

STRATEGIC STATE RECOVERY ACT PLAN  
FOR  
TITLE I  
OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998  
AND  
THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT

# State of Nebraska

For The Period of  
July 1, 2009, through June 30, 2010

**Stand Alone Response to Recovery Act  
Specific Questions**

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## I. Context, Vision, and Strategy

### A. Economic and Labor Market Context

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

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

#### Overview of Nebraska Economy

Nebraska is feeling the affects of the current recession. While Nebraska has not been hit as hard as other areas of the country many of the state's businesses provide goods and/or services to businesses in other states that have been hit hard. This spin off affect is definitely causing Nebraska businesses to layoff workers. The downturn for Nebraska began to show up in the later part of November 2008 and has continued to grow through March 2009. Manufacturing and Professional and Business Services have been the hardest hit. Table A1 displays the number of layoffs that have been reported through the Rapid Response program.

#### Nebraska Permanent Layoffs

##### Nebraska Statewide, Fourth Quarter 2008 through First Quarter 2009

A1

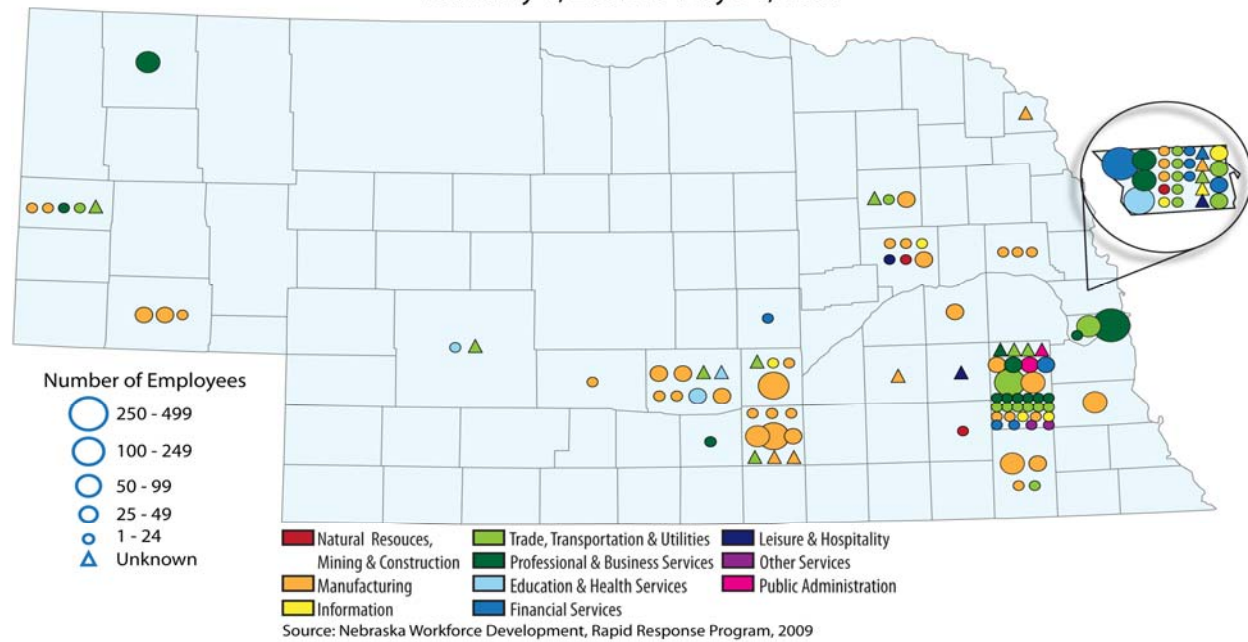
	<i>Number of Employees</i>	<i>Number of Events</i>
<b>Industry</b>		
Natural Resources, Mining, & Construction	60	4
Manufacturing	2,739	86
Trade, Transportation and Utilities	923	48
Information	182	9
Financial Activities	225	15
Professional and Business Services	1,297	20
Education and Health Services	442	10
Leisure and Hospitality	115	12
Other Services	55	3
Public Administration	35	2
<b>Event Date</b>		
October 2008	523	21
November 2008	1,099	27
December 2008	506	18
January 2009	1,438	47
February 2009	906	63
March 2009	1,601	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,073</b>	<b>209</b>

Note: Layoff data may have changed since gathered; gathered on April 6, 2009

Source: Nebraska Workforce Development, Rapid Response Program, 2009

The map displays the wide range of layoffs throughout the state. The non-metropolitan areas have been affected more by the manufacturing layoffs than the metropolitan areas.

### Announced and Pending Nebraska Permanent Layoffs by Industry: February 1, 2009 to May 31, 2009



Layoffs along with normal seasonal declines contributed to the unemployment rate being 4.9 percent for the first calendar quarter of 2009. The unemployment rate for the first quarter of 2008 was 3.3 percent. Nebraska is starting out 2009 (first quarter) with 46 percent more unemployed than in first quarter 2008. Employment levels by industry for the first quarter of 2009 decreased by 10,201 jobs as compared to first quarter 2008. Goods producing industries contributed the largest number of jobs lost during this period.

A2

<i>Work Force Employment</i>	<i>2007 Quarterly Average</i>	<i>2008 Quarterly Average</i>	<i>2009 Quarterly Average</i>	<i>2008 - 2009 change</i>	<i>2008 - 2009 Percent Change</i>
Non-Farm Employment	942069	952144	941943	(10201)	-1%
Goods-Producing	145248	147845	140775	(7070)	-5%
Manufacturing	100264	102119	95787	(6332)	-6%
Durable Goods	49516	49838	45627	(4212)	-8%
Non-Durable Goods	50748	52281	50161	(2120)	-4%
Natural Resources & Construction	44985	45725	44988	(738)	-2%
Service-Providing	796821	804300	801168	(3132)	0%
Trade, Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities	200621	203283	199752	(3531)	-2%
Total Trade	145068	147804	145684	(2120)	-1%
Wholesale Trade	39984	41307	40776	(531)	-1%
Retail Trade	105084	106497	104908	(1589)	-1%
Transportation, Warehousing & Utilities incl RR	55553	55479	54068	(1411)	-3%
Information	19080	19161	17956	(1205)	-6%
Financial Activities	68102	68773	68525	(247)	0%
Professional & Business Services	101222	104495	100690	(3805)	-4%
Education & Health Services	131483	131506	134084	2577	2%
Leisure and Hospitality	78237	78975	78240	(735)	-1%
Other Services, except Public	34395	34819	34795	(23)	0%
Total Government (Public Administration)	163680	163288	167226	3938	2%
Federal Government	15946	15831	16096	265	2%
State Government	39959	39233	40276	1043	3%
Local Government	107775	108225	110854	2630	2%

Source: NE Workforce Development, Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Quarterly data using Current Employment Statistics.

Professional and Business Services is the largest contributor to job loss during the first quarter of 2009 as compared to 2008. The only bright spot for private non-farm employment in this comparison (A2) was in Education and Health Services with the main contributor for employment growth coming from health services. Nebraska should continue to experience non-farm employment levels below the 2008 levels as long as national unemployment levels remain high. Nebraska may experience a lag coming out of the recession once it turns around nationally. It will take a few months for orders to reach Nebraska businesses and for businesses to gear up to meet demand.

### Demographics

Population growth and decline is influenced by natural growth and migration. Overall, Nebraska experienced growth of 3.6% between 2000 and 2007. While most age groups increased in population in Nebraska, a large increase occurred in the population age 50 to 59, with a 27.6% change between 2000 and 2007. The aging of Nebraska's population is also evident in the drop in population for those aged 30 to 49. Growth in the population aged 20 to 29 may be attributed to children of Baby Boomers reaching that age group. Historical population trends are used to predict changes in the labor force. While the number of people in the labor force is expected to increase, the labor force will constitute less of the population as Baby Boomers age and 20 to 59 year olds shrink proportionately. As Nebraska's population ages, businesses will begin replacing retiring Baby Boomers. Table A3 shows there are significant drops in the population following the Baby Boomers. This may make it difficult for businesses to replace their retiring workers, and even harder to find the replacements with the skills and experience needed.

A3

### Population Growth by Age Group

Nebraska Statewide

Age	2000 Population	2007 Population	Change	Percent Change (%)
Under 20	504,189	498,642	-5,547	-1.1
20-29	232,606	256,113	23,507	10.1
30-39	240,702	219,852	-20,850	-8.7
40-49	257,393	250,245	-7,148	-2.8
50-59	181,944	232,133	50,189	27.6
60-69	123,327	142,562	19,235	15.6
70 and Over	173,161	175,024	1,863	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,713,322</b>	<b>1,774,571</b>	<b>61,249</b>	<b>3.6</b>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2008

The movement of the Baby Boomers out of the labor force will require training and re-training of workers in the other age groups as they move into jobs previously held by those in the 50 and over age group. A look at the age of workers by Industry provides a glimpse into the areas where training will be needed. Table A4 shows manufacturing with an average age of 40.7 and 15.5 percent of those working in this industry age 55 and over. This industry for example will need to account for the loss of knowledge, skills and abilities of about 16,000 workers in less than 10 years.

## A4

**Older Workers and Average Age of Workers by Industry**

Nebraska Statewide, 2007

	Average Age	Age 55 and Over	
		Count	%
Natural Resources & Mining	37.3	2,314	17.7
Construction	37.6	5,750	11.8
Manufacturing	40.7	15,950	15.5
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	38.4	33,385	17.6
Information	39.4	2,518	14.7
Financial Activities	40.2	9,038	16.2
Professional & Business Services	37.6	17,541	14.0
Education & Health Services	42.3	43,050	22.5
Leisure & Hospitality	28.7	5,715	7.1
Other Services	38.7	4,425	18.5
Public Administration	43.1	11,376	25.1

Source: Nebraska Workforce Development, Administrative Records, 2008

The Hispanic or Latino (of any race) is experiencing the largest percent growth in Nebraska since 2000. This combined with most of the growth in Nebraska's population coming from immigration to the state will create training opportunities to improve workforce skills. Table A5 displays the growth patterns taking place in Nebraska.

## A5

**Population by Race and Ethnicity**

Nebraska Statewide

	2000 Population	2007 Population	Change	Percent Change (%)
Total:	1,713,322	1,774,571	61,249	3.6
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	95,279	133,832	38,553	40.5
Not Hispanic or Latino:	1,618,043	1,640,739	22,696	1.4
White Alone	1,497,772	1,500,380	2,608	0.2
Black or African American Alone	68,476	75,014	6,538	9.5
American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	13,600	15,180	1,580	11.6
Asian Alone	22,297	29,631	7,334	32.9
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	707	912	205	29.0
Two or More Races	15,191	19,622	4,431	29.2
Total Minority (non-white or Hispanic or Latino)	215,550	274,191	58,641	27.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates, 2008

## Industry and Occupation Projections

Nebraska is expected to have about a one percent growth annually from 2006 to 2016. This growth is expected to show up in all industries except for two industry categories; Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing and Information. Transportation and Warehousing, Professional, Scientific and Technical Services, Health Care and Social Assistance Services, Construction, and Management of Companies and Enterprises are some industries that are expected to have good growth potential.

A6  
**Long-Term Industry Employment Projections**  
 Nebraska Statewide, 2006 to 2016

	2006 Annual Employment	2016 Projected Employment	Change in Employment 2006-2016	Percent Change (%)	Compound Annual Growth Rate (%)
Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing	60,309	59,993	-316	-0.5	-0.05
Mining	1,268	1,330	62	4.9	0.48
Utilities	1,322	1,580	258	19.5	1.80
Construction	44,766	52,296	7,530	16.8	1.57
Manufacturing	101,323	105,616	4,293	4.2	0.42
Wholesale Trade	38,070	39,404	1,334	3.5	0.35
Retail Trade	106,078	115,039	8,961	8.4	0.81
Transportation and Warehousing	51,416	63,210	11,794	22.9	2.09
Information	19,261	17,914	-1,347	-7.0	-0.72
Finance and Insurance	55,362	64,998	9,636	17.4	1.62
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	9,232	9,767	535	5.8	0.56
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	38,175	49,829	11,654	30.5	2.70
Management of Companies and Enterprises	15,353	27,093	11,740	76.5	5.84
Administrative & Waste Management Services	44,443	47,890	3,447	7.8	0.75
Educational Services (including state and local gov)	99,893	107,113	7,220	7.2	0.70
Health Care and Social Assistance	115,402	154,051	38,649	33.5	2.93
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	11,380	14,288	2,908	25.6	2.30
Accommodation and Food Services	68,949	82,407	13,458	19.5	1.80
Other Services (except Government)	37,515	41,253	3,738	10.0	0.95
Government	77,791	84,223	6,432	8.3	0.80
<b>Total Statewide</b>	<b>997,308</b>	<b>1,139,294</b>	<b>141,986</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>1.34</b>

Source: Nebraska Workforce Development, 2006-2016 Long-Term Industry Projections, 2008

The industrial growth will translate into the growth of many occupations. As can be seen in table A8 some occupations that may not have as much growth taking place are expected to have high openings due to replacement needs. Several of Nebraska's industries are projected to experience significant growth by 2016. The top industries expected to see the largest growth rates are Management of Companies & Enterprises (5.84%), Health Care & Social Assistance (2.93%) and Professional, Scientific, & Technical Services (2.70%). Information (-0.72%) and Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing (-0.05%) are likely to see a decline. The industries that are expected to have the largest growth rates are industries that have some of the highest average hourly wage rates. During 2006 to 2016 Nebraska industry growth is projected at a rate of 14.2% with 141,986 total openings. The Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) for Nebraska

is 1.3%. It is expected that the growth and replacement patterns exhibited in the long term projections (table A.8) will continue as Nebraska emerges from the current recession.

A7

Industry	Ave Hourly wage	Hourly Entry wage
Natural resources and mining	\$15.92	\$9.08
Construction	\$19.01	\$11.27
Manufacturing	\$16.77	\$10.49
Trade, Transportation, and Utilities	\$15.67	\$7.94
Information	\$21.78	\$9.26
Financial Activities	\$20.76	\$10.58
Professional and Business Services	\$20.16	\$9.20
Education and Health Services	\$19.23	\$9.61
Leisure and Hospitality	\$9.17	\$6.82
Other Services	\$14.45	\$7.70
Public Administration	\$19.18	\$10.27

Nebraska Workforce Development, Department of Labor,  
Labor Market Information, OES Program 2008 Survey data.

A.8

**Long-Term Occupational Employment Projections**  
Nebraska Statewide, 2006 to 2016

	2006 Est. Empl.	2016 Proj. Empl.	Growth Openings	Replace- ment Openings	Total Openings	Numeric Change	Percent Change (%)
Management Occupations	51,274	57,676	6,449	9,333	15,782	6,402	12.5
Business and Financial Operations Occupations	45,303	55,366	10,076	7,976	18,052	10,063	22.2
Computer and Mathematical Occupations	23,172	29,272	6,103	5,051	11,154	6,100	26.3
Architecture and Engineering Occupations	11,422	13,464	2,042	2,670	4,712	2,042	17.9
Life, Physical, and Social Science Occupations	8,699	10,409	1,710	1,948	3,658	1,710	19.7
Community and Social Services Occupations	15,732	19,343	3,611	2,659	6,270	3,611	23.0
Legal Occupations	5,436	6,279	843	957	1,800	843	15.5
Education, Training, and Library Occupations	66,042	72,530	6,566	13,270	19,836	6,488	9.8
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations	15,043	17,191	2,199	3,621	5,820	2,148	14.3
Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations	55,529	72,747	17,218	10,536	27,754	17,218	31.0
Healthcare Support Occupations	28,857	37,382	8,546	3,004	11,550	8,525	29.5
Protective Service Occupations	16,700	18,602	1,910	4,973	6,883	1,902	11.4
Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations	75,467	90,805	15,338	26,195	41,533	15,338	20.3
Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations	33,676	36,920	3,249	5,775	9,024	3,244	9.6
Personal Care and Service Occupations	28,545	33,407	4,938	7,197	12,135	4,862	17.0
Sales and Related Occupations	105,754	115,784	10,834	32,586	43,420	10,030	9.5
Office and Administrative Support Occupations	171,986	191,212	22,004	36,796	58,800	19,226	11.2
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations	41,166	42,084	995	10,128	11,123	918	2.2
Construction and Extraction Occupations	50,949	58,505	7,579	9,360	16,939	7,556	14.8
Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations	44,130	48,948	4,913	7,353	12,266	4,818	10.9
Production Occupations	82,861	88,073	6,635	18,456	25,091	5,212	6.3
Transportation and Material Moving Occupations	89,167	99,386	11,727	19,637	31,364	10,219	11.5
<b>Total, All Occupations Statewide</b>	<b>1,066,910</b>	<b>1,215,385</b>	<b>155,485</b>	<b>239,481</b>	<b>394,966</b>	<b>148,475</b>	<b>13.9</b>

Skill gaps for Nebraska workers can be identified by looking at future demand for occupations based on long-term projections and then comparing with current supply. Gaps in skills, abilities, and training received may often be difficult to identify for a variety of reasons, some of which are listed below.

Location: The people trained or skilled in critical occupations may not be located in the right place to fill vacancies as they are available. Demands for specific skills may be in rural areas while the existing supply is located in an urban area.

Age: The workforce is an aging workforce, and the Baby Boom generation is within 5 years of retirement age (65). The surge in 60-74 year-olds combined with a decline in 40-54 year-olds may result in an especially challenging decade in addressing industry's demand on Nebraska's labor force.

Industry: Projected skills demand for an occupation may be spread across several industries.

Based on the growth and replacement needs of the major occupational categories listed above, the following gaps are anticipated by 2016:

Skills:

*Basic Skills-* developed capacities that facilitate learning or more rapid acquisition of knowledge.

Active Learning, Active Listening, Learning Strategies, Mathematics, Monitoring, and Reading Comprehension

*Complex Problem Solving Skills-* developed capacities used to solve novel, ill-defined problems in complex, real-world settings.

Complex Problem Solving

*Social Skills-* developed capacities to work with people to achieve goals.

Instructing

*Technical Skills-*

Equipment Maintenance, Equipment Selection, Installation, Programming, and Troubleshooting

Abilities:

Problem Sensitivity, Arm-Hand Steadiness, Deductive Reasoning, Inductive Reasoning, Oral Comprehension, Oral Expression, Far Vision (farsightedness), Multilimb Coordination, Near Vision (nearsightedness), and Manual Dexterity

Work Activities:

Interacting with Computers, Troubleshooting, Repairing & Maintaining Mechanical Equipment, Controlling Machines & Processes, Getting Information, Assisting & Caring for Others, Making Decisions & Solving Problems, Organizing & Prioritizing Work, Documenting & Recording Information, Operating Vehicles or Equipment, Inspecting Equipment or Material, Handling Moving Objects, and Establishing & Maintaining Interpersonal Relationships

## Conclusion

It is difficult to say how the Nebraska economy will respond to the current recession. Looking at the past recessions as far back as 1975 each one has impacted industries and occupations differently. The recession of the early 1980's, for example, had a big impact on agriculture creating a need for training in skills that would move workers from the farms to non-farm jobs. The current recession is having a big impact on manufacturing jobs which are related to the auto

industry, housing construction, and consumer goods. As the auto industry goes through restructuring, some of the related jobs will come back and some will change requiring retraining. The same can be said for manufacturing jobs that relate to the construction and consumer industries. This recession was preceded by high gas prices that softened the market and brought more recognition for the need to be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly. This has fostered the term of “green jobs”. While there still are not any clear definitions for green jobs, it is apparent that many of the current job classifications fall into the category of green jobs. There will be new businesses that will start up to meet the demand for products and services to meet higher environmental demands. While many of the job titles may not change, there will be a need to train in these occupations on how to do the job in a more environmentally friendly way.

## **B. State Vision and Priorities**

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

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

Compared with many states across the nation, Nebraska has not experienced significant economic decline. However, the economic downturn is impacting communities and residents across the state. Nebraska’s March 2009 unemployment rate was 4.6% compared to 3.1% in March 2008. This means 14,701 more Nebraskans are without work and in need of employment and training services. Individuals filing initial claims for unemployment insurance are up 80% and job growth remains stagnant at less than 1%.

Through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009, Nebraska will invigorate its public workforce system through innovative strategies and initiatives. These strategies and initiatives will not only result in increased services to Nebraskans but new and creative partnerships with community colleges and other education providers, apprenticeship programs, employers, and business and labor organizations. Nebraska’s vision is to utilize the Recovery Act funds in concert with its formula funds to the greatest degree possible to effectively implement innovative one stop service delivery strategies. Governor Heineman has said, “While Nebraska’s economy and the State’s budget have been stable during the past year, the national economic downturn is impacting communities and residents across the state. We expect the federal funds received to be used primarily for programs that create and maintain jobs, support education and provide human services and health care assistance to help vulnerable Nebraskans.” Governor Heineman is committed to implementing the Recovery Act expeditiously and effectively with full transparency and accountability. He has established [Recovery.Nebraska.gov](http://Recovery.Nebraska.gov) which is the State of Nebraska’s portal for informing citizens about the use of federal stimulus funding received under the ARRA. This site provides accountability and transparency on how the stimulus funds are being spent. In addition to the [Recovery.Nebraska.gov](http://Recovery.Nebraska.gov) web portal, Nebraska Workforce Development/Department of Labor will host an agency recovery website specific for Department of Labor programs. This website will provide information on program expenditures, number served and outcomes for activities

funded through ARRA. The Nebraska Workforce Development/Department of Labor website can be found at [www.NebraskaWorkforce.com](http://www.NebraskaWorkforce.com) and click on NDOL Recovery. These two tools will ensure the transparency and accountability of the ARRA funds.

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

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

Nebraska will primarily use the youth Recovery Act funds to implement a summer employment opportunity program. To ensure that as many youth as possible have the opportunity for developing career goals and participating in workforce training, the state will distribute 85% of the youth Recovery Act funds direct to Nebraska’s three local WIA areas as well as 7.5% of the state’s 15% set-aside. The Summer Youth Employment Program is the priority for these funds. The State is encouraging the local WIA areas to, if appropriate, continue services beyond the Summer Youth Employment Program. Over the summer months, youth will be identified for continued training services in the year-round youth program or adult program whichever is appropriate for their age. In order to successfully accomplish the transition from the Summer Youth Employment Program to year-round services, the state has applied for a waiver that would waive the youth performance measures for out-of-school youth ages 18 to 24 served with Recovery Act funds beyond the summer months who participate in work experience only. The three local areas in Nebraska will continue to compliment the State’s overall vision for serving youth though close collaboration with partner agencies who specialize in serving youth most in need, offenders, homeless youth, youth in and aging out of foster care, migrant and seasonal farm worker youth, Native American youth and youth with disabilities. By working closely with One-Stop partner agencies to leverage funds and coordinate services more youth in need will be served.

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

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

Governor Heineman supports the following five priorities as established by the State and Local Workforce Investment Act Boards. These priorities create a vision that is clear in its focus on collaboration, integration, and efficiency for Nebraska employers and job seekers.

1. **An integrated, seamless service delivery system where all of the mandated partners are actively participating in the Workforce Investment System through co-location, single point of service, and a shared vision.**

The Governor is committed to assuring that the workforce investment system is reaching across Nebraska. He urges the Nebraska workforce investment system to invest resources leveraging technology to reach our citizens beyond the confines of our physical offices.

2. **A demand-driven workforce system focused on meeting the talent needs of high-growth, high demand industries within a regional development context where individuals are trained with an awareness of the skill sets necessary for specified State, regional, and local targeted industries.**

In Governor Heineman's April 14, 2009 letter to Secretary Steven Chu (U.S. Department of Energy), he said "the State is committed to improving energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as a balanced State energy policy." As new energy occupations and other high-growth, high demand industry occupations emerge, the workforce investment system is preparing to meet the challenges of training in these "dynamic" fields as evidenced by new policies, such as, Nebraska's "Demand Occupations" WIA policy.

3. **Customers making informed choices regarding work and training based on quality workforce information including job pay, benefits, and local economic issues.**

The NebraskaWorkforce.com Website provides constantly updated information to assist workers regarding job pay, benefits, and local economic issues. The "Nebraska Workforce Trends" is posted on this site along with "Layoff Reports." Within the Labor Market Information section are informational articles, such as, "Graduate Outcomes in Nebraska." Reports are provided to the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board to keep the members and public abreast of recent state and local economic issues.

4. **Increased State and Local flexibility in tailoring the delivery of One Stop services, taking into consideration:**

- **local diversity and language barriers;**
- **individuals with disabilities;**
- **demographic shifts;**
- **transportation barriers;**
- **out-of-school youth populations;**
- **priority of service for veterans [ensure linkage to State and county veterans' organizations];**
- **faith-based organizations;**
- **rural development needs;**
- **incumbent workers;**
- **entrepreneurs;**
- **nontraditional training and jobs placements; and**
- **the pursuit of waiver authority, as necessary, to enhance service delivery.**

As evidenced by the Governor's request for two new waivers with the implementation of the Recovery Act, Nebraska continues to look for increased flexibility to meet the needs of Nebraskans.

5. **Increased performance accountability through the evolution of integrated and enhanced information systems, particularly common data and performance systems.** Nebraska is investigating the potential for more integrated and enhanced information systems, including a single web portal for job seekers to assist in finding jobs in Nebraska. The Governor encourages the cooperation of the Department of Labor and Department of Economic Development in aiding job seekers as they explore opportunities in Nebraska.

### C. Overarching State Strategies

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

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

- How workforce investment system resources, both stimulus and regular formula funds, can be deployed to serve increased numbers of workers in need.

Workforce system officials have given clear direction in policy discussions that it is the priority of the Governor, as well as clearly stated in TEGE 14-08, that Recovery Act funds need to result in an increased number of people receiving services. In Legislative Bill 315 which is the State’s 2010-2011 appropriations bill, the Nebraska Legislature included the following language, “It is the intent of the Legislature that the local Workforce Investment Boards direct not less than seventy percent of funds received from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 for adult training and employment activities, including supportive services and need-related payments, and for dislocated worker employment and training activities, to support access to training and training-related services, including but not limited to, tuition for credit bearing courses, and costs related to adult basic education programs and certificate programs.”

For program funds awarded under the Recovery Act for WIA, Nebraska’s three local areas have a planning goal of utilizing 70% for direct participant services which includes; training, support services and need-based payments and 30% for program operations which is primarily case management staff. The State and local areas will leverage formula funds to the greatest degree possible and the State will award as much as possible to the local areas to serve workers in need. Additionally, of the youth WIA Recovery Act funds, the State immediately distributed 7.5% of the 15% set aside to the local areas to serve more youth in the 2009 Summer Youth Employment Program.

- How adults and dislocated workers, including low-income adults, who need to acquire new skills will have increased access to education and training opportunities.

One of Nebraska’s primary strategies in increasing access to education and training opportunities is to provide needs-related based payments with Recovery Act funds for adults and dislocated workers. Traditionally, Nebraska has not offered needs-related based payments due to limited funding. However, it has long been identified that a highly beneficial element for a participant to advance and complete training would be to provide needs-related based payments. The

availability of supportive services and Recovery Act funded needs-related payments has increased the access to education and training opportunities for adults and dislocated workers.

- How the state will address a dual-customer approach, meeting the skill needs of existing and emerging employers and high-growth occupations as well as the needs of under-skilled adults.

The expectation of a dual customer approach was set forth in the State Recovery Act policy. The State's Demand Occupation policy addresses measures taken to ensure that fifty percent of the Adult and Dislocated workers participants (combined) initiated into training in a local area during the program year shall be for a high-demand, high wage and high-skill occupation at either the State or Regional level.

- How workforce activities (e.g., adult education, job training, postsecondary education, registered apprenticeship, career advancement, needs based payments, and supportive service activities) will be aligned in career pathways both now in implementing the Recovery Act and in the transformed workforce system of the future.

In the area of Career Pathways, the State will continue to support and help develop FutureForce Nebraska which is a statewide initiative that educates our present and future workforce about: careers (including high growth opportunities available regionally, locally and statewide); the pathways to those careers; and how to take advantage of our unique resources and economic opportunities. The State through ARRA funds will explore adding and expanding the Career Pathways in FutureForce to include Green Jobs.

- How the state will partner to develop workforce solutions with community colleges, business and labor organizations, registered apprenticeship program sponsors, civic groups, and community organizations to align workforce development strategies and align workforce strategies with strategies for regional development and shared prosperity.

Nebraska Workforce Development/Department of Labor has begun a planning process called, *Career Center Services 2010 & Beyond; New Dimensions for a New Decade*. This planning process will involve Career Center staff representing WIA, Wagner-Peyser, UI, Veteran and Re-Employment services, One Stop partners, employers, local Workforce Investment Boards and other community organizations who have a stake in workforce issues. The goal of the planning process is to identify strategies that; continue to develop a strong, innovative public workforce system, helps increase access to services for workers and employers, leverage opportunities that emerging industries are creating and support talent development for low income adults and youth and dislocated workers.

#### **D. Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training**

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

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

- Increase services to workers in need.

Nebraska will make every attempt to push as much as possible ARRA funds (including administrative and state set-aside) to the local areas to provide services to in-need adult, youth and dislocated workers.

- Support the full range of One-Stop Career Center customers in acquiring the skills needed to attain jobs in high-growth, high-wage industries and occupations, including such supports as needs-based payments, basic skills remediation, English as a second language, and supportive services.

Nebraska's Career Centers along with our Labor Market Information Unit will continue to develop the most cutting edge information on available jobs and employment trends. In January 2009, Nebraska implemented an H-3 (high growth, high skill and high wage) policy to ensure the three local areas prioritize the use of WIA training funds on H-3 occupations. With ARRA funds, Nebraska's three local areas intend to provide needs-related based payments to eligible adult and dislocated worker enrollees.

- Ensure education and training delivered through the workforce system results in education and workforce skills of demonstrated value, and focus assessments and certifications towards the next level of education and employment.

In December of 2006, a FutureForce Forum was held in Nebraska to start the discussion on how Nebraska would address the economic, workforce, and education challenges it faces now and in the future. Stakeholders from Education, Economic Development, and Workforce Development recognized the importance of ensuring that Nebraska's workforce was prepared to meet the needs of its target growth industries. FutureForce Nebraska has made a great deal of progress in meeting these challenges and continues to develop comprehensive career pathways.

In 2008, State and local Workforce representatives met to consider redefining high growth, high demand occupational areas. The Nebraska Workforce Development Career Compass Focused Search identified high-demand, high wage and high-skill occupations at both the State and regional levels. A Demand Occupations policy was written and the TREX system was modified to allow for the tracking and reporting of training in these valued occupations. In addition, the policy gave weight to training in registered apprenticeships and dynamic occupations in cutting edge growth industries, i.e., alternative energy development, biotechnology (agribusiness), electronics manufacturing, software development, etc.

Nebraska has long recognized the importance of an individual's attainment of measureable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. The year-round youth common measure "Attainment of a Degree or Certificate" is covered in posted State policy. The State "Case Management" policy recognizes the important role of case managers along with providing guidance on comprehensive assessment and service strategies.

In late PY 2008, Nebraska began to develop its "Green Jobs" policy. This policy recognizes the need to develop training models that map pathways leading to portable and industry recognized credentials.

- Strategically use youth, dislocated worker and adult statewide funds to quickly deliver innovative services.

An innovative service delivery and training strategy Nebraska will be using in PY09 is Web Conferencing. With Technical Assistance Training funds from U.S. DOL, Region V office, and statewide funding resources, Nebraska has purchased Web Conferencing Technology hardware and service in order to improve staff training and service to dislocated workers. Since Nebraska's geography is a significant barrier in providing training (particularly in rural parts of the state), this technology shall allow for quicker delivery of services.

Nebraska has, also, been able to increase the services to workers in need by increasing the number of providers available for training through on-line, distance learning.

Nebraska is considering using statewide Recovery Act funding to deliver innovative, demonstration projects that transition older youth at higher risk who have benefited from Recovery Act funded programs into adult programs funded by the Recovery Act. Meetings have been held to identify individuals who would be appropriately served from this statewide effort.

- Provide targeted work experiences in order to prepare individuals for job opportunities in new industries or occupations, particularly using registered apprenticeship and on-the-job training for all jobseekers, and summer work experience for youth.

The Lincoln, Omaha and Grand Island Career Centers entered into an agreement with the Steamfitter's and Plumber's Union Local 464 to receive applications, assess and refer qualified candidates for the Registered Apprenticeship programs for interview. Over 300 applications were received, and interviews are presently being conducted by the Union to identify successful applicants. Additionally, an agreement with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to provide temporary workers through the Career Centers has been forged in Columbus and Lincoln. NWD-DOL has applied for a Technical Assistance Grant to develop an information site dealing specifically with Registered Apprenticeship programs in Nebraska. The web pages will be linked directly from the agency home page, and will provide information to job seekers looking for "earn while you learn" opportunities, as well as information for employers already involved in the Registered Apprenticeship System and those considering the possibilities for their own businesses. Partnerships with the established Unions in the state, and a close working relationship with the State Director for the Office of Apprenticeship will cultivate an atmosphere of cooperation and resource integration that will prove to be beneficial for everyone involved.

The State intends to utilize its Worker Training funds to assist workers in developing skills needed for emerging jobs particularly in the alternative energy, healthcare and communications fields. Additionally, in late 2008, State and local Workforce representatives worked on designing and implementing a Demand Occupations State Policy. This policy helps the local WIA areas align training resources to support and promote high-demand, high wage and high skill job opportunities, dynamic occupations that directly link to employment opportunities and Registered Apprenticeship training. With the additional resources available due to Recovery Act funding, such supports as needs-based payments, basic skills remediation, English as a second language, and supportive services shall be available to more One-Stop Career Center customers.

- Align workforce activities with education strategies and economic and community development strategies to meet skill needs of jobs and industries important to the local and regional economies and meet the needs of under-skilled adults.

An important part of the Business Services strategy is developing relationships with local employers and partnering with community entities such as Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development and others. Nebraska Workforce Development-Department of Labor is engaged at the local level. As employer's hiring and growth needs are identified, Career Centers can respond with a menu of services, including hiring events, resource alignment, assessment, and training opportunities. Identification of growth industries, emerging occupations, and new businesses are

critically important to the health of local economies, and being in a position to act as a liaison between developers, employers and job seekers contributes to overall progress. Training opportunities through Recovery Act funded WIA, RES, and Registered Apprenticeship programs shall raise skill levels to meet the changing needs of the local area and statewide.

## II. Service Delivery

### A. State Governance and Collaboration

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

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

The Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Economic Development are all agencies that directly report to the Governor. The Department of Education does not report to the Governor but rather to the State Board of Education. The Governor has required that state agencies who report to him coordinate all Recovery Act plans for expenditure of funds through the State Budget Office. The Governor's Policy Research Office plays a similar role in coordinating policy. Nebraska recently held the *Innovation Workshop for Regional Talent Development*. This event was to build on regional leadership and relationships to advance the region and state as global competitors through innovation, business expansion and a trained workforce. Governor Heineman, Department of Labor, Education and Economic Development all participated in this event. Additionally, Nebraska is participating in a National Governors' Association Policy Academy. The purpose of this Policy Academy through a team of state policymakers, educators and influential private sector representatives is to develop a customized plan to prepare high school students to pursue postsecondary education and later high-wage occupations. The goal is to equip more high school students with technical and academic skills through a rigorous career technical education.

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

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

In Nebraska, WIA, Wagner-Peyser and Trade are all housed and managed out of the Office of Employment and Training/Department of Labor and the Unemployment Insurance is a stand-alone office but also housed in the Department of Labor. Therefore, the ability to coordinate, collaborate and implement new legislation, initiatives and programs is done with few barriers. Examples that demonstrate a high level of operational collaboration include; joint policy development, cross training between WIA, Wagner-Peyser and Trade, implementation of Auto Coder between the UI Program and Career Center staff, submittal of a REA grant between UI

and Career Center services, and joint staff meetings. The upcoming planning initiative the Department is implementing, “*Career Center Services 2010 & Beyond; New Dimensions for a New Decade*” is underway which will involve stakeholders of workforce investment activities and programs at both the State and local level. This initiative will identify strategies for implementation to best meet the needs and challenges for our future workforce. Planning sessions such as this continue to improve the operational collaboration of workforce programs. Nebraska participated in the *Collaborate for Success: Partnering with Registered Apprenticeship Action Clinic* held in December of 2008. As a result, Nebraska developed an action plan to better partner and promote the Registered Apprenticeship Program to Nebraska workers, employers and training providers. Most recently, Nebraska received a Technical Assistance award to assist in implementing our Apprenticeship Action Plan. This Technical Assistance award will go to the development of web pages to promote Apprenticeship Programs as well as updating our Eligible Training Provider list to insure apprenticeship programs are included.

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

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

In responding to this question, states should describe:

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

Wagner-Peyser core services may be provided through staff assistance at local One Stop Career Centers or through self-access via career center resource rooms or the internet. These services may include local labor market/employment information, notice of available job openings, referrals to local training options, education and training on JOBLINK, job search and matching and/or information and referral to other supportive services, as appropriate. Reemployment Services (RES) differ from the Wagner-Peyser services, in that, they are defined as unique to the individual and more intensive in nature. They may include career counseling, job development, case management, interest and skills assessments, and employment plans, among others.

Unemployment Insurance Claimants most likely to exhaust benefits as well as those possessing higher demand skills will be identified through the Unemployment Insurance Worker Profiling system upon determination of the first benefit payment. This early identification expedites coordination of reemployment services through the local One Stop Career Centers. Once

identified, the claimant will be invited to the Career Center closest to their home address for orientation with a Workforce Coordinator. Each claimant will complete a comprehensive assessment and the results incorporated into an individual employment plan (IEP) that outlines unique employment goals and next steps. All RES participants will be provided information on WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and, as appropriate, encouraged to apply for services.

While the UI Benefits Payment System and Employment Service systems currently share a limited interface which includes the use of AutoCoder (ONET Codes), planning is underway to further enhance the technology systems. The statistical models used for Worker Profiling will be expanded to allow for greater flexibility and adaptability congruent to changing labor market information. Additional planned upgrades will increase end-user automation and incorporate immediate feedback regarding career center registration, job referral, and job placement activities with easier and streamlined access to all services. Budgeting projections for these system changes could expend up to 50% of funding.

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

**(§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)**

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

Services available to job seekers will continue to be available through the Career Center, the Resource Room, and electronically through the Website. Enhanced technology will incorporate service strategies to expand the overall scope of delivery and availability. The state job bank, JobLink, is available 24/7 via the internet and fully accessible to employers seeking to post positions and search for qualified candidates. Employers may choose to work with a local Career Center to craft job opening announcements and request job searches for qualified candidates. As appropriate, job orders may be shared with Job Central - National Labor Exchange to increase exposure and/or satisfy compliance requirements for federal contract employers. Since more than 50 state-administered federally funded programs have been impacted by Recovery Act funding, the Commissioner of Labor has been in communication with the Governor to ensure that the jobs created are posted on the state job bank. Additionally with ARRA, the State intends to upgrade its Career Center technology to a more comprehensive system that allows easier interface between other federal employment and training programs, accounts for self-service, facilitated self-help and staff-assisted service and is user friendly to the consumer. This technology will be ADA compliant. The State is also exploring possibilities of expanding the use of technology outside Career Center locations to provide more accessibility particularly in the rural parts of the state.

### **C. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services**

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

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

State policies ensure adults and dislocated workers have universal access to the minimum required core services in the following manner:

- Nebraska’s One-Stop Delivery System policy at NebraskaWorkforce.com (go into Information-Workforce Investment Act-Policies) on P. 3 discusses universality under elements of a comprehensive One-Stop center, on P. 6 it lists the minimum core services (also addressed below), and on P. 11 it discusses the minimum elements of an affiliate site.
- Accessibility policy was issued to ensure that the programs, services, and facilities of each One-Stop delivery system are accessible to all, including individuals with disabilities.
- Recovery Act policy emphasizes on P. 9 the priority use of WIA Adult program funds for services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals.

Wagner Peyser Act Employment Services are available and accessible for all job seekers. Recovery Act funding has allowed for the addition of several more Wagner-Peyser staff in the Career Centers, enhanced technology, and access to the internet facilitating the service to many more job seekers than previously possible.

The State has established a Limited English Proficiency Plan which provides that individuals with Limited English proficiency are able to access programs and services provided by the One Stop Career Centers and One Stop partners on an equitable basis.

The State policy “Nebraska’s One-Stop Delivery System” requires that all comprehensive One-Stop centers provide core services to individuals who are adults or dislocated workers through the One-Stop delivery system and shall, at a minimum, include:

- i. Determinations of whether the individuals are eligible to receive assistance under this subtitle;
- ii. Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling), and orientation to the information and other services available through the One-Stop delivery system;
- iii. Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- iv. Job search and placement assistance, and where appropriate, career counseling;
- v. Provision of employment statistics information, including the provisions of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:
- vi. Job vacancy listings in such labor market areas;
- vii. Information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described in clause (I); and
- viii. Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations; and
- ix. Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services as described in Section 122, provided by program, and eligible providers of youth activities described in Section 123, providers of adult education described in Title II, providers of postsecondary vocational education activities and vocational education activities available to school dropouts under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.), and providers of vocational rehabilitation program activities described in Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C.720 et seq.);

- x. Provision of information regarding how the local area is performing on the local performance measures and the One-Stop delivery system in the local area;
- xi. Provision of accurate information relating to the availability of supportive services, including childcare and transportation available in the local area, and referral to such services, as appropriate;
- xii. Provision of information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
- xiii. Assistance in establishing eligibility for-
- xiv. Welfare-to-Work activities authorized under Section 403(a)(5) of the Social Security Act (as added by Section 5001 of the Balanced Budget Act of 1997) available in the local area; and
- xv. Programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs that are not funded under this Act and are available in the local area; and
- xvi. Follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace for participants in Workforce Investment activities authorized under this subtitle who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment, as appropriate.

On an annual basis, State Monitors review to be sure there is universal access to all of these core services.

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

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

Registration for Career Center services is the “single point of entry” for individuals in need of assistance, and from information gathered during the registration process, a full cadre of services will be identified for the job seeker that may include job training and/or skills development, employment services or assistive services. Enhanced technology made possible by Recovery Act funding will allow Career Center staff to efficiently and effectively gather pertinent information and channel individuals to critical services. By integrating resources provided under the Recovery Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, WIA Title I for adults and dislocated workers, as well as resources provided by required One-Stop partner programs, multiple paths are available to meet the needs of individuals, particularly low-income and low-skilled workers.

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

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

Nebraska Workforce Development is currently researching the opportunities for job seekers and the potential effect to the agency if it becomes an Employment Network in partnership with the Social Security Administration's "Ticket to Work Program". Through participation in the EN Program, NWD-DOL will be able to assist job seekers with disabilities who currently receive SSDI/SSI benefits to better assess the impact returning to work would have on their overall financial success, and provide a transition process as candidates move from benefits recipients to fully employed individuals. The State distributed 7.5% of Recovery Act statewide youth funds to the local areas to allow for increased opportunities for more participants at the local level. The Nebraska Worker Training program leverages multiple training program funds to provide grant opportunities for Nebraska businesses to access funds for training incumbent workers. Nebraska has been able to maximize the investment of WIA Title I funds and Recovery Act funds since Nebraska has an approved waiver on the period of initial eligibility for training providers. Under this waiver, the State has been able to provide an opportunity for training providers to continue as initially eligible providers and that has led to increased participation. All of public higher education in Nebraska is represented on the eligible training provider list, including all of the Community Colleges, all of the State colleges, and all of the University system campuses. This list includes several training opportunities for on-line, distance learning allowing for greater access to training especially for rural participants.

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

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

- Do all One-Stop Career Centers have a uniform method of organizing their service delivery to business customers?

Services to business customers/employers vary somewhat across the state due to economic conditions and geography. In Lincoln and Omaha, the only metro areas in Nebraska, a dedicated team of Business Services Representatives work closely with employers and the Career Center staff to market and deliver services available through Nebraska Workforce Development. In more rural areas, a variation of the Business Services plan has been implemented that provides high quality services to employers through developing relationships and providing services tailored to the employer's needs.

- Is there a common individual assessment process utilized in every One-Stop Career Center?

There are several assessments used in the Career Centers across the state, including CareerScope, the Nebraska Career Information System, CASAS and assessments available on the Career Connections website. There are also online assessments available in the Resource Rooms. The assessment used and the information gained depend to some extent on the needs and skill level of the job seeker. The common process for assessment throughout the Career Centers and across programs is to assess for basic skills and career/job interests.

- What approaches will be used to ensure funds are targeted to those most in need, including low-income, public assistance recipients, persons with disabilities, etc.?

Local mailers have been sent to people who reside in Areas of Substantial Unemployment asking if they are low income and need to earn some cash. Newspaper articles and television stories have tried to get the word out to those most in need. When individuals are assessed for eligibility, information is collected for the tracking system to identify most in need, including low-income, public assistance recipients, persons with disabilities, etc. The local areas have developed a most in need check list tool to ensure those most in need receive priority. The State Recovery Act policy requires that “priority use of WIA Adult program funds must be for services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals as described in WIA section 134(d)(4)(E).”

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

Nebraska’s One-Stop Delivery System policy insures integration of all resources. Coordination and delivery of service is maximized and streamlined through the use of the Nebraska Workforce Access System (NWAS). NWAS is an electronic common intake and case management tool available to One Stop Career Center partners. This system provides a single “point of entry” for customers by gathering individual demographic information and assists in the assessment and identification of needed service provisions for targeted populations.

#### **D. Youth Services**

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

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

- Describe the anticipated program design for the WIA Youth funds provided under the Recovery Act. Include in this description a program design for both younger, in-school, and older or out-of-school youth (including the 22-24 year olds that can be served with Recovery Act funds).

All three of the local areas will operate a 2009 summer youth employment program. The program will serve youth age 14-24 with a focus on serving the neediest youth and a priority of service given for veterans and eligible spouses.

An assessment and development of an individual service strategy will be provided to each participant. Developmentally or age-appropriate strategies will be used to set work readiness goals for the youth which in turn will influence placement at worksites with age appropriate job requirements and responsibilities.

Work readiness will be the only indicator to assess the effectiveness of summer employment. Participants will be evaluated pre- and post-program to determine whether a measurable increase has occurred.

The 12 month follow-up will not be required for youth served with Recovery Act funds during the summer months only. However, older and out-of-school youth who are not returning to school following the summer months that are identified during or after their summer Work Experience as possibly benefiting from year-round participation in the WIA program may continue to be served at the end of the summer in the year-round Youth WIA program or the

Adult WIA program, depending on the participant's age and program appropriateness. Local areas will expend at least thirty percent (30%) of the Recovery Act Youth Program allocation on out-of-school youth. The same priority provisions that apply to Adult veteran participants also apply to Youth veteran participants.

• Will the state use the Recovery Act funds to fund only a 2009 summer youth program or some combination of 2009 and 2010? If using the funds over two summers, what percentage of funds does the state anticipate using for the first summer?

All three local areas plan to expend all Recovery Act funds for a 2009 summer program. If any funds remain on October 1, 2009, the local areas will take advantage of the waiver the State plans to submit extending work experience only to March 31, 2010.

• If using the funds for summer employment opportunities, describe how the state will deliver summer youth employment opportunities. Will the state operate the program or allocate the funds?

The State will not operate summer youth programs. The State has allocated all of the Recovery Act funds to Local Areas except for the 5% State Administration and 2.5% to be used for Incentive, Capacity Building and Technical Assistance.

• Describe the types of worksites that will be developed for summer employment, including a mix of public and private sector work experiences, and how the state will ensure that meaningful work experiences will be developed.

The local areas plan to use a combination of public and non-profit worksites. Worksites will be developed in a manner that ensures the placement of youth does not displace current employees.

Worksite selection criteria will include such things as:

- Meaningful work activities;
- Age appropriate job assignments;
- Structured work environment;
- Adequate supervision;
- Supervisor to participant ratio;
- Workplace safety guidelines;
- Knowledge of child labor laws; and
- Compliance with program limitations such as the prohibition of swimming pools and golf courses as worksites.

Worksite matches will be made based on the individual's age, abilities, goals, and interests while factoring in the individual's availability of transportation to the various worksite locations.

• Describe the state's policy for developing the mix of classroom versus worksite time in a summer employment opportunity. Describe the state's policy for determining that summer employment opportunities are connected to academic and/or occupational learning and the types of connections that will be utilized.

The State's Recovery Act policy states that local areas have program design flexibility in determining whether it is appropriate that academic learning be directly linked to summer employment for youth served with Recovery Act funds in the summer months only. The policy also states that the purpose of the work experience is to provide the youth participant with the opportunity for career exploration and skill development.

- Describe any policies or strategies that the state is implementing to ensure that local areas implement activities that support out-of-school youth during summer and/or non-summer months, such as supportive services, needs-based payments, or day-care.

The State's Recovery Act policy states that supportive services shall be provided, as necessary and in accordance to local plans. Local areas do not plan to provide needs-based payments to youth who are in a paid work experience, however supportive services will be provided as needed, including day-care.

- Provide the anticipated number of youth to be served with Recovery Act funds, including the anticipated number of summer employment opportunities created with Recovery Act funds.

In Nebraska, the anticipated number of youth to be served with Recovery Act funds is 805. Summer employment opportunities will be created for each of the anticipated 805 youth served.

## **E. Veterans' Priority of Service**

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

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

- A description of the changes to policies for the delivery of priority of service by the State Workforce Agency or Agencies, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and One-Stop Career Centers for all qualified job training programs delivered through the state's workforce system. The description must include how:

1. The state policies ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service.
2. The state policies ensure that covered persons are aware of:
  - a. Their entitlement to priority of service;
  - b. The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and
  - c. Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/ or services.

- A description or copy of the state's policy requiring Local Workforce Investment Boards to develop and include policies in their Local Plan to implement priority of service for the local One-Stop Career Centers and for service delivery by local workforce preparation and training providers.

The State's WIA Veterans' Priority Provisions policy [posted on the NebraskaWorkforce.com Website (go into Information – Workforce Investment Act – policies)] was revised to incorporate the new requirements under the December 19, 2008 final rule including the wording below:

### **Impact on Workforce Investment System Processes**

1. Processes must be in place to ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry.
  - Point of entry may include: reception through a One-Stop Career Center established pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; as part of an application process for a

specific program; or through any other method by which covered persons express an interest in receiving services, either in-person or virtually.

- The processes for identifying covered persons at the point of entry must be designed to: permit the individual to make known his or her covered person status; and permit those qualified job training programs to initiate data collection for covered entrants.
  - The processes for identifying covered persons are not required to verify the status of an individual as a veteran or eligible spouse at the point of entry unless they immediately undergo eligibility determination and enrollment in a program.
2. Covered persons must be given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service. This includes ensuring that covered persons are aware of:
    - Their entitlement to priority of service;
    - The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and
    - Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services.
  3. The Strategic State Workforce Investment Plan must address priority of service including 1 and 2 above.
  4. Local Workforce Investment Boards must develop and include in their strategic local plan, policies implementing priority of service for the local One-Stop Career Centers and for service delivery by local workforce training providers. These policies must include 1 and 2 above. The Jobs for Veterans Act does not change the requirement that participants must qualify as eligible under the Workforce Investment Act, nor does it change local area ability to budget funds among core, intensive, training and supportive services. Local programs are not required to change their allocations among services to reserve funds for veterans, but are required to ensure that eligible covered persons are given priority over non-covered persons for all available services.
  5. Any informational or service delivery Web site developed with funding from an impacted program or grant shall provide information on veterans' priority and how to access assistance via the nearest One-Stop Center in receiving priority service from any applicable program or grant.
  6. Specific grant language on the veterans' priority shall be required in all grant agreements to ensure that grantees are fully aware of the law's requirements and of their obligation to design service delivery strategies accordingly. Funding recipients must include priority of service and its associated data collection and reporting requirements in all requests for proposals, solicitations for grant awards, sub-grants, contracts, sub-contracts, or other mechanisms utilized to define service delivery strategies using DOL funding, including (where feasible) memoranda of understanding, or other service delivery agreements.

A State team provided training on this policy and the implications to services at One Stop Career Centers across the state in January of 2009.

#### **F. Service Delivery to Targeted Populations**

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

**(§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)**

State policies and strategies ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services are accessible and meet the needs of multiple populations.

Nebraska has implemented accessible employment and training services are delivered through One Stop Career Centers for the following populations.

- **Dislocated Workers**

Five State policies relate to meeting the needs of dislocated workers including: Recovery Act; Eligibility for Dislocated Workers; State Dislocated Worker Unit Rapid Response Procedures; Integrating Services under Trade Adjustment Assistance and the Workforce Investment Act; and Veterans' Priority Provisions. The "Recovery Act" policy includes narrative stating: "Recovery Act funds are provided to assure supportive services and needs-related payments that may be necessary for an individual's participation in job training are a part of the dislocated worker service strategy."

- **Displaced Homemakers**

The policy on Eligibility for Dislocated Workers addresses the eligibility of displaced homemakers to ensure their consideration for services. The Local Plan Instructions require the local plans to address how their services shall meet the needs of displaced homemakers.

- **Low-Income Individuals, such as, Migrants and Seasonal Farmworkers**

Wagner-Peyser resources will be used to provide concentrated outreach services with additional temporary staff during the peak periods for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs), if necessary. The full menu of services will be available to MSFWs at the local One Stop Career Centers. Bilingual staff will be available to conduct outreach activities when necessary. The One Stop Career Centers stand prepared to serve any potential increase in the number of migrant farm worker population as a result of investments aimed at economic growth. New approaches to reach low income, and low skills MSFWs will include enhanced partnership with NAF Multicultural Development Corporation (167 Grantee) and engaging with community-based organizations such as the Panhandle Community Resource Center.

The State Monitor Advocate has assisted with the development and review of Nebraska's plan. Recommendations have been considered and incorporated where appropriate. The Monitor Advocate oversees the Wagner-Peyser Migrant Seasonal Farmworker program outreach and will regularly evaluate and submit its performance to insure that the required equity ratio indicators are being met or exceeded.

In the Youth Services section of the State's Recovery Act policy it states: "Consistent with the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration's strategic vision for the delivery of services under WIA, local areas are encouraged to focus services on the youth most in need including: out-of-school youth and those most at risk of dropping out, youth in and aging out of foster care, youth offenders and those at risk of court involvement, homeless and runaway youth, children of incarcerated parents, migrant youth, Indian and Native American youth, and youth with disabilities."

The State's Recovery Act policy when addressing Adult Services stresses that the Recovery Act requires that priority use of WIA Adult program funds must be for services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals.

- **Women and Minorities**

The State “Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination” policy was updated to reference the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. It requires that recipients are obligated to ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. It requires that every recipient must designate an Equal Opportunity Officer (EO Officer), except small recipients and service providers. Every application for financial assistance under Title I of WIA must include an assurance prohibiting “discrimination against all individuals in the United States on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and against beneficiaries on the basis of either citizenship/status as a lawfully admitted immigrant authorized to work in the United States or participation in any WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.” The state will ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity through issuance of policies, required assurances in state and local plans, monitoring, and by developing and implementing a Methods of Administration.

- **Individuals training for Non-Traditional Employment**

The Local Plan Instructions require the local plans to address how their services shall meet the needs of individuals training for non-traditional employment. The development of a Website featuring opportunities available to job seekers through the Registered Apprenticeship System, including a listing of occupations and contacts, will provide information and encouragement for people looking for a “learn while you earn” vocation. Increased partnering with the federal DOL Apprenticeship Director and linking WIA with the System, when appropriate, will provide exposure to many occupations job seekers may not previously have considered.

- **Veterans**

The State policy “Veterans’ Priority Provisions” provides local areas guidance regarding veterans’ priority of service outlined in Public Law 107-288, The Jobs for Veterans’ Act of 2002. In addition, Nebraska’s Veterans Employment and Training Service State Plan provides information on the full integration of the Veterans program into the local service delivery system.

Recovery Act and Wagner-Peyser resources will be used to fund additional staff to provide enhanced support and services to eligible veterans in partnership with veterans’ staff located at the One Stop Career Centers. DVOP and LVER staff will continue to be available to provide intensive services for identified veterans and focused outreach activities for employers within the local communities.

- **Public Assistance Recipients**

The State’s “Recovery Act” policy requires that priority use of WIA Adult program funds must be for services to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals. Supportive services and needs-related payments must be available to support the employment and training needs of these priority populations.

- **Older Individuals**

The State policy on the “Senior Community Service Employment Program” identifies issues that may be addressed in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Local Workforce Investment Board and the local SCSEP sponsors. Older individuals are also ensured nondiscrimination and equal opportunity by the “Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination” policy. Wagner-Peyser services are available to everyone, including older job seekers with

limited or outdated skills. Partnership with programs such as Experience Works will enhance services available to older workers and support return to work by providing on the job coaching and skill building. Recovery Act funding will be used to provide additional technology in the Career Center Resource Room and provide opportunities for those individuals to learn how to use technology.

- **People with Limited English-Speaking Proficiency**

The State has established a Limited English Proficiency Plan which provides that individuals with limited English proficiency are able to access the programs and services provided by the One Stop Career Centers on an equitable basis. The statewide plan addresses the programs and services available through entities that receive federal financial assistance under the Recovery Act and Title I of the Workforce Investment Act as a part of the One Stop delivery system. The LEP Plan covers the Office of Employment and Training comprised of a network of five regional and two metro centers. The Plan outlines interpreter and translation services for clients with English as a Second Language and use of bilingual staff in several locations. Ongoing efforts will be made to expand marketing materials to serve LEP customers. In addition, the Office of Employment and Training maintains a contractor for interpretation and translation services available as needed for Rapid Response presentations, public notices, and written materials.

- **People with Disabilities**

The One Stop Career Center staffs in Nebraska facilitate universal programmatic and environmental access to the One Stop system for persons with disabilities. One Stop Career Center staffs are knowledgeable about the complaint procedures under the Nondiscrimination provisions of the Workforce Investment Action, section 188. State program staff conducts accessibility assessments and recommends updates in One Stop facilities, services and accessibility equipment. Wagner-Peyser Services are universal and available free of charge to anyone requesting services. Resource room computers and equipment in all Career Centers include software and adaptive equipment as well as staff familiar with the equipment to ensure accessibility for persons requiring accommodations. Registration forms for services available on the NWD-DOL website are fully accessible and screen reader friendly. Facilities are equipped with automatic doors and ramps where necessary, and handicap accessible parking is provided.

The State “Eligibility for Adult Programs” policy states: “If the family of a disabled individual does not meet the income eligibility criteria, the disabled individual is to be considered a low-income individual if the individual’s own income; (a) Meets the income criteria established in WIA Section 101(25)(B); or (b) Meets the income eligibility criteria for cash payments under any federal, state or local public assistance program.

### **III. Operations**

#### **A. Transparency and Public Comment**

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

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

- State efforts to promote transparency.

In the State WIA “Recovery Act” policy [posted at NebraskaWorkforce.com (go into Information – Workforce Investment Act - Policies)] it states: “Transparent and frequent communication with the public about the nature of the Recovery Act investments is required. Information on Nebraska’s stimulus funding is available at <http://www.Recovery.Nebraska.gov>. The federal government’s Website at <http://www.Recovery.gov>, provides information from a national perspective.” At the March 13, 2009 Nebraska Workforce Investment Board meeting, several partners, board members and the public were advised of the Recovery Act allocation amounts and efforts. Local television news stories have, also, featured youth signing up for summer employment experiences. In April, the Nebraska Workforce Development/Department of Labor also established a Website at: <http://www.dol.state.ne.us/nwd/recovery.cfm>. The site gives citizens direct access to the use of federal stimulus funding received under the Recovery Act for unemployment insurance and employment and training programs. It will be updated regularly to provide full accountability and transparency as funding is received and expended for projects.

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

The State posts all of the State Plan modifications, waiver requests, and will post this Recovery Act Plan stand alone attachment to the State Plan modification to the NebraskaWorkforce.com Website (go into Information – Workforce Investment Act – State Plans). The Recovery Act Plan was reviewed by the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board’s Compliance Committee at their May 27, 2009. This was followed by the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board’s full meeting on June 17, 2009, which is a public meeting announced through Legal Notices. All comments have been given consideration.

## **B. Increasing Services for Universal Access**

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

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

Nebraska’s current policies on One Stop Delivery System, Accessibility, and Limited English Proficiency Title VI Prohibition against National Origin Discrimination (posted at nebraskaworkforce.com) provide guidance and promote universal access statewide. In addition, Wagner-Peyser Recovery Act funds will be utilized to support an additional 21 total staff (14 RES and 7 Wagner-Peyser other services.) This additional level of staffing shall increase and expand service delivery over the next 18 – 24 months. To make the most efficient and effective use of these additional staff, deployment and/or placement has been determined in direct proportion to recent Unemployment Insurance claims data and lay-off and downsizing events captured through the State Rapid Response unit.

## **C. Local Planning Process**

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

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

The State provided Local Plan Instructions for PY 07, PY 08, and PY 09 to the local areas in December, 2008. These instructions provided a framework for the local workforce investment plan. After passage of the Recovery Act, the State and local area representatives began meeting on a weekly basis to strategize on the implementation of Recovery Act funded WIA Title I programs. A Recovery Act Summer Employment Participant and Exit Summary chart was developed to attach to their Local Plans. Issuances and State WIA policies were provided and posted on the NebraskaWorkforce.com Website. Technical assistance questions were answered by the State. The State Recovery Act policy in the Adult Services section stated that “needs-related payments must be available to support the employment and training needs of these priority populations.” Each of the local plans discussed this issue. The State Recovery Act policy, also, required the local areas to establish a methodology for determining work readiness skills upon beginning and completing the summer experience in order to determine whether a measurable increase has occurred. This was, also, addressed in the local plans. In April of 2009, the local areas were asked to provide information on: their anticipated program design for the WIA Youth funds provided under the Recovery Act (including the 22-24 year olds to be served with Recovery Act funds); whether they planned to use the Recovery Act funds only for a 2009 summer youth program or some combination of 2009 and 2010; the types of worksites that would be developed for summer employment; and the anticipated number of youth to be served with Recovery Act funds. The responses from the local areas were incorporated into the State Plan. The local areas also added this information into their local plans. The local plans were forwarded to the Office of Employment and Training after 30 days of public comment. The Compliance Committee of the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board met on May 27, 2009, for their review. Their recommendations on the plans were then forwarded to the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board for their review on June 17, 2009. This board then recommended them to the Governor.

#### **D. Procurement**

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

In answering this question, the state should describe:

- How providers of all youth services will be procured under the Recovery Act. If using funds for summer employment opportunities and the fiscal agent or the state is not operating this program element, please specifically describe procedures for procuring summer employment operational entities and job opportunities.

All State level awards and grants shall follow procurement requirements of the State of Nebraska provided that the procurements conform to applicable Federal law. The State of Nebraska, Department of Administrative Services, Materiel Division (DAS) is responsible for purchases of personal property. The DAS manual Procedures for the Procurement of Contractual Services describes the processes for developing contracts. All agencies are required to use a standardized, open and fair process for the selection of contractual services. The State WIA “Procurement Standards” policy is posted on the NebraskaWorkforce.com Website (go into Information –

Workforce Investment Act – Policies) and is applicable to Recovery Act funded procurement processes.

The Nebraska Workforce Development, Department of Labor is the administrative entity for the Tri-County Workforce Investment Area serving Douglas, Sarpy and Washington Counties in Nebraska. As the administrative entity for Tri-County, a contract was let through a competitive bidding process for the provision of WIA youth services in the Tri-County area. The competitive bidding process complied with all state and federal competitive bidding requirements. Goodwill Industries, Inc. of Omaha, Nebraska was awarded the WIA youth services contract as a result of that competitive bidding process. Since Section 19 of TEGL 14-08 issued following the enactment of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided that “States may request a waiver to expand existing competitively bid contracts,” Nebraska requested a waiver to expand its existing contractual relationship with Goodwill by 106.5% through a companion contract specific to the use of ARRA for the 2009 WIA youth summer employment. In the two other local areas, the fiscal agent is operating this program.

• How the state will implement the Recovery Act provision that a Local Workforce Investment Board may award a contract to an institution of higher education or other eligible training provider if the local board determines that it would facilitate the training of multiple individuals in high-demand occupations, and if such a contract does not limit customer choice.

The State provides information on eligible training providers (ETP) at the <http://traininglink.dol.state.ne.us> site so that the customer is able to make an informed decision on which provider and program of training services best meets his/her needs. Through its currently approved waiver, it has been able to extend the period of initial eligibility of training providers. This has allowed the State to identify the broadest range of eligible training providers to enable individuals to make informed choices related to their training goals, especially in “high-growth, high-demand industries.” All of public higher education in Nebraska is represented on the eligible training provider list, including all of the Community Colleges, all of the State colleges, and all of the University system campuses.

## **E. Technical Assistance**

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

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

The State helps local areas identify areas needing improvement by reviewing performance on a regular basis, requiring corrective action when issues are discovered through on-site monitor reviews, tracking and reviewing expenditures monthly, notifying local areas of information that is unacceptable to the TREX Management Information System based on edit checks, and conducting surveys sponsored by the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board.

Technical assistance is provided by:

- sponsoring statewide training sessions on areas that need improvement;

- training of new staff on the TREX Management Information System;
- training on changes to the TREX system due to Recovery Act reporting requirements;
- funding local training efforts, as requested and as funding is available;
- bringing partners to Local WIA Administrators meeting to update on programs;
- drafting policy to clarify federal guidance;
- sharing written technical assistance papers;
- sponsoring attendance at national conferences, as funding is available; and
- participating on conference calls to discuss relevant issues.

Weekly Summer Youth team meetings have been held at the State office bringing together local area representatives, State administrators, policy, performance, and reporting coordinators to prepare for Recovery Act programs, particularly the summer employment program.

In addition, local areas that fail to meet performance standards are eligible to receive technical assistance funded through the Recovery Act to aid them in correcting their performance. The amount of funds set aside for technical assistance will be identified at the same time the incentive funds are awarded. Before technical assistance funds are distributed, the local area must submit a corrective action plan that addresses:

- the analysis done to determine the causes for the failure, and
- the steps that need to be taken to correct the problems along with an estimated line item budget to accomplish the steps.

The State Workforce Development - Office of Employment and Training will assist the local area in identifying training opportunities that relate to areas where correction is needed. After the corrective action plan has been approved and funds distributed, a monthly review of performance will be conducted at the state level. If improvement does not take place by the end of the following quarter, a meeting will be held with representation from the local area administrative unit, local workforce investment board and the state administrative office present.

## **F. Monitoring and Oversight**

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

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

The Nebraska Workforce Investment Board provides oversight of the One-Stop system by visiting local Career Centers, surveying local areas, using mystery shoppers to evaluate, and contracting for evaluative studies, as needed.

The Nebraska Workforce Development - Department of Labor, Office of General Counsel, monitors program and fiscal performance at the state and local area levels to ensure proper systems are not only in place, but that they are being followed and meet the requirements of the law on a yearly basis. Following passage of the Recovery Act, monitoring plans and schedules previously in place were adapted to include review of Recovery Act funded activities. Summer

Employment monitoring plans for the Recovery Act funded activities have been drafted and made available on the Website. Summer Employment on-site monitoring is tentatively planned for June and July of 2009.

The Nebraska Workforce Development – Office of Employment and Training shall provide oversight and monitoring of the Recovery Act funded reemployment services.

According to State Recovery Act policy, the State as the “recipient” of Recovery Act funds must conduct regular oversight and monitoring of its WIA activities and those of its subrecipients and contractors in order to determine that expenditures have been made against the appropriate cost categories and within the cost limitations. Oversight and monitoring must determine whether or not there is compliance with programmatic, accountability, and transparency provisions of the Recovery Act, as well as the regular provisions of the Workforce Investment Act, as amended, and its regulations and other applicable laws and regulations. The “subrecipients” are the entities which are awarded Recovery Act subgrants. They must conduct regular oversight and monitoring of their subrecipients and contractors in order to determine that expenditures have been made against the appropriate cost categories and within the cost limitations. They must also ensure there is compliance with programmatic, accountability, and transparency provisions of the Recovery Act, as well as the regular provisions of the Workforce Investment Act, as amended, and its regulations and other applicable laws and regulations. The State and its subrecipients shall provide technical assistance, as necessary and appropriate.

#### **G. Accountability and Performance**

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

- The Recovery Act emphasizes the importance of accountability. Describe the state’s overall efforts to hold the state and its local areas accountable for the results of activities funded by the Recovery Act, and how the state will measure whether it has achieved the state’s goals for implementation as described in Questions I.C. and I.E. under “State Vision and Priorities.”

Nebraska has made available to the public through two web portals initial and on-going program information on the Recovery Act activities, expenditures and outcomes. These two sites are [Recovery.Nebraska.gov](http://Recovery.Nebraska.gov) and [www.NebraskaWorkforce.com](http://www.NebraskaWorkforce.com). Nebraska is in the process of modifying its Management Information Systems in order to account for and be able to report on participants served through Recovery Act funds. The Financial Controller for Nebraska Workforce Development/Department of Labor provides a weekly report to the Department’s directors on Recovery Act expenditures. The internal state monitor has revised the State Monitoring Manual to include a section on monitoring WIA Recovery Act funds as well as scheduling site visits. And finally, the Nebraska Auditing of Public Accounts will be reviewing the Recovery Act funds administered by Nebraska Workforce Development/Department of Labor. All of these efforts will help ensure that the State achieves its goals described under “State Vision and Priorities.”

Each local area will collect their own participant data on personal computers using the same statewide software package and standard Management Information System forms. State staff track and review performance on a quarterly basis, for the state, as well as for each local area. This allows the performance measurement standards to be updated each quarter as actual data is received. The state and each local board are sent a quarterly report on their updated standards and actual performance. The state and local boards will be involved in a continuous evaluation of program performance. The Compliance Committee of the Nebraska Workforce Investment Board will review performance on a regular basis, oversee the corrective actions and technical assistance process, and determine what, if any, directional changes are required for the state or local areas. The state and local boards' performance system is based, in part, on a commitment to enhance local performance through incentive, capacity building, and technical assistance monetary awards. Since Nebraska received its requested Common Measures waiver, the PY09 local performance will be evaluated as outlined below. These awards are intended to reinforce the strategic direction of the system.

#### Failure Under Recovery Act Funded Programs

Failure to meet performance standards occurs when a local area does not meet a cumulative average of 100% of the core performance level per Recovery Act funded program (adults, year-round youth and dislocated worker). Local areas that fail to meet performance standards will not receive incentive awards for the particular program for that program year.

#### **Incentive Awards Under Recovery Act Funded Programs**

At a minimum, two and one half percent (2.5%) of the Adult, Youth, and Dislocated Worker Recovery Act funds set aside at the state level will be available for incentive awards, capacity building, and technical assistance. Nebraska will reserve 67% of this set-aside for incentive grants and 33% for capacity building and technical assistance.

To be considered eligible for receiving an incentive award, a local area must have a cumulative average of 100% of the core performance level per program [area](#). When calculating an individual standard, performance is rounded to whole numbers with .5 and over rounded up, and .4 and below rounded down. If the actual performance rounded is equal to or higher than the adjusted standard, then the local area has met or exceeded the individual standard. If after rounding, actual performance is below the adjusted standard, then the local area has not met that individual standard.

Of the funds available for Recovery Act incentive (the 67% share), the distribution of the funds will be the following:

Adults	33%
Dislocated Workers	33%
Youth	34%

When a local area has met the criteria to be eligible for incentives, the following factors will be used to evaluate performance and assign monetary awards.

Factor 1. Exceed the Secretary of Labor's performance standards;

Factor 2. Placement in quality employment that provides fringe benefits;

Factor 3. Placement in quality employment that exceeds the average wage at

placement for the local area based on Labor Market Information data; and Factor 4 Share of Exiters as identified in the Annual Report.

Incentive Distribution for Recovery Act funded programs for Adults, Dislocated Workers, and Youth.

**Adult Recovery Act Incentive Funding**

Thirty-three percent (33%) of the total funds available for incentive will be used to reward local areas that exceed the Secretary of Labor’s core performance standards in the adult measures.

The weight distribution for these performance measures are:

- Entry into Unsubsidized Employment 20%
- 6-Months retention in Unsubsidized Employment 20%
- Average Earnings 20%

Ten percent (10%) will be used as a reward for placing participants in quality employment. Half of this share will be divided among the local areas who are able to exceed the Average Wage at Placement for their area based on the following Labor Market Information data:

Omaha	\$8.60
Lincoln	\$8.50
Greater Nebraska	\$7.33

The other half of the ten percent share will reward local areas that can verify that over half of those employed at termination will be eligible for fringe benefits with their employer. If no local area qualifies for this 10%, then the funds allowed for this factor will be incorporated with the funds for first factor.

Thirty percent (30%) will be given to local areas eligible for this program’s incentive based on their share of Adult Recovery Act funded exiters according to the Annual Report.

**Dislocated Workers Recovery Act Incentive Funding**

Thirty-three percent (33%) of the total funds available for incentive will be used to reward local areas that exceed the Secretary of Labor’s core performance standards in the dislocated workers area.

The weight distribution for these performance measures are:

- Entry into Unsubsidized Employment 20%
- 6-Months retention in Unsubsidized Employment 20%
- Average Earnings 20%

Ten percent (10%) will be used as a reward for placing participants in quality employment. Half of this share will be divided among the local areas who are able to exceed the Average Wage at Placement for their area based on the following Labor Market Information data:

Omaha	\$8.60
Lincoln	\$8.50
Greater Nebraska	\$7.33

The other half of the ten percent share will reward local areas that can verify that over half of those employed at termination will be eligible for fringe benefits with their employer. If no local area qualifies for this 10%, then the funds allowed for this factor will be incorporated with the funds for first factor.

Thirty percent (30%) will be given to local areas eligible for this program’s incentive based on their share of Dislocated Worker Recovery Act funded exiters according to the Annual Report.

**Youth**

Thirty-four percent (34%) of the total funds available for incentive will be used to reward local areas that exceed the Secretary of Labor’s core performance standards for year-round Youth.

The weight distribution for these performance measures is:

- Placement in Employment or Education 20%
- Attainment of Degree or Certificate 20%
- Literacy and Numeracy Gains 20%

Ten percent (10%) will be used as a reward for placing participants in quality employment. Half of this share will be divided among the local areas who are able to exceed the Average Wage at Placement for their area based on the following Labor Market Information data:

Omaha	\$8.60
Lincoln	\$8.50
Greater Nebraska	\$7.33

The other half of this ten percent share will reward local areas that can verify that over half of those employed at termination will be eligible for fringe benefits with their employer. If no local area qualifies for this 10%, then the funds allowed for this factor will be incorporated with the funds for factor 1.

Thirty percent (30%) will be given to local areas eligible for this program’s incentive based on their share of Youth Recovery Act funded exiters according to the Annual Report.

- The Recovery Act requires states to report on work readiness to assess the effectiveness of summer employment opportunities for youth. The state should identify its methodology for determining whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred, and what tools will be used for this determination.

The State WIA “Recovery Act” policy states: “Local areas should establish a methodology for determining work readiness skills upon beginning and completing the summer experience in order to determine whether a measurable increase has occurred. Although local areas are not required to use a specific assessment instrument to determine pre- and post-work readiness skills, local areas should choose from a variety of assessment tools including worksite supervisor evaluations, work readiness skill checklists administered by program staff, portfolio assessments, and any other relevant forms of assessing work readiness skills.” The State TREX management information system shall be used to track performance on this measurement. The State shall review and report to the national office and to the NWIB Compliance Committee.

