutions offering certificate and apprenticeship programs at the postsecondary level. The adult evening school divisions offer NJDOE-approved vocational and technical education programs to youth and adults that prepare them for further education and for careers in current or emerging employment sectors other than those requiring a baccalaureate, master's, or doctoral degree.

Currently, the 21 vocational-technical schools and the comprehensive high schools offer postsecondary vocational and technical education programs for 103 occupations. The programs may lead to the attainment of school certificates, licenses, and apprenticeship program certificates. Perkins funds are used to develop, improve, and expand access to quality, state-of-the-art technology in vocational and technical education programs. Funds are used to purchase new technologies and supporting equipment that enable schools to implement industry-approved curricula, issue industry-approved certificates of completion, provide eligibility for completers to sit for state licensing, and eligibility to receive apprenticeship certificates.

New Jersey's apprenticeship program is a prime example of linking secondary and postsecondary occupational education programs. Through its Youth Transitions to Work Partnership Program (YTTW), students who successfully complete a secondary occupational education program may be awarded advanced standing credit for apprenticeship-related instruction provided by adult evening divisions of the area vocational-technical schools. Funds from YTTW local grant programs are used to develop these school-to-apprenticeship linkages. In addition, similar linkages are being developed between secondary occupational education programs and private, union apprenticeship training programs.

Several area vocational-technical schools and the corresponding county/community colleges are piloting new initiatives dedicated to expanding access to vocational and technical programs. The Sussex County Technology Center (Center) is a representative example. The concept of the Center has been praised by state, local, and school district officials as a creative, innovative, and appropriate expression of inter-institutional collaboration. The Center is a marketing structure created jointly by Sussex County Community College and the Sussex County Vocational School in May 1996. The structure is used to market and advertise postsecondary educational programs, courses, and services so as to signal to both the general public and the constituencies of both the college and school their joint commitment to collaboration, coordination, and the elimination of duplicated or overlapping educational services. Also, the Center provides for the sharing and joint use of educational facilities, instructional equipment, and other fixed, physical, and human resources of the two participating entities. The college and the school share in the costs associated with the joint marketing of the programs, courses, and services included in the semester-by-semester marketing plan. For purposes of accountability and success, statistics are kept on courses offered and completed, enrollments, and hours of instruction.

2.14.2 Linkages: Curriculum Certification

As explained in Section 2.9, NJDOE is in the process of implementing a curriculum certification program to assist schools to upgrade existing occupational education programs to meet the standards established by national industries. As a result of this program, all of the

participating schools will apply for and fulfill all conditions to obtain certification from the certifying agencies. The curriculum certification process includes the following elements:

- Establishment of required knowledge, skills, and abilities for secondary occupational education programs by federally-recognized employer/labor organizations;
- Development of a procedure by which high schools can have their secondary occupational education program certified by the appropriate employer/labor organization as meeting their requirements; and
- Development of a process by which successful completers of the approved occupational education program can receive industry-recognized credentials and access to related postsecondary education and training.

2.14.3 Linkages: Private Vocational Schools

Private vocational schools offer a variety of educational opportunities for youth and adults in New Jersey. Private vocational schools are approved by the Department of Education for compliance with New Jersey laws (*New Jersey Revised Statutes*, Title 18A, Chapter 69) and the rules of the New Jersey State Board of Education for the registration and regulation of private vocational schools in New Jersey (N.J.A.C. 6A:18-1.1 et seq.). In accordance with the New Jersey Administrative Code (6A:18-1.1), a "private vocational school" means a business enterprise, operated either for profit or not for profit, which maintains a place of business within the state of New Jersey and which:

- Solicits pupils from the general public;
- Charges tuition and/or other fees;
- Offers instruction to a group or groups of four or more pupils at one time; and
- Offers preparatory instruction to pupils for entry-level employment or for upgrading in a specific occupational field.

It is not the policy of the New Jersey Department of Education or any of its divisions to recommend or endorse any particular private school or educational training program.

2.14.4 Linkages: Colleges

New Jersey has 19 county/community colleges offering two-year associate's degree programs, diplomas, certificates, and Continuing Education Units in 22 occupational areas. Additional two- and four-year degree programs in a variety of disciplines are also available. As a result of New Jersey's participation in the Tech-Prep initiative, all New Jersey's county/community colleges participate in a variety of activities that foster linkages between secondary education and postsecondary education and training opportunities.

Exemplifying such linkages are joint programs between community college and county vocational-technical schools leading to certificate and/or associate's degree programs.

Participants earn college credit from the community college for work completed at the secondary level. The Mercer County Community College/Mercer County Technical School Certificate of Proficiency program for automotive technologies illustrates this example. The program prepares students for positions in the automotive service field such as automotive mechanic, parts installer, and front-end mechanic. Admission requires a high school diploma or equivalent with one year of algebra or applied mathematics, which is applicable towards the certificate.

Other examples include high-technology high schools, magnet schools, and career academies, where secondary students engage in a variety of educational programs that lead to college credits and entrance into degree and/or certificate programs with advanced standing.

2.14.5 Linkages: Education Commission of the States Project

New Jersey is currently participating in a major project for higher education under the auspices of the Education Commission of the States (ECS). ECS was formed in 1965 to help governors, state legislators, state education officials, and others to improve the quality of education at all levels. The project, Roles and Leadership for Postsecondary Education, is exploring how state policy can foster stronger postsecondary involvement in connecting learning and work. To this end the NJDOE, Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives, has awarded a five-year grant for a statewide consortium to design and implement a model Tech-Prep program in engineering, science, and technology.

2.14.6 Linkages: Tech-Prep Programs for Health Occupations

Over the past five years, A grant program entitled Tech Prep—Allied Health supports Tech-Prep programs for health occupations and has provided opportunities for school districts in selected areas to form consortia of secondary and postsecondary institutions to implement a defined career path for students seeking careers in health occupations. This field was chosen in response to the critical need for the health care service industry to attract and retain qualified health care providers at all levels. Because the field of health occupations includes many disciplines that require education beyond the associate’s degree level, the model developed shows a clear career ladder linking secondary education with all levels of postsecondary education. The programs are designed to provide technical preparation in the field of health occupations; to build student competencies by offering instruction in applied mathematics, science, and communications through a sequential course of study; and to lead to placement in employment. Students are able to “stop out” at various educational levels and then return to continue their education with no loss of earned credit. Models, therefore, include an option for students to enter specific job opportunities at the conclusion of high school, as well as after the attainment of a certificate, an associate’s, bachelor’s, master’s or doctoral degree.

The intent of the program is consistent with the *Strategic Plan for Systematic Improvement of Education in New Jersey*. The program encourages the development of partnerships with other agencies of state and local government and private and community-based organizations involved in the provisions of services in which academic and nonacademic needs overlap. These partnerships create a more coherent support network for the provision of services through schools, allowing educators to focus greater attention on the core academic mission.

The program integrates academic knowledge with the skills to apply that knowledge in the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards, so that students meeting the standards will be prepared for the transition from school or from higher education to work.

2.14.7 Linkages: Engineering, Science, and Technology Tech Prep

The purpose of the Engineering, Science, and Technology Tech-Prep Program is to develop a pool of academically prepared, technically sophisticated youth to help fulfill New Jersey's economic need for qualified persons seeking careers in the state's research and development industry. This program will fulfill that workforce need, in part, by providing seed money for a local consortium of comprehensive schools, county vocational schools, two-year colleges, four-year colleges, research universities, and research and development industries to develop and implement initiatives which will ensure that New Jersey's youth are adequately prepared for entrance into two-year and four-year engineering, science, and technology degree programs and for entrance into careers in the research and development industry.

It is the goal of the NJDOE and its partners, through this grant program, to implement a model Engineering, Science, and Technology Tech-Prep Program that will accomplish the following:

- Create linkages between secondary and postsecondary institutions;
- Better enable these institutions to prepare youth to enter two-year and four-year degree programs;
- Prepare youth for lifelong, occupationally-relevant learning and career advancement opportunities.

2.14.8 Linkages: State Higher Education Executive Officers Project

The State Higher Education Executive Officers Project (SHEEO) has committed to a multi-year initiative that examines and supports state strategies that promote successful student transitions between education and work. Currently, the effort is focused on the transition from secondary to postsecondary learning experiences. New Jersey is one of the participating states in this comprehensive project, which is very closely aligned with the goals and objectives of Perkins activities. Areas being assessed include the following:

- College admissions policies and practices, including "traditional" admission requirements (using high school coursework, grade point average, test scores, class rank, and similar measures to determine college admissions), as well as "competency-based" admission requirements (using standards that measure what students know and are able to do to determine college admissions);
- Policies and programs supporting student preparation for college; and
- Remediation policies and practices.

The NJDOE has established a joint Commission on Higher Education and an NJDOE task force to improve student transition from high school to college. The role of the task force has been to do the following:

- Examine students' transitions from high school to college and their preparation for college work;
- Determine how well current processes are working;
- Consider whether those processes are understood by students, parents, and high school and college personnel;
- Determine whether they are consistent with recent K-12 reform efforts, (e.g., the core curriculum content standards); and
- Recommend changes, as appropriate, to improve the transition from high school to college in New Jersey for the future.

To address this charge, the task force formed four subcommittees to review related research/literature, survey key educational audiences and make recommendations for New Jersey's students to experience improved transitions for the year 2000 and beyond. The task force membership consists of academic deans from two- and four-year colleges, secondary school principals and curriculum developers, admissions directors from both two- and four-year campuses, high school guidance counselors, and staff from the Commission on Higher Education and the Department of Education. The group has established the groundwork for a transition plan linking secondary and postsecondary education that will guide New Jersey's students during FY 2000-2004.

2.14.9 Linkages: Community College/Vocational School Alliance

Based on the recommendations of New Jersey's joint Department of Education/Commission on Higher Education report, *Mission Differentiation and Collaboration*, a joint task force composed of two-year college and secondary vocational school representatives was formed to examine the status of workforce training.

One method of maximizing resources is the formation of strategic alliances between and among education and training providers, including but not limited to meeting the needs of special populations and economically disadvantaged students.

Grant programs, including the Tech-Prep program authorized under the Perkins Act, call for articulation between secondary and postsecondary educational institutions. Although past Tech-Prep efforts have produced notable achievements, much remains to be done. The role of this task force is to examine current efforts and results and to recommend actions to improve the current articulation system.

Within the framework of federal statutory and regulatory requirements for Tech Prep, the

specific responsibilities of this task force are to:

- Examine past methods of program articulation between secondary schools and community colleges to identify policy barriers to articulation;
- Examine past methods of program articulation between secondary schools and community colleges to identify procedural barriers to articulation;
- Identify policy and procedural barriers which now limit or which could limit the participation of four-year colleges in 2+2+2 programs;
- Identify exemplary instances of program articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions (including those that provide for closely-linked, time-shortened programs), and assess the viability of using these as articulation models;
- Identify exemplary instances of program articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions that incorporate the sharing of physical and human resources;
- Identify exemplary instances of program articulation between secondary and postsecondary institutions that incorporate alternative delivery systems for student learning;
- Identify exemplary instances of program articulation between county/community colleges and four-year colleges and assess the viability of using these as articulation models;
- Identify exemplary instances of active business/industry participation in programs covered by articulation agreements and assess the viability of using these as articulation models; and
- Examine the feasibility of developing a standard articulation agreement which could be used statewide for 2+2+2 programs.

2.15 Addressing Equity Provisions of the General Education Provisions Act

The process of achieving “equitable occupational training programs” for special populations that include single parents and displaced homemakers will require that equitable principles remain in the forefront when planning programs, implementing recruitment strategies, and promoting equality in school and classroom practices.

School districts that serve these special populations are required to

- Incorporate equity activities into all levels of the curriculum;
- Assure that staff members who deal directly with members of these special populations have adequate training to impart awareness, accurate knowledge, and encouragement to further career options for nontraditional employment;

- Create an effective data collection system to delineate services to special populations;
- Plan for an effective collaborative approach at the local level (educational institutions, service providers, community-based organizations) to effect coordination of services for special populations;
- Restructure or create local plans to assure adequate child care and transportation services for special populations; and
- Develop objective measures and outcomes for performance, recruitment activities, projected retention and placement rates.

2.16 Procedures for Developing Memoranda of Understanding with WIA

Under the Workforce Investment Act, 121(c), each WIB, through the collaborative process of member input and with the agreement of the chief elected official, develops and enters into and signs a memorandum of understanding with the One-Stop partners describing the operation of the One-Stop delivery system in the local area in terms of:

- The services to be provided through the One-Stop delivery system;
- The funding of the costs of the services and the system;
- The methods for referral of individuals between the One-Stop operator and the partners, for specific services and activities;
- The length of the memorandum to coincide with the length of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan, FY 2000-2004*, as pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act, and the procedures for amending the memorandum; and
- Any other individual provisions as the parties to the agreement determine appropriate.

2.17 Procedures for Nonduplication of Programs in WIA

Protection against duplication of programs and services is achieved through the state, county, and local planning processes. Each state agency responsible for programs governed by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has representation on the SETC and participates on the various task forces and work groups, including the Internal Planning Committee. The Internal Planning Committee discusses program delivery and recommends statewide programs and services to the Commission and the Governor. The WIBs function as microcosms of the SETC with the authority to determine regional program and service needs and the method of delivery. Local grant recipients of Perkins funds are required to complete local program plans and annual spending plans that include a statement of assurance that the proposed programs, services, and activities are coordinated with appropriate WIA services and activities. The regional WIB reviews each local grant recipient's plan, which is then submitted to the NJDOE with documentation of such review.

Section 3

Accountability and Evaluation

3.0 Accountability and Evaluation

3.1 Procedures to Include Input

The Perkins Act established the core indicators of performance. New Jersey consulted with eligible recipients to obtain their input on the performance standards. In the previous plan, the state had identified an extensive series of performance standards and measures which had proved to be more extensive than they needed to be. As a consequence, the decision was made to focus accountability and evaluation on those core indicators specified in the Perkins Act.

The State Director of Vocational Education, who heads the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives, has held a series of meetings with groups who will be affected by this plan. Specifically, he has met with representatives of the New Jersey County College Presidents' Association, as well as the New Jersey Council for Resource Development and the New Jersey County College Association for Institutional Research and Planning of the colleges; the superintendents of the state's vocational-technical schools; the New Jersey Committee of Practitioners; and the offices of Special Education and Bilingual Education and Equity. The focus of these meetings has been to develop plans jointly to meet the requirements of the Perkins Act and to make certain that Vocational and Technical education in New Jersey meets the challenge of the 21st century. In addition, public hearings have been held around the state under the auspices of the SETC, and points raised at these hearings have received consideration.

3.2 Performance Standards: Identification and Description

New Jersey has traditionally maintained high standards for its vocational and technical preparation of students. The Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 specifies new standards for vocational education students equal to those for all students, which New Jersey will adopt beginning in Program Year 2000. Because New Jersey has adopted a system of Core Curriculum Content Standards for all students and universal requirements for assessment so that students may qualify for high school graduation, the system assures the challenge of high academic standards for all students in New Jersey.

The matrix which follows, specifying the measures, standards, and performance indicators for success under the Act, indicates the levels students are expected to achieve in programs in the state's public school districts and in postsecondary settings. In the past, New Jersey's Program Performance Measures and Standards (PPMS) established performance expectations for all occupational programs in the state. The PPMS also established the basis for sanctions against under-performing programs and the basis for providing extra funding for programs achieving extraordinary standards. The Extraordinary Standards Program rewarded outstanding programs through a special state vocational aid fund. Beginning in FY 2001, failure to attain expected standards will result in sanctions imposed upon the affected districts or institutions in the form of reduced allocations, in conformity with the provisions of the new Perkins Act. These sanctions of reduced allocations will be placed in effect before the state imposes the sanction of closing the program.

To be sure the performance levels are objective, quantifiable, and measurable, the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives will ask districts and postsecondary institutions to submit data on students, with the results to be aggregated at the state level. In order to accomplish the task, the Vocational Education Data System (VEDS) will be upgraded and expanded.

3.2.1 Core Indicators

The following Core Indicators, specified in the Act, have been adopted in New Jersey:

- *Student attainment of challenging State-established academic and vocational/technical skill proficiencies.*
- *Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma, or a postsecondary degree or credential.*
- *Placement in, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement or retention in employment.*
- *Student participation in and completion of vocational and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment.*

3.2.2 State Levels of Performance for Each Indicator

3.2.2.1 Core indicator: *Student attainment of challenging State-established academic and vocational/technical skill proficiencies.*

Academic proficiency, expected to result from the integration of academic instruction into all vocational-technical courses as specified in the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards, will be measured at the secondary level through the use of New Jersey's new High School Proficiency Assessment.² New Jersey's statewide standard for this measure is an 85 percent passing rate. New Jersey tests students in their eighth grade year, also. The previously-used Early Warning Test (EWT) will be replaced by the Grade Eight Proficiency Assessment (GEPA) which becomes operational in FY 1999. Scores on the GEPA and HSPA serve as general measurement of academic progress for purposes of the Perkins Act.

On the postsecondary level, for students enrolled in A.A.S., certificate, or certain Vocational and Technical A.S. programs, grade point average (GPA), the traditional measure, will act as a proxy for academic proficiency. Because of the traditional problem in tracking "success" in county/community college students, many of whom enroll without clearly-defined goals or for purposes other than obtaining a degree, discussions with community college representatives yielded an agreement that full-time students enrolled for purposes of either

² The High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA) will become operational in FY 2001, as the state's Core Curriculum Content Standards are phased in. The High School Proficiency Test (HSPT) will be in use until that time. Although their purposes are similar, the HSPA and HSPT differ somewhat because the HSPA will include academic material being phased in with the Core Curriculum Content Standards.

graduation or transfer would be counted. The standard was set at 3.0 on a traditional four-point scale, with 30 percent of students achieving the 3.0 GPA serving as the desired performance indicator.

Vocational and technical skill proficiencies will be measured through licensure examinations, for those fields in which licensure is required, industry-endorsed competency examinations, or a state-recognized test as indicated by the National Skill Standards Board (NSSB). In New Jersey, NOCTI/SOCAT or V-TECS tests are recognized, in order of preference. These will be the measure for both secondary and postsecondary students. The standard will be a 70 percent passing rate. A 90 percent passing rate will continue as the extraordinary standard.

3.2.2.2 Core indicator: *Student attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, a proficiency credential in conjunction with a secondary school diploma, or a postsecondary degree or credential.*

The Perkins Act specifies the measures to be used as evidence of completion. New Jersey adopts these measures. At the secondary level, the attainment of a diploma is the measure, with the required standard set at 85 percent. At the postsecondary county/community college level, for full-time students enrolled in college-level (nonremedial) courses, the measure is graduation or transfer, and the standard is 30 percent. Following transfer, the attainment of a degree within three years is the measure, with the desired performance set at 60 percent for the state university and at 50 percent for other four-year colleges. At the postsecondary level, for adults pursuing vocational and technical goals in county vocational schools, the measure is certification by an appropriate school employee that a student has completed his or her program.

3.2.2.3 Core Indicator: *Placement in, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement or retention in employment.*

Placement in, retention in, and completion of postsecondary education or advanced training, placement in military service, or placement or retention in employment is specified in the Perkins Act as evidence of success. This placement achievement measure will be adopted in New Jersey, using as a standard 75 percent. At the postsecondary collegiate level, it is assumed that many students will have been employed previously. An indication of placement in a position appropriate to their newly-achieved skills, which would be signaled by an increase in pay, is the standard to be met. For these students, who were previously employed, the measure to be used will be length of time to increased salary, as indicated by Department of Labor wage reporting records. For those not previously employed, the measure will be the placement rate, with the standard set at 75 percent of completers. These students will be expected to retain employment for at least 90 days in order to reach the standard.

3.2.2.4 Core Indicator: *Student participation in and completion of vocational and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment.*

Measures of student participation in and completion of vocational and technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment have traditionally used 25

percent as the standard to define nontraditional programs in the state. This plan will continue to use this method to identify nontraditional training programs. Performance measures of student participation in and completion of vocational-technical education programs that lead to nontraditional training and employment will use student enrollment information in 1998 as baseline data to obtain a measure of under-represented population in each program. An annual 5 percent increase over the baseline data of the under-represented population in 75 percent of the identified nontraditional training programs will be the state's standard of performance. A positive increase will represent district improvement in recruitment and retention strategies of the under-represented population.

Matrix Summary

The matrix that follows is intended as a tool, a compact guide to the federally-required performance indicators, New Jersey's established standards and measures, and the indicators of current status which districts will report and which will be used to assess outcomes achievement. It should not replace an understanding of the standards as described in the preceding pages. In the left-hand column, the matrix specifies that which is being assessed, the "core indicators," as set down in the Perkins Act. The first item, for example, is the academic proficiency of vocational and technical education students. The second column lists the measuring instrument, the means that will be used to determine the outcome level, in this case, the High School Proficiency Assessment (HSPA). The third column lists the state-determined standard of acceptability. In the case of academic proficiency, the criterion is that 85 percent of test-takers must pass the test to meet state standards. The right-hand column indicates what the data show about the level at which students are achieving in each district each year. It is a record of current status and serves to demonstrate the degree to which improvement is needed to meet acceptability standards on each item to be assessed. It is to be filled in at the local level.

Performance Standards and Measures Matrix

Assessment Item	Measure/Instrument	Standard/Criterion	Status Indicator (completed locally)
Academic Proficiency	<u>Secondary</u> : HSPA	85% of program completers must pass test	Percent of test-takers passing (or overall gain from GEPA)
	<u>Postsecondary</u> : GPA	30% of f.t. college level students enrolled in vo-tech programs must achieve 3.0 GPA	Percent of students earning 3.0 on 4 point scale
Vocational-Technical Skill Proficiencies	<u>Secondary</u> : licensure/ industry competency exam on state-recognized exam	70% of qualified students must pass exam	Percent of students qualified to sit for exam passing the exam
	<u>Postsecondary</u> : same as secondary	Same as secondary	Same as secondary
Evidence of Completion	<u>Secondary</u> : diploma or equivalent	85% completion rate	Receipt of required diploma/equivalent
	<u>Postsecondary (college)</u> : associate's degree or certificate or transfer plus degree within 3 years	30% completion rate	Receipt of degree, certificate
	(Vocational-technical) certification of program completion	30% of program enrollees	Receipt of completion certification
Placement Achievement	<u>Secondary and Postsecondary</u> : Further education enrollment, military service enlistment, or employment	75% of completers will continue education, enter the military or gain and retain employment in field of preparation for at least 90 days	Continued enrollment, enlistment, or employment in field of preparation for at least 90 days from initial placement
	<u>Postsecondary</u> : Employment for those not previously employed or length of time to salary increase for previously employed	75% gain and retain employment for at least 90 days or, if previously employed, employee gains salary increase within 1 year	Percent gaining and retaining employment, or length of time before salary increase if previously employed
Nontraditional training	Identified nontraditional programs: measure of under-represented gender to over-represented gender	5% increase over baseline data in 75% of identified nontraditional programs	5% increase of under-represented population

3.3 Evaluation of Program Effectiveness; Assuring Nonduplication

Programs of eligible recipients will be measured against the performance indicators using the VEDS information system and other sources for employment information to provide the necessary data.

Nonduplication of programs is ensured through the WIBs, which must endorse the districts' Perkins Act applications. In addition, in areas of the state where Tech-Prep consortia are located, the existence of articulated programs ensures nonduplication.

Reports of program effectiveness will be analyzed by the NJDOE and will be a topic for discussion with local districts. A report of effectiveness will be included in the annual Perkins Performance Report, which is coordinated, edited, and produced by a staff member of the OSCCI.

3.3.1 Monitoring Process

All programs in New Jersey receive technical assistance on an ongoing basis from members of the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives. In addition, New Jersey employs a monitoring process to ensure that programs are being carried out according to federal guidelines.

The following elements are examined during the monitoring visit for each Perkins grant:

- The status of implementation activities and timelines;
- Outcome evaluation data for all completed goals and objectives;
- Current budget expenditures;
- Time and activity data for all grant-funded positions;
- Current student enrollment data by program; and
- Perkins mandates (e.g., applied academics).

The OSCCI staff meets with the district/college staff responsible for facilitating the visit and with designated grant contact people/managers. The purpose of the interviews is to review the status of each grant and discuss the documentation and support materials provided. The OSCCI staff reviews documentation and visits a sample of program sites to inspect equipment and verify enrollments.

A minimum of one-third of the grants within each Request for Proposal will be monitored on-site annually. At the discretion of the NJDOE, immediate or more frequent monitoring will be conducted for any questionable contracts. Evaluation panel members for a particular RFP cannot be involved in monitoring for that same RFP.

The chart that follows shows how the monitoring function is conducted.

TYPE OF GRANT EVALUATION			WHO	HOW
1.1 Quarterly Report Reviews			Program Officer	Desk Review
1.2 Site Visits				
1.2.1	Entitlement	All grants over \$100,000	Program Officer	Site visit –1/yr. (25 secondary, 24 postsecondary)
		All grants under \$100,000	Program Officer	Site visit – 1/yr.- 10% sample: 7 secondary, 2 post-secondary.
1.2.2	Competitive	All targeted grants	Program Officer	Site visit – 1/yr.
		All continuation grants	Program Officer	Site visit – 1/yr.
		All grants over \$100,000	Program Officer	Site visit – 1/yr.
		Other [RFPs] <u>grants</u>	Program Officer	Site visit – 1/yr. - 33% grantees

3.4 Reporting Student Measurement of Progress (Including Special Populations)

3.4.1 Secondary Students Completing Three or More Courses

The local districts must submit data on all secondary students completing three or more courses in an approved occupational education program, with the results to be aggregated at the state level.

District reported outcome measures will be collected utilizing the annual VEDS. The VEDS data collection system will require the inclusion of each student’s demographic data and educational data, including those of special populations students.

The Department of Education will serve as a collection agency in collaboration with recommended testing authorities to provide the measures of occupational competencies. The state’s *Guidelines for the Measurement of Occupational Competencies* will identify the tests which can be used in the various programs to meet the requirements for competency testing.

The tests should be selected in the following priority order:

1. If a licensing or industry credentialing examination exists, it must be used (e.g., licensing examinations for cosmetology and licensed practical nursing).

2. If no such test is available, a nationally-validated test, such as the SOCAT from NOCTI, should be used.
3. If a nationally-validated test is unavailable or cannot be administered for some reason, a standardized test (based upon an employer-verified task list) or a test generated from a Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States (V-TECS) must be used. The testing authority will provide the previous year's competency test results on the percentage of students passing in each program.

Other data necessary to provide accountability information for requirements under the law will be collected by matching student data files with wage record files, records in higher education files, state administration files, corrections files, and the following federal agencies: defense, personnel management, and postal services.

Information the state gathers on achievement of the state's adjusted levels of performance, including those of special populations, will be presented in the annual report submitted to the Secretary.

3.4.2 Secondary Students Completing One or More Vocational Course

The local districts will be required to submit data on all vocational students who have completed one or more vocational course(s) in an approved occupational education program.

Data collection would be the same as in 3.4.1., except that the student would be distinguished from those who have completed a series of courses as described in 3.4.1 by identifying the student's status in the vocational education system. (e.g. continuing student, course taker, concentrator).

These students would not be reported in competency test results because they have not completed three or more courses in an approved occupational education program.

3.4.3 Postsecondary Students Enrolled in Vocational and Technical Programs

The county/community colleges submit yearly final reports indicating the number of students served by the Perkins grant. Currently, the information contained in the report represents the total number of students served: those enrolled in a vocational program and those receiving support services. The report identifies students according to the program in which they are enrolled, their gender, and an indication of membership in a special population. With the reauthorization of the Perkins Act, the colleges will be required to report on the number of students currently enrolled in vocational certificate or degree programs. A student is defined as one who has completed 12 nonremedial credits satisfactorily. As in previous years, these students will be identified according to the program in which they are enrolled, their gender, and membership in a special population.

The county vocational-technical schools will be required to submit data on all postsecondary vocational students who have completed one or more vocational course(s) in an approved occupational education program. Institutions will report outcome measures on the VEDS,

specifically designed to include postsecondary performance measure requirements. The schools will report student demographic data, as well as educational data. These students would not be reported in competency test results because they would not have completed the occupational program and, therefore, are not completers eligible to sit for the test/exam.

3.4.4 Postsecondary Students Completing Vocational and Technical Programs

In addition to currently enrolled students, the colleges will report on the number of students who completed their programs each year. Students will be identified in the same manner as above. Furthermore, colleges will provide data indicating the students' success in completing the programs by submitting the percent of completers who pass the competency exams. Colleges will also provide data indicating the students' status after completing the program with the exception of data obtainable through the DOL.

The county vocational schools will be required to submit data on all postsecondary vocational students who have completed an approved vocational and technical education program. Data collection would be the same as under 3.4.3. These students will be identified as completers and would be included in competency test results.

3.5 Complete, Accurate, Reliable Data

To ensure that local educational agencies and eligible institutions report accurate, complete, and reliable data to the state, each recipient will be required to comply with all evaluation and reporting requirements.

As part of the evaluation and reporting process, each eligible applicant would submit an application for approval which contains the project's goals, objectives, project implementation forms, and budget (summary and budget narrative). Applicants must include further assurances that evaluation, follow-up, and job placement strategies are identified and on file.

Evaluation procedures will be part of the requirements for each funded project. The purpose of the evaluation procedures is to provide information on contract compliance and to provide information that can be used for program improvement and programmatic and fiscal accountability.

Program objectives must be measurable and describe the outcomes of instruction, as well as the process; the demographics of the student or target group must be described; and the statistical results must be provided for each program objective.

To ensure complete, accurate, and reliable data, the state will assume responsibility for annual monitoring of the Perkins grant program according to established NJDOE policies.

For local educational agencies and eligible institutions, the state will provide workshops and manuals explaining the data collection methodology.

The state will evaluate reports and check data for quality control, accuracy, and completeness. Data will be analyzed and compared to the previous year's reports to ensure reliable and valid measures.

3.6 Common Data Collection with Programs/Activities of WIA

Currently the SETC has formed an interagency agreement work group to determine common data elements and indicators that will be used to evaluate all programs and services provided through the state's One-Stop Career Center System. This system will evolve as data become available and the data collection system is structured.

New Jersey envisions a performance standards and data collection system that will serve to assist districts to improve their performance based upon what they can learn about the effectiveness of their instruction. Using a philosophy based, in part, upon the publication, *A Look at Accountability for Secondary Vocational Education*, by Gene Bottoms and Richard Makin, New Jersey's system of accountability is ultimately aimed at raising the level of achievement in vocational education. Consequently, the state is planning to phase in a data-reporting and collection system that will enable it to learn how vocational students in each district achieve academic outcomes, technical outcomes, employment achievements, and continuing education efforts. Its purpose, then, will be to inform districts of their levels of achievement so that each district can see its results and plan improvements to its programs. Central to this effort is an upgrading of data collection systems throughout the state offices. The NJDOE, for example, has plans to develop a master student database by FY 2002 that will offer it greater flexibility and greater capacity. NJDOE envisions a statewide system that will enable it to interact with other departments to provide a record-linkage system that combines useful information from each of the databases for purposes of analysis. None of these analyses identifies individual records; they merely provide aggregate data. The current system does not permit such activity at present, but it is expected that such developments will be a reality within the next five years. It is upon this expectation that the accountability matrix is based.

Section 4

Special Populations and Other Groups

4.0. Special Populations and Other Groups

Definitions of Special Populations in New Jersey

Individuals with disabilities means individual(s) with any disability.

Individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including foster children means individuals from families with incomes below the federal poverty line and applicable to a family of the size involved for the fiscal year for which the determination is made, compared to the number of such individuals who reside in the school districts served by all the local educational agencies in the state for such in the preceding fiscal year.

Individuals preparing for nontraditional training and employment means individuals who are preparing for occupations or fields of work, including careers in computer science, technology, and other emerging high-skill occupations, for which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work.

Single parent, including single pregnant women, means an individual who is legally separated from a spouse and has a minor child or children for which the parent has either custody or joint custody or is pregnant. This also includes unmarried individuals who are pregnant or who have responsibility for a minor child or children.

Displaced homemaker means an individual who has worked primarily without remuneration to care for a home and family, and for that reason has diminished marketable skills; has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; or is a parent whose youngest dependent child will become ineligible to receive assistance under part A of Title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.) not later than two years after the date on which the parent applies for assistance under this title; and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.

Individuals with limited English proficiency means a secondary school student, an adult, or out-of-school youth who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and whose native language is a language other than English; or who lives in a family or community environment in which a language other than English is dominant.

Individual with other barriers to education achievement means a secondary school student, or out-of-school youth, who is older than other students in the same grade level; who is performing below grade level on standardized tests; whose behavior is disruptive in a regular school routine; or is disaffected by authority and structure. The student may be attending an alternative school or incarcerated in a correctional or juvenile facility.

Approved Private School for the Disabled corresponds to “approved private school for the handicapped” and means an incorporated entity approved by the Department of Education according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.2 or 7.3 to provide special education and related services to students with disabilities placed by the district board of education responsible for providing their education.

4.1 Program Strategies for Special Populations

During the past several years, the SETC convened a number of task forces to address the unique needs of members of special populations in transitioning into the workforce. The task forces focused on the following:

- Adult literacy
- At-risk youth
- Gender equity
- Inmates in correctional facilities
- Individuals with disabilities

Membership on each task force was designed to include representatives from all segments of the targeted population. Upon completion of their work, each task force submitted its report to the SETC for concurrence. The Commission then submitted the approved reports to the Governor for her endorsement. Following this approval process, the report recommendations became the foundation for implementation by each state agency charged with developing New Jersey’s workforce.

The recommendations pertaining to education from each task force report are listed below and included in this state plan.

Gender Equity Taskforce report, *Leveling the Playing Field: Removing Barriers for Women in New Jersey’s Employment and Training Programs*, makes the following eight recommendations:

1. All occupational training programs, career orientation programs, and school-to-work programs must incorporate equity into all areas and all levels of curriculum.
2. Intake and staff counselors, instructors, job developers, case managers, and others who deal directly with clients need professional development assistance in working with women, especially in the area of nontraditional training and employment.
3. Data collection must be enhanced to allow for the detailed analysis of services to women. Information should include at least the following: type of training, number of participants, age, race, sex, placement in jobs, and wage rates. Data must be evaluated, and the service provider must be held accountable for performance.

4. Better coordination at the local level among service providers, community-based organizations, and local educational institutions is encouraged. Plans for specific activities for training women in nontraditional occupations should be included in every statewide and locally-planned strategy for serving workforce readiness needs.
5. The concept of job readiness must be refined to address access to child care and transportation in order to duly meet the needs of girls and women.
6. The equity staff of the Department of Education should be fully utilized to assist the other state departments and local grantees in learning about and implementing successful gender equity initiatives throughout the workforce investment system.
7. The New Jersey Department of Transportation should use all available resources under the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act to fund training programs for women in highway construction trades.
8. The New Jersey Department of Treasury should take steps to use all available resources to fund training programs for women and racial and ethnic minorities.

The Taskforce on Adult Literacy report, *Adult Literacy in New Jersey: Meeting the Challenge of the 21st Century*, makes the following recommendations:

1. Improve planning and coordination.
2. Ensure responsiveness to customer needs.
3. Optimize the use of technology.
4. Expand staff development opportunities.
5. Improve program accountability.
6. Improve awareness of the importance of literacy programs.

The Work Group on Persons with Disabilities, *Opportunity for All*, makes the following recommendations:

1. The workforce investment system must provide a variety of options and approaches for persons with disabilities. Flexibility must be the guiding principle for all recommendations in the development of programs for people with disabilities.
2. Schools must provide special education students with the necessary support in the implementation of enriched learning opportunities.
3. Implement, within the proposed Department of Education accountability system, measures and standards which include programs serving people with disabilities, to ensure that all completers of occupational education programs possess the skills and attitudes required by employers.
4. Create an integrated school environment in which students with disabilities participate in activities with all students to facilitate movement into an integrated work environment.
5. Improve the coordination of transition planning (school-to-work, school-to-school, etc.) for youth with disabilities. Secondary school systems (special education and occupational education), including vocational-technical schools, rehabilitation agencies, and private and public employment sector,

- must cooperate to achieve this goal.
6. Expand special education support services and resources for teachers, counselors, and administrators dealing with vocational students, persons with disabilities, and approximately 20 to 30 percent of the vocational education population.
 7. Establish support by the Commission on Higher Education, Departments of Human Services and Labor, for the development of a broad-based rehabilitation counseling education program that would establish competencies at all degree levels for various rehabilitation professionals, including but not limited to concentrations in specific areas, such as vocational counseling, psychosocial, etc.
 8. Enhance linkages between the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to address the relationship between special education programs for persons with disabilities and the lifelong learning and career preparation systems. This linkage will require a detailed assessment of how these two systems can be made more compatible.
 9. The Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education, colleges, and school districts must ensure that the necessary support system is in place and that linkages are made between the agencies to create greater opportunities for college students with disabilities.
 10. Establish a single point of contact in the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services field offices to assist people with disabilities, their families, and the employer community in their effort to access employment opportunities for people with disabilities and to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
 11. Establish a core component of the New Jersey Business Resource Network, with the Department of Labor's Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, to link programs and agencies that serve persons with disabilities with all elements of the statewide Business Resource Network.
 12. Increase the awareness of persons with disabilities, as well as the public and private sectors, to the Technology Assistance Resource Program and other technology assistance programs.
 13. Establish an interdepartmental work group of the six departments represented on the SETC and commission staff to coordinate and facilitate the implementation of the recommendations of the Workgroup on Persons with Disabilities. A lead agency will be identified and the group will report to the executive board work group on a regular basis.

The At-Risk Youth Task Force report, *Youth at Work: Making It in the Global Economy* makes the following recommendations:

1. Develop a comprehensive, employment-oriented program for at-risk youth that provides opportunities for career exploration, employment experience, and a transition to the world of work. This program must be available to both in-school and out-of-school youth.
2. Create youth apprenticeship opportunities as described in the National Youth Apprenticeship Act of 1992: "The first step in shaping a new national concept of youth apprenticeship is to develop a strategy for preserving the

successful aspects of traditional apprenticeships while expanding those approaches identified within youth apprenticeship.”

3. Develop a joint strategy between the Department of Education and the Commission on Higher Education to link cooperative education programs between secondary and postsecondary institutions to improve their quality.
4. Expand summer work experience for in-school youth through partnerships between business and the schools and through programs such as structured employment training, job tryout, and shadowing.
5. Enhance and expand the Commission on Higher Education’s effort to establish closer collaboration between institutions of higher education and the public schools. Successful pre-collegiate academic programs, like College Bound, must be made available to more students.
6. Expand and strengthen the Department of Human Services School-Based Youth Services Program by adding an employment component that includes, for example, job tryouts, community service work experience, and job shadowing.
7. Expand the New Jersey Youth Corps Program by including an explicit vocational education component while maintaining the program’s current philosophy.

The Corrections Education Task Force report, *Standing Corrected: Education and Rehabilitation of Criminal Offenders*, makes the following recommendations:

1. The Department of Corrections and the Juvenile Justice Commission should report data on a bi-annual basis that aggregate post-release information on offenders, e.g. employment status, education participation, and continued involvement with the criminal justice system. This should be correlated with the institutional participation in education, training, and the transition system.
2. The Department of Corrections should place greater emphasis on rehabilitation.
3. A strategic plan that determines adequate funding and staffing levels for corrections education should be established.
4. Employers need to be given incentive to hire ex-offenders, e.g. targeted tax credits and training subsidies.
5. The Department of Corrections and the Juvenile Justice Commission should initiate a public information campaign to promote programs and services that are positively correlated with institutional and post-release success as measured by education attainment, job placement and persistence, employment and salary levels, and recidivism.
6. The Department of Corrections should work with the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Education to develop strategies to ensure that federal and state corrections education funds can be expended within established time frames during state spending freezes.
7. State plans for federal grants dealing with the provision of education and support services should include a section on serving individuals in the criminal justice system.
8. Training for educational personnel conducted or supported by state agencies

- should include corrections educators.
9. All education programs should focus on attainment of marketable skills and credentials.
 10. Collaborative efforts with community colleges and county vocational schools should be expanded.
 11. Academic and vocational education should be integrated with one another, and applied and experiential learning approaches should be utilized.
 12. The state education funding formula should be extended to incarcerated youth in county facilities.
 13. Greater opportunities for students continuing their education or entering the workforce should be developed for juveniles.
 14. Juvenile female offenders should have access to the same programs, resources, and services as their male counterparts.
 15. The Department of Corrections, Juvenile Justice Commission, and county systems must be electronically linked to the One-Stop Career Center system.

The Taskforce on Education and Workforce Quality in its report, *Linking Education and the Workforce: An Imperative for New Jersey's Economic Future*, makes the following recommendations:

1. WIBs must assume overall responsibility for local school-to-work planning and become the focal point for promoting and facilitating linkages and collaboration between and among districts in a county or multi-county area and with employers, organized labor, postsecondary educational institutions, and community-based organizations.
2. Stakeholder involvement in schools, postsecondary institutions, and other educational providers must be expanded to provide for input from the broader community in which learners live and work.
3. Integration among various segments of the education system should be strengthened.
4. Schools should be given the flexibility to create innovation; they must be held accountable for the success of their students.
5. All learners in the system must be given the opportunity to maximize their potential regardless of age, race, gender, disability, socioeconomic status, etc.
6. Teacher certification requirements must reflect the new workforce readiness agenda.
7. Current teachers must be afforded the opportunity to participate in the workplace outside of school and to learn new methods that support the changing economy and prepare students for a “career” in learning.
8. Parents and school board members must be educated about the importance of integrating workforce preparation with the educational curriculum.
9. Career education must begin in the elementary school.
10. The educational system must adopt a reform agenda that emphasizes technology in the classroom, infusion of contextual learning into the curriculum, and integration of work-based and school-based learning.
11. Authentic assessment methodologies should be incorporated into the curriculum to provide students and teachers with a greater opportunity to measure a broad spectrum of student learning and provide more meaningful

- and useful documentation and analysis of this learning.
12. Curricula must emphasize the acquisition of skills and knowledge that provide learners with a solid foundation in academic, vocational, work readiness, and entrepreneurial areas.
 13. Distance learning and technology-assisted learning must be incorporated into the curriculum delivery system at all levels of education.
 14. Open entry/exit programs that are competency-based should be introduced and expanded at the secondary level and beyond.

Vocational education for special population students will include mainstreamed students with services and specialized education programs designed to enable them to achieve vocational education objectives that would otherwise be beyond their reach as a result of their limitations. Special population students need to have access to a broader spectrum of employment and training opportunities than they traditionally have had in New Jersey.

The Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives will require districts to serve students in each of the special populations. Each district's five-year plan for vocational education will assess the need of each population and, once these needs are identified, will be encouraged to acquire the needed resources, programs, and services to provide the least restrictive environment and best practices for special population students enrolled in vocational programs. Districts will also be required to serve the same as or an even greater proportional number of these special population students than are found in the district's total student population. Districts will be required to provide programs which meet or exceed the state adjusted levels of performance. Programs for special populations will have the same objectives as other vocational-technical programs for preparation and advancement in high-skill and high-wage careers.

Vocational Education Five-year Plans will be reviewed by the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives, the Office of Special Education, and the Office of Bilingual Education and Equity Issues for appropriate activities and services. Districts will receive technical assistance to modify curricula to meet special population needs from the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives.

An assessment and onsite monitoring of the vocational and technical education programs carried out with Perkins funds will be conducted to determine how the needs of special populations are being met and how such programs enable special population students to meet state adjusted levels of performance.

Districts will be encouraged to hire coordinators to advocate enrollment, special services, and adaptive/specialized equipment for special populations to succeed in regular vocational education classes. Greater evaluation will be required regarding the effectiveness of these individuals.

Interagency agreements have been established to facilitate policies and services for the transition of individuals with disabilities from school to adult life. These agreements are between the Department of Education, Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives,

and the Office of Special Education; Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation; and Department of Human Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities.

When students with disabilities reach age 14 or younger, if appropriate, and every year until graduation, their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are required to include a "statement of transition service needs." The "statement of transition service needs" focuses on the student's courses of study (required, elective, modified or specially-designed courses) that will help the student achieve desired post-school goals. This statement must also include, when appropriate, the need for "technical consultation" from the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. When students with disabilities reach age 16 or younger, if appropriate, and every year until graduation, their IEPs must also include a "statement of needed transition services." The "statement of needed transition services" is a plan for adult life beyond school that must address instruction, employment, community experiences, post-school adult living, related services, and, if appropriate, acquisition of daily living skills, functional vocational assessment, and a statement of interagency responsibilities or any needed linkages.

4.2 Providing Equal Access for All Perkins-funded Activities

Members of special populations shall have equal access to vocational education programs regardless of individual limitation. Specialized programs will have the same high quality as the other vocational education programs with the expectation that students will achieve industry standards and competencies. Whenever possible special populations students will be placed in regular vocational education programs with appropriate services. A special population student's placement in vocational programs will be based upon his or her assessment and occupational goals and not upon the special population education programs which have been previously created within the district.

4.3 Nondiscrimination

Students from special populations shall be provided equal access to occupational training as provided by the school districts. Statements of assurance, signed by the chief school administrator representing the local educational agency's board of education, will include (1) statements of nondiscrimination, committing the district to provide equal access for special populations regardless of age, race, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation or affection, English proficiency, socioeconomic status, or disability; and (2) effective recruitment and outreach efforts that include language which encourages members of these special populations to participate in occupational training programs. The local board of education will require that its policies promote equality in school and classroom practices. It will publicize throughout the community the local board's policies prohibiting bias, harassment, discrimination, and segregation. Members of the special populations should be informed of the district's affirmative action officer's responsibilities, location, and availability.

Monitoring of vocational education programs will require reporting of enrollments in each of these special population groups to be compared to the population of the county or district. Male/female enrollments by program will also be reviewed for gender bias. Programs will be evaluated for conformity to their previously-approved five-year and annual spending plans.

Districts which fail to present such information or which have an identified special population which is not being served will have vocational education funds payment suspended until a remediation plan is established and approved by the State Director of Vocational Education. Programs will enable special populations to meet or exceed state levels of performance in high-skill, high-wage careers and/or prepare for additional education.

4.4 Helping Special Populations Meet Levels of Performance

Section 4.5 specifies how individuals who are members of special populations will be provided with programs designed to enable the special populations to meet or exceed state adjusted levels of performance and how special populations will be prepared for further learning and for high-skill, high-wage careers.

Section 4.1, Program Strategies for Special Populations, describes the local districts' responsibility to meet or exceed the state adjusted levels of performance. The strategies also state that programs for special populations will have the same objectives as other vocational-technical programs for preparation and advancement in high-skill and high-wage careers.

4.5 Addressing Needs of Students in Alternative Education Programs

The vocational education five-year plan for each individual district with approved occupational education programs will include the details of the activities each district will provide to meet the identified needs of the alternative education special population.

Alternative education offers nontraditional, yet effective, learning environments that provide flexible education objectives closely related to the learning styles and the individual needs of students. This learning opportunity is designed to meet the special needs, interests, and aspirations of at-risk youth who may be disruptive and/or disaffected with a traditional academic environment. Alternative education schools are small, carefully staffed, and provide intense, comprehensive, and individualized services to students and to their families, so they can achieve the Core Curriculum Content Standards required for graduation in New Jersey.

Alternative education schools may also incorporate site-based management approaches, cooperative learning strategies, and shared decision-making into the program structure. In addition, alternative education schools provide a caring and supportive long-term environment where rules and regulations are clearly defined and fairly and consistently enforced.

Research has revealed several key components that are effective in alternative schools. These components are recommended in order to successfully implement alternative education:

- Flexible scheduling that includes both day and evening hours;
- Low teacher-to-student ratio;

- Individualized instruction, including individual education plans;
- Preparation for state assessment (GEPA and HSPA);
- A counseling component; and
- Certified teaching staff.

The Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives staff will review five-year vocational education plans with specific reference to the needs of students involved in alternative schools. A local district’s annual spending plan will specify amounts and detailed budget items from its annual Perkins allocation to be used for this identified special population.

4.5.1 Additional State Level Activities and Services

The New Jersey Supreme Court in *Abbott v. Fred G. Burke* (A-155-97) upheld the need for the establishment and implementation of alternative schools. Abbott districts are required to provide alternative education programs and have dropout prevention specialist(s). The court acknowledged that alternative schools “prevent dropouts by providing more individualized instruction as well as necessary additional supports, such as job counseling, social workers, and guidance counselors.” In addition, “placing students in alternative education programs decreases disruptions in the regular school, and for students in the programs, increases academic performance, fosters positive lifestyles, and reduces aggressive behavior.” Vocational education has been identified as a means to provide contextual education for these students. The number of approved vocational education programs in alternative high schools will be increased.

An interagency agreement negotiated with the Department of Human Services funds Youth Corps services in career development, job readiness skills, and workplace readiness skills. It also provides employment opportunities for dropout youth from the ages of 16 to 24, with an average age of 18. New Jersey Youth Corps projects offer basic skills instruction, including preparation for the General Educational Development (GED) test or adult high school instruction, employability skills instruction, counseling, job development and placement, and community service experiences. New Jersey Youth Corps will continue to be funded as a provider of valuable services for students in the state.

4.6 Using Funds to Prepare for Nontraditional Training and Employment

School districts must implement a plan to increase the participation of single parents and displaced homemakers in high-wage, high-skill, and nontraditional occupational education in order for individuals in these populations to achieve economic self-sufficiency and freedom from dependence on public assistance programs. The following components must be included:

- Recruitment;
- Orientation workshops for nontraditional careers and occupational education information;

- Intake and assessment activities to determine interest and skill level. This may include interest and aptitude testing, as well as tests of basic skills;
- Career counseling sessions and development of an individual career plan;
- Occupational training; and
- Job placement assistance.

District surveys will be developed to determine the number of potential students who are single parents or displaced homemakers. Occupational training programs will be identified to recruit members of this targeted population, and assessment tools will be used to determine skill levels of individual participants. These tools may or may not include the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), Career Ability Placement Survey (CAPS), Career Occupational Reference System (CORS), and Career and Occupational Profile System (COPS). A curriculum should be developed that includes remedial courses with appropriate benchmarks to determine levels of progress. Upon completion of satisfactory benchmarks, participants will progress to the next level of achievement so that they can ultimately meet or exceed the state adjusted levels of performance. A satisfactory completion of a basic level of performance will entitle a participant to enter into a contract for entrance into high-wage, high-skill occupational training. Students who have graduated from occupational training programs and are currently in the workforce should be afforded the opportunity to enter into advanced training to complement and enhance their current skill levels.

Each school district will develop its spending plan to use a portion of the allocated funds for promotion of nontraditional training and employment for single parents and displaced homemakers. This plan may include activities such as workshops that create awareness of nontraditional careers, information on community bulletin boards, school district newsletters, local newspapers, and community outreach to and collaboration with agencies that provide services to single parents and displaced homemakers.

4.6.1 State Leadership Activities

The coordinator for nontraditional training will provide technical assistance to school districts as they plan, develop, and implement services for displaced homemakers and single parents, and work collaboratively with the Statewide Nontraditional Career Assistance Center to create new models and strategies to accomplish statewide goals and objectives. Leadership activities will include components to provide technical assistance for the following:

Workplace Readiness Standards Conference: This conference will be structured for educators and will focus on strategies to foster the goal of allowing all students, including special populations, to develop career planning and workplace readiness skills.

Career Development Training: This includes Achieving Sex Equity Through Students (ASETS) student leadership training, conflict management, Careers 2000 workshops, and the development of career plans.

Professional Development Seminars: These seminars will be geared for programs funded through Perkins legislation and focus on nontraditional specialized workshops such as Equitable School: Success for All Students; facilitator training for ASETS and Careers 2000; and presentations for local education agencies related to nontraditional training.

Marketing Nontraditional Career Opportunities: This includes a School-to-Careers Mentoring Guide, posters, newsletters, tabletop exhibits, and a standard packet of information on workplace readiness and nontraditional careers.

Identification of Best Practices: These include an emphasis on a conference on nontraditional career training model programs, a Hall of Fame recognition program for participating schools, and distribution of information on model programs via the Internet.

Pilot Demonstration Sites: The state will establish sites throughout New Jersey to function as “technical resource centers” for educators and other interested individuals to gather information to incorporate workplace readiness standards and nontraditional career information into the curriculum for all students.

Regional and Nationwide Conferences: The state will encourage attendance and participation in conferences related to equity, nontraditional training, and single parent/displaced homemaker issues.

Monitoring: The state will monitor program, fiscal, and data collection activities associated with the Statewide Nontraditional Career Assistance Center and school districts to assure that goals and objectives are met. It will also provide technical assistance as needed.

The vocational education five-year plan for each individual district will specify the details of the activities this district will provide to meet the identified need for this nontraditional training/employment. The local district’s annual spending plan will specify amounts and detailed budget items from their annual allocation to be used for this special population.

4.7 Serving Individuals in Correctional Institutions

The vocational education five-year plan for each individual district will include the details of the activities each district will provide to meet the identified need for individuals in correctional institutions. The local district’s annual spending plan will specify amounts and detailed budget items from its annual allocation to be used for this special population. Local district funds will follow the individual secondary student when that student is relocated into a correctional facility. Several county vocational schools provide special population vocational education programs to county correctional facilities.

4.7.1 State Level Activities and Services

The State's correctional system is organized around two institutional complexes, adult and youth, adults under the jurisdiction of the New Jersey Department of Corrections and juveniles under the Juvenile Justice Commission. At present, there are 13 adult institutions operated by the NJDOC and 33 sites operated by the JJC. There is also a newly-developed stabilization and reintegration program for juveniles under the auspices of the JJC. There are no state institutions exclusively for female juvenile offenders. The NJDOC operates a number of minimum-security camps, which are satellite units to their institutions, and the NJDOC also houses inmates in county correctional institutions. The counties operate facilities for short-term incarceration of both adult and juvenile offenders. The Juvenile Justice Commission within the Department of Law and Public Safety became responsible for the operation of all state-operated juvenile facilities in 1996.

4.7.1.1 New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC)

The NJDOC, as one of its major objectives, states, "its role is to ensure that persons committed to the state correctional institutions are provided with the care, discipline, training and treatment needed to prepare them for reintegration into the community." Much of the training and treatment is coordinated through Office of Educational Services (OES), which is responsible for the provision of education in the NJDOC, and the OES functions like a public school district. Each of the 13 institutions under the NJDOC has a director of education, who is responsible to both the institutional superintendent and the executive director of OES. Both OES staff and institutional education staff are subject to the same certification requirements as public school educators.

Academic as well as vocational education programs are offered throughout the NJDOC system. Although there is some variation in programs from one institution to the next, the academic offerings at each institution, at a minimum, include pre-secondary and secondary curricula. Pre-secondary curricula are designed for students whose grade level is below 7.5, and secondary curricula are designed for students at or above 7.5 grade level. Both curricula emphasize the acquisition of basic academic skills consistent with students' appropriate grade level.

In both the youth and the adult complexes, the programs are typically remedial. The programs generally focus on development of basic skills and preparation for the General Education Development (GED) test. English as a Second Language (ESL) programs are available at most institutions as well.

The NJDOC offers numerous vocational programs; specific curricula vary by institution because of institutional inmate profiles and available resources. Vocational programs provide skill training in air conditioning and refrigeration, auto body, auto service, automotive technician, barbering, building services, building trades, carpentry, clerical skills, computer programming, commercial art, cosmetology, electrical/electronics, employability skills, food service, graphic arts, home economics, horticulture, nurse aide, painting and decorating, paralegal, plumbing, small engine repair, diesel mechanics, upholstery, welding, and woodworking. Although certificates are awarded for course completion, not all programs result in industry-based skill certificates. However, such certificates are program

components of the automotive trades shops at both East Jersey State Prison and Bayside State Prison, both of which offer Automotive Services Excellence (ASE) certification to qualified students. East Jersey State Prison and the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility offer trade-specific certifications for cosmetology.

The NJDOC's apprenticeship program currently has registered apprentices in eight trade areas. Apprenticeship opportunities are offered in six of the correctional facilities:

- East Jersey State Prison (Culinary Arts)
- Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility (Print Shop)
- Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women (Upholstery)
- Garden State Reception and Youth Correctional Facility (Cabinet Making and Upholstery)
- Bayside State Prison (Upholstery and Masonry)
- A.C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility (Sheet Metal).

The NJDOC also offers an array of pre-vocational programs, which provide opportunities for career exploration, the acquisition of employability skills, vocational assessment, and counseling. These programs are typically targeted at younger inmates but are also offered to adult inmates. The NJDOC continues to modernize and expand its APTICOM program. APTICOM is an assessment system that measures vocational aptitudes and interests and educational attainment in math and language skills. The assessment results are compiled in a comprehensive report that provides valuable information to the educational staff and the student. In addition, the data are used to construct a group profile to determine appropriate programs for institutional populations and vocational program placements.

In addition, the NJDOC has entered into a few collaborative endeavors with other educational institutions. Camden County Vocational Schools, for example, has developed a partnership with Riverfront State Prison in Camden and Bayside State Prison at its Ancora unit. Adhering to the same curriculum and standards utilized by its full-time adult campus programs, the school provides occupational training for approximately 200 inmates per school year at these facilities. Programs offered at Riverfront include automotive technology, electronics, drafting, construction trades technology, masonry, and culinary arts. The school's training programs at Bayside include construction trades technology and culinary arts. Inmates are given a progress chart, which identifies the competencies achieved, and those who complete a training program receive certificates from the school.

4.7.1.2 Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC)

The Juvenile Justice Commission serves adjudicated youth between the ages of 13 and 18. The students are educated within institutional facilities, community residential centers, and community day programs. The average number of students served by the JJC who are classified as educationally disabled is 45 percent. Of the classified population, the majority of students are classified as emotionally disturbed (behaviorally disordered). Many of the students have learning disabilities that are identified as contributory factors toward the emotionally-disturbed classification. Approximately three percent of the students are female.

Upon admission to a JJC program, students are tested to identify their educational level. Strengths and weaknesses are identified for the purpose of defining the individual student's needs. The local education agency the student last attended is contacted. This contact is to assist in developing the most appropriate educational program and to verify the student's educational status.

The educational programs within the JJC are aligned with the Core Curriculum Content Standards, described in section 2.3. Junior and senior high school-level programs are offered to the students. Opportunities are offered to students to complete their curriculum studies through regular classroom instruction or, if necessary, through an alternative school setting. Law-related education and a wellness curriculum (specifically addressing substance abuse awareness) are also integral parts of the educational program.

Vocational and pre-vocational modules are a substantial portion of the educational effort in order to integrate work readiness skills into every student's program. Employment assessment, vocational guidance and counseling, planning, and transitioning are stressed with each student. Much of the work in work readiness is associated with the JJC's technology plan. The plan includes hardware and software elements created specifically to assist the student in his or her efforts to transition back to the community and be better prepared to enter the work force or continue in the educational system. The JJC also offers vocational training opportunities in careers that include upholstery, horticulture, welding, optical laboratory, graphic arts, automobile body repair, small engine repair, radio and television communication, drafting, automobile mechanics, electrical and building trades, cabinet making, computer technology, and cosmetology.

The JJC also has instituted a Stabilization and Reintegration Program. The program is a highly-structured, military-type program. It serves youthful offenders, aged 13 to 19, who were adjudicated by the courts. Offenders who have committed first degree crimes, sexual crimes, arson, or who have a prior history of escape are not accepted into this program. The Stabilization and Reintegration Program consists of three phases:

- **Orientation Phase:** This phase recruits participants from secure care facilities and detention centers. It provides an overall introduction to military protocol and physical fitness. This phase serves as the "staging area" which houses selected recruits for up to 30 days.
- **Boot Camp Phase:** This phase includes physical training, drills, inspections, and general orders to enhance self discipline. Participants in this phase attend school for four hours per day and vocational training for 2.5 hours per day. It also provides substance abuse and behavior modification programs.
- **Aftercare Phase:** This phase focuses on maintaining what was achieved during the two prior phases. Local education agencies are contacted by aftercare staff prior to the participants' release into the community. Strict supervision is initially provided, and there are eight face-to-face contacts during the first month. The phase also provides drug screening, family counseling, restorative services, and it requires the trainee to perform community service.

Section 5

Tech Prep

5.0 Tech-Prep Education

Title II of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 defines the purpose of the Tech-Prep program as a program of study that

- Combines, at a minimum, two years of secondary education (as determined under state law) with a minimum of two years of postsecondary education in a non-duplicative, sequential course of study;
- Integrates academic and vocational-technical instruction and utilizes work-based and work-site learning;
- Provides technical preparation in a career field such as engineering technology, applied science, a mechanical, industrial, or practical art or trade, agriculture, health occupations, business, or applied economics;
- Builds student competence in mathematics, science, reading, writing, communications, economics, and workplace skills through applied, contextual academics and integrated instruction, in a coherent sequence of courses;
- Leads to an associate's or a baccalaureate degree or a postsecondary certificate in a specific career field; and
- Leads to placement in appropriate employment or to further education.

It is the New Jersey Department of Education's goal, through the Tech-Prep program, to improve occupational training opportunities for students at the secondary and postsecondary levels, thereby providing a better-prepared workforce that meets industry and educational standards.

The intent of New Jersey's Tech-Prep grant program is to develop and implement a range of nonduplicative, sequenced, competency-based courses and experiences that provide secondary students with an improved opportunity for a "seamless" transition from school to postsecondary technical education or work. The state's Tech-Prep programs combine a common core of applied academic courses and technical courses at the high school level for continued postsecondary education or training.

During FY 1997, 22 grants were awarded to Tech-Prep consortia throughout New Jersey. Of these, 11 were awarded to consortia having community colleges as the lead institution/fiscal agent, and 11 were awarded to consortia having secondary schools or county vocational schools as the lead institution/fiscal agent. During FY 1997, 9,000 students were served by these grantees.

During FY 1998, 23 grants were awarded to Tech-Prep consortia throughout New Jersey. Of these, 11 were awarded to consortia having community colleges as the lead institution/fiscal agent, and 12 were awarded to consortia having county vocational schools as the lead institution/fiscal agent. During FY 1998, 21,187 students were served by these grantees.

Currently in FY 1999, 20 grants have been awarded to Tech-Prep consortia. Twelve consortia have county vocational schools and eight have community colleges as the lead institution/fiscal agent. These consortia have embarked on a five-year plan wherein at least one new occupational program will be phased in each year. The resulting curriculum revision and articulation agreements among the member institutions will improve the nature and delivery of education programs.

5.1 Tech-Prep Articulation

The consortium must produce at least one signed articulation agreement for each funded occupational program, including at least one articulation agreement with a baccalaureate-granting institution for each funded occupational program; the articulation agreements must reflect a nonduplicative, sequential course of study.

5.2 Description of Program Specifics

Each consortium must address programs that consist of a minimum of two years of secondary education and four years of higher education. Programs must have a common core of required proficiency in mathematics, science, reading, writing, communications, economics, and workplace skills through applied, contextual academics, and integrated instruction in a nonduplicative, sequential course of study. Programs of study must lead to an associate's or a baccalaureate degree or a postsecondary certificate in a specific career field.

5.3 Meeting Academic Standards and Other Requirements

Each consortium, as required under NJDOE, will meet the following requirements:

- Meet all requirements of the Core Curriculum Content Standards, including the Cross-Content Workplace Readiness Standards;
- Link secondary schools, two-year postsecondary institutions, four-year institutions of higher education, and apprenticeship programs through nonduplicative sequences of courses in career fields, including the investigation of opportunities for Tech-Prep secondary students to enroll concurrently in secondary and postsecondary coursework;
- Use work-based and work-site learning in conjunction with business and all aspects of an industry in each funded occupational program; and
- Use educational technology and distance learning to involve all consortium partners more fully in the development and operation of programs.

5.4 Inservice Training

Consortia are required to implement an inservice training program for Tech-Prep personnel, including teachers, that accomplishes the following:

- Trains Vocational and Technical teachers to effectively implement Tech-Prep programs;
- Provides joint training for teachers in the Tech-Prep consortium;
- Ensures that teachers and administrators stay current with the needs, expectations, and methods of business and all aspects of the industry;
- Trains postsecondary faculty in the use of contextual and applied curricula and instruction; and
- Provides training in the use and application of technology.

5.5 Training Programs for Counselors

Consortia are required to implement an inservice training program for Tech-Prep counselors designed to enable counselors to more effectively do the following:

- Provide information to students regarding Tech-Prep education programs;
- Support student progress in completing Tech-Prep programs;
- Provide information on related employment opportunities;
- Ensure that such students are placed in appropriate employment; and
- Stay current with the needs, expectations, and methods of business and all aspects of the industry.

5.6 Equal Access for Special Populations

Under terms of the award, the consortium must provide equal access to the full range of technical programs to individuals who are members of special populations, including the development of technical program services appropriate to the needs of special populations. The consortium must recruit special population students. The consortium must develop the technical program services needed by special population students.

5.7 Preparatory Services

The consortium will provide preparatory services, as needed, that assist participants. Students who require preparatory services should receive the needed services in a timely manner.

5.8 Process for Awarding of Grants (Fed. #B.1)

Prior to their evaluation by the panel of readers, proposals are screened to determine whether they are, in fact, eligible for evaluation. Complete proposals are those that include all elements listed in the Request for Proposals (RFP) subsection, Required Component Listing.

The initial round of each grant competition results in funded projects which are eligible for continuation funding in subsequent years. In the initial round, grant proposals are evaluated and rated by a panel of three readers. The evaluation panel consists of one reader from the originating office, one from another office within NJDOE, and one reader external to the Department of Education who is knowledgeable in the content area.

Proposals are evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, and accuracy and appropriateness of response to each of the items identified in Proposal Instructions and Selection Criteria of the RFP. Evaluators use the selection criteria identified as the basis for their scoring of proposals.

To be eligible for funding, a proposal must receive a score of at least 65 points out of 100. Eligible proposals will be ranked in descending order, from highest to lowest score, but only the highest-scoring proposals are funded.

5.9 Special Consideration to Applications Addressing Sec. 205(d) (Fed. #B.2)

Special consideration is given to applications that address the areas identified in Sec. 205(d):

- The consortium must place the Tech-Prep graduates in an occupationally appropriate job or into a directly related postsecondary collegiate degree program.
- The program must expand participation strategies for business, industry, and labor in each funded occupational program. The advisory council/committee associated with the occupational program must include appropriate representation from business, industry, and labor. There should be evidence (e.g., meeting minutes) of increased business, industry, and labor participation in program planning, development, implementation, and follow-up.
- The consortium must provide equal access to the full range of technical programs to individuals who are members of special populations, including the development of technical program services appropriate to the needs of special populations.
- The consortium must implement and/or expand program(s) in an approved occupational field (including allied health), which is on the New Jersey Occupational Information Coordinating Committee demand list.
- Summative evaluation will demonstrate how the Tech-Prep program enabled students to meet high academic and employability competencies.

5.10 Equitable Distribution of Funds (Fed. #B.3)

The demographics of the local consortia have provided an equitable distribution of services to urban and rural populations.

5.11 Procedure for Evaluation on Core Indicators (Fed. #B.4)

NJDOE will regularly evaluate the grant program to ensure that it is meeting the approved goals and objectives. The program evaluation will be based upon the interim and final reports and upon on-site monitoring visits conducted by Department of Education personnel. Grantees must meet the goals and objectives of the grant program. The degree to which goals and objectives identified in the grant proposal are satisfied is the criterion on which evaluations of local programs are based.

All consortia will be required to submit data required for evaluation on core indicators as indicated in Section 3 of this plan.

5.12 Plan for Data Collection (Fed. #B.5)

The consortium will compile and provide a summary of student performance and follow-up results (e.g., a skill certificate) for 100 percent of all Tech-Prep completers as specified in Section 3 of this plan.

5.13 Changes to be Made to the Existing Tech-Prep Program (Fed. #C.3)

It is NJDOE's goal, through the Tech-Prep program, to improve occupational training opportunities for students at the secondary and postsecondary levels, thereby providing a better-prepared workforce that meets industry and educational standards.

The design of New Jersey's Tech-Prep grant program focuses on implementing consortia that improve training opportunities for students in occupational programs; supporting improved and expanded articulation between the secondary and postsecondary providers of education and training; and preparing a skilled workforce that meets industry and educational standards. Consortia funded under this program will achieve the following:

- Implement and expand a nonduplicative, sequential course of study that provides secondary students with an improved opportunity for a "seamless" transition from school to postsecondary technical education or work.
- Obtain articulation agreements for each funded occupational program, including at least one articulation agreement with a baccalaureate-granting institution for each funded occupational program; these articulation agreements should reflect a non-duplicative, sequential course of study.
- Use work-based and work-site learning in conjunction with business and all aspects of an industry in each funded occupational program.
- Revise curricular materials and articulation agreements to reflect the use of work-based learning in each funded occupational program.
- Ensure that all students participate in work-based and work-site learning.

- Ensure that the curriculum in each funded occupational program reflects instruction in all aspects of an industry.

5.14 Participation of Institutions Awarding Baccalaureate Degrees (Fed. #C.4)

Commencing with the five-year plan in FY 1999, all local consortia were required to have at least one baccalaureate degree granting institution actively involved as a partner.

Additionally, all consortia were required to expand participation strategies for business, industry, and labor in each funded occupational program.

5.15 Additional Tech-Prep Activities to be Implemented (Fed. #C.5)

During FY 1999, an NJDOE Request for Proposal was issued that supports the initiation of a consortium of educational institutions and companies involved in research and development industries to design and implement a model program for engineering, science, and technology. This Tech-Prep program will prepare graduates for employment in the research, development, and technical services career field. The grantee will select the disciplines and programs to be included over the five-year period of the grant award.

Section 6
Financial Requirements

6.0 Financial Requirements

6.1 Allocation of Funds Among Secondary, Postsecondary and Adult Vocational and Technical Education Schools [122(c)(4)(A) and 122(c)(4)(B)]

As described in Section 2, Program Administration, New Jersey gathers input on statewide needs from a variety of constituents on an ongoing basis to review program quality. The input process addresses access to and quality of vocational education programs. Program criteria include consideration of the following factors:

- Integration of academic and vocational skills;
- Academic and vocational competencies;
- Skill attainment and job placement;
- Secondary-postsecondary linkages;
- Training appropriateness to the workplace;
- Access of all populations;
- Relevance of programs to existing and future labor market needs;
- Relevance of curriculum, equipment, and instructional materials;
- Workplace competencies; and
- Other factors identified throughout the process.

The state has determined that in New Jersey, based on the geographic make-up of the state, it is inappropriate to waive the minimum allocation requirement of \$15,000 for a single district or consortium to qualify for eligibility.

Specific areas of need are reviewed through studies conducted by the various task forces of the SETC. Each local education agency is required to conduct a needs assessment that interfaces with the Workforce Investment Act and their WIB.

The distribution of federal funds is designed to meet the identified needs for vocational education. The distribution is accomplished through the use of both formula-driven allotments and competitive requests for proposal (RFP) processes.

6.1.1 Formula-driven Allotments

Formula-driven allotments shall be allocated as described in Title I, Part A, Allotment and Allocation, Section 112, Within State Allocation, of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998. Of the total state allotment, 85 percent will be distributed to eligible institutions in the state through allocations. Two percent of the 85 percent will be used as a reserve to assist school districts that are rural and serve a high number of occupational students, which have been underserved by federal funding in the past. The remaining 98 percent of the 85 percent will be distributed to secondary and post secondary institutions.

Five percent of the state’s allotment is reserved for State Administration. Ten percent of the state’s allotment is reserved for State Leadership, from which correctional institutions will receive one percent. In addition, nontraditional training programs will be supported with \$150,000 of the State Leadership portion. The following chart outlines the distribution within the state:

**State of New Jersey
FY 2000 Budget Allocations
Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act**

Title I Within State Allocation

Grant Award: \$21,030,188

* (1) Secondary/Postsecondary Allocation
 Secondary (66%) \$11,561,077
 Postsecondary (34%) \$ 5,956,170

Category	Category Calculation	Totals
Administration (5% of Grant)		\$ 1,051,509
State Leadership (10% of grant)		2,103,019
Corrections (10% of State Leadership)	21,030	
Nontraditional Training	150,000	
State Leadership Balance	1,931,989	
Formula (85%)		17,875
Rural Reserve	357,513	
Formula Balance	17,518,147*	
Grand Totals	\$21,030,188	\$21,030,188

Title II

Tech-Prep Grant Award \$2,188,871

6.1.2 Competitive Funding Awards

Competitive funding awards will be made through the issuance of RFPs. The Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives will make various grants available from federal and state funds for the following purposes :

State Vocational Education Programs

- Tech-Prep Engineering, Science and Technology.
- Occupational Education Safety and Health Training and Standards Updating.
- Extraordinary Standard Incentive Program.
- Vocational Student Organizations.
- Apprenticeship Coordinator.
- FFA Statewide Leadership and Administrative Services.
- Agricultural Education Development Initiative.
- Automotive Youth Employment Services.
- Equity Program.

Tech Prep

- Tech-Prep Associate Degree Program.
- Youth Transitions to Work Partnership Programs.

Eligible recipients for each RFP could vary. RFPs which are developed to address important vocational education issues can be targeted to a specific applicant or group of applicants or to all eligible recipients in the state. Each RFP developed by the Office of School-to-Career and College Initiatives must be approved by the department's Grants Management Committee. The final awarding of funds for the RFPs is contingent on the application's receiving an acceptable review and the availability of funds.

6.2 Allocation Formulas Among Institutions

6.2.1 Criteria Used to Identify Reserve Funds

New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the nation. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 1990 data, 89.4 percent of the state's population resides in urban areas. Such a figure means that 10.6 percent of the state's population resides in nonurban, or rural, areas. By definition, those rural areas have lower population densities and, often, a smaller tax base and smaller schools with fewer curricular offerings. Some of the districts report a high

percentage of occupational students served but generally lower total student numbers. With a smaller student population, a number of the school districts have been unable to meet the criteria to qualify them for funding under the Perkins Act. To assist those previously underserved districts, the state will use a 2 percent Reserve fund as identified in subsection 112(c)(1).

The following information was used to determine the criteria to determine the definition of rural.

6.2.1.1 Definition of Rural

The Census Bureau in its decennial survey defines rural as a residual category of places "outside urbanized areas in open country, or in communities with less than 2,500 inhabitants," or where the population density is "less than 1,000 inhabitants per square mile."

In monthly household sample surveys, the Census Bureau contrasts data in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan counties. It uses the term nonmetropolitan to describe counties outside of, or not integrated with, large population concentrations of 50,000 or more. Nonmetropolitan takes in larger areas than does the term "rural" and ones that are politically defined (i.e., counties, not just areas). In covering large geopolitical units, it thus encompasses larger populations.

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE) also offers a definition of rural. Rural education refers to all education programs offered that serve the populations of rural communities. Rural is defined as all people living outside urbanized areas in the open country or in communities of less than 2,500 inhabitants; it also includes those living in areas of extended cities with a population density of less than 1,000 inhabitants per square mile.

The New Jersey Office of State Planning uses the following additional criteria as a general guide for delineating the Rural Planning Area. The Office of State Planning suggests that local conditions may require flexible application of the criteria to achieve the policy objectives of the planning area.

- (1) *Population density of less than 1,000 people per square mile, outside Centers;*
- (2) *Area greater than one square mile; and land currently in agricultural or natural resource production or having a strong potential for production;*
- (3) *Soils of local importance as determined by the County Agriculture Development Board; or Prime and unique soils as determined by the U.S.D.A. Soil Conservation Service; or Soils of statewide importance as determined by the N.J.D.A. State Soil Conservation Committee;*
- (4) *Undeveloped wooded tracts, vacant lands, and large, contiguous tracts of agricultural lands predominantly served by rural, two-lane roads and individual wells and septic tanks; and*

- (5) *Farmland satisfying the above delineation criteria, as well as the delineation criteria for the Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area, is designated as Planning Area 4B, Rural Environmentally Sensitive Planning Area.*

Based on the above criteria, New Jersey will use *Spotlight on Rural Schools in New Jersey*, a list of rural school districts published by Research for Better Schools in 1993. This list was compiled by a committee representing New Jersey school districts and government agencies. This list will constitute the eligible participants in the rural reserve pool. It is the most recent publication listing the state's rural school districts.

6.2.2 Secondary-Postsecondary Division of Funds

The secondary-postsecondary split of funds for FY 2000 was calculated by comparing the total number of postsecondary students enrolled in associate in applied science degree programs supported with Perkins funds, and the total adult vocational education program enrollments of county vocational schools as reported by the individual county/community colleges and county vocational schools, to the total number of students enrolled in secondary vocational programs. The reported numbers are 33,956, postsecondary; and 66,516, secondary. The FY 2000 split was rounded to 66 percent secondary; and 34 percent postsecondary.

6.2.3 Distribution of Funds to Secondary School Programs

In FY 2000, funds allocated under this subsection will be distributed to local educational agencies based on the following formula: Seventy percent of the allocation is based upon the amount of Chapter I funds received by the district; 20 percent is based upon the number of disabled students with individualized education programs; and 10 percent is based upon the number of students enrolled in schools and adults enrolled in training programs.

Allocations are made to all secondary districts, including the county vocational-technical schools, based on the proportion of the number of special needs students served by each entity. In New Jersey, county vocational schools are not the district of residence for secondary students. The secondary district of residence maintains a sending/receiving relationship with the county vocational schools serving their students.

In FY 2000 and in each of the four succeeding fiscal years, 30 percent of the allocation is based on the number of individuals aged 15 through 19, inclusive, who reside in the school district served by the local education agency for the preceding fiscal year, compared to the total number of such individuals who reside in the school districts in the state. Seventy percent of the allocation is based on the number of individuals aged 15 through 19, inclusive, who reside in the school district served by such local education agency from families with incomes below the poverty line applicable to a family of the size involved for the fiscal year for which the determination is made, compared to the number of such individuals who reside in the school districts served by all local education agencies in the state.

6.2.4 Distribution of Funds to Postsecondary and Adult Programs

It has been demonstrated that the current Pell formula does not result in an equitable distribution of funds to eligible institutions or consortia that have the highest numbers of economically disadvantaged individuals. Of the 40 providers of postsecondary vocational programs, only 23 receive an allocation under the Pell Grant formula in Section 232 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act as amended. Among the institutions not receiving an allocation are the county vocational schools in the state's urban areas, including Camden, Essex, Hudson, and Passaic counties.

In 1995 the State Employment and Training Commission reviewed this matter and recommended a non-Pell formula that was applied to those schools that delivered adult training to non-Pell students. The formula consisted of the individual school's total adult participants in the Family Development Program, Job Training Partnership Act programs and Pell populations divided by the total adult participant populations of the same programs served by the universe of schools in the non-Pell category. State funds are distributed by this formula. It is the intent of the state to continue this policy for FY 2000. If the new data continue to warrant a change in formula methodology, the state will request a waiver for FY 2001 to develop a more appropriate formula for the Distribution of Funds to Postsecondary and Adult Programs.

6.3 Consortia

6.3.1 Secondary Consortia

Any LEA receiving an allocation that is less than the minimum amount specified in Sec. 131(d)(1) shall either:

- 1) enter into a consortium with one or more other LEA(s) for the purpose of providing enhanced services and to meet the minimum grant requirement, or
- 2) form a consortium with a county vocational and technical education school offering programs that meet the requirements of Section 135 and transfer such allocation to the county vocational school.

All consortia established under 1) or 2) above shall operate programs that are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective. Funds allocated to a consortium formed to meet the requirements of this paragraph shall be used only for purposes and programs that are mutually beneficial to all members of the consortium and can be used only for programs authorized under this title. Such funds may not be reallocated to individual members of the consortium for purposes or programs benefiting only one member of the consortium.

Consortium arrangements must serve primarily as a structure for operating joint projects that provide services to all participating LEAs. The consortium project must meet all requirements identified in section 125 of the Perkins Act, including the following:

- Strengthening the academic, vocational, and technical skills of the students participating in vocational programs;

- Providing students with strong experiences in and understandings of all aspects of the chosen industry;
- Developing, improving, or expanding the use of technology in vocational education;
- Providing professional development programs;
- Developing and implementing evaluations of vocational and technical programs;
- Initiating, improving, expanding, and modernizing quality vocational and technical education programs;
- Providing services and activities that are of sufficient size, scope, and quality to be effective; and
- Linking secondary vocational and technical education and postsecondary vocational and technical education.

6.3.2 Postsecondary Consortia

Under the authority of Section 132(a)(4), postsecondary vocational institutions in the counties of Cumberland, Hunterdon, Salem, Sussex, and Warren will receive a waiver of consortium requirements due to the rural, sparsely-populated nature of their areas.

Chapter Four

**Title II, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

**One-year Transition Plan for the period of
Fiscal Year 1999-2000**

**David C. Hesper
Commissioner**

**Barbara Anderson
Assistant Commissioner
Division of Student Services**

**Arlene Roth
Director
Office of Specialized Populations**

April 1999

State of New Jersey Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0500

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Introduction to Chapter Four

Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System

The groundwork for developing one set of policies, one plan, that address the needs of the various funding streams is outlined in Chapter One. The Chapter also provides the state vision and philosophic underpinnings for New Jersey's workforce investment system. Since the development of *A Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Readiness System* in 1982, the state has made significant strides towards the creation of a unified employment, training and education system. New Jersey has been a pioneer in implementing many of the principals described in WIA, including collaborative and unified planning, a School-to-Career system, One-Stop Career System, and the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) the state's Workforce Investment Board and local Workforce Investment Boards.

With the passage of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), New Jersey has been encouraged to continue along its ground-breaking path: the development of a world-class, demand-side focused, workforce investment system. *The Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* is a "living document." During the next six months, the state will develop a full comprehensive five-year WIA plan that will continue to evolve over its life.

Chapter Four is submitted in response to Title II -- Adult Education and Literacy of the Workforce Investment Act, and represents a One-year Transitional State Plan. It is consistent with the broad vision and mission outlined in Chapter One. Initiatives that are currently planned through June 30, 2000 are discussed in this Chapter and adult literacy issues that the state anticipates addressing through the planning process outlined in Chapter One are delineated.

Section 221 (1) requires the State to develop, submit, and implement the State plan, and Section 224 (b)(5)(6) and (8) require assurances specific to the State plan content.

1.0 Eligible Agency Certifications and Assurances

1.1 Certifications

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Vocational and Adult Education**

**Adult Education and Family Literacy Act
Enacted August 7, 1998 as Title II of the
Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220)**

The Department of Education of the State of New Jersey hereby submits its One-year Transitional State Plan, as part of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*, to be effective until June 30, 2000. The eligible agency also assures that this plan, which serves as an agreement between State and Federal Governments under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, will be administered in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations, including the following certifications and assurances:

**CERTIFICATIONS
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT GENERAL
ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS
(34 CFR PART 76.104)**

- (1) The plan is submitted by the State agency that is eligible to submit the plan.
- (2) The state agency has authority under State law to perform the functions of the State under the program.
- (3) The State legally may carry out each provision of the plan.
- (4) All provisions of the plan are consistent with State law.
- (5) A State officer, specified by title in the certification, has authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under the plan.
- (6) The State officer who submits the plan, specified by the title in the certification, has authority to submit the plan.
- (7) The agency that submits the plan has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan.
- (8) The plan is the basis for State operation and administration of the program.

1.2 Assurances

Assurances
WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998
(Public Law 105-220)

(Section 224 (b) (5), (6), and (8))

1. The eligible agency will award not less than one grant to an eligible provider who offers flexible schedules and necessary support services (such as child care and transportation to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities, or individuals with other special needs, to participate in adult education and literacy activities, which eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with support services that are not provided under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities provided under this subtitle for support services.
2. Funds received under this subtitle will not be expended for any purpose other than for activities under this subtitle.
3. The eligible agency will expend the funds under this subtitle in a manner consistent with fiscal requirements in Section 241.

SEC. 241. ADMINISTRATIVE PROVISIONS.

(a) Supplement Not Supplant. --Funds made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle shall supplement and not supplant other State or local public funds expended for adult education and literacy activities.

(b) Maintenance of Effort. --

(1) In general. --

(A) Determination.--An eligible agency may receive funds under this subtitle for any fiscal year if the Secretary finds that the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the second preceding fiscal year, was not less than 90 percent of the fiscal effort per student or the aggregate expenditures of such eligible agency for adult education and literacy activities, in the third preceding fiscal year.

(B) Proportionate reduction.--Subject to paragraphs (2), (3), and (4), for any fiscal year with respect to which the secretary determines under subparagraph (A) that the fiscal effort or the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency for the preceding program year were less than such effort or expenditures for the second preceding program year, the Secretary--

(i.) shall determine the percentage decreases in such effort or in such expenditures; and,

(ii) shall decrease the payment made under this subtitle for such program year to the agency for adult education and literacy activities by the lesser of such percentages.

(2) Computation.--In computing the fiscal effort and aggregate expenditures under paragraph (1), the Secretary shall exclude capital expenditures and special one-time project costs.

(3) Decrease in federal support.--If the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for a fiscal year is less than the amount made available for adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle for the preceding fiscal year, then the fiscal effort per student and the aggregate expenditures of an eligible agency required in order avoid a reduction under paragraph (1)(B) shall be decreased by the same percentage as the percentage decrease in the amount so made available.

(4) Waiver.--The Secretary may waive the requirements of this subsection for one fiscal year only, if the Secretary determines that a waiver would be equitable due to exceptional or uncontrollable circumstances, such as a natural disaster or an unforeseen and precipitous decline in the financial resources of the State or outlying area of the eligible agency. If the Secretary grants a waiver under the preceding sentence for a fiscal year, the level of effort required under paragraph (1) shall not be reduced in the subsequent fiscal year because of the waiver.

Department of Education
PO Box 500
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

David C. Hespe, Commissioner

Signature

Section 224 (b)(1) of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act requires: "An objective assessment of the needs of individuals in the State or outlying area for adult education and literacy activities, including individuals most in need or hardest to serve."

2.0 Needs Assessment (Sec. 224(b)(1))

During the time period, 1992-1998, several needs assessments and policy studies were initiated in an effort to make fundamental changes in the way the State provided workforce investment policies. Each of these studies was undertaken and coordinated by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and is referenced in Chapter One of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*.

The most recent study was conducted in 1997-98 through the establishment of the Task Force on Adult Literacy. This Task Force included representatives from the State departments of Correction, Education, Human Services, Labor and Treasury, business and industry, the Commission on Higher Education, the SETC, community-based organizations, higher education and adult education, etc. The Task Force placed particular emphasis on adults with literacy proficiency at Levels 1 and 2 as defined by the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS):

Level I: The average score for adults with less than a high school diploma falls within the two lowest levels (I and II) of the five NALS levels.

Level II: For adults whose highest level of educational achievement is high school completion, the average score is at the high end of Level II.

The report of the Task Force, *The Literacy Connection, Improving Adult Literacy in New Jersey*, includes background information, literacy statistics with information on populations, a description of the current system and recommendations for improvement. The recommendations focus on improved coordinated interagency planning and accountability, and advancing the employability and self-sufficiency of the State's low-literate adults. Prior to development of the report there were three public hearings held across the State for the purpose of obtaining public input. Specific areas identified for improvement included: planning and coordination across all state and local entities with a focus on improving the workforce investment system; greater responsiveness to customer needs; expanding the use of technology; expanding staff development opportunities; enhancing program accountability that is congruent with the State's workforce system; and increasing awareness of the importance of literacy. (Refer to appendices for the report and recommendations).

Additional detailed assessment information can be found in Chapter Two, Section 1c of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*.

Section 224 (b)(2) requires: A description of the adult education and literacy activities that will be carried out with any funds received under this subtitle.

3.0 Description of Adult Education and Literacy Activities

3.1 Description of Allowable Activities

This section requires that each eligible provider receiving a grant or contract shall provide services or instruction in one or more of the following categories: adult education and literacy services, including workplace literacy services offered for the purpose of improving the productivity of the workforce through the improvement of literacy skills; family literacy services; and English literacy programs.

The populations to be served include:

- individuals who are low-income and educationally disadvantaged;
- individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including employment, single parents and displaced homemakers;
- individuals with disabilities;
- individuals with limited English proficiency; and,
- individuals lacking a secondary school diploma.

The *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* contains a statewide vision for a future workforce investment system. New Jersey, through its workforce investment partners, is committed to work collaboratively to improve the quality of the workforce and to meet the demands of the workplace. This system has at its foundation a set of core principles as referenced in Chapter One:

- 1) A successful workforce readiness system must be consumer-based and market-driven.
- 2) The workforce readiness system must be accountable and performance based.
- 3) It must have, at its core, attainment of fundamental literacy and basic skills.
- 4) There must be full utilization of all potential workers.
- 5) Employers and workers must be involved in governance at all levels of the system and in defining the outcomes to be achieved.
- 6) The system must provide access to lifelong learning.

Refer to Mission and Vision sections in Chapter One of this plan for an in-depth description of the statewide vision for the future and the statewide planning and implementation process to ensure its accomplishment. As part of this effort, a strategy for the future provision of literacy services, the identification of service priorities and a planned use of literacy funds available from a variety of state agencies will be developed during the next fiscal year. Therefore, the description of activities provided below is for the transition year of 1999-2000 and will be amended as the unified statewide system develops.

3.1.1 Adult Basic Skills Grants

In 1997-98, the Department of Education (DOE) took action to begin to eliminate the fragmentation of services and to strengthen statewide programs to better enable adults to achieve success. The 1997-98 Adult Basic Skills Request for Proposals (RFP) represented the initial phase of a restructured delivery system for adult education. DOE initiated a competitive, multi-year RFP that was disseminated, on a statewide basis, to those eligible providers that are currently listed in Title II of the WIA (Section 302 (5)). The RFP encouraged the development of countywide consortia in which adult education providers in each county could submit a joint application for funding. The RFP focused on the provision of a continuum of comprehensive adult education programs and services that integrated essential instructional components and support services, coordinated activities with other state, federal and local efforts, such as Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), welfare reform efforts, the One-Stop Career Center system network, fostered the use of technology in instruction, encouraged partnerships with business and industry and included measures of accountability.

The 1999-2000 multi-year Request for Continuation Applications (RFC) represents the third year of this multi-year program. Requirements under Title II (Section 231 (e)) have been incorporated into the previous provisions.

Components of the program include:

- instruction that includes adult education and literacy services;
- adult secondary education (GED);
- English literacy designed to help individuals of limited English proficiency achieve competence in the English language;
- curricula for adult basic education (all levels) that emphasizes preparation for the workplace;
- curricula and/or activities that provide learning in real life contexts;
- activities that coordinate the adult education comprehensive service project with the WIBs. (Providers are required to submit a letter of support from the appropriate county or regional WIB documenting consultation, collaboration and consistency with other planning efforts under the auspices of the WIB).
- ongoing staff development focusing, at a minimum, on requirements for success in the workplace and serving the welfare-to-work population, etc. (Providers receive funds for professional development activities. Each provider is required to submit a professional development plan for all project staff to develop the skills necessary to work in a comprehensive adult education program, with a minimum of six hours of professional development and training required for each staff member.)

- a system for the provision of services to specialized populations, including adults with disabilities.
- a process for identifying and recruiting those adults in the project service area who have been identified as being in the lowest level of literacy (having minimal literacy skills) and who are most in need of literacy services, including those who are low-income.
- documentation of activities that coordinate the adult education comprehensive service project with other community resources and the following efforts: (1) One-Stop Career Center system and (2) Welfare to Work. (Providers are required to work through the WIBs to facilitate the development of partnerships with boards of social services or county welfare agencies to submit a referral plan that will ensure provision of services to the welfare population.)
- A program design that includes a system for the provision of support services, either on-site or through coordination with other social service agencies that will enable individuals to attend and complete programs.
- Sufficient hours of operation, per week, to enable students to achieve substantial learning gains.
- a schedule of classes, as well as delivery sites, that demonstrates flexibility consistent with student needs.
- A description of how technology is being promoted for adult learners.
- A description of any alternative methods of service delivery that are being used to provide adult education instruction (i.e., distance learning, public television, Internet, etc.) and alternative delivery sites.
- A description of how agencies will establish measurable goals for participant outcomes to achieve substantial learning gains.
- A program management plan that includes but is not limited to: a data system to document the identified population to be served; participant outcomes; plan of operation; recordkeeping; intake process; strategies for recruitment and retention; attendance policies, etc.

As indicated previously, the above restructuring represented an initial phase intended to begin to eliminate the fragmentation and lack of coordination among providers. In order to carry out the State's vision under this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*, increased coordination and cooperation at state and local levels will be needed. Through the cooperative planning efforts described in the above Plan, amendments and restructuring will occur, as needed, in order to attain the statewide goals.

3.1.2 Distance Learning Project

A partnership was developed between DOE and New Jersey Network (NJN), New Jersey's only statewide public television network. Three specific distance learning projects are provided each week using state leadership funds. Through this collaborative effort, programs are targeted at diversified audiences. Currently, there is consideration to expanding this partnership project to include a basic literacy component in the future.

Current distance learning components include:

- Kentucky Educational Television's (KET) *GED on TV* series, in English and in Spanish, is broadcast Monday through Friday and once on Sunday for adults preparing for the GED. The program is offered twice a day in English and in Spanish, respectively.
- *Crossroads Café*, a program for adults with limited English proficiency, is aired one day each week.
- *Math Basics*, also produced by KET, is shown once a week. This program is for adults with low level math literacy skills who are not yet ready to enter into a GED program.

Adults who are interested in these programs can call a toll-free telephone number for additional information or for the location of local adult education providers offering instruction for GED test preparation, adult basic education and literacy, and English Literacy. The toll-free number is located at NJN. Adults interested in the *GED on TV* program are screened by NJN staff using an informal intake and assessment tool developed by NJDOE staff. Adults whose assessment results indicate possible success in the program are referred to department staff at the Adult Literacy Enhancement Center (ALEC), while those with results indicating lower levels of literacy are referred to local instructional programs or literacy volunteer affiliates.

Adults referred to assigned staff at ALEC are contacted by telephone, given a program orientation and then are sent a skill assessment locator test (TABE) to complete. The potential distance learning student is instructed to complete the locator test and to return it to ALEC for scoring. Locators returned with results at the difficult level in reading and at least a medium or middle level in Math are accepted into the program. These students are then sent an appropriate assessment test to complete. ALEC staff use the additional skill level information obtained through this testing when counseling students regarding the use of the GED on TV worktexts or in making assignments in supporting adult level instructional workbooks. Staff at ALEC maintain contact with students on an ongoing basis and provide follow-up, instructional support and counseling as needed.

Students completing the *GED on TV* program are tested using the Official GED Practice Test and then, if readiness is indicated, referred to a local GED Testing Center.

3.1.3 Volunteer-Based Adult Literacy Program

DOE has made available competitive, two-year grants (1999-2001) for the development and implementation of volunteer-based adult literacy projects. The purpose is for the implementation of an instructional approach that is based upon a foundation of research in the implementation of volunteer programs for adult learners. This grant program enables agencies, through the use of tutor-learner matches, to sponsor volunteer one-on-one or small group tutorial services that will provide support to adult learners.

The grant recipient agencies must provide services or instruction in one or more of the following: adult education and literacy services that include workplace literacy; family literacy; and/or English literacy programs for persons of limited English proficiency. Projects will be required to provide instruction that utilizes real life contexts, effective educational practices, the development of a collaborative relationships with other community agencies, the development of a strong network of volunteer-tutors, flexible scheduling, referral sources for support services and the utilization of technology, as appropriate.

Applicants for the Volunteer-Based Adult Literacy Grant program may be single agencies; partnerships or consortia. The focus of all the applicant agencies must be to provide volunteer services to adults, who are most in need, primarily those at the lowest levels of literacy. Each applicant must clearly address all of the considerations in Section 231 (e) with emphasis on demonstrating: past effectiveness in improving the literacy skills of adults and families; that the instruction and activities focus on functional literacy and preparation for employment; how it will develop individuals and objectives for adult learners; how linkages with other agencies to provide support services will be developed; the activities proposed to address recruitment, training and matching of tutors and learners. Grant applications must address all of the program considerations.

3.1.4 Other Planning Activities:

During the next fiscal year, as planning continues to meet the vision contained in *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*, the State will explore the following areas for future activities:

What should be the role of adult education in a workforce investment system? How do we meet workforce-oriented goals for adult literacy education while still meeting the broad-based goals of learners and other traditional stakeholders? How do we achieve a customer-driven, high quality, high performance delivery system for adult education in this system in the future?

How do we optimize resources to effectively serve the greatest number of adults?

What additional performance standards should be applied to adult literacy education and how should outcomes be measured in the future?

How can we effectively address the issue of providing services to adults with learning disabilities at the State and local levels?

How can we increase further collaboration among adult education providers and other agencies in the One-Stop system?

3.2 Special Rule

Each eligible agency awarding a grant or contract under this section shall not use any funds made available under this subtitle for adult education and literacy activities for the purpose of supporting or providing programs, services, or other activities for individuals who are not individuals described in subparagraphs (A) and (B) of Section 203 (1), except that such agency may use such funds for such purpose if such programs, services, or activities are related to family literacy services. In providing family literacy services under this subtitle, an eligible provider shall attempt to coordinate with programs and services that are not assisted under this subtitle prior to using funds for adult education and literacy activities other than adult education activities (Section 231) (d)).

Section 224 (b)(3) requires a description of how the eligible agency will evaluate annually the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities based on the performance measures described in Section 212.

4.0 Annual Evaluation of Adult Education and Literacy Activities (Sec. 224(b)(3))

Chapter Two, Section V of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* describes statewide plans to evaluate annually the effectiveness of the Workforce Investment System, including adult education and literacy activities. Primarily, the State is actively working with the United States Department of Labor to develop a web-enabled system that would facilitate automated long-term tracking of participants. Once this common data system is ready, it will be utilized on a statewide basis to promote accountability through consistent measurement of performance.

In the interim, the following activities will take place to evaluate the effectiveness of the adult education and literacy activities.

4.1 Annual Evaluation

The major focus of the evaluation will be the effectiveness of state and local providers in attaining the core indicators of performance described in Section 212 (b)(2)(A). Refer to Section 5 of this chapter for more detailed information on the indicators. These include at a minimum:

- 1) Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;
- 2) Placement in, retention in, or completion of, post secondary education, training, unsubsidized employment, or career advancement;
- 3) Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

4.1.1 Interim Program Report Data

In addition, all recipients of DOE grants are required to submit periodic program and fiscal reports documenting grant-related activities relevant to the current contract period. The reports are reviewed to ascertain the degree of the grantee's progress and conformance with program regulations and enabling legislation.

The following information is collected for each reporting period and used to evaluate the progress of the program on an annual basis:

- (1) Status of activities that have been completed ;

- (2) Data such as the following: enrollment; number of participants who have obtained a GED; number of participants who have obtained a job or entered a training or retraining program; number of welfare participants; number of participants who have received support services; number of participants who have advanced in their jobs, etc.;
- (3) Information on coordination with WIBs, One-Stop Career Centers, etc.
- 4) Where activities have not been completed during the appropriate reporting period, a narrative must be provided, containing, at a minimum, a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the reporting period; the reasons for variance if the established objectives were not met, including a discussion of the impact, if any, that such variance may have on subsequent contract period continuation program design and implementation; and a plan for completing any objectives not accomplished during the reporting period.

4.1.2 Fiscal Report Data

Eligible providers must also prepare and submit required fiscal reports showing the cumulative expenditures in each budget line for which funds were approved.

4.2 Oversight Activities

DOE will conduct periodic reviews of the eligible provider's progress based on the program outlined in the contract and the required program and fiscal reports. In conducting these reviews, the eligible agency will consider program progress in the context of the full multi-year grant, and whether such progress is likely to contribute to a successful program implemented over multiple years.

Department staff will conduct desk reviews of program and fiscal reports, and will implement on-site monitoring during the program year, in accordance with Department policy.

In the event that the analysis of periodic and/or final program and fiscal reports and/or the findings of on-site monitoring show that a grantee has failed to implement project activities and/or to meet contract specifications, terms and conditions, the contractor will be informed of the areas of deficiency. An opportunity for technical assistance to remediate the problem area(s) may be provided depending upon the nature of the deficiency. Failure to successfully address the identified area(s) of deficiency may result in budget reductions, and may have an impact upon the grantee's eligibility for subsequent continuation funding under this grant program.

Section 224 (b)(4) requires a description of the performance measures described in section 212 and how such performance measures will ensure the improvement of adult education and literacy activities in the State or outlying area.

5.0 Performance Measures (Sec. 224(b)(4))

The New Jersey State Department of Education will establish a comprehensive performance accountability system, comprised of activities to assess the effectiveness of eligible agencies in achieving continuous improvement in adult education and literacy activities under this subtitle to optimize the return on investment of federal funds in adult education and literacy activities. These performance measures will be coordinated with the statewide workforce investment system described in Chapter Two, Section V of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*.

5.1 Eligible Agency Performance Measures (Sec. 212)

Federal performance measures to be used with local providers include the following core indicators of performance described in Sec. 212 (b)(2)(A):

- 5.1.1 Demonstrated improvement in literacy skill levels in reading, writing and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem solving, English language acquisition, and other literacy skills;
- 5.1.2 Placement in, retention in, or completion of post-secondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement;
- 5.1.3 Receipt of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

5.2 Additional Indicators

During the 1999-2000 year, DOE will work with a task force of representatives of state agencies and local provider agencies to determine additional performance indicators. Examples of these additional indicators may include measures of customer satisfaction, measures of attainment of individual goals by adult learners and measures to address workplace readiness activities.

In this plan, the 1997-98 program year has been used as the base year upon which to establish performance data for the transitional year 1999-2000. Since the State will be establishing a statewide information management system, more effective data collection instruments should be available in the future. The performance data provided in this section will be amended, as needed, under the new system.

Core Indicator #1: Demonstrated improvements in literacy skill levels in reading, writing, and speaking the English language, numeracy, problem-solving, English Language acquisition, an other literacy skills.

Performance Measures	Projected for 1999-2000
<p>Beginning Literacy (ABE) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Beginning Literacy who completed that level.</p> <p>(#completed level /#enrolled=% completed)</p>	<p>34% of beginning level enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level.</p>
<p>Beginning (ABE) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in Beginning ABE who completed that level.</p> <p>(# completed level /# enrolled=% completed)</p>	<p>29% of beginning level ABE enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete the educational functioning level.</p>
<p>Intermediate (ABE) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in intermediate ABE who completed that level.</p> <p>(#completed level /#enrolled=%completed)</p>	<p>31% of intermediate level ABE enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of basic skills needed to complete this educational functioning level.</p>
<p>Beginning Literacy (ESL) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in beginning Literacy (ESL) who completed that level.</p> <p>(#completed level /#enrolled=%completed)</p>	<p>29% of beginning level literacy (ESL) enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of English language skills needed to complete this educational functioning level.</p>
<p>Beginning (ESL) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in beginning ESL who completed that level.</p> <p>(# completed level /# enrolled=%completed)</p>	<p>35% of beginning level (ESL) enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of English language skills needed to complete the educational functioning level.</p>
<p>Intermediate (ESL) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in intermediate ESL who completed that level.</p> <p>(#completed level /# enrolled=%completed)</p>	<p>39% of intermediate level (ESL) enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of English language skills needed to complete the educational functioning level.</p>
<p>Advanced (ESL) The percentage of adult learners enrolled in advanced ESL who completed that level.</p> <p>(#completed level /# enrolled=%completed)</p>	<p>33% of advanced ESL enrollees will acquire (validated by formal assessment) the level of English language skills needed to complete the educational functioning level.</p>

Core Indicator #2: Placement in, retention in, or completion of post-secondary education, training, unsubsidized employment or career advancement.

Performance Measures	Projected for 1999-2000
<p>Placement in post-secondary education or training The total number of adult learners entering other academic or vocational programs (at the post-secondary level).</p>	2,954 adults will enroll in further academic or vocational programs.
<p>Placement in unsubsidized employment The percentage of unemployed adult learners (in the workforce) who obtained unsubsidized employment</p>	25% of unemployed adult learners enrolled (and in the workforce) will obtain unsubsidized employment.
<p>Retention in or job advancement The total number of adults learners who retained employment or advanced on the job.</p>	5,316 adults will get a job, be retained or advanced in their current job.

Core Indicator #3: Receipt of secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

Performance Measures	Projected for 1999-2000
<p>High School Completion The total number of adults enrolled who earned a high school diploma or recognized equivalent.</p>	2,321 adults will earn a diploma or GED

Section 224 (b) (7) requires a description of how the eligible agency will fund local activities in accordance with the considerations described in Section 231 (e).

6.0 Procedures for Funding Eligible Providers (Sec. 224 (b) (7))

6.1 Eligible Providers (Section 203 (5))

Eligible providers for a grant or contract include agencies from the following categories:

- 1) a local educational agency;
- 2) a community-based organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- 3) a volunteer literacy organization of demonstrated effectiveness;
- 4) an institution of higher education;
- 5) a public or private nonprofit agency;
- 6) a library;
- 7) a public housing authority
- 8) a nonprofit institution that is not described in subparagraphs 1 through 7 and has the ability to provide literacy services to adults and families; and
- 9) a consortium of the agencies, organizations, institutions, libraries, or authorities described in any of items 1 through 8.

6.2 Notice of Availability

DOE will announce availability of funding by a direct mailing of all Requests for Proposals (RFPs) or Requests for Continuation Applications (RFCs) to eligible provider agencies and by placement on the Department's web site.

6.3 Applications

In preparing a response to the RFP or RFC, each eligible provider is responsible for addressing and complying with all requirements and including all components set forth in the application guidelines.

Applications for 1999-2000 must include the following essential components:

A process for identifying and recruiting those adults in the project service area who have been identified as being most in need of literacy services, including those who are low-income or having minimal literacy skills.

Curricula at all instructional levels that emphasizes preparation for the workplace.

Curricula and/or activities that provide learning in real life contexts.

Documentation of activities that coordinate the adult education program with the appropriate county or regional Workforce Investment Board (WIB). A letter of support documenting that there has been consultation and collaboration with the WIB regarding the status of adult literacy in the service area and its coordination with other systems, i.e. employment and training system, One-Stop Career Center system and welfare-to-work initiatives, is required.

A description of linkages with the One-Stop Career Center system, including the training provided to staff in the use of WNJPIN; and activities that give students access to WNJPIN, the talent bank and the job bank.

A referral plan, with appropriate signatures and a letter of support that will ensure recruiting and providing services to the welfare population.

A program design that includes a system for the provision of support services, either on-site or through coordination with other social service agencies.

A program design that includes provision of services to specialized populations, including adults with disabilities.

A professional development plan for program staff to develop the necessary skills, with a minimum of six hours of professional development and training required for each staff member.

Sufficient hours of operation, per week, to enable students to achieve substantial learning gains, with at least twenty hours of daytime instruction and twelve hours of evening instruction. A schedule must be attached to the grant application.

A schedule of classes, as well as delivery sites, that demonstrates flexibility consistent with student needs.

A description of how technology is being promoted for adult learners.

A description of any alternative methods of service delivery that are being used to provide adult education instruction (i.e. distance learning: public television, Internet, etc.) and alternative delivery sites.

A description of how agencies will establish measurable goals for participant outcomes to achieve substantial learning gains.

A program management plan, including a data system, to document the identified population to be served; participant outcomes; plan of operation; recordkeeping; intake process; strategies for recruitment and retention; attendance policies, etc.

Applicant agencies are encouraged to form partnerships with business and industry, staff members must be appropriately certified in accordance with New Jersey requirements and applicants must use instructional educational practices that research has proven to be effective.

Applicants must adhere to all budget requirements, specifically eligible and ineligible costs.

Applicants must not spend more than five percent of the grant on administration, which is limited to planning, administration, personnel development and interagency coordination, unless the Department has stipulated an exception to this rule.

6.4 Process

The procedure for competitive and multi-year grant will be carried out in accordance with the Department's grants management system for discretionary grants. Agencies wishing to obtain funding must submit an application in response to an RFP or RFC that includes, but is not limited to, all of the elements indicated in 6.3.

Regional technical assistance sessions are provided throughout the State in sufficient numbers to enable multiple participants and/or representatives of consortia partner agencies to attend. Applications must be submitted in accordance with stipulated timelines.

Projected timelines for the notice and receipt of applications are:

Dissemination of RFP	mid February 1999
Technical Assistance Sessions	February and March 1999
Application Due Date	April 8, 1999
Completion of Review Process	May and June 1999
Notification of Award	July 1999

6.5 Evaluation of Applications

In the first contract period, grant applications are evaluated and rated by a panel of three readers in accordance with selection criteria that are contained within the RFP guidelines document. Readers of grant proposals must certify that no conflict of interest exists which would create an undue advantage or disadvantage for any applicant in the application evaluation and scoring process. Applications are evaluated on the basis of quality, comprehensiveness, completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to each of the items identified in the selection criteria. To be eligible for funding, an application must receive a minimum score established by the Department's grants management system.

For each succeeding year of a multi-year grant, grant applications are reviewed by an internal review team. Each application is assessed on the basis of quality and comprehensiveness, as well as completeness, accuracy and appropriateness of response to each item identified in review criteria. In addition, applicants must meet requirements for continuation funding that have been established by the Department's grants management system.

In awarding grants or contracts, the Department will give consideration to each of the items contained in Section 231 (e).

6.6 Further Information

As part of the ongoing planning process described in Chapter One, which will be undertaken to develop a more comprehensive *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*, the State will pursue opportunities for the use of multiple funding sources and leveraging funds to further coordinate, increase, and improve the provision of services. Partnerships between local providers and the one-stop system will be further developed.

Section 224 (b) (9) requires a description of the process that will be used for public participation and comment with respect to the State Plan.

7.0 Public Participation and Comment (Section 224 (b) (9))

7.1 Description of Activities

The SETC conducted three Statewide Town Meetings to solicit public comments and recommendations for this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*. The public comment sessions were held from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. as follows:

Northern Region - Tuesday, February 23, 1999

County College of Morris

Southern Region - Friday, February 26, 1999

CIM Center, Camden County College

Central Region - Thursday, March 4, 1999

13th Floor, Auditorium,
Department of Labor

More detail on the Town Meetings can be found in Chapter One of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*.

In addition, a focus group meeting with constituents representing adult education and literacy was held on March 5, 1999. The focus group was coordinated by the SETC and included representatives of state agencies, the New Jersey Association of Lifelong Learning (NJALL) and provider agencies. Additional focus group meetings will be held beginning in April 1999 to ensure that full consideration will be given to issues pertinent to adult education and literacy as planning for a workforce investment system continues.

The SETC has also scheduled a public hearing for March 26, 1999, at the New Jersey Department of Labor Building, to solicit further input. Refer to Chapter One of this Plan for further information regarding public participation. The Draft Plan also appears on the SETC Home Page at: www.wnjpin.state.nj.us/OneStopCareerCenter/SETC/index.html. Comments may also be e-mailed to that site.

7.1 Governor's Comments

Refer to this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* for further information regarding the governor's comments.

Section 224 (b) (10) requires a description of how the eligible agency will develop program strategies for populations that include, at a minimum, low income students, individuals with disabilities, single parents and homemakers, and individuals with multiple barriers to educational enhancement, including individuals with limited English proficiency.

8.0 Description of Program Strategies for Populations (Section 224 (b) (10))

8.1 Strategies

8.1.2 Policy and Planning

The Department of Education, in conjunction with its partner agencies, will target for services those populations that are most in need. Included will be individuals that are low income, individuals with disabilities, individuals with limited English proficiency, individuals lacking a secondary school diploma, individuals in correctional facilities and/or institutions and individuals with multiple barriers.

Legislation for a State Council for Adult Literacy Education has recently been enacted within the State. This Council will be placed in the SETC, as it is SETC's mission to facilitate joint planning and oversight among workforce investment agencies and to give the private sector a voice in the process. The proposed purpose of the council is to facilitate statewide and local policy development and planning in consultation with a broad cross section of adult education stakeholders. The Council will not assume the operational authority of any state agency, but instead, will ensure greater coordination and collaboration among agencies. Although the Council will be charged with policy development, final approval and implementation of all plans and recommendations will rest with the legally designated authorities.

A proposed strategy for the Council to explore is the consolidation of literacy initiatives of multiple state agencies and to encourage leveraging of funds from various sources.

Continued development of strategies for populations described above, as well as other populations indicated in the Workforce Investment Act, will continue to be part of the combined planning efforts for this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*. (Refer to Chapter Two, Section 4 of this Plan for more detailed information on strategies.)

8.1.3 Specific Current Strategies For Continuous Improvement

In addition to the combined collaborative efforts described above, the Department of Education will emphasize continuous improvement through the following methods:

8.1.3a During the past two years, the Department has provided intensive professional development on the topic: Supporting Adults with Learning disabilities and Other Special Learning Needs. This has occurred through a ten hour collaborative, interactive professional development seminar facilitated by Department professional development staff. The content included an overview of the characteristics and challenges that may be present for the adult with diagnosed or suspected learning disabilities; small group development of an assessment inventory for use in the classroom; and instructional strategies to assist the adult student to accommodate learning disabilities and other special learning needs. The ten hours of training was scheduled at times convenient to the programs, provided at local sites and was specifically for adult educators, volunteer tutors, administrators and other adult literacy practitioners. While this training has been effective, there continues to be a need for further training and programming to address this population, particularly with the emphasis on the welfare-to-work population and workforce readiness.

An adult education focus group consisting of a variety of stakeholders will begin meeting in April to address the provision of services to adults with disabilities.

8.1.3b There will be a continuation of the broadcast on NJN public television of the series for limited English proficient students (Crossroads Café).

8.1.3c There will be continuation of KET's GED on TV series in English and Spanish, as well as Math Basics. In addition, there is consideration being given to broadcasting a literacy skills program on public television.

8.1.3d Other strategies to be addressed, primarily through the State's combined planning efforts, include: expanding the use of technology, a statewide data management system and a statewide assessment system that cut across all state and provider agencies. (Refer to Chapter Two of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* for more information on these efforts).

8.1.3e The Department will address, through an adult education focus group, expanding linkages between adult literacy and family literacy. This connection currently exists with the State's Even Start Family Literacy Program. However, the intent is to increase and expand this approach.

Section 224 (b) (11) requires a description of how the adult education and literacy activities that will be carried out with any funds received under Title II will be integrated with other adult education, career development, and employment and training activities in the State served by the eligible agency.

9.0 Integration with other Adult Education and Training Activities (Section 224 (b) (11))

9.1 Description of Planned Integrated Activities

The State of New Jersey will submit a unified plan authorized under Section 501. Refer to Chapter One and Two of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* for information on the programs included, and a description of planned, integrated activities for the future. The purpose is to link a variety of workforce development programs and services and to leverage funds from other sources to provide a more comprehensive strategy for meeting the needs of individuals and employers.

At the present time, the Department's 1999-2000 RFC Application requires each provider to specify and document coordinating activities with:

- the appropriate county or regional WIBs, and to submit a letter of support from the WIB that addresses required components;
- the One-Stop Career Center system. Providers must provide an update of linkages with the One-Stop Career Center system; training provided to staff in WNJPIN; and activities that give students access to WNJPIN, the talent bank and the job bank;
- the WIBs to facilitate the development of partnerships with boards of social services or county welfare agencies and the State employment office or workforce center in each county. Providers are required to submit a referral plan, with appropriate signatures and a letter of support, that will ensure recruiting and providing services to the welfare population. The plan must stipulate the number of welfare to work clients that will be served by the project. The application must also include at least one activity to address the provision of services to the welfare population.

Section 231 (c) requires: Each eligible agency receiving funds under Title II shall ensure that (1) all eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts under this section; and (2) the same grant or contract announcement process and application process is used for all eligible providers in the State or outlying areas.

10.0 Description of the Steps to Ensure Direct and Equitable Access (Section 224 (b)(12))

10.1 Description of Steps (Sections 231 and 225)

Through DOE's grants management system for discretionary grants, all required steps will be taken to ensure that: (1) all eligible providers will have direct and equitable access to apply for grants and contracts under this section, and (2) that, although there may be multiple RFPs or RFCs, the same grant or contract announcement and application process will be used for all eligible providers in the State. In addition, DOE's grants process for selecting recipients of funds will give each agency, institution and organization an equitable opportunity to receive a grant award.

DOE takes several steps to ensure equitable access. These include:

- Direct mailing of availability of funding to all categories of eligible providers in accordance with Section 203 (5) 1-9, Workforce Investment Boards and state agencies included in this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*.
- Notice of funding availability on DOE's web site.
- Provision of appropriate documents to any eligible agency that contacts DOE to express interest in the availability of funds.

DOE's grants management process uses this approach for all discretionary grants to make every effort to ensure direct and equitable access.

10.2 Notice of Availability

The State of New Jersey DOE ensures that:

- 1) All eligible providers have direct and equitable access to apply for grants or contracts under this section; and
- 2) The same grant or contract announcement process and application process is used for all eligible providers in the State or outlying areas.

Refer to Section 6.0 of this chapter for more detailed information on direct and equitable access for funding of eligible providers. The same grant announcement process and application process that is described in Section 6.0 will be used for all eligible providers in the State.

10.3 Allocation of Funds (Sec. 223-State Leadership)

DOE will take all required steps to ensure that funds used for state leadership activities are awarded in accordance with the State's contracting and/or waiver of authorization procedures. These procedures are in accordance with the Department of Treasury and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Section 225 requires for each fiscal year, each eligible agency to carry out corrections education or education for other institutionalized individuals using funding authorized by Section 222 (a) (1). Section 232 (a) (1) allows not more than ten percent of 82.5 percent of the funding for the cost of educational programs for criminal offenders in correctional programs, for criminals in corrections education and for other institutionalized individuals, and Section 225 (c) requires that priority be given to those individuals who are within five years of release from incarceration.

11.0 Programs for Corrections Education and Other Institutionalized Individuals (Sec. 225)

11.1 Types of Programs

DOE will take the steps required to ensure that not more than 10 percent of 82.5 percent of funding for the cost of educational programs will be allocated for programs for criminal offenders in correctional facilities as well as for other institutional individuals. Emphasis will be on programs that promote: (1) adult basic education; (2) programs for individuals with disabilities as well as other special needs; (3) English literacy programs; (4) secondary school credit programs; (5) transitional support to prepare students to make a successful transition to the community; and (6) life skills and employability skill development to prepare students to gain employment.

11.2 Priority

DOE will use the same grant announcement and application process to provide funds to serve individuals in correctional facilities and other institutions that is being used for all other eligible providers.

Providers that receive funds to provide programs and services to correctional facilities and other institutions will be required to describe in their grant application, in addition to all other program requirements, how they will give priority to serving individuals who are likely to leave the correctional institution within five years of participation in the program.

11.3 Types of Institutional Settings

For the purposes of applying for funds under the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, in the following correctional institutions: prisons, jails, reformatories, work farms, detention centers, halfway houses, community-based rehabilitation centers, or any similar institution designed for the confinement or rehabilitation of criminal offenders.

Section 223 (a) requires that each eligible agency shall use funds made available under section 222 (a) (2) for one or more adult education and literacy activities.

12.0 Description of Proposed State Leadership Activities (Section 223 (a), (b))

12.1 Description of Activities

The Department of Education shall use not more than 12.5% of funds made available under Section 222 (a) (2) for one or more of the following adult education and literacy activities:

(1) The establishment or operation of professional development programs to improve the quality of instruction provided pursuant to local activities required under Section 231 (b), including instruction in phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension, and instruction provided by volunteers or by personnel of New Jersey.

(2) The provision of technical assistance to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities.

(3) The provision of technology assistance, including staff training, to eligible providers of adult education and literacy activities to enable the eligible providers to improve the quality of such activities.

(4) The support of State or regional networks of literacy centers.

(5) The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of, and the improvement in, adult education and literacy activities.

(6) Incentives for program coordination and integration and performance awards.

(7) Developing and disseminating curricula, including curricula incorporating phonemic awareness, systemic phonics, fluency, and reading comprehension.

(8) Other activities of statewide significance that promote the purpose of this title.

(9) Coordination with existing support services, such as transportation, child care, and other assistance designed to increase rates of enrollment in, and successful completion of, adult education and literacy activities, to adults enrolled in such activities.

(10) Integration of literacy instruction and occupational skill training, and promoting linkages with employers.

(11) Linkages with post secondary educational institutions.

The collaborative planning framework for all of the programs in New Jersey involved in workforce development will ultimately impact proposed leadership activities. As noted previously, this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* contains an in-depth description of the statewide vision for the future and the statewide planning and implementation process that will occur to ensure its accomplishment. During the transition year of 1999-2000, through the collaborative planning process, the State will embark on a strategy for the future provision of literacy services, the identification of service priorities and a planned use of literacy funds available from a variety of state agencies. As the unified statewide system develops, new proposed leadership activities will likely emerge and amendments will be made, as needed. At the current time, however, proposed statewide leadership activities will include:

- Development of a statewide staff development plan that involves DOE's adult literacy training site, the State's higher education institutions and the resources of the other state agencies to deliver staff development programs.
- Conduct of statewide professional development activities utilizing a variety of methods, such as statewide conference, workshops, video-conferencing, targeted training series, development of products. Suggested topics include:

- Reading Strategies for Adult Learners
- Family Literacy
- Expanding the Use of Technology
- Distance Learning Resources and Options
- Performance Standards in Adult Education
- Implementation of CASAS
- Strategies for Adults with Learning Disabilities
- Approaches to Workplace Readiness

- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of and the improvement in adult education and literacy activities, as described in Section 4.0 of this chapter.
- Development and implementation of a statewide data-management system for all participants in the Workforce Investment System (See Chapter Two of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*).
- Continuation and potential expansion of the distance learning project that is operating through the partnership between DOE and NJN described in Section 3.0 of this chapter.
- Increased utilization of technology as a tool for: leadership activities, the provision of professional development activities and, of primary importance, the provision of instructional activities. The latter will include increasing technological skills of staff in provider agencies.

- Implementation of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) in 6-8 provider agencies selected through a statistical sampling. Agencies selected will be required to meet statewide criteria.
- Meetings (beginning in April 1999) of an adult education focus group, comprised of a variety of stakeholders, to concentrate on issues such as the following:
 - increased and improved provision of services to adults with disabilities in programs and in the workforce
 - new approaches to professional development
 - increased use of family literacy
 - issues regarding staff certification in adult education programs
 - planning grants for Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs)
 - incentive grants

12.2 Collaboration with Other Related Agencies and Programs

In carrying out this Section, the Department of Education will collaborate with the State Council of Adult Literacy and its partner agencies, where possible, and avoid duplicating efforts of other State agencies in order to maximize the impact of the activities. Refer to Mission and Vision sections in Chapter One of this *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* for detailed descriptions on collaborative process and activities.

New Jersey

Strategic Five Year State Workforce Investment Plan

Chapter Five

*ANNUAL STATE PLAN UNDER SSA SECTION 403(a)(5)-
WELFARE-TO-WORK
FORMULA GRANT PROGRAM
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
FY 1999*

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR(S)

Name of Grant Recipient and State Administrative Agency: Mel Gelade, Commissioner of Labor

Address: New Jersey Department of Labor
John Fitch Plaza
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Name and title of State Signatory Official (Governor's designee): Mel Gelade, Commissioner of Labor

Address: New Jersey Department of Labor
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WELFARE-TO-WORK FORMULA GRANT STATE PLAN

Introduction

New Jersey's FY 1999 State Plan for the Welfare-to-Work Formula Grant resembles the FY 1998 plan, but addresses the additional items included in the Federal planning instructions.

This Chapter of New Jersey's Strategic Five Year State Workforce Investment Plan describes the State's blueprint for moving the hard to employ into lasting, unsubsidized employment. The plan builds on a collaborative planning process that has been created in the State. New Jersey has institutionalized a special set of relationships among state agencies and between those agencies and the localities. This has been developed through the leadership of the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC). Chapter One of the Strategic Five Year State Workforce Investment Plan contains the goals and vision that guided the creation of this Chapter.

In March 1997, the New Jersey Legislature passed comprehensive welfare reform legislation. The new laws created Work First New Jersey (WFNJ), a temporary assistance program with a five year lifetime limit of benefits. It also gave a two-year extension of benefits for child care and medical care after employment. Under Work First New Jersey, Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) have responsibility for planning all "to work" activities within their WIB areas. The State Departments of Human Services (DHS) and Labor (DOL) have committed to provide funds to WIB areas in accordance with the decisions made through the WIB planning process for welfare-to-work activities.

Recognizing the need for increased coordination among state agencies to make Work First New Jersey a success, Governor Whitman signed Executive Order Number 59 creating a "Work First New Jersey Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee." The Committee members include designees from the Departments of Human Services, Banking and Insurance, Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs, Education, Health and Senior Services, Labor and Transportation. Each Department works to augment and support comprehensive welfare reform by coordinating policies.

As a result, New Jersey has created a coordinated transportation planning project designed to meet the needs of Work First participants. This includes the provision of bus and rail passes for program participants to travel from home to work. In addition, the State has established a Work First New Jersey Rental Assistance Program to provide rental assistance to families leaving the welfare rolls. Further, the State has undertaken a comprehensive substance abuse initiative that is being implemented in conjunction with Work First activities. New Jersey has also committed to providing the necessary child care to those individuals receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families through the Work First New Jersey Child Care Program, as well as transitional assistance to those moving off welfare and child care subsidies to those at-risk for welfare dependency.

In February 1997, anticipating passage of New Jersey's Work First program, the State Employment and Training Commission issued initial planning instructions to the WIBs. WIBs were asked to create Welfare-to-Work Subcommittees and develop plans for an integrated service delivery system to address the needs of welfare recipients. The WIB Welfare-to-Work Subcommittees were comprised of a broad array of individuals. At least 30% were drawn from the private sector and the rest included representatives from employment and training, education, economic development, and community-based organizations. The county Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) agency was also a required member of the committee. This representation ensured that the voice of the community was heard during the planning process. Special attention was given to include the opinions of welfare recipients, as well as those of local officials. These plans were supplemented with local WIB plan addenda in October of 1998. The plan addenda described the use of FY1998 Welfare-to-Work formula funds and all other available funding streams to ensure that the hardest to serve are provided with a comprehensive array of services and job opportunities. Special emphasis was placed on service collaboratives, enhanced job counseling/coaching and retention services.

As the rest of this plan indicates, New Jersey's policy development infrastructure is prepared to meet the challenge of serving the hardest to employ of the welfare population. Agency differences have been put aside to support the first principle of the New Jersey Welfare-to-Work initiative - a focus on the needs of the customer. The State is committed to providing the necessary support to prepare all welfare recipients for economic self-sufficiency, including long-term recipients and those with significant barriers to employment.

It is within this context that New Jersey's statewide plan for the Welfare-to-Work Formula Grant was prepared.

I. Welfare-to-Work Program Description

A. Program Design

1. *Describe the State and local targeting strategies to reach the hard-to-employ TANF recipients eligible under WtW and assure that appropriate activities and services are provided to help these participants achieve self-sufficiency.*

Through collaboration between the State and WIBs, New Jersey has developed a broad strategy to target the individuals eligible for services under the Welfare-to-Work Formula Grant (WtW). New Jersey is committed to establishing a comprehensive set of services that intervene between time of eligibility, the placement on a job and afterward. The system is based on collaboration among agencies and targeted to the needs of individuals.

The WIBs have been asked to supplement their welfare-to-work plans outlining their strategies to identify and reach the hardest to serve population. Because New Jersey's system is founded on the principle that it be "state-based and locally-delivered," the decisions for how to reach this population must also be made in the context of the overall WIB process. The WIB process provides the opportunity for the county TANF agency as well as all other WIB welfare-to-work committee members to address issues, such as barriers to service, targeting, and client flow together. Services for the WtW population are carefully planned and coordinated to maximize resources and delivered according to a comprehensive strategy.

Each WIB has submitted a plan addendum (see section 6) that explains the local process for identification of the target population.¹ The process includes:

- A "call-in" by the county TANF agency for all individuals receiving assistance for 60 months or more. This is the first step in identifying and reaching out to those who are eligible for WtW services.
- Using the call-in to pre-certify individuals for WtW grant eligibility.

In addition, the WIBs also incorporate those identification factors that have been detailed in the WtW legislation as barriers to employment:

- The individual has not completed secondary school or obtained a GED and has low skills in math or reading. At least 90% of the low skilled individuals must be at or below grade 8.9;
- The individual requires substance abuse treatment for employment; or,

¹New Jersey has invested in a planning and service delivery model that gives WIBs significant decision-making authority. The WIB plan addendum will include greater specifics related to services for this population, but based on the needs and resources of each WIB area.

- The individual has a poor work history. At least 90% of individuals with a poor work history must have worked no more than 3 consecutive months in the past 12 calendar months.

Equally important to the identification of the target population is the development of comprehensive programs to serve the needs of the population. As a first step, we are seeking to establish the collaborative relationship among service deliverers that, according to their specifications, deliver a wide menu of services including job search, Alternate Work Experience Programs (AWEP), Community Work Experience Programs (CWEP), On-the-Job Training (OJT), and, depending on the needs of the individual, drug rehabilitation, counseling, case management and basic literacy. Other supports such as child care and transportation are available at the outset and throughout the process. All programs conform to the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

2. *Define and describe State and local strategies regarding:*

- the employment activities (community service, work experience, job creation through public and private wage subsidies, on-the-job training) that are planned under this grant; and,*
- the utilization of contracts with public and private providers of job readiness, placement and post-employment services; job vouchers for placement, readiness, and post-employment services; job retention, or support services, that are planned under this grant.*

The New Jersey SETC, DOL and DHS have asked each WIB to prepare a unified, comprehensive local plan for the delivery of workforce investment services through the One-Stop System, including a baseline of services for the welfare-to-work population and the sub-population of the hardest to employ. WIBs have autonomy in selecting from an array of service interventions, consistent with the law and State policy, most appropriate for their WIB area. WIB plans provide for the provision of targeted, responsive services for the hardest-to-employ within the One-Stop System. Specific definitions for these employment activities are contained in New Jersey's TANF plan on pages 10-12.

In support of unified local plans for a streamlined delivery system, the Departments of Labor and Human Services have issued instructions that enable WIBs to link all “to work” funding streams in support of the workforce investment system for the TANF population. Included are WtW funds, TANF Employability funds (DHS and DOL), Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds (Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds if available), Wagner-Peyser resources, Vocational Rehabilitation funds, Unemployment Insurance resources and others.² In addition, WIBs are encouraged to incorporate tax incentives and subsidies into their array of services.

Finally, the resources available through Adult Basic Education, Vocational Education, and institutions of higher education are a part of the WIB plan. WIBs are encouraged to plan for ways to use all resources simultaneously to assist individuals to find jobs, retain employment and advance to economic self-sufficiency.

²All unified planning will be done in accordance with existing State and Federal laws governing programs and resources included in these efforts.

The WIB plans guide contracts and service delivery at the local level. Because New Jersey's system is locally-delivered, the DHS and DOL contract directly with counties for the administration of funds from Human Services and Labor. This practice is also used for WtW funds. The counties, in accordance with the WIB plans, contract for services at the local level. The State expects those contracts to be performance based as described in section 4 of this Chapter. As noted at the end of this section, counties are being encouraged to issue Requests for Proposals for services under WtW.

The effort to develop unified local workforce investment plans is mirrored at the State level with the creation of New Jersey's Strategic Five Year Unified State Workforce Investment Plan. Based on these coordinated planning efforts, New Jersey has forged relationships among community-based organizations (CBOs), the Employment Service, the county TANF agency, employers, county colleges, apprenticeship programs, Americorps programs, vocational schools and the JTPA system, among others, to provide the optimal mix of services under Welfare-to-Work that can be accessed easily by an individual. By connecting institutions in such a manner and making them responsible for the outcome of each individual, a seamless chain of services is created to maximize the potential for success. All services are designed to meet existing TANF requirements. Each WIB welfare-to-work plan addendum describes how this occurs in each given area.

Special support services ensure that standard "to-work" services are truly accessible to the hard to employ. Affiliation agreements exist between each service delivery collaborative and the appropriate social service agencies for the provision of: domestic violence services and mental health treatment. These services, along with child care, transportation, and substance abuse treatment, are funded through WtW, if not otherwise available. Each service delivery collaborative links with and utilizes the State initiatives for child care, transportation and substance abuse as described in other sections of this plan.

Every service delivery collaborative has demonstrated the ability to provide the following with the available WtW Formula Grant funds or with other funds:

- Intensive case management as an essential part of each service collaborative. Each program participant is linked to a specific case manager within the service collaborative who is responsible for ensuring proper coordination of all elements of the participant's service plan. Case management begins upon referral.
- AWEP site development and management.
- For AWEPS, schedule work-based and classroom-based learning - ensure that the logistics are worked out including transportation, child care, etc. This requires close coordination with the TANF agency. Ongoing job search is also provided along with the constant monitoring of class and work-based experiences.
- Job development - establish links with the local employer community.
- Job coaching/employment counseling - including AWEP and CWEP oversight.
- Job Placement - in conjunction with services and facilities developed by One-Stop Career Center system.

- Job Retention Strategies - including mentoring services and the provision of opportunities for literacy enhancement and skill upgrading as well as peer support activities. Job coaching and employment counseling are encouraged as successful job retention activities.
- Availability of computer system with appropriate computer network connectivity including, where possible, the State developed One Ease-E Link software.
- Determination of career readiness status of each individual which may also include job search.

Every service delivery collaborative provides the following through leveraged funding:

- A service plan that is agreed to and honored by the individual and the relevant agencies to offer guidance on that person's path to work. The service plan is a reciprocal agreement in which the individual and the agency both make commitments. An individual's service plan is forwarded to the county TANF agency for inclusion in their Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP).
- Job Search - including job readiness skills, financial management skills, and use of Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network, Professional Services Groups, and other innovative techniques.
- Job training and basic literacy through connecting and leveraging relevant program resources.
- Value-added skill opportunities including job readiness skills, Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) workplace foundation skills, along with basic education offerings such as Adult Basic Education, General Equivalence Degree and English as a Second Language.

The range of services described above is viewed as baseline services that may need to be intensified, expanded or supplemented in new ways to meet the needs of this population. The State encourages innovation in meeting the needs of the hardest-to-employ.

The most effective, quality services available in the area are used to serve the target population. An open process is used in determining how these services are provided. Requests for Proposals are used to obtain appropriate services. Funds are obligated according to the State's procurement process. As a general principle, New Jersey does not support presumptive deliverers for any of these services. Service providers are judged on their capacity to deliver high-quality, customer-focused services rather than by tradition.

3. *Describe the State and local policy and procedures which will govern implementation of such activities. Include how WtW funds will be used to provide necessary support services (child care, substance abuse treatment, transportation, etc.) when these services are not otherwise available to the individual participants receiving WtW services.*

During the implementation of Work First New Jersey, the State adopted a number of policies that are the foundation for decision making at the State and WIB levels regarding the delivery of workforce investment services.

Unlike previous welfare entitlement programs, Work First is not a benefit program with a work component, but rather a work program with a benefit component. Individuals must assume personal responsibility for finding a job. The system is designed to enable participants to become employable and find a job that allows them to achieve self-sufficiency.

Economic self-sufficiency and job retention are the predominant themes of every intervention. Work activities are the entryway to all services beyond employability assessment, self-help, and job search. All individuals are expected to work as a condition of occupational skill training. Each participant receives training on job readiness skills and job retention strategies as part of the array of services offered to those with barriers to employment. Services to WtW participants are mainstream services of the One-Stop Career Center System.

The emphasis on work and achieving economic self-sufficiency requires that staff of the workforce investment system redefine their relationships with each participant. Placement into a job and even retention in a job is not a success if the individual does not attain economic self-sufficiency. All members of the One-Stop System assist participants until economic self-sufficiency is reached. The WtW population needs intensive case management and job counseling (we have termed this “Job Plus Coordination”) to take full advantage of New Jersey’s workforce investment services. Preparation for nontraditional occupations occupies a special role due to the relationship between higher-skilled, frequently nontraditional occupations and higher wages. The process used to approve demand occupations permits WIBs to gain approval for training in occupations based on demand for women in occupations that may not be measured in the aggregate data. This supports New Jersey’s goal to achieve equity across all occupations.

Post employment services, previously virtually ignored, have taken on new significance in assuring economic self-sufficiency. Each WIB has devised service strategies for job placement and retention as well as long-term labor force retention. In addition, strategies are being developed to address high turnover rates and assist those individuals who move between jobs to ensure smooth transition and prevent a disruption in their efforts to attain self-sufficiency. Every effort is made to move an individual from one job directly into another without a return to the welfare caseload. Attachment to the labor force is the priority, not necessarily retention in the first job placement.

All job retention strategies incorporate not only the services available from workforce investment programs - training and retraining - but also those available from community-based and faith-based organizations, drug treatment programs, housing authorities and tenant organizations, organizations serving persons with disabilities, transportation agencies, child care agencies, community and business organizations and others. WIBs work with employers to put job retention activities in place. The use of employment counselors and job coaches in some areas has proven to be a successful tool in job retention.

As established earlier, the WIB plans serve as the blueprint for all funding streams and their activities in a geographic area. WtW funds are used to augment current support services where

appropriate, and for continuing those services to individuals, no longer eligible under TANF, to enhance their job retention.

There is full coordination of WtW resources with other existing resources for support services. In cases where there is a shortfall relating to the hard-to-employ or those with characteristics relating to long-term welfare dependency, the WIB may decide to recommend that some portion of the available funds be directed to meet those needs. However, the assumption is that resources are available for support services through special initiatives such as substance abuse services (see section 10) and child care services.

Aside from lack of skills, the barriers to employment for the hardest to employ include the lack of affordable and accessible child care, transportation, substance abuse, and other personal obstacles. New Jersey has also begun to address transportation through the implementation of a county transportation planning process (see section 9). Because of the issues identified through this process, funds are being used to address the gaps in services that impede the ability of a participant to secure and/or maintain employment. Each county has identified issues specific to its area, and employ transportation strategies developed by county transportation steering committees.

New Jersey has invested substantial new resources in child care for WFNJ participants. The WFNJ regulations require that child care be in place before a recipient is required to attend a work activity. Each county has a Unified Child Care agency that is responsible for arranging child care before a work activity. Child care is in place for the target population as they move into WtW programs. The WFNJ legislation also calls for subsidized child care for two years after employment. Therefore, WtW resources are not needed for child care, except in unusual circumstances.

4. *List the performance goals and outcomes the State intends to achieve in serving the eligible participants in the WtW program including: (a) placement in unsubsidized jobs; (b) duration of such placement; and, c) increase in earnings. The performance goals and outcomes should be expressed in measurable, quantifiable terms to the greatest extent possible.*

The State believes that economic self-sufficiency and job placements should be the measures of success for the program. These are consistent with the core standards for the entire One Stop system. Program participation rates are used as an indicator of program progress, but are not an end in themselves. Therefore, all program standards focus on jobs and their current and future ability to prevent welfare dependency.

It is anticipated that measures established in the WIA will be adopted. Additional Governor's Standards will be established to guide staff activity and mark vendor performance. Outcomes will be measured in terms of economic self-sufficiency, placements in jobs, duration of employment, earnings, and credential gains, customer satisfaction and others. Standards will include adjustments for individuals' barriers and local economic conditions whenever possible. Final standards will be set upon receipt of recommendations from an interdepartmental workgroup. In the interim, JTPA welfare standards and their local adjustments will be used.

To further emphasize the importance of job placements, New Jersey requires pay-for-performance contracting using payment points such as: 1) completion of a work readiness program; 2) placement in unsubsidized employment; 3) 30 days duration in a job; and, 4) 180 days duration in a job. Additionally, New Jersey will consider incentives for placement in high-wage occupations. After the first year of operation of the system, performance levels will be benchmarked and goals will be established to ensure continuous improvement.

In addition to performance standards, other information is used to help administrators and program operators, such as types of program activities, types of employment, reasons for exiting from the program, effective coordination of resources and others. Measures of customer satisfaction are included as an administrative tool

The State has also outlined a process for local monitoring, including identification of performance measures. This can be found in section 7 of this plan.

5. *Provide a description of how the program will be implemented by PICs across the State, including the roles and responsibilities of the State WtW administrative Agency and the TANF agency; a list of the substate areas and the local entities responsible for program administration; and, the program's implementation target dates.*

In New Jersey, the State-level administration of the workforce investment system, of which welfare-to-work is a part, falls primarily to the Departments of Education, Human Services and Labor. The DHS is the designated State TANF Administrative Agency and the Department of Labor is the designated State Welfare-to-Work Administrative Agency. However, the collaborative nature of New Jersey's planning leads to the direct involvement of many other state and local agencies in the planning of welfare-to-work in New Jersey. There is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in place between the DHS and DOL for the administration of welfare-to-work funds. A contract between the two agencies details activities.

At the State level, through the leadership of the SETC, all policy documents and implementation plans are discussed and revised by the interagency Welfare-to-Work Working Group that meets every two weeks. The guidelines for WIB planning were developed in this cooperative atmosphere. Similarly, an interagency group of 35 individuals participated in the review of WIB welfare-to-work plans.

As described in the introduction to this plan, the WIB planning process is, and has been, a collaborative effort among local stakeholders. The plans are recognized as the guiding policy documents for all welfare-to-work resources to the WIB areas. In New Jersey, this translates to both State and Federal resources that may be used to move individuals from welfare dependency to unsubsidized employment. The language for the operational contracts between the State agencies and counties (as the entities responsible for program administration) are drawn directly from the WIB plans. In other words, through both planning and implementation, welfare-to-work in New Jersey is designed to be a systemic response to State and Federal law rather than a program by program response. Finally, to solidify the integrity of this collaborative process, WIBs review local contracts between counties and service providers to ensure consistency with the WIB plans.

The WIB planning process is an evolving one and plans are refined through addenda as needed. Any specific requirements under the Welfare-to-Work Formula Grant that have not been dealt with in the existing WIB plans are addressed by the WIBs and submitted as attachments to their plans.

A listing of the substate areas and local entities responsible for program administration is attached.

6. *Identify the State policies and procedures, developed in coordination with PICs, regarding: (a) identification and referral of participants; and, (b) assessment and case management, if any. Include a description of the coordination efforts that the local TANF and administrative agency will undertake in this process, including the role these local agencies will play in providing assessment and case management to qualified participants. Specify any additional characteristics associated with, or predictive of, long term welfare dependence which have been identified by the State, in consultation with the operating entity, which will be used in determining eligibility under the thirty percent provision.*

Currently, to ensure the identification of participants, the Work First New Jersey (WFNJ) county agency uses state administered automated systems entitled the Family Assistance Management Information System (FAMIS) and On-line Management for Economic Goal Achievement (OMEGA). These systems contain demographics on those persons currently in receipt of case assistance.

Present recipients and new applicants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) are initially prescreened by the county WFNJ agency for immediate need services. Applicants then must satisfy child support requirements and register for work with the Department of Labor, Employment Services (DOL/ES).

Registration with New Jersey DOL/ES ensures that individuals are initially exposed to existing job opportunities. During this period, individuals are exposed to an array of available employment opportunities through New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN). This network also provides employers with on-line access to list employment opportunities for those seeking jobs, and through America's Talent Bank are able to access prospective job candidates' resumes.

After DOL's registration, the balance of the TANF application interview is completed by the WFNJ county agency. An Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) is developed for each applicant and the mandatory, deferred or exempt WFNJ participant status is assessed. The purpose of the IRP is to identify the specific needs of each participant to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

The plan enables the individual and the county worker to identify barriers, establish goals and objectives, and develop strategies. Several agencies have also initiated pilot projects using standardized assessment tools. These projects will continue to be monitored for effectiveness.

Following the development of the IRP, the WFNJ agency refers WFNJ mandatory individuals to a four week Job Search/Job Readiness activity if they have not obtained employment through the DOL registration effort.

During this four-week intervention, all WFNJ participants are provided with sufficient knowledge and skills to navigate the labor market. Individuals are required to become involved in either structured or self-directed job search.

Recognizing the unique needs of the target population for the Federal WtW grants, each WIB developed an addendum to its WIB welfare-to-work plan which details additional information on identifying and reaching the hardest to employ population. WIBs follow the criteria in the WtW regulations:

- (A). Identifying within the existing caseload, those recipients who meet the following criteria:
 - (a)(i) Are long-term welfare recipients (with 30 or more months of receipt), or who face termination from TANF assistance within 12 months; AND,
 - (ii) Who face two of three specified labor market deficiencies (lack of high school diploma or GED and low reading or math skills; requiring a substance treatment for employment; poor work history) OR are a non-custodial parent of minors whose custodial parent meets criteria (a)(I) and (a)(ii).
 - (b) Individuals who have characteristics associated with long-term welfare dependence, such as school dropouts, teen pregnancy, or poor work history, and are either recipients of TANF assistance or non-custodial parents.
- (B) Developing plan for prioritization of identified populations to receive service.

The State is currently reviewing some of the research regarding the predictive characteristics of long-term welfare dependence and may use some of this information in defining the population eligible for 30% funding.

The WIB plan addenda include:

- I. WIB plans specifically address the local process for identifying WtW eligible participants in their local area. The process includes:
 - The county TANF agency “call-in” process for those individuals who have been on the welfare caseload for 60 months or longer and pre-certification.
 - Specific links between the county TANF agency and the One-Stop System. All WtW referrals must come through the county TANF agency.

II. Developing a plan for services to the targeted population.

New Jersey has set the following priorities for service delivery:

. Target Population (in priority order)

1. First Priority

Those individuals who have received assistance for 60 months or more; and, who face major labor market deficiencies (two or three); lack of high school diploma or GED, low reading or math skills; require substance abuse treatment for employment; or, have a poor work history OR non-custodial parents of minors whose custodial parents meet above requirements.

In every case of the above, in an effort to provide a holistic approach to serving families, a determination will be made if services are needed by the non-custodial parent in this identified family to enhance their employability. A non-custodial parent who enters the labor market and provides child support assistance increases the likelihood that the custodial parent can move away from welfare dependency and toward economic self-sufficiency. WIB areas will be given assistance in identifying these individuals for participation.

2. Second Priority - (to be no more than 30% of allocation)

Individuals receiving TANF whom also have the long-term welfare dependence characteristic of teenage pregnancy (either as a teen parent or as a child in a family receiving TANF support who becomes pregnant). In all cases, an effort is made to provide a holistic approach to serving families. A determination will be made if services are needed by the non-custodial parent, in this identified family, to enhance their employability. A non-custodial parent who enters the labor market and provides child support assistance increases the likelihood that the custodial parent can move away from welfare dependency and toward economic self-sufficiency. WIB areas will be given assistance in identifying these individuals for participation.

3. Third Priority

- 1) Those between 30 and 60 months of assistance; and,
- 2) Those who face major labor market deficiencies (two or three): lack of high school diploma or GED, low reading or math skills; requiring substance abuse treatment for employment; or, have a poor work history OR non-custodial parents of minors whose custodial parents meet above requirement.

The WIB plan addendum for services includes:

- Functions of the TANF agency (eligibility determination, referral to workforce investment system, etc.)
 - How the above stated priorities will be met
 - Identification of population
 - Links to the county substance abuse care coordinator
 - Role of job search
 - Assessment mechanism
 - Outreach to population
 - Jobs Plus Coordinator function
- III. Identifying services needed and the process for how they will be developed and implemented, including a description of the local RFP process.

The WIB identifies how a collaborative model will be achieved (section 2). All of the services identified in the legislation are addressed as part of the menu of services to be provided.

All funding and referrals for substance abuse treatment is made through the system being established by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (see section 10).

While the WIBs develop agreements on assessment for this population, the State has begun exploring the establishment of a standard, statewide assessment process that can be used to determine an individual's skill level, employability and other factors. In cooperation with the Center for Employment Policy and Workforce Development at Rutgers University, the SETC will draw on the knowledge and expertise of practitioners such as employment counselors, case managers and others to identify both tools and processes that will most effectively assist in linking an individual with unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible. All current State funds for "to-work" activities must be compatible with the WIB Plan. This requirement extends to the Federal WtW funds and RFPs will be issued for all services.

The State, in consultation with the WIBs, has identified TANF teen parents as being at high risk for long term welfare dependency. In response, the Departments of Labor and Human Services conducted local sessions for WIBs and local providers to make them aware of the special needs of this group. Social and health services identified as being essential for this population includes Intensive Case Management, family life education, and mentoring. Coordination with the following types of programs needs to be part of any collaborative intending to serve this population: School Based Youth Services Program, School-to-Career Initiatives, HSACs, Child Care Agencies, Mental Health and Family Counseling Agencies, Substance Abuse Services, Family Planning and Housing and all the members of the One Stop Career Center System.

7. *Describe the State's procedures for conducting monitoring and oversight of substate areas to ensure adequate fiscal controls and achievement of quality program outcomes for WiW participants. The description should include, but not be limited to:*
 - a. *mechanisms for monitoring expenditures of match requirements, allowable activities, and targeting of eligible participants;*
 - b. *frequency of monitoring; and,*
 - c. *use of technical assistance to ensure compliance with the Act and as a tool for corrective action and program improvement.*

New Jersey has adopted a three-part oversight partnership to support the One-Stop workforce investment system. The system recognizes responsibility for oversight at the State, WIB and service provider levels. Together these partners ensure the integrity of financial procedures and practices, including match requirements and procurement; ensure the achievement of quality programs composed of allowable activities for targeted individuals; and, ensure consistency with state and local goals, especially the local WIB plan. Briefly, the State partner is responsible for guaranteeing compliance with Federal and State policy, statute and regulation. The WIB partner is responsible for adherence to the WIB plan and program operators are responsible for efficient and effective delivery of activities and services.

The Departments of Labor and Human Services have instituted a joint monitoring process to ensure adequate fiscal controls and achievement of quality program outcomes. Special emphasis is placed on issues related to coordination, participant flow, and service mix. In cases in which there are specific interagency problems, representatives from both departments meet with the WIB and other organizational representatives to resolve issues.

State monitoring efforts review performance results, compliance issues and substate operational methodologies that lead the target population to economic self-sufficiency. The primary components of the monitoring system are: managerial monitoring of performance, field monitoring of local systems' operation, and meeting technical assistance needs disclosed by monitoring findings and reports.

State staff review information about actual enrollment versus planned enrollment, placement in unsubsidized jobs, duration of placement and increases in earnings, analysis of component enrollments in community and alternate work experience, occupational and educational/job readiness training, OJT, and direct job placement. In addition, obligation and expenditure rates are reviewed to assess the level of activity.

These reviews are conducted on a monthly basis. Monthly status reports are provided to local administrators and WIBs indicating problem areas, lower than standard performance results and other factors that impact on the operation of the program. Local areas are expected to respond to problem areas.

On-site field reviews are conducted by the State to review operations, compliance issues, and coordination among local agencies consistent with the county plan. Upon completion of each review, a report is provided to administrators and the WIB. When corrective action is needed, a corrective action plan must be submitted and follow-up by State staff is conducted to review the

implementation of the plan. Field visit reviews also offer the opportunity to provide technical assistance.

In addition, the findings of field reviews enable State administrators to identify successful approaches and problems so that they can be shared with other areas. State monitoring results are used to guide technical assistance activities. Senior staff of the Departments of Labor and Human Services discuss available monitoring results at their monthly meetings to decide when system-wide technical assistance is needed.

WIBs have established Oversight Committees to insure that program operations are in keeping with the plans developed by the WIBs for a One-Stop System. WIBs focus on how well activities meet their plans and why these activities were selected. Their responsibility extends to all welfare-to-work activities. WIBs are responsible for evaluating how well their area's programs are promoting economic self-sufficiency.

The WIB Committees look at outcome and process performance indicators to help identify any need for improvement. Each WIB strives for continuous quality improvement.

The following are potential outcome and process measures that are utilized:

Outcome Measures

Number and proportion of persons employed

New Jersey will serve 5,000 eligible individuals per year

Average cost of \$5,000 per individual.

60% or 3,000 individuals will obtain unsubsidized employment

Wages of employed individuals.

Individuals will have an average wage at placement of \$8.99/hr, but no less than minimum wage.

Number and proportion of individuals achieving economic self-sufficiency

Of those obtaining unsubsidized employment, 2,250 (75% of 3,000) will still be employed six months after employment began.

Process Measures

Number of persons in job search

Number employed from job search activities

Number of persons in work activities

Number employed from each activity

Time from TANF agency certification of WFNJ eligibility to first work activity

Number of persons anticipated, but not showing up for activity

System Measures

Adherence of the program to WIB welfare-to-work plan

Consistency with the local labor market and its skill needs

Integration with One-Stop efforts

Avoidance of regional service duplication

Quality evaluations of services
Reasonable utilization of resources

These measures will be supplemented by measures recommended by the One-Stop Performance Workgroup and by any prescribed Federal measures.

Those areas to be specifically monitored by the NJDOL Office of Internal Audit (OIA) include, but are not limited to:

Administrative Standards
Fund Management
Expenditure of Funds
70/30% Expenditure Rates
Matching Funds

OIA Monitoring Approach:

The specifics of the approach depend on the identity of the grantee. Should the grantee be a JTPA Administrative Entity, the Administrative Entity is required to submit a WtW Monthly Financial Report to NJDOL. Financial monitoring of WtW funds is incorporated into our normal financial monitoring of the JTPA Administrative Entity. Although WtW monitoring is not extensive (approximately once a year), it provides a contemporaneous look at the program prior to outset of the A-133 audit. An in-depth review of the A-133 audit is a significant part of the overall monitoring.

An agency other than the JTPA Administrative Entity is required to submit a Monthly Financial Report, and a separate monitoring initiative is undertaken. Such a monitoring initiative includes the above referenced areas as well as a desk review of the annual audit.

In addition to a yearly review, a special monitoring of WtW takes place upon receipt/notification of the following:

- Specific requests made by programmatic staff to have problem areas or areas needing additional information monitored. These requests may be based on programmatic monitoring visits made by Division of Employment and Training staff;
- Specific requests from the Division of Accounting based on their review of Monthly Expenditure Reports;
- Specific areas that have been identified in A-133 audit reports as needing improvement/corrective action;
- Complaints or anonymous tips, provided they are warranted; and,
- Specific requests to monitor subrecipient contracts (<\$300K).

By performing WtW annual monitoring and by following up on A-133 audit findings, adequate WtW financial oversight is accomplished.

8. *Describe the strategies of the State and PICs to prevent duplication of services and promote coordination among WtW, TANF, JTPA, One-Stop Centers/Employment Service and other employment and training systems throughout the State.*

Chapter One of the *State Plan* lays out a clear direction for New Jersey's workforce investment system to become a streamlined unified system that delivers seamless services to all customers. In New Jersey, the physical manifestation of that policy is embodied in the One-Stop Career Center System, the local service delivery mechanism. Thus, it has been a long-standing practice in New Jersey to coordinate workforce investment resources at the State and WIB levels. When WIBs were first established, they were given the responsibility of beginning a resource analysis that would identify all of the various funding sources coming into the WIB area that could be applied to the workforce investment system.

In the WIB local unified plan, WIBs address how the various funding streams identified through their resource analysis are linked in order to serve the welfare population. The State specifically asked WIBs to address JTPA, Carl Perkins, School-to-Career, the Employment Services' Workforce Development Partnership, Workplace Literacy, Youth Corps, Americorps, Single Parent Programs, Adult Education, and School-Based Youth Services. Within their plans, WIBs link these funding sources to specific job readiness and job placement activities and describe how an individual would move through the system and avoid unnecessary duplication, particularly in the areas of intake, assessment, and referral.

Workforce investment services, including those under welfare-to-work, are to be delivered through New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers. Since receiving its One-Stop Implementation Grant in 1995, New Jersey has planned for a fully coordinated system in each WIB area, supported by new technologies that allow for an easy link between programs. Now, in New Jersey, the Employment Service (ES) is linked directly to welfare agencies, in most cases, actually having ES staff in county welfare agencies. Case Management software called One Ease-E Link will directly integrate individual participant level data for programs in the Departments of Labor, Human Services and Health and Senior Services. This technology will support New Jersey's One-Stop System until the One Stop Operating System, being developed under the direction of the USDOL, is available. Most importantly, the One-Stop System, as it has evolved in New Jersey, has brought about cooperation among agencies within the WIB area that has begun to ensure that there truly will be no wrong door one can enter when seeking services. This includes welfare recipients.

The requirement of the Welfare-to-Work Formula Grant offers New Jersey the opportunity to take its history of streamlining and reducing duplication to the next level. The unified planning efforts of the WIB and the activities that are conducted under the Formula Grant build upon the solid foundation of cooperation, collaboration, and streamlined delivery of services now found in New Jersey.

9. *Describe the strategies of the State and PICs to promote and encourage coordination with the State Department of Transportation, MPO's, transit operators, and other transportation providers to help ensure that the transportation needs of those moving from Welfare to Work are met.*

Governor Whitman signed Executive Order Number 59 to bring about interagency coordination in creating a comprehensive plan that addresses the broad array of challenges to the successful implementation of welfare reform. This has resulted in monthly meetings of an interdepartmental committee that includes the Departments of Banking and Insurance, Commerce and Economic Development, Community Affairs, Education, Health and Senior Services, Human Services, Labor and Transportation. The Chair of the group is the Director of the Governor's Office of Policy and Planning. The group is charged with the responsibility of developing the implementation plan.

One of the major interagency issues that has been addressed is transportation. New Jersey is engaged in a major transportation planning project. We believe this is the only statewide transportation effort to meet the needs of welfare recipients.

The New Jersey Statewide County and Community Transportation Planning Project is underway in New Jersey's 21 counties. The counties are in the process of developing plans for more coordinated and integrated local and regional transportation services. At the State level, the planning and coordination is directed by the New Jersey Department of Human Services, New Jersey Department of Transportation, and New Jersey Transit. The Departments of Human Services and Transportation have staff assigned to work cooperatively on policy issues.

The project is being led by a steering committee in each county that minimally consists of the WIB Director, County Planners, County Welfare Agencies, Unified Child Care Agency, and other local stakeholders. In addition, in many counties, the municipal planning organizations (MPOs) are represented on the steering committees. In all counties, the MPOs and the Transit Planners have been asked to participate in the planning process. In addition, NJ Transit has assigned staff to work with each WIB and the WIB Executive Directors are kept informed of transportation activities. Finally, to assist in the completion of the planning process, a team of consultants, including senior staff from Multisystems, Inc., Urbitran Associates, Inc. and Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates, have been hired to assist in the preparation of the county transportation plans.

A major objective of this planning effort is to identify service gaps and develop strategies to address the unique transportation needs created by the WFNJ welfare reform initiative. As a result of the county planning process, the information obtained and the strategies developed to support the WFNJ program also provide for increased mobility and improved transportation systems for other employment needs. Planning has been under way since June 1997, and most county plans are complete.

In addition to the planning process currently under way, the Departments of Human Services and Transportation and New Jersey Transit have implemented several transportation initiatives to ensure the transportation needs of those moving from welfare-to-work are met. New Jersey currently implements the WorkPass program that provides monthly bus and/or rail passes to

WFNJ participants to facilitate their use of public transit. It also affords the county greater potential for administrative cost efficiencies. Another program is “Get A Job. Get A Ride!” This initiative provides a free month’s commute to work for any WFNJ/TANF participant who terminates the receipt of cash assistance for employment.

Counties participating in the New Jersey Transportation Coordination Planning Process may apply to the “Transportation Innovation Fund” for seed money to initiate other innovative solutions addressing gaps in transportation service. In addition to identified funding sources, the State is aggressively pursuing funding opportunities made available through private sector partnerships, Federal grants and private foundations.

10. *Describe the strategies of the State and PICs to promote and encourage coordination with the State Housing Finance Agencies, public and assisted housing providers and agencies and other community-based organizations, and public and private health, mental health and service agencies, vocational rehabilitation and related agencies.*

As noted in section 1, the WIB Welfare-to-Work Subcommittees are comprised of a broad array of individuals from various service sectors including community-based organizations, substance abuse, mental health, vocational rehabilitation, public housing agencies, child care, transportation and others. These individuals actively participate in the development of the plan addendum for the hard to place population.

New Jersey has also utilized the previously described interagency committee to coordinate initiatives of all departments and agencies in moving individuals from welfare to economic self-sufficiency. There are major efforts underway in the following areas:

- Development of WFNJ Rental Assistance Program in conjunction with the Department of Community Affairs. The goal is to create a time limited rental subsidy to working families exiting welfare for unsubsidized employment.
- Substance Abuse Initiative

The State of New Jersey recognizes that substance abuse can be a significant barrier to a successful transition from welfare to work and is committed to helping WFNJ recipients overcome that barrier. To accomplish this, the Department of Human Services, in conjunction with the Department of Health and Senior Services, Division of Addiction Services (DHSS/DAS) is developing a system of coordinated substance abuse assessment and treatment. Addiction specialists, known as Care Coordinators, receive referrals from WFNJ caseworkers for those WFNJ recipients who have failed at a work requirement because of a suspected substance abuse problem.

Recipients are assessed as to the nature and severity of their addiction and referred for treatment to one of a network of pre-approved treatment providers based on the American Society of Addiction Medicine Patient Placement Criteria Second Edition (ASAMPPC-2). Care Coordinators work with recipients and move them among levels of care as indicated by changes

in their addiction severity and work with the WFNJ case worker to assist recipients to transition smoothly from treatment into work.

All substance abuse and mental health treatment providers who meet the requirements set out by the DHSS/DAS are eligible to accept referrals and be reimbursed through this program. This enables the State to offer WFNJ recipients a comprehensive continuum of substance abuse treatment within a reasonable distance of where they live and work. Treatment providers receive a prior authorization each time they are asked to provide treatment for services they render. A set of fees has been developed for this program based on current Medicaid and DAS funding structures which accommodates the enhanced work integration demands and other special needs of WFNJ recipients.

New Jersey is committed to fully coordinated substance abuse treatment for welfare recipients. A Care Coordinator either is in place at the County TANF agency or directly linked to that agency to allow for immediate screening and treatment. All funds, under WtW and other programs, for substance abuse treatment are directed to the mechanism established by this initiative for identifying and assisting those individuals with substance abuse issues. Therefore, all local referrals for treatment are made through this system.

B. Within State Distribution of Funds

Describe the formula factors used by the State to allocate not less than 85 percent of the amount of grant funds among the PICs in the State as well as the timeline for the allocation to PICs. Provide a listing of the allocations the State will make to each substate area.

The 85% portion of grant funds is distributed to WIBs based on a formula, consistent with the law, that distributes:

- One half based on the number by which the population of the area with an income that is less than the poverty line exceeds 7.5% of the total population of the area, compared to all such numbers in all such areas in the State;
- One quarter based on the share of the number of adults receiving assistance under TANF or the predecessor program in the area for 30 months or more, relative to the number of such individuals residing in the State; and,
- One quarter based on the area's share of the number of unemployed individuals residing in the area, relative to the number of such individuals residing in the State.

See attachment A for preliminary planning estimates by WIB area. All funds will be distributed within 30 days of approval of the State plan.

C. Coordination and Consultation

Describe the approach, including process and timing, used to obtain and take into account consultation and coordination with substate entities such as public, private and non-profit organizations, in the

development of the State plan. Include either a summary description of the comments received, along with the names of the individuals or entities who commented, or include copies of the actual comments received as an attachment to the plan.

As outlined in the introduction to this plan, New Jersey's planning process for its workforce investment system is the hallmark of a coordinated, consultative process. Through the leadership of the SETC, New Jersey's policy-makers strive to reach out to all those who have an interest in the workforce investment system. As we go about this and all of the planning processes, the Commission, as a public/private body, is required by State and Federal law to have a cross section of individuals represented among its members. In addition, over the past eight years, as needs have arisen, the SETC has formed various task forces, etc., to address particular needs and address the concerns of other members of the workforce investment community. In the same manner, WIBs can and do draw on the knowledge and expertise of individuals and organizations interested in the workforce investment system.

As it relates to the development of this plan at the State level, the planning group for this document was comprised of individuals from the Departments of Labor, Human Services, the SETC, two WIBs, and one municipal welfare agency. These individuals were responsible for incorporating the ideas and input of others, reflecting the concern of the Welfare-to-Work Working Group, responding to comments from public hearings, and ultimately compiling the plan itself. The outline for this plan was presented to and discussed with WIB Directors, drafts were mailed to the WIB Welfare-to-Work Committees, and a session was held with WIB Directors and Committee Chairs to gain input.

Finally, to ensure consistency with other efforts, this plan went to the SETC's Public Sector Planning Committee which is comprised of sub-cabinet level officials from the Departments of Community Affairs, Corrections, Education, Human Services, Labor, the Commission on Commerce and Economic Growth, the Commission on Higher Education, the Governor's Office of Policy and Planning, and the Office of Management and Budget.

D. **Expenditure of Funds**

1. *Describe the process the State will use to maintain administrative costs at the 15 percent limit.*

State's Administrative System for Financial Management

The New Jersey Department of Labor's Division of Employment and Training and Division of Accounting coordinates efforts to ensure the proper distribution of financial instructions, including appropriate use of administrative funds; funding allocations; authorization of funds; collection of financial reports from the grantee; and, notification to the grantee when there is a need to implement financial corrective actions.

Financial Management

Documentation at the State level includes monthly financial reports submitted by the grantee, summaries of monthly reports, budget sheets and Notices of Obligation which are sent to the grantee identifying amounts within funding sources that the grantee has been authorized to

obligate. Financial and participant data are used by NJDOL to track cost per participant information. The Division of Accounting reviews monthly financial reports submitted by the grantee to ensure accuracy and compliance.

Auditing and Oversight

The NJDOL Office of Internal Audit (OIA) and Monitoring Unit cooperate in reviewing locally initiated audits and ensuring compliance with the Single Audit Act. The NJDOL cooperates with any OIA initiated audit. Questioned costs and administrative recommendations are provided to the grantee by the OIA, after consulting with NJDOL. When necessary, corrective action is pursued by the NJDOL. The recovery of funds is coordinated with the Division of Accounting.

State's Administrative Services

The NJDOL's administrative activities include the preparation and processing of contracts for State funded programs and discretionary grants. Technical assistance is provided to potential subgrantees as they prepare draft responses to contractual requirements. The NJDOL Contract Unit oversees this activity which includes a contract review and sign-off process that extends to the Commissioner of NJDOL.

2. *Describe how the PIC, and any alternate agency designated by the Governor, will coordinate the expenditure of any funds provided for the WtW program between TANF and WtW.*

The grantee prepares and submits a plan to the NJDOL's Division of Employment and Training Contract Unit. The plan defines the grantee's goals and its policies and activities to meet its goals. The plan also reconciles its planned activities to performance standards and program and compliance requirements as established by Federal and State regulations for WtW.

The grantee in administering WtW agrees to maintain a professionally administered financial and cash management accounting system which utilizes procedures that are in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) and, at a minimum, provides for the following:

1. The control of contracted funds and other assets to ensure that the obligation and disbursement of program funds and use of property are in conformance with the requirements of WtW Federal and State regulations and policies.
2. Maintenance of detailed documentation that fully supports monthly financial reports that are prepared and submitted.
3. Maintenance of a system for internal controls to protect and safeguard all assets of State and Federal programs.
4. Maintenance of detailed records to include information pertaining to subgrants, contracts, obligations, uncommitted balances, assets interest/program income, and other records as required by State and/or Federal regulations.

5. Maintenance of accrual-based monthly financial reporting system.
6. Maintenance of controls and procedures to ensure that the opportunity for unauthorized, fraudulent, or otherwise irregular acts is minimized.

The grantee will have access to an online computerized reporting system and be able to prepare timely financial reports for transmission to NJDOL, Office of the Director, Division of Accounting.

E. **Application for Waiver**

1. *Provide copies of any comments from the Chief Elected Official(s) regarding the Governor's selection of each alternate agency for the administration of WtW funds in each individual, affected substate area.*
 2. *Include information that indicates how the selection of each alternate agency will improve the effectiveness or efficiency of the program in each of the affected substate areas, including the advantages provided by the alternate agency in achieving the goals of WtW. In presenting the rationale, the Governor should provide such information as (s)he deems is necessary to support the waiver request. This information should include such items as, the reasons for not using the PIC (including poor performance under the Job Training Partnership Act or evidence that the PIC has refused the WtW administrative role), and/or the superior capabilities of each alternate agency to coordinate activities and resources among the relevant local agencies in order to achieve planned outcomes.*
- New Jersey does not request waivers in addition to those already granted. Justification for granted waivers is included in the 1998 plan. The granted waivers are expected to be valid until the Job Training Partnership Act expires.

II. **Description of 15% Projects to Help Long-Term Recipients of Assistance Enter Unsubsidized Jobs**

Describe the State's plans for the expenditure, uses and goals of the 15% funds. These funds may be distributed to public, private non-profit, and private for profit entities, including, PICs, governmental entities, community-based organizations, and community development corporations.

The State will utilize 15% discretionary funds to create highly needed unfunded services. The goal of all 15% discretionary projects will be to move the target population to work and economic self-sufficiency. The following are areas in which the discretionary funds will be used:

1. **Transportation Innovation Fund**
As described in Question 9, New Jersey has set up a Transportation Innovations Fund as a clearinghouse for innovative community transportation initiatives. Funds will be earmarked for strategies to deal with post-employment transportation needs of WFNJ recipients.
2. **Customized Training**

The Department of Labor's Office of Customized Training will identify employers and industries that would be interested in hiring and training WFNJ recipients. A portion of the discretionary funds may be used to support innovative projects with employers.

3. Tracking of Activities and Creation of Supports

County case management entities (generally the county TANF agency) will receive a supplemental payment based on the number of participants targeted for service to assist them in tracking participation in activities and entering supports on OMEGA, the computer tracking system, for transportation, participant allowances and child care referrals.

4. Program Innovations

The State will reserve a portion of the discretionary funds for program innovations and shortfalls in services not otherwise supported.

5. Training and Job Search with the Department of Corrections

The State is developing a program to identify paroled individuals attached to the corrections system who are non-custodial parents of persons qualifying for these funds and to provide these non-custodial parents with specialized job training and job search that will assist them in obtaining unsubsidized employment and thereby meet their child support obligations.

III. **Estimate of Matching Funds**

1. *Include an estimate of the amount of matching expenditures for the FY 1999 Federal funding which the State expects to make during the period covered by the plan.*
2. *Include the process by which these expenditures will be monitored and reported quarterly to ensure the State meets its projected match.*

According to the WtW requirements, New Jersey is requesting the full amount of \$21,708,979. The State expects to match \$10,854,490 during FY 1999. The match will come from State funds used by the Department of Human Services for its Child Care program, from training funds from the State's Workforce Development Program and to the extent available, in-kind contributions from the grantee. The identified funds will not be used to match any other Federal program.

Assurances will be given by the grantees and proper review controls will be needed to ensure that none of the funding claimed as in-kind support was previously used to match other Federal programs or that it does not consist of activities funded by other Federal programs.

IV. **Funding**

The State should submit an estimate of expenditures of WtW formula grant funds for each quarter of each fiscal year covered by the plan by percentage or dollar amount.

Consistent with the TANF plan, the State intends to expend 25% of the funds each quarter of the year covered by this plan.

1999 USDOL Welfare-to-Work Formula Fund Planning Estimates

<i>WIB</i>	WtW Formula funds (85%)
Atlantic/Cape May	\$ 760,677
Bergen	\$ 463,707
Burlington	\$ 259,346
Camden	\$ 1,716,007
Cumberland/Salem	\$ 928,702
Essex (less Newark)	\$ 810,573
Newark	\$ 5,105,997
Gloucester	\$ 187,941
Hudson	\$ 4,206,565
Mercer	\$ 337,641
Middlesex/Somerset/Hunterdon	\$ 623,724
Monmouth	\$ 443,897
Morris/Sussex/Warren	\$ 323,426
Ocean	\$ 300,166
Passaic	\$ 1,431,825
Union	\$ 552,438

Totals	\$ 18,452,632
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Administrative Entities for USDOL Welfare-to-Work Funds

<i>WIB</i>	<i>WtW Administrative Entity</i>
Atlantic/Cape May	Atlantic/Cape May Career Centers, Inc. 750 W. Delilah Road Pleasantville, NJ 08232 Phone: (609) 485-0052
Bergen	Bergen County Department of Human Services 21 Main Street , Room 115W Hackensack, NJ 07601 Phone: (201) 646-3644
Burlington	Burlington County Department of Economic Development 124 High Street, P.O.Box 6000 Mount Holly, NJ 08060 Phone: (609) 265-5055
Camden	Camden County Family Development & Job Training Resources Center 315 South White Horse Pike Magnolia, NJ 08049 Phone: (609) 566-7200
Cumberland/Salem	Cumberland/Salem Job Training Consortium 220 North Laurel Street. P.O.Box 1398 Bridgeton, NJ 08302 Phone: (609) 451-8920
Essex (less Newark)	Essex County Department of Planning and Economic Development Hall of Records 465 Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Newark, NJ 07012 Phone: (973) 286-2956
Newark	City of Newark Mayor's Office of Employment & Training 55 Liberty Street Newark, NJ 07102 Phone: (973) 733-4820

Gloucester	Office of Business & Economic Development Route 45 & Budd Blvd, P.O.Box 337 Woodbury, NJ 08096 Phone: (609) 384-6930
Hudson	Department of Health & Human Services 595 County Avenue, Building 2 Secaucus, NJ 07094 Phone: (201) 271-4311
Mercer	County of Mercer Office of Employment & Training 650 South Broad Street Trenton, NJ 08650 Phone: (609) 989-6824
Middlesex/Somerset/Hunterdon	County of Middlesex Employment & Training Department New Brunswick, NJ 08901 Phone: (732) 745-3920
Monmouth	County of Monmouth Division of Employment & Training 170 Monmouth St. Red Bank, NJ 07701 Phone: (732) 742-2282 X 24
Morris/Sussex/Warren	Morris, Sussex & Warren Office of Workforce Development 300 Schuyler Place 3 rd floor, P.O.Box 900 Morristown, NJ 07963-0900 Phone: (973) 285-6880
Ocean	Ocean County PIC. 1959 Route 9 Toms River, NJ 08755 Phone: (732) 240-5995 X225
Passaic	Passaic County Department of Human Services 401 Grand Street, Room 417 Paterson, NJ 07505 Phone: (973) 881-2834
Union	Union County Department of Human Services Administration Building, 4 th floor Elizabeth, NJ 07207 Phone: (908) 527-4805

PROGRAM ASSURANCES

ASSURANCES

The State of New Jersey, assures to the following requirements under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act.

PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION/ACTIVITIES

1. The State is an eligible State, pursuant to SSA section 402(a) for the fiscal year. *Statutory Citations: SSA section 402(a); SSA section 403(a)(5)(A)(ii)(IV).*
2. The State assures that qualified State expenditures (within the meaning of SSA section 409(a)(7)) for the fiscal year will not be less than the applicable percentage of historic State expenditures (within the meaning of SSA section 409(a)(7)) with respect to the fiscal year. *Statutory Citations: SSA section 403(5)(A)(ii)(V); SSA section 409(a)(7).*
[That is, the State will meet its TANF maintenance-of-effort requirement under SSA section 409(a)(7) for the fiscal year].
3. The State has consulted and coordinated with the appropriate entities in the substate areas regarding the plan and the design of WtW services in the State. *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(A)(ii)(I)(cc).*
4. The State will make available to the public a summary of the WtW plan. *Statutory Citation: SSA section 402(b).*
5. The State has agreed to negotiate in good faith with the Secretary of Health and Human Services with respect to the substance and funding of any evaluation under SSA section 413(j) and to cooperate with the conduct of such an evaluation. *Statutory Citations: SSA section 403(a)(5)(A)(ii)(III); SSA section 413(j).*
6. The State shall not use any part of these grant funds, nor any part of state expenditures made to match the funds, to fulfill any obligation of any State, political subdivision, or private industry council to contribute funds under SSA sections 403(b) or 418 or any other provision of the Social Security Act or other Federal law. (NOTE: There is an exception to this requirement for Access to Jobs.) *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(C)(vi).*
7. The State will return to The Secretary of Labor any part of the WtW funds that are not expended within 3 years after the date the funds are so provided. *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(C)(vii).*
8. The State WtW program will be conducted in accordance with the WtW legislation, regulatory provisions, future written guidance provided by the Department, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.
9. The State will apply the TANF law and regulations to the operation of the WtW program, unless otherwise specified by the Department or defined in SSA section 403(a)(5) or the applicable WtW regulations.
10. The State assures that services under the WtW grant are provided to eligible participants only.
11. The State will maintain and submit accurate, complete and timely participant and financial records reports, as specified by the Secretary of Labor and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

12. The State will establish a mechanism to exchange information and coordinate the WtW program operated by the State and PICs with other programs available that will assist in providing welfare recipients employment.
13. The State shall adhere to the certifications required under TANF and will meet the TANF maintenance of effort requirements.
14. The State will comply with the "common rule" Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments codified for DOL at 29 CFR Part 97.
15. The State will follow the audit requirements of The Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 and OMB-Circular A-133.
16. The State will follow the allowable cost/cost principles of OMB Circular A-87.

WORKER PROTECTIONS

1. The State will establish policies to enforce the provisions regarding nondisplacement in work activities under a program operated with funds provided under WtW. *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(J)(i).*
2. The State assures that the Health and Safety standards established under Federal and State law otherwise applicable to working conditions of employees shall be equally applicable to working conditions of other participants engaged in a work activity under a program operated with funds provided under WtW. *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(J)(ii).*
3. The State will enforce the provision that an individual may not be discriminated against by reason of gender with respect to participation in work activities under a program operated with funds provided under WtW. *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(J)(iii).*
4. The State shall establish and maintain procedures for grievances or complaints from participants and employees under the WtW program. The procedures established will be consistent with the requirements of SSA section 403(a)(5)(J)(iv). *Statutory Citation: SSA section 403(a)(5)(J)(iv).*
5. The State shall establish and enforce standards and procedures to ensure against fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures against nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the State WtW program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage.
6. The State will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of the laws enumerated at SSA section 408(d), with respect to participation in work activities engaged in under the WtW program.

Governor or Authorized Signatory (Type and Sign Name)	Mel Gelade
Title, (if other than the Governor)	Commissioner Of Labor
Date Signed	

March 23, 1999

John Szufnarowski, Regional Commissioner
US Department of Education
Rehabilitation Services Administration
75 Park Place – Room 1208
New York, NY 10007

Dear Commissioner Szufnarowski:

I am pleased to submit as part of New Jersey's Unified State Plan under Section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act, the State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program, including the following eight attachments:

Attachment 4.2(c): Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

Attachment 4.6(a)(3): Request for Waiver of Statewideness

Attachment 4.9(c): Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities

Attachment 4.11(b): Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Attachment 4.12: Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports

(Includes Order of Selection – option 4.12c 2 A)

Attachment 4.16(b)(2): Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures

Attachment 6.9(c)(2): Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

Attachment 7.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

Their effective date is July 1, 1999.

If you have any questions concerning any of the enclosures, please do not hesitate to contact Thomas G. Jennings, Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services at 609-292-5987.

Sincerely,

COMMISSIONER

**STATE PLAN FOR THE
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM
AND
STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE
STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM**

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STATE PLAN FOR THE
STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

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STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM AND STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

STATE: New Jersey

AGENCY: Department of Labor

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL X BLIND COMBINED

SECTION 1: LEGAL BASIS AND STATE CERTIFICATIONS

1.1 The New Jersey Department of Labor (name of designated State agency or designated State unit) is authorized to submit this State plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under title VI, part B of the Act.

1.2 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I, part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the New Jersey Department of Labor (name of the designated State agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under title I and the administration of this State plan.

1.3 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI, part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under title VI, part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the title I State plan.

1.4 The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding this State plan and its supplement.

1.5 The State legally may carry out each provision of the State plan and its supplement.

1.6 All provisions of the State plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

1.7 The Commissioner (title of State officer) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under this State plan and its supplement.

1.8 The Commissioner (title of State officer) has the authority to submit this State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State plan supplement for supported employment services.

1.9 The agency that submits this State plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

1.10 The effective date of this State plan and its supplement is July 1, 1999 .

Mel Gelade

(Signature) (Typed Name of Signatory)

Commissioner

(Date)(Title)

¹ Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.

² Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁴ No funds under title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.

⁵ Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR part 361.

⁶ No funds under title VI, part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the title I State plan in accordance with section 625(a) of the Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR part 361, and 34 CFR part 363.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.20(a)(1) and (2), (b), and (d), and 363.11(g)(9))

(a) The designated State agency, prior to the adoption of any policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State plan and supported employment services under

the supplement to the State plan, including making any amendment to such policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the State to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures, and actively consults with the Director of the client assistance program carried out under section 112 of the Act, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on the policies or procedures.

(b) The designated State agency provides adequate notice of the meetings in accordance with State law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of such State law, in accordance with procedures developed by the State agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.

2.2 State review process. (34 CFR Part 79)

If the State plan, its supplement, or amendment to the State plan is subject to the State review process, such materials are reviewed and commented on in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12372, and comments provided by the State review process are transmitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

This State plan and its supplement are subject to the State review process.

Yes No x

SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT

3.1 Submittal of the State plan, its supplement, and revisions to the plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act)

(a) The State submits to the Commissioner a State plan for vocational rehabilitation services that meets the requirements of section 101 of the Act and a State plan

supplement for supported employment services that meets the requirements of section 625 of the Act on the same date that the State submits a State plan under section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

(b) If the State submits a State unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 without including the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services in the unified plan, the State submits to the Commissioner the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services on the same date that the State submits its unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

(c) The State submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

(d) The State submits to the Commissioner at such time and in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:

(1) comprehensive system of personnel development;

(2) assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;

(3) innovation and expansion activities; and

(4) requirements under title I, part B or title VI, part B of the Act.

(e) The State plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of such modifications as the State determines to be necessary or as the Commissioner may require based on a change in State policy, a change in Federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a Federal court or the highest court of the State, or a finding by the Commissioner of State noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, until the State submits and receives approval of a new State plan or plan supplement.

3.2 Supported employment plan. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

The State has an acceptable plan for carrying out part B of title VI of the Act, including the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under part B of title I of the Act to pay for the cost of services leading to supported employment.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN

4.1 Designated State agency and designated State unit. (Sections 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13)

(a) Designated State agency.

(1) There is a State agency designated as the sole State agency to administer the State plan, or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the State by a sole local agency.

(2) The designated State agency is:

primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities; or

not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities.

(3) In American Samoa, the designated State agency is the Governor.

(b) Designated State unit.

(1) If the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, the State agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or other organizational unit that:

(A) is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and is responsible for the designated State agency's vocational rehabilitation program, including those responsibilities specified in subparagraph (5) of this paragraph of the State plan;

(B) has a full-time director;

(C) has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit;

(D) is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated State agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated State agency; and

(E) at a minimum, has the following responsibilities that cannot be delegated to any other agency or individual:

(i) all decisions affecting eligibility for vocational

rehabilitation services, the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of services;

(ii) a determination that an individual has ended participation in the vocational rehabilitation program and achieved an employment outcome after receiving vocational rehabilitation services;

(iii) policy formulation and implementation; and

(iv) allocation and expenditure of vocational rehabilitation funds.

(2) The name of the designated State unit is the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

4.2 State independent commission or state rehabilitation council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State plan must contain one of the following two assurances.

(a) The designated State agency is an independent commission that:

(1) is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State;

(2) is consumer-controlled by persons who:

(A) are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and

(B) represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind;

(3) includes family members, advocates, or other representatives, of individuals with mental impairments; and

(4) undertakes the functions set forth in section 105(c)(4) of the Act;

or

(b) x The State has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in section 105 of the Act and the designated State unit:

jointly with the Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities, and jointly submits annual reports of progress with the Council, consistent with the provisions of section 101(a)(15) of the Act and section 4.12 of this State plan;

regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;

includes in the State plan and in any revision to the State plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and

(4) transmits to the Council:

(A) all plans, reports, and other information required under title I of the Act to be submitted to the Secretary;

(B) all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State plan; and

(C) copies of due process hearing decisions issued under title I of the Act, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

(c) If the designated State unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c) provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this subsection of the State plan, the response of the designated State unit to the input and recommendations, and explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the state plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21(a))

The designated State agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan, the views of:

- (a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or in appropriate cases, the individuals' representatives;
- (b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;
- (d) the Director of the client assistance program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

4.4 Non-federal share. (Section 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60(b))

The non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out this State plan is provided through the financial participation by the State, or if the State elects, by the State and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.15)

- (a) The State plan provides for local administration and each local agency is under the supervision of the designated State unit and is the sole local agency responsible for the administration of the program within the political subdivision that it serves.

Yes No X

- (b) *IF YES, Attachment 4.5* identifies each local agency and describes the methods each local agency uses to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with this State plan.

4.6 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Sections 101(a)(2)(A) and (4)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25 and .26)

The State plan is in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, except in the case when:

(a) The State unit is providing services in one or more political subdivisions of the State that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State plan and the:

(1) non-Federal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual; and

(2) services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments.

(3) If the State is providing services that meet the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this subsection,

Attachment 4.6(a)(3) requests a waiver of

statewideness in
accordance with the
requirements in 34
CFR 361.26(b); or

(b) Earmarked funds are used toward the non-Federal share and such funds are earmarked for particular geographic areas within the State contingent on the State notifying the Commissioner that it cannot provide the full non-Federal share without the use of such earmarked funds.

4.7 Shared funding and administration of joint programs.
(Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

(a) The designated State agency is carrying out a joint program involving shared funding and administrative responsibility with another State agency or a local public agency to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Yes No X

(b) *IF YES*, Attachment 4.7(b) describes the:

(1) nature and scope
of the joint program;

(2) services to be
provided;

(3) respective roles of
each participating
agency in the
provision of services
and their
administration; and

(4) share of the costs
to be assumed by each
agency.

(c) If the joint program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan subsection.

4.8 Third-party cooperative arrangements involving funds from other public agencies (Section 12 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.28)

(a) The designated State unit has entered into a third-party cooperative arrangement for providing or administering vocational rehabilitation services with another State agency or a local public agency that is furnishing part or all of the non-Federal share.

Yes X No

(b) *IF YES:*

(1) The services provided by the cooperating agency are not the customary or typical services provided by that agency but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or are existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded, or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus.

(2) The services provided by the cooperating agency are only available to

applicants for, or recipients of, services from the designated State unit.

(3) Program expenditures and staff providing services under the cooperative arrangement are under the administrative supervision of the designated State unit.

(4) All State plan requirements, including the State's order of selection, if an order is in effect, apply to all services provided under the cooperative program.

(c) If the third-party cooperative program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan.

4.9 Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23 and .24)

(a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment systems.

The designated State agency has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system of the State in accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(11)(A) of the Act.

(b) Replication of cooperative agreements.

The designated State agency replicates the cooperative agreement identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of the State plan at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system.

(c) Interagency cooperation with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.9(c) describes the:

(1) interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;

(2) coordination, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 4.9(d) of this subsection, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from

school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;

(3) manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 5.6(b) of the State plan; and,

(4) efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the requirements of subsection 7.5 of the supplement to this State plan.

(d) Coordination with education officials.

Plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with

disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan are described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(2)** which also includes information on a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:

(1) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;

(2) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(3) the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency,

including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and

(4) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.

(e) Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.

The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

(f) Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.

(1) There is in the State a recipient(s) of a grant under part C of title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near Federal and State reservations.

Yes No X

(2) *IF YES*, the designated State agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement with each grant recipient in the State that receives funds under part C of title I of the Act. The agreement(s) describes strategies for collaboration and coordination in providing vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities, including:

(A) strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;

(B) procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and who are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and

(C) provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

(g) Reciprocal referral services with a separate agency for individuals who are blind.

In those States in which there is a separate designated State unit for individuals who are blind and also a designated State unit for all other individuals with disabilities, the two State units:

(1) have established reciprocal referral services;

(2) use each other's services and facilities to the extent feasible;

(3) jointly plan activities to improve services in the State for individuals with multiple impairments, including visual impairments; and

(4) otherwise cooperate to provide more effective services, including, if appropriate, entering into a written cooperative agreement.

4.10 Methods of administration. (Sections 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (c))

(a) General.

The State agency employs methods of administration found by the Commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of this State plan.

(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.

The designated State agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the State, who are in receipt of assistance under title I of the Act, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in section 503 of the Act.

(c) Written standards for providers of services.

The designated State agency has established, maintains, makes available to the public, and implements written minimum standards for the various types of providers used by the designated State unit in providing vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan.

(d) Facilities.

Facilities used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State plan comply with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved on August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the "Architectural Barriers Act of 1968"), with section 504 of the Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

4.11 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

(a) The designated State agency has implemented a comprehensive system of personnel development that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(7) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.18.

(b) Attachment 4.11(b) describes the designated State agency's policies, procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an

adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit. The description addresses the following requirements:

(1) collection and analysis on an annual basis of data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.18(a);

(2) plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds, and personnel who are individuals with disabilities;

(3) establishment and maintenance of personnel standards meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that personnel, including professionals and paraprofessionals, are adequately trained and prepared, including:

(A) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are

providing vocational rehabilitation services; and

(B) to the extent that such standards are not based on the highest requirements in the State applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the State is currently taking and the steps the State plans to take to retrain or hire personnel within the designated State unit so that such personnel meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the State;

(4) standards to ensure the availability of personnel within the designated State unit or other individuals who are, to the maximum extent feasible, trained to communicate in the native language or mode of communication of an applicant or eligible individual;

(5) staff development to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training; and

(6) coordination of its personnel development system with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.12 Annual state goals and reports of progress. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

(a) Assessments and estimates.

(1) Attachment 4.12(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the State has such a Council) every 3 years, and:

(A) describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

(i)
individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

(ii)
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(B) provides an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

(2) For any year in which the State revises the assessments, the designated State unit submits to the Commissioner a report containing information regarding revisions to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

The designated State agency annually submits **Attachment 4.12(b)** that includes, State estimates of the:

(1) number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under this State plan;

(2) number of such individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under part B of title I of the Act and under part B of title VI of the Act, including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection in accordance with paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and

(3) costs of the services described in subparagraph (1), including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) Goals and priorities.

(1) **Attachment 4.12(c)(1)** identifies

the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs and also identifies any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the State revises the goals and priorities.

(2) Order of selection.

(A) If the State agency is operating on an order of selection, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provides a justification for the order, the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category consistent with the provisions of paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan.

(B) If, however, the agency assures in paragraph 6.4(a) of this State plan that it can provide the full range of services identified in subsection 5.1 of this State plan to all eligible individuals, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B)** satisfies all of the provisions identified in

paragraph 6.4(b) of the State plan.

(3) Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) specifies, consistent with subsection 7.4 of the State plan supplement, the State's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(4) Basis.

The goals and priorities are based on:

(A) the analysis of the comprehensive assessment and any revisions in the assessment consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4.12(a) of this State plan;

(B) the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act; and

(C) other available information on the operation of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs, including reports from the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and the findings of monitoring activities carried out by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

(5) In accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act, the goals and priorities, including any revisions to the goals and priorities, are jointly developed, agreed to, and reviewed annually by the designated State unit and

the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

(d) Strategies.

Attachment 4.12(d) describes the strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:

(1) address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;

(2) carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the provisions of subsection 7.6 of the State plan supplement; and

(3) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) Evaluation and reports of progress.

Attachment 4.12(e) describes the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and includes an annual joint report of the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, to the Commissioner on the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year. The description includes:

(1) an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in subparagraph (c) of this subsection plan were achieved;

(2) an identification of the strategies that contributed to achieving the goals;

(3) to the extent to which the goals were not achieved, an explanation of the factors that impeded that achievement;

(4) an assessment of the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established pursuant to section 106 of the Act; and

(5) a report consistent with paragraph 4.13(c) of this State plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act)

(a) The designated State agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Act:

(1) for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State identified in

paragraphs 4.12(a) and (c) of this State plan; and

(2) to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 105(d)(1) of the Act, and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 705(e)(1) of the Act.

(b) **Attachment 4.12(d)** describes how the reserved funds identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of this State plan will be utilized.

(c) **Attachment 4.12(e)** describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.14 State-imposed requirements. (Section 17 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.39)

The designated State unit identifies upon request those regulations and policies relating to the administration or operation of its vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs that are State-imposed, including any regulations or policy based on State interpretation of any Federal law, regulations, or guidelines.

4.15 Protection, use, and release of personal information. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.38)

The designated State agency and the designated State unit have policies and procedures that are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.38 to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information, including photographs and lists of names.

4.16 Mediation and impartial due process hearing. (Section 102(c) of the Act)

(a) Fair hearing board.

There is a fair hearing board, established by the State prior to January 1, 1985, that is authorized under State law to review determinations or decisions made under the Act and to carry out the responsibilities of the impartial hearing officer.

Yes X No

(b) Mediation and review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "NO":

(1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of and procedures for the review through an impartial due process hearing of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.

(2) Attachment 4.16(b)(2) contains

the procedures for mediation; the procedures for review through an impartial due process hearing; and, the procedures to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer, including the standards for reviewing decisions of an hearing officer, if the designated State agency has elected to implement such review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "YES":

(1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.

(2) Attachment 4.16(b)(2) contains the procedures for mediation.

4.17 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

(a) The designated State unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the Commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State plan.

(b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and ensures the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

SECTION 5: SCOPE OF THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

5.1 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. (Section 103(a) of the Act)

Vocational rehabilitation services provided under this State plan are any services described in an individualized plan for employment necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:

(a) an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

(b) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act and subsection 5.3 of this State plan;

(c) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of

this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan;

(d) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;

(e) vocational and other training services, including the provision of personal and vocational adjustment services, books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher education shall be paid for with funds under this State plan unless maximum efforts have been made by the designated State unit and the individual to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for such training;

(f) to the extent that financial support is not readily available from a source (such as through health insurance of the individual or through comparable services and benefits consistent with section 101(a)(8)(A) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan), other than the designated State unit, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, including:

(1) corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate

or reduce such impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time;

(2) necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment;

(3) prosthetic and orthotic devices;

(4) eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual;

(5) special services (including transplantation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease; and

(6) diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;

(g) maintenance for additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving

services under an individualized plan for employment;

(h) transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this subsection and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome;

(i) on-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while an individual is receiving other services described in this subsection;

(j) interpreter services provided by qualified personnel for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and reader services for individuals who are determined to be blind, after an examination by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;

(k) rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services, for individuals who are blind;

(l) occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies;

(m) technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided under the statewide workforce investment system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome;

(n) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;

(o) transition services for students with disabilities that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;

(p) supported employment services;

(q) services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome; and

(r) specific post-employment services necessary to assist an individual with a disability to retain, regain, or advance in employment.

5.2 Written policies governing the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.50)

(a) The State unit has written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services specified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan and the criteria under which each service is provided.

(b) The policies are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.50 and:

(1) ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in that individual's individualized plan for employment; and

(2) do not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and scope of services to be provided to the

individual to achieve
an employment
outcome.

5.3 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act)

Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, are provided information and support services to assist the applicants and eligible individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.

5.4 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act)

Except as otherwise provided in part C of title I of the Act, the designated State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the designated State agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the State.

5.5 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services to groups of individuals with disabilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49, .61 and .62)

(a) The State plan provides for the following optional vocational rehabilitation services for the benefit of groups of individuals with disabilities.

(1) ~~X~~ The establishment, development, or improvement of community rehabilitation programs, including, under special circumstances, the construction of a community rehabilitation facility, that are used to provide services to promote integration and competitive employment.

If the State elects to use the authority to construct a facility for a

community rehabilitation program,
the following requirements are met:

(A) The Federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the State's allotment under section 110 of the Act for that fiscal year.

(B) The provisions of section 306 of the Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.

(C) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated State agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services, other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.

(2)
Telecommunications systems, including telephone, television,

satellite, radio, and similar systems, that have the potential for substantially improving service delivery methods of activities described in this section of this State plan and developing appropriate programming to meet the particular needs of individuals with disabilities.

(3) Special services to provide nonvisual access to information for individuals who are blind, including the use of telecommunications, Braille, sound recordings, or other appropriate media; captioned television, films, or video cassettes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; tactile materials for individuals who are deaf-blind; and other special services that provide information through tactile, vibratory, auditory, and visual media.

(4) ~~X~~ Technical assistance and support services to businesses that are not subject to title I of the

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and that are seeking to employ individuals with disabilities.

(5) Small business enterprises operated by individuals with significant disabilities, the operation of which can be improved by the management services and supervision of the designated State agency, along or together with the acquisition by the designated State agency of vending facilities or other equipment and initial stocks and supplies.

(A) If the State unit provides small businesses enterprise services, only individuals with significant disabili

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(B) If
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(C) Under its small business enterprises, the State unit provides:

(i) only the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;

(ii) only a program or programs other than the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;

(iii) both the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program and another program(s).

(6) X Consultative and technical assistance services to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.

(7) X Other services that promise to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but that are not related directly to the individualized plan for employment of any one individual with a disability.

(b) If the State plan provides for any of these services to groups of individuals with disabilities, the designated State unit has:

(1) written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services it provides and the criteria under which each service is provided; and

(2) information to ensure the proper and efficient administration of those services in the form and detail and at the time required by the Secretary, including:

(A) the types of services provided;

(B) the costs of those services; and

(C) to the extent feasible, estimates of the numbers of individuals benefiting from those services.

5.6 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated State agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under part A of title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated State agency that such for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide such vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.

(b) Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.

The manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers is described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(3)**.

SECTION 6: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

6.1 Record of services. (Section 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.47)

The designated State unit maintains for each applicant or eligible individual a record of services that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.47.

6.2 Referrals and applications. (Sections 101(a)(6)(A) and 102(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.41)

(a) The designated State unit has standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services. These standards include timelines for making good faith efforts to inform individuals of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority of services.

(b) Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, an eligibility determination is made within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, unless:

(1) exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the designated State unit preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the designated State unit and the individual

agree to a specific extension of time; or

(2) the designated State unit is exploring an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacities to perform in work situations under section 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.

6.3 Information and referral services. (Section 101(a)(20) of the Act)

The designated State agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the State.

6.4 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

(a) The designated State unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services.

Yes No X

(b) **IF YES**, Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B) contains an explanation that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.36(a)(2) or (3) and describes how, on the basis of the designated State unit's projected fiscal and personnel resources and its assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with

significant disabilities within the State, it will:

(1) continue to provide services to all individuals currently receiving services;

(2) provide assessment services to all individuals expected to apply for services in the next fiscal year;

(3) provide services to all individuals who are expected to be determined eligible in the next fiscal year; and

(4) meet all program requirements.

(c) **IF NO:**

(1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.

(2) **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** contains:

(A) the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services; and

(B) a justification for the order of selection.

(3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria are provided access to the services provided through the designated State unit's information and referral system implemented under section 101(a)(20) of the Act and subsection 6.3 of this State plan.

6.5 Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services. (Sections 7(2)(A)(i) and (D), 7(20)(A), 101(a)(12) and 102(a)(1)(A), (2)(B) and (4) of the Act)

(a) To determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual's priority under an order of selection for services, if the State is operating under an order of selection, the designated State unit, to the maximum extent possible consistent with the requirements of this State plan, uses existing and current information, including information available from other programs and providers, particularly information provided by education officials and the Social Security Administration, and information provided by the applicant and the family of the applicant.

(b) To the extent that existing information is unavailable or insufficient, the designated State unit provides appropriate assessment activities to obtain necessary additional information to make the determination regarding the applicant's eligibility, and, if

applicable, the applicant's priority under an order of selection.

(c) The State unit's determination of an applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based only on the following requirements.

(1) A determination that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment.

(2) A determination that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.

(3) A presumption, in accordance with section 102(a)(2)(A) of the Act and paragraph (d) of this subsection of the State plan, that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

(4) A determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

(d) The designated State unit presumes that an applicant who meets the eligibility requirements in subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this subsection of this State plan can benefit in terms of an employment outcome unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the individual's disability. In making such a demonstration, the designated State unit first explores the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experiences consistent with the provisions of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.

(e) If there is appropriate evidence that establishes the applicant's eligibility for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the designated State unit:

(1) presumes the applicant to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan (provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual) unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing

evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual in accordance with the provisions of section 102(a)(2) of the Act and paragraph 6.5(d) of this State plan; and

(2) considers the applicant to be an individual with a significant disability consistent with the provisions of section 7(21)(A) of the Act.

(f) In the application of the eligibility criteria, the following requirements are met.

(1) No duration of residence requirement is imposed that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State.

(2) No applicant or group of applicants is excluded or found ineligible solely on the basis of the type of disability.

(3) The eligibility requirements are applied without

regard to the age, gender, race, color, creed, or national origin of the applicant.

(4) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family.

6.6 Procedures for ineligibility determination. (Section 102(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.43)

If the State unit determines that an applicant is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services or determines that an individual receiving services under an individualized plan for employment is no longer eligible for services, the State unit:

(a) makes the determination only after providing an opportunity for full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, with the individual's representative;

(b) informs the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in writing, supplemented as necessary by other appropriate modes of communication consistent with the informed choice of the individual, of the ineligibility determination, including:

(1) the reasons for the determination; and

(2) the description of the means by which

the individual may express, and seek remedy for, any dissatisfaction with the determination, including the procedures for the review by an impartial hearing officer consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan;

(c) provides the individual with a description of services available from the client assistance program and information on how to contact that program; and

(d) reviews any ineligibility determination that is based on a finding that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services within 12 months and annually thereafter, if such a review is requested by the individual or, if appropriate, by the individual's representative, except when the:

(1) individual has refused the review;

(2) individual is no longer present in the State;

(3) individual's whereabouts are unknown; or

(4) individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

6.7 Closure without ineligibility determination. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.44)

The State unit does not administratively close an applicant's record of services prior to making an eligibility determination unless the:

(a) applicant declines to participate in, or is unavailable to complete an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services; and

(b) State unit has made a reasonable number of attempts to contact the applicant or, if appropriate, the applicant's representative to encourage the applicant's participation.

6.8 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

(a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the State unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.

(b) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the eligible individual at the time needed to achieve the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit uses those comparable services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.

(c) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program, but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.

(d) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:

(1) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

(2) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act;

(3) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State plan;

(4) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services,

and follow-along services;

(5) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and

(6) post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.

(e) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection also do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:

(1) progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;

(2) an immediate job placement; or

(3) provision of such service to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.

(f) The Governor of the State in consultation with the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that there is an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act between any appropriate public entity, including the State medicaid program, public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system, and the designated State unit so as to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, other than the services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of such services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

6.9 Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need. (Section 12(c) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.54)

(a) No financial needs test is applied and no financial participation is required as a condition for furnishing the following vocational rehabilitation services:

(1) assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services, except those non-assessment services that are provided during an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and

capacity to perform in work situations, consistent with the requirements of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act;

(2) assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;

(3) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice;

(4) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through cooperative agreements under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan; and

(5) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.

(b) The State unit considers the financial need of eligible individuals, or individuals

who are receiving services during an exploration of an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations consistent with subparagraph (1) of paragraph (a) of this subsection, in order to determine the extent of the individual's participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services.

Yes No

(c) ***IF YES:***

(1) The State unit has written policies on the determination of financial need that are consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.54 and these policies:

(A) are applied uniformly to all individuals in similar circumstances; and

(B) ensure that the level of the individual's participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services is:

(i) reason
able;

(ii) based
on the
individ
ual's
financi
al
need,
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ng the

consideration of any disability-related expenses paid by the individual; and

(iii) not so high as to effectively deny the individual a necessary service

.

(2) Attachment 6.9(c)(2) specifies the services for which the designated State unit has a financial needs test.

6.10 Development of the individualized plan for employment.
(Sections 7(2)(B), 101(a)(9), and 102(b)(1) and (2) of the Act)

(a) The designated State unit conducts an assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs for each eligible individual, including the need for supported employment services, or, if the State is operating under an order of selection, for each eligible individual to whom the State is able to provide services, for the purpose of identifying the provisions to be included in the individualized plan for employment that

meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act.

(b) The development of the individualized plan for employment meets the following procedural requirements.

(1) The individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented in a timely manner subsequent to the determination of the eligibility of the individual for services under this State plan, except if the State is operating under an order of selection, the individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented only for individuals to whom the State is able to provide services.

(2) The designated State unit provides to the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, information on the individual's options for the development of the individualized plan for employment, including:

(A) information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the individualized

plan for employment for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual;

(B) a description of the full range of components that must be included in an individualized plan for employment;

(C) as appropriate,

(i) an explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an individualized plan for employment;

(ii) additional

information
the
eligible
individual
requests or the
designated
State
unit
determines to
be
necessary;
and

(iii)
information
on the
availability of
assistance in
completing
designated
State
agency
forms
required in
developing an
individualized
plan
for
employment;

(D) a description of the rights and remedies available to the eligible individual, including, if appropriate, recourse to mediation and the impartial due process hearing consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan; and

(E) a description of the availability of the client assistance program and information about how to contact the program.

(3) The individualized plan for employment is developed as a written document prepared on forms provided by the designated State unit and is developed and implemented in a manner that affords eligible individuals the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, the settings in which the services will be provided, the employment setting, and the methods used to procure the services consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.

(4) The individualized plan for employment is agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's

representative, and approved and signed by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit with a copy of the individualized plan for employment provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, of the individual's representative.

(5) The individualized plan for employment is reviewed at least annually by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative and amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a representative of the designated State agency or a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as determined to be appropriate by the individual.

(6) If there are substantive changes in the individualized plan for employment with respect to the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the services, such amendments to the

individualized plan for employment do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit.

6.11 Mandatory components of the individualized plan for employment. (Sections 101(a)(9), 102(b)(3), and 625(b)(6)(C),(E), and (F) of the Act)

(a) Each individualized plan for employment includes, at a minimum, the following mandatory components describing the:

(1) specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;

(2) specific rehabilitation services that are:

(A) needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services; and

(B) provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent

with the informed choice of the eligible individual;

(3) timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;

(4) entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods used to procure the services;

(5) criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;

(6) terms and conditions of the individualized plan for employment, including, as appropriate, information related to the:

(A)
responsibilities of the designated State unit;

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(C) responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefits requirements as identified in section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and

(7) projected need for post-employment services, as determined to be necessary.

(b) The individualized plan for employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate also contains the identification of the:

(1) extended services needed by the eligible individual; and

(2) source of the extended services or, to the extent that the source of extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the individualized plan for employment, the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that extended services will become available.

6.12 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act)

(a) The designated State unit:

(1) conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State plan who has achieved an employment outcome either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)) for 2 years after the achievement of the outcome (and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment; and

(2) makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in subparagraph (a)(1) in engaging in competitive employment.

(b) The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation, and acknowledges through sign-off that such review and reevaluation have been conducted.

SECTION 7: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated State agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in subsection 1.2 of the title I State plan is the State agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under title VI, part B of the Act.

7.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

Attachment 4.12(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) of the title I State plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities and the need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

7.3 Description of the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 7.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services.

7.4 Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) identifies the State's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act.

7.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.9(c)(4) describes the efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported

employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

7.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.12(d)(2) describes the designated State agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

7.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated State agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under part B of title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under title I of the Act.

SECTION 8: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated State agency expends no more than five percent of the State's allotment under section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

8.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

(a) Funds made available under title VI, part B of the Act are used by the designated State agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.

(b) Funds provided under title VI, part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under title I of the Act, in providing supported employment services

specified in the individualized plan for employment.

(c) Funds provided under part B of title VI or title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under part B of title VI or title I of the Act.

SECTION 9: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

9.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

(a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in section 7(36) of the Act.

(b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.

(c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

9.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with severe disabilities. (Section 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities, including the assessment of rehabilitation, career, and employment needs, conducted under section 102(b)(1)(A) of the Act and paragraph 6.10(a) of this State plan and funded under title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

9.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

(a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act and subsections 6.10 and

.11 of this State plan is developed and updated using funds under Title I.

(b) The individualized plan for employment:

(1) specifies the supported employment services to be provided;

(2) describes the expected extended services needed; and

(3) identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.

(c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs.

ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED OF ALL AGENCIES

Attachment 4.9(c): Cooperation and
Coordination with Other Agencies
and Other Entities

(1) Cooperation with
Agencies That Are
Not in the Statewide
Workforce
Investment System
and with Other
Entities

(2) Coordination with
Education Officials

(3) Cooperative
Agreements with
Private Non-profit
Vocational
Rehabilitation Service
Providers

(4) Evidence of
Collaboration
Regarding Supported
Employment Services
and Extended
Services

Attachment 4.11(b):
Comprehensive System of Personnel
Development

Attachment 4.12 Assessments;
Estimates; Goals and Priorities;
Strategies; and Progress Reports

(a): Results of
Comprehensive Statewide
Assessment of the
Rehabilitation Needs of
Individuals with Disabilities
and Need to Establish,
Develop, or Improve
Community Rehabilitation
Programs

(b): Annual Estimates of
Individuals to Be Served and
Costs of Services

(c)(1): State's Goals and
Priorities

(c)(3): Goals and Plans for
Distribution of Title VI, Part
B Funds

(d): State's Strategies and
Use of Title I Funds for
Innovation and Expansion
Activities

(1) To Address Needs
Identified in the
Comprehensive
Assessment and to
Achieve Identified
Goals and Priorities

(2) To Carryout
Outreach Activities to
Identify and Serve
Individuals with the
Most Significant
Disabilities Who are
Minorities

(3) To Overcome
Identified Barriers
Relating to Equitable
Access to and
Participation of
Individuals with
Disabilities in the
State Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services Program and
the State Supported
Employment Services
Program.

(e): Evaluation and Report of
Progress in Achieving
Identified Goals and
Priorities and Use Of Title I
Funds for Innovation and
Expansion Activities

Attachment 4.16(b)(2): Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing
Procedures

Attachment 7.3: Quality, Scope,
and Extent of Supported
Employment Services

ATTACHMENTS CONTINGENT ON OPTIONS SELECTED

The following attachments identified by an "X" are also submitted as part of the State plan.

**X Attachment 4.2(c): Summary of Input and
Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation
Council; Response of the Designated State Unit;
and Explanations for Rejection of Input or
Recommendations**

**Attachment 4.5: Local
Administration**

**X Attachment 4.6(a)(3): Request
for Waiver of Statewideness**

**Attachment 4.7(b): Shared
Funding and Administration of
Joint Program**

**X Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A): Order
of Selection**

**Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B):
Explanation to Support the Decision
Not to Establish an Order of
Selection**

**X Attachment 6.9(c)(2): Services
Subject to Financial Needs Test**

SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL (SRC); RESPONSE OF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT (DVRs); AND EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTION OF INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS

The State Rehabilitation Council contracted with the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University for the Consumer Satisfaction Survey to solicit the views of consumers who have received services from DVRs. More than 7-in-10 clients say their overall experience with DVRs was excellent or good and a similar group gave positive ratings to the guidance provided by their DVRs counselor. There is an overall positive degree of satisfaction with the services provided by DVRs.

About half of the respondents gave positive ratings to the services provided by DVRs to help clients get or keep a job. The Council recommended to DVRs that steps be taken to increase the assistance provided to consumers. DVRs agreed with this finding and has committed new resources to the Employer Services Network and the Systematic Approaches to Gainful Employment (SAGE) project.

In order to receive consumer input at various stages of consumer's participation in the program, the Council recommended that a short survey form be distributed to consumers while they are receiving services from DVRs. DVRs agreed and when the form is finalized, it will be given to consumers by local office personnel and returned directly to Eagleton for analysis. The DVRs agrees that this will give immediate feedback on consumer satisfaction during the service phase so that problems and difficulties can be resolved in a timely fashion.

At the annual SRC retreat in March 1999, the members will review the survey in detail and will make additional recommendations to DVRs.

The 1998 Amendments establish mediation as a voluntary component of due process to resolve consumer grievances with agency decisions. DVRs has informed the SRC of the steps that will be taken to implement this when requested by a consumer. The SRC has recommended the adoption of the procedure and DVRs will establish it and include it in administrative code.

The SRC has reviewed the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD). DVRs will sponsor counseling staff for Master's degrees through UMDNJ to meet the requirements of CSPD. The SRC endorses this concept to develop a highly trained counseling staff. The council recommended that consideration must be given to availability of the program to minority candidates and the subject matter emphasize the significant role of the consumer in the rehabilitation process. The DVRs agreed to incorporate this into the plan.

The Council recommended to DVRs that there be greater consumer involvement on the State Employment and Training Council (SETC) and the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS). The SETC and the boards need sensitization to the needs of persons with

disabilities in relation to the job market. DVRS will work through the Department of Labor to see that the SETC and WIBS are aware of this concern and of the availability of technical assistance.

The Council is concerned that One-Stop sites be accessible to persons with disabilities and address all communication modalities in order that consumers can fully utilize the services on the same basis as all other citizens. DVRS will work with the appropriate units of the Department of Labor to see that all the employment needs of persons with disabilities are addressed by the One-Stop system.

The SRC strongly supports the continuation of transition programming for students with disabilities. They are pleased with DVRS' efforts in transitioning and recommended that programs be increased. The agency agreed with this recommendation and will continue working closely with the Department of Education to enforce this.

The annual retreat will be held in March 1999. These retreats are essential in facilitating stronger working relationships with Council members and interaction with DVRS. The Council recommends that the DVRS provide training on the 1998 Amendments to the membership during the retreat. DVRS agrees with this recommendation. The Director and his staff will provide the training. DVRS will, at the request of the Council, provide assistance at the retreat on Council goal planning for 1999.

DVRS agrees with the following recommendations of the SRC State Plan Committee and they are incorporated in Attachments 4.11(b) or 4.12 as appropriate:

- Identify and target low income urban areas for outreach for transition services for students with disabilities
- Ensure that all counselors are trained in current best practices to provide technical consultation regarding the inclusion of transition services in the IEPs of students with disabilities
- Ensure that cultural diversity training addresses New Jersey's rapidly growing Asian population
- Address the identified need to improve transportation services to individuals with disabilities by strengthening DVRS' relationship with NJ Transit and exploring the possibility of accessing transportation services developed for TANF recipients under NJ's Work First (Welfare to Work) Program for individuals with disabilities
- Increase outreach activities to welfare recipients with disabilities

**REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS
AND
IDENTIFICATION OF THE TYPES OF ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT
UNDER A WAIVER OF STATEWIDENESS**

NJDVRS plans to fund special joint transition projects for youth with disabilities in local school districts through shared funding and administration. The activities to be carried out under these projects are as follows:

- * job sampling experiences
- * on-the-job experiences
- * vocational assessments
- * job development activities

NJDVRS will secure written assurances from participating local education agencies (LEAs) that they will: contribute the non-Federal share of funds; obtain NJDVRS approval for each proposed service before it is put in effect; and apply all other state plan requirements, including DVRS= order of selection requirements to all services approved under the waiver (copy attached).

**Assurances Required from LEAs Entering Cooperative Agreements with NJDVRS
to**

Share the Cost of Transition Services for DVRS Eligible LEA Students

1. Services funded under this agreement are not the customary or typical services provided by the LEA, but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus. These services are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services from NJDVRS. The approval of NJDVRS will be obtained for each proposed service before it is put into effect.
2. Program expenditures and staff providing services are under the administrative supervision of NJDVRS.
3. NJDVRS' State Plan requirements, including its order of selection, will apply to all services provided under the cooperative program.
4. The LEA's financial share will be met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed by a private agency, organization or individuals. These non-federal funds will not be used for

any other match purposes and will be provided in cash or through certified cash expenditures.

5. Services funded under this agreement are not services of the LEA to which an individual with a disability would be entitled if he/she were not an applicant or client of NJDVRs.

Signature Name and Title Date

Name and address of LEA

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES

Cooperation with Agencies that Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

It is incumbent upon the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services to be a major player in the delivery of services to persons with disabilities. The finite nature of the resources available to the program dictates that this undertaking cannot truly succeed as a solo effort. It is necessary to enter into many formal and informal arrangements with agencies that have services to offer the individual with a disability, while at the same time relating with those programs whose focus is centered on the general population.

The Division presently has existing Cooperative Agreements with the following agencies that are not required partners in the Statewide Workforce Investment System:

Division of Developmental Disabilities (Supported Employment & Transitioning)

Division of Mental Health Services (Supported Employment)

Department of Education Office of Special Education Program

(Supported Employment & Transitioning)

NJ Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

New Jersey Head Injury Association

Lexington Center

Mental Health Services State Planning Board

New Jersey Transit ADA Task Force

Technology Related Assistance Program

Division of Youth and Family Services

In addition, NJDVRS is a member of various councils, task forces, advisory bodies, etc. that foster interagency cooperation. NJ DVRS is represented on the State Special Education Advisory Council, the Special Needs Advisory Group to the Commission on Higher Education, the Developmental Disabilities Council, the Commodities and Services Council whose mission is to expand the employment opportunities for adults with significant disabilities through the State Use Law, TBI-NET, advisory bodies to Region II, RCEP, etc.

On the local level, DVRS is not only represented on every Workforce Investment Board (WIB), WIB School to Work Opportunities Committee, and county transition consortium in the State, but is actively involved with Human Service Advisory Councils, community mental health planning bodies and those private and public entities that may be of benefit to individuals with disabilities.

Many of our interagency efforts are defined contractually (UCPANJ, community colleges, many community rehabilitation programs, Centers for Independent Living, etc.), though not all. Some exist through informal agreements, networking and long established (but not necessarily written) practices (New Jersey American Congress of Community Support and Employment Services [NJ ACCSES formerly NJARF] , NJRA, Association of Persons in Supported Employment [APSE], the Deaf Consortium, the New Jersey Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, etc.)

Coordination with Education Officials

The New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJ DVRS) is prepared to work with the educational system to provide technical assistance, both formal and informal, in the development of transition plans and to assess the eligibility of those students who may need and want DVRS services when they exit the school system, regardless of whether or not they were eligible for special education. The State Unit is also prepared to develop an Individualized Plan for

Employment (IPE) with the eligible student, prior to graduation, to assure that needed transition services which have not been completed will continue in the youth's post-secondary endeavors as a seamless transition.

On September 30, 1998, New Jersey completed a five year federal transition grant from the United States Department of Education entitled the "*New Jersey Partnership for Transition from School to Adult Life for Youth with Disabilities.*" The grant was a collaborative effort among the Department of Education (DOE) Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) and the Office of School to Careers Initiative (OSTCI), DVRS in the New Jersey Department Labor (NJ DOL), the University Affiliated Program (UAP) at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey and the Statewide Parent Advocacy Network (SPAN).

Fiscal year '98 was the fifth and final year of the grant, but DVRS is continuing both the quantitative and qualitative changes in our relationships with secondary students with disabilities and with the teachers and child study team personnel who work with them. An individual counselor is now assigned to each school district and is responsible for providing in-service training to school staff and Technical Consultations to students, parents and educators on request, even before referral for eligibility determination is indicated. A Technical Consultation is defined as a request by the local school system, parent or student for technical assistance from a DVRS counselor on transition plans for a student with a disability who is at least age 14, but not within two years of exiting, or a student who is not ready to have a case opened and eligibility determined.

The transition goal continues to be collaboration with both local and state level education staff in order to provide outcome based transition services to youth with disabilities, beginning at age 14. Our objective is to ensure that DVRS input will be available, when needed, so that realistic vocational plans can become part of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) statement of transition services needs (related to instruction) at age 14, and part of the IEP statement of needed transition services at age 16, and DVRS counselors can determine eligibility and develop IPEs while the student is still in school.

DVRS will continue to educate counselors as to the need to be involved earlier in the transition process in order to be sure that eligibility determinations are completed and IPEs developed before graduation; to encourage counselors to share this information with their assigned schools; to continue to offer technical assistance while students are still in school; and to improve our interactions with guidance counselors who have the responsibility for transition planning for those students with disabilities who are not classified as needing special education.

The innovative initiative, undertaken by DVRS in FY '97 and still continuing is a jointly funded project with school districts to provide funding of personnel to provide vocational assessments, job sampling, job development, on-the-job training opportunities and job coaching for DVRS eligible students. Services are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services from DVRS. Services funded under these agreements are not services of the partner agency to which an individual with a disability would be entitled if he/she were not an applicant to or client of DVRS. They are not the customary or typical services provided by LEAs, but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus. These agreements are envisioned as three year collaborative funding, at 75% DVRS, 25% school district the first year, 50%/50% the second year and 25% DVRS, 75% school district the third year. The districts must agree to maintain the projects after the joint funding ceases.

Agreements to fund these projects are currently in place with Bergen County Technical/Special Services School District (there is now an 87% participation rate from all public school systems in Bergen County), which is serviced by our Hackensack office, with Mercer County Special Services School District, which is serviced by our Trenton local office and with the Pennsville School District which is serviced by our Bridgeton local office. Local offices are pleased with the programs and feel that the agreements have not only increased transition services to students with disabilities, but have improved relationships and referral procedures with all of the schools involved in the programs.

Fiscal year 1998 was the first year of a new five year transition project, *Transition Counselors in the Schools*, funded by the Office of Special Education, Department of Education. The project provides \$300,000 annually to provide salaries for six DVRS counselors to work in schools in order to provide vocational rehabilitation oriented services to transitioning students, and to teach school personnel how to provide services such as vocational exploration, situational vocational assessment and other community based vocational experiences including job tours, job sampling, paid and unpaid work experiences. The counselors work with students who are younger than students typically referred to DVRS and are able to provide more intensive and frequent services than those offered outside of this project, which are generally limited to Technical Consultations.

This program is established in the Burlington, Elizabeth, Morristown, Newark, Paterson and Toms River DVRS offices. Project counselors rotate through school districts, moving on when the office feels confident that child study team members are able to make informal decisions as to

when to make a DVRS referral and when systems are in place to include community-based job experiences and assessments as part of the students' IEPs. They work as a team with in-office DVRS counselors, providing training on transition and working with them to transfer cases to the in-office caseloads, either for eligibility determination or for development of the IPE.

Interagency collaboration has been the cornerstone of the New Jersey Transition from School to Adult Life program. Although the systems change grant no longer exists, interagency initiatives have continued to flourish.

On the state level, both DVRS and OSEP continue to provide designated staff to coordinate the programs. The State Agency Directors Forum, which meets about every two months, has been expanded to include DVRS; OSEP and the Office of School to Careers Initiatives (OSTCI), both in the DOE; the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), both in the Department of Human Services; and the newly established Juvenile Justice Commission. Recently this group has focused on state policy issues and services to those with the most severe disabilities. These six State Agency Directors continue to meet and share policy concerns regarding transition.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

In addition to implementing those cooperative agreements included in section one of this attachment, DVRS: meets regularly with a liaison committee of the New Jersey American Congress of Community Support and Employment Services (ACCSES), also known as the New Jersey Association of Rehabilitation Facilities (NJARF), which consists of their Executive Committee and others; actively participates in the annual conference and joint planning with the Association of Persons in Supported Employment (APSE); plans and implements joint programs with leading comprehensive rehabilitation facilities such as the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation and JFK Johnson Rehabilitation Institute; meets regularly with the Centers for Independent Living; and maintains active involvement in the Technology Assistive Resource Program (TARP) which is now operated by New Jersey Protection and Advocacy, Inc.

Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is presently working on an updated agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). One of the objectives of the agreement is to facilitate the movement of individuals being served in supported employment from the intensive phase of job coaching to the extended phase. DDD assumes responsibility for the follow along services in the extended phase.

The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services has contracted with the Division of Mental Health Services to provide both the intensive phase and extended phase of supported employment through the Community Mental Health Center System. Not only has the Division of Mental Health Services committed funds to the extended phase, but as of fiscal year 1998 supplemented DVRS funds for the intensive phase also.

DVRS receives state funds for placement under the Sheltered Workshop Act. Presently, \$500,000 of this grant-in-aid is reserved for funding extended services for supported employment for individuals who do not qualify for funds from other State Divisions.

PROCEDURES AND ACTIVITIES REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (CSPD)

The NJDVRS Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) establishes and supports a highly qualified staff dedicated to offering vocational rehabilitation services to eligible individuals with disabilities.

The mission of the New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services is to enable eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve employment outcomes consistent with their strengths, priorities, needs, abilities and capabilities. In keeping with the goals set forth by the mission the CSPD focuses on the following areas:

- Pre-service training
- Recruitment of qualified personnel
- Training needs of current employees
- Continuing education
- Development of Vocational Rehabilitation personnel

- Retention of qualified VR personnel

Information was gathered from employee records, hiring information, interaction with university based training programs, certifying bodies and an ongoing process of training needs assessment. Guidelines have been provided by The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended and the New Jersey Department of Personnel hiring policies and terms of employment. Projections were made based on the current number of employees in regard to their age, length of service, education and availability of training resources. A draft of the report was submitted to the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the comments received were incorporated into the document.

Pre-service Training and Recruitment - Background

In New Jersey there is one graduate level program that prepares students in Psycho-social Rehabilitation. This course has not yet been CORE (Council on Rehabilitation Education) approved. Other Graduate programs in the state offer related degrees in Social Work and Student Personnel Services. Within Region 2 there are several CORE approved Rehabilitation Counseling Programs at NYU, Hofstra and Hunter College.

NJ Department of Personnel (DOP) recruits potential employees through a generic system of open competitive testing. On occasion the Department offers an open competitive examination in the VR Counselor series. Due to their specific nature the Rehabilitation Counselor for the Deaf and the Spanish/English Counselor positions can be recruited directly. Due to the downsizing of certain State agencies the DOP maintains lists of employees who have been affected by a Reduction in Force (RIF). Prior to filling new positions these lists must be explored.

NJDVRS is in discussions with the New Jersey Department of Labor Office of Personnel to review the standards for open competitive hiring, accepting transfers from other state agencies and promoting from NJDVRS paraprofessional and support titles. The intent of these discussions is to ensure that the recruitment practices are compatible with the standards or qualifications based on the highest requirements in the state for the rehabilitation counseling profession. "Highest requirements in the state applicable to that profession or discipline means the highest entry level academic degree needed for any national or state approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or other comparable requirements that apply to that profession or discipline." In the State of New Jersey the recently amended Professional Counselor Licensure Law identifies a combination of education and experience as standards for the designation of Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor (LRC) which makes it the highest requirement in the state.

Goal 1: To recruit qualified applicants for entry level DVRS Counselor positions.

Action Steps:

- Maintain relationships with CORE accredited schools throughout Region 2.

- CSAVR Regional Education Forums
- Expand Intern Program with DVRS
- Support the efforts of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey – School of Health Related Professions (UMDNJ-SHRP) to establish a Rehabilitation Counseling Program eligible for CORE approval.
- Explore testing options within the structure of DOP and graduate programs.
- Work with DOP recruitment staff to feature careers in vocational rehabilitation.
- Encourage staff to participate in Career Days and other similar events in High Schools.
- Target school districts and community colleges in urban enterprise zones for career development.

Training Needs of Current Employees/Continuing Education - Background

The Rehabilitation Act recognizes the need for an ongoing and progressive In Service Training Program to upgrade the skills, increase the knowledge and maximize the performance of personnel employed by the Designated State Unit (DSU) who provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities.

NJDVRS offers a complete selection of training for all levels of VR personnel through:

- The DVRS Institute (Subject matter experts from the program staff)
- The Region 2 Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program - RRCEP-2
- The NJ Department of Personnel Human Resource Development Institute
- The NJ Department of Labor Office of Personnel and Training
- Selected Consultants and RSA Short Term Training Grants
- Selected conferences, workshops and seminars

Goal 2: To enhance the knowledge, skills and abilities of DVRS employees.

Action steps:

- Implementation of the In-Service Training Plan
- Coordination of all training offered through other resources

- Increase staff awareness of emerging trends, changing demographics and statewide economic development
- computerization of case recording
- state population issues in regard to aging and identified minority groups
- labor market information
- incentives and funding streams following state empowerment zones
- welfare to work initiatives
- transition from school to work best practices
- familiarity with revised Individual Education Plan (IEP)
- Continued awareness of individuals with disabilities from traditionally underserved minority groups
- adherence to a cultural competency model
 - development of outreach programs for groups identified in Section 21 of the Rehab Act
 - encourage RRCEP II to explore service needs of New Jersey's growing Asian population.

In 1998 a survey was conducted by the Training Unit in order to determine the education and training needs of staff at all levels. Based on the Regulations of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1992 and the issues that were further stated in the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 pertaining to "qualified rehabilitation personnel," the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) has determined that a Master's Degree and eligibility for the highest certification requirement in the state will be necessary for all staff in counseling titles.

NJDVRS has identified those counselors in need of educational upgrading. The analyses of the 1998 survey reveals that of the 145 employees in counseling titles, there are 93 individuals in need of further education to comply with the law.

Goal 3: To ensure that qualified rehabilitation personnel serve the individuals with disabilities who participate in the Public Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Action Steps

- Creation of an In-state Master's Degree Program for DVRS personnel

- Contract with UMDNJ – SHRP to fund tuition for 100 employees to achieve a Masters Degree in Rehabilitation Counseling (a five year timeframe allows all affected personnel to begin the program and for DVRS to build the skills of newly hired staff)
- Continue to supplement the funding of the Tuition Refund Program with resources from the In Service Training Grant
- Explore a distance learning program with schools within the Region
- Explore a program of CAGS (Certificate of Advanced Graduate Studies)
- Encourage involvement with Thomas Edison College
- Maintain training offerings that grant Continuing Education Units (CEU's)

Goal 4: To enable VR Counselors to obtain and maintain the CRC and/or the New Jersey Licensed Rehabilitation Counselor through In-Service Training

Action Steps

- Continue to offer credits for all DVRS sponsored programs
- Offer opportunities to attend approved programs through the In Service Training Grant resources
- Offer a study guide for eligible candidates to take the CRC exam
- Establish a match between CRC Supervisors and candidates for mentoring
- Offer up to date information on application procedures for LRC

Goal 5: To expand outreach to individuals with disabilities who are from traditionally underserved minority backgrounds as identified in the Act by offering opportunities to employees of similar backgrounds.

Action Steps:

- Expand promotional opportunities for paraprofessional and support staff
- Emphasize career track
- Promote Tuition Refund Program
- Collaborate with RRCEP-II to increase awareness of cultural diversity
- Recruit through an information program to clients attending college.

Retention of Qualified VR Personnel - Background

An analysis of the VR personnel records reveals that there are a significant number of employees with over 20 years experience. In addition these staff members are nearing an age where they will be considering retirement within the next 5 years. Therefore, plans must be made to maintain the management structure as well as the staffing patterns to operate a full service VR agency. In all likelihood there will not be an expansion of the positions dedicated to the program so we will base projections on the current levels.

Goal 6: To prepare staff to assume new roles as a part of the succession plan.

Action Steps:

- Continue to offer training opportunities for advanced degrees at all levels.
- Offer a mentoring program to groom new management and counseling staff.
- Continue support of the National Executive Leadership Program.
- Expand support of the Certified Public Management Program.

In addition to the need to employ qualified personnel, the agency recognizes the need for service providers with whom we do business to employ qualified rehabilitation personnel. Through collaborative efforts, we hope to assure that appropriate graduate level training programs will be available within the State of New Jersey to community rehabilitation program personnel, as well as to DVRS staff.

Goal 7: To evaluate the progress of these training efforts to ensure improved services to individuals with disabilities.

Action Steps:

- Staff will meet established standards for qualified rehabilitation personnel.
- Future SRC consumer satisfaction surveys will reflect improved level of counselor competency.
- Internal DVRS practices such as the Performance Assessment Review (PAR) will address educational achievement in the developmental plans.
- Creation of a recognition program for those achieving the master's degree in Rehabilitation Counseling.

ASSESSMENTS; ESTIMATES; GOALS AND PRIORITIES; STRATEGIES; AND PROGRESS REPORTS

(a)(1)(A) Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals

In response to the need that was identified to increase clients' options for choice of vendors in

the area of supported employment, DVRS continues to accept applications to vend supported

employment and to approve those programs meeting the standards adopted in Chapter 51 of the

New Jersey Administrative Code. DVRS now provides supported employment services

through 77 community rehabilitation programs throughout the State.

The Transition Partnership has raised awareness of school personnel to DVRS's services. The earlier involvement of the local VR counselor in the individual's plan has raised community awareness of the Division's role in assisting individuals exiting the school system enter the business community. It is anticipated that this increased awareness will increase demand.

Some of the students may indeed have become active in supported employment or supported community activities prior to their transitioning. In some instances this may supplant services that would have been expected from DVRS. However, some individuals who have been participating in the supported community programs have significantly more functional involvement (requiring assistance with toileting, feeding, suctioning, etc.) than the Division or its vendors has experienced. Strategies for providing and acquiring services for these extremely involved individuals will receive attention.

It is anticipated that some of these individuals who prior to the 1998 Amendments would have required an extended evaluation will, under the new Amendments, require trial work experiences. DVRS is taking the steps necessary to ensure that there will be adequately prepared community resources to meet these anticipated needs.

In addition, DVRS will identify and target low income urban areas for outreach for transition services for students with disabilities and will ensure that all counselors are trained in current best practices to provide technical consultation regarding the inclusion of transition services in the IEPs of students with disabilities.

Efforts to address the needs of individuals with the most severe disabilities who are minorities are rooted in the training of qualified rehabilitation staff, community outreach and increased vendors/resources who are trained in working with these populations.

The following methods will be used by the state agency to ensure that outreach occurs:

Staff training, including training that addresses New Jersey's rapidly growing Asian population, to understand multi-cultural issues, appreciate cultural differences, as well

as, understanding and sensitivity to communication issues and traditional coping skills as they pertain to disability and employment.

Community outreach to encourage students from minority backgrounds to become interested in the field of rehabilitation.

Recruitment of qualified minorities.

Development of those resources qualified to evaluate, assess and serve individuals whose language and cultural barriers may be impeding their progress toward achieving their vocational goals.

NJDVRS encourages its providers to recruit bilingual culturally sensitive staff to serve individuals who are minorities with the most severe disabilities.

Through collaborative efforts with Work First New Jersey (Welfare to Work) and New Jersey's One Stop Career Centers, DVRS will electronically link with many agencies targeting services to minorities. These links will not only enhance increased referrals to DVRS of minorities and welfare recipients with disabilities, but will foster increased collaboration among the partners to address other identified needs, such as transportation. DVRS, in addition to strengthening its ties with NJ Transit, plans to explore the possibility of accessing transportation services developed for TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) recipients under the Work First Program for individuals with disabilities.

The goal of the In Service Training Program is to upgrade the skills, increase the knowledge and maximize the performance of Vocational Rehabilitation personnel so that they may provide quality services to individuals with disabilities. In conjunction with the Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RCEP) and New Jersey's "Many Faces, One Family" Program, the Training Unit will offer training sessions that increase awareness of cultural diversity issues and outreach methods to promote services to individuals from minority groups.

The Training Plan addresses the following:

Staff training including training that addresses New Jersey's rapidly growing Asian population, to understand multi-cultural issues, appreciate cultural difference and be sensitive to communication issues and traditional coping skills as they pertain to disability and employment.

Through community outreach encourage students from minority backgrounds to become interested in the field of rehabilitation and in turn, reach increased numbers of individuals from traditionally underserved populations who are in need.

The creation of "Best Practice" guidelines to facilitate the inclusion of all people with disabilities to access Vocational Rehabilitation services and achieve employment outcomes.

Replication of the Counselor Workbook Project which is a program that develops a comfortable alliance between the field office and the individual with a disability from one of the traditionally underserved minority groups.

The RCEP will offer technical assistance in achieving cultural competence, awareness and sensitivity through group discussion, individual interviews and targeted research projects.

The NJ Department of Personnel's Human Resource Development Institute (HRDI) offers training entitled "Valuing Diversity" to all state employees.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) has incorporated goals to increase the numbers of VR personnel from the identified minority backgrounds by offering opportunities to employees from those groups to advance within the agency through training and education. This will be achieved through Individual Development Plans (IDP's), the NJ Department of Labor Tuition Refund Program, and a special initiative with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ). See attachment 4.11(b) for details.

(a)(1)(B) Community Rehabilitation Program Needs

In addition to the need to develop adequate programs to provide trial work experiences as mentioned above, the need for short term (3 to 5 days) comprehensive vocational evaluation has been identified and is being addressed jointly with representatives of ACCSES. DVRS recognizes the need for the community rehabilitation programs to employ and develop qualified rehabilitation personnel and will provide

assistance in this area by continuing staff development efforts under innovation and expansion activities and seeing that both the Regional Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program at the State University of New York and the Masters degree vocational rehabilitation counseling program at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey give adequate consideration to both the continuing education and recruitment needs of community rehabilitation programs.

DVRS will meet with its Professional Advisory Committee to Community Rehabilitation Programs to consider proposing amendments to the New Jersey Administrative Code regarding the qualifications of community rehabilitation program personnel delivering supported employment services to DVRS clients and the ratio of community rehabilitation program staff to clients in various program categories.

In response to requests from the Passaic County rehabilitation community, DVRS is considering establishing a community rehabilitation program that includes extended/supported employment components in Passaic County.

Annual estimates

(1) It is estimated that 25,590 individuals will be eligible for services in Program Year 2000.

Of the 25,590 eligible individuals, it is estimated that all will receive services provided under Part B of Title I of the Act and/or under Part B of Title VI of the Act. Estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order of selection for services are provided in Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A).

Service costs for each priority category within the order are estimated as follows:

Priority One \$40,447,295

Priority Two \$5,872,500

Priority Three \$3,720,000

Total \$ \$50,039,795

(c)(1) Goals and Priorities

NJDVRS will continue to emphasize the achievement of employment outcomes that are integrated, competitive and where there is a career path for the individual. This is reflected in section (d) and (e) below.

In addition to those areas to which DVRS anticipated dedicating a portion of funds to innovation and expansion, as outlined in section (d) below, DVRS will:

reach out to TANF, SSDI and SSI recipients with disabilities in partnership with the Work First, Pass It On and other collaborative programs assisting individuals to become more self sufficient and less dependent on public assistance.

help implement a fully coordinated One-Stop System with streamlined service delivery that meets the needs of all those looking to enter the workforce, stay in the workforce or re-enter the workforce, as well as the needs of employers.

coordinate its specialized Employer Services Network with the Business Service Representatives serving the Work First and One-Stop initiatives.

capitalize on the many resources available through state of the art information technology, including the Career Information Delivery System, America's Job Bank, America's Talent Bank and America's Career Infonet.

reinforce the strategies found most effective in the Systematic Approaches to Gainful Employment (SAGE) pilot offices in all of the DVRS local offices.

assure through program evaluation activities that the Amendments of 1998 have been fully implemented.

(c)(2)(A) Order of Selection

The number of people in New Jersey with disabilities, who are prevented from working, or in danger of losing their jobs as a result of their impairment, is projected to continue to be greater than the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (NJDVRS) resources available to serve them. As a result, the NJDVRS has determined that it is necessary to continue operating under an Order of Selection for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

Beginning in FY '89, there were insufficient funds for evaluation of all applicants, and services to all clients NJDVRS found eligible. Services were delayed and authorized from FY '90 allocations when they became available, thereby beginning FY '90 in a deficit mode.

Since implementation of the Order of Selection in October 1991, NJDVRS has developed and refined fiscal and case management policies and practices that will enable it, in Program Year 2000, with careful control of the priority categories being served, to actually provide services to every client found eligible for services. Continuation of the Order of Selection is considered to be crucial to this fiscal management system, enabling DVRS to serve all of, and an increasing number of, individuals with the most significant disabilities; and maximize the number of clients served in the less significant categories with a minimum of delay.

NJDVRS does not rely solely on a diagnosis as a determination of significant disability, but does consider every disability, or combination of disabilities as evaluated during the assessment, for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs. If the disability, or combination of disabilities, presents impairments that seriously limit at least one functional capacity (such as mobility, communication, self-care, self-direction, inter-personal skills, work tolerance, or work skills), in terms of an employment outcome, and if vocational rehabilitation can be expected to require multiple services over an extended period of time; the person will be considered to be significantly disabled.

Order of Selection Categories

Priority One - Clients classified as individuals with a most significant disability who meet the following criteria:

have a significant physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which seriously limit two or more functional capacities in terms of employment outcome, and

require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Program Year 2000 Service Goal: 18,575

Outcome

Goal: 2,555

Time Frame: July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

Priority Two - Clients classified as individuals with a significant disability who meet the following criteria:

have a significant physical or mental impairment or combination of impairments which seriously limit at least one functional capacity in terms of employment outcome, and

require multiple vocational rehabilitation services over an extended period of time.

Program Year 2000 Service Goal: 3,915

Outcome

Goal: 575

Time Frame: July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

Priority Three - All other eligible clients.

Program Year 2000 Service Goal: 3,100

Outcome

Goal: 730

Time Frame: July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

TOTAL Service Goal: 25,590

Outcome Goal: 3,860

Time Frame: July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000

If all eligible clients within a designated priority category cannot be served with funds available, they will be provided services in the order in which they applied for services.

The Order of Selection shall not preclude:

Diagnostic services necessary to establish a client's eligibility

Post-employment services

Information and referral services

(c)(3) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

The goal of DVRS is to create an effective, coordinated system of supported employment work opportunities throughout New Jersey to meet the needs of individuals with various disabilities. Targeted disability groups include individuals with serious mental illness, with developmental disabilities, who are deaf or hard of hearing, and those with traumatic brain injury. To achieve this goal, DVRS plans the following objectives:

To review the fee for service for supported employment services which was implemented April 1, 1992

To provide supported employment training opportunities for staff members of providers as needed

To continue to expand the list of qualified providers, as appropriate

To review and consider proposing amendments to the Standards to Vend Supported Employment in the New Jersey Administrative Code (N.J.A.C. 12:51)

For Program Year 2000 the New Jersey DVRS is expecting to obligate over 3 million dollars for supported employment. This is a combination of approximately \$830,000 Title VI-B funds, \$450,000 of State funds and approximately 1.7 million dollars of Title I funds (federal/State) to augment the Title VI-B funds.

For Program Year 2000, DVRS projects providing supported employment services to at least 1700 individuals with the following most significant disabilities:

Mental Illness 750

Developmental Disabilities
650

Deafness/Hard of Hearing
150

Traumatic Brain Injury 150

State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

In addition to implementing the strategies mentioned above, DVRS plans to dedicate Title I funds for innovation and expansion activities outlined below:

transition programs delivered to students with disabilities by LEAs entering cooperative cost sharing agreements

behavior modification (support) programs for individuals with the most significant disabilities who are currently served in sheltered workshops to assist them to move to employment in integrated job settings

local area networks that will enable local office personnel to more fully utilize information technology systems that will benefit their clients

a computerized case and caseload management system to enable counselors to serve clients more efficiently

professional development programs to ensure services are delivered by qualified personnel

operation/initiatives of both the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC) and the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC)

(e) Evaluation and reports of progress

Many of the goals and activities highlighted in the Strategic Plan for the period October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2000 are still being pursued.

DVRS did achieve increased integrated employment for its clients. In federal fiscal year 1998, 89% of all rehabilitated closures were competitively employed; 81% of rehabilitated closures who were significantly disabled were competitively employed. There was a mathematical difference of 73 between the percentage of individuals exiting the program in competitive employment who reported their own income as the largest single source of economic support at exit when compared to the percentage who reported their own income as the largest single source of support at application.

During the five quarters that ended 12/31/98, DVRS expended \$47,992 (ffy 1998) and \$17,681 (ffy 1999) on its Systematic Approaches to Gainful Employment (SAGE) initiative. Effective placement techniques identified in the pilot offices have been implemented on a statewide basis.

The shared funding of joint transition programs with local education agencies (LEAs) continued in Bergen and Mercer Counties, and a new project was implemented with the Pennsville School District in Salem County. FY 1998 expenditures and obligations at 12/31/98 totaled \$398,873. FY 1999 expenditures and obligations at 12/31/98 totaled \$221,179. In FY 1998 Bergen County participants increased 8% (from 238 to 256) and there was a 7% increase (from 197 to 210) in vocational assessments. Comparable increases were not achieved in on-the-job experiences or competitive employment. Mercer County realized modest increases in both participants (6% from 36 to 38) and vocational assessments (8% from 36 to 39), but not in on-the-job experiences or employment outcomes. Pennsville was extremely slow in getting started, but did begin to make some headway in developing both transition plans and community based assessments. All projects achieved strengthened relationships and smoother transitions with DVRS local offices.

The behavior modification (support) project for sheltered employees will be implemented before the end of FY 1999.

Fifty Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP) staff will be trained in profiling before the end of FY 1999. It is anticipated that there will be an additional course offered in Program Year 2000. \$29,112 in FY 1998 I&E funds was expended for in-service training for CRP staff.

An Employer Services Network has been established and is being coordinated by a Program Development Specialist in the Central Office who has a primary liaison with a designated backup person in each local office. He coordinates with the Business Service Representatives unit of the Department of Labor to maximize the impact of the unit and avoid duplication of effort.

The FY 1999 contract with HireAbility was increased to \$100,000, a \$41,000 or 69% increase over their FY 1998 contract. Their program was expanded to: include Mercer County; increase the number of local job fairs where they will offer the "Windmills" disability awareness training; increase the training opportunities for DVRS staff; and offer internships to five NJ college students with disabilities.

With the increase in funding from the National Institute of Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR) to the Technology Assistive Resource Program (TARP), it was not necessary to dedicate I&E funds to assessing the need for technology demonstration/assessment centers. New Jersey Protection and Advocacy, Inc. (NJP&A), through the TARP, is in the process of identifying what is already available and what is still needed to provide adequate access.

Full integration in One Stop Centers and pilot projects to meet the demands of Work First New Jersey (Welfare to Work) continue as objectives.

Efforts to establish Assistive Technology Consultation Services for DVRS staff has been thwarted by the lack of a clear authority in the field. Who is qualified to provide such consultation is not clear, and there is no recognized certifying body on which to rely. Among those vying for a position of authority in the field are CARF and RESNA. The effort to bring order to this important area of client services will continue.

Establishing Computer Set-Up/Help Desk Services for Clients has been approached on two levels. One involved DVRS technology support staff actually going out and providing hands-on support. This has been initially successful but has resulted in clients making additional demands on the staff, often to move or make adjustments to equipment. It is difficult, and often impossible to meet these on-going demands. The second approach has been to purchase set-up services from the vendor who supplied the equipment. This has been successful and resulted in less demand for repairs or adjustments. Most equipment today comes with multi-year guarantees and service has not been a major problem.

The volunteer program initiated in each of the twelve Centers for Independent Living (CILs) participating in the FY 1998 project has been extended through June 30, 1999. It has exceeded expectations in that 235 individuals have been added to the CILs' volunteer roles as of 12/31/98. A total of \$175,000 of FY 1998 funds have been obligated or expended. CILs have used a variety of recruitment strategies and developed new outreach materials for volunteer recruitment. All CILs have offered orientation programs for new recruits. The New Jersey Conference on Volunteerism was used as a vehicle to train CILs on the nuts and bolts of running a volunteer program.

Innovation and Expansion (I&E) funds supported the activities of both the Statewide Independent Living Council (SILC) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC). FY 1998 SILC expenditures totaled \$41,040. SRC FY 1998 obligations and expenditures at 12/31/98 totaled \$30,000. At 12/31/98, FY 1999 obligations and expenditures for both councils equaled those of FY 1998.

Total FY 1998 I&E obligations and expenditures at 12/31/98 were \$722,017. At 12/31/98 total FY 1999 obligations and expenditures for I&E were \$298,860.

Although standards and indicators have not, at the writing, yet been adopted, DVRS has taken a look at its performance relative to most of the evaluation standards and performance indicators proposed by the U.S. Department of Education on October 14, 1998. In addition to the statistics relative to "high quality employment outcomes" given at the beginning of this section, the overall number of successful closures increased from 3434 in FY 1997 to 4040 in FY 1998. The rehabilitation rate achieved in FY 1998 was 58%. Sixty-eight % (68%) of full-time competitively employed successful closures had health insurance that covers hospitalization available through their jobs.

In the area of equal access to service, the minority service rate was 86% of the overall service rate in FY 1998.

Data regarding consumer satisfaction is available in the report prepared by the Eagleton Institute Center for Public Interest Polling at Rutgers University for the State Rehabilitation Council. Highlights are presented in Attachment 4.2(c).

In FY 1998 DVRS spent 90.5% of Federal VR and State matching funds on direct service to consumers, including services provided directly by DVRS.

DVRS is proud of its achievements and pleased it has exceeded the performance levels required by the Department of Education in its October 14, 1998 proposal. DVRS will endeavor to increase its level of performance relative to the indicators by continuing to draw strength from its consumer advocates, One-Stop partners, and a delivery system enhanced by coordinated planning.

MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES

All applicants/consumers for vocational rehabilitation shall be advised of their right to request mediation, an administrative review and/or a fair hearing in the event that they are dissatisfied with any determination with regard to the furnishing or denial of vocational rehabilitation services. The applicant/consumer may request mediation and/or a fair hearing without going through an administrative review.

An administrative review, mediation and/or a fair hearing must be requested in writing by the applicant or consumer. This written request should be submitted to the Director, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

The mediation session, review or hearing shall be held at a time and place convenient for the applicant or consumer. A hearing by an impartial hearing officer must be held within 45 days of an individual's request for review, unless informal resolution is achieved prior to the 45th day or the parties agree to a specific extension of time.

The applicant or consumer will be notified of the date, time and place of the mediation session, review or hearing. The notification will be sent in advance of the mediation session, review or hearing and provide enough time for the applicant or consumer to prepare for the mediation session, review or hearing.

The applicant or consumer may be represented by counsel, friend, Client Assistance Program, parent, guardian, self, or other representative. All correspondence, decisions, scheduling of an administrative review, mediation session or fair hearing, or other documents sent to the consumer, which are related to the appeal will be copied and sent to the representative.

The applicant or consumer and his or her representative, if he or she desires to have one, will be given an adequate opportunity for cross examination and to present evidence and/or witnesses on his or her behalf during the review or fair hearing. The applicant or consumer will be given an opportunity to submit evidence and information at the mediation session.

The review shall be held before a Division administrator within 14 days of the request by the applicant or consumer for a review. Within ten days of receiving a request for mediation, the Division shall notify the applicant or consumer that it has forwarded the request to the Public Defender's Office of Dispute Settlement or that it declines to participate in mediation. The Public Defender's Office of Dispute Settlement shall conduct a mediation session within twenty

days of receiving the request for mediation. Fair hearings shall be conducted by an impartial hearing officer who shall be an administrative law judge within 45 days of the request by the applicant or consumer for a fair hearing pursuant to the Administrative Procedure Act, N.J.S.A. 52:14B-1 et seq. and the Uniform Administrative Procedure Rules, N.J.A.C. 1:1, and Federal regulations.

The Division administrator or impartial hearing officer shall render a decision in writing and provide a full written report of his or her findings and the grounds for the decision to the consumer or his or her representative and to the DVRS Director within 30 days of the completion of the review or conclusion of the hearing.

The decision of the Division administrator shall be deemed final unless the applicant or consumer requests mediation and/or a fair hearing.

Within 20 days of the mailing of the impartial hearing officer's decision to the applicant or consumer and the Director, either party may request a review by the Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Labor. The Commissioner shall provide both parties the opportunity for submission of additional information relevant to a final decision within 15 days of receipt of request for review.

The Commissioner shall not overturn or modify the decision of the hearing officer, or part of the decision, that supports the position of the applicant or eligible individual unless the Commissioner concludes, based on clear and convincing evidence, that the decision of the impartial hearing officer is clearly erroneous on the basis of being contrary to the approved State plan, the Act (including federal regulations implementing the Act) or any State rule or policy that is consistent with the Federal requirements. The final decision shall be issued by the Commissioner no later than 45 days from receipt of the request for review.

The Office of Dispute Settlement shall oversee and manage the mediation process. This shall include providing qualified and impartial mediators whose selection and conduct is guided by the "Model Standards of Conduct for Mediators" approved by the American Arbitration Association, the Litigation Section and the Dispute Resolution Section of the

American Bar Association, and the Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution. The role of the mediator is to: facilitate exchange of information pertinent to the mediation session; help parties define issues and identify options; facilitate communication between the parties in an impartial manner; assist parties in reaching a voluntary agreement; adjourn the mediation at the request

of the parties to obtain additional information or explore options; and terminate mediation if in the mediator's judgment the parties are not making progress toward resolving the issue(s) in dispute.

If the mediation results in agreement, the conclusions shall be incorporated into a written agreement and signed by each party. If the mediation does not result in agreement the mediator shall document the date and the participants at the meetings. No other record of the mediation shall be made.

Discussions that occur during the mediation process whether in joint session or in separate meetings, shall be confidential and shall not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearings or civil proceedings.

The mediator shall not be called as a witness in any subsequent proceeding to testify regarding any information gained during the course of mediation.

Except for the time limitation for the parties to request a review of the impartial hearing officer's decision, at the request of a party for good cause shown, the time limits established may be extended for a reasonable time.

IDENTIFICATION OF SERVICES FOR WHICH THERE IS A FINANCIAL NEEDS TEST

The individual's financial need is considered for determining participation in the cost of the following vocational rehabilitation services:

physical and mental restoration services;

vocational and other training services (except on-the-job training, work adjustment training and job coaching);

maintenance;

transportation;

services to members of an individual's family when necessary to the vocational rehabilitation of the individual with a disability;

interpreter services and note-taking services for individuals who are deaf;

telecommunications, sensory and other technological aids and devices;

post-employment services necessary to maintain suitable employment;

occupational licenses, tools, equipment, initial stocks and supplies;

other goods and services which can reasonably be expected to benefit an individual with a disability in terms of employment;

personal assistance services; and

rehabilitation technology services.

QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

During the current year New Jersey will continue to sponsor several major supported employment efforts. These efforts are funded through federal Title VI-B and 110 funds, and through state funds. All of them are targeted to individuals with the most significant disabilities as defined in Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A).

In an effort to assure quality services, standards for vending supported employment have been added to the New Jersey Administrative Code, N.J.A.C. 12:51-20. These became effective November 8, 1996.

There is, in conjunction with the N.J. Division of Mental Health Services (DMHS), a program to serve individuals who are seriously mentally ill. DVRS contracts with the DMHS, who in turn sub-contracts with community mental health programs to provide the intensive, initial job coaching phase. The DMHS funds part of the intensive phase and all of the on-going extended services. Local agreements of cooperation were developed between the local DVRS offices and the mental health providers. These agreements spell out the referral process, reporting requirements and the transfer of responsibility.

There is also a program to serve those who are deaf or hard of hearing. The program for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing is intended to show the effectiveness of the supported employment model in meeting the needs of these individuals. The program was changed from a contract program to a fee for service program on March 13, 1995. This allowed the program to reach out to all individuals with hearing loss who need supported employment opportunities. The program has been able to contract with a sheltered workshop program to be reimbursed for extended services with funds from a placement grant-in-aid program funded by the State under the Sheltered Workshop Act.

In conjunction with the N.J. Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD), Division of Mental Health Services(DMHS), Special Education, and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CBVI), an agreement of cooperation is in place to provide supported employment opportunities to individuals with various disabilities. The NJDVRs and CBVI fund the initial phase of intensive job coaching and work adjustment, provided by local vendors, and when the consumer is stabilized on the job DDD and DMHS assume the responsibility for the long term follow-along.

A program for individuals with head injuries, project PACE (People Aiming for Careers and Employment) utilizes the supported job coach model. The New Jersey Head Injury Association is the parent organization and provides much of the medical expertise. The project staff provides the initial intensive job coaching under DVRs authorization and the N.J. Division of Developmental Disabilities funds the on-going extended services.

New Jersey's primary Supported Employment model has been the individual job coach model, but enclaves, mobile crews and dispersed enclaves are available in some areas. The emphasis on the individual job coach model has allowed individuals to be placed in the most integrated, least restrictive work settings available.

The Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) provides job coach training to many of its consumers at both the intensive and follow along phases.

In January of 1995 all providers of supported employment services who vend to DVRs, except those under contract with DMHS, were changed to a fee for service method of reimbursement. Standards to vend the service were promulgated, an application process developed and the opportunity to vend was offered to all known Community Rehabilitation Programs. There are now 77 organizations approved to provide supported employment to clients of the Division.

March 29, 1999

John Szufnarowski, Regional Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration
US Department of Education
Region II
75 Park Place, Room 1208
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioner Szufnarowski:

Enclosed is the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program. This has been submitted as part of New Jersey's Unified State Plan under Section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment

Act. It is our understanding that your office will be receiving the entire Unified Plan, with the appropriate signatures and signed off by the Commissioner of Labor Mel Gelade, at a later date.

Enclosed is the State Plan Pre-Print and the following attachments, as required:

Attachment 4.2(c) Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations.

Attachment 4.9(c) Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities.

Attachment 4.11(b) Comprehensive System of Personnel Development.

Attachment 4.12 Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports.

Attachment 4.16(b)(2) Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures.

Attachment 6.9(c)(2) Services Subject to Financial Needs Test.

Attachment 7.3 Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services.

The Effective Date for the Unified Plan is July 1, 1999. Also enclosed are the required Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension; and the Drug-Free Workplace

Requirements
for the Title I
and Title VI-C
Programs.

If you have
any questions
concerning
any of the
information
enclosed,
please contact

(Mrs.)
Jamie
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STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM AND STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM STATE: New Jersey

AGENCY: Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL BLIND X COMBINED

SECTION 1: LEGAL BASIS AND STATE CERTIFICATIONS

1.1 The **Department of Human Services/Commission f/t Blind & Visually Impaired** (name of designated State agency or designated State unit) is authorized to submit this State plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under title VI, part B of the Act.

1.2 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I, part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the **Department of Human Services** (name of the designated State agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under title I and the administration of this State plan.

1.3 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI, part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under title VI, part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the title I State plan.

1.4 The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding this State plan and its supplement.

1.5 The State legally may carry out each provision of the State plan and its supplement.

1.6 All provisions of the State plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.

1.7 The **Commissioner of the Department of Human Services** (title of State officer) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under this State plan and its supplement.

1.8 The **Commissioner of the Department of Human Services** (title of State officer) has the authority to submit this State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State plan supplement for supported employment services.

1.9 The agency that submits this State plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

1.10 The effective date of this State plan and its supplement is **July 1, 1999**

Michele Guhl

(Signature) (Typed Name of Signatory)

Commissioner, Department of Human Services

(Date) (Title)

¹ Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.

² Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁴ No funds under title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.

⁵ Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR part 361.

⁶ No funds under title VI, part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the title I State plan in accordance with section 625(a) of the Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR part 361, and 34 CFR part 363.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.20(a)(1) and (2), (b), and (d), and 363.11(g)(9))

(a) The designated State agency, prior to the adoption of any policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State plan, including making any amendment to such policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the State to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures, and actively consults with the Director of the client assistance program carried out under section 112 of the Act, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on the policies or procedures.

(b) The designated State agency provides adequate notice of the meetings in accordance with State law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of such State

law, in accordance with procedures developed by the State agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.

2.2 State review process. (34 CFR Part 79)

If the State plan, its supplement, or amendment to the State plan is subject to the State review process, such materials are reviewed and commented on in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12372, and comments provided by the State review process are transmitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

This State plan and its supplement are subject to the State review process.

Yes No

SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT

3.1 Submittal of the State plan, its supplement, and revisions to the plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act)

(a) The State submits to the Commissioner a State plan for vocational rehabilitation services that meets the requirements of section 101 of the Act and a State plan supplement for supported employment services that meets the requirements of section 625 of the Act on the same date that the State submits a State plan under section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

(b) If the State submits a State unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 without including the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services in the unified plan, the State submits to the Commissioner the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services on the same date that the State submits its unified plan under

section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

(c) The State submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

(d) The State submits to the Commissioner at such time and in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:

(1) comprehensive system of personnel development;

(2) assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;

(3) innovation and expansion activities; and

(4) requirements under title I, part B or title VI, part B of the Act.

(e) The State plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of such modifications as the State determines to be necessary or as the Commissioner may require based on a change in State policy, a change in Federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a Federal court or the highest court of the State, or a finding by the Commissioner of State noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, until the State submits and receives approval of a new State plan or plan supplement.

3.2 Supported employment plan. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

The State has an acceptable plan for carrying out part B of title VI of the Act, including the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under part B of title I of the Act to pay for the cost of services leading to supported employment.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN

4.1 Designated State agency and designated State unit.

(Sections 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13)

(a) Designated State agency.

(1) There is a State agency designated as the sole State agency to administer the State plan, or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the State by a sole local agency.

(2) The designated State agency is:

primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities; or

X not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities.

(3) In American Samoa, the designated State agency is the Governor.

(b) Designated State unit.

(1) If the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, the State agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or other organizational unit that:

(A) is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and is responsible for the designated State agency

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(2) The name of the designated State unit is **The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

4.2 State independent commission or state rehabilitation council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

The State plan must contain one of the following two assurances.

(a) The designated State agency is an independent commission that:

(1) is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State;

(2) is consumer-controlled by persons who:

(A) are individuals with physical or mental impairments that

substantially limit major life activities; and

(B) represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind;

(3) includes family members, advocates, or other representatives, of individuals with mental impairments; and

(4) undertakes the functions set forth in section 105(c)(4) of the Act;

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(b) X The State has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in section 105 of the Act and the designated State unit:

(1) jointly with the Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities, and jointly submits annual reports of progress with the Council, consistent with the provisions of section 101(a)(15) of the Act and section 4.12 of this State plan;

(2) regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;

(3) includes in the State plan and in any revision to the State plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and

recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and

(4) transmits to the Council:

(A) all plans, reports, and other information required under title I of the Act to be submitted to the Secretary;

(B) all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State plan; and

(C) copies of due process hearing decisions issued under title I of the Act, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

(c) If the designated State unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c) provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this subsection of the State plan, the response of the designated State unit to the input and recommendations, and explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the state plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21(a))

The designated State agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan, the views of:

(a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or in appropriate cases, the individuals' representatives;

(b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;

(c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;

(d) the Director of the client assistance program; and

(e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

4.4 Non-federal share. (Section 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60(b))

The non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out this State plan is provided through the financial participation by the State, or if the State elects, by the State and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.15)

(a) The State plan provides for local administration and each local agency is under the supervision of the designated State unit and is the sole local agency responsible for the administration of the program within the political subdivision that it serves.

Yes_No X

(b) *IF YES, Attachment 4.5* identifies each local agency and describes the methods each local agency uses to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with this State plan.

4.6 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Sections 101(a)(2)(A) and (4)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25 and .26)

The State plan is in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, except in the case when:

(a) The State unit is providing services in one or more political subdivisions of the

State that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State plan and the:

(1) non-Federal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual; and

(2) services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments.

(3) If the State is providing services that meet the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this subsection,

Attachment 4.6(a)(3) requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26(b); or

(b) Earmarked funds are used toward the non-Federal share and such funds are earmarked for particular geographic areas

within the State contingent on the State notifying the Commissioner that it cannot provide the full non-Federal share without the use of such earmarked funds.

4.7 Shared funding and administration of joint programs.
(Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

(a) The designated State agency is carrying out a joint program involving shared funding and administrative responsibility with another State agency or a local public agency to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Yes No **X**

(b) *IF YES*, Attachment 4.7(b) describes the:

(1) nature and scope of the joint program;

(2) services to be provided;

(3) respective roles of each participating agency in the provision of services and their administration; and

(4) share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

(c) If the joint program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan subsection.

4.8 Third-party cooperative arrangements involving funds from other public agencies (Section 12 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.28)

(a) The designated State unit has entered into a third-party cooperative arrangement for providing or administering vocational rehabilitation services with another State agency or a local public agency that is furnishing part or all of the non-Federal share.

Yes No X

(b) *IF YES:*

(1) The services provided by the cooperating agency are not the customary or typical services provided by that agency but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or are existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded, or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus.

(2) The services provided by the cooperating agency are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services from the designated State unit.

(3) Program expenditures and staff providing services

under the cooperative arrangement are under the administrative supervision of the designated State unit.

(4) All State plan requirements, including the State's order of selection, if an order is in effect, apply to all services provided under the cooperative program.

(c) If the third-party cooperative program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan.

4.9 Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23 and .24)

(a) Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment systems.

The designated State agency has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system of the State in accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(11)(A) of the Act.

(b) Replication of cooperative agreements.

The designated State agency replicates the cooperative agreement identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of the State

plan at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system.

(c) Interagency cooperation with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.9(c) describes the:

(1) interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;

(2) coordination, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 4.9(d) of this subsection, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational

rehabilitation
services;

(3) manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 5.6(b) of the State plan; and,

(4) efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the requirements of subsection 7.5 of the supplement to this State plan.

(d) Coordination with education officials.

Plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals

with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan are described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(2)** which also includes information on a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:

(1) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;

(2) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;

(3) the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State

lead agencies and
qualified personnel
responsible for
transition services;
and

(4) procedures for
outreach to and
identification of
students with
disabilities who need
transition services.

**(e) Coordination with statewide
independent living council and
independent living centers.**

The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

**(f) Cooperative agreement with recipients
of grants for services to American
Indians.**

(1) There is in the
State a recipient(s) of
a grant under part C
of title I of the Act for
the provision of
vocational
rehabilitation services
for American Indians
who are individuals
with disabilities
residing on or near
Federal and State
reservations.

Yes No X

(2) IF YES, the designated State agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement with each grant recipient in the State that receives funds under part C of title I of the Act. The agreement(s) describes strategies for collaboration and coordination in providing vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities, including:

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(g) Reciprocal referral services with a separate agency for individuals who are blind.

In those States in which there is a separate designated State unit for individuals who are blind and also a designated State unit for all other individuals with disabilities, the two State units:

(1) have established reciprocal referral services;

(2) use each other's services and facilities to the extent feasible;

(3) jointly plan activities to improve services in the State for individuals with multiple impairments, including visual impairments; and

(4) otherwise cooperate to provide more effective services, including, if appropriate, entering into a written cooperative agreement.

4.10 Methods of administration. (Sections 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (c))

(a) General.

The State agency employs methods of administration found by the Commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of this State plan.

(b) Employment of individuals with disabilities.

The designated State agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the State, who are in receipt of assistance under title I of the Act, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same

terms and conditions as set forth in section 503 of the Act.

(c) Written standards for providers of services.

The designated State agency has established, maintains, makes available to the public, and implements written minimum standards for the various types of providers used by the designated State unit in providing vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan.

(d) Facilities.

Facilities used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State plan comply with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved on August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the "Architectural Barriers Act of 1968"), with section 504 of the Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

4.11 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

(a) The designated State agency has implemented a comprehensive system of personnel development that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(7) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.18.

(b) Attachment 4.11(b) describes the designated State agency's policies, procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit. The description addresses the following requirements:

(1) collection and analysis on an annual basis of data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.18(a);

(2) plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds, and personnel who are individuals with disabilities;

(3) establishment and maintenance of personnel standards meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that personnel, including professionals and paraprofessionals, are adequately trained and prepared, including:

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(4) standards to ensure the availability of personnel within the designated State unit or other individuals who are, to the maximum extent feasible, trained to communicate in the native language or mode of communication of an applicant or eligible individual;

(5) staff development to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training; and

(6) coordination of its personnel development system with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.12 Annual state goals and reports of progress. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

(a) Assessments and estimates.

(1) Attachment

4.12(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the State has such a Council) every 3 years, and:

(A) describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

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(B) provides an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

(2) For any year in which the State revises the assessments, the designated State unit submits to the Commissioner a

report containing information regarding revisions to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

The designated State agency annually submits **Attachment 4.12(b)** that includes, State estimates of the:

(1) number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under this State plan;

(2) number of such individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under part B of title I of the Act and under part B of title VI of the Act, including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection in accordance with paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and

(3) costs of the services described in subparagraph (1), including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each

priority category
within the order.

(c) Goals and priorities.

(1) Attachment

4.12(c)(1) identifies the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs and also identifies any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the State revises the goals and priorities.

(2) Order of selection.

(A) If the State agency is operating on an order of selection,

Attachment

4.12(c)(2)(A) shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provides a justification for the order, the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category consistent with the

provisions of paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan.

(B) If, however, the agency assures in paragraph 6.4(a) of this State plan that it can provide the full range of services identified in subsection 5.1 of this State plan to all eligible individuals,

Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B) satisfies all of the provisions identified in paragraph 6.4(b) of the State plan.

(3) Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) specifies, consistent with subsection 7.4 of the State plan supplement, the State's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(4) Basis.

The goals and priorities are based on:

(A) the analysis of the comprehensive assessment and any revisions in the assessment consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4.12(a) of this State plan;

(B) the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act; and

(C) other available information on the operation of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs, including reports from the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and the findings of monitoring activities carried out by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

(5) In accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act, the goals and priorities, including any revisions to the goals and priorities, are jointly developed, agreed to, and reviewed annually by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

(d) Strategies.

Attachment 4.12(d) describes the strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:

(1) address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;

(2) carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the

provisions of
subsection 7.6 of the
State plan
supplement; and

(3) overcome
identified barriers
relating to equitable
access to and
participation of
individuals with
disabilities in the
State Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services Program and
State Supported
Employment Services
Program.

(e) Evaluation and reports of progress.

Attachment 4.12(e) describes the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and includes an annual joint report of the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, to the Commissioner on the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year. The description includes:

(1) an evaluation of
the extent to which
the goals identified in
subparagraph (c) of
this subsection plan
were achieved;

(2) an identification
of the strategies that
contributed to
achieving the goals;

(3) to the extent to
which the goals were

not achieved, an explanation of the factors that impeded that achievement;

(4) an assessment of the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established pursuant to section 106 of the Act; and

(5) a report consistent with paragraph 4.13(c) of this State plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act)

(a) The designated State agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Act:

(1) for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide

assessment and goals and priorities of the State identified in paragraphs 4.12(a) and (c) of this State plan; and

(2) to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 105(d)(1) of the Act, and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 705(e)(1) of the Act.

(b) Attachment 4.12(d) describes how the reserved funds identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of this State plan will be utilized.

(c) Attachment 4.12(e) describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.14 State-imposed requirements. (Section 17 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.39)

The designated State unit identifies upon request those regulations and policies relating to the administration or operation of its vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs that are State-imposed, including any regulations or policy based on State interpretation of any Federal law, regulations, or guidelines.

4.15 Protection, use, and release of personal information. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.38)

The designated State agency and the designated State unit have policies and procedures that are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.38 to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information, including photographs and lists of names.

4.16 Mediation and impartial due process hearing. (Section 102(c) of the Act)

(a) Fair hearing board.

There is a fair hearing board, established by the State prior to January 1, 1985, that is authorized under State law to review determinations or decisions made under the Act and to carry out the responsibilities of the impartial hearing officer.

Yes No X

(b) Mediation and review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "NO":

(1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of and procedures for the review through an impartial due process hearing of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.

(2) Attachment 4.16(b)(2) contains

the procedures for mediation; the procedures for review through an impartial due process hearing; and, the procedures to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer, including the standards for reviewing decisions of an hearing officer, if the designated State agency has elected to implement such review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "YES":

(1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.

(2) Attachment 4.16(b)(2) contains the procedures for mediation.

4.17 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

(a) The designated State unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the

time required by the Commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State plan.

(b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and ensures the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

SECTION 5: SCOPE OF THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

5.1 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. (Section 103(a) of the Act)

Vocational rehabilitation services provided under this State plan are any services described in an individualized plan for employment necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:

- (a) an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
- (b) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act and subsection 5.3 of this State plan;
- (c) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan;

(d) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;

(e) vocational and other training services, including the provision of personal and vocational adjustment services, books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher education shall be paid for with funds under this State plan unless maximum efforts have been made by the designated State unit and the individual to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for such training;

(f) to the extent that financial support is not readily available from a source (such as through health insurance of the individual or through comparable services and benefits consistent with section 101(a)(8)(A) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan), other than the designated State unit, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, including:

(1) corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce such impediment to employment within a

reasonable length of time;

(2) necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment;

(3) prosthetic and orthotic devices;

(4) eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual;

(5) special services (including transplantation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease; and

(6) diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;

(g) maintenance for additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an individualized plan for employment;

- (h)** transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this subsection and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome;
- (i)** on-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while an individual is receiving other services described in this subsection;
- (j)** interpreter services provided by qualified personnel for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and reader services for individuals who are determined to be blind, after an examination by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;
- (k)** rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services, for individuals who are blind;
- (l)** occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies;
- (m)** technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided under the statewide workforce investment system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or telecommuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome;
- (n)** rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;
- (o)** transition services for students with disabilities that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;

(p) supported employment services;

(q) services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome; and

(r) specific post-employment services necessary to assist an individual with a disability to retain, regain, or advance in employment.

5.2 Written policies governing the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.50)

(a) The State unit has written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services specified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan and the criteria under which each service is provided.

(b) The policies are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.50 and:

(1) ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in that individual's individualized plan for employment; and

(2) do not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and scope of services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

5.3 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act)

Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, are provided information and support services to assist the applicants and eligible individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.

5.4 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act)

Except as otherwise provided in part C of title I of the Act, the designated State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the designated State agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the State.

5.5 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services to groups of individuals with disabilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49, .61 and .62)

(a) The State plan provides for the following optional vocational rehabilitation services for the benefit of groups of individuals with disabilities.

(1) The establishment, development, or improvement of community rehabilitation programs, including, under special circumstances, the construction of a community rehabilitation facility, that are used to provide services to promote integration

and competitive
employment.

If the State elects to
use the authority to
construct a facility for
a community
rehabilitation
program, the
following
requirements are met:

(A) The Federal share of the
cost of construction for
facilities for a fiscal year does
not exceed an amount equal to
10 percent of the State's
allotment under section 110 of
the Act for that fiscal year.

(B) The provisions of section
306 of the Act that were in
effect prior to the enactment of
the Rehabilitation Act
Amendments of 1998 apply to
such construction.

(C) There is compliance with
the requirements in 34 CFR
361.62(b) that ensure the use
of the construction authority
will not reduce the efforts of
the designated State agency in
providing other vocational
rehabilitation services, other
than the establishment of
facilities for community
rehabilitation programs.

(2) Telecommunications systems,
including telephone, television,
satellite, radio, and similar systems,
that have the potential for
substantially improving service
delivery methods of activities
described in this section of this State

plan and developing appropriate programming to meet the particular needs of individuals with disabilities.

(3) Special services to provide nonvisual access to information for individuals who are blind, including the use of telecommunications, Braille, sound recordings, or other appropriate media; captioned television, films, or video cassettes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; tactile materials for individuals who are deaf-blind; and other special services that provide information through tactile, vibratory, auditory, and visual media.

(4) Technical assistance and support services to businesses that are not subject to title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and that are seeking to employ individuals with disabilities.

(5) Small business enterprises operated by individuals with significant disabilities, the operation of which can be improved by the management services and supervision of the designated State agency, along or together with the acquisition by the designated State agency of vending facilities or other equipment and initial stocks and supplies.

(A) If the State unit provides small business enterprise services, only individuals with significant disabilities are selected to participate in this supervised program.

(B) If the State unit sets aside funds from the proceeds of the operation of the small business enterprises, it has a description of the methods used in setting aside funds and the purposes for which funds are set aside.

(C) Under its small business enterprises, the State unit provides:

(i) X only the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;

(ii) only a program or programs other than the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;

(iii) both the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program and another program(s).

(6) X Consultative and technical assistance services to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.

(7) X Other services that promise to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but that are not related directly to the individualized plan for employment of any one individual with a disability.

(b) If the State plan provides for any of these services to groups of individuals

with disabilities, the designated State unit has:

(1) written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services it provides and the criteria under which each service is provided; and

(2) information to ensure the proper and efficient administration of those services in the form and detail and at the time required by the Secretary, including:

(A) the types of services provided;

(B) the costs of those services; and

(C) to the extent feasible, estimates of the numbers of individuals benefiting from those services.

5.6 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated State agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under part A of title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated State agency that such for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide such vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.

(b) Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.

The manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational

rehabilitation service providers is described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(3)**.

SECTION 6: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

6.1 Record of services. (Section 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.47)

The designated State unit maintains for each applicant or eligible individual a record of services that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.47.

6.2 Referrals and applications. (Sections 101(a)(6)(A) and 102(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.41)

(a) The designated State unit has standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services. These standards include timelines for making good faith efforts to inform individuals of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority of services.

(b) Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, an eligibility determination is made within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, unless:

(1) exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the designated State unit preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the designated State unit and the individual agree to a specific extension of time; or

(2) the designated State unit is exploring an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacities to perform in work situations under section 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.

6.3 Information and referral services. (Section 101(a)(20) of the Act)

The designated State agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the State.

6.4 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

(a) The designated State unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services.

Yes No

(b) ***IF YES***, Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B) contains an explanation that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.36(a)(2) or (3) and describes how, on the basis of the designated State unit's projected fiscal and personnel resources and its assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities within the State, it will:

(1) continue to provide services to all individuals currently receiving services;

(2) provide assessment services to all individuals expected to apply for services in the next fiscal year;

(3) provide services to all individuals who are expected to be determined eligible in the next fiscal year; and

(4) meet all program requirements.

(c) **IF NO:**

(1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.

(2) **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** contains:

(A) the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services; and

(B) a
justification for
the order of
selection.

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6.5 Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services. (Sections 7(2)(A)(i) and (D), 7(20)(A), 101(a)(12) and 102(a)(1)(A), (2)(B) and (4) of the Act)

(a) To determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual's priority under an order of selection for services, if the State is operating under an order of selection, the designated State unit, to the maximum extent possible consistent with the requirements of this State plan, uses existing and current information, including information available from other programs and providers, particularly information provided by education officials and the Social Security Administration, and information provided by the applicant and the family of the applicant.

(b) To the extent that existing information is unavailable or insufficient, the designated State unit provides appropriate assessment activities to obtain necessary additional information to make the determination regarding the applicant's eligibility, and, if applicable, the applicant's priority under an order of selection.

(c) The State unit's determination of an applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based only on the following requirements.

(1) A determination that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment.

(2) A determination that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.

(3) A presumption, in accordance with section 102(a)(2)(A) of the Act and paragraph (d) of this subsection of the State plan, that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

(4) A determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

(d) The designated State unit presumes that an applicant who meets the eligibility

requirements in subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this subsection of this State plan can benefit in terms of an employment outcome unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the individual's disability. In making such a demonstration, the designated State unit first explores the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experiences consistent with the provisions of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.

(e) If there is appropriate evidence that establishes the applicant's eligibility for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the designated State unit:

(1) presumes the applicant to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan (provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual) unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable

of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual in accordance with the provisions of section 102(a)(2) of the Act and paragraph 6.5(d) of this State plan; and

(2) considers the applicant to be an individual with a significant disability consistent with the provisions of section 7(21)(A) of the Act.

(f) In the application of the eligibility criteria, the following requirements are met.

(1) No duration of residence requirement is imposed that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State.

(2) No applicant or group of applicants is excluded or found ineligible solely on the basis of the type of disability.

(3) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the age, gender, race, color,

creed, or national origin of the applicant.

(4) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family.

6.6 Procedures for ineligibility determination. (Section 102(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.43)

If the State unit determines that an applicant is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services or determines that an individual receiving services under an individualized plan for employment is no longer eligible for services, the State unit:

(a) makes the determination only after providing an opportunity for full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, with the individual's representative;

(b) informs the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in writing, supplemented as necessary by other appropriate modes of communication consistent with the informed choice of the individual, of the ineligibility determination, including:

(1) the reasons for the determination; and

(2) the description of the means by which the individual may express, and seek

remedy for, any dissatisfaction with the determination, including the procedures for the review by an impartial hearing officer consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan;

(c) provides the individual with a description of services available from the client assistance program and information on how to contact that program; and

(d) reviews any ineligibility determination that is based on a finding that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services within 12 months and annually thereafter, if such a review is requested by the individual or, if appropriate, by the individual's representative, except when the:

(1) individual has refused the review;

(2) individual is no longer present in the State;

(3) individual's whereabouts are unknown; or

(4) individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

6.7 Closure without ineligibility determination. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.44)

The State unit does not administratively close an applicant's record of services prior to making an eligibility determination unless the:

(a) applicant declines to participate in, or is unavailable to complete an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services; and

(b) State unit has made a reasonable number of attempts to contact the applicant or, if appropriate, the applicant's representative to encourage the applicant's participation.

6.8 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

(a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the State unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.

(b) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the eligible individual at the time needed to achieve the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit uses those comparable services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.

(c) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program, but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.

(d) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:

(1) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;

(2) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act;

(3) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State plan;

(4) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services,

and follow-along services;

(5) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and

(6) post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.

(e) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection also do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:

(1) progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;

(2) an immediate job placement; or

(3) provision of such service to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.

(f) The Governor of the State in consultation with the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that there is an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act between any appropriate public entity, including the State medicaid program, public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system, and the designated State unit so as to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, other than the services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of such services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

6.9 Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need. (Section 12(c) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.54)

(a) No financial needs test is applied and no financial participation is required as a condition for furnishing the following vocational rehabilitation services:

(1) assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services, except those non-assessment services that are provided during an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations,

consistent with the requirements of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act;

(2) assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;

(3) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice;

(4) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through cooperative agreements under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan; and

(5) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.

(b) The State unit considers the financial need of eligible individuals, or individuals who are receiving services during an exploration of an individual's abilities,

capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations consistent with subparagraph (1) of paragraph (a) of this subsection, in order to determine the extent of the individual's participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services.

Yes X No

(c) **IF YES:**

(1) The State unit has written policies on the determination of financial need that are consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.54 and these policies:

(A) are applied uniformly to all individuals in similar circumstances; and

(B) ensure that the level of the individual's participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services is:

(i) reasonable;

(ii) based on the individual's financial need, including the consideration of any disability-related expenses paid

by the
individual; and

(iii) not so high
as to effectively
deny the
individual a
necessary
service.

(2) Attachment

6.9(c)(2) specifies the
services for which the
designated State unit
has a financial needs
test.

6.10 Development of the individualized plan for employment.

(Sections 7(2)(B), 101(a)(9), and 102(b)(1) and (2) of the Act)

(a) The designated State unit conducts an assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs for each eligible individual, including the need for supported employment services, or, if the State is operating under an order of selection, for each eligible individual to whom the State is able to provide services, for the purpose of identifying the provisions to be included in the individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act.

(b) The development of the individualized plan for employment meets the following procedural requirements.

(1) The individualized
plan for employment
is developed and
implemented in a
timely manner

subsequent to the determination of the eligibility of the individual for services under this State plan, except if the State is operating under an order of selection, the individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented only for individuals to whom the State is able to provide services.

(2) The designated State unit provides to the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, information on the individual's options for the development of the individualized plan for employment, including:

(A) information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the

individualized
plan for
employment for
the individual,
and the
availability of
technical
assistance in
developing all
or part of the
individualized
plan for
employment for
the individual;

(B) a
description of
the full range of
components
that must be
included in an
individualized
plan for
employment;

(C) as
appropriate,

(i) an
explanation of
agency
guidelines and
criteria
associated with
financial
commitments
concerning an
individualized
plan for
employment;

(ii) additional
information the
eligible
individual
requests or the

designated
State unit
determines to
be necessary;
and

(iii) information
on the
availability of
assistance in
completing
designated
State agency
forms required
in developing
an
individualized
plan for
employment;

(D) a
description of
the rights and
remedies
available to the
eligible
individual,
including, if
appropriate,
recourse to
mediation and
the impartial
due process
hearing
consistent with
the provisions
of section
102(c) of the
Act and
subsection 4.16
of this State
plan; and

(E) a
description of
the availability

of the client
assistance
program and
information
about how to
contact the
program.

(3) The individualized plan for employment is developed as a written document prepared on forms provided by the designated State unit and is developed and implemented in a manner that affords eligible individuals the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, the settings in which the services will be provided, the employment setting, and the methods used to procure the services consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.

(4) The individualized plan for employment is agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as

appropriate, the individual's representative, and approved and signed by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit with a copy of the individualized plan for employment provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, of the individual's representative.

(5) The individualized plan for employment is reviewed at least annually by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative and amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a representative of the

designated State agency or a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as determined to be appropriate by the individual.

(6) If there are substantive changes in the individualized plan for employment with respect to the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the services, such amendments to the individualized plan for employment do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit.

6.11 Mandatory components of the individualized plan for employment. (Sections 101(a)(9), 102(b)(3), and 625(b)(6)(C),(E), and (F) of the Act)

(a) Each individualized plan for employment includes, at a minimum, the following mandatory components describing the:

(1) specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;

(2) specific rehabilitation services that are:

(A) needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services; and

(B) provided in the most integrated

setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;

(3) timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;

(4) entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods used to procure the services;

(5) criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;

(6) terms and conditions of the individualized plan for employment, including, as appropriate, information related to the:

(A) responsibilities of the

designated
State unit;

(B)
responsibilities
of the eligible
individual,
including those
related to:

(i) the
achievement of
the employment
outcome;

(ii)
participation, if
applicable, in
the paying the
costs of the
plan; and

(iii) applying
for and securing
comparable
benefits
consistent with
the
requirements of
section
101(a)(8) of the
Act and
subsection 6.8
of this State
plan; and

(C)
responsibilities
of other entities
as the result of
arrangements
made pursuant
to comparable
services or
benefits
requirements as

identified in
section
101(a)(8) of the
Act and
subsection 6.8
of this State
plan; and

(7) projected need for
post-employment
services, as
determined to be
necessary.

(b) The individualized plan for employment
for individuals with the most significant
disabilities for whom an employment
outcome in a supported employment setting
has been determined to be appropriate also
contains the identification of the:

(1) extended services
needed by the eligible
individual; and

(2) source of the
extended services or,
to the extent that the
source of extended
services cannot be
identified at the time
of the development of
the individualized
plan for employment,
the basis for
concluding that there
is a reasonable
expectation that
extended services will
become available.

6.12 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act)

(a) The designated State unit:

(1) conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State plan who has achieved an employment outcome either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)) for 2 years after the achievement of the outcome (and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment; and

(2) makes maximum efforts, including the identification and

provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in subparagraph (a)(1) in engaging in competitive employment.

(b) The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation, and acknowledges through sign-off that such review and reevaluation have been conducted.

STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

SECTION 7: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated State agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in subsection 1.2 of the title I State plan is the State agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under title VI, part B of the Act.

7.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

Attachment 4.12(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) of the title I State plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities and the need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

7.3 Description of the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 7.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services.

7.4 Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

Attachment 4.12(c)(3) identifies the State's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act.

7.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services. (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.9(c)(4) describes the efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

7.6 Minority outreach. (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.12(d)(2) describes the designated State agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

7.7 Reports. (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated State agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under part B of title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under title I of the Act.

SECTION 8: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

8.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs. (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated State agency expends no more than five percent of the State's allotment under section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

8.2 Use of funds in providing services. (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

(a) Funds made available under title VI, part B of the Act are used by the designated State agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.

(b) Funds provided under title VI, part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under title I of the Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.

(c) Funds provided under part B of title VI or title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under part B of title VI or title I of the Act.

SECTION 9: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

9.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

(a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in section 7(36) of the Act.

(b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.

(c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the

maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

9.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with severe disabilities. (Section 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities, including the assessment of rehabilitation, career, and employment needs, conducted under section 102(b)(1)(A) of the Act and paragraph 6.10(a) of this State plan and funded under title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

9.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

(a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act and subsections 6.10 and .11 of this State plan is developed and updated using funds under Title I.

(b) The individualized plan for employment:

(1) specifies the supported employment services to be provided;

(2) describes the expected extended services needed; and

(3) identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan

for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.

(c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs.

ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED OF ALL AGENCIES

Attachment 4.9(c): Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities

(1) Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

(2) Coordination with Education Officials

(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

(4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

Attachment 4.11(b):
Comprehensive System of Personnel
Development

Attachment 4.12 Assessments;
Estimates; Goals and Priorities;
Strategies; and Progress Reports

(a): Results of
Comprehensive Statewide
Assessment of the
Rehabilitation Needs of
Individuals with Disabilities
and Need to Establish,
Develop, or Improve
Community Rehabilitation
Programs

(b): Annual Estimates of
Individuals to Be Served and
Costs of Services

(c)(1): State's Goals and
Priorities

(c)(3): Goals and Plans for
Distribution of Title VI, Part
B Funds

(d): State's Strategies and
Use of Title I Funds for
Innovation and Expansion
Activities

(1) To Address Needs
Identified in the
Comprehensive
Assessment and to
Achieve Identified
Goals and Priorities

(2) To Carryout
Outreach Activities to
Identify and Serve
Individuals with the
Most Significant

Disabilities Who are
Minorities

(3) To Overcome
Identified Barriers
Relating to Equitable
Access to and
Participation of
Individuals with
Disabilities in the
State Vocational
Rehabilitation
Services Program and
the State Supported
Employment Services
Program.

(e): Evaluation and Report of
Progress in Achieving
Identified Goals and
Priorities and Use Of Title I
Funds for Innovation and
Expansion Activities

Attachment 4.16(b)(2): Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing
Procedures

Attachment 7.3: Quality, Scope,
and Extent of Supported
Employment Services

ATTACHMENTS CONTINGENT ON OPTIONS SELECTED

The following attachments identified by an "X" are also submitted as part of the State
plan.

X Attachment 4.2(c): Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State
Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations
for Rejection of Input or Recommendations

__ Attachment 4.5: Local Administration

__ Attachment 4.6(a)(3): Request for Waiver of Statewideness

__ Attachment 4.7(b): Shared Funding and Administration of Joint Program

Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A): Order of Selection

X Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B): Explanation to Support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection

_X Attachment 6.9(c)(2): Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL; RESPONSE OF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT; AND EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTION OF INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

The State Rehabilitation Council contracted with the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University to conduct a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on clients who received services under a Plan in 1996. More than 1400 surveys were mailed and a high response rate was achieved. Although the overall level of satisfaction was high with consumers, there were some areas that consumers felt that the commission needed to improve on. These areas were:

Better dissemination of information on CBVI services

Better communication between staff and consumers

Delays in receiving services

Inconsistency of services

People want jobs.

The State Rehabilitation Council made a presentation to vocational rehabilitation staff in June of 1998 and solicited from staff recommendations to address the issues listed above. Among the suggestions adopted are the establishment of an agency newsletter, Internet site, brochures, recruitment of paraprofessional staff. Some recommendations, such as video development and 800 number establishment were rejected as being too costly. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired will continue working with the State Rehabilitation Council to continually improve the quality of services offered to consumers.

The State Rehabilitation Council has been conducting Annual Forums with the Commission since 1993 as a mechanism of gathering information to assist the Commission constantly improve the services that are offered. The lack of adequate transportation for individuals with disabilities continues to be a common theme in these forums. A forum specifically dedicated to issues of transportation was convened in the fall of 1998. Consumers, legislators, and NJ Transit officials were invited to participate to

gain information on how this issue impacts upon the provision of VR services and employment. A Tri- Council Forum (including the State Rehabilitation Council of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the State Independent Living Council) is planned during State fiscal 2000 to further address this issue.

The Annual Report, recently completed and submitted to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, listed the 1998 Accomplishments and the Goals and Initiatives for 1999.

The 1998 Accomplishments were as follows:

Involved in the development of the State, Strategic and Resource Plans

Development of program performance recommendations based on the consumer Satisfaction Survey

Increased involvement in CVBI review of policies and program planning

Presentation of five regional public hearings in conjunction with the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration under the United State Department of Education

Continued advocacy for the re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act

Recommendation of strategies to increase competitive employment opportunities

Collaboration with the Statewide Independent Living Council and the SRC of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on issues of concern to people with disabilities

Establishment of a mentoring committee which successfully implemented Phase I of a mentoring program

Provided testimony on the Unified state Plan developed by the Workforce Investment System of New Jersey

Participated in a National Rehabilitation Council meeting at the Council for State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Spring Conference

The Goals and Initiatives for 1999 are as follows:

Co-sponsor (with DVRS) a public hearing on the Unified State Plan to receive consumer comments and recommendations

Follow up on the suggestions and recommendations of consumers from the public meetings specific to the issue of transportation

Conduct a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on the Intake Unit at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center

Solicit, evaluate, and analyze feedback on consumer involvement and informed choice

Establish a protocol for SRC review of information gathered through the exit interviews of consumers from the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center

Clarify the roles, responsibilities and relationships of CBVI staff and SRC members in planning and decision making processes

Develop result-oriented goals for each SRC sub-committee

Develop an informational brochure and web page

Participate in the continues evolution of CBVI technology efforts

Participate in the on-going training of One-Stop staff

Participate in RSA monitoring of state agencies

Implement Phase II of the SRC Mentoring Program

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER

AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES

(1) Cooperation with Agencies that Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

Because of the size of the population it serves, the complexity of the services rendered and because of the emphasis placed upon partnerships and collaboration by its funding source, the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired finds that cooperative agreements with organizations and service providers enhance our ability to deliver quality services to persons who are blind and visually impaired.

The Commission presently has Cooperative Agreements with the following agencies that are not required partners in the Statewide Workforce Investment System:

Division of Developmental Disabilities (Transitioning)

Division of Mental Health Services (Supported Employment)

Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs
(Transitioning)

NJ Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators

The Lexington Center

Division of Youth and Family Services

Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

New Jersey Transit ADA Task Force

National Federation of the Blind (Newsline and Jobline)

Department of Health (Diabetic Services)

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

Drew University

Division of Disability Services (in progress)

The above list represents more formal cooperative agreements which are with organizations not currently under contract with the Commission for the Blind. Contracted agencies include organizations such as the Community Health Law Project, Recordings for the Blind, Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, National Society to Prevent Blindness and various other entities such as the Passaic County Board of Social Services, Cumberland County, Family Services of Morris county, the Senior Service Corps, Inc., Family Services Association, and Heightened Independence. Many of these contracted services are provided to clients who are not seeking employment, or are services closely related to blindness, rather than employment. In addition, CBVI acts as the State Licensing Agency for business people in the Randolph Sheppard Program and, as such, enters into agreements with government agencies to provide food services (primarily) to building employees and the public.

On a less formal basis, the Commission maintains membership on a variety of levels and supports the activities of a variety of organizations such as Region II, RRCEP, the Commodities and Services Council, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, Association of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Network of Organizations for the Blind, New Jersey Transit Senior Citizen and Disabled Advisory Committee, and various county college, and chamber of commerce organizations.

(2) Coordination with Education Officials

Since 1910, the Commission has assisted school districts in providing education programs that address the special needs of children with visual impairment and blindness. In 1993, this partnership was formalized with local school districts through provider service agreements. These agreements identify the specific level of services that the Commission will provide for each child in the school district. As the child reaches the age of fourteen, the Commission's education counselor refers the student to a transition counselor who will begin to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and provide the student with information concerning a variety of programs designed around the specific needs of blind or visually impaired youth who require information as well as specialized techniques for research and training in career awareness/job seeking activities, etc. Throughout this transition process, contact with the school district remains constant, as the student's participation in various programs, and need and provision for specialized training and/or adaptive equipment are addressed as part of the IEP and the transition plan. Technical consultation begun in the earlier grades with the education counselor is continued by the transition counselor. In the education community, CBVI transition counselors play an organizational role in technical consultation through their active participation in career fairs, school-to-work activities, task force memberships etc.

On the state level, the Executive Director of CBVI is an invited member to the State Agency Directors Forum which includes directors of DVRS; OSEP, OSTCI, both in the DOE; the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the Juvenile Justice Commission. These meetings enhance the coordination of policies and programs relating to students in transition.

Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

In addition to those listed above, the Commission has an agreement with the New Jersey Association of the Deaf and Blind and works closely with a variety of rehabilitation organizations in a contractual relationship. Our contracts are with the First Occupational Center of New Jersey, the Monmouth Center for Vocational Rehabilitation, St. Joseph's School for the Blind, Abilitech, and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Center. Additionally, the Commission maintains close relationships with many of the Centers for Independent Living, and Independent Living organizations such as Pathway to Independence with whom we have a contract.

(4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently working on an updated agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). DDD has traditionally assumed responsibility for the follow along services in the extended phase of supported employment.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has contracted with three service providers for job coaching and extended services, (The First Occupational Center for Northern New Jersey, Monmouth Center for Vocational Rehabilitation for Central New Jersey, and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training and Opportunity Center for Southern New Jersey.) In addition, the Commission utilizes Title VI, Part C funds on an individualized fee for service basis in order to provide consumers with a range of choices in the provision of supported employment services. At present, the Commission utilizes the same fee structure and approval process as that which is in place for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is committed to the establishment and maintenance of Comprehensive System of Personnel Development to ensure that highly qualified individuals provided services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. The Commission will utilize a variety of highly qualified providers including the Region II Continuing Education Program (RRCEP), the New Jersey Department of Personnel, Human Resource Institute (HRDI), New Jersey and other state universities and colleges, as well as consultants and individuals who can provide workshops, conferences and other discipline specific training for the professional VR staff.

Components of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

In- service Training

Vocational outcomes (employment), career development, and personal empowerment are the cornerstones of the vocational rehabilitation program. Issues, such as community access, the development of personal and social relationships, social responsibility, leisure and recreation, and personal fulfillment all must be considered if the agency's vocational rehabilitation program is to continue to have a positive impact on the lives of our consumers. Staff is empowered to assist the consumers in reaching their personal goals and this is accomplished through a comprehensive, integrated sequence of goal focused training programs utilizing the Human Resource Development model.

Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RRCEP). The Commission provides ongoing training opportunities through the RRCEP to VR staff to meet the present and emerging needs in the field. The Commission is an active member of the RRCEP Advisory Board and participates in the development of training to meet the needs of agency staff.

Tuition Reimbursement Program. The Commission encourages employees to participate in the tuition reimbursement program. The program provides a means for employees to pursue formal academic training to improve job skills and work performance and to further career development. Courses must be job related and are

generally pursued on the employees' own time. The Commission will reimburse for up to six credits per semester, at the state college or university rate, whichever is higher.

New Jersey Department of Personnel The New Jersey Department of Personnel, through the Human Resource Development Institute (HRDI) offers courses, on an ongoing basis to agency staff to assist them achieve personal and organizational goals and needs. Employees are encouraged to attend courses pertinent to their job duties and responsibilities.

Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services. (DVRS) The Commission has been working closely with DVRS to provide joint training to vocational rehabilitation staff of both agencies. Joint efforts will enable both agencies to provide the most effective and cost efficient training to staff through shared resources, i.e. vendors, distance learning mechanisms, such as satellite sites, compressed video teleconferencing, computers, etc.

Conference, Workshops and other Training. The Commission encourages staff to attend training, seminars, and workshops appropriate to their job duties and responsibilities within and outside the state.

Subject Matter Experts. The Commission has developed in-house subject matter experts. These are staff who can provide training to other agency staff in areas of their expertise. Areas that we have used and will continue to use subject matter experts are ADA, CPR, and Employer Relations/Grievance Process.

Distance Learning. The Commission will continue to utilize its stationary and mobile satellite equipment to provide training from across the nation to vocational rehabilitation staff. The stationary satellite is located at the Commission's Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center.

State Licensure

The Regulations to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandate that states develop and implement strategies for the hiring or retraining of personnel to meet standards or qualifications based on the highest requirements in the state for the counseling profession. New Jersey presently has established a standard, which is a 60 credit Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation. This is the standard that our agency must work toward. In New Jersey, we have not had a CORE approved Rehabilitation Counseling program since 1985. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services have been negotiating with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) School of Health Related Professions to establish a Masters level program in Vocational Rehabilitation. It is anticipated that the program will commence in the summer of 1999 at two distinct sites.

The Commission presently has 14 counselors working with the Title I program with bachelor degrees and who will be required to obtain a Masters degree. Additionally, there

are 11 vocational counselors who have Masters degrees in other fields. The opportunity will be offered to these individuals to obtain a Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation in order to meet the state standard. Our agency anticipates that all of the vocational rehabilitation counseling staff will have obtained the standard by fiscal 2004.

The Commission views participation in this program to meet the CSPD requirement as an employee benefit, which is valuable and part of a national competency movement. Financial participation will be provided by the agency to enable an employee to complete this program.

**ASSESSMENT; ESTIMATES; GOALS AND PRIORITIES;
STRATEGIES; AND PROGRESS REPORTS**

(a)(1)(A) Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired utilizes a variety of methods to ascertain the rehabilitation needs of individuals residing in the state in order to continue to improve the nature and scope of services that are provided to individuals seeking an employment outcome. These assessments are done in a variety of ways:

Forums and Public Meeting conducted with the Commission's State Rehabilitation Council, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and other entities.

Evaluations conducted with consumers exiting the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center.

Continuing surveys conducted by the State Rehabilitation Council.

Review of prior year(s) closure information at the end of each fiscal year. This evaluation focuses on the number of individuals employed, the wages at closure, and satisfaction with services offered.

On February 25, 1999, a Public Meeting was held prior to the submittal of the Unified State Plan on April 1, 1999 to gather information from consumers, other professionals, and interested parties. There were a variety of issues that were brought forth and these were as follows:

Technology is and will continue to be a major issue relative to the employment of individuals with disabilities. More sophisticated technology and continuous training is needed to allow individuals compete on an even level with non-disabled persons.

Passaic County is in need of a Center in the county to meet the needs of consumers. Individuals have to travel to surrounding counties to receive the services that they require. Transportation, as it is, requires individuals to spend long hours just getting to centers in adjoining counties.

Changes in Social Security guidelines are needed so that people can continue receiving health benefits when they begin working, if benefits are not available.

Transportation for all individuals with disabilities, whether in employment or training, continues to be a major impediment. Transportation needs to be available, particularly in rural areas and during off- hours so that people can go to work. There are major problems with Access Link. It is not meeting the need of people with disabilities. The WIB's are required to develop Transportation Plans, as they relate to Work First New Jersey. These Transportation Plans make recommendations to New Jersey Transit. DVRS and CBVI need to be aware of these as they relate to consumers.

Literacy needs must be addressed, regardless of the media, for all people. The changing job market will continue to require a higher skill level.

Consumers must make some of their own changes if they are going to be successful, not just rely on others to make changes. If something is needed, don't hesitate to ask for it.

The Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services attended the Public Meeting and led an Open Discussion period following the formal presentations. As estimated 60 people participated in the Public Meeting. A direct outgrowth of this Meeting was that the State Rehabilitation Councils of both agencies and the State Independent Living Council will convene to discuss the major issue of transportation and determine what they can do as a group to effect the necessary changes.

(a)(1)(B) Community Rehabilitation Program Needs

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired operates the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, a residential facility that provides comprehensive services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired residing in the state. The following services are offered: evaluation and adjustment to blindness services, vocational assessment, independent living services, counseling and guidance, and specific vocational training in areas identified by consumer and staff input. Presently, a comprehensive food service training program is underway at the facility. In October, 1998, the Norma F. Krajczar Technology Center was opened at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center to provide evaluations and training to consumers in assistive technology in order to meet the growing need for technology that exists in most occupations today. The Technology Center keeps abreast of the latest developments in technology to meet the current and ever expanding needs of consumers entering training and employment situations.

Community Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state, including the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, will need to be prepared for and utilized to assist vocational

rehabilitation agencies implement the trial work situations as required in the Rehabilitation Act amendments.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requires that Community Rehabilitation Programs also employ qualified rehabilitation personnel. Although, at present, the first priority is the education and training of state agency staff, sufficient opportunities must be available to assist the Community Programs meet the mandates of the Act.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired continues to meet with ACCSES to investigate ways and methods to increase the number of blind and visually impaired consumers employed by the State Use Program.

(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services

(1) It is estimated that 2800 individuals will be eligible for services in Program Year 2000.

(2) Of the 2800 eligible individuals, it is estimated that all will receive services provided under Part B of Title I of the Act and/or under Part B of Title VI of the Act. The Commission for the Blind is not under an order of selection.

(3) Service costs are estimated to be \$ 11,858,00 inclusive of amounts for Supported Employment under Title VI, part B and state match under Title I.

(c)(1) Goals and Priorities

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has established goals and priorities for all consumers of services. The Mission statement, Philosophy, Goals and Objectives are as follows:

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote and provide services in the areas of education, employment, independence and eye health through informed choice and partnership with persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families and the community.

Statement of Philosophy

People who are blind and visually impaired can succeed in education, in careers, in the home and in the community. The services that our agency provides directly impacts on

the ability of individuals to achieve success. The consumer must be the most important part of the process. The skills of blindness are essential to independence, education and employment and must be promoted by staff to consumers, employers, educational institutions, and the general public. We encourage involvement and support by the family of the consumer. Research and development of assistive technology is encouraged and supported to ensure that persons who are blind and visually impaired can become independent and competitive in education and employment.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

General Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

The Commission will provide timely, effective, high-quality services.

Objectives

Determine eligibility for services within 30 days of referral and begin service delivery within 30 days of eligibility determination.

Analyze and streamline the Intake process.

Undertake consumer satisfaction surveys, follow-up interviews, and act on consumer recommendations.

Provide resource information as needed.

Maintain a highly trained and competent staff.

Goal 2

The Commission will increase competitive employment.

Objectives

- Network with employers to establish an informed public as to the abilities of persons who are blind and visually impaired in the work place.
- Develop access to computerized job banks.
- Upgrade formal and informal training for Commission staff to be relevant to current market trends. Work cooperatively with the

Workforce System in New Jersey to ensure access to labor market information.

- Provide, in partnership with employers and in keeping with the provisions of ADA, technical and adaptive assistance at the work place.

Goal 3

The Commission will work towards excellence in the education of students who are blind and visually impaired.

Objectives

- Work toward age-appropriate concept development, early literacy experiences and grade-level achievements for students who are blind and visually impaired.
- Provide education services and adaptive equipment that will promote integration and enable students who are blind and visually impaired to function independently on an equal basis with their peers.
- Promote positive attitudes among school staff regarding the abilities of students who are blind and visually impaired and the skills of blindness.
- Keep parents informed on a regular basis of the scheduling and content of lessons and the student's progress.
- Develop partnerships for the purpose of sharing information among parents, Commission staff, classroom teachers and advocacy groups regarding trends, changes, new ideas and different approaches in the education of children who are blind and visually impaired.

Goal 4

The Commission will work to decrease the incidence of blindness or significant vision loss through eye health programs.

Objectives

- To increase public awareness of eye safety and the causes and treatment of vision loss by publicizing the Commission's prevention services and conducting education and detection programs.
- Provide blindness prevention services such as eye disease detection screenings and medical intervention.
- Target high-risk populations for prevention and eye health services.

Goal 5

The Commission will actively promote equality and full inclusion into society.

Objectives

- Work to promote abilities and dispel misconceptions about blindness and visual impairments.
- Work to promote positive attitudes through a variety of community-based activities.
- Advocate for the rights of the population served.
- Build a collaborative network of consumers, blindness organizations, other disability groups, service providers and interested individuals to facilitate consumer empowerment.
- Encourage consumers to advocate for themselves through blindness organizations, government, community, in school and on the job.

Goal 6

The Commission will work in partnership with consumers.

Objectives

- Work with the individual to choose a direction which will enable him or her to achieve desired goals.
- Develop an individual blueprint for achievement that will early define expectations and responsibilities.
- Review service plans annually as developed between case managers and consumers.
- Conduct routine compliance reviews to ensure the delivery of consumer services.
- Seek consumer input through committees, forums, public hearings, etc.

Goal 7

The Commission will encourage positive attitudes toward blindness and visual impairments by consumers and their families.

Objectives

- Develop a mentoring program.
- Implement a program of socialization and interpersonal skills appropriate to various age groups.

Goal 8

The Commission will expand service delivery to historically underserved populations.

Objectives

- Analyze targeted populations to determine appropriate service needs.
- Expand outreach activities.

- Increase services to these populations.
- Conduct annual reviews.
- Review and revise Commission literature and communications.

Goal 9

The Commission will promote the development and use of assistive technology.

Objective

- Maintain up-to-date information on assistive technology.
- Develop a training program for Commission staff.

The Sterling Group The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in order to benchmark our activities, demonstrate continuous improvement and develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the next millenium, has employed the Sterling Group to evaluate all areas of our agency and make recommendations on how we can improve the quality of services that we offer.

(c)(2)(B) Explanation to support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is able to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services to all eligible individuals who are blind and visually Impaired within the state who apply for services. Our agency has not delayed, through waiting lists or any other means, eligibility determinations, assessments, the development of the IPE, and the provision of services under the IPE. The Commission's budget for fiscal 1999 is approximately \$22 million dollars. Our agency anticipates that we will be able to provide the full range of vocational services to all eligible individuals in fiscal 2000. In addition to adequate resources, the Commission is able to utilize agency-based programs and personnel and contract services to assist in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

The Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center (JKRC) The Commission operates a comprehensive, residential rehabilitation center, located centrally in the state. The JKRC is able to provide Adjustment to Blindness counseling and training, diagnostic and pre-vocational evaluations. A consumer is able to receive services in the following instructional areas: vocational assessment, career counseling, communications, home and personal management, orientation and mobility, low vision services, and evaluation and

training in assistive technology. The Center is able to provide training for Randolph-Sheppard operators and Job Seeking Skills training.

Adaptive Living Skill and Prevention Services The Commission, in addition to providing vocational rehabilitation services, is able to offer services to consumers that will enhance their ability to be employed. These direct services, offered on a regional basis, are eye health nursing, social casework, orientation and mobility, and rehabilitation teaching. These services can be offered before, during, and after the rehabilitation process in order to ensure ongoing support and meet consumer needs.

Contracted Services Contracted services assists the vocational rehabilitation program by providing direct services to consumers. Utilizing this method, the Commission is able to provide services in Assistive Technology, Supported Employment, Legal services, and services to the older blind.

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, by utilizing the above in-house modalities are able to provide services to all eligible blind and visually impaired consumers residing in the state.

(3) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired remain committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers who are blind and visually impaired. There are presently sixty-five (65) providers throughout the state who provide supported employment services on a fee for service basis. In addition to utilizing the Title VI, Part B funds on the individual fee for service basis, the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired contracts with three (3) providers for intensive job coaching and extended services. These three providers are the First Occupational Center (Northern New Jersey), Monmouth Center Vocational Rehabilitation (Central New Jersey), and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training and Opportunity Center (Southern New Jersey). The total amount expended for the three contracts is \$168,000.

Change in Fee for Service Rate. Effective April 1, 1999, the baseline hourly fee for service rate was raised from \$37.00 to \$42.00 by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This represents the first increase to reflect rising costs since the fee for service mechanism was introduced in 1991.

Interagency Agreement with D.D.D. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired plans to update its Interagency Agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (D.D.D.). With the continued emphasis of moving individuals from institutional setting to group homes, The Commission plans to work with DDD on a strategy to refer individuals who are blind and visually impaired and developmentally disabled to the Commission for the intensive phase of supported employment job

coaching. Upon completion of the intensive phase, these individuals will be referred back to DDD for the long-term extended services.

(d) State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired plans to continue to dedicate funding that was set aside in the previous Strategic Plan (October 1, 1997-September 30, 2000). The activities that were focused on at that time were as follows:

Operation of and initiatives of the State Rehabilitation Council

Personnel Development to ensure that vocational services are provided by highly qualified rehabilitation personnel

Initiation of the VR loaner program through an existing state program to ensure that equipment is available for consumers when they are commencing a training or employment situation.

Expansion of the National Industries for the Blind/ Veterans Administration employment initiatives

New initiative to be undertaken in fiscal 2000 and beyond are:

Mentoring program focusing on transition students, newly blinded individuals, and new Randolph-Sheppard operators.

Continued enhancement of transition programs. This will include redefining the populations presently served in the transition programs, utilizing other community programs, such as the Job Corp, and ensuring that programs are sequential, developmental and non-duplicative.

Development of employment program with National Industries for the Blind, with the focus on non-traditional occupations (i.e. homebound employment) for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.

Expansion through community based organizations into non-traditional occupations for CBVI consumers, such as construction and automotive trades and food service.

The Commission for the Blind acknowledges the need to assure effective communication with its potential consumers. To a great extent, that communication will be enhanced through the development of a newsletter, a WEB page, standardized brochures, etc., however to the extent that potential consumers may not be able to read print, additional interventions are needed to assure that potential consumers are made aware of the agency's program offerings and to standardize our communication with our current consumers.

Since effective planning of vocational rehabilitation begins at the initial point of contact, the Commission has established a centralized intake unit, consisting of experienced counselors who will work with potential clients until eligibility is established. Monitoring of this function is ongoing, with a formalized evaluation of effort underway through our next consumer satisfaction survey which is targeted at individuals who have been processed through this centralized unit.

Historically, the Commission for the Blind has successfully penetrated the minority population in proportion to the representation of minorities in the general population. We have, however, initiated outreach in selected populations, such as the Latino population in areas outside of vocational rehabilitation with the expectation that our success in vision restoration programs would generate referrals to vocational rehabilitation as well. Additionally, CBVI has a series of contractual relationships with organizations serving older blind, many of which are in geographic areas heavily populated by minorities.

The primary barrier relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with visual disabilities in the state VR program relates to the issues of travel and print access. CBVI has designed its services to be delivered to individuals within their home environment, rather than base services in an office setting. Because the nature of the disability affects the individual's mobility, our population consistently emphasizes the need for access to transportation. This need and the anticipated response to this need is identified above. With respect to Workforce Development and service delivery through the One-Stops, an initial effort is being made to provide access by utilizing lap-top computers with the ability to dial into systems appropriate to meet constituent needs.

With respect to print access, the Commission has initiated and promotes actively, the development of technology resources through its research and development committee, the ongoing expansion of its contracts for technology services (including training), the purchase of adaptive equipment where appropriate, and the development of low tech alternatives to job seeking etc.

On a state level, the Workforce Development system has been responsive to equitable access by supporting the provision of specifically adapted technology through the local WIB's. This need is ongoing as reader service, technology, alternative media for vocational assessments, career testing and other print material is developed for customers of the One-Stops.

(e) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Many of the initiative highlighted in the Strategic Plan for the period October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2000 are still being pursued. Activities of the State Rehabilitation Council continues to receive financial support, the food service program has commenced at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center and the agreement with the Library for the Blind and Print Handicapped for a VR loaner program is nearly completed.

The criteria that the Commission utilized to determine if the objectives were met are the number of individuals achieving an employment outcome and the results of Consumer Satisfaction Surveys. Although the number of consumers achieving an employment outcome remained the same, the number of people in competitive employment rose from 203 to 224, and the number of homemakers and individuals in sheltered employment decreased. The Consumer Satisfaction Survey indicated that more than 75% of consumers felt that they benefited from CBVI services, had their rights explained to them, were given the opportunity to make their own choices about a vocational goal, and would recommend CBVI to a friend. The Commission will continue to conduct surveys as a mechanism to improve services. Some areas, such as counselors' timeliness of response and delays in service have been noted and the Commission will continue to monitor progress in those areas.

MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES

The Rehabilitation Act mandates that mediation procedures are established and implemented that allow parties to resolve disputes through a process that shall be available whenever requested. The process must meet the following criteria:

The process is voluntary on the part of both parties.

Is not used to deny or delay the right of the individual to a hearing.

The mediation is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has contacted the State of New Jersey Office of the Public Defender and our agency will utilize the Office of Dispute Settlement in Trenton for purposes of mediation. The standards of practice, suggested time frames, and the cost estimates are as follows:

Standards of Practice. The Model standards of Conduct for Mediators, endorsed by The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, The American Arbitration Association and the American Bar Association will be utilized.

Time Frames. The mediation session will be scheduled within 20 days of the request for mediation. The 20-day time frame would include the initial conference call with the parties, and the exchange of information pertinent to the mediation session.

Cost Estimate. Mediation and consulting services would be provided at the cost of \$75.00 per hour.

Any agreement from the mediation session(s) will be set forth in writing in a written mediation agreement. The process shall be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently rewriting Chapter 95, our agency Vocational Rehabilitation Rule, to reflect the changes brought about by The Workforce Act and the Rehabilitation Act. The mediation procedures will be included under the Due Process section of the code, after they are reviewed by the Office of Dispute Settlement, the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the State Rehabilitation Council of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired uses an economic needs test in determining a consumer's financial participation in the cost of certain vocational rehabilitation services, other than evaluation of eligibility, diagnostic evaluation, counseling and guidance, referral services, and job placement. The services for which there is an economic needs test are as follows:

College Tuition

Maintenance

Adaptive equipment

Low vision follow-up visits

Accessory or optical low vision aids

Projection or electronic low vision aids

Medical devices and equipment

Restoration services

Personal attendant services

Technological aids

Vocational training (except work adjustment training)

Training equipment

Transportation

Placement equipment

QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired remains committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers who are blind and visually impaired.

Although there exists a sufficient number of service providers who deliver supported employment in the state on a fee for service basis, there is reluctance on the part of many providers to work with individuals with significant disabilities who are blind and visually impaired. The commission presently contracts with three (3) providers for intensive job coaching and extended services- The First Occupational Center (Northern New Jersey), Monmouth Center Vocational Rehabilitation (Central New Jersey), and Jersey Cape Diagnostic, Training and Opportunity Center (Southern New Jersey). The Commission is prepared to expand these contract based on successful supported employment outcomes or develop new providers to meet the needs of consumers who require these types of services.

The Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RRCEP) for Community Rehabilitation Programs and the University Affiliated Program, due to a continuing turnover in staff, offer a variety of training programs in basic and advanced job coaching to meet the continuing need of providers.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently redeveloping our agency's Interagency Agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) for Supported Employment Services. Under the new agreement, individuals are eligible and appropriate for supported employment services, and who are DDD eligible, would be provided intensive job coaching services by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The on going extended services would be provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities.

March 29, 1999

John Szufnarowski, Regional Commissioner
Rehabilitation Services Administration
US Department of Education
Region II
75 Park Place, Room 1208
New York, New York 10007

Dear Commissioner Szufnarowski:

Enclosed is the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired's State Plan for the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Plan Supplement for the State Supported Employment Services Program. This has been submitted as part of New Jersey's Unified State Plan under Section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act. It is our understanding that your office will be receiving the entire Unified Plan, with the appropriate signatures and signed off by the Commissioner of Labor Mel Gelade, at a later date.

Enclosed is the State Plan Pre-Print and the following attachments, as required:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Attachment 4.2(c) | Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations. |
| Attachment 4.9(c) | Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities. |
| Attachment 4.11(b) | Comprehensive System of Personnel Development. |
| Attachment 4.12 | Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports. |
| Attachment 4.16(b)(2) | Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures. |
| Attachment 6.9(c)(2) | Services Subject to Financial Needs Test. |

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

Attachment 7.3

Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported
Employment Services.

The Effective Date for the Unified Plan is July 1, 1999.

Also enclosed are the required Certifications Regarding Lobbying; Debarment, Suspension; and the Drug-Free Workplace Requirements for the Title I and Title VI-C Programs.

If you have any questions concerning any of the information enclosed, please contact (Mrs.) Jamie C. Hilton, Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, at (973) 648-2324.

Sincerely,

Michele Guhl, Commissioner
Department of Human Services

MKG:6

**STATE PLAN FOR THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES
PROGRAM**

AND

**STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT
SERVICES PROGRAM**

STATE: New Jersey

AGENCY: Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired

AGENCY TYPE: GENERAL ___ BLIND X COMBINED

SECTION 1: LEGAL BASIS AND STATE CERTIFICATIONS

- 1.1** The Department of Human Services/Commission f/t Blind & Visually Impaired (name of designated State agency or designated State unit) is authorized to submit this State plan under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended¹ and its supplement under title VI, part B of the Act.¹

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

- 1.2 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title I, part B of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services, the **Department of Human Services** (name of the designated State agency)³ agrees to operate and administer the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program in accordance with the provisions of this State plan⁴, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁵, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under section 111 of the Act are used solely for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under title I and the administration of this State plan.
- 1.3 As a condition for the receipt of Federal funds under title VI, part B of the Act for supported employment services, the designated State agency agrees to operate and administer the State Supported Employment Services Program in accordance with the provisions of the supplement to this State plan⁶, the Act, and all applicable regulations⁷, policies, and procedures established by the Secretary. Funds made available under title VI, part B are used solely for the provision of supported employment services and the administration of the supplement to the title I State plan.
- 1.4 The designated State agency and/or the designated State unit has the authority under State law to perform the functions of the State regarding this State plan and its supplement.
- 1.5 The State legally may carry out each provision of the State plan and its supplement.
- 1.6 All provisions of the State plan and its supplement are consistent with State law.
- 1.7 The **Commissioner of the Department of Human Services** (title of State officer) has the authority under State law to receive, hold, and disburse Federal funds made available under this State plan and its supplement.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

1.8 The **Commissioner of the Department of Human Services** (title of State officer) has the authority to submit this State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and the State plan supplement for supported employment services.

1.9 The agency that submits this State plan and its supplement has adopted or otherwise formally approved the plan and its supplement.

1.10 The effective date of this State plan and its supplement is July 1, 1999

(Signature)

Michele Guhl

(Typed Name of Signatory)

(Date)

Commissioner, Department of Human Services

(Title)

¹ Public Law 93-112, as amended by Public Laws 93-516, 95-602, 98-221, 99-506, 100-630, 102-569, 103-073, and 105-220.

² Unless otherwise stated, "Act" means the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

³ All references in this plan to "designated State agency" or to "the State agency" relate to the agency identified in this paragraph.

⁴ No funds under title I of the Act may be awarded without an approved State plan in accordance with section 101(a) of the Act and 34 CFR part 361.

⁵ Applicable regulations include the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR) in 34 CFR parts 74, 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 85, and 86 and the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program regulations in 34 CFR part 361.

⁶ No funds under title VI, part B of the Act may be awarded without an approved supplement to the title I State plan in accordance with section 625(a) of the Act.

⁷ Applicable regulations include the EDGAR citations in footnote 5, 34 CFR part 361, and 34 CFR part 363.

SECTION 2: PUBLIC COMMENT ON STATE PLAN POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

2.1 Public participation requirements. (Section 101(a)(16)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.20(a)(1) and (2), (b), and (d), and 363.11(g)(9))

- (a) The designated State agency, prior to the adoption of any policies or procedures governing the provision of vocational rehabilitation services under the State plan and supported employment services under the supplement to the State plan, including making any amendment to such policies and procedures, conducts public meetings throughout the State to provide the public, including individuals with disabilities, an opportunity to comment on the policies or procedures, and actively consults with the Director of the client assistance program carried out under section 112 of the Act, and, as appropriate, Indian tribes, tribal organizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations on the policies or procedures.
- (b) The designated State agency provides adequate notice of the meetings in accordance with State law governing public meetings, or, in the absence of such State law, in accordance with procedures developed by the State agency in consultation with the State Rehabilitation Council, if the agency has a Council.

2.2 State review process. (34 CFR Part 79)

If the State plan, its supplement, or amendment to the State plan is subject to the State review process, such materials are reviewed and commented on in accordance with the provisions of Executive Order 12372, and comments provided by the State review process are transmitted to the Rehabilitation Services Administration.

This State plan and its supplement are subject to the State review process.

Yes___ No X

SECTION 3: SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN AND ITS SUPPLEMENT

FFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

3.1 Submittal of the State plan, its supplement, and revisions to the plan and its supplement. (Sections 101(a)(1), (23) and 625(a)(1) of the Act)

- (a) The State submits to the Commissioner a State plan for vocational rehabilitation services that meets the requirements of section 101 of the Act and a State plan supplement for supported employment services that meets the requirements of section 625 of the Act on the same date that the State submits a State plan under section 112 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
- (b) If the State submits a State unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 without including the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services in the unified plan, the State submits to the Commissioner the State plan for vocational rehabilitation services and its supplement for supported employment services on the same date that the State submits its unified plan under section 501(b) of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.
- (c) The State submits only those policies, procedures, or descriptions required under this State plan and its supplement that have not been previously submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- (d) The State submits to the Commissioner at such time and in such manner as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, reports containing annual updates of the information relating to the:
 - (1) comprehensive system of personnel development;
 - (2) assessments, estimates, goals and priorities, and reports of progress;
 - (3) innovation and expansion activities; and
 - (4) requirements under title I, part B or title VI, part B of the Act.
- (e) The State plan and its supplement are in effect subject to the submission of such modifications as the State determines to be necessary or as the Commissioner may require based on a change in State policy, a change in Federal law, including regulations, an interpretation of the Act by a Federal court or the highest court of the State, or a finding by the Commissioner of State

FFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

noncompliance with the requirements of the Act, until the State submits and receives approval of a new State plan or plan supplement.

3.2 Supported employment plan. (Sections 101(a)(22) and 625(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.34 and 363.10)

The State has an acceptable plan for carrying out part B of title VI of the Act, including the use of funds under that part to supplement funds made available under part B of title I of the Act to pay for the cost of services leading to supported employment.

SECTION 4: ADMINISTRATION OF THE STATE PLAN

4.1 Designated State agency and designated State unit. (Sections 101(a)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.13)

(a) Designated State agency.

(1) There is a State agency designated as the sole State agency to administer the State plan, or to supervise its administration in a political subdivision of the State by a sole local agency.

(2) The designated State agency is:

_____ primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities; or

 X not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities.

(3) In American Samoa, the designated State agency is the Governor.

(b) Designated State unit.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

- (1) If the designated State agency is not primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, the State agency includes a vocational rehabilitation bureau, division, or other organizational unit that:
- (A) is primarily concerned with vocational rehabilitation, or vocational and other rehabilitation, of individuals with disabilities, and is responsible for the designated State agency's vocational rehabilitation program, including those responsibilities specified in subparagraph (5) of this paragraph of the State plan;
 - (B) has a full-time director;
 - (C) has a staff, at least 90 percent of whom are employed full time on the rehabilitation work of the organizational unit;
 - (D) is located at an organizational level and has an organizational status within the designated State agency comparable to that of other major organizational units of the designated State agency; and
 - (E) at a minimum, has the following responsibilities that cannot be delegated to any other agency or individual:
 - (i) all decisions affecting eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, the nature and scope of available services, and the provision of services;
 - (ii) a determination that an individual has ended participation in the vocational rehabilitation program and achieved an employment outcome after receiving vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (iii) policy formulation and implementation; and
 - (iv) allocation and expenditure of vocational rehabilitation funds.
- (2) The name of the designated State unit is **The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired**

4.2 State independent commission or state rehabilitation council. (Sections 101(a)(21) and 105 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.16 and .17)

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

The State plan must contain one of the following two assurances.

- (a) ___ The designated State agency is an independent commission that:
- (1) is responsible under State law for operating, or overseeing the operation of, the vocational rehabilitation program in the State;
 - (2) is consumer-controlled by persons who:
 - (A) are individuals with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit major life activities; and
 - (B) represent individuals with a broad range of disabilities, unless the designated State unit under the direction of the commission is the State agency for individuals who are blind;
 - (3) includes family members, advocates, or other representatives, of individuals with mental impairments; and
 - (4) undertakes the functions set forth in section 105(c)(4) of the Act;

or

- (b) X The State has established a State Rehabilitation Council that meets the criteria set forth in section 105 of the Act and the designated State unit:
- (1) jointly with the Council develops, agrees to, and reviews annually State goals and priorities, and jointly submits annual reports of progress with the Council, consistent with the provisions of section 101(a)(15) of the Act and section 4.12 of this State plan;
 - (2) regularly consults with the Council regarding the development, implementation, and revision of State policies and procedures of general applicability pertaining to the provision of vocational rehabilitation services;

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(3) includes in the State plan and in any revision to the State plan, a summary of input provided by the Council, including recommendations from the annual report of the Council, the review and analysis of consumer satisfaction, and other reports prepared by the Council, and the response of the designated State unit to such input and recommendations, including explanations for rejecting any input or recommendation; and

(4) transmits to the Council:

(A) all plans, reports, and other information required under title I of the Act to be submitted to the Secretary;

(B) all policies and information on all practices and procedures of general applicability provided to or used by rehabilitation personnel in carrying out this State plan; and

(C) copies of due process hearing decisions issued under title I of the Act, which are transmitted in such a manner as to ensure that the identity of the participants in the hearings is kept confidential.

(c) *If the designated State unit has a State Rehabilitation Council, Attachment 4.2(c)* provides a summary of the input provided by the Council consistent with the provisions identified in subparagraph (b)(3) of this subsection of the State plan, the response of the designated State unit to the input and recommendations, and explanations for the rejection of any input or any recommendation.

4.3 Consultations regarding the administration of the state plan. (Section 101(a)(16)(B) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.21(a))

The designated State agency takes into account, in connection with matters of general policy arising in the administration of the plan, the views of:

(a) individuals and groups of individuals who are recipients of vocational rehabilitation services, or in appropriate cases, the individuals' representatives;

(b) personnel working in programs that provide vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;

(c) providers of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities;

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- (d) the Director of the client assistance program; and
- (e) the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

4.4 Non-federal share. (Section 101(a)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 80.24 and 361.60(b))

The non-Federal share of the cost of carrying out this State plan is provided through the financial participation by the State, or if the State elects, by the State and local agencies.

4.5 Local administration. (Section 101(a)(2)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.15)

- (a) The State plan provides for local administration and each local agency is under the supervision of the designated State unit and is the sole local agency responsible for the administration of the program within the political subdivision that it serves.

Yes ___ No X

- (b) *IF YES, Attachment 4.5* identifies each local agency and describes the methods each local agency uses to administer the vocational rehabilitation program in accordance with this State plan.

4.6 Statewideness and waivers of statewideness. (Sections 101(a)(2)(A) and (4)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.25 and .26)

The State plan is in effect in all political subdivisions of the State, except in the case when:

- (a) The State unit is providing services in one or more political subdivisions of the State that increase services or expand the scope of services that are available statewide under this State plan and the:
 - (1) non-Federal share of the cost of these services is met from funds provided by a local public agency, including funds contributed to a local public agency by a private agency, organization, or individual; and

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- (2) services are likely to promote the vocational rehabilitation of substantially larger numbers of individuals with disabilities or of individuals with disabilities with particular types of impairments.
- (3) If the State is providing services that meet the provisions of subparagraphs (a)(1) and (2) of this subsection, **Attachment 4.6(a)(3)** requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.26(b); or
- (b) Earmarked funds are used toward the non-Federal share and such funds are earmarked for particular geographic areas within the State contingent on the State notifying the Commissioner that it cannot provide the full non-Federal share without the use of such earmarked funds.

4.7 Shared funding and administration of joint programs. (Section 101(a)(2)(A)(ii) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.27)

- (a) The designated State agency is carrying out a joint program involving shared funding and administrative responsibility with another State agency or a local public agency to provide services to individuals with disabilities.

Yes ___ No X

- (b) *IF YES*, **Attachment 4.7(b)** describes the:

- (1) nature and scope of the joint program;
- (2) services to be provided;
- (3) respective roles of each participating agency in the provision of services and their administration; and
- (4) share of the costs to be assumed by each agency.

- (c) If the joint program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan subsection.

4.8 Third-party cooperative arrangements involving funds from other public agencies (Section 12 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.28)

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- (a) The designated State unit has entered into a third-party cooperative arrangement for providing or administering vocational rehabilitation services with another State agency or a local public agency that is furnishing part or all of the non-Federal share.

Yes No

- (b) *IF YES:*

- (1) The services provided by the cooperating agency are not the customary or typical services provided by that agency but are new services that have a vocational rehabilitation focus or are existing services that have been modified, adapted, expanded, or reconfigured to have a vocational rehabilitation focus.
- (2) The services provided by the cooperating agency are only available to applicants for, or recipients of, services from the designated State unit.
- (3) Program expenditures and staff providing services under the cooperative arrangement are under the administrative supervision of the designated State unit.
- (4) All State plan requirements, including the State's order of selection, if an order is in effect, apply to all services provided under the cooperative program.

- (c) If the third-party cooperative program provides services in one or more political subdivisions of the State, the State requests a waiver of statewideness in accordance with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.26 and subparagraph 4.6(a)(3) of this State plan.

4.9 Cooperation, collaboration, and coordination. (Sections 101(a)(11) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.22, .23 and .24)

- (a) **Cooperative agreements with other components of statewide workforce investment systems.**

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 1999

The designated State agency has cooperative agreements with other entities that are components of the statewide workforce investment system of the State in accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(11)(A) of the Act.

(b) Replication of cooperative agreements.

The designated State agency replicates the cooperative agreement identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of the State plan at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system.

(c) Interagency cooperation with other agencies and entities.

Attachment 4.9(c) describes the:

- (1)** interagency cooperation with, and utilization of the services and facilities of the Federal, State, and local agencies and programs, including programs carried out by the Under Secretary for Rural Development of the United States Department of Agriculture and State use contracting programs, to the extent that such agencies and programs are not carrying out activities through the statewide workforce investment system;
- (2)** coordination, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 4.9(d) of this subsection, with education officials to facilitate the transition of students with disabilities from school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services;
- (3)** manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers, consistent with the requirements of paragraph 5.6(b) of the State plan; and,
- (4)** efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and entities with respect to the provision of supported employment and extended services for individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the requirements of subsection 7.5 of the supplement to this State plan.

(d) Coordination with education officials.

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Plans, policies, and procedures for coordination between the designated State agency and education officials responsible for the public education of students with disabilities that are designed to facilitate the transition of the students who are individuals with disabilities from the receipt of educational services in school to the receipt of vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan are described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(2)** which also includes information on a formal interagency agreement with the State educational agency that, at a minimum, provides for:

- (1) consultation and technical assistance to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including vocational rehabilitation services;
 - (2) transition planning by personnel of the designated State agency and the educational agency for students with disabilities that facilitates the development and completion of their individualized education programs under section 614(d) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
 - (3) the roles and responsibilities, including financial responsibilities, of each agency, including provisions for determining State lead agencies and qualified personnel responsible for transition services; and
 - (4) procedures for outreach to and identification of students with disabilities who need transition services.
- (e) **Coordination with statewide independent living council and independent living centers.**

The designated State unit, the Statewide Independent Living Council established under section 705 of the Act, and the independent living centers described in part C of title VII of the Act within the State have developed working relationships and coordinate their activities.

(f) **Cooperative agreement with recipients of grants for services to American Indians.**

- (1) There is in the State a recipient(s) of a grant under part C of title I of the Act for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing on or near Federal and State reservations.

Yes ___ No X

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(2) ***IF YES***, the designated State agency has entered into a formal cooperative agreement with each grant recipient in the State that receives funds under part C of title I of the Act. The agreement(s) describes strategies for collaboration and coordination in providing vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities, including:

(A) strategies for interagency referral and information sharing that assist in eligibility determinations and the development of individualized plans for employment;

(B) procedures for ensuring that American Indians who are individuals with disabilities and who are living near a reservation or tribal service area are provided vocational rehabilitation services; and

(C) provisions for sharing resources in cooperative studies and assessments, joint training activities, and other collaborative activities designed to improve the provision of services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities.

(g) **Reciprocal referral services with a separate agency for individuals who are blind.**

In those States in which there is a separate designated State unit for individuals who are blind and also a designated State unit for all other individuals with disabilities, the two State units:

(1) have established reciprocal referral services;

(2) use each other's services and facilities to the extent feasible;

(3) jointly plan activities to improve services in the State for individuals with multiple impairments, including visual impairments; and

(4) otherwise cooperate to provide more effective services, including, if appropriate, entering into a written cooperative agreement.

4.10 Methods of administration. (Sections 101(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.12, .19 and .51(a) and (c))

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(a) **General.**

The State agency employs methods of administration found by the Commissioner to be necessary for the proper and efficient administration of this State plan.

(b) **Employment of individuals with disabilities.**

The designated State agency and entities carrying out community rehabilitation programs in the State, who are in receipt of assistance under title I of the Act, take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified individuals with disabilities covered under and on the same terms and conditions as set forth in section 503 of the Act.

(c) **Written standards for providers of services.**

The designated State agency has established, maintains, makes available to the public, and implements written minimum standards for the various types of providers used by the designated State unit in providing vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan.

(d) **Facilities.**

Facilities used in connection with the delivery of services assisted under this State plan comply with the provisions of the Act entitled "An Act to insure that certain buildings financed with Federal funds are so designed and constructed as to be accessible to the physically handicapped", approved on August 12, 1968 (commonly known as the "Architectural Barriers Act of 1968"), with section 504 of the Act and with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990.

4.11 Comprehensive system of personnel development. (Section 101(a)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.18)

- (a) The designated State agency has implemented a comprehensive system of personnel development that meets the requirements of section 101(a)(7) of the Act and 34 CFR 361.18.

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- (b) **Attachment 4.11(b)** describes the designated State agency's policies, procedures and activities to establish and maintain a comprehensive system of personnel development designed to ensure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professional and paraprofessional personnel for the designated State unit. The description addresses the following requirements:
- (1) collection and analysis on an annual basis of data on qualified personnel needs and personnel development consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.18(a);
 - (2) plan to address the current and projected needs for qualified personnel including the coordination and facilitation of efforts between the designated State unit and institutions of higher education and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel, including personnel from minority backgrounds, and personnel who are individuals with disabilities;
 - (3) establishment and maintenance of personnel standards meeting the requirements of 34 CFR 361.18(c) to ensure that personnel, including professionals and paraprofessionals, are adequately trained and prepared, including:
 - (A) standards that are consistent with any national or State-approved or recognized certification, licensing, registration, or, in the absence of these requirements, other comparable requirements that apply to the profession or discipline in which such personnel are providing vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (B) to the extent that such standards are not based on the highest requirements in the State applicable to a particular profession or discipline, the steps the State is currently taking and the steps the State plans to take to retrain or hire personnel within the designated State unit so that such personnel meet standards that are based on the highest requirements in the State;
 - (4) standards to ensure the availability of personnel within the designated State unit or other individuals who are, to the maximum extent feasible, trained to communicate in the native language or mode of communication of an applicant or eligible individual;
 - (5) staff development to ensure that all personnel employed by the designated State unit receive appropriate and adequate training; and

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- (6) coordination of its personnel development system with personnel development under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

4.12 Annual state goals and reports of progress. (Sections 101(a)(15), 105(c)(2) and 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

(a) Assessments and estimates.

(1) Attachment 4.12(a) documents the results of a comprehensive, statewide assessment, jointly conducted by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council (if the State has such a Council) every 3 years, and:

(A) describes the rehabilitation needs of individuals with disabilities residing within the State, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of:

(i) individuals with the most significant disabilities, including their need for supported employment services;

(ii) individuals with disabilities who are minorities and individuals with disabilities who have been unserved or underserved by the vocational rehabilitation program carried out under this State plan; and

(iii) individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system, as identified by such individuals and personnel assisting such individuals through the components.

(B) provides an assessment of the need to establish, develop, or improve community rehabilitation programs within the State.

(2) For any year in which the State revises the assessments, the designated State unit submits to the Commissioner a report containing information regarding revisions to the assessments.

(b) Annual estimates.

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The designated State agency annually submits **Attachment 4.12(b)** that includes, State estimates of the:

- (1) number of individuals in the State who are eligible for services under this State plan;
- (2) number of such individuals who will receive services provided with funds provided under part B of title I of the Act and under part B of title VI of the Act, including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection in accordance with paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan, estimates of the number of individuals to be served under each priority category within the order; and
- (3) costs of the services described in subparagraph (1), including, if the designated State agency uses an order of selection, the service costs for each priority category within the order.

(c) **Goals and priorities.**

- (1) **Attachment 4.12(c)(1)** identifies the goals and priorities of the State in carrying out the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs and also identifies any revisions in the goals and priorities for any year the State revises the goals and priorities.
- (2) **Order of selection.**
 - (A) If the State agency is operating on an order of selection, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A)** shows the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services and provides a justification for the order, the service and outcome goals, and the time within which these goals may be achieved for individuals in each priority category consistent with the provisions of paragraph 6.4(c) of this State plan.
 - (B) If, however, the agency assures in paragraph 6.4(a) of this State plan that it can provide the full range of services identified in subsection 5.1 of this State plan to all eligible individuals, **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B)** satisfies all of the provisions identified in paragraph 6.4(b) of the State plan.
- (3) **Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds.**

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Attachment 4.12(c)(3) specifies, consistent with subsection 7.4 of the State plan supplement, the State's goals and priorities with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act for the provision of supported employment services.

(4) Basis.

The goals and priorities are based on:

- (A)** the analysis of the comprehensive assessment and any revisions in the assessment consistent with the provisions of paragraph 4.12(a) of this State plan;
 - (B)** the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established under section 106 of the Act; and
 - (C)** other available information on the operation of the vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs, including reports from the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has a Council, and the findings of monitoring activities carried out by the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- (5)** In accordance with the provisions of section 101(a)(15)(C)(ii) and (iii) of the Act, the goals and priorities, including any revisions to the goals and priorities, are jointly developed, agreed to, and reviewed annually by the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council.

(d) Strategies.

Attachment 4.12(d) describes the strategies, including those identified in section 101(a)(15)(D) of the Act and the innovation and expansion activities of paragraph 4.13(a) of this State plan, the designated State agency will use to:

- (1)** address the needs identified in the assessment conducted under paragraph (a) of this subsection and achieve the goals and priorities identified in paragraph (c) of this subsection;
- (2)** carryout outreach activities to identify and serve individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities consistent with the provisions of subsection 7.6 of the State plan supplement; and

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- (3) overcome identified barriers relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and State Supported Employment Services Program.

(e) **Evaluation and reports of progress.**

Attachment 4.12(e) describes the results of an evaluation of the effectiveness of the vocational rehabilitation program, and includes an annual joint report of the designated State unit and the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, to the Commissioner on the progress made in improving the effectiveness of the program from the previous year. The description includes:

- (1) an evaluation of the extent to which the goals identified in subparagraph (c) of this subsection plan were achieved;
- (2) an identification of the strategies that contributed to achieving the goals;
- (3) to the extent to which the goals were not achieved, an explanation of the factors that impeded that achievement;
- (4) an assessment of the performance of the State on the standards and indicators established pursuant to section 106 of the Act; and
- (5) a report consistent with paragraph 4.13(c) of this State plan on how the funds reserved for innovation and expansion activities were utilized in the preceding year.

4.13 Innovation and expansion. (Section 101(a)(18) of the Act)

- (a) The designated State agency reserves and uses a portion of the funds allotted to the State under section 110 of the Act:
 - (1) for the development and implementation of innovative approaches to expand and improve the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with disabilities under this State plan, particularly individuals with the most significant disabilities, consistent with the findings of the statewide assessment and goals and priorities of the State identified in paragraphs 4.12(a) and (c) of this State plan; and

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(2) to support the funding of the State Rehabilitation Council, if the State has such a Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 105(d)(1) of the Act, and the funding of the Statewide Independent Living Council, consistent with the resource plan prepared under section 705(e)(1) of the Act.

(b) **Attachment 4.12(d)** describes how the reserved funds identified in paragraph (a) of this subsection of this State plan will be utilized.

(c) **Attachment 4.12(e)** describes how the reserved funds were utilized in the preceding year.

4.14 State-imposed requirements. (Section 17 of the Act; 34 CFR 361.39)

The designated State unit identifies upon request those regulations and policies relating to the administration or operation of its vocational rehabilitation and supported employment programs that are State-imposed, including any regulations or policy based on State interpretation of any Federal law, regulations, or guidelines.

4.15 Protection, use, and release of personal information. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.38)

The designated State agency and the designated State unit have policies and procedures that are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.38 to safeguard the confidentiality of all personal information, including photographs and lists of names.

4.16 Mediation and impartial due process hearing. (Section 102(c) of the Act)

(a) **Fair hearing board.**

There is a fair hearing board, established by the State prior to January 1, 1985, that is authorized under State law to review determinations or decisions made under the Act and to carry out the responsibilities of the impartial hearing officer.

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Yes __ No X

(b) Mediation and review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "NO":

- (1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of and procedures for the review through an impartial due process hearing of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.
- (2) **Attachment 4.16(b)(2)** contains the procedures for mediation; the procedures for review through an impartial due process hearing; and, the procedures to seek an impartial review of the decision of the hearing officer, including the standards for reviewing decisions of an hearing officer, if the designated State agency has elected to implement such review procedures.

IF THE ANSWER TO (a) IS "YES":

- (1) The designated State agency has established procedures consistent with the requirements of section 102(c) of the Act for mediation of determinations made by personnel of the designated State unit that affect the provision of vocational rehabilitation services to applicants or eligible individuals.
- (2) **Attachment 4.16(b)(2)** contains the procedures for mediation.

4.17 Reports. (Section 101(a)(10) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.40)

- (a) The designated State unit submits reports in the form and level of detail and at the time required by the Commissioner regarding applicants for and eligible individuals receiving services under the State plan.

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- (b) Information submitted in the reports provides a complete count, unless sampling techniques are used, of the applicants and eligible individuals in a manner that permits the greatest possible cross-classification of data and ensures the confidentiality of the identity of each individual.

SECTION 5: SCOPE OF THE STATE VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES PROGRAM

5.1 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities. (Section 103(a) of the Act)

Vocational rehabilitation services provided under this State plan are any services described in an individualized plan for employment necessary to assist an individual with a disability in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining an employment outcome that is consistent with the strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, including:

- (a) an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
- (b) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act and subsection 5.3 of this State plan;
- (c) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan;
- (d) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
- (e) vocational and other training services, including the provision of personal and vocational adjustment services, books, tools, and other training materials, except that no training services provided at an institution of higher education shall be paid for with funds under this State plan unless maximum efforts have been made by the designated State unit and the individual to secure grant assistance, in whole or in part, from other sources to pay for such training;

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- (f) to the extent that financial support is not readily available from a source (such as through health insurance of the individual or through comparable services and benefits consistent with section 101(a)(8)(A) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan), other than the designated State unit, diagnosis and treatment of physical and mental impairments, including:
- (1) corrective surgery or therapeutic treatment necessary to correct or substantially modify a physical or mental condition that constitutes a substantial impediment to employment, but is of such a nature that such correction or modification may reasonably be expected to eliminate or reduce such impediment to employment within a reasonable length of time;
 - (2) necessary hospitalization in connection with surgery or treatment;
 - (3) prosthetic and orthotic devices;
 - (4) eyeglasses and visual services as prescribed by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws and who are selected by the individual;
 - (5) special services (including transplantation and dialysis), artificial kidneys, and supplies necessary for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease; and
 - (6) diagnosis and treatment for mental and emotional disorders by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;
- (g) maintenance for additional costs incurred while participating in an assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs or while receiving services under an individualized plan for employment;
- (h) transportation, including adequate training in the use of public transportation vehicles and systems, that is provided in connection with the provision of any other service described in this subsection and needed by the individual to achieve an employment outcome;
- (i) on-the-job or other related personal assistance services provided while an individual is receiving other services described in this subsection;

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- (j) interpreter services provided by qualified personnel for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, and reader services for individuals who are determined to be blind, after an examination by qualified personnel who meet State licensure laws;
- (k) rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services, for individuals who are blind;
- (l) occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks and supplies;
- (m) technical assistance and other consultation services to conduct market analyses, develop business plans, and otherwise provide resources, to the extent such resources are authorized to be provided under the statewide workforce investment system, to eligible individuals who are pursuing self-employment or tele commuting or establishing a small business operation as an employment outcome;
- (n) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices;
- (o) transition services for students with disabilities that facilitate the achievement of the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
- (p) supported employment services;
- (q) services to the family of an individual with a disability necessary to assist the individual to achieve an employment outcome; and
- (r) specific post-employment services necessary to assist an individual with a disability to retain, regain, or advance in employment.

5.2 Written policies governing the provision of services to individuals with disabilities. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.50)

- (a) The State unit has written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services specified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan and the criteria under which each service is provided.

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- (b) The policies are consistent with the provisions in 34 CFR 361.50 and:
- (1) ensure that the provision of services is based on the rehabilitation needs of each individual as identified in that individual's individualized plan for employment; and
 - (2) do not establish any arbitrary limits on the nature and scope of services to be provided to the individual to achieve an employment outcome.

5.3 Opportunity to make informed choices regarding the selection of services and providers. (Sections 101(a)(19) and 102(d) of the Act)

Applicants and eligible individuals, or, as appropriate, the applicants' representatives or the individuals' representatives, are provided information and support services to assist the applicants and eligible individuals in exercising informed choice throughout the rehabilitation process, consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.

5.4 Services to American Indians. (Section 101(a)(13) of the Act)

Except as otherwise provided in part C of title I of the Act, the designated State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services to American Indians who are individuals with disabilities residing in the State to the same extent as the designated State agency provides such services to other significant populations of individuals with disabilities residing in the State.

5.5 Scope of vocational rehabilitation services to groups of individuals with disabilities. (Sections 101(a)(17) and 103(b) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.49, .61 and .62)

- (a) The State plan provides for the following optional vocational rehabilitation services for the benefit of groups of individuals with disabilities.
- (1) ___ The establishment, development, or improvement of community rehabilitation programs, including, under special circumstances, the construction of a community rehabilitation facility, that are used to provide services to promote integration and competitive employment.

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If the State elects to use the authority to construct a facility for a community rehabilitation program, the following requirements are met:

- (A) The Federal share of the cost of construction for facilities for a fiscal year does not exceed an amount equal to 10 percent of the State's allotment under section 110 of the Act for that fiscal year.
 - (B) The provisions of section 306 of the Act that were in effect prior to the enactment of the Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 apply to such construction.
 - (C) There is compliance with the requirements in 34 CFR 361.62(b) that ensure the use of the construction authority will not reduce the efforts of the designated State agency in providing other vocational rehabilitation services, other than the establishment of facilities for community rehabilitation programs.
- (2) ___ Telecommunications systems, including telephone, television, satellite, radio, and similar systems, that have the potential for substantially improving service delivery methods of activities described in this section of this State plan and developing appropriate programming to meet the particular needs of individuals with disabilities.
 - (3) ___ Special services to provide nonvisual access to information for individuals who are blind, including the use of telecommunications, Braille, sound recordings, or other appropriate media; captioned television, films, or video cassettes for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing; tactile materials for individuals who are deaf-blind; and other special services that provide information through tactile, vibratory, auditory, and visual media.
 - (4) ___ Technical assistance and support services to businesses that are not subject to title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and that are seeking to employ individuals with disabilities.
 - (5) ___ Small business enterprises operated by individuals with significant disabilities, the operation of which can be improved by the management services and supervision of the designated State agency, along or together with the acquisition by the designated State agency of vending facilities or other equipment and initial stocks and supplies.
 - (A) If the State unit provides small business enterprise services, only individuals with significant disabilities are selected to participate in this supervised program.

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- (B) If the State unit sets aside funds from the proceeds of the operation of the small business enterprises, it has a description of the methods used in setting aside funds and the purposes for which funds are set aside.
- (C) Under its small business enterprises, the State unit provides:
 - (i) X only the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;
 - (ii) ___ only a program or programs other than the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program;
 - (iii) ___ both the Randolph-Sheppard Vending Facility Program and another program(s).
- (6) X Consultative and technical assistance services to assist educational agencies in planning for the transition of students with disabilities from school to post-school activities, including employment.
- (7) X Other services that promise to contribute substantially to the rehabilitation of a group of individuals but that are not related directly to the individualized plan for employment of any one individual with a disability.

(b)

If the State plan provides for any of these services to groups of individuals

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with
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ies, the
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unit
has:

- (1) written policies covering the nature and scope of each of the vocational rehabilitation services it provides and the criteria under which each service is provided; and
- (2) information to ensure the proper and efficient administration of those services in the form and detail and at the time required by the Secretary, including:
 - (A) the types of services provided;
 - (B) the costs of those services; and
 - (C) to the extent feasible, estimates of the numbers of individuals benefiting from those services.

5.6 Contracts and cooperative agreements. (Section 101(a)(24) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.31 and .32)

(a) Contracts with for-profit organizations.

The designated State agency has the authority to enter into contracts with for-profit organizations for the purpose of providing, as vocational rehabilitation services, on-the-job training and related programs for individuals with disabilities under part A of title VI of the Act, upon the determination by the designated State agency that such for-profit organizations are better qualified to provide such vocational rehabilitation services than non-profit agencies and organizations.

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(b) **Cooperative agreements with private non-profit organizations.**

The manner in which the designated State agency establishes cooperative agreements with private non-profit vocational rehabilitation service providers is described in **Attachment 4.9(c)(3)**.

SECTION 6: ADMINISTRATION OF THE PROVISION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

6.1 Record of services. (Section 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.47)

The designated State unit maintains for each applicant or eligible individual a record of services that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.47.

6.2 Referrals and applications. (Sections 101(a)(6)(A) and 102(a)(6) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.41)

(a) The designated State unit has standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services. These standards include timelines for making good faith efforts to inform individuals of application requirements and to gather information necessary to initiate an assessment to determine eligibility and priority of services.

(b) Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, an eligibility determination is made within a reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days, unless:

- (1) exceptional and unforeseen circumstances beyond the control of the designated State unit preclude making an eligibility determination within 60 days and the designated State unit and the individual agree to a specific extension of time; or
- (2) the designated State unit is exploring an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacities to perform in work situations under section 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.

6.3 Information and referral services. (Section 101(a)(20) of the Act)

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The designated State agency has implemented an information and referral system that is adequate to ensure that individuals with disabilities are provided accurate vocational rehabilitation information and guidance, using appropriate modes of communication, to assist such individuals in preparing for, securing, retaining, or regaining employment, and are appropriately referred to Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system in the State.

6.4 Ability to serve all eligible individuals; order of selection for services. (Sections 12(d) and 101(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.36)

- (a) The designated State unit is able to provide the full range of services listed in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, as appropriate, to all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State who apply for services.

Yes X No

- (b) ***IF YES***, Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B) contains an explanation that satisfies the requirements of 34 CFR 361.36(a)(2) or (3) and describes how, on the basis of the designated State unit's projected fiscal and personnel resources and its assessment of the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities within the State, it will:

- (1) continue to provide services to all individuals currently receiving services;
- (2) provide assessment services to all individuals expected to apply for services in the next fiscal year;
- (3) provide services to all individuals who are expected to be determined eligible in the next fiscal year; and
- (4) meet all program requirements.

- (c) ***IF NO***:

- (1) Individuals with the most significant disabilities are selected for vocational rehabilitation services before other individuals with disabilities.
- (2) Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A) contains:

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- (A) the order to be followed in selecting eligible individuals to be provided vocational rehabilitation services; and
 - (B) a justification for the order of selection.
- (3) Eligible individuals who do not meet the order of selection criteria are provided access to the services provided through the designated State unit's information and referral system implemented under section 101(a)(20) of the Act and subsection 6.3 of this State plan.

6.5 Assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services. (Sections 7(2)(A)(i) and (D), 7(20)(A), 101(a)(12) and 102(a)(1)(A), (2)(B) and (4) of the Act)

- (a) To determine whether an individual is eligible for vocational rehabilitation services and the individual's priority under an order of selection for services, if the State is operating under an order of selection, the designated State unit, to the maximum extent possible consistent with the requirements of this State plan, uses existing and current information, including information available from other programs and providers, particularly information provided by education officials and the Social Security Administration, and information provided by the applicant and the family of the applicant.
- (b) To the extent that existing information is unavailable or insufficient, the designated State unit provides appropriate assessment activities to obtain necessary additional information to make the determination regarding the applicant's eligibility, and, if applicable, the applicant's priority under an order of selection.
- (c) The State unit's determination of an applicant's eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services is based only on the following requirements.
 - (1) A determination that the applicant has a physical or mental impairment.
 - (2) A determination that the applicant's physical or mental impairment constitutes or results in a substantial impediment to employment.
 - (3) A presumption, in accordance with section 102(a)(2)(A) of the Act and paragraph (d) of this subsection of the State plan, that the applicant can benefit in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

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- (4) A determination that the applicant requires vocational rehabilitation services to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.
- (d) The designated State unit presumes that an applicant who meets the eligibility requirements in subparagraphs (c)(1) and (c)(2) of this subsection of this State plan can benefit in terms of an employment outcome unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the individual's disability. In making such a demonstration, the designated State unit first explores the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations through the use of trial work experiences consistent with the provisions of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act.
- (e) If there is appropriate evidence that establishes the applicant's eligibility for Social Security benefits under Title II or Title XVI of the Social Security Act, the designated State unit:
 - (1) presumes the applicant to be eligible for vocational rehabilitation services under this State plan (provided that the individual intends to achieve an employment outcome consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual) unless the designated State unit can demonstrate by clear and convincing evidence that the applicant is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from vocational rehabilitation services due to the severity of the disability of the individual in accordance with the provisions of section 102(a)(2) of the Act and paragraph 6.5(d) of this State plan; and
 - (2) considers the applicant to be an individual with a significant disability consistent with the provisions of section 7(21)(A) of the Act.
- (f) In the application of the eligibility criteria, the following requirements are met.
 - (1) No duration of residence requirement is imposed that excludes from services under the plan any individual who is present in the State.
 - (2) No applicant or group of applicants is excluded or found ineligible solely on the basis of the type of disability.

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- (3) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the age, gender, race, color, creed, or national origin of the applicant.
- (4) The eligibility requirements are applied without regard to the particular service needs or anticipated cost of services required by an applicant or the income level of an applicant or applicant's family.

6.6 Procedures for ineligibility determination. (Section 102(a)(5) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.43)

If the State unit determines that an applicant is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services or determines that an individual receiving services under an individualized plan for employment is no longer eligible for services, the State unit:

- (a) makes the determination only after providing an opportunity for full consultation with the individual or, as appropriate, with the individual's representative;
- (b) informs the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in writing, supplemented as necessary by other appropriate modes of communication consistent with the informed choice of the individual, of the ineligibility determination, including:
 - (1) the reasons for the determination; and
 - (2) the description of the means by which the individual may express, and seek remedy for, any dissatisfaction with the determination, including the procedures for the review by an impartial hearing officer consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan;
- (c) provides the individual with a description of services available from the client assistance program and information on how to contact that program; and
- (d) reviews any ineligibility determination that is based on a finding that the individual is incapable of benefiting in terms of an employment outcome from the provision of vocational rehabilitation services within 12 months and annually thereafter, if such a review is requested by the individual or, if appropriate, by the individual's representative, except when the:

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- (1) individual has refused the review;
- (2) individual is no longer present in the State;
- (3) individual's whereabouts are unknown; or
- (4) individual's medical condition is rapidly progressive or terminal.

6.7 Closure without ineligibility determination. (Sections 12(c) and 101(a)(6)(A) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.44)

The State unit does not administratively close an applicant's record of services prior to making an eligibility determination unless the:

- (a) applicant declines to participate in, or is unavailable to complete an assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services; and
- (b) State unit has made a reasonable number of attempts to contact the applicant or, if appropriate, the applicant's representative to encourage the applicant's participation.

6.8 Availability of comparable services and benefits. (Sections 101(a)(8) and 103(a) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.53)

- (a) Prior to providing any vocational rehabilitation services, except those services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, to an eligible individual, or to members of the individual's family, the State unit determines whether comparable services and benefits exist under any other program and whether those services and benefits are available to the individual.
- (b) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program and are available to the eligible individual at the time needed to achieve the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit uses those comparable services or benefits to meet, in whole or in part, the cost of vocational rehabilitation services.
- (c) If comparable services or benefits exist under any other program, but are not available to the individual at the time needed to satisfy the provisions of the individual's individualized plan for employment, the State unit provides vocational rehabilitation services until those comparable services and benefits become available.

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- (d) The following services are exempt from a determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits:
- (1) assessment for determining eligibility and vocational rehabilitation needs by qualified personnel, including, if appropriate, an assessment by personnel skilled in rehabilitation technology;
 - (2) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act;
 - (3) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through agreements developed under section 101(a)(11) of the Act, if such services are not available under this State plan;
 - (4) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services;
 - (5) rehabilitation technology, including telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices; and
 - (6) post-employment services consisting of the services listed under subparagraphs (1) through (5) of this paragraph.
- (e) The requirements of paragraph (a) of this subsection also do not apply if the determination of the availability of comparable services and benefits under any other program would interrupt or delay:
- (1) progress of the individual toward achieving the employment outcome identified in the individualized plan for employment;
 - (2) an immediate job placement; or
 - (3) provision of such service to any individual who is determined to be at extreme medical risk, based on medical evidence provided by an appropriate qualified medical professional.
- (f) The Governor of the State in consultation with the designated State vocational rehabilitation agency and other appropriate agencies ensures that there is an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination that meets the

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requirements of section 101(a)(8)(B)(i)-(iv) of the Act between any appropriate public entity, including the State medicaid program, public institution of higher education, and a component of the statewide workforce investment system, and the designated State unit so as to ensure the provision of the vocational rehabilitation services identified in section 103(a) of the Act and subsection 5.1 of this State plan, other than the services identified in paragraph (d) of this subsection, that are included in the individualized plan for employment of an eligible individual, including the provision of such services during the pendency of any dispute that may arise in the implementation of the interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination.

6.9 Participation of individuals in cost of services based on financial need. (Section 12(c) of the Act; 34 CFR 361.54)

- (a) No financial needs test is applied and no financial participation is required as a condition for furnishing the following vocational rehabilitation services:
- (1) assessment for determining eligibility and priority for services, except those non-assessment services that are provided during an exploration of the individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations, consistent with the requirements of sections 7(2)(D) and 102(a)(2)(B) of the Act;
 - (2) assessment for determining vocational rehabilitation needs;
 - (3) counseling and guidance, including information and support services to assist an individual in exercising informed choice;
 - (4) referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies through cooperative agreements under section 101(a)(11) of the Act and subsection 4.9 of this State plan, if such services are not available under this State plan; and
 - (5) job-related services, including job search and placement assistance, job retention services, follow-up services, and follow-along services.
- (b) The State unit considers the financial need of eligible individuals, or individuals who are receiving services during an exploration of an individual's abilities, capabilities, and capacity to perform in work situations consistent with subparagraph (1) of paragraph (a) of this subsection, in order to determine the extent of the individual's participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services.

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Yes X No

(c) **IF YES:**

- (1) The State unit has written policies on the determination of financial need that are consistent with the provisions of 34 CFR 361.54 and these policies:
 - (A) are applied uniformly to all individuals in similar circumstances; and
 - (B) ensure that the level of the individual's participation in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services is:
 - (i) reasonable;
 - (ii) based on the individual's financial need, including the consideration of any disability-related expenses paid by the individual; and
 - (iii) not so high as to effectively deny the individual a necessary service.
- (2) **Attachment 6.9(c)(2)** specifies the services for which the designated State unit has a financial needs test.

6.10 Development of the individualized plan for employment. (Sections 7(2)(B), 101(a)(9), and 102(b)(1) and (2) of the Act)

- (a) The designated State unit conducts an assessment to determine the vocational rehabilitation needs for each eligible individual, including the need for supported employment services, or, if the State is operating under an order of selection, for each eligible individual to whom the State is able to provide services, for the purpose of identifying the provisions to be included in the individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act.
- (b) The development of the individualized plan for employment meets the following procedural requirements.

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- (1) The individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented in a timely manner subsequent to the determination of the eligibility of the individual for services under this State plan, except if the State is operating under an order of selection, the individualized plan for employment is developed and implemented only for individuals to whom the State is able to provide services.
- (2) The designated State unit provides to the eligible individual or the individual's representative, in writing and in an appropriate mode of communication, information on the individual's options for the development of the individualized plan for employment, including:
 - (A) information on the availability of assistance, to the extent determined appropriate by the eligible individual, from a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual, and the availability of technical assistance in developing all or part of the individualized plan for employment for the individual;
 - (B) a description of the full range of components that must be included in an individualized plan for employment;
 - (C) as appropriate,
 - (i) an explanation of agency guidelines and criteria associated with financial commitments concerning an individualized plan for employment;
 - (ii) additional information the eligible individual requests or the designated State unit determines to be necessary; and
 - (iii) information on the availability of assistance in completing designated State agency forms required in developing an individualized plan for employment;
 - (D) a description of the rights and remedies available to the eligible individual, including, if appropriate, recourse to mediation and the impartial due process hearing consistent with the provisions of section 102(c) of the Act and subsection 4.16 of this State plan; and

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- (E) a description of the availability of the client assistance program and information about how to contact the program.
- (3) The individualized plan for employment is developed as a written document prepared on forms provided by the designated State unit and is developed and implemented in a manner that affords eligible individuals the opportunity to exercise informed choice in selecting an employment outcome, the specific vocational rehabilitation services to be provided under the plan, the entity that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, the settings in which the services will be provided, the employment setting, and the methods used to procure the services consistent with the provisions of section 102(d) of the Act.
- (4) The individualized plan for employment is agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and approved and signed by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit with a copy of the individualized plan for employment provided to the individual or, as appropriate, to the individual's representative, in writing and, if appropriate, in the native language or mode of communication of the individual or, as appropriate, of the individual's representative.
- (5) The individualized plan for employment is reviewed at least annually by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor and the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative and amended, as necessary, by the individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, in collaboration with a representative of the designated State agency or a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor, as determined to be appropriate by the individual.
- (6) If there are substantive changes in the individualized plan for employment with respect to the employment outcome, the vocational rehabilitation services to be provided, or the providers of the services, such amendments to the individualized plan for employment do not take effect until agreed to and signed by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, and by a qualified vocational rehabilitation counselor employed by the designated State unit.

6.11 Mandatory components of the individualized plan for employment. (Sections 101(a)(9), 102(b)(3), and 625(b)(6)(C),(E), and (F) of the Act)

- (a) Each individualized plan for employment includes, at a minimum, the following mandatory components describing the:

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- (1) specific employment outcome that is chosen by the eligible individual, consistent with the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of the eligible individual, and, to the maximum extent appropriate, results in employment in an integrated setting;
- (2) specific rehabilitation services that are:
 - (A) needed to achieve the employment outcome, including, as appropriate, the provision of assistive technology devices and assistive technology services, and personal assistance services, including training in the management of such services; and
 - (B) provided in the most integrated setting that is appropriate for the service involved and is consistent with the informed choice of the eligible individual;
- (3) timelines for the achievement of the employment outcome and for the initiation of services;
- (4) entity chosen by the eligible individual or, as appropriate, the individual's representative, that will provide the vocational rehabilitation services, and the methods used to procure the services;
- (5) criteria to evaluate progress toward achievement of the employment outcome;
- (6) terms and conditions of the individualized plan for employment, including, as appropriate, information related to the:
 - (A) responsibilities of the designated State unit;
 - (B) responsibilities of the eligible individual, including those related to:
 - (i) the achievement of the employment outcome;
 - (ii) participation, if applicable, in the paying the costs of the plan; and

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- (iii) applying for and securing comparable benefits consistent with the requirements of section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and
 - (C) responsibilities of other entities as the result of arrangements made pursuant to comparable services or benefits requirements as identified in section 101(a)(8) of the Act and subsection 6.8 of this State plan; and
 - (7) projected need for post-employment services, as determined to be necessary.
- (b) The individualized plan for employment for individuals with the most significant disabilities for whom an employment outcome in a supported employment setting has been determined to be appropriate also contains the identification of the:
 - (1) extended services needed by the eligible individual; and
 - (2) source of the extended services or, to the extent that the source of extended services cannot be identified at the time of the development of the individualized plan for employment, the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that extended services will become available.

6.12 Annual review of individuals in extended employment or other employment under special certificate provisions of the fair labor standards act of 1938. (Section 101(a)(14) of the Act)

- (a) The designated State unit:
 - (1) conducts an annual review and reevaluation of the status of each individual with a disability served under this State plan who has achieved an employment outcome either in an extended employment setting in a community rehabilitation program or any other employment under section 14(c) of the Fair Labor Standards Act (29 U.S.C. 214(c)) for 2 years after the achievement of the outcome (and annually thereafter if requested by the individual or, if appropriate, the individual's representative), to determine the interests, priorities, and needs of the individual with respect to competitive employment or training for competitive employment; and

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- (2) makes maximum efforts, including the identification and provision of vocational rehabilitation services, reasonable accommodations, and other necessary support services, to assist the individuals described in subparagraph (a)(1) in engaging in competitive employment.
- (b) The individual with a disability, or, if appropriate, the individual's representative has input into the review and reevaluation, and acknowledges through sign-off that such review and reevaluation have been conducted.

STATE PLAN SUPPLEMENT FOR THE STATE SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES PROGRAM

SECTION 7: PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

7.1 Designated state agency. (Section 625(b)(1) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(a))

The designated State agency for vocational rehabilitation services identified in subsection 1.2 of the title I State plan is the State agency designated to administer the State Supported Employment Services Program authorized under title VI, part B of the Act.

7.2 Statewide assessment of supported employment services needs. (Section 625(b)(2) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(b))

Attachment 4.12(a) describes the results of the comprehensive, statewide needs assessment conducted under section 101(a)(15)(a)(1) of the Act and subparagraph 4.12(a)(1) of the title I State plan with respect to the rehabilitation needs of individuals with significant disabilities and the need for supported employment services, including needs related to coordination.

7.3 Description of the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(c) and .50(b)(2))

Attachment 7.3 describes the quality, scope, and extent of supported employment services to be provided to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive supported employment services.

7.4 Goals and plans for distribution of title VI, part B funds. (Section 625(b)(3) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(d) and .20)

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Attachment 4.12(c)(3) identifies the State's goals and plans with respect to the distribution of funds received under section 622 of the Act.

- 7.5 Evidence of collaboration with respect to supported employment services and extended services.** (Sections 625(b)(4) and (5) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(e))

Attachment 4.9(c)(4) describes the efforts of the designated State agency to identify and make arrangements, including entering into cooperative agreements, with other State agencies and other appropriate entities to assist in the provision of supported employment services and other public or nonprofit agencies or organizations within the State, employers, natural supports, and other entities with respect to the provision of extended services.

- 7.6 Minority outreach.** (34 CFR 363.11(f))

Attachment 4.12(d)(2) describes the designated State agency's outreach procedures for identifying and serving individuals with the most significant disabilities who are minorities.

- 7.7 Reports.** (Sections 625(b)(8) and 626 of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(h) and .52)

The designated State agency submits reports in such form and in accordance with such procedures as the Secretary may require and collects the information required by section 101(a)(10) of the Act separately for individuals receiving supported employment services under part B of title VI and individuals receiving supported employment services under title I of the Act.

SECTION 8: FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

- 8.1 Five percent limitation on administrative costs.** (Section 625(b)(7) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(8))

The designated State agency expends no more than five percent of the State's allotment under section 622 of the Act for administrative costs in carrying out the State Supported Employment Services Program.

- 8.2 Use of funds in providing services.** (Sections 623 and 625(b)(6)(A) and (D) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.6(c)(2)(iv), .11(g)(1) and (4))

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- (a) Funds made available under title VI, part B of the Act are used by the designated State agency only to provide supported employment services to individuals with the most significant disabilities who are eligible to receive such services.
- (b) Funds provided under title VI, part B are used only to supplement, and not supplant, the funds provided under title I of the Act, in providing supported employment services specified in the individualized plan for employment.
- (c) Funds provided under part B of title VI or title I of the Act are not used to provide extended services to individuals who are eligible under part B of title VI or title I of the Act.

SECTION 9: PROVISION OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

9.1 Scope of supported employment services. (Sections 7(36) and 625(b)(6)(F) and (G) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(6) and (7))

- (a) Supported employment services are those services as defined in section 7(36) of the Act.
- (b) To the extent job skills training is provided, the training is provided on-site.
- (c) Supported employment services include placement in an integrated setting for the maximum number of hours possible based on the unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests, and informed choice of individuals with the most significant disabilities.

9.2 Comprehensive assessments of individuals with severe disabilities. (Section 625(b)(6)(B); 34 CFR 363.11(g)(2))

The comprehensive assessment of individuals with significant disabilities, including the assessment of rehabilitation, career, and employment needs, conducted under section 102(b)(1)(A) of the Act and paragraph 6.10(a) of this State plan and funded under title I of the Act includes consideration of supported employment as an appropriate employment outcome.

9.3 Individualized plan for employment. (Sections 102(b)(3)(F) and 625(b)(6)(C) and (E) of the Act; 34 CFR 363.11(g)(3) and (5))

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- (a) An individualized plan for employment that meets the requirements of section 102(b) of the Act and subsections 6.10 and .11 of this State plan is developed and updated using funds under Title I.
- (b) The individualized plan for employment:
 - (1) specifies the supported employment services to be provided;
 - (2) describes the expected extended services needed; and
 - (3) identifies the source of extended services, including natural supports, or, to the extent that it is not possible to identify the source of extended services at the time the individualized plan for employment plan is developed, a statement describing the basis for concluding that there is a reasonable expectation that sources will become available.
- (c) Services provided under an individualized plan for employment are coordinated with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs.

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ATTACHMENTS REQUIRED OF ALL AGENCIES

Attachment 4.9(c): Cooperation and Coordination with Other Agencies and Other Entities

- (1) Cooperation with Agencies That Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities
- (2) Coordination with Education Officials
- (3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers
- (4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

Attachment 4.11(b): Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

Attachment 4.12 Assessments; Estimates; Goals and Priorities; Strategies; and Progress Reports

- (a): Results of Comprehensive Statewide Assessment of the Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals with Disabilities and Need to Establish, Develop, or Improve Community Rehabilitation Programs
- (b): Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services
- (c)(1): State's Goals and Priorities
- (c)(3): Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds
- (d): State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities
 - (1) To Address Needs Identified in the Comprehensive Assessment and to Achieve Identified Goals and Priorities
 - (2) To Carryout Outreach Activities to Identify and Serve Individuals with the Most Significant Disabilities Who are Minorities
 - (3) To Overcome Identified Barriers Relating to Equitable Access to and Participation of Individuals with Disabilities in the State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program and the State Supported Employment Services Program.

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- (e): Evaluation and Report of Progress in Achieving Identified Goals and Priorities and Use Of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion Activities

Attachment 4.16(b)(2): Mediation and Impartial Due Process Hearing Procedures

Attachment 7.3: Quality, Scope, and Extent of Supported Employment Services

ATTACHMENTS CONTINGENT ON OPTIONS SELECTED

The following attachments identified by an "X" are also submitted as part of the State plan.

- X **Attachment 4.2(c):** Summary of Input and Recommendations of the State Rehabilitation Council; Response of the Designated State Unit; and Explanations for Rejection of Input or Recommendations
- Attachment 4.5:** Local Administration
- Attachment 4.6(a)(3):** Request for Waiver of Statewideness
- Attachment 4.7(b):** Shared Funding and Administration of Joint Program
- Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(A):** Order of Selection
- X **Attachment 4.12(c)(2)(B):** Explanation to Support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection
- X **Attachment 6.9(c)(2):** Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL; RESPONSE OF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT; AND EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTION OF INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

The State Rehabilitation Council contracted with the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University to conduct a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on clients who received services under a Plan in 1996. More than 1400 surveys were mailed and a high response rate was achieved. Although the overall level of satisfaction was high with consumers, there were some areas that consumers felt that the commission needed to improve on. These areas were:

- ?? Better dissemination of information on CBVI services
- ?? Better communication between staff and consumers
- ?? Delays in receiving services
- ?? Inconsistency of services
- ?? People want jobs.

The State Rehabilitation Council made a presentation to vocational rehabilitation staff in June of 1998 and solicited from staff recommendations to address the issues listed above. Among the suggestions adopted are the establishment of an agency newsletter, Internet site, brochures, recruitment of paraprofessional staff. Some recommendations, such as video development and 800 number establishment were rejected as being too costly. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired will continue working with the State Rehabilitation Council to continually improve the quality of services offered to consumers.

The State Rehabilitation Council has been conducting Annual Forums with the Commission since 1993 as a mechanism of gathering information to assist the Commission constantly improve the services that are offered. The lack of adequate transportation for individuals with disabilities continues to be a common theme in these forums. A forum specifically dedicated to issues of transportation was convened in the fall of 1998. Consumers, legislators, and NJ Transit officials were invited to participate to gain information on how this issue impacts upon the provision of VR services and employment. A Tri- Council Forum (including the State Rehabilitation Council of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the State Independent Living Council) is planned during State fiscal 2000 to further address this issue.

The Annual Report, recently completed and submitted to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, listed the 1998 Accomplishments and the Goals and Initiatives for 1999.

The 1998 Accomplishments were as follows:

- ?? Involved in the development of the State, Strategic and Resource Plans
- ?? Development of program performance recommendations based on the consumer Satisfaction Survey
- ?? Increased involvement in CVBI review of policies and program planning
- ?? Presentation of five regional public hearings in conjunction with the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration under the United State Department of Education
- ?? Continued advocacy for the re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act
- ?? Recommendation of strategies to increase competitive employment opportunities
- ?? Collaboration with the Statewide Independent Living Council and the SRC of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on issues of concern to people with disabilities
- ?? Establishment of a mentoring committee which successfully implemented Phase I of a mentoring program
- ?? Provided testimony on the Unified state Plan developed by the Workforce Investment System of New Jersey

?? Participated in a National Rehabilitation Council meeting at the Council for State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Spring Conference

The Goals and Initiatives for 1999 are as follows:

- ?? Co-sponsor (with DVRS) a public hearing on the Unified State Plan to receive consumer comments and recommendations
- ?? Follow up on the suggestions and recommendations of consumers from the public meetings specific to the issue of transportation
- ?? Conduct a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on the Intake Unit at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center
- ?? Solicit, evaluate, and analyze feedback on consumer involvement and informed choice
- ?? Establish a protocol for SRC review of information gathered through the exit interviews of consumers from the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center
- ?? Clarify the roles, responsibilities and relationships of CBVI staff and SRC members in planning and decision making processes
- ?? Develop result-oriented goals for each SRC sub-committee
- ?? Develop an informational brochure and web page
- ?? Participate in the continues evolution of CBVI technology efforts
- ?? Participate in the on-going training of One-Stop staff
- ?? Participate in RSA monitoring of state agencies
- ?? Implement Phase II of the SRC Mentoring Program

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES

(1) Cooperation with Agencies that Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

Because of the size of the population it serves, the complexity of the services rendered and because of the emphasis placed upon partnerships and collaboration by its funding source, the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired finds that cooperative agreements with organizations and service providers enhance our ability to deliver quality services to persons who are blind and visually impaired.

The Commission presently has Cooperative Agreements with the following agencies that are not required partners in the Statewide Workforce Investment System:

- ?? Division of Developmental Disabilities (Transitioning)
- ?? Division of Mental Health Services (Supported Employment)
- ?? Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Transitioning)
- ?? NJ Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- ?? The Lexington Center
- ?? Division of Youth and Family Services
- ?? Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ?? New Jersey Transit ADA Task Force
- ?? National Federation of the Blind (Newsline and Jobline)
- ?? Department of Health (Diabetic Services)
- ?? Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- ?? Drew University
- ?? Division of Disability Services (in progress)

The above list represents more formal cooperative agreements which are with organizations not currently under contract with the Commission for the Blind. Contracted agencies include organizations such as the Community Health Law Project, Recordings for the Blind, Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, National Society to Prevent Blindness and various other entities such as the Passaic County Board of Social Services, Cumberland County, Family Services of Morris county, the Senior Service Corps, Inc., Family Services Association, and Heightened Independence. Many of these contracted services are provided to clients who are not seeking employment, or are services closely related to blindness, rather than employment. In addition, CBVI acts as the State Licensing Agency for business people in the Randolph Sheppard Program and, as such, enters into agreements with government agencies to provide food services (primarily) to building employees and the public.

On a less formal basis, the Commission maintains membership on a variety of levels and supports the activities of a variety of organizations such as Region II, RRCEP, the Commodities and Services Council, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, Association of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Network of Organizations for the Blind, New Jersey Transit Senior Citizen and Disabled Advisory Committee, and various county college, and chamber of commerce organizations.

(2) Coordination with Education Officials

Since 1910, the Commission has assisted school districts in providing education programs that address the special needs of children with visual impairment and blindness. In 1993, this partnership was formalized with local school districts through provider service agreements. These agreements identify the specific level of services that the Commission will provide for each child in the school district. As the child reaches the age of fourteen, the Commission's education counselor refers the student to a transition counselor who will begin to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and provide the student with information concerning a variety of programs designed around the specific needs of blind or visually impaired youth who require information as well as specialized techniques for research and training in career awareness/job seeking activities, etc. Throughout this transition process, contact with the school district remains constant, as the student's participation in various programs, and need and provision for specialized training and/or adaptive equipment are addressed as part of the IEP and the transition plan. Technical consultation begun in the earlier grades with the education counselor is continued by the transition counselor. In the education community, CBVI transition counselors play an organizational role in technical consultation through their active participation in career fairs, school-to-work activities, task force memberships etc.

On the state level, the Executive Director of CBVI is an invited member to the State Agency Directors Forum which includes directors of DVRS; OSEP, OSTCI, both in the DOE; the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the Juvenile Justice Commission. These meetings enhance the coordination of policies and programs relating to students in transition.

(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

In addition to those listed above, the Commission has an agreement with the New Jersey Association of the Deaf and Blind and works closely with a variety of rehabilitation organizations in a contractual relationship. Our contracts are with the First Occupational Center of New Jersey, the Monmouth Center for Vocational Rehabilitation, St. Joseph's School for the Blind, Abilitech, and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Center. Additionally, the Commission maintains close relationships with many of the Centers for Independent Living, and Independent Living organizations such as Pathway to Independence with whom we have a contract.

(4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently working on an updated agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). DDD has traditionally assumed responsibility for the follow along services in the extended phase of supported employment.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has contracted with three service providers for job coaching and extended services, (The First Occupational Center for Northern New Jersey, Monmouth Center for Vocational Rehabilitation for Central New Jersey, and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training and Opportunity Center for Southern New Jersey.) In addition, the Commission utilizes Title VI, Part C funds on an individualized fee for service basis in order to provide consumers with a range of choices in the provision of supported employment services. At present, the Commission utilizes the same fee structure and approval process as that which is in place for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is committed to the establishment and maintenance of Comprehensive System of Personnel Development to ensure that highly qualified individuals provided services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. The Commission will utilize a variety of highly qualified providers including the Region II Continuing Education Program (RRCEP), the New Jersey Department of Personnel, Human Resource Institute (HRDI), New Jersey and other state universities and colleges, as well as consultants and individuals who can provide workshops, conferences and other discipline specific training for the professional VR staff.

Components of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

In- service Training

Vocational outcomes (employment), career development, and personal empowerment are the cornerstones of the vocational rehabilitation program. Issues, such as community access, the development of personal and social relationships, social responsibility, leisure and recreation, and personal fulfillment all must be considered if the agency's vocational rehabilitation program is to continue to have a positive impact on the lives of our consumers. Staff is empowered to assist the consumers in reaching their personal goals and this is accomplished through a comprehensive, integrated sequence of goal focused training programs utilizing the Human Resource Development model.

Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RRCEP). The Commission provides ongoing training opportunities through the RRCEP to VR staff to meet the present and emerging needs in the field. The Commission is an active member of the RRCEP Advisory Board and participates in the development of training to meet the needs of agency staff.

Tuition Reimbursement Program. The Commission encourages employees to participate in the tuition reimbursement program. The program provides a means for employees to pursue formal academic training to improve job skills and work performance and to further career development. Courses must be job related and are generally pursued on the employees' own time. The Commission will reimburse for up to six credits per semester, at the state college or university rate, whichever is higher.

New Jersey Department of Personnel The New Jersey Department of Personnel, through the Human Resource Development Institute (HRDI) offers courses, on an ongoing basis to agency staff to assist them achieve personal and organizational goals and needs. Employees are encouraged to attend courses pertinent to their job duties and responsibilities.

Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

(DVRS) The Commission has been working closely with DVRS to provide joint training to vocational rehabilitation staff of both agencies. Joint efforts will enable both agencies to provide the most effective and cost efficient training to staff through shared resources, i.e. vendors, distance learning mechanisms, such as satellite sites, compressed video teleconferencing, computers, etc.

Conference, Workshops and other Training. The Commission encourages staff to attend training, seminars, and workshops appropriate to their job duties and responsibilities within and outside the state.

Subject Matter Experts. The Commission has developed in-house subject matter experts. These are staff who can provide training to other agency staff in areas of their expertise. Areas that we have used and will continue to use subject matter experts are ADA, CPR, and Employer Relations/Grievance Process.

Distance Learning. The Commission will continue to utilize its stationary and mobile satellite equipment to provide training from across the nation to vocational rehabilitation staff. The stationary satellite is located at the Commission's Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center.

State Licensure

The Regulations to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandate that states develop and implement strategies for the hiring or retraining of personnel to meet standards or qualifications based on the highest requirements in the state for the counseling profession. New Jersey presently has established a standard, which is a 60 credit Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation. This is the standard that our agency must work toward. In New Jersey, we have not had a CORE approved Rehabilitation Counseling program since 1985. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services have been negotiating with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) School of Health Related Professions to establish a Masters level program in Vocational Rehabilitation. It is anticipated that the program will commence in the summer of 1999 at two distinct sites.

The Commission presently has 14 counselors working with the Title I program with bachelor degrees and who will be required to obtain a Masters degree. Additionally, there are 11 vocational counselors who have Masters degrees in other fields. The opportunity will be offered to these individuals to obtain a Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation in order to meet the state standard. Our agency anticipates that all of the vocational rehabilitation counseling staff will have obtained the standard by fiscal 2004.

The Commission views participation in this program to meet the CSPD requirement as an employee benefit, which is valuable and part of a national competency movement. Financial participation will be provided by the agency to enable an employee to complete this program.

ASSESSMENT; ESTIMATES; GOALS AND PRIORITIES; STRATEGIES; AND PROGRESS REPORTS

(a)(1)(A) Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired utilizes a variety of methods to ascertain the rehabilitation needs of individuals residing in the state in order to continue to improve the nature and scope of services that are provided to individuals seeking an employment outcome. These assessments are done in a variety of ways:

Forums and Public Meeting conducted with the Commission's State Rehabilitation Council, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and other entities.

Evaluations conducted with consumers exiting the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center.

Continuing surveys conducted by the State Rehabilitation Council.

Review of prior year(s) closure information at the end of each fiscal year. This evaluation focuses on the number of individuals employed, the wages at closure, and satisfaction with services offered.

On February 25, 1999, a Public Meeting was held prior to the submittal of the Unified State Plan on April 1, 1999 to gather information from consumers, other professionals, and interested parties. There were a variety of issues that were brought forth and these were as follows:

- ?? Technology is and will continue to be a major issue relative to the employment of individuals with disabilities. More sophisticated technology and continuous training is needed to allow individuals compete on an even level with non-disabled persons.
- ?? Passaic County is in need of a Center in the county to meet the needs of consumers. Individuals have to travel to surrounding counties to receive the services that they require. Transportation, as it is, requires individuals to spend long hours just getting to centers in adjoining counties.
- ?? Changes in Social Security guidelines are needed so that people can continue receiving health benefits when they begin working, if benefits are not available.
- ?? Transportation for all individuals with disabilities, whether in employment or training, continues to be a major impediment. Transportation needs to be available, particularly in rural areas and during off- hours so that people can go to work. There are major problems with Access Link. It is not meeting the need of people with disabilities. The WIB's are required to develop Transportation Plans, as they relate to Work First New Jersey. These

Transportation Plans make recommendations to New Jersey Transit. DVRS and CBVI need to be aware of these as they relate to consumers.

- ?? Literacy needs must be addressed, regardless of the media, for all people. The changing job market will continue to require a higher skill level.
- ?? Consumers must make some of their own changes if they are going to be successful, not just rely on others to make changes. If something is needed, don't hesitate to ask for it.

The Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services attended the Public Meeting and led an Open Discussion period following the formal presentations. As estimated 60 people participated in the Public Meeting. A direct outgrowth of this Meeting was that the State Rehabilitation Councils of both agencies and the State Independent Living Council will convene to discuss the major issue of transportation and determine what they can do as a group to effect the necessary changes.

(a)(1)(B) Community Rehabilitation Program Needs

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired operates the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, a residential facility that provides comprehensive services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired residing in the state. The following services are offered: evaluation and adjustment to blindness services, vocational assessment, independent living services, counseling and guidance, and specific vocational training in areas identified by consumer and staff input. Presently, a comprehensive food service training program is underway at the facility. In October, 1998, the Norma F. Krajczar Technology Center was opened at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center to provide evaluations and training to consumers in assistive technology in order to meet the growing need for technology that exists in most occupations today. The Technology Center keeps abreast of the latest developments in technology to meet the current and ever expanding needs of consumers entering training and employment situations.

Community Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state, including the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, will need to be prepared for and utilized to assist vocational rehabilitation agencies implement the trial work situations as required in the Rehabilitation Act amendments.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requires that Community Rehabilitation Programs also employ qualified rehabilitation personnel. Although, at present, the first priority is the education and training of state agency staff, sufficient opportunities must be available to assist the Community Programs meet the mandates of the Act.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired continues to meet with ACCSES to investigate ways and methods to increase the number of blind and visually impaired consumers employed by the State Use Program.

(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services

- (1) It is estimated that 2800 individuals will be eligible for services in Program Year 2000.
- (2) Of the 2800 eligible individuals, it is estimated that all will receive services provided under Part B of Title I of the Act and/or under Part B of Title VI of the Act. The Commission for the Blind is not under an order of selection.
- (3) Service costs are estimated to be \$ 11,858,00 inclusive of amounts for Supported Employment under Title VI, part B and state match under Title I.

(c)(1) Goals and Priorities

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has established goals and priorities for all consumers of services. The Mission statement, Philosophy, Goals and Objectives are as follows:

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote and provide services in the areas of education, employment, independence and eye health through informed choice and partnership with persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families and the community.

Statement of Philosophy

People who are blind and visually impaired can succeed in education, in careers, in the home and in the community. The services that our agency provides directly impacts on the ability of individuals to achieve success. The consumer must be the most important part of the process. The skills of blindness are essential to independence, education and employment and must be promoted by staff to consumers, employers, educational institutions, and the general public. We encourage involvement and support by the family of the consumer. Research and development of assistive technology is encouraged and supported to ensure that persons who are blind and visually impaired can become independent and competitive in education and employment.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

General Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

The Commission will provide timely, effective, high-quality services.

Objectives

- ?? Determine eligibility for services within 30 days of referral and begin service delivery within 30 days of eligibility determination.
- ?? Analyze and streamline the Intake process.
- ?? Undertake consumer satisfaction surveys, follow-up interviews, and act on consumer recommendations.
- ?? Provide resource information as needed.
- ?? Maintain a highly trained and competent staff.

Goal 2

The Commission will increase competitive employment.

Objectives

- Network with employers to establish an informed public as to the abilities of persons who are blind and visually impaired in the work place.
- Develop access to computerized job banks.
- Upgrade formal and informal training for Commission staff to be relevant to current market trends. Work cooperatively with the Workforce System in New Jersey to ensure access to labor market information.
- Provide, in partnership with employers and in keeping with the provisions of ADA, technical and adaptive assistance at the work place.

Goal 3

The Commission will work towards excellence in the education of students who are blind and visually impaired.

Objectives

- Work toward age-appropriate concept development, early literacy experiences and grade-level achievements for students who are blind and visually impaired.
- Provide education services and adaptive equipment that will promote integration and enable students who are blind and visually impaired to function independently on an equal basis with their peers.
- Promote positive attitudes among school staff regarding the abilities of students who are blind and visually impaired and the skills of blindness.

- Keep parents informed on a regular basis of the scheduling and content of lessons and the student's progress.
- Develop partnerships for the purpose of sharing information among parents, Commission staff, classroom teachers and advocacy groups regarding trends, changes, new ideas and different approaches in the education of children who are blind and visually impaired.

Goal 4

The Commission will work to decrease the incidence of blindness or significant vision loss through eye health programs.

Objectives

- To increase public awareness of eye safety and the causes and treatment of vision loss by publicizing the Commission's prevention services and conducting education and detection programs.
- Provide blindness prevention services such as eye disease detection screenings and medical intervention.
- Target high-risk populations for prevention and eye health services.

Goal 5

The Commission will actively promote equality and full inclusion into society.

Objectives

- Work to promote abilities and dispel misconceptions about blindness and visual impairments.
- Work to promote positive attitudes through a variety of community-based activities.
- Advocate for the rights of the population served.
- Build a collaborative network of consumers, blindness organizations, other disability groups, service providers and interested individuals to facilitate consumer empowerment.
- Encourage consumers to advocate for themselves through blindness organizations, government, community, in school and on the job.

Goal 6

The Commission will work in partnership with consumers.

Objectives

- Work with the individual to choose a direction which will enable him or her to achieve desired goals.
- Develop an individual blueprint for achievement that will early define expectations and responsibilities.

- Review service plans annually as developed between case managers and consumers.
- Conduct routine compliance reviews to ensure the delivery of consumer services.
- Seek consumer input through committees, forums, public hearings, etc.

Goal 7

The Commission will encourage positive attitudes toward blindness and visual impairments by consumers and their families.

Objectives

- Develop a mentoring program.
- Implement a program of socialization and interpersonal skills appropriate to various age groups.

Goal 8

The Commission will expand service delivery to historically underserved populations.

Objectives

- Analyze targeted populations to determine appropriate service needs.
- Expand outreach activities.
- Increase services to these populations.
- Conduct annual reviews.
- Review and revise Commission literature and communications.

Goal 9

The Commission will promote the development and use of assistive technology.

Objective

- Maintain up-to-date information on assistive technology.
- Develop a training program for Commission staff.

The Sterling Group The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in order to benchmark our activities, demonstrate continuous improvement and develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the next millenium, has employed the Sterling Group to evaluate all areas of our agency and make recommendations on how we can improve the quality of services that we offer.

(c)(2)(B) Explanation to support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is able to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services to all eligible individuals who are blind and visually Impaired within the state who apply for services. Our agency has not delayed, through waiting lists or any other means, eligibility determinations, assessments, the development of the IPE, and the provision of services under the IPE. The Commission's budget for fiscal 1999 is approximately \$22 million dollars. Our agency anticipates that we will be able to provide the full range of vocational services to all eligible individuals in fiscal 2000. In addition to adequate resources, the Commission is able to utilize agency-based programs and personnel and contract services to assist in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

The Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center (JKRC) The Commission operates a comprehensive, residential rehabilitation center, located centrally in the state. The JKRC is able to provide Adjustment to Blindness counseling and training, diagnostic and pre-vocational evaluations. A consumer is able to receive services in the following instructional areas: vocational assessment, career counseling, communications, home and personal management, orientation and mobility, low vision services, and evaluation and training in assistive technology. The Center is able to provide training for Randolph- Sheppard operators and Job Seeking Skills training.

Adaptive Living Skill and Prevention Services The Commission, in addition to providing vocational rehabilitation services, is able to offer services to consumers that will enhance their ability to be employed. These direct services, offered on a regional basis, are eye health nursing, social casework, orientation and mobility, and rehabilitation teaching. These services can be offered before, during, and after the rehabilitation process in order to ensure ongoing support and meet consumer needs.

Contracted Services Contracted services assists the vocational rehabilitation program by providing direct services to consumers. Utilizing this method, the Commission is able to provide services in Assistive Technology, Supported Employment, Legal services, and services to the older blind.

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, by utilizing the above in-house modalities are able to provide services to all eligible blind and visually impaired consumers residing in the state.

(3) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired remain committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers who are blind and visually impaired. There are presently sixty-five (65) providers throughout the state who provide supported employment services on a fee for service basis. In addition to utilizing the Title VI, Part B funds on the individual fee for service basis, the Commission for the Blind and Visually

Impaired contracts with three (3) providers for intensive job coaching and extended services. These three providers are the First Occupational Center (Northern New Jersey), Monmouth Center Vocational Rehabilitation (Central New Jersey), and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training and Opportunity Center (Southern New Jersey). The total amount expended for the three contracts is \$168,000.

Change in Fee for Service Rate. Effective April 1, 1999, the baseline hourly fee for service rate was raised from \$37.00 to \$42.00 by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This represents the first increase to reflect rising costs since the fee for service mechanism was introduced in 1991.

Interagency Agreement with D.D.D. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired plans to update its Interagency Agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (D.D.D.). With the continued emphasis of moving individuals from institutional setting to group homes, The Commission plans to work with DDD on a strategy to refer individuals who are blind and visually impaired and developmentally disabled to the Commission for the intensive phase of supported employment job coaching. Upon completion of the intensive phase, these individuals will be referred back to DDD for the long-term extended services.

(d) State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired plans to continue to dedicate funding that was set aside in the previous Strategic Plan (October 1, 1997- September 30, 2000). The activities that were focused on at that time were as follows:

- ?? Operation of and initiatives of the State Rehabilitation Council
- ?? Personnel Development to ensure that vocational services are provided by highly qualified rehabilitation personnel
- ?? Initiation of the VR loaner program through an existing state program to ensure that equipment is available for consumers when they are commencing a training or employment situation.
- ?? Expansion of the National Industries for the Blind/ Veterans Administration employment initiatives

New initiative to be undertaken in fiscal 2000 and beyond are:

- ?? Mentoring program focusing on transition students, newly blinded individuals, and new Randolph-Sheppard operators.
- ?? Continued enhancement of transition programs. This will include redefining the populations presently served in the transition programs, utilizing other community programs, such as the Job Corp, and ensuring that programs are sequential, developmental and non-duplicative.

- ?? Development of employment program with National Industries for the Blind, with the focus on non-traditional occupations (i.e. homebound employment) for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.
- ?? Expansion through community based organizations into non- traditional occupations for CBVI consumers, such as construction and automotive trades and food service.

The Commission for the Blind acknowledges the need to assure effective communication with its potential consumers. To a great extent, that communication will be enhanced through the development of a newsletter, a WEB page, standardized brochures, etc., however to the extent that potential consumers may not be able to read print, additional interventions are needed to assure that potential consumers are made aware of the agency's program offerings and to standardize our communication with our current consumers.

Since effective planning of vocational rehabilitation begins at the initial point of contact, the Commission has established a centralized intake unit, consisting of experienced counselors who will work with potential clients until eligibility is established. Monitoring of this function is ongoing, with a formalized evaluation of effort underway through our next consumer satisfaction survey which is targeted at individuals who have been processed through this centralized unit.

Historically, the Commission for the Blind has successfully penetrated the minority population in proportion to the representation of minorities in the general population. We have, however, initiated outreach in selected populations, such as the Latino population in areas outside of vocational rehabilitation with the expectation that our success in vision restoration programs would generate referrals to vocational rehabilitation as well. Additionally, CBVI has a series of contractual relationships with organizations serving older blind, many of which are in geographic areas heavily populated by minorities.

The primary barrier relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with visual disabilities in the state VR program relates to the issues of travel and print access. CBVI has designed its services to be delivered to individuals within their home environment, rather than base services in an office setting. Because the nature of the disability affects the individual's mobility, our population consistently emphasizes the need for access to transportation. This need and the anticipated response to this need is identified above. With respect to Workforce Development and service delivery through the One-Stops, an initial effort is being made to provide access by utilizing lap-top computers with the ability to dial into systems appropriate to meet constituent needs.

With respect to print access, the Commission has initiated and promotes actively, the development of technology resources through its research and development committee, the ongoing expansion of its contracts for technology services

(including training), the purchase of adaptive equipment where appropriate, and the development of low tech alternatives to job seeking etc.

On a state level, the Workforce Development system has been responsive to equitable access by supporting the provision of specifically adapted technology through the local WIB's. This need is ongoing as reader service, technology, alternative media for vocational assessments, career testing and other print material is developed for customers of the One-Stops.

(e) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Many of the initiative highlighted in the Strategic Plan for the period October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2000 are still being pursued. Activities of the State Rehabilitation Council continues to receive financial support, the food service program has commenced at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center and the agreement with the Library for the Blind and Print Handicapped for a VR loaner program is nearly completed.

The criteria that the Commission utilized to determine if the objectives were met are the number of individuals achieving an employment outcome and the results of Consumer Satisfaction Surveys. Although the number of consumers achieving an employment outcome remained the same, the number of people in competitive employment rose from 203 to 224, and the number of homemakers and individuals in sheltered employment decreased. The Consumer Satisfaction Survey indicated that more than 75% of consumers felt that they benefited from CBVI services, had their rights explained to them, were given the opportunity to make their own choices about a vocational goal, and would recommend CBVI to a friend. The Commission will continue to conduct surveys as a mechanism to improve services. Some areas, such as counselors' timeliness of response and delays in service have been noted and the Commission will continue to monitor progress in those areas.

MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES

The Rehabilitation Act mandates that mediation procedures are established and implemented that allow parties to resolve disputes through a process that shall be available whenever requested. The process must meet the following criteria:

- ?? The process is voluntary on the part of both parties.
- ?? Is not used to deny or delay the right of the individual to a hearing.
- ?? The mediation is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has contacted the State of New Jersey Office of the Public Defender and our agency will utilize the Office of Dispute Settlement in Trenton for purposes of mediation. The standards of practice, suggested time frames, and the cost estimates are as follows:

Standards of Practice. The Model standards of Conduct for Mediators, endorsed by The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, The American Arbitration Association and the American Bar Association will be utilized.

Time Frames. The mediation session will be scheduled within 20 days of the request for mediation. The 20-day time frame would include the initial conference call with the parties, and the exchange of information pertinent to the mediation session.

Cost Estimate. Mediation and consulting services would be provided at the cost of \$75.00 per hour.

Any agreement from the mediation session(s) will be set forth in writing in a written mediation agreement. The process shall be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently rewriting Chapter 95, our agency Vocational Rehabilitation Rule, to reflect the changes brought about by The Workforce Act and the Rehabilitation Act. The mediation procedures will be included under the Due Process section of the code, after they are reviewed by the Office of Dispute Settlement, the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the State Rehabilitation Council of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired uses an economic needs test in determining a consumer's financial participation in the cost of certain vocational rehabilitation services, other than evaluation of eligibility, diagnostic evaluation, counseling and guidance, referral services, and job placement. The services for which there is an economic needs test are as follows:

?? College Tuition

??Maintenance

??Adaptive equipment

??Low vision follow-up visits

??Accessory or optical low vision aids

??Projection or electronic low vision aids

??Medical devices and equipment

??Restoration services

??Personal attendant services

??Technological aids

??Vocational training (except work adjustment training)

??Training equipment

??Transportation

??Placement equipment

QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired remains committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers who are blind and visually impaired.

Although there exists a sufficient number of service providers who deliver supported employment in the state on a fee for service basis, there is reluctance on the part of many providers to work with individuals with significant disabilities who are blind and visually impaired. The commission presently contracts with three (3) providers for intensive job coaching and extended services- The First Occupational Center (Northern New Jersey), Monmouth Center Vocational Rehabilitation (Central New Jersey), and Jersey Cape Diagnostic, Training and Opportunity Center (Southern New Jersey). The Commission is prepared to expand these contract based on successful supported employment outcomes or develop new providers to meet the needs of consumers who require these types of services.

The Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RRCEP) for Community Rehabilitation Programs and the University Affiliated Program, due to a continuing turnover in staff, offer a variety of training programs in basic and advanced job coaching to meet the continuing need of providers.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently redeveloping our agency's Interagency Agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) for Supported Employment Services. Under the new agreement, individuals are eligible and appropriate for supported employment services, and who are DDD eligible, would be provided intensive job coaching services by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The on going extended services would be provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities.



SUMMARY OF INPUT AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL; RESPONSE OF THE DESIGNATED STATE UNIT; AND EXPLANATIONS FOR REJECTION OF INPUT OR RECOMMENDATIONS.

The State Rehabilitation Council contracted with the Eagleton Institute of Rutgers University to conduct a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on clients who received services under a Plan in 1996. More than 1400 surveys were mailed and a high response rate was achieved. Although the overall level of satisfaction was high with consumers, there were some areas that consumers felt that the commission needed to improve on. These areas were:

- ?? Better dissemination of information on CBVI services
- ?? Better communication between staff and consumers
- ?? Delays in receiving services
- ?? Inconsistency of services
- ?? People want jobs.

The State Rehabilitation Council made a presentation to vocational rehabilitation staff in June of 1998 and solicited from staff recommendations to address the issues listed above. Among the suggestions adopted are the establishment of an agency newsletter, Internet site, brochures, recruitment of paraprofessional staff. Some recommendations, such as video development and 800 number establishment were rejected as being too costly. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired will continue working with the State Rehabilitation Council to continually improve the quality of services offered to consumers.

The State Rehabilitation Council has been conducting Annual Forums with the Commission since 1993 as a mechanism of gathering information to assist the Commission constantly improve the services that are offered. The lack of adequate transportation for individuals with disabilities continues to be a common theme in these forums. A forum specifically dedicated to issues of transportation was convened in the fall of 1998. Consumers, legislators, and NJ Transit officials were invited to participate to gain information on how this issue impacts upon the provision of VR services and employment. A Tri- Council Forum (including the State Rehabilitation Council of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the State Independent Living Council) is planned during State fiscal 2000 to further address this issue.

The Annual Report, recently completed and submitted to the Governor and to the Rehabilitation Services Administration, listed the 1998 Accomplishments and the Goals and Initiatives for 1999.

The 1998 Accomplishments were as follows:

- ?? Involved in the development of the State, Strategic and Resource Plans
- ?? Development of program performance recommendations based on the consumer Satisfaction Survey

- ?? Increased involvement in CVBI review of policies and program planning
- ?? Presentation of five regional public hearings in conjunction with the federal Rehabilitation Services Administration under the United State Department of Education
- ?? Continued advocacy for the re-authorization of the Rehabilitation Act
- ?? Recommendation of strategies to increase competitive employment opportunities
- ?? Collaboration with the Statewide Independent Living Council and the SRC of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation on issues of concern to people with disabilities
- ?? Establishment of a mentoring committee which successfully implemented Phase I of a mentoring program
- ?? Provided testimony on the Unified state Plan developed by the Workforce Investment System of New Jersey
- ?? Participated in a National Rehabilitation Council meeting at the Council for State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation Spring Conference

The Goals and Initiatives for 1999 are as follows:

- ?? Co-sponsor (with DVRS) a public hearing on the Unified State Plan to receive consumer comments and recommendations
- ?? Follow up on the suggestions and recommendations of consumers from the public meetings specific to the issue of transportation
- ?? Conduct a Consumer Satisfaction Survey on the Intake Unit at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center
- ?? Solicit, evaluate, and analyze feedback on consumer involvement and informed choice
- ?? Establish a protocol for SRC review of information gathered through the exit interviews of consumers from the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center
- ?? Clarify the roles, responsibilities and relationships of CBVI staff and SRC members in planning and decision making processes
- ?? Develop result-oriented goals for each SRC sub-committee
- ?? Develop an informational brochure and web page
- ?? Participate in the continues evolution of CBVI technology efforts
- ?? Participate in the on-going training of One-Stop staff
- ?? Participate in RSA monitoring of state agencies
- ?? Implement Phase II of the SRC Mentoring Program

COOPERATION AND COORDINATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES

(1) Cooperation with Agencies that Are Not in the Statewide Workforce Investment System and with Other Entities

Because of the size of the population it serves, the complexity of the services rendered and because of the emphasis placed upon partnerships and collaboration by its funding source, the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired finds that cooperative agreements with organizations and service providers enhance our ability to deliver quality services to persons who are blind and visually impaired.

The Commission presently has Cooperative Agreements with the following agencies that are not required partners in the Statewide Workforce Investment System:

- ?? Division of Developmental Disabilities (Transitioning)
- ?? Division of Mental Health Services (Supported Employment)
- ?? Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs (Transitioning)
- ?? NJ Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators
- ?? The Lexington Center
- ?? Division of Youth and Family Services
- ?? Division of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
- ?? New Jersey Transit ADA Task Force
- ?? National Federation of the Blind (Newsline and Jobline)
- ?? Department of Health (Diabetic Services)
- ?? Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- ?? Drew University
- ?? Division of Disability Services (in progress)

The above list represents more formal cooperative agreements which are with organizations not currently under contract with the Commission for the Blind. Contracted agencies include organizations such as the Community Health Law Project, Recordings for the Blind, Puerto Rican Association for Human Development, National Society to Prevent Blindness and various other entities such as the Passaic County Board of Social Services, Cumberland County, Family Services of Morris county, the Senior Service Corps, Inc., Family Services Association, and Heightened Independence. Many of these contracted services are provided to clients who are not seeking employment, or are services closely related to blindness, rather than employment. In addition, CBVI acts as the State Licensing Agency for business people in the Randolph Sheppard Program and, as such, enters into agreements with government agencies to provide food services (primarily) to building employees and the public.

On a less formal basis, the Commission maintains membership on a variety of levels and supports the activities of a variety of organizations such as Region II, RRCEP, the Commodities and Services Council, Council of State Administrators of Vocational Rehabilitation, National Council of State Agencies for the Blind, Association of Education and Rehabilitation for the Blind and Visually Impaired, the Network of Organizations for the Blind, New Jersey Transit Senior Citizen and Disabled Advisory Committee, and various county college, and chamber of commerce organizations.

(2) Coordination with Education Officials

Since 1910, the Commission has assisted school districts in providing education programs that address the special needs of children with visual impairment and blindness. In 1993, this partnership was formalized with local school districts through provider service agreements. These agreements identify the specific level of services that the Commission will provide for each child in the school district. As the child reaches the age of fourteen, the Commission's education counselor refers the student to a transition counselor who will begin to determine eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services and provide the student with information concerning a variety of programs designed around the specific needs of blind or visually impaired youth who require information as well as specialized techniques for research and training in career awareness/job seeking activities, etc. Throughout this transition process, contact with the school district remains constant, as the student's participation in various programs, and need and provision for specialized training and/or adaptive equipment are addressed as part of the IEP and the transition plan. Technical consultation begun in the earlier grades with the education counselor is continued by the transition counselor. In the education community, CBVI transition counselors play an organizational role in technical consultation through their active participation in career fairs, school-to-work activities, task force memberships etc.

On the state level, the Executive Director of CBVI is an invited member to the State Agency Directors Forum which includes directors of DVRS; OSEP, OSTCI, both in the DOE; the Division of Developmental Disabilities, and the Juvenile Justice Commission. These meetings enhance the coordination of policies and programs relating to students in transition.

(3) Cooperative Agreements with Private Non-Profit Vocational Rehabilitation Service Providers

In addition to those listed above, the Commission has an agreement with the New Jersey Association of the Deaf and Blind and works closely with a variety of rehabilitation organizations in a contractual relationship. Our contracts are with the First Occupational Center of New Jersey, the Monmouth Center for Vocational Rehabilitation, St. Joseph's School for the Blind, Abilitech, and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Center. Additionally, the Commission maintains close relationships with many of the Centers for Independent Living, and Independent Living organizations such as Pathway to Independence with whom we have a contract.

(4) Evidence of Collaboration Regarding Supported Employment Services and Extended Services

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently working on an updated agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD). DDD has traditionally assumed responsibility for the follow along services in the extended phase of supported employment.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has contracted with three service providers for job coaching and extended services, (The First Occupational Center for Northern New Jersey, Monmouth Center for Vocational Rehabilitation for Central New Jersey, and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training and Opportunity Center for Southern New Jersey.) In addition, the Commission utilizes Title VI, Part C funds on an individualized fee for service basis in order to provide consumers with a range of choices in the provision of supported employment services. At present, the Commission utilizes the same fee structure and approval process as that which is in place for the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is committed to the establishment and maintenance of Comprehensive System of Personnel Development to ensure that highly qualified individuals provided services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired. The Commission will utilize a variety of highly qualified providers including the Region II Continuing Education Program (RRCEP), the New Jersey Department of Personnel, Human Resource Institute (HRDI), New Jersey and other state universities and colleges, as well as consultants and individuals who can provide workshops, conferences and other discipline specific training for the professional VR staff.

Components of the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development

In- service Training

Vocational outcomes (employment), career development, and personal empowerment are the cornerstones of the vocational rehabilitation program. Issues, such as community access, the development of personal and social relationships, social responsibility, leisure and recreation, and personal fulfillment all must be considered if the agency's vocational rehabilitation program is to continue to have a positive impact on the lives of our consumers. Staff is empowered to assist the consumers in reaching their personal goals and this is accomplished through a comprehensive, integrated sequence of goal focused training programs utilizing the Human Resource Development model.

Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RRCEP). The Commission provides ongoing training opportunities through the RRCEP to VR staff to meet the present and emerging needs in the field. The Commission is an active member of the RRCEP Advisory Board and participates in the development of training to meet the needs of agency staff.

Tuition Reimbursement Program. The Commission encourages employees to participate in the tuition reimbursement program. The program provides a means for employees to pursue formal academic training to improve job skills and work performance and to further career development. Courses must be job related and are generally pursued on the employees' own time. The Commission will reimburse for up to six credits per semester, at the state college or university rate, whichever is higher.

New Jersey Department of Personnel The New Jersey Department of Personnel, through the Human Resource Development Institute (HRDI) offers courses, on an ongoing basis to agency staff to assist them achieve personal and organizational goals and needs. Employees are encouraged to attend courses pertinent to their job duties and responsibilities.

Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services.

(DVRS) The Commission has been working closely with DVRS to provide joint training to vocational rehabilitation staff of both agencies. Joint efforts will enable both agencies to provide the most effective and cost efficient training to staff through shared resources, i.e. vendors, distance learning mechanisms, such as satellite sites, compressed video teleconferencing, computers, etc.

Conference, Workshops and other Training. The Commission encourages staff to attend training, seminars, and workshops appropriate to their job duties and responsibilities within and outside the state.

Subject Matter Experts. The Commission has developed in-house subject matter experts. These are staff who can provide training to other agency staff in areas of their expertise. Areas that we have used and will continue to use subject matter experts are ADA, CPR, and Employer Relations/Grievance Process.

Distance Learning. The Commission will continue to utilize its stationary and mobile satellite equipment to provide training from across the nation to vocational rehabilitation staff. The stationary satellite is located at the Commission's Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center.

State Licensure

The Regulations to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, mandate that states develop and implement strategies for the hiring or retraining of personnel to meet standards or qualifications based on the highest requirements in the state for the counseling profession. New Jersey presently has established a standard, which is a 60 credit Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation. This is the standard that our agency must work toward. In New Jersey, we have not had a CORE approved Rehabilitation Counseling program since 1985. The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services have been negotiating with the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ) School of Health Related Professions to establish a Masters level program in Vocational Rehabilitation. It is anticipated that the program will commence in the summer of 1999 at two distinct sites.

The Commission presently has 14 counselors working with the Title I program with bachelor degrees and who will be required to obtain a Masters degree. Additionally, there are 11 vocational counselors who have Masters degrees in other fields. The opportunity will be offered to these individuals to obtain a Masters Degree in Vocational Rehabilitation in order to meet the state standard. Our agency anticipates that all of the vocational rehabilitation counseling staff will have obtained the standard by fiscal 2004.

The Commission views participation in this program to meet the CSPD requirement as an employee benefit, which is valuable and part of a national competency movement. Financial participation will be provided by the agency to enable an employee to complete this program.

ASSESSMENT; ESTIMATES; GOALS AND PRIORITIES; STRATEGIES; AND PROGRESS REPORTS

(a)(1)(A) Rehabilitation Needs of Individuals

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired utilizes a variety of methods to ascertain the rehabilitation needs of individuals residing in the state in order to continue to improve the nature and scope of services that are provided to individuals seeking an employment outcome. These assessments are done in a variety of ways:

Forums and Public Meeting conducted with the Commission's State Rehabilitation Council, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and other entities.

Evaluations conducted with consumers exiting the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center.

Continuing surveys conducted by the State Rehabilitation Council.

Review of prior year(s) closure information at the end of each fiscal year. This evaluation focuses on the number of individuals employed, the wages at closure, and satisfaction with services offered.

On February 25, 1999, a Public Meeting was held prior to the submittal of the Unified State Plan on April 1, 1999 to gather information from consumers, other professionals, and interested parties. There were a variety of issues that were brought forth and these were as follows:

- ?? Technology is and will continue to be a major issue relative to the employment of individuals with disabilities. More sophisticated technology and continuous training is needed to allow individuals compete on an even level with non-disabled persons.
- ?? Passaic County is in need of a Center in the county to meet the needs of consumers. Individuals have to travel to surrounding counties to receive the services that they require. Transportation, as it is, requires individuals to spend long hours just getting to centers in adjoining counties.
- ?? Changes in Social Security guidelines are needed so that people can continue receiving health benefits when they begin working, if benefits are not available.
- ?? Transportation for all individuals with disabilities, whether in employment or training, continues to be a major impediment. Transportation needs to be available, particularly in rural areas and during off- hours so that people can go to work. There are major problems with Access Link. It is not meeting the need of people with disabilities. The WIB's are required to develop Transportation Plans, as they relate to Work First New Jersey. These

Transportation Plans make recommendations to New Jersey Transit. DVRS and CBVI need to be aware of these as they relate to consumers.

- ?? Literacy needs must be addressed, regardless of the media, for all people. The changing job market will continue to require a higher skill level.
- ?? Consumers must make some of their own changes if they are going to be successful, not just rely on others to make changes. If something is needed, don't hesitate to ask for it.

The Executive Director of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and the Director of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services attended the Public Meeting and led an Open Discussion period following the formal presentations. As estimated 60 people participated in the Public Meeting. A direct outgrowth of this Meeting was that the State Rehabilitation Councils of both agencies and the State Independent Living Council will convene to discuss the major issue of transportation and determine what they can do as a group to effect the necessary changes.

(a)(1)(B) Community Rehabilitation Program Needs

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired operates the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, a residential facility that provides comprehensive services to individuals who are blind and visually impaired residing in the state. The following services are offered: evaluation and adjustment to blindness services, vocational assessment, independent living services, counseling and guidance, and specific vocational training in areas identified by consumer and staff input. Presently, a comprehensive food service training program is underway at the facility. In October, 1998, the Norma F. Krajczar Technology Center was opened at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center to provide evaluations and training to consumers in assistive technology in order to meet the growing need for technology that exists in most occupations today. The Technology Center keeps abreast of the latest developments in technology to meet the current and ever expanding needs of consumers entering training and employment situations.

Community Rehabilitation Programs throughout the state, including the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center, will need to be prepared for and utilized to assist vocational rehabilitation agencies implement the trial work situations as required in the Rehabilitation Act amendments.

The Comprehensive System of Personnel Development requires that Community Rehabilitation Programs also employ qualified rehabilitation personnel. Although, at present, the first priority is the education and training of state agency staff, sufficient opportunities must be available to assist the Community Programs meet the mandates of the Act.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired continues to meet with ACCSES to investigate ways and methods to increase the number of blind and visually impaired consumers employed by the State Use Program.

(b) Annual Estimates of Individuals to Be Served and Costs of Services

- (1) It is estimated that 2800 individuals will be eligible for services in Program Year 2000.
- (2) Of the 2800 eligible individuals, it is estimated that all will receive services provided under Part B of Title I of the Act and/or under Part B of Title VI of the Act. The Commission for the Blind is not under an order of selection.
- (3) Service costs are estimated to be \$ 11,858,00 inclusive of amounts for Supported Employment under Title VI, part B and state match under Title I.

(c)(1) Goals and Priorities

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has established goals and priorities for all consumers of services. The Mission statement, Philosophy, Goals and Objectives are as follows:

Mission Statement

The mission of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is to promote and provide services in the areas of education, employment, independence and eye health through informed choice and partnership with persons who are blind or visually impaired, their families and the community.

Statement of Philosophy

People who are blind and visually impaired can succeed in education, in careers, in the home and in the community. The services that our agency provides directly impacts on the ability of individuals to achieve success. The consumer must be the most important part of the process. The skills of blindness are essential to independence, education and employment and must be promoted by staff to consumers, employers, educational institutions, and the general public. We encourage involvement and support by the family of the consumer. Research and development of assistive technology is encouraged and supported to ensure that persons who are blind and visually impaired can become independent and competitive in education and employment.

ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

General Goals and Objectives

Goal 1

The Commission will provide timely, effective, high-quality services.

Objectives

- ?? Determine eligibility for services within 30 days of referral and begin service delivery within 30 days of eligibility determination.
- ?? Analyze and streamline the Intake process.
- ?? Undertake consumer satisfaction surveys, follow-up interviews, and act on consumer recommendations.
- ?? Provide resource information as needed.
- ?? Maintain a highly trained and competent staff.

Goal 2

The Commission will increase competitive employment.

Objectives

- Network with employers to establish an informed public as to the abilities of persons who are blind and visually impaired in the work place.
- Develop access to computerized job banks.
- Upgrade formal and informal training for Commission staff to be relevant to current market trends. Work cooperatively with the Workforce System in New Jersey to ensure access to labor market information.
- Provide, in partnership with employers and in keeping with the provisions of ADA, technical and adaptive assistance at the work place.

Goal 3

The Commission will work towards excellence in the education of students who are blind and visually impaired.

Objectives

- Work toward age-appropriate concept development, early literacy experiences and grade-level achievements for students who are blind and visually impaired.
- Provide education services and adaptive equipment that will promote integration and enable students who are blind and visually impaired to function independently on an equal basis with their peers.
- Promote positive attitudes among school staff regarding the abilities of students who are blind and visually impaired and the skills of blindness.

- Keep parents informed on a regular basis of the scheduling and content of lessons and the student's progress.
- Develop partnerships for the purpose of sharing information among parents, Commission staff, classroom teachers and advocacy groups regarding trends, changes, new ideas and different approaches in the education of children who are blind and visually impaired.

Goal 4

The Commission will work to decrease the incidence of blindness or significant vision loss through eye health programs.

Objectives

- To increase public awareness of eye safety and the causes and treatment of vision loss by publicizing the Commission's prevention services and conducting education and detection programs.
- Provide blindness prevention services such as eye disease detection screenings and medical intervention.
- Target high-risk populations for prevention and eye health services.

Goal 5

The Commission will actively promote equality and full inclusion into society.

Objectives

- Work to promote abilities and dispel misconceptions about blindness and visual impairments.
- Work to promote positive attitudes through a variety of community-based activities.
- Advocate for the rights of the population served.
- Build a collaborative network of consumers, blindness organizations, other disability groups, service providers and interested individuals to facilitate consumer empowerment.
- Encourage consumers to advocate for themselves through blindness organizations, government, community, in school and on the job.

Goal 6

The Commission will work in partnership with consumers.

Objectives

- Work with the individual to choose a direction which will enable him or her to achieve desired goals.
- Develop an individual blueprint for achievement that will early define expectations and responsibilities.

- Review service plans annually as developed between case managers and consumers.
- Conduct routine compliance reviews to ensure the delivery of consumer services.
- Seek consumer input through committees, forums, public hearings, etc.

Goal 7

The Commission will encourage positive attitudes toward blindness and visual impairments by consumers and their families.

Objectives

- Develop a mentoring program.
- Implement a program of socialization and interpersonal skills appropriate to various age groups.

Goal 8

The Commission will expand service delivery to historically underserved populations.

Objectives

- Analyze targeted populations to determine appropriate service needs.
- Expand outreach activities.
- Increase services to these populations.
- Conduct annual reviews.
- Review and revise Commission literature and communications.

Goal 9

The Commission will promote the development and use of assistive technology.

Objective

- Maintain up-to-date information on assistive technology.
- Develop a training program for Commission staff.

The Sterling Group The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired, in order to benchmark our activities, demonstrate continuous improvement and develop a Comprehensive Strategic Plan for the next millenium, has employed the Sterling Group to evaluate all areas of our agency and make recommendations on how we can improve the quality of services that we offer.

(c)(2)(B) Explanation to support the Decision Not to Establish an Order of Selection

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is able to provide Vocational Rehabilitation Services to all eligible individuals who are blind and visually Impaired within the state who apply for services. Our agency has not delayed, through waiting lists or any other means, eligibility determinations, assessments, the development of the IPE, and the provision of services under the IPE. The Commission's budget for fiscal 1999 is approximately \$22 million dollars. Our agency anticipates that we will be able to provide the full range of vocational services to all eligible individuals in fiscal 2000. In addition to adequate resources, the Commission is able to utilize agency-based programs and personnel and contract services to assist in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services.

The Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center (JKRC) The Commission operates a comprehensive, residential rehabilitation center, located centrally in the state. The JKRC is able to provide Adjustment to Blindness counseling and training, diagnostic and pre-vocational evaluations. A consumer is able to receive services in the following instructional areas: vocational assessment, career counseling, communications, home and personal management, orientation and mobility, low vision services, and evaluation and training in assistive technology. The Center is able to provide training for Randolph- Sheppard operators and Job Seeking Skills training.

Adaptive Living Skill and Prevention Services The Commission, in addition to providing vocational rehabilitation services, is able to offer services to consumers that will enhance their ability to be employed. These direct services, offered on a regional basis, are eye health nursing, social casework, orientation and mobility, and rehabilitation teaching. These services can be offered before, during, and after the rehabilitation process in order to ensure ongoing support and meet consumer needs.

Contracted Services Contracted services assists the vocational rehabilitation program by providing direct services to consumers. Utilizing this method, the Commission is able to provide services in Assistive Technology, Supported Employment, Legal services, and services to the older blind.

Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, by utilizing the above in-house modalities are able to provide services to all eligible blind and visually impaired consumers residing in the state.

(3) Goals and Plans for Distribution of Title VI, Part B Funds

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired remain committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers who are blind and visually impaired. There are presently sixty-five (65) providers throughout the state who provide supported employment services on a fee for service basis. In addition to utilizing the Title VI, Part B funds on the individual fee for service basis, the Commission for the Blind and Visually

Impaired contracts with three (3) providers for intensive job coaching and extended services. These three providers are the First Occupational Center (Northern New Jersey), Monmouth Center Vocational Rehabilitation (Central New Jersey), and Jersey Cape Diagnostic Training and Opportunity Center (Southern New Jersey). The total amount expended for the three contracts is \$168,000.

Change in Fee for Service Rate. Effective April 1, 1999, the baseline hourly fee for service rate was raised from \$37.00 to \$42.00 by the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. This represents the first increase to reflect rising costs since the fee for service mechanism was introduced in 1991.

Interagency Agreement with D.D.D. The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired plans to update its Interagency Agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (D.D.D.). With the continued emphasis of moving individuals from institutional setting to group homes, The Commission plans to work with DDD on a strategy to refer individuals who are blind and visually impaired and developmentally disabled to the Commission for the intensive phase of supported employment job coaching. Upon completion of the intensive phase, these individuals will be referred back to DDD for the long- term extended services.

(d) State's Strategies and Use of Title I Funds for Innovation and Expansion

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired plans to continue to dedicate funding that was set aside in the previous Strategic Plan (October 1, 1997- September 30, 2000). The activities that were focused on at that time were as follows:

- ?? Operation of and initiatives of the State Rehabilitation Council
- ?? Personnel Development to ensure that vocational services are provided by highly qualified rehabilitation personnel
- ?? Initiation of the VR loaner program through an existing state program to ensure that equipment is available for consumers when they are commencing a training or employment situation.
- ?? Expansion of the National Industries for the Blind/ Veterans Administration employment initiatives

New initiative to be undertaken in fiscal 2000 and beyond are:

- ?? Mentoring program focusing on transition students, newly blinded individuals, and new Randolph-Sheppard operators.
- ?? Continued enhancement of transition programs. This will include redefining the populations presently served in the transition programs, utilizing other community programs, such as the Job Corp, and ensuring that programs are sequential, developmental and non-duplicative.

- ?? Development of employment program with National Industries for the Blind, with the focus on non-traditional occupations (i.e. homebound employment) for individuals who are blind and visually impaired.
- ?? Expansion through community based organizations into non- traditional occupations for CBVI consumers, such as construction and automotive trades and food service.

The Commission for the Blind acknowledges the need to assure effective communication with its potential consumers. To a great extent, that communication will be enhanced through the development of a newsletter, a WEB page, standardized brochures, etc., however to the extent that potential consumers may not be able to read print, additional interventions are needed to assure that potential consumers are made aware of the agency's program offerings and to standardize our communication with our current consumers.

Since effective planning of vocational rehabilitation begins at the initial point of contact, the Commission has established a centralized intake unit, consisting of experienced counselors who will work with potential clients until eligibility is established. Monitoring of this function is ongoing, with a formalized evaluation of effort underway through our next consumer satisfaction survey which is targeted at individuals who have been processed through this centralized unit.

Historically, the Commission for the Blind has successfully penetrated the minority population in proportion to the representation of minorities in the general population. We have, however, initiated outreach in selected populations, such as the Latino population in areas outside of vocational rehabilitation with the expectation that our success in vision restoration programs would generate referrals to vocational rehabilitation as well. Additionally, CBVI has a series of contractual relationships with organizations serving older blind, many of which are in geographic areas heavily populated by minorities.

The primary barrier relating to equitable access to and participation of individuals with visual disabilities in the state VR program relates to the issues of travel and print access. CBVI has designed its services to be delivered to individuals within their home environment, rather than base services in an office setting. Because the nature of the disability affects the individual's mobility, our population consistently emphasizes the need for access to transportation. This need and the anticipated response to this need is identified above. With respect to Workforce Development and service delivery through the One-Stops, an initial effort is being made to provide access by utilizing lap-top computers with the ability to dial into systems appropriate to meet constituent needs.

With respect to print access, the Commission has initiated and promotes actively, the development of technology resources through its research and development committee, the ongoing expansion of its contracts for technology services

(including training), the purchase of adaptive equipment where appropriate, and the development of low tech alternatives to job seeking etc.

On a state level, the Workforce Development system has been responsive to equitable access by supporting the provision of specifically adapted technology through the local WIB's. This need is ongoing as reader service, technology, alternative media for vocational assessments, career testing and other print material is developed for customers of the One-Stops.

(e) Evaluation and Reports of Progress

Many of the initiative highlighted in the Strategic Plan for the period October 1, 1997 through September 30, 2000 are still being pursued. Activities of the State Rehabilitation Council continues to receive financial support, the food service program has commenced at the Joseph Kohn Rehabilitation Center and the agreement with the Library for the Blind and Print Handicapped for a VR loaner program is nearly completed.

The criteria that the Commission utilized to determine if the objectives were met are the number of individuals achieving an employment outcome and the results of Consumer Satisfaction Surveys. Although the number of consumers achieving an employment outcome remained the same, the number of people in competitive employment rose from 203 to 224, and the number of homemakers and individuals in sheltered employment decreased. The Consumer Satisfaction Survey indicated that more than 75% of consumers felt that they benefited from CBVI services, had their rights explained to them, were given the opportunity to make their own choices about a vocational goal, and would recommend CBVI to a friend. The Commission will continue to conduct surveys as a mechanism to improve services. Some areas, such as counselors' timeliness of response and delays in service have been noted and the Commission will continue to monitor progress in those areas.

MEDIATION AND IMPARTIAL DUE PROCESS HEARING PROCEDURES

The Rehabilitation Act mandates that mediation procedures are established and implemented that allow parties to resolve disputes through a process that shall be available whenever requested. The process must meet the following criteria:

- ?? The process is voluntary on the part of both parties.
- ?? Is not used to deny or delay the right of the individual to a hearing.
- ?? The mediation is conducted by a qualified and impartial mediator who is trained in effective mediation techniques.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired has contacted the State of New Jersey Office of the Public Defender and our agency will utilize the Office of Dispute Settlement in Trenton for purposes of mediation. The standards of practice, suggested time frames, and the cost estimates are as follows:

Standards of Practice. The Model standards of Conduct for Mediators, endorsed by The Society of Professionals in Dispute Resolution, The American Arbitration Association and the American Bar Association will be utilized.

Time Frames. The mediation session will be scheduled within 20 days of the request for mediation. The 20-day time frame would include the initial conference call with the parties, and the exchange of information pertinent to the mediation session.

Cost Estimate. Mediation and consulting services would be provided at the cost of \$75.00 per hour.

Any agreement from the mediation session(s) will be set forth in writing in a written mediation agreement. The process shall be confidential and may not be used as evidence in any subsequent due process hearing or civil proceeding.

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently rewriting Chapter 95, our agency Vocational Rehabilitation Rule, to reflect the changes brought about by The Workforce Act and the Rehabilitation Act. The mediation procedures will be included under the Due Process section of the code, after they are reviewed by the Office of Dispute Settlement, the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the State Rehabilitation Council of the New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Services Subject to Financial Needs Test

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired uses an economic needs test in determining a consumer's financial participation in the cost of certain vocational rehabilitation services, other than evaluation of eligibility, diagnostic evaluation, counseling and guidance, referral services, and job placement. The services for which there is an economic needs test are as follows:

- ?? College Tuition
- ??Maintenance
- ??Adaptive equipment
- ??Low vision follow-up visits
- ??Accessory or optical low vision aids
- ??Projection or electronic low vision aids
- ??Medical devices and equipment
- ??Restoration services
- ??Personal attendant services
- ??Technological aids
- ??Vocational training (except work adjustment training)
- ??Training equipment
- ??Transportation
- ??Placement equipment

QUALITY, SCOPE AND EXTENT OF SUPPORTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

The New Jersey Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired remains committed to increasing the quality, scope and extent of Supported Employment Services to eligible consumers who are blind and visually impaired.

Although there exists a sufficient number of service providers who deliver supported employment in the state on a fee for service basis, there is reluctance on the part of many providers to work with individuals with significant disabilities who are blind and visually impaired. The commission presently contracts with three (3) providers for intensive job coaching and extended services- The First Occupational Center (Northern New Jersey), Monmouth Center Vocational Rehabilitation (Central New Jersey), and Jersey Cape Diagnostic, Training and Opportunity Center (Southern New Jersey). The Commission is prepared to expand these contract based on successful supported employment outcomes or develop new providers to meet the needs of consumers who require these types of services.

The Region II Rehabilitation Continuing Education Program (RRCEP) for Community Rehabilitation Programs and the University Affiliated Program, due to a continuing turnover in staff, offer a variety of training programs in basic and advanced job coaching to meet the continuing need of providers.

The Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired is presently redeveloping our agency's Interagency Agreement with the Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD) for Supported Employment Services. Under the new agreement, individuals are eligible and appropriate for supported employment services, and who are DDD eligible, would be provided intensive job coaching services by the Commission for the Blind and Visually Impaired. The on going extended services would be provided by the Division of Developmental Disabilities.