

ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER PLAN

LWA 12

Background of Local Workforce Area 12:

Local Workforce Area (LWA) 12 is comprised of Bureau, LaSalle, Lee and Putnam Counties in the north central part of Illinois, within 100 miles of the major metropolitan areas of Chicago, Peoria, Joliet and Rockford. LWA 12 is rural in nature with a population of 188,539 (*Annual Estimates of the Resident Population for Counties of Illinois: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2008 – U.S. Census Bureau*). The largest single city in the four-county area is Ottawa, with a population of 18,307.

Like many other areas throughout the United States, LWA 12 has been severely impacted by the current recession. The local unemployment rate is traditionally higher than that of both the state and the country, and as of April, 2009, the unemployment rate was 10.2%, compared to 9.4% for the state and 8.9% nationally.

Labor Market data available through 2008 shows that Manufacturing is still the dominant sector in WIA 12, both in terms of numbers of workers and in wages paid. Prior to the recent economic downturn, it had even seen job growth in the local area. (*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics*) The largest sectors that show the highest growth in the area, however, are retail and administrative services. The types of jobs within these industries are generally characterized by lower wages, fewer benefits, less opportunity for advancement and high turnover. Wholesale Trade, due to the growth of the warehouse and logistics sector, has become an important sector in the area. While wages in this sector are above those in retail and services, they are still less than those in manufacturing and construction. The impact of the changing industry mix is certain to affect the local economy. With the median household income for LWA 12 ranging from \$44,204 (\$21.25/hour) to \$49,518 (\$23.8/hour), most families will require 2 wages earners to meet this level. (*Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2005-2007 American Community Survey*)

These various employment and labor market issues will be addressed through the leadership and direction of North Central Illinois Works (NCI Works) and the local Chief Elected Officials of the four counties. The Board consists of a solid balance between public and private members, with large and small businesses appropriately represented among the private sector. The commitment and support of the local elected officials is evidenced by their desire to have a representative on the local workforce investment board. This mix of members almost certainly guarantees that the workforce investment system created by their input and recommendations will enhance the quality of life for all residents of LWA 12 and make its labor force more competitive with those around it.

I. Local Needs Analysis and Assessment: As an initial step in developing a long-range vision for the local workforce investment system, it is important to take stock of the current needs of the system's potential customers. These customers include, of course, local employers, job seekers, current workers and youth.

Part of this local assessment should also include an analysis of local employment demands, both current and projected. Where are job openings projected to be found in the five-year plan period, and what skill will be required in those jobs? Assistance in acquiring data which will be helpful in this assessment will be forthcoming from the Workforce Information Committee of the Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB).

Finally, this section should begin the process of synthesizing these supply and demand analyses with an initial assessment of the local resources, including local education and training resources, which exist to meet the identified needs

A. Current and projected customer needs

1. Employer Needs

Describe the needs of local employers, in particular the labor force needs of local employers.

- What are the key existing industries in the local employment base (part of this description should include a listing of the 10 –15 largest industries in the local area?) What are the key occupations within these industries?
- What industries are expected to grow during the five years of the local plan (part of this description should include a listing of the 10 –15 largest projected net growth industries over the next five years)? What are the occupations related to these growth industries? How will that growth affect employer demands on the local labor force?
- How does the local program intend to measure and assess these employer needs on an ongoing basis throughout the five years of the plan?

Response:

Data from the U. S Census Bureau shows largest industry sectors in LWIA 12: (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, *Local Employment Dynamics*)

High Growth Industries
Top 10 Industry Sectors ranked on the greatest employment
State=Illinois, WIA=12 No. Central IL Works WB, Sex=Male and Female, Age=14-99
Private Firms Only

Rank	Industry	Average Quarterly Employment (2007Q2,2007Q3, 2007Q4,2008Q1)	Growth in Employment (%) (2007Q1,2008Q1)	Average Monthly Earnings (\$) (2007Q2,2007Q3, 2007Q4,2008Q1)
	All NAICS Sectors	59,723	1.9 %	\$3,037
1	31-33 Manufacturing	11,500	2.2 %	\$4,150
2	44-45 Retail Trade	9,238	4.7 %	\$2,141
3	62 Health Care and Social Assistance	8,478	2.3 %	\$2,876
4	72 Accommodation and Food Services	5,348	-3.1 %	\$1,090
5	42 Wholesale Trade	4,397	4.8 %	\$3,445
6	48-49 Transportation and Warehousing	3,384	1.7 %	\$3,190
7	56 Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	2,998	12.5 %	\$1,967
8	23 Construction	2,759	-10.8 %	\$3,968
9	81 Other Services (except Public Administration)	2,188	1.0 %	\$1,771
10	52 Finance and Insurance	2,168	-3.3 %	\$3,290

And the fastest growing (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Local Employment Dynamics)

High Growth Industries
Top 10 Industry Sectors ranked on the greatest growth in employment
State=Illinois, WIA=12 No. Central IL Works WB, Sex=Male and Female, Age=14-99
Private Firms Only

Rank	Industry	Growth in Employment (%) (2007Q1,2008Q1)	Average Quarterly Employment (2007Q2,2007Q3, 2007Q4,2008Q1)	Average Quarterly New Hire Employment (2007Q2,2007Q3, 2007Q4,2008Q1)	Average Monthly Earnings (\$) (2007Q2,2007Q3, 2007Q4,2008Q1)
	All NAICS Sectors	1.9 %	59,723	4,124	\$3,037
1	56 Administrative and Support and Waste Management and Remediation Services	12.5 %	2,998	423	\$1,967
2	61 Educational Services	11.9 %	565	31	\$1,620
3	51 Information	5.4 %	837	54	\$2,879
4	42 Wholesale Trade	4.8 %	4,397	272	\$3,445
5	44-45 Retail Trade	4.7 %	9,238	855	\$2,141
6	21 Mining, Quarrying, and Oil and Gas Extraction	3.7 %	380	12	\$6,310
7	11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	2.9 %	1,356	74	\$2,729
8	71 Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	2.4 %	608	58	\$1,404
9	62 Health Care and Social Assistance	2.3 %	8,478	449	\$2,876
10	31-33 Manufacturing	2.2 %	11,500	453	\$4,150

(Larger tables are attached.)

In addition to the above data, in August of 2007, NCI Works contracted with a consulting firm to update the community audit conducted in the four-county local workforce area. The North Central Illinois State of the Workforce Report has provided the Board with a wealth of labor market and demographic information. Both the report and data from the Illinois Department of Employment Security project the Services and Retail Trades industries to continue to grow in

LWA #12, but bring low to mid-level wages. Manufacturing, with its higher wages, will continue to decline in terms of total numbers of jobs, but the age of the current manufacturing workforce will result in vacancies due to retirements. “New economy jobs”, those that rely more on brains than on hands, could add higher skilled, higher paying jobs to the area but challenges such as limited technological capacity, educational attainment levels below state and national levels, and an aging workforce will make attracting these types of companies difficult.

On the other hand, the strategic location of our workforce area makes it very attractive to logistics and warehousing businesses, including a new Kohl’s distribution center, and the upcoming construction of an intermodal facility just outside the area’s eastern border. Future hiring within the logistics industry will be due to both adding new jobs and filling openings due to turnover. While the new intermodal facility is likely to increase the number of job opportunities in the logistics field, one manufacturer expressed concern that it would create competition for good workers.

During this current recession, while it seems that all sectors have been impacted, Manufacturing has been particularly hard-hit. ArcelorMittal, a steel finishing facility, one of the largest, best paying, employers in LWA 12 announced in February that they will close the Hennepin (Putnam County) facility. While the union is seeking a buyer for the facility, it seems that these 275 jobs will be lost. Other manufacturers have also had both temporary and permanent layoffs in the past 6 months, and it remains to be seen if these jobs will be permanently lost. These job losses in the manufacturing sector have simply accelerated the trend that was noted in the State of the Workforce report.

One of the challenges facing not only the manufacturing sector, but also the financial, medical, and education sectors is the aging of the workforce in LWA 12. As seen in Chart 1, the percentage of workers over the age of 55 has increased to almost 20%. This is not only a challenge for businesses, but also for the the workforce system. One of the initiatives that NCI Works has begun is the Cost Effective Retirement Transition (CERT) work group. This group, comprising several private sector representatives, the WIB chair and vice-chair, and the director of the Dislocated Workers Center, is focused on helping local employers recognize and manage the challenges created by the aging workforce and preparing for the coming retirements of a large number of workers. This work group will eventually be folded into the Private Sector Employer Committee.

The reality of this aging workforce means that even in industries that are either growing slowly or shrinking, there will be employment opportunities in the future. The challenge for the one-stop system is to help employers by creating a “qualified” workforce, able to step into these vacancies and be available for new opportunities.

“Qualified workforce”, however, means different things to different employers. For example, manufacturers tend to look for applicants with basic and soft skills and, to a greater extent today than in the past, to post-secondary certificates or degrees. Drivers make up a large part of the workforce within the logistics field, and therefore, certification is required prior to employment. Yet, a solid foundation of soft skills plays an important role in their being hired as well. Logistics employers mentioned qualities such as the ability to pass a criminal background check

and a physical/drug test, minimum driving experience and a good driving record, a good work ethic and a good work history as requirements for their potential employees. Retail traders, with their lower-skilled jobs for the most part require no certifications, and when they do, they are usually those that can be earned on the job. Due to the nature of their business, these employers tend to focus more on the interpersonal soft skills such as honesty, dependability, communication and ability to get along with people.

Again, through its Private Sector Employer Committee, NCI Works intends to solicit employer input and develop action plans for addressing the various gaps. Feedback from the employers will be crucial to determining if employer needs are being met.

One new area that NCI Works has recognized as an emerging industry in the area is that of “Green” energy. In addition to a biodiesel plant and an ethanol plant, wind farms are operating in LWA 12, and new ones are in the planning stages. Local community colleges are just now developing curricula for these fields.

The Workforce Investment Act Section 134 (d) (4) (A) (iii) states that funds allocated to a local area shall be used to provide training services to adults and dislocated workers “who select programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area involved or in another area in which the adults or dislocated workers receiving such services are willing to relocate.”

Through IDES Policy Letter No. 12, the State of Illinois issued the Title IB Eligibility Policy Guide which establishes policies and procedures for determining various eligibility issues for the youth, adult and dislocated worker programs. One of the issues addressed in this document is determining whether customers have selected a program which is “directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or in another area to which the individual is willing to relocate.” The state has determined that persons are considered to have met this criterion if one of the following conditions is met:

1. the selected training is intended to prepare customers for employment in an occupation which has employment growth at or above the average employment growth as projected in the LWA or in another area to which the customer is willing to relocate;
2. an employer has provided a written statement of intent to hire upon successful completion of the selected training program; or
3. the LWIB has determined that employment opportunities are available in the local area.

Because the labor market information that is available from either the U.S. Census Bureau or the Illinois Department of Employment Security becomes outdated quickly, NCI Works has decided to take advantage of the flexibility provided by this last condition. At its meeting on March 27, 2001, the members approved several suggestions that were forwarded to them for further action, and as a result, employment opportunities will be considered available in LWA 12 either based on existing labor market reports or under one of the following conditions:

- a. Feasibility studies or strategic planning conducted by community colleges or other workforce-related organizations for the approval or development of new/revised programs or services.

For example, in order to offer new certificate or degree programs, community colleges must conduct feasibility studies to verify the need for that particular training. Results of such studies could be forwarded to an appropriate WIB committee and used as the basis for recognizing “employment opportunities” in the LWA. In addition, other workforce-related organizations may conduct strategic planning sessions or focus groups with the local business community. Information obtained from these sessions may identify current employment opportunities by occupation and/or industry and could be forwarded to an appropriate committee as acceptable documentation of such.

- b. Local employment surveys conducted by NCI Works, area Chambers of Commerce, Personnel Associations, Business or Industry Associations.

Again as an example, results from local labor market surveys conducted by new companies that have recently located in the area or may be looking to locate in the area in the future could be forwarded to an appropriate WIB committee and used as acceptable documentation of current employment opportunities. Also, some associations and/or organizations such as chambers of commerce, personnel associations, business or industry association and NCI Works may have information available from surveys they have conducted or sponsored. Information obtained through these surveys may identify current employment opportunities and could be made available to an appropriate committee for use as acceptable documentation.

- c. Information that indicates a high rate of retirement locally in a given occupation

This type of information could be obtained through either of the first two methods or through on-site visits with various local businesses in the area. **The CERT group will also be a source of this information.**

- d. Local Union Input

Local unions may have information on available local employment opportunities that could be forwarded to an appropriate committee and used as acceptable documentation.

- e. A documented trend of job openings in the want ads of local newspapers.

Staff could consult local newspapers and identify available job openings that have appeared regularly in the want ads. They will also work with the Private

Sector Employers Committee in order to define “trend” in terms of a specified length of time openings have appeared for a particular occupation.

- f. A request from an employer or group of employers for training in a specific occupational area.

An example of this option would be if employment opportunities for a specific occupation are available in one geographic area of the LWA but the occupation itself is not considered “high growth” for the entire LWA based on existing data. Training could be provided at the request of an employer or group of employers who wish to establish a pool of qualified workers from which new employees could be hired.

NCI Works has asked that training provided under any of these conditions be reported to the Private Sector Employers Committee and shared with the full Board as part of its regular report.

2. Job Seeker Needs

Describe the needs of local adult job seekers, which may include those who are underemployed, those who are unemployed or those who are considered dislocated workers. How will the makeup of key industries and industry growth affect the employment opportunities available to job seekers? How will these key and growth industries affect the skills required of job seekers? How well do the existing skills of adult job seekers match the current and projected demands of the local economy?

Response:

Based on information collected through the Community Audit, the educational attainment level in the NCI Works’ area is significantly lower than in the state or nation. In fact, the State of the Workforce Report notes that about 52% of adults have attained only a high school diploma or less. If we look at the demand side, the report reveals that only about 45% of jobs in our four counties require no more than a high school diploma, typical of the many jobs that exist in the services and retail trades industries. Therefore, not only are there too many lower-qualified adults in the local area, but they are competing for lower paying jobs. On the other hand, the percentage of jobs that require post-secondary education is higher than the percentage of the adults who have that level of educational attainment.

In order to rectify this situation, NCI Works must focus on not only attracting and/or creating these advanced jobs but making sure that the workforce is adequately prepared to fill them. Programs that offer computer training and other similar technology courses must be made readily available and accessible to the current workforce. Many employers indicated that, when possible, they prefer to promote from within their companies. However, the fact is that oftentimes the current workforce cannot meet the skill needs of the advancement, particularly in

the case of promotions to supervisory positions. **Therefore, Incumbent Worker Training programs will need to include not only occupational/skill training, but also programs will need to be designed to train workers to be supervisors.** This then would provide a means for not only career advancement but also wage progression. The community colleges, in collaboration with employers, will be instrumental in designing and offering supervisory training programs for current workers who have the potential to move into higher level positions.

In the current economy, not all job seekers are unskilled or dissatisfied workers. Many of them are individuals who have lost their jobs due to mass layoffs or plant closings. **They bring an established work history with them and in many cases a high skill level.** For some employers who have not been able to find skilled workers, they are an attractive pool of candidates. **The one-stop system has a role in matching these workers to the job openings that they may not otherwise know exist.**

This group of workers has traditionally been a part of the middle class, possesses a good work ethic and are good citizens for our nation. They will need help developing their job search and exploration skills, counseling to deal with the life changes they are experiencing and may need retraining. **Using Illinois Skills Match and Illinois workNet, we can inform this group of openings, as well as help them identify skills that they may not currently have but are in demand.**

3. Other Customer Needs

a. Worker Needs

Describe the needs of local workers (i.e., those who are currently employed). In what ways are the skill demands of local businesses changing? How will they be expected to continue changing over the five years of the plan? How well positioned are current workers and businesses to react to these changing skill demands?

Response:

Another workforce issue was recently discussed at a Private Sector Employer Committee Meeting. Some NCI Works members from manufacturing companies indicated that industry standards are moving towards requiring some degree of certification for most of their employees within the next 3 – 5 years. Given that their current workforce would not meet this requirement, they believe it is necessary to begin addressing this issue now through both general and occupation-specific certification programs. **Incumbent Worker training programs can be used to help employers address some of these requirements.** Again, the community colleges, in collaboration with employers, will be instrumental in designing and offering these programs.

An issue that affects particularly current workers and some of the “more established” workers is the aging workforce within LWA 12. These individuals have a solid work history and a strong work ethic. They also have different responsibilities than do younger workers. Family

commitments such as college or post-secondary school costs for their children, house payments and possibly higher medical expenses for themselves and their families consume a large part of their income. The trend in the local economy is that higher-paying manufacturing jobs are being replaced by lower-paying jobs in the services, retail and wholesale industries. This will make it more difficult for the mature workers to find jobs or start new careers that pay self-sufficient wages without adequate upgrading and retraining programs to provide them with the necessary skills.

b. Youth Needs

Not unlike other places in the country, Local Workforce Area 12 suffers from a rather frustrating situation: “youth flight”, whereby young members of the population who complete post-secondary education tend to leave the area, creating labor shortages at home. The challenge, then, for NCI Works is to **not only help** create opportunities in terms of high-skilled, high paying jobs that will encourage young people to remain in the area **but to inform those who have already left that opportunities exist.** One current initiative, “No Place Like Home”, is a web site that serves as a source of information about current and projected jobs in the local area that pay over \$15 per hour, an amount that we hope will be enough to make it worthwhile for some who have left the area to consider returning.

B. Identification of key customer segments

1. Employer segments

Given the analysis of local employer needs, are there segments of the local employer community which can be identified as key customers for the workforce investment system? These employers may be key customers because of their size (small or large), their projected growth (high growth or low growth), their projected skill gaps (projected difficulties in finding adequate numbers of skilled workers), etc.

Response:

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 provides the overall framework for establishing local workforce investment systems. These systems are intended to integrate all employment and training programs for adults and youth into a single, customer-friendly set of services offered through one-stop delivery centers. The workforce investment systems include not only the agencies and institutions that directly provide the services but also other key players such as employers, local elected officials, labor organizations, community-based organizations and economic development agencies.

The real advantage of WIA to employers is that it provides access to the specialized services of all the agencies and institutions through a central point of entry to employment and training programs: the one-stop delivery system. With each partnering agency adding their area of expertise to the menu of services, the local workforce investment system will have the ability to provide the appropriate mix of services and training to address an employer's workforce needs. Again, these needs vary depending upon the business and whether it is comprised largely of emerging, transitional, or incumbent workers. Businesses who hire a large number of first time or transitional workers will be more dependent upon training in adult basic education, English As a Second Language and soft skills, whereas employers with a more stable, long-term workforce benefit from upgrade training and/or occupation-specific customized training programs.

A key to providing good services to the employer community has been the development of the Business Services Team in our local workforce. Staff from One-Stop partners and other entities have designed a customized program that offers a single point of contact for local employers. Workforce needs are analyzed and a business plan developed based on the appropriate mix of services necessary to address the identified needs. In the northwest part of LWA 12, we have partnered with LWA 4 on their Business Service Team.

The Workforce Investment Act makes provisions for three types of services:

- Core services, which include orientation to information and services that are available; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities; supportive services; job search and placement assistance, including labor market information; follow-up services for persons placed in unsubsidized employment for not less than 12 months.
- Intensive services, which may include individual counseling and career planning; case management; short-term pre-vocational services, including communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance, and soft skills training to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment.
- Training services, which may include occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment; on-the-job-training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction; skill upgrading and retraining; entrepreneurial training; customized training; occupational bridge programs; incumbent workers training; work experience; academic remediation/prevocational services; and internships as defined in the Training Expenditure requirements policy letter 07-PL-40.

A comparison of the needs identified by local employers with these available services reveals a direct link between the two. **NCI Works has identified health care, manufacturing, logistics, and tourism as "key customers" within the employer community of LWA #12. Another key customer is not a particular industry sector, but the firms within any sector that are looking to incorporate green technologies, whether it be in construction, HVAC, energy, or any industry. NCI Works, through**

it's Business Services Team and Private Sector committee will seek to identify those firms that are trying to "go green". We will look forward to any assistance available from DOL and DCEO in creating definitions that will help us in this effort.

2. Population Segments

Given the analysis of local worker needs (both job seekers and current workers), and given the emphasis on universal services under WIA, are there segments of the local population which can be identified as key customers for the workforce investment system? These individuals may be key customers because of their employment history, their age, their barriers to employment, their special needs (including supportive service needs), etc.

Response:

Local worker needs have been previously discussed.

Section 134 (d)(4)(E) of the Workforce Investment Act creates a priority system for Title I adult funds received by a local area. The law also requires that the local Workforce Investment Board and the Governor provide guidance to one-stop operators regarding implementation of this requirement. Specifically, this section requires that operators of one-stop centers give priority for the receipt of adult intensive and training services to public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals. State WIA Policy Letter No. 99-1 sets forth the policy under which this provision will be carried out. Local areas have the option of enrolling at least 51% low-income adults or welfare recipients in intensive or training services, or spending at least 51% of the funds spent on Adult intensive and training services for this targeted population. This policy requirement then would suggest that this population be one of the key customer segments of the worker community.

C. Policy and programmatic implications of the local needs analysis

1. Resource implications

What are resource implications of the identified customer needs (in particular the supportive service needs of customers)? Will the funds made available through WIA Title I be sufficient to meet these identified needs?

Response:

Several customers of the workforce investment system have been identified: emerging workers, transitional workers, incumbent workers, and the employers who hire these workers. Furthermore, a multitude of special issues affiliated with these

customer groups has also been identified which the local system must address if a competitive, quality workforce is to ever be achieved in LWA 12. No one agency or entity should bear the entire cost, financial or otherwise, for providing these services. It was the intent of Congress, through the Workforce Investment Act, to encourage all partners to be a part of the local workforce investment system and contribute their expertise and specialized services to assure its success. WIA allows the provision of services to a universal client population in addition to the targeted populations of economically disadvantaged adults and dislocated workers. Moreover, services to employers are more flexible under WIA (e.g., upgrade training to incumbent workers). It is fully expected that this expanded scope of services and activities will fully tap the resources under Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funding.

The previous section identified low-income adults as the priority under the Adult Program given the fact that the Department of Labor has stated that funds under this part will generally be considered limited. Should a shortfall of funds occur under the Dislocated Worker Program, the WIB has adopted a policy that gives priority of service to dislocated workers based on the following criteria:

1. Nearness to completing the training program,
2. Lack of availability of other sources of training funds, and
3. Need for individuals with that training by the local employer community.

Supportive services such as child care, transportation, etc. are often critical to an individual's successful completion of a training program. The law allows for policies governing these services to be established by either the local workforce investment board or the one-stop operator. In LWA 12, the WIB authorized the one-stop operator consortium to address issues regarding supportive services, **including Needs Related Payments (See attached policy)**.

2. Workforce education and training implications

What are the workforce education and training opportunity implications of the identified customer needs? Will workforce education and training opportunities be available in the area to meet the identified needs?

Response:

Automation increases and technology advances are leading to a demand for greater productivity and efficiency, sometimes reducing the need for labor. Firms are being asked to produce more with fewer employees. These employees are often asked to acquire new skills and take on a broad array of tasks. All employees from janitor to front line staff to top executives will have a need for cross-training, retraining, continuing education, etc. For all job seekers, the potential for upward mobility in the

labor force depends on their education and skill levels. There is a need and recognition among employers for employees who are more versatile and flexible.

Individuals with barriers to employment have skill needs that cover all three of the following areas: (1) basic skills; (2) soft skills; and, (3) occupational and employment skills. Once this customer group has acquired the soft skills through work experience, or work readiness training, they still need the technical and occupational training to have an opportunity to achieve self-sufficiency. Most of this group is unlikely to have used technology in any context.

One of the implications of the above trends both for job and skill seekers is the need for lifelong learning. The need to be able to work and learn at the same time requires continuous collaboration between business and educational institutions. Training providers will be challenged to provide a variety of options for identified customers to use in upgrading their education and skills (i.e., web-based; blended; at the workplace site; evening and weekend courses.)

Training will be needed by a more diverse group of current and potential workers. The North Central Illinois Works State of the Workforce Report shows a dramatic growth in the Hispanic population. This implies the continuous need for English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. The aging of the local workforce will require training providers and teachers who can meet the unique needs of the adult student. This also implies a need for better assessment of potential students by both service and training providers.

Through focus group meetings and informal discussions with leaders in the North Central Illinois Works' targeted industries, local employers identified basic skills, communication, and computer skills as necessary for all workers. Additionally, many workers will need training in the soft skills; i.e., teamwork, time management, customer service, adapting to change, etc.

In the past, a variety of training programs and providers have been utilized to serve low-income adults and dislocated workers in LWA. It is the intention of NCI Works to utilize the state list of training providers to provide clients with maximum choice. However, since LWA 12 is a rural area, only a limited number of clients in the past have chosen to go outside its boundaries to access training. Those who choose to do so have greater need for supportive services such as child care and mileage. Though our local Child Care Resource & Referral agency will be fully utilized for child care assistance for low income individuals, resources for support costs through WIA Title I funding may still be limited.

There are only two main training providers located in LWA 12. Each comprehensive community college has representatives on the NCI Works Board. Both of these institutions utilize business and industry advisory committees and focus groups to assess the needs of local employers in the development of new curricula.

One of the challenges is that community colleges operate on the traditional fall, spring and summer semester basis. The diverse certificate and degree programs offered by these institutions provide opportunities for LWA 12 residents to obtain training at a reasonable price close to their homes. However, there is a need for short-term training programs that offer a variety of entry and exit times. Traditionally, short-term training programs have been more costly. Therefore, a balance must be struck between training options, funding, and customer choice.

While it is obviously important and necessary to identify customers and customer need in the development of a new system or the overhaul of an existing system, marketing its services and/or intended outcomes can prove equally important to its success. Reaching job seekers and even current workers will more than likely be achieved through traditional methods of outreach and recruitment. If local employers, however, are to have a complete buy-in to the “new” workforce development system in LWA 12, they must be able to readily recognize its advantages over the “old” system. Therefore, NCI Works has charged its Business Liaison and Marketing Committee with the responsibility of getting that message out to the business community. To date, this Committee has identified the following avenues for accomplishing this:

1. Press releases
2. Public Service Announcements
3. Annual Employer Conference
4. NCI Works Annual Report
5. Illinois workNet
6. North Central Illinois Works Newsletter – developed by staff with a focus on WIB members and business-related issues

II. Local Strategic Vision and Goals: Following the assessment of the local workforce investment system requested in Section I, it is the purpose of this section to develop and describe the vision and goals of the system over the five years covered by the plan.

In this section, you will identify the local workforce development goals which will include your response to the customer needs identified in Section I.

In particular, this section will serve to describe goals for continued improvement of the local workforce investment system (the one-stop delivery system, interagency coordination and collaboration, the local service provider system, etc.).

A. Provide (in a few paragraphs) the local vision for the implementation, development, use and improvement of the workforce development system. This section should specifically address the following questions, while relating each goal to the customer needs identified in Section I:

1. Generally, how will the local workforce development system be developed and utilized in order to meet the customer needs identified in Section I?

Response:

Recognizing that creating a comprehensive system is a major undertaking that requires long-term preparation and strategic planning by all parties involved, the Board through its committees first focused its efforts on designing and later refining the workforce development system in this area. During the past several years of WIA, appropriate committees have been assigned sections of the system to discuss and develop. In fact, a consulting firm has been hired this year to take a look at the workforce development system in LWA #12, and develop a One-Stop Operational Plan to address customer flow and streamlining services to be sure we are meeting the needs of both employers and job seekers.

The Planning/Organizational Resources Committee reviews the 5-year training plan on a continual basis and recommends modifications as necessary. This year, the plans for ARRA programs and services will be incorporated into this modification.

The Accountability Committee has established criteria that it uses to periodically review and evaluate the system to ensure that it is not only being utilized by both employers and job seekers, but also meeting their workforce needs as well. This Committee is also charged with reviewing the progress of other committees to ensure any projects and/or initiatives support the overall mission and goals of the local workforce system.

The Youth Council is charged with making sure the local workforce system is meeting the needs of the youth in LWA 12. The partners and stakeholders who sit on the Council have been instrumental in developing initiatives such as Work in the Real World, which provided employers an opportunity to meet with youth who are likely to make up the

future workforce in our area and talk to them about skills requirements, work environment and their employment expectations. The Council is also promoting linkages between education and the business community wherever possible.

2. What are the specific and measurable local goals for improvement of the one-stop delivery system over the five years covered by the plan? How do these goals relate to the customer needs identified in Section I?

Response:

As stated above, NCI Works recognizes that the development of an overall vision requires a very intensive and thorough strategic planning process to ensure that the needs of all customers will be met. Because specific and measurable goals are dependent upon that vision, the Board's goals that were established in the early stages of the local system were updated as needed to address a changing economy. The goals and how they will impact the one-stop delivery system while meeting customer needs are described below.

Goal I: Identify and Respond to Employer Needs Related to its Workforce. At each NCI Works meeting, time is set aside to address employer needs, either specifically or in general. Once identified, the task of coming up with the appropriate solution is assigned to one of the standing committees or a special task force. One such example of an identified challenge and the appropriate solution, was the development of the "No Place Like Home" campaign (previously addressed in this plan) to counter the youth flight, or "brain drain" phenomenon in LWA 12.

The Private Sector Employer Committee has been charged with the responsibility of developing a system that can quickly and effectively respond to employer needs. An example of a successful response is the North Central Illinois Logistic Council (NCILC). The Logistics industry has been a growing industry in this area for the past several years and Private Sector Employer Committee members were exploring ideas for assisting those businesses. As a result of their efforts, the NCILC was formed as a networking and educational forum for employers to meet, hear speakers on topics relevant to the Logistics industry, and share ideas and best practices with one another.

Goal II: Educate and Train a Workforce to Prepare Them for the Globally Competitive Marketplace. NCI Works will assure that all employment and training services for adults and youth are integrated and streamlined as much as possible to prepare them for the changing workforce needs and challenges. Incumbent Worker Training will continue to be utilized as a tool for upgrading and/or enhancing the skills of current workers, enabling them to retain their jobs or advance to higher-skilled positions.

In the current economy, “green jobs” have become the focus of workforce systems across the country. In LWA #12, workers and/or job seekers will be encouraged to pursue training that enables them to fill the demand not only for the traditional occupations in the targeted industries (i.e., manufacturing, healthcare, tourism and logistics), but also for the “green” jobs in any industry that put them on a career path to self-sufficiency.

Goal III: Remove Barriers to Employment. Barriers to employment often include issues beyond simple training issues. For example, they can include English language deficiency, lack of transportation and affordable housing or child care, and discrimination against individuals with disabilities. The NCI Works One-Stop Partner Committee will be responsible for determining the best mix of services for eliminating these barriers. Wherever possible, attention will be focused on leveraging funds other than WIA to achieve this goal.

Goal IV: Expand Community Awareness of Workforce and Economic Development Efforts and Issues. NCI Works believes that in order to impact the local workforce development system, it will need the support and commitment of the community at large, and in particular its economic development partners. The Business Liaison & Marketing Committee has developed a strategy to increase the visibility of the local board through media campaigns, projects and other initiatives designed to add value to the overall workforce development system in the four-county area.

Goal V: Obtain, Coordinate and Maximize Resources to Support Workforce and Economic Development. Again, given the natural connection between the workforce and economic development systems, NCI Works believes that it is critical for all partners and stakeholders that make up these systems, both public and private, to coordinate and maximize any and all individual resources in order to achieve successful results. Because the local workforce system has access to a vast pool of workers and potential workers for existing, expanding and new businesses, the Private Sector Employer Committee will be responsible for assuring that the workforce in LWA 12 is adequately prepared to respond to employer demand created by local economic development efforts and initiatives. The One-Stop Partner Committee will be responsible for addressing gaps in educating and training the workforce that may pose barriers to those efforts.

- a. What are the local goals for the improvement of interagency collaboration and coordination over the five years covered by the plan?

The partner agencies in Local Workforce Area 12 have collaborated on a number of activities, all of which have improved the overall delivery system. One of the more notable efforts has been the Business Services Team (BST). Staff from several of the different agencies make up the BST in the NCI Works’ four-county area. Employers are able to access a variety of services through a single point of entry into the system, and have all of their workforce needs met by a certified, professional staff.

The One-Stop Partner Committee is a standing committee of the NCI Works and meets on a regular basis. During those meetings, partners address issues, obstacles and new initiatives that will improve the local workforce system as needed. Furthermore, the Accountability Committee, another standing committee of the Board periodically reviews the procedures for delivering customer services and makes recommendations for improvements where necessary to enhance the delivery system.

- b. What are the goals for the improvement of the local service provider system over the five years covered by the plan?

Certainly Goals #I & #IV will be instrumental in assuring improvement of the local service provider system as it relates to employers. Yet, because the needs of employers are so closely linked to those of job seekers and current workers, assuring effective, efficient and relevant education and workforce development activities will also provide these customer groups with the tools they need to obtain self-sufficient employment.

As previously mentioned, the Accountability Committee will regularly review the performance and activities of the partner programs that will be providing services within the local workforce investment system. The committee also reviews the results of monitoring and oversight reports on all service providers in order to make them more accountable to meeting both the goals of NCI Works and the needs of employers, job seekers and workers in LWA 12.

- c. What goals does the local workforce development system have relating to increased customer choice?

A well-trained and adequately prepared workforce will result if quality services are provided to employers, job seekers and current workers. Goal #II proposes to do just that. Life-long learning is a key aspect in providing opportunities for upgrading skills of current workers, educating and re-educating job seekers, emerging and transitional workers, and being responsive to the ever-changing needs of employers. NCI Works is committed to ensuring that the adults and youth served by the local one-stop delivery system are afforded every opportunity to access the matrix of services available within LWA 12.

- d. What are the local goals for developing and maintaining the technological infrastructure needed to provide the informational services?

Developing and maintaining the technological needs of the one-stop system is a shared responsibility of the partners in LWA 12, and indeed all partners have contributed to this effort. On an as-needed basis, infrastructure is purchased and/or upgraded to ensure all customers who visit the one-stop are afforded the latest technology funding can provide.

Certainly the addition of Illinois Skills Match and Illinois workNet have been a great asset in providing information on job openings, available services and current events and initiatives at the national, state and local levels. All customers (i.e., employers, workers, job seekers and youth) are made aware of these resources and encouraged to utilize them to meet their respective goals.

- e. What goals does the local workforce development system have regarding the leveraging of funds from sources other than WIA?

While Goal #III specifically mentions focusing resources to minimize barriers to employment, Goal #V serves as a perfect complement by seeking to give all partners and stakeholders ownership in workforce and economic development issues, policies and initiatives by utilizing any and all resources. Furthermore, the Planning/Organizational Resources Committee of NCI Works has been charged with the responsibility of exploring new funding options, including fee-for-service, for workforce development activities such as providing soft skills to the general public. As part of the process, this committee intends to continuously pursue all avenues of potential funding in the local workforce area and will make recommendations to the full WIB as appropriate.

3. What state or federal policies or regulations have been identified which inhibit the achievement of these local workforce development system goals?

Response:

By design, the Workforce Investment Act emphasizes system building and universal services at the state and local levels. Furthermore, it is based on seven principles, noteworthy among them are state and local flexibility, and strong roles for Local Boards and the Private Sector. It would seem to follow, then, that both the federal and state levels of government would give as much decision-making authority and flexibility to the local levels as possible. NCI Works and LWA 12 continue to support the basic legislative principles.

At the federal level, consideration should be given to the following:

- In terms of Federal performance standards, some flexibility should be given if all of the negotiated standards are not met.
- To assure the system truly meets local needs, maximum flexibility and decision-making authority should be granted to the local chief elected officials (i.e. county and/or city officials) and local workforce investment boards whenever and wherever possible.
- Administrative cost limitations and definitions should minimally remain as they are, or if changed, they should become more flexible and liberal.

At the State level:

- Maximum decision-making authority should be granted to local elected officials and local boards in developing and designing both programs and systems. Unless required or prohibited by the Act, no further state policies or regulations should be imposed on the local level. This would allow local boards and elected officials the flexibility to design programs and systems that would enable them to achieve their local goals.
- Time lines for planning, developing and implementing the local workforce investment system policies and procedures should be lenient and nonrestrictive as possible.
- Coordination of services and leveraging of resources would be more achievable if the local offices of state agencies were not only empowered to make decisions that would produce the desired results, but also encouraged at the State level to do so whenever needed to produce the desired results.

III. Local System Infrastructure and Services: In this section you will describe the local systems through which services will be provided, and then the services themselves.

These systems and services should be designed to meet the customer needs identified in Section I, and the workforce development system goals identified in Section II.

A. Description of the local One-Stop system

1. Identification of the fiscal agent

What entity will be responsible for the disbursement of grant funds for workforce investment activities at the direction of the local board, as described in §117(d)(3)(B)(i)(III) of WIA?

Response:

Section 117(d)(3)(B)(i)(III) of WIA states that the local grant recipient, or its designated grant sub-recipient, “shall disburse such funds for workforce investment activities at the direction of the local board, pursuant to the requirements of this title, if the direction does not violate a provision of this Act.” It further states that funds shall be disbursed “immediately on receiving such direction from the local board.” Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. has been designated the grant sub-recipient by the local elected officials of LWA 12 and will be responsible for the disbursement of grant funds.

2. Actions taken to establish the one-stop system to date and changes during the plan period

What actions have been taken to establish the local one-stop system prior to WIA implementation? Include a description of the existing Illinois Employment and Training Centers (IETCs) in the workforce investment area and any existing satellites.

What entity(ies) have been designated as the one-stop operator(s) in accordance with §117(d)(2)(A) and §121(d) of WIA? What was the process by which the local board made this designation?

What changes in the one-stop system are planned during the five-year period of the plan? What additional IETCs and satellites are planned?

Response:

As a non-incorporated board, NCI Works will not be the one-stop operator in LWA 12. Rather, it will keep with the state's position that one-stop centers be managed by a consortium of entities that includes at least three or more of the required partners. NCI Works followed the procedures described in Section 121(d)(2)(A)(ii) and designated the consortium of the Ottawa/LaSalle offices of Illinois Department of Employment Security (Wagner-Peyser Partner, Unemployment Insurance Partner, and Veterans Programs Partner), Illinois Valley Community College (Title I Partner /Dislocated Worker Program, Carl Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, and Adult Education and Literacy Programs Partner), and Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. (Title I Partner/ Adult and Youth Programs, and Trade Adjustment Assistance/NAFTA Partner) to be the one-stop operator in LWA 12.

This consortium of entities was first established under the Implementation Grant and has been operating the Illinois Employment & Training Center, now the NCI Works - IL workNet Center in SDA/LWA 12 since 1994. All three local partners have displayed successful performance results in their respective program areas and will continue the cooperative environment under which they have jointly directed the activities of this center during this period of time. Representatives of the consortium meet monthly to address issues affecting the one-stop system and center. Decisions regarding changes to the one-stop and satellites result from this process.

3. Roles of required and optional partners

Describe the intended roles of the partners in the one-stop system under WIA. Realizing that these partner roles may still be under local negotiation, provide to the extent possible a broad description of the partner roles, and the local vision for how the partners will work together to provide services to the customers of the one-stop system.

To the extent that each of the following issues have been negotiated, include a description of:

- a. The core services which will be provided by each partner through the one-stop system. What assumptions have been made regarding utilization of core services by the customers of the partner agencies?
- b. The provision of access to appropriate services from all partners (e.g., referral, technology links, out stationing, cross-training of staff, etc.).
- c. The provision of financial contributions for universally-accessible core services.
- d. The local definition of “system costs” and “shared costs” (i.e., costs subject to participation among the partners). How will each partner provide financial contributions for the general support of the one-stop system?
- e. The contribution of each partner to the services provided to key customer segments identified in Section I.

There may be a single comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated in the local area, or there may be several MOUs involving two or more partners each. If one or more MOUs have been fully negotiated, attach a copy of each such completed MOU. If the MOU(s) are still under negotiation, provide a status report regarding the negotiation process(es), with an estimated completion date as well as any other relevant timelines in the negotiation process. When the MOUs are complete, the local plan must be modified to include them.

Response:

The One Stop Partner Committee (OSP) meets every other month and approves the Memorandum of Understanding annually or as required by DCEO. The MOU is then approved by NCI Works and the Chief Elected Officials at their next meetings following the OSP committee approval. The resource sharing agreement is also reviewed and updated as part of this process. A copy of the MOU is available on site with all of the local parties to the agreement.

B. Provider Certification and Customer Choice

1. Provider Certification System

While the eligibility determination procedures themselves (as well as the extent of required performance and cost information) are determined by the Governor and the State Board, several aspects of the provider certification system are to be developed locally.

- a. Provide a description of the procedures by which service providers who desire to provide training services will submit initial applications to the local board. These procedures should include the following:
 - Describe the initial application procedures for post-secondary educational institutions and entities carrying out apprenticeship programs (as referenced in §122 (b)(1) of WIA). These procedures should include the local board's information requirements for these types of providers. These information requirements may or may not include performance and cost information.
 - Describe the initial application procedures for other eligible providers (as referenced in §122 (b)(2) of WIA). These procedures must conform to the eligibility determinations procedures established by the Governor, including all specified performance and cost information.

- b. Provide a description of the procedures by which service providers which desire to provide training services will submit subsequent applications to the local board. These procedures should include the following:
 - Describe the subsequent application procedures for other eligible providers (as referenced in §122 (a)(2) of WIA). These procedures must conform to the eligibility determinations procedures established by the Governor, including all specified performance and cost information.

 - Describe any additional, verifiable, program-specific performance information required by the local board (§122 (d)(2)(B)).

Response:

North Central Illinois Works publicized the new WIA certification process to the training provider community as widely as possible. Local newspapers, the internet and direct mailings targeted to training providers were among the methods used for reaching this audience. Service providers who expressed a desire to be considered were sent a letter detailing the information required. NCI Works followed the State of Illinois Training Provider Certification Policy for initial eligibility except where noted. Potential Service Providers are directed to the Illinois Workforce Development System website (<http://iwds.state.il.us/iwdshome.html>) for information about being on the statewide training program list. They are then directed to contact NCI Works so that they can be input into the system and a user name and password can be established. Once the user name and password is established, NCI Works will contact them with that information and the potential service provider will be asked to access the application online through the aforementioned website for

completion. Once the potential service provider completes the application they will submit it to NCI Works for review and approval.

North Central Illinois Works requires applicants to document at least one of the following state criteria in their applications for initial provider certification:

- The provider is currently approved or has received accreditation under an existing process such as that offered by the North Central Association, the Illinois Community College Board, or the Illinois State Board of Education.
- The program for which certification is being sought has been approved by the accrediting body (Illinois Community College Board or Illinois State Board of Education) or has been recognized by the industry as meeting the standards necessary for approval or accreditation.
- The provider is receiving or has received funds for a program for which certification is being sought under a grant, contract or voucher from an agency within the Illinois workforce development system within 3 years of the date of application.
- If a provider cannot meet any of the above criteria, it must demonstrate to the local Workforce Investment Board(s) that the program for which it is seeking certification meets the following criteria:
 - 1) Provider has been in business operation for at least two consecutive years,
 - 2) Provider submits documentation that certification will meet hiring requirements of local employers,
 - 3) Provider will furnish completion rates, training related entered employment rates, and licensure success rate (if applicable).
 - 4) Provider submits documentation that program is in demand in local workforce area, and
 - 5) Provider may also be required to complete additional steps as listed below.
 - The training provider that is seeking certification may be required to appear before the Accountability Committee.
 - The Accountability Committee and/or support staff may interview past participants for input on training received.
 - Training area should be in a high growth field.
 - The Accountability Committee and/or support staff may conduct on-site visits to the provider wishing to become certified.
 - Other criteria may be applied as deemed appropriate by the Evaluation and Analysis Committee.

Furthermore, each applicant will need to provide:

- The number of years it has been in operation,

- The date that each program for which certification is being sought was established,
- The cost of each program for which certification is being sought and briefly explain what is included in that cost figure, and
- Measures of performance as required by procedures established by the Governor.

As another condition for initial eligibility, providers must agree to submit appropriate information on all programs for which they are seeking certification to the Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS).

All programs are subject to State eligibility criteria. At this time, no additional program-specific performance information is required by NCI Works.

Application form and instructions included in Appendix A.

Each provider will be notified by NCI Works whether it was approved or not approved to be included on the local list and subsequently the statewide list. Certified providers/programs and relevant information will then be forwarded to the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (IDCEO) who maintains the statewide list through the IWDS. Furthermore, all training programs approved by NCI Works will be considered approved programs for the purpose of individuals' 500(c)5 waivers.

If NCI Works denies initial eligibility certification to a training provider and/or any of the programs for which it sought certification, it will notify the affected provider of its decision. The provider may then appeal the decision according to the local Request for Reconsideration Procedures available through the Business Employment Skills Team, Inc. Office.

2. Individual Training Accounts

Describe local policies regarding the use of ITAs.

- Provide a description of the procedures by which the local board will make the State list of eligible providers of training services available to customers in the one-stop centers. Include a description of how performance and cost information relating to eligible providers (as applicable) will be made available to customers, and how this information will be updated on an ongoing basis.
- Describe the referral arrangements between the one-stop system and the eligible providers of training services which will ensure the ability of customers to receive chosen training services. Include a description of payment arrangements between the local board and eligible providers of training services for ITAs.

- c. Describe what, if any, limitations the local board will impose on the use of ITAs in accordance with §663.420 of the interim final regulations. Such limitations may affect the dollar amount and/or duration of ITAs, or may limit their use to training programs which are directly linked to occupations that are in demand in the local area (or another area to which the customer is willing to relocate). Such limitations may *not* be implemented in a manner which undermines the WIA's requirement to maximize customer choice in the selection of an eligible training provider.
- d. What portion of adult training funds will be budgeted and used for ITAs? What portion of dislocated worker training funds will be budgeted and used for ITAs?

Response:

The State list of eligible providers of training services will be made available to customers through the IWDS. Customers can access the system at <http://iwds.cmc.state.il.us> by using the computers in the resource room at the One-stop and satellite offices.

Locally providers can be approved and referred to the state list on an ongoing basis as opposed to once or twice a year. Participation will need to be encouraged due to a limited number of providers in the local area. Locally, training providers will be allowed to apply at any time. In order to expedite the certification process, North Central Illinois Works has authorized staff to approve training providers/programs on its behalf provided they meet the established criteria for certification. At each regularly scheduled meeting, the Board ratifies all providers and programs that have been approved.

The entity that provides services under each applicable Title I program will negotiate customer referral arrangements and provide a copy of the voucher training authorization form. This form will describe the services to be received, period covered, and the authority to invoice for these services when delivered. The agreement will also address payment arrangements. Linkages have been developed with most of the training providers in the area which have resulted in establishing mutually agreeable payment arrangements. The specific documents and forms are available with operating procedures at the office of the applicable Title I program.

The following policies regarding Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) have been approved by NCI Works:

- Service providers geographically located within LWA 12 must initially apply for certification to NCI Works. However, if rejected by NCI Works, or if its request for certification is not acted upon within a 30-day period, the provider may then apply for certification to another local workforce investment board. Similarly, a service provider not geographically located within LWA may apply for approval to North Central Illinois Works if its request for certification was either rejected or not acted upon within a 30-day period by its primary local workforce investment board. In any

case, once a provider is certified and included on the statewide list, it is then eligible to receive local WIA ITA funds.

- ITAs will cover tuition, books and required fees.
- A dollar cap of \$10,000 per WIA enrollment will be placed on an ITA. This cap will be reviewed periodically to take into account tuition and other increases.
- A waiver policy of the ITA cap will require each case to be reviewed by an inter-agency or one-stop operator staff with sign-off by the chairperson of the Accountability Committee or a NCI Works officer for those applications for waiver that are approved by the staff committee. Consideration will be given to prior client experience with the particular provider and program and possible cost share arrangements with the client.
- No time limit for using the ITAs is being established, since WIA has a strong work emphasis and students may be encouraged to work part-time.
- In order to apply for an ITA, an individual who has defaulted on a student loan(s) or may still owe money to a training institution must show proof that a repayment plan has been agreed to and is being fulfilled.

Funding for training purposes shall be part of the budgeting and planning process of the agency operating the programs with the plan then approved by NCI Works. An adequate portion of adult and dislocated worker training funds will be budgeted and used for ITAs. Some portion of training funds will be set aside for OJT and other types of training program uses if deemed appropriate. LWA 12 will put forth its best effort to comply with the 40% training requirement as described in WIA Policy Letter NO. 07-PL-40 as it does with all DOL and DCEO policies, notices and memos.

C. Procurement Procedures

Describe local policies and procedures for procurement in the following instances:

1. Procurement of *providers* of on-the-job training or customized training, in accordance with §122(h);

Response:

On-the-job-training (OJT) or customized training will be made available to employers when either is determined to be the appropriate method of training for a particular employee or group of employees. Since both are very occupational-specific, providers will be selected as a result of marketing and recruitment. In keeping with good procurement practices, past performance of OJT and customized training providers will be taken into consideration.

2. Competitive procurement of providers of youth activities. In accordance with §123, describe how the recommendations of the youth council will form the basis for this procurement;

Response:

(Provided in Youth Plan and modifications previously submitted.)

3. Procurement of providers of intensive services, in accordance with §134(d)(3)(B)(ii);

Response:

Intensive services as defined by the Workforce Investment Act include: comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of individual employment plans, group counseling, individual and career planning, case management and short-term pre-vocational services. North Central Illinois Works has reviewed and considered the past performance of providers who currently offer these services in approving providers of intensive services under WIA. Since the Title I b operator has staff with over 100 years of combined experience in successfully providing these services, they have continued to provide these services.

4. Procurement of providers of training activities, if the local board determines that there are an insufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs. The establishment of local policies and procedures in this regard must include a public comment period of interested providers of at least 30 days. The description local policies in this regard should include a description of how this determination of insufficiency has or will be made by the local board; and,

Response:

North Central Illinois Works has determined that there should be a sufficient number of eligible providers in the local area to accomplish the purpose of a system of ITAs.

5. Procurement of providers of training service programs of demonstrated effectiveness to special participant populations which face multiple barriers to employment. The description of local policies in this regard should include a description of the criteria used by the local board to determine “demonstrated effectiveness,” particularly as it applies to the special population(s) to be served. This description should also include the recognition of the local legislative intent that this type of procurement be limited in use, and that it is not intended to override the customer empowerment inherent in the system of ITA usage.

Response:

Procuring providers of training service programs of demonstrated effectiveness to special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment will be used on a very limited basis. When the procurement takes place, NCI Works will consider the following criteria when selecting contracts:

1. Financial stability of the organization
2. Demonstrated performance in the delivery of services to hard to serve participants, including but not limited to:
 - Completion rate
 - Attainment of skills
 - Certificates or degrees the program is designed to provide
 - Placement into unsubsidized employment
 - Retention in employment
3. How the specific program relates to the workforce needs identified in the local plan
4. The option to use an ITA is not available to best serve the special populations participant(s).

Hard-to-serve barriers for this purpose are: individuals with substantial language or cultural barriers, offenders, homeless individuals, and any other hard-to-serve populations as defined by the Governor.

D. Services to Special Populations

1. Describe the services which will be made available to special populations. These populations should include the key customer segments identified in accordance with Section 1.B.2. of these local planning guidelines. They may also include any or all the following populations:
 - Dislocated workers
 - Displaced homemakers
 - Low-income individuals
 - Migrant and seasonal workers
 - Public assistance recipients
 - Women
 - Minorities
 - Individuals training for nontraditional employment
 - Veterans
 - Individuals with multiple barriers to employment

Response:

The appropriate mix of services to these special populations will be determined based upon initial and in-depth assessments of their needs, abilities, skill levels and employment barriers. Based on past history and experience with these special populations, some show up at higher incident levels within the emerging, transitional and incumbent worker groups than others will. For example, displaced homemakers and public assistance recipients are more likely to be found among the emerging or transitional workers and need the soft skills, basic academic skills and life skills training. On the other hand, dislocated workers may be without a job because of their lay-off or

termination, and be more appropriate for one or more of the training and/or retraining services.

Regarding services to Veterans, all partner agencies agree to the following:

Key Definitions

- *Covered person* - The regulations adopt and apply this statutory term, which includes *eligible spouses*, as defined by the statute, and *veteran*, as defined by the regulations.
 - *Veteran* - The regulations specify that the definition for *veteran* specified at 38 U.S.c. 101(2) applies across all qualified job training programs for the purpose of priority of service. That definition includes two key criteria:
 - Service in the active military, naval, or air service; and,
 - Discharge under conditions other than dishonorable.
 - *Eligible spouse* - For Veterans Priority of Service an eligible spouse is/was married to a veteran who:
 - Dies of a service-connected disability or died while a total service connected disability per VA evaluation was in existence;
 - Service member is missing in action, captured or forcibly detained by a foreign power for more than 90 days; or,
 - Veteran has total service-connected disability, per VA evaluation.
- A) All partners who are recipients of funds for qualified job training programs will
- identify covered persons at the *point of entry* to programs and/or services so they can take full advantage of priority of service. Point of entry includes physical locations, such as IL workNet Centers, as well as web sites and other virtual service delivery resources, including Illinois Skills Match and IL workNet.
 - implement policies to ensure that covered persons are aware of:
 - Their entitlement to priority of service;
 - The full array of programs and services available to them; and,
 - Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.
- B) All partners agree to the following in terms of implementing Priority of Service:
- Priority of service means the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining services, and that “taking precedence” may mean:
 - The covered person receives access to the service or resource earlier in time than the non-covered person; or
 - If the service or resource is limited, the covered person receives access to the service or resource instead of or before the non-covered person.
 - Priority of service may be applied across three different types of qualified job training programs:
 - Universal access programs that do not target specific groups;
 - Discretionary targeting programs that focus on certain groups but are not mandated to serve target group members before other eligible individuals; and,
 - Statutory targeting programs that are mandated by federal law to provide priority or preference to certain groups.

Furthermore:

- A). ~~Staff identify Veterans status as part of the initial process for assessing customer needs and services, as well as referral to another partner agency.~~
- C) The Business Services Team includes Hire Veteran’s First and Veteran’s Priority in their presentations to Employers.

D) Illinois Skills Match automatically gives preference to Veterans when matching job orders.

2. Complete the WIA Program Services to Special Populations form included in Attachment A of this letter. The planned service levels shown on this form are not meant to be strictly enforced on the basis of low incidences. They are meant to provide background for the performance measure negotiation process, as well as an indication of program choices regarding services to special populations.
3. WIA adult funds are generally considered to be limited as that term is used in Section 134 of the Act. Therefore, WIA title I adult grant funds budgeted for intensive and training services must be provided on a priority basis to TANF or other low-income individuals who do not otherwise have access to these services through other funding sources. Discuss and quantify how the area will comply with this requirement as part of the submission of the local plan. Compliance with this requirement may be demonstrated by the local area in one of two ways; either 51% or more of the participants served are from the target population; or 51% or more of the adult funds budgeted for intensive and training services are expended on the target population. The local area may request a waiver to the targeting requirement to the extent that empirical evidence is presented that demonstrates that, due the availability of sufficient alternative funds or insufficient demand from the priority population, the needs of the low-income population can be adequately met without targeting. The waiver may be requested as part of the local plan submission or at a later date. Indicate if a waiver is being requested. If so, provide the empirical evidence required to support the waiver request.

Response:

LWA 12 has opted to comply with the priority requirement based on individuals enrolled in rather than on dollars spent. At this time, a waiver to this targeting requirement is not being requested.

E. Description of Adult Employment and Training Activities

Provide a description of the adult employment and training activities which will be made available in the local area. This description should indicate how the proposed activities will help to meet the goals identified in Section II, as well as how they will help to meet the customer needs identified in Section I. This description of adult employment and training activities should include descriptions of the following:

- Available self-accessed and informational core services;
- Available staff-assisted core services;
- Available intensive services;

- Available training services; and
- Planned registrants by level of service (i.e., post-registration core services, intensive services and training services).

Response:

In order to provide employers and workers with optimum opportunity for selection of services, all employment and training activities allowable under WIA as well as those provided by all partner agencies will be made available in the local area. North Central Illinois Works fully intends not to limit the options available to either employers or workers in order to meet their employment needs. Again, emerging and transitional workers need training in soft skills, career exploration, basic academic skills, and life skills. Incumbent workers and to some extent transitional workers would benefit from skills-upgrade training and retention services. Depending upon individual need, workers in any of the three categories could benefit from supportive service assistance, personal and employment counseling, learning how to balance work and life issues, and retention services.

- Self-accessed and informational core services, which include internet access to job search and labor market information provided by IL workNet and IL Skills Match, among others.
- Staff-assisted core services, which include orientation to information and services that are available; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities; supportive services; job search and placement assistance, including labor market information; follow-up services for persons placed in unsubsidized employment for not less than 12 months.
- Intensive services, which may include individual counseling and career planning; case management; short-term pre-vocational services, including communication skills, interviewing skills, personal maintenance and soft skills training to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment.
- Training services, which may include occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment; on-the-job-training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction; skill upgrading and retraining; entrepreneurial training; customized training; occupational bridge programs; incumbent worker's training, work experience, academic remediation/prevocational services; and internships as defined in the Training Expenditure requirements policy letter NO. 07-PL-40.

Assessment at both the Core and Intensive Services levels will be key to determining appropriate career paths and strategies for a job seeker or worker. Horizons and One Touch are interest inventory assessment tools which are utilized for job seekers, and transitional workers, who are unsure of which occupational goals they would like to pursue. For the job seekers and/or workers who need more in-depth assistance with career planning, the appropriate assessment instrument is selected from among the several available: Career Ability Placement Survey (CAPS) will help identify abilities and aptitudes; the Career Occupational Preference System Interest Inventory (COPS) provides for further exploration of occupational interests; Career

Orientation Placement and Evaluation Survey helps evaluate an individual's values as they relate to an occupation; and the Employment Inventory helps predict how an individual will perform in a given set of occupational areas. O*NET Work Importance Locator and Interest Profiler is a tool that helps decide a path based on interests and what is important in a job. IL workNet provides a wide array of career exploration and job search information and education and training options. Any one or combination of these instruments will be utilized to assist individuals in setting their employment goals. From that point, a career plan will be developed to guide them on to their ultimate destination of a self-sufficient career.

The definition of "self-sufficiency" is the responsibility of the local WIB. In LWA 12, "self-sufficiency" has been defined as 200% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level for family household income for the purpose of eligibility for program services. In addition, the income level used for establishing self-sufficiency for the family of 2 will also serve as the basis for determining self-sufficiency for the family of 1.

For the purpose of OJT and Customized Training for upgrading the skills of employed workers, Business Employment Skills Team, Inc., as the provider of Adult Title I services, will use a self-sufficiency wage. This wage will be defined as 200% of the Lower Living Standard for a family size of 1. An employed individual that is below 200% of the Lower Living Standard and meets all other program criteria is eligible for OJT and Customized Training.

F. Description of Dislocated Worker Employment and Training Activities

Provide a description of the dislocated worker employment and training activities which will be made available in the local area. This description should indicate how the proposed activities will help to meet the goals identified in Section II, as well as how they will help to meet the customer needs identified in Section I. This description of dislocated worker employment and training activities should include descriptions of the following:

- Available self-accessed and informational core services;
- Available staff-assisted core services;
- Available intensive services;
- Available training services; and
- Planned registrants by level of service (i.e., post-registration core services, intensive services and training services).

Response:

All employment and training activities allowable under WIA for Dislocated Workers will be made available in the local area. Staff will work to meet the employment needs of both the employer and dislocated worker customers.

Dislocated Workers are among the customers identified in Section 1 who need assistance with both finding a job and upgrading their existing skills. They need assistance in developing their

job search and exploration skills. Dislocated workers will benefit from labor market and career information, personal counseling and support services and skill upgrading.

Dislocated workers will be served through each of the following levels of service:

- **Self-accessed and information core services**, which include internet access to job search and labor market information
- **Staff-assisted core services**, orientation to information and services that are available; initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes and abilities; job search and placement assistance – including Workforce Orientation Week (a four day, 16 hr. workshop, covering skill identification, stress management, resumes, cover letters, thank you letters, networking techniques, taking charge of the interview, video-taped interview, etc. This workshop is designed to provide each dislocated worker with the basic tools for conducting a productive job search); labor market information, information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations, information on and referral to providers of support services. Follow up services for persons placed in unsubsidized employment for not less than 12 months.
- **Intensive Services**
 - Comprehensive and special assessments (i.e. O-Net Interest Survey, TABE, Strong Interest Inventory, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator)
 - In-depth interviewing (to determine prior work history; transferable skills, family needs, identify employment barriers, etc.)
 - Development of an Individual Career Plan (identify the individual’s employment goals, achievement objectives and the appropriate combination of services to achieve those employment goals)
 - Short term Pre-vocational services such as the following: workshops that provide instruction in soft skills, introductory computer classes, written communication skills and refresher Math
 - Group counseling (i.e. specialized workshops, such as anger management or financial management, will be scheduled on an as needed basis)
 - Case Management
 - Individualized counseling and career planning
- **Training Services**, which may include occupational skills training, including training for non-traditional employment; on-the-job training; programs that combine workplace training with related instruction; training programs operated by the private sector; skill upgrading and

retraining; entrepreneurial training; job readiness training, adult education and literacy activities, provided in combination with any of the above training activities; and customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

The state training provider list, along with performance and cost information will be made available to all dislocated workers.

Dislocated workers involved in plant closings or a major layoff may be eligible for services provided by the state Rapid Response Unit. The local WIB and chief elected officials are involved with rapid response by virtue of the participation of the Title IB grantee or its designee. Rapid response procedures require on-site intervention efforts involving a local rapid response team, which has traditionally included representatives from the Dislocated Workers Center, the Illinois Department of Employment Security, AFL-CIO Member Assistance Program and a state rapid response specialist.

Rapid Response procedures are defined in six phases:

- Notification – **Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notification Act**
- Investigation
- Initial On-Site Meeting
- Pre-Layoff Workshops
- Planning for Services
- Project Implementation

The goal is to provide early intervention assistance designed to transition workers to their next employment as soon as possible.

North Central Illinois Works has decided to address two other Dislocated Worker policy areas:

- **Look-back period.** A look-back period limits how long ago someone may have been dislocated and still be considered a dislocated worker. Although the State is not establishing a look-back period, it has permitted local WIBs to set such a limit as part of their targeting strategy; in LWA 12 this limit will be two years.
- **Self-sufficiency definition.** Self-sufficiency for dislocated workers shall be defined as 80% of the wage at dislocation or 150% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level, whichever is greater. (Income level for a family of 2 will be used as the basis for determining self-sufficiency for the family of 1.) Self-sufficiency for displaced homemakers shall be defined as 150% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level. (Income level for a family of 2 will be used as basis for determining self-sufficiency for the family of 1.)

Further definition and clarification of services for dislocated workers in LWA #12 will take place as additional guidance is provided by the state, the Department of Labor and North Central Illinois Works.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity allows local WIA programs to provide Incumbent Worker Training as part of business strategies for linking workforce development and economic development programs. In accordance with the policies set forth in DCEO policy letters, North Central Illinois Works (NCI Works) is including such services in its local plan. NCI Works will set aside money from any and all funding streams based on local need and up to the maximum percents allowed by law and/or through approved waivers.

Several industry sectors will be targeted for incumbent worker training programs. The Manufacturing sector was identified through our CSSI plan as critical to our area's economy because of what it contributes in terms of higher wages, as well as its prevalence and importance to the regions productivity. Advanced technology has become a part of many manufacturing companies, and current workers need to learn new skills in order to fill upgraded and/or new positions in order to remain employed. Finally, although the Manufacturing Industry as a whole is experiencing a decline in growth, there are significant shortages in some specialized sub-sectors.

The Transportation/Warehousing/Logistics (TWL) and Healthcare sectors were also part of the CSSI plan for the local workforce area, and they, too, will be targeted for incumbent worker training. Like jobs in the Manufacturing field, jobs in these two sectors provide good wages and require advanced and/or specialized training. However, unlike the Manufacturing industry, the TWL and Healthcare industries are growing industries, with vacancies going unfilled and significant shortages in some occupational sub-sectors.

Certainly the NCI Works area is looking to capitalize on the State's campaign to promote Tourism and Hospitality opportunities. The four-county region is home to several State Parks, a number of cultural and recreational points of interest, and is even seeing signs of a burgeoning wine industry within its geographic boundaries. Capitalizing on these assets opens the door to entrepreneurial opportunities and advancements for workers currently employed in entry level positions or positions that at one time may have required a lower skill level but now require advanced and/or additional training.

With the emphasis on promoting green jobs at the federal and state levels, NCI Works intends to assist local employers from any industry in upgrading or enhancing the skills of their current workforce to meet these new demands. Therefore, where appropriate, Incumbent Worker Training will be used as the vehicle to provide workers with the training needed to "green up" their skills and knowledge, thereby enabling them and their employers to compete in this changing economy.

NCI Works makes the following assurances:

- a. All WIA-required services will continue to be provided using the LWIB's adult, dislocated worker and youth formula allocations,
- b. The LWIB will continue to meet its performance and expenditure benchmarks for adult, dislocated worker and youth formula allocations, and,
- c. That any projects that are part of an economic development incentive package are in compliance with all federal and state policies governing these incentives or will be subject to a clawback (recover) provision.

G. Description of Youth Activities

Provide a description of the youth activities which will be made available in the local area. This description should indicate how the proposed activities will help to meet the goals identified in Section II, as well as how they will help to meet the customer needs identified in Section I. This description of youth activities should include descriptions of the following:

1. Provide a description of the key design components of the youth program in the local area. In accordance with §129(c)(1), the design framework of the local youth program must include:
 - An objective assessment of each youth registrant;
 - Development of an individual service strategy for each youth registrant; and
 - Preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, preparation for employment, and effective connections to intermediary organizations that provide strong links to the job market and employers.

2. Provide a description of how the youth program elements required by §664.410 of the interim final regulations will be provided within that framework. Those required elements are:
 - Tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to secondary school completion, including dropout prevention strategies;
 - Alternative secondary school offerings;
 - Summer employment opportunities directly linked to academic and occupational learning;
 - Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
 - Occupational skills training;
 - Leadership development opportunities, which may include such activities as positive social behavior and soft skills, decision making, team work, and other activities;
 - Supportive services;
 - Adult mentoring for a duration of at least twelve (12) months, that may occur both during and after program participation;
 - Follow-up services; and

- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.
3. Provide a description of the means by which successful providers of these youth activities will be identified by the local board (or by the youth council if given that responsibility by the local board), in accordance with §118(b)(6).
 4. Provide a description of the mechanisms for coordinating the youth program with:
 - Foster care programs;
 - Education;
 - Public assistance programs; and,
 - Other youth programs.
 5. Provide a description of the planned registrants by service type (i.e. summer employment and year-round youth programs).

(Section G. is addressed in previously submitted youth plan and modifications.)

IV. Performance Management: In this section you will describe how you intend to measure the success of your strategies in achieving your goals and serving your customers, as well as how you intend to use this data to continuously improve the local workforce investment system.

A. Negotiated Performance Goals

1. Provide the negotiated performance goals for each of the following core indicators for Program Years 2007 through 2008 on the form provided:

~~Program Year 2007~~

a. ~~Adults~~

- ~~I. Entered employment rate;~~
- ~~ii. Six month retention rate;~~
- ~~iii. Adult Average Earnings;~~

b. ~~Dislocated Workers~~

- ~~I. Entered employment rate;~~
- ~~ii. Six month retention rate;~~
- ~~iii. Dislocated Workers Average Earnings;~~

e. ~~Youth, ages 19 to 21~~

- ~~I. Entered employment rate;~~
- ~~ii. Six month retention rate~~
- ~~iii. Average earnings change in six months~~
- ~~iv. Credential attainment rate (training services only)~~

d. ~~Youth, ages 14 to 18~~

- ~~I. Skill attainment rate;~~
- ~~ii. Diplomas or equivalent attainment rate;~~
- ~~iii. Retention rate.~~

Program Year 2008

a. Adults

- i. Entered employment rate
- ii. Six month retention rate
- iii. Adult Average Earnings

b. Dislocated Workers

- i. Entered employment rate
- ii. Six month retention rate
- iii. Dislocated Workers Average Earnings

c. Youth

- i. Youth Placement in Employment or Education Rate
- ii. Youth Attainment of a Degree or Certificate Rate
- iii. Youth Literacy and Numeracy Gains Rate

B. Other Performance Measures

1. Provide a description of any locally developed (i.e., by the LWIB) performance measures.

Response:

North Central Illinois Works does not intend to develop local performance measures at this time.

C. Continuous Improvement Program

1. Provide a description of the local continuous improvement program. This program description should include the following aspects:
 - Overall performance outcomes;
 - Eligible service provider performance; and
 - Key local area processes, including local strategies for staff development and cross-program training.

Response:

Performance measures results will improve in each standard from one year to the next when required by the negotiated standards. Just as the performance of the overall program will be reviewed so too will the performance of eligible service providers. They will be encouraged to show improved results which will then translate into better performance for the Title I program in general.

Key processes will be formally reviewed periodically, but suggestions for improvement will continuously be solicited and accepted as appropriate. Cross-program training will always be an especially important phase of the workforce development system in LWA 12. North Central Illinois Works and the CEOs recognize the importance of a well-trained, experienced staff. Accordingly, staff development will be an on-going process and will be made available both in-house and through outside presenters and trainers as appropriate

2. Needs for state funded assistance

Describe any needs for state funded assistance in order to develop and continuously improve the local one-stop system. The state is interested in assessing local needs for state assistance to develop and maintain the workforce development system.

Response to this question will assist the state to develop a plan for the utilization of state reserve funds under Sections 128(a) and 133(a). Keep in mind that this section is requesting a needs-assessment only. Responses to this question do not constitute an application for funding, and no entitlement should be inferred.

Although any perceived local needs should be identified in this section of the plan, the State is particularly interested in identifying local needs in the following areas:

- a. Technology infrastructure needs
- b. Technical assistance and training needs
- c. Organizational development needs of the WIB and the Youth Council

Response:

State-agency partners should be encouraged to empower their local offices to make decisions and enter into arrangements according to local needs. It is the local managers, or administrators, who know best what specific services they can contribute to the workforce development system to meet the needs of all customers. Just as local economies and workforce design will vary from one LWA to another, so too will the mix of services that make the best “fit”. The State, from the very top level, should promote this cooperation and collaboration through its system of local offices.

Specific funding assistance in LWA 12 has been identified as follows:

- Technology infrastructure: improving and upgrading hardware and software that will link all partners to the one-stop system. While some improvements have been made over the years, still not all partner systems are able to “talk” to one another, which leads to duplicate data entry as well as to fragmented customer files.
- Technical assistance and training: continuous quality training to all partner staff when new initiatives are introduced into the system. Also, TA funding should be made available to LWIBs for special projects and initiatives which would enable them to carry out their locally-developed mission and goals, as well as their state and federally-defined roles.
- Organizational development needs of the WIB and Youth Council: quality training to the WIB and Youth Council for continuous improvement and/or development of expanded roles provided in-house and by outside providers who are considered experts in development of Boards/Councils as well as in the employment and training field.
- Marketing and implementation activities for Illinois **workNet™**: Funding for dedicated staff, materials and promotional items would help local workforce areas reach a wider audience in an expedited time frame.

In addition to the specific needs for state funded assistance identified above, the Planning/Organizational Resources Committee of NCI Works has been assigned the task of reviewing local workforce investment system needs. If the committee identifies needs that could be addressed through state funded assistance, this information will be forwarded to the appropriate agency(ies) through the proper channels.

(NOTE: Because we have to wait to see if we get any comments, this section may need to be further revised before submitting to DCEO)

VI. Plan Development Process: In this section you will describe the processes by which widespread local input was received during the development of the plan.

- A. Describe the process for developing the local workforce investment plan. Include a description of the chief elected officials and the local board's involvement in drafting, reviewing and commenting on the Plan. What actions were taken to collaborate in the development of the local plan with other local elected officials, the business community, labor organizations, educators, vocational rehabilitation agencies, and other interested parties, such as service providers, welfare agencies, community-based organizations, transportation providers and advocates?

Response:

This modification of the youth, adult and dislocated worker plan for LWA 12 was presented to and approved by the Planning/Organizational Resources Committee acting on behalf of NCI Works at their meeting on June 17, 2009. Their action will be ratified at the July NCI Works meeting. Representatives of the business community, labor, education, vocational rehabilitation agencies, welfare agencies and community-based organizations serve on the local workforce investment board and were asked to provide input and comments on the plan as presented. The modification was presented to the Chief Elected Officials at their June 15, 2009 meeting. At that time they unanimously voted to allow the BEST, Inc. Executive Director to act on their behalf at the Planning/Organizational Resources Committee Meeting in order to get the modification submitted by the June 30, 2009 due date. This action will be ratified by the CEOs at their August 2009 meeting, and any revisions, additions, etc. will be addressed at that time. This modification to the NCI Works 5-year plan is being submitted with the expressed understanding that the document is a work in progress and that future meetings will focus on more thoroughly analyzing the workforce development system in LWA 12.

- B. Describe the mechanisms which were used to make copies of the proposed plan available to the public for comment prior to submission.

Response:

A legal notice was placed in all major newspapers throughout LWA 12 following policy procedures. This legal notice informed the general public and any interested parties that the modified Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Plan would be available for comment in the BEST, Inc. administrative office and the Dislocated Worker Center office at Illinois Valley Community College.

- C. Describe the measures taken to allow formal comment on the local plan from members of the public, and from representatives of business and labor organizations.

Response:

As previously mentioned, the proposed youth plan and the adult and dislocated worker plan was presented to and approved by the Planning/Organizational Resources Committee acting on behalf of NCI Works at their meeting on June 17, 2009. Their action will be ratified at the July NCI Works meeting. A legal notice was placed in the newspapers on June 18, 2009. Members of the general public, and representatives from the business community and labor organizations were notified of the opportunity for input and comments through these mechanisms.

- D. Include with the submission of the plan any comments that represent a disagreement with the plan.

No comments were received.

American Recovery & Reinvestment Act Plan

Appendix A

(Budget & Participant Information)

Performance Goals

Evidence of Publication

Changes to Adult/Dislocated Worker Plan:

Section II. Local Strategic Vision and Goals – Major re-write of whole section.

Section IV. C. Continuous Improvement Program – Minimal changes/re-write

Section VI. Updated section for process and dates.