

The State Workforce Investment Board and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) are developing the Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act plan for the next two program years. Components of that plan are or will be available for review by clicking the links below. Interested parties are encouraged to provide written comments on the draft plan. Comments should reference the section(s) to which they pertain. The Draft State Plan will be presented to the State Board for approval on Friday, May 13. **Comments will be accepted through Monday, May 31 at 5:00 p.m.** by emailing MDES at: jgraham@mdes.ms.gov or by writing **ATTN: State Plan Review and Comments, Post Office Box 24568, Jackson, Mississippi 39225-4568.**

The State Plan is divided into sections as outlined in U.S. Department of Labor Instructions. Please select any of the following links to view that section.

Governor's Vision for the Mississippi Workforce Development System

Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act Plan:

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- II. State Workforce Investment Priorities
- III. State Governance Structure
 - A. Organization of State agencies in relation to Governor
 - B. State Workforce Investment Board (WIB)
 - C. Structure/Process for State agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the local workforce investment system
- IV. Economic and Labor Market Analysis
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STRATEGIC TWO-YEAR WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PLAN

FOR

TITLE I

OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998

AND

THE WAGNER-PEYSER ACT

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

For the period of

July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2007

FULL PLAN

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Two-Year Strategic Plan
For the Period of July 1, 2005- June 30, 2007
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GOVERNOR'S VISION FOR THE MISSISSIPPI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

When Governor Barbour was inaugurated in January 2004, he announced that his number one priority was to improve the workforce development system in Mississippi, in order for businesses to thrive, prosper, and create increased job opportunities. Governor Barbour announced four goals:

- ❑ Centralize and streamline workforce training functions
- ❑ Maximize and leverage all workforce training funds
- ❑ Raise the skill level of Mississippi Workers
- ❑ Create Job Opportunities

A series of steps has been taken to realize this vision. A group of more than 500 businesspeople organized as Momentum Mississippi to develop goals and strategies to improve Mississippi's business climate and economic conditions. The Governor named his new State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) including key business leaders and merged it with Mississippi's separate community college workforce council.

Governor Barbour worked with the state legislature to enact a new law in 2004 that consolidated employment-training programs into one new executive agency, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). MDES supports the SWIB, WIA, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans' Programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Work Opportunity Tax Credits, Labor Market Information and Business Outreach Services.

Local workforce areas were combined in order to streamline activities, reduce administrative costs, and more sharply focus workforce activities. Mississippi's four workforce areas (see attached map) are administered by four Local Workforce Boards, overseen by a consortium of elected County Supervisors, with staff and fiscal support provided by four Planning and Development Districts. These local area boundaries and administrative arrangements will remain in effect throughout the two-year planning period.

Momentum Mississippi has developed several long-range goals based on the following facts:

- Mississippi has 1.3 million workers
- 80% of Mississippians are high school graduates
- 25% of Mississippians are college graduates
- Mississippi has the lowest national wage – 400,000 full time workers make between \$5.15 and \$9.50 per hour
- Ten years ago, 25% of Mississippi jobs were in manufacturing
- In 2005, 16% of Mississippi jobs are in manufacturing
- In 2005, 25% of the non-metro jobs are in manufacturing
- In 2005, 15% of the metro jobs are in manufacturing
- In Mississippi, services, government, and retail make up the bulk of the job market
- In Mississippi, there is strong growth in the automotive, communications, information technology, polymers, geospatial and healthcare sectors

Momentum Mississippi is committed to developing a workforce training system that can enhance Mississippi's economic development. Momentum Mississippi has adopted a set of long-range goals benchmarked against the following Southern States: Kentucky, Oklahoma, Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Louisiana, Florida, Arkansas and Texas.

By 2010:

- Mississippi will remain first in per capita income growth
- Mississippi will move from 10th to 8th or higher in employment growth
- Mississippi will be at least 6th in image for locating or expanding a business
- Mississippi will move from 12th to 9th or higher in high-tech share of employment

Mississippi's State Workforce Investment Board has adopted six broad directional goals for the workforce development system that build on the Governor's vision and Momentum Mississippi's long-range goals:

1. Install an accountability system that tracks system-wide results and funding;

2. Consolidate workforce training efforts and reduce redundancy and administration;
3. Involve business in defining training needs;
4. Provide a user-friendly system for all customers;
5. Develop a clearly defined implementation plan; and
6. Fully leverage the community/junior college system.

FOCUS ON WORKFORCE GROUPS AND TARGETED INDUSTRIES

Mississippi's near-term strategy will be to focus upon the following selected areas in which we can make an immediate impact in promoting jobs and job growth.

- The Workforce – In this phase of development, Mississippi recognizes that providing opportunities to the following groups is essential to building a more vibrant workforce:
 - Incumbent Workers – Including but not limited to low skill and entry-level workers and workers with no clear career path to advancement;
 - Dislocated Workers – Including but not limited to Mississippi workers who have lost jobs as a result of a business closure due to trade related displacements, displaced homemakers, and the children of dislocated workers;
 - Veterans – Including but not limited to recently separated veterans, families of veterans and active military personnel, and military personnel returning from active duty;
 - Offenders and Ex-Offenders – Including but not limited to incarcerated individuals scheduled for release within three months;
 - Older Youth – Including but not limited to individuals over 18 and less than 22 years of age who are not enrolled in school or who are underemployed; and
 - Mature Workers – Including but not limited to unemployed or under employed individuals over the age of 55.

- Targeted Industries – To ensure the growth of the economy, Mississippi recognizes that it must focus resources upon those

businesses and skills providing the greatest opportunity for future growth. The State will encourage its partners to focus predominately on the following business types:

- Existing Business – Including but not limited to businesses with current documented demand or high-growth;
- High Growth and High Demand – Including but not limited to businesses with future high growth and high demand potential;
- Healthcare – Including but not limited to healthcare related occupations where training is provided in partnership with healthcare providers;
- Small Business – Including but not limited to businesses that employ not less than 5 and not more than 50 workers and which support high growth or high demand occupations;
- Advanced Manufacturing – Including but not limited to businesses engaged in making a better product at less cost; and
- Support Industries – Including but not limited to businesses or services necessary to support and enhance economic growth such as construction, education, finance, and transportation.

In summary, Mississippi will implement Governor Barbour’s vision of an integrated, accountable workforce development system. The workforce system will promote business growth and increase employment opportunities by strengthening the partnership between Momentum Mississippi, the State’s fifteen community and junior colleges, the four local workforce investment board, each of the One-Stop partner agencies and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security. The workforce partnership will consolidate services in a statewide One-Stop system that is customer-friendly and focuses upon (1) existing workers, (2) dislocated workers, (3) veterans, (4) offenders and ex-offenders, (5) youth from 18 to 21, and (6) mature workers to provide jobs and skills for existing businesses, high-growth and high-demand occupations, the booming healthcare professions, small businesses, advanced manufacturing, and support industries including construction, finance and transportation.

MISSISSIPPI'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

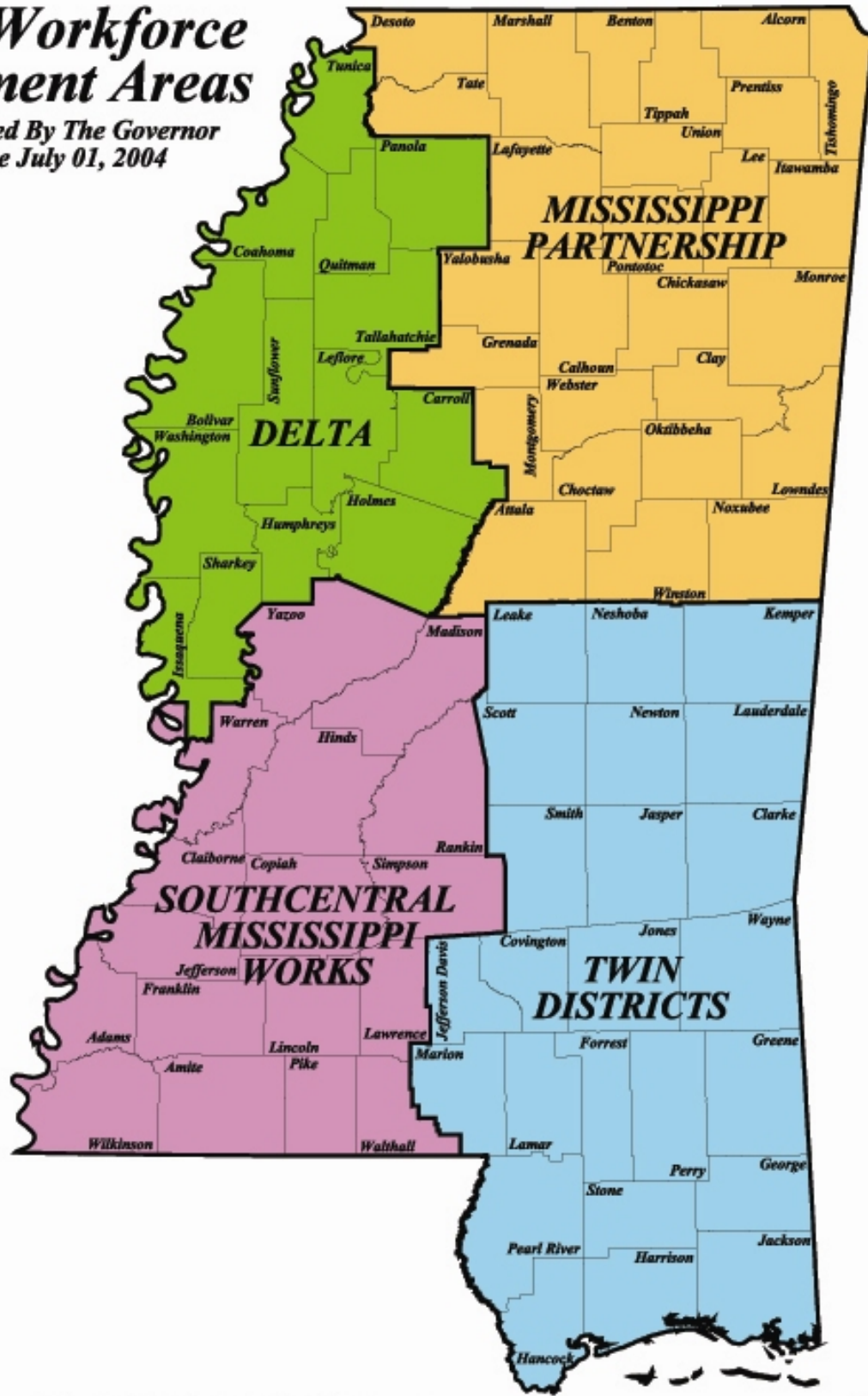
The Mississippi Department of Employment Security serves as the lead Executive Agency to implement the Governor's vision and the goals of Momentum Mississippi and the State Workforce Investment Board to increase employment opportunities in Mississippi and improve Mississippi's economic health. This will be done in partnership with the four local workforce investment boards, business leaders, and the following state agencies:

- Mississippi Development Authority (the state's economic development agency);
- Department of Rehabilitative Services;
- Department of Human Services;
- State Board of Community and Junior Colleges;
- State Board of Education; and
- Institutions of Higher Learning.

MDES will provide all of its services through an integrated system of One-Stop Centers. The four local workforce investment boards have all contracted with MDES to work in partnership with the community and junior colleges to administer the One-Stop Centers. Each center has one manager who oversees Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, WIA services, Veterans services, Dislocated Worker and Trade Adjustment Assistance Services, Work Opportunity Tax Credits, Vocational Rehabilitation Services and Job Corps recruiting. At the state level, Business Outreach Services, Rapid Response, and Labor Market Information will be provided. This integrated service model will be characterized by customer-friendliness, an emphasis on providing personal and automated support for self-service, and strict and transparent accountability.

Local Workforce Investment Areas

As Designated By The Governor
Effective July 01, 2004



11/15/04

State of Mississippi

Plan Development Process

- I. Include (a) a discussion of the involvement of the Governor and the State Board in the development of the plan, and (b) a description of the manner in which the State Board collaborated with economic development, education, the business community and other interested parties in the development of the state plan. (§112(b)(1).)**

The Governor's Workforce Team has been working on developing and implementing the Governor's workforce plans since his inauguration in January 2004. Therefore, the issuance of the Department of Labor guidance for the Two-Year Workforce Investment Plan gave the Team the opportunity to formalize relative workforce plans, policies, and procedures. The Team's members worked to assemble the plan and prepared all drafts for partner and community review and comment. The Team has sought input from the local workforce areas, economic developers and business leaders, workforce development professionals, educators, partner agencies and stakeholders.

At the same time the State Workforce Investment Board is working on a true Strategic Plan for the State's unified workforce system. When possible and appropriate, the Workforce Team incorporated the strategic planning work of the Board in this plan.

- II. 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), 112(b)(9).)**

The State made the plan available of public comment in the following ways:

- Completed sections of the draft of the state plan were posted on the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) website starting on April 8, 2005, for public review and comment.
- Public Notices were placed in the five of the State's major daily newspapers announcing the availability of the draft plan on the MDES website for review and comments and providing instructions on how, where and when comment should be submitted;
- Written notice of the draft plan availability was mailed to workforce partners and interested parties including but not limited to local workforce administrators, elected officials and boards, partner agencies, and community and junior college presidents.
- Each of the 12 Local Workforce Investment Area directors and his/her Workforce Investment Board chair were invited to review and make recommendations to the plan;
- The plan was discussed at meetings attended by local Workforce Investment Area directors and other stakeholders.
- No comments have been received to date. Comments received after the plan has been submitted will be forwarded to the Department of Labor.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DRAFT TWO-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007

I. Describe the Governor’s vision for a statewide workforce investment system. Provide a summary articulating the Governor’s vision for utilizing the resources of the public workforce system in support of the State’s economic development that address the issues and questions below. States are encouraged to attach more detailed documents to expand upon any aspect of the summary response if available. (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).)

A. What are the State’s economic development goals for attracting, retaining and growing business and industry within the State? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).)

Governor Haley Barbour recently unveiled the formation of a long-range economic development plan for the State, “*Momentum Mississippi*.” The Momentum Mississippi concept built upon Blueprint Mississippi’s recommendations, which came from business and higher education leaders and the Mississippi Economic Council. *Momentum Mississippi* will immediately fulfill one of the recommendations of Blueprint Mississippi – the implementation of the Statewide Economic Development Planning Act of 1987. The Act calls for a strategic, statewide approach to economic development that is systematically reviewed and updated. Governor Barbour formed a *Momentum Mississippi* Advisory Committee, a broad-based group from every region of the State to give recommendations for long-range economic development plans. Many of this advisory committee’s members are also members of the State Workforce Investment Board (the State Workforce Board).

According to Governor Barbour, “It should be no surprise that *Momentum Mississippi* will be a top priority for this Administration. Job creation is our state’s most urgent need.” The *Momentum Mississippi* Advisory Committee and the State Workforce Board will help to insure that the State is focusing its resources in the most effective manner for today’s environment.

B. Given that a skilled workforce is a key to the economic success of every business, what is the Governor’s vision for maximizing and leveraging the broad array of Federal and State resources available for workforce investment flowing through the State’s cabinet agencies and/or education agencies in order to ensure a skilled workforce for the State’s business and industry? (§112(a) and (b)(4)(A-C).)

When Governor Barbour was inaugurated in January 2004, he announced that his number one priority was to improve the workforce development system in Mississippi, in order for businesses to thrive, prosper and create increased job opportunities. Governor Barbour announced four goals:

- ❑ Centralize and streamline workforce training;
- ❑ Maximize and leverage all workforce training funds;
- ❑ Raise the skill level of Mississippi workers; and,
- ❑ Create job opportunities.

A series of steps has been taken to realize this strategic initiative. A group of more than 500 business people organized as *Momentum Mississippi* to develop goals and strategies to improve Mississippi's business climate and economic conditions. The Governor appointed his new State Workforce Board, which includes key business leaders, and merged the Board with Mississippi's separate community and junior college council that oversaw the use of State workforce training dollars.

Governor Barbour worked with the state legislature to enact a new law in 2004 that consolidated employment and training programs into one new executive agency, the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES). MDES supports the State Board, WIA, Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, the Veterans' Programs, Trade Adjustment Assistance, Work Opportunity Tax Credits, labor market information, and business outreach services.

Several local workforce areas were combined in order to streamline activities, reduce administrative costs, and more sharply focus workforce activities. Currently, four workforce areas (see map, **Attachment E**) receive policy governance from four strong local workforce investment boards (the local Workforce Boards), overseen by a consortium of elected County Supervisors, with staff and fiscal support provided by four Planning and Development Districts.

C. Given the continuously changing skill needs that business and industry have as a result of innovation and new technology, 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)(A-C).)

Momentum Mississippi has adopted a set of long-range goals for the year 2010 in relationship to similar and neighboring states including:

- Increasing per capita income growth;
- Increasing employment growth;

- Enhancing the State’s image for locating or expanding a business;
- Increasing the State’s high-tech employment share; and,
- Maintaining the State’s manufacturing job share while increasing worker skills and earnings.

In order to achieve these goals, education and job training will have to become better linked to businesses and the WIN Job Centers (One-Stop Career Centers.) In the past year, the Governor has set aside a large portion of his statewide funds to create new high demand/high growth training programs delivered by the State’s fifteen community and junior colleges. These valuable new training options for Mississippi’s businesses and workers will be improved and expanded each year utilizing a brand new fund stream created by Governor Barbour and the State legislature in the spring of 2005. The State Workforce Board will coordinate this new fund stream. In addition, a continued emphasis upon cost effectiveness will allow a greater percentage of WIA funds to be spent on training each year.

D. What is the Governor’s vision for bringing together the key players in workforce development including business and industry, economic development, education, and the public workforce system to continuously identify the workforce challenges facing the State and to develop innovative strategies and solutions that effectively leverage resources to address those challenges? (§112(b)(10).)

The Governor has linked the work of the *Momentum Mississippi* Advisory Committee and the State Workforce Board. The two groups have significantly overlapping membership and connected agendas.

Mississippi’s State Workforce Board has adopted six goals for the workforce development system that build on the Governor’s vision and *Momentum Mississippi*’s long-range economic development goals:

1. Install an accountability system that tracks system wide results and funding;
2. Consolidate workforce training efforts and reduce redundancy and administration;
3. Involve business in defining training needs;
4. Provide a user-friendly system for all customers;
5. Develop a clearly defined implementation plan; and
6. Fully leverage the community and junior college system.

The Board Chair has named six committees to guide the Board and the workforce system in addressing each of these goals. Board members chair these committees. However, membership is not limited to State Workforce Board members. Partners, interested parties and subject matter experts have been invited to participate as members of each committee. This process reflects and supports the Governor's vision for bringing together all key workforce development players including business and industry, economic development, education, and the One- Stop partners to continuously identify workforce challenges facing the State and to develop innovative strategies and solutions that effectively leverage resources to address those challenges.

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, 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 farm worker youth, and other youth at risk? (§112(b)(18)(A).)

Governor Barbour recognizes that to build the State's future economy we must focus not only upon the existing workforce but also on the future workforce ... our youth. Education and career-building opportunities are key to the State's plan for economic growth and will be in the forefront of the work of *Momentum Mississippi* and the State Workforce Board. While the youth focus of this plan will be older youth, the Board will continue its planning efforts to enhance career building in the educational system, especially for those youth most in need, 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 farm worker youth, and other youth at risk.

II. State Workforce Investment Priorities

Identify the Governor's key workforce investment priorities for the State's public workforce system and how each will lead to actualizing the Governor's vision for workforce and economic development. (§§111(d)(2) and 112 (a).)

Mississippi's near-term strategy will be to focus upon the following areas where the greatest impact can be made in promoting jobs and job growth.

The Workforce – Mississippi recognizes that providing opportunities to the following groups is essential to building a more vibrant workforce:

- Existing Workers – Including but not limited to low skill and entry-level workers and workers with no clear career path to advancement;

- Dislocated Workers – Including but not limited to Mississippi workers who have lost jobs as a result of foreign trade, displaced homemakers and the children of dislocated workers;
- Veterans – Including but not limited to recently separated veterans and families of Veterans;
- Offenders and Ex-Offenders – Including but not limited to incarcerated individuals scheduled for release within three months;
- Older Youth – Including but not limited to individuals between 18 and 22 who are not enrolled in school or who are under employed; and
- Mature Workers – Including but not limited to unemployed or under employed individuals over 55.

Targeted Industries – To ensure the growth of the economy, Mississippi recognizes that it must focus resources upon businesses and skills providing the greatest opportunity for future growth. The State will encourage its workforce partners to focus predominantly upon the following business types:

- Existing Business – Including but not limited to currently expanding businesses;
- High Growth and High Demand Potential- Including but not limited to current or new businesses expected to expand at a high rate in the immediate future;
- Healthcare – Including but not limited to healthcare related occupations where training is provided in partnership with healthcare providers;
- Small Business – Including but not limited to businesses that employ not less than 5 and not more than 50 workers and which support high growth or high demand occupations;
- Advanced Manufacturing – Including but not limited to businesses engaged in making a better product at less cost; and,
- Support Industries – Including but not limited to businesses or services necessary to support and enhance economic growth such as construction, education, finance, and transportation.

Mississippi will continue to implement Governor Barbour’s vision of an integrated, accountable workforce development system. The workforce system will promote business growth and will increase employment opportunities and wages for Mississippi workers by strengthening public/private partnerships, further integrating and consolidating One-Stop services and expanding training and educational opportunities in high growth and high demand occupations.

III. State Governance Structure (§112(b)(8)(A).)

A. Organization of State agencies in relation to the:

- 1. Provide an organizational chart that delineates the relationship to the Governor of the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system, including education and economic development and the**

required and optional One-Stop partner programs managed by each agency.

An organizational chart reflecting the relationship between the Governor and agencies involved in the State's workforce development system is included as **Attachment A**.

1. In a narrative describe how the agencies involved in the public workforce investment system interrelate on workforce and economic development issues and the respective lines of authority.

Governor Haley Barbour has stated on numerous occasions, "Our goal in Mississippi is to use WIA and the State Workforce Board to align resources to provide employers with well-trained workers and individuals with the opportunities to get their first job, their next job or a better job." Mississippi's Workforce Investment Network (WIN) is the workforce development centerpiece, combining Federal, State and community programs and services and making them easily accessible at over 60 WIN Job Centers throughout the State, as well as through on-line electronic sites.

The WIN system represents a collaborative effort including private businesses, local elected officials and local and state public agencies. This collaboration ensures that the needs of local businesses and job seekers are met through tailored solutions designed to promote workforce development and economic growth.

WIN partners include, but are not limited to: the Mississippi Department of Employment Security; the Mississippi Development Authority; local elected officials; local Workforce Boards; the Mississippi Department of Education; the Mississippi Department of Human Services; the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services; the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges; and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Additional partners are engaged at the local level.

The above partners interact on a regular basis to conduct rapid response sessions for dislocated workers, recruit potential businesses, partner to provide incumbent worker training, on-the-job training and customized training and participate in pilot projects designed to enhance and improve service delivery. The directors of key agencies that participate in the WIN system as One-Stop partners were appointed to the State Workforce Board.

While partner agencies function independently, with their own governing bodies and statutory authorities, all are dedicated to the mission of increasing employment in Mississippi. These partner agencies recognize

the value of pooling resources to eliminate duplication and maximize the use of Federal and State workforce dollars.

B. State Workforce Investment Board (§112(b)(1).)

1. Describe the Organization and Structure of the State Board. (§111.)

The Governor appoints a Chair from among the Board's business members. The Chair presides at Board meetings and appoints the Vice-Chair. The Chair appoints committees as deemed necessary to carry out the work of the Board. Currently, the Board has an Executive Committee and six other committees have been established to address the Board's six goals. These committees are: Accountability and System Oversight; Business Involvement and the Workforce Training Enhancement Fund; Workforce Training Efficiencies; Leveraging Community & Junior Colleges; Seamless Customer Service; and Strategic Plan Oversight.

2. Identify the organizations or entities represented on the State Board. If you are using an alternative entity which does not contain all the members required under section 111(b)(1), describe how each of the entities required under this section will be involved in planning and implementing the State's workforce investment system as envisioned in WIA. How is the alternative entity achieving the State's WIA goals? (§§111(a-c), 111(e), and 112(b)(1).)

A list of the current State Workforce Board member, including the organization each member represents, is included as **Attachment B**.

2. Describe the process your State used to identify your State Board members. How did you select board members, including business representatives, who have optimum policy-making authority and who represent diverse regions of the State as required under WIA? (20CFR 661.200.)

The Governor's Appointment Secretary, following WIA guidelines, identified potential Board members. The Appointment Secretary consulted with business organizations, including the Mississippi Economic Council and the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, to ensure that individuals representing both small and large businesses were included on the Board and that an appropriate mix of employers was considered. Efforts were made to select business representatives who served on local Workforce Boards or who led business associations. Including these members helps align workforce activities, strengthens coordination and ensures a cohesive approach to designing and operating the workforce investment system

The directors of key agencies that participate as One-Stop partners were appointed to ensure their input and experience.

The Lieutenant Governor, the presiding officer of the Senate, appointed two members of the Mississippi Senate. The Speaker of the House of Representatives of the Mississippi Legislature appointed two members from the House of Representatives. The President of the Mississippi AFL-CIO was consulted regarding Board members representing labor.

The demographics and regions of the State were taken into consideration when appointing SWIB members. The appointment process ensured that Board members represent critical sectors of the economy, including manufacturing, services, retail, construction, and banking, and that appointees live and work in the Mississippi Delta, the hill country and the central, southwest, southeast, and Gulf Coast regions.

3. Describe how the board's membership enables you to achieve your vision described above. (§§111(a-c) and 112(b)(1).)

With a dynamic and diverse membership, the State Workforce Board is well equipped to provide the direction-setting leadership needed to implement and oversee Mississippi's workforce development system. Through the recent passage of The Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, the Governor and the legislature has outlined the duties of the State Workforce Board, including functions in Section 111(d) of the Workforce Investment Act.

4. Describe how the Board carries out its functions as required in sec. 111 (d) and 20 CFR 661.205. Include functions the Board has assumed that are in addition to those required. Identify any functions required in sec. 111 (d) the Board does not perform and explain why.

The State Workforce Board performs all functions listed in WIA section 111(d) and 20 CFR 661.205. In addition, the SWIB develops accountability standards for State funded community and junior college workforce development programs.

5. How will the State Board ensure that the public (including people with disabilities) has access to board meetings and information regarding State Board activities, including membership and meeting minutes? (20 CFR 661.205)

Every effort will be made to ensure that the public is informed of Board meetings and decisions. In compliance with Mississippi State Law (Mississippi Code of 1972 Annotated, Title 25-41-13, Open Meetings), a public notice will be included in appropriate newspapers across the State

to announce the time, date, and location of each Board meeting. Also, announcements of upcoming Board meetings and committee meetings can be found on the Mississippi Department of Employment Security website, and e-mails will be sent to anyone requesting meeting information.

In addition, each meeting shall be held in a location that is accessible to the general public and that is handicapped accessible. Adequate seating will be provided at each meeting to allow members of the public to observe the proceedings. Minutes are kept of each Board meeting and are on file at the Mississippi Department of Employment Security building. The minutes are open for public inspection during regular business hours. A copy of minutes and information regarding Board activities is provided upon request.

6. Identify the circumstances that constitute a conflict of interest for any State or local workforce investment board member or the entity that s/he represents, and any matter that would provide a financial benefit to that member or his or her immediate family. (§§111(f), 112(b)(13), and 117(g).)

State law addresses conflict of interest at §25-4-101 through 25-4-119, which covers State and local Workforce Board members. At §25-4-105, the law states:

- a. No public servant shall use his official position to obtain pecuniary benefit for himself other than that compensation provided for by law, or to obtain pecuniary benefit for any relative or any business with which he is associated.
- b. No public servant shall be interested, directly or indirectly, during the term for which he shall have been chosen, or within one (1) year after the expiration of such term, in any contract with the state, or any district, county, city or town thereof, authorized by any law passed or order made by any board of which he may be or may have been a member.
- c. No public servant shall:
 - (1) **Be a contractor, subcontractor, or vendor with the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent, other than in his contract of employment, or have a material financial interest in any business which is a contractor, subcontractor or vendor with the governmental entity of which he is a member, officer, employee or agent.**
 - (2) **Be a purchaser, direct or indirect, at any sale made by him in his official capacity or by the governmental entity of which he is an officer or employee, except in respect of the sale of goods**

or services when provided as public utilities or offered to the general public on a uniform price schedule.

- (3) Be a purchaser, direct or indirect, of any claim, certificate, warrant or other security issued by or to be paid out of the treasury of the governmental entity of which he is an officer or employee.
- (4) Perform any service for any compensation during his term of office or employment by which he attempts to influence a decision of the authority of the governmental entity of which he is a member.
- (5) Perform any service for any compensation for any person or business after termination of his office or employment in relation to any case, decision, proceeding or application with respect to which he was directly concerned or in which he personally participated during the period of his service or employment.

7. What resources does the State provide the board to carry out its functions, i.e. staff, funding, etc.?

The State provides the Board with one fulltime staff position and other staff and funding support necessary to carry out its functions.

C. Structure/Process for State agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the local workforce investment system. (Sect. 112(b)(8)(A).)

- 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), 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).)**

The Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004 changed the face of the State's workforce investment system. The Act established and prescribed the membership of the State Workforce Board, which assumed the responsibilities of the Mississippi Workforce Development Advisory Council (the governing body for the State's community and junior colleges workforce funds) and the former State Workforce Investment Act Board (the governing body for WIA activities).

The Workforce Consolidation Act was designed to establish a comprehensive workforce training system focused upon achieving results,

using resources efficiently, and ensuring that workers and employers can easily access needed training services. The goal is to maximize cooperation among state agencies while increasing the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, thereby improving the quality of the workforce, reducing welfare dependency, and enhancing the productivity and competitiveness of the State of Mississippi.

As a result of the passage of Senate Bill 2478 in February 2005, administration of the Workforce Investment Act will be transferred from the Mississippi Development Authority to the Mississippi Department of Employment Security effective July 1, 2005. The transfer of WIA to MDES will further enhance collaboration and cooperation by placing the management of WIA, Wagner-Peyser, unemployment insurance, veterans' programs and Trade Adjustment Assistance within a single state agency.

- 2. Describe the lines of communication established by the Governor to ensure open and effective sharing of information among the State agencies responsible for implementing the vision for the public workforce system; between the State agencies and the State Workforce Investment Board.**

The Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004 stipulates that the State Workforce Board shall coordinate all training programs and funds in the State, and that each State agency and director will work cooperatively and be individually and collectively responsible to the Governor for the successful implementation of the statewide workforce investment system. The Governor, as Chief Executive Officer of the State, has complete authority to enforce cooperation among all entities that utilize Federal or State funding for the conduct of workforce training activities.

- 3. Describe the lines of communication and mechanisms established by the Governor to ensure timely and effective sharing of information between the State agencies/State Board and local workforce investment areas and local Boards. Include types of regularly issued guidance and how Federal guidance is disseminated to local Boards and One-Stop Career Centers. (§112(b)(1).)**

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security will issue regular, written communications to the local Workforce Boards. These communications will disseminate Federal guidance, such as Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGL's) and Training and Employment Notices (TEN's), drafts and final versions of State policies, and information on upcoming conferences and training sessions.

Information will also be distributed through the MDES web site and through partner agency web sites as appropriate.

Refer also to plan section III.A.4, above.

- 4. Describe any cross-cutting organizations or bodies at the State level designed to guide and inform an integrated vision for serving youth in the State within the context of workforce investment, social services, juvenile justice, and education. Describe the membership of such bodies and the functions and responsibilities in establishing priorities and services for youth? How is the State promoting a collaborative cross-agency approach for both policy development and service delivery at the local level for youth? (§112(b)(18)(A).)**

When WIA was implemented in Mississippi, the State Workforce Board did not elect to establish a state-level Youth Council. Instead, local Youth Councils will take the lead, building upon their existing relationships with youth agencies and service providers.

In 2003, the State convened a Youth Summit. Each local area sent a team consisting of representatives from local Youth Council staff, youth providers, WIA partner agencies, and community- and faith-based organizations. A State Youth Team met as well and featured team members from education, disability advocates and community-based organizations. The intent of the State Team was to provide support to the local teams and help effect policy changes. Most of the local teams continue to meet and have had a significant impact on service delivery to youth in their areas.

In order to realize DOL's new vision for serving the neediest youth, Mississippi will reconvene the Youth Team. In addition to the participants identified above, this Youth Team will include representatives from the State agencies that oversee juvenile justice, social services, education, and workforce development, as well as participants from other interested youth advocacy groups.

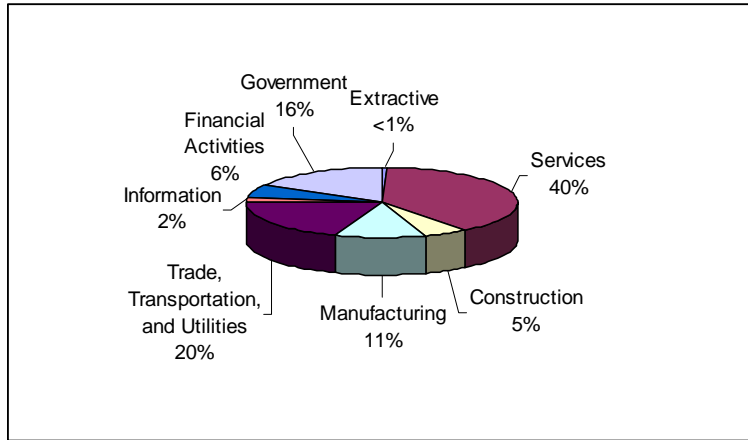
We are excited to have the committed support of Governor Barbour. In keeping with the Governor's vision for Mississippi, the State Youth Team will make the education and preparation of youth for tomorrow's workforce a top priority.

- IV. Economic and Labor Market Analysis (§112(b)(4).): As a foundation for this strategic plan and to inform the strategic investments and strategies that flow from this plan, provide a detailed analysis of the State's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. Elements of the analysis should include the following:**

A. What is the current makeup of the State’s economic base by industry?

In the last two decades, the industry structure in the nation as a whole has shifted toward more of a service and knowledge-based industry. Currently, in the U.S. 40 percent of all jobs are in the service sector, 11 percent in manufacturing, and the remaining are shared across several sectors (see Figure 1).

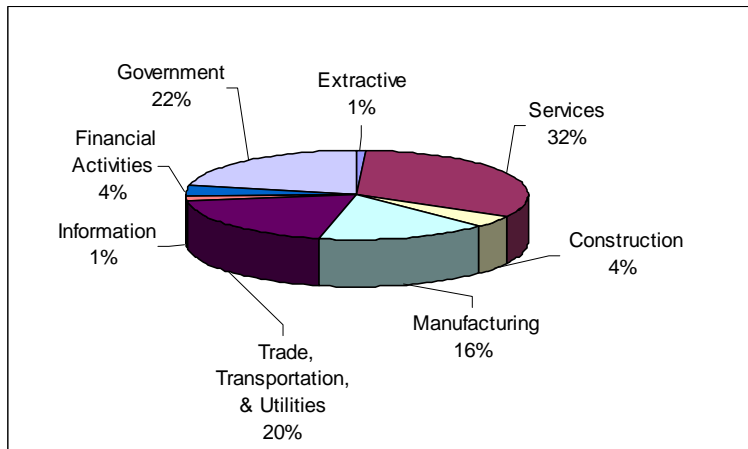
Figure 1: U.S. Economic Base by Industry, 2004



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics, 2004

Mississippi has followed national industrial trends and has 34 percent of its current workforce employed in services and 16 percent in the manufacturing sector (see Figure 2). The greater reliance on jobs in the manufacturing sector, as compared to the nation, reflects the rural nature of Mississippi, which continues to provide comparative advantage in terms of low labor and land costs.

Figure 2: Mississippi Economic Base by Industry, 2004



Source: MS Department of Employment Security Current Employment Statistics, 2004

Within the service sector, the two largest sub-sectors are health care and social assistance, and accommodation and food services, accounting for approximately 60 percent of all service sector jobs. The former sub-sector pays an average annual wage of \$30,000 and the latter sub-sector pays \$14,000.

Table 1: The Service Sector, State of MS, 2003-2004

	2003	2004	Percent Change	Average Annual Wage
Professional and Business Services	78,870	82,800	4.98	
Professional, Scientific and Technical	28,690	29,900	4.22	36,447
Management of Companies	10,470	9,900	-5.44	51,722
Administrative and Support	39,710	43,000	8.29	17,962
Educational and Health Services	115,800	119,000	2.76	
Educational Services	14,520	15,600	7.44	26,839
Health Care and Social Assistance	101,280	103,500	2.19	30,465
Leisure and Hospitality	123,250	125,100	1.50	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	13,310	13,100	-1.58	18,543
Accommodation and Food Services	109,940	112,000	1.87	14,104
Other Services	37,610	37,700	0.24	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>355,530</i>	<i>364,700</i>	<i>2.58</i>	

Source: Employment data come from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2004. Wage data come from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2003.

Seventy-three percent of those employed in the service sector work for businesses with over 50 employees. These large employers, however, account for only five percent of all service businesses.

Table 2: Size of Mississippi Service Businesses, 2004

Number of Employees	% of businesses	% of employees
1-5	65.5	6.2
6-10	13.8	5.1
11-20	9.0	6.3
21-50	6.4	9.7
51-100	2.1	7.2
100+	3.1	65.4

Source: Mississippi Business Tax Records, 2004

Within the manufacturing sector, the three largest sub-sectors are transportation equipment, furniture and related products, and food manufacturing, accounting for 46 percent of all jobs in manufacturing. Of these, transportation equipment pays

the highest average annual wage, \$40,000, followed by furniture and related products and food manufacturing paying \$27,000 and \$21,000 respectively. Other large sub-sectors include wood products manufacturing, machinery manufacturing, other durable manufacturing, and fabricated metal, accounting for approximately 27 percent of all jobs in manufacturing. Of these, machinery manufacturing pays the highest annual average wage, \$34,000, and wood products pays the least, \$31,000.

Table 3: The Manufacturing Sector, State of MS, 2003-2004

	2003	2004	Percent Change	Average Annual Wage
Durable Manufacturing	113,140	116,300	2.79	
Wood Product Manufacturing	13,120	13,100	-0.15	30,659
Fabricated Metal	11,580	11,000	-5.01	33,175
Machinery Manufacturing	12,180	12,000	-1.48	34,273
Computer and Electronic Equipment	3,010	3,100	2.99	33,452
Electrical Equipment	9,070	9,000	-0.77	28,877
Transportation Equipment	24,620	28,600	16.17	39,246
Furniture and Related Products	27,450	27,800	1.28	27,040
Other Durable Manufacturing	12,110	11,700	-3.39	n/a
Non-Durable Manufacturing	65,810	63,100	-4.12	
Food Manufacturing	27,660	26,800	-3.11	21,262
Apparel Manufacturing	5,680	5,000	-11.97	19,551
Paper Manufacturing	6,220	5,700	-8.36	54,564
Chemical Manufacturing	6,980	6,900	-1.15	47,062
<i>Total</i>	<i>178,950</i>	<i>179,400</i>	<i>0.25</i>	

Source: Employment data come from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2004. Wage data come from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2003.

Eighty-seven percent of those employed in manufacturing work for businesses with over 50 employees. These large employers account for 19 percent of all manufacturing businesses.

Table 4: Size of Mississippi Manufacturing Businesses, 2004

Number of Employees	% of businesses	% of employees
1-5	39.8	1.3
6-10	13.4	1.5
11-20	13.1	2.9
21-50	14.1	6.8
51-100	7.3	7.6
100+	12.2	79.9

Source: Mississippi Business Tax Records, 2004

In Mississippi, the government and trade, transportation, and utilities sectors are also among the largest employers, accounting for 22 and 20 percent of all employment, respectively (see Table 5 and Table 6). The largest sub-sectors are local government and retail trade.

Table 5: The Government Sector, State of MS, 2003-2004

	2003	2004	% Change
Federal Government	25,810	25,400	-1.59
State Government	61,320	61,400	0.13
Local Government	153,650	155,700	1.33
<i>Total</i>	<i>240,780</i>	<i>242,500</i>	<i>0.71</i>

Source: MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2004

Table 6: The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Sector, State of MS, 2003-2004

	2003	2004	% Change	Average Annual Wage
Wholesale Trade	34,860	35,000	0.40	37,870
Retail Trade	138,660	138,500	-0.12	19,158
Transportation and Warehousing	37,780	38,700	2.44	31,610
Utilities	7,990	8,000	0.13	48,841
<i>Total</i>	<i>219,290</i>	<i>220,200</i>	<i>0.41</i>	

Source: Employment data come from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2004. Wage data come from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2003

Mississippi's economic base varies in each of the four local workforce areas. Manufacturing is more predominant in the Mississippi Partnership, comprising 25 percent of all employment. The largest sub-sector in this area is furniture manufacturing, employing approximately 24,000, accounting for 33 percent of all manufacturing jobs.

B. What industries and occupations are projected to grow and or decline in the short term and over the next decade?

In the short term, only three manufacturing sub-sectors have grown. Between 2003 and 2004, transportation equipment grew by 16 percent, computer and electronic equipment by three percent, and furniture and related products by one percent. During the same period, the remaining manufacturing sub-sectors have experienced a decline ranging between one and 12 percent, accounting for an average net decline of 0.25 percent. Over the next ten years, manufacturing employment is expected to increase by 10 percent. This growth will be due primarily to plastics and rubber products manufacturing (21 percent), transportation equipment manufacturing (20 percent), food manufacturing (18 percent), machinery manufacturing (16 percent), beverage and tobacco product manufacturing (11 percent), and furniture and related product manufacturing (11 percent). Several sub-sectors, however, are expected to decline between three and 20 percent. Apparel manufacturing and

leather manufacturing are expected to experience the most dramatic declines (20 and 18 percent, respectively).

As for the service sector, employment grew by approximately three percent between 2003 and 2004. The two sub-sectors with the largest growth rate are administrative support and educational services, growing at eight and seven percent, respectively. During the same period, management of companies and arts, entertainment, and recreation declined by five and two percent respectively. Over the next 10 years, the service industry is expected to grow by 25 percent. Social assistance, administrative and support services, and professional, scientific, and technical services are each expected to grow by over 33 percent. None of the service sub-sectors are expected to decline.

Additional information on occupational growth is reported in **Attachment C, Appendix B**.

C. In what industries and occupations is there a demand for skilled workers and available jobs, both today and projected over the next decade? In what numbers?

In the current economic environment, the demand for skilled workers cuts across industry sectors, especially in those that require the application of technology and knowledge such as automotive and health care professionals. Over the next 10 years, there is a projected annual demand of 50,665 new jobs. Of these, 29,365 (58 percent) will require little or no preparation and 21,300 (42 percent) will require moderate or extensive education or training. Of the four workforce areas, only the Delta did not reflect the statewide trend, with only 36% of the projected new jobs requiring moderate or extensive education or training.

Among fast growing occupations that require extensive education or training are social workers, registered nurses and schoolteachers. Occupations requiring moderate preparation include teacher assistants, maintenance and repair workers, first-line supervisors, office and administrative support workers, carpenters, and licensed practical and vocational nurses (see **Attachment C, Appendix C**).

Across industry sectors, the majority of all jobs require at least medium preparation. Manufacturing sub-sectors such as transportation, electrical, and computer equipment require considerable to extensive preparation. For the service sector, those requiring considerable or extensive preparation include the health care, management, and professional, scientific, and technical sub-sectors.

D. What jobs/occupations are most critical to the State’s economy?

The most critical jobs in Mississippi are those that pay above the state’s annual average wage (\$27,765) and are expected to be the fastest growing (see **Attachment C, Appendix B, Table 1b**). These are the jobs that provide tax revenue and, therefore, support State education and development initiatives. Also critical are jobs provided by small and medium sized businesses, as they are less likely to be subject to changes in the global economy.

E. What are the skill needs for the available, critical and projected jobs?

The available, projected, and critical jobs fall within five job zones (see **Attachment C, Appendix C**).

The jobs falling within zone one generally require a high school diploma or GED certificate. Some may require a formal training course to obtain a license. Employees in these occupations need only a few days to a few months of training.

The jobs falling within zone two usually require a high school diploma and may require some vocational training or job-related course work. In some cases, an associate's or bachelor's degree could be needed. Employees in these occupations need anywhere from a few months to one year of working with experienced employees.

The jobs falling within job zone three require training in vocational schools, related on-the-job experience, or an associate's degree. Some may require a bachelor's degree. Employees in these occupations usually need one or two years of training involving both on-the-job experience and informal training with experienced workers.

The jobs falling within job zone four usually require a four-year bachelor's degree. Employees in these occupations usually need several years of work-related experience, on-the-job training, and/or vocational training.

The jobs falling within job zone five require a minimum of a bachelor's degree. However, many also require graduate school. For example, they may require a master's degree, and some require a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D. (law degree).

Of all projected occupations in Mississippi, 56 percent fall within zones one and two, and the remainder fall within zones three through five (see **Attachment C, Appendix C, Table 6c**).

The critical jobs require from medium to extensive training or education (see **Attachment C, Appendix B** and **Attachment C, Appendix C**).

F. What are the current and projected demographics of the available labor pool (including the incumbent workforce) both now and over the next decade?

Currently, there is a 61 percent labor force participation rate in Mississippi (see **Attachment C, Appendix D, Table 1d**). This is slightly lower than the national average (64 percent). Over the next twenty years, the participation rate is expected to decline. There are substantial differences in participation rates by gender, race, and age.

There are almost an equal number of men and women in the workforce. Of all males, 70 percent participate in the labor force. Only 53 percent of females participate.

The workforce is comprised predominantly of whites with 68 percent, followed by blacks at 31 percent and others at one percent. 61 percent of whites participate in the labor force, and 55 percent of blacks participate. Over the next 10 years, the labor force in Mississippi is expected to experience a substantial increase in minority participation.

Seventy percent of the workforce falls within the age group 25-54, 16 percent within the age group 16-24, and the remainder are over 55. Over the next 10 years the labor force in Mississippi is expected to experience a large increase in participation among those 55 and older, from 13 to 28 percent.

G. Is the State experiencing any “in migration” or “out migration” of workers that impact the labor pool?

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, between 1995 and 2000 Mississippi experienced a net in-migration of 26,930 (10 per 1000 population). However, Mississippi experienced a net out-migration of approximately 5,000 young, single college educated individuals, a rate of 134 per 1000 population. If these migration patterns continue, older and less skilled workers will comprise an ever larger part of the Mississippi labor force.

H. Based on an analysis of both the projected demand for skills and the available and projected labor pool, what skill gaps is the State experiencing today and what skill gaps are projected over the next decade?

The current economic development goal is to move toward a higher paying, higher skilled, more knowledge-based economy. Meeting this goal requires a far more focused investment in training and education so that Mississippi can continue to be competitive nationally and globally.

I. Based on an analysis of the economy and the labor market, what workforce development issues has the State identified?

Increasing per capita income is critical. Although per capita income has increased since the 1990s, it remains only 74 percent of the national average. Similarly, the current poverty rate is lower than in the early 1990s, yet remains substantially above the national average. Unemployment rates are also well above the national average. The outflow of young, skilled workers must be reversed. These issues are now being addressed for the first time through unified workforce and economic development initiatives.

J. What workforce development issues has the State prioritized as being most critical to its economic health and growth?

Refer to the six goals adopted by the State Workforce Board in plan section I.D.

V. Overarching State Strategies

A. Identify how the State will use WIA Title I funds to leverage other Federal, State, local, and private resources in order to maximize the effectiveness of such resources and to expand the participation of business, employees, and individuals in the Statewide workforce investment system. (§112(b)(10).)

Leveraging other resources is one of the SWIB's goals. The first phase will be to cooperate far more closely with the State's strong community and junior college system. In 2005, Governor Barbour introduced and signed the Workforce Training Enhancement Fund Bill. This legislation calls for the State Workforce Board to assist the community and junior college effort to increase services to business through incumbent worker training, utilizing funds generated by the unemployment tax system.

B. What strategies are in place to address the national strategic direction discussed in Part I 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).)

- Integrated, seamless service delivery through comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers

Mississippi will continue the efforts started by Governor Barbour with the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004 to build a truly consolidated statewide workforce system that

maximizes cooperation among state agencies, increases worker employment, retention and earnings, and also increases occupational skill attainment. This consolidated system will accomplish the goal of seamless service delivery. One of the six goals identified by the State Workforce Board is consolidation of workforce training efforts and reduction of duplication and administration.

- A demand-driven workforce system governed by business-led workforce investment boards

During the appointment process the Governor made sure to appoint business leaders committed to a strong demand-driven workforce system. Another one of the State Workforce Board's six goals is ensuring business involvement in deciding the training needs of the existing and future workforce.

- Maximum flexibility in tailoring service delivery and making strategic investment in workforce development activities to meet the needs of the State and local economies and labor markets

Yet another of the six goals identified by the State Workforce Board is the development of an easy to use workforce investment system for job seekers, businesses and other customers. This goal will be realized in a clearly defined action plan for the State's workforce investment system.

- Customers making informed choices based on quality workforce information and accessing quality training providers

The overarching theme of the State's goals is customer service and ease of use. Any workforce system that provides good customer service in an easy-to-use atmosphere must provide its customers with information necessary to make informed and sound choices based on a realistic view of current and future workforce needs. The State will strive to make the best and most relevant information available to customers through the WIN Job Centers.

- Increased fiscal and performance accountability

The State Workforce Investment Board ranked accountability as its number one goal for the unified workforce investment system. Committees have been appointed to guide and oversee the installation of an accountability system to track and correlate money spent and results achieved.

- A youth program targeting out-of-school populations with increased accountability for employment and/or increased secondary and post-secondary education outcomes

The State recognizes the need to focus youth resources on out-of-school and harder to serve populations and upon increased secondary and post-secondary

education outcomes. The State will continue work started last year at the Department of Labor’s Regional Youth Forum. The State will continue to work with its WIA partner youth programs funded through the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Justice, and Labor to provide the support needed at the State level for targeting out-of-school populations while increasing accountability for employment and education outcomes.

C. Based on the State’s economic and labor market analysis, what strategies has the State implemented or plans to implement to identify and target industries and occupations within the State that are high growth, high demand, and vital to the State’s economy? (§§112(a) and 112(b)(4)(A).)

The State may want to consider:

- 1. Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the economy; or**
- 2. Industries that have a significant impact on the overall economy; or**
- 3. Industries that impact the growth of other industries; or**
- 4. Industries that are being transformed by technology and innovation that require new skill sets for workers; or**
- 5. Industries that are new and emerging and are expected to grow.**

Over the next decade, Mississippi industries are expected to generate a total of 105,955 new jobs that will account for 54 percent of all expected new jobs (196,546). Five industry sectors will pay at or above the State average annual wage (\$27,765). These account for 20 percent of all expected new jobs. Particular emphasis will be placed on assisting high-wage industries to expand.

Table 1: Industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the economy

Industry	2003 Average Wage	2012 Projected Employment
Administrative and support	17,962	12,570
Food services and drinking places	9,864	11,960
Ambulatory health care	41,749	10,970
General merchandise stores	16,557	9,630
Professional, scientific, and technical	39,053	9,180
Hospitals	32,368	9,145
Nursing and residential care facilities	19,611	6,310
Specialty trade contractors	27,343	5,940
Social assistance	16,910	5,710
Accommodation	21,664	5,660
Food manufacturing	21,262	5,200
Religious, grant making, civic organizations	23,051	5,080
Transportation equipment manufacturing	39,246	4,600
Support activities for ag and forestry	24,584	4,000

*Highlighted sub-sectors have a 2003 annual average wage at or above the state average of \$27,765.

The State has identified specific industries and occupations which are high growth, high demand, and vital to the State's economy. These industries include two of the three industries recognized nationally in the President's High Growth, High Demand Initiative – Healthcare and Geospatial (GIS) Industries – as well as two others specific to the State – Hospitality/Gaming and Automotive.

A number of initiatives are underway or in the planning stages that are designed to expand the workforce for the industries and occupations identified above. A few examples follow.

- The Southcentral Mississippi Works Local Workforce Investment Area currently operates a specialty WIN Job Center in Canton that is dedicated to serving the needs of the Nissan automotive assembly plant and its suppliers. The State has also provided funding to the Mississippi Partnership Local Workforce Investment Area to conduct a Labor Market Survey to determine the number of underemployed workers in Pontotoc, Lee, and Union Counties. These counties are partners in the Wellsprings Project that is a major contender for a proposed Toyota automotive assembly plant.
- Through a contract with the Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce, the State has implemented the High School Nurse Academy, a high school nursing mentorship program operating in each of the four local workforce areas. This mentorship program is expected to expand to new sites around the State.

D. What strategies are in place to promote and develop ongoing and sustained strategic partnerships that include business and industry, economic development, the public workforce system, and education partners (K-12, community colleges, and others) for the purpose of continuously identifying workforce challenges and developing solutions to targeted industries' workforce challenges? (§112(b)(8).)

Strategic partnerships include the Mississippi Alternative Path to Quality Teachers, a training program implemented by the Mississippi Community College Foundation to recruit, train, and mentor public school teachers who are unemployed or underemployed and who already have four-year degrees that are not in education. This is partially funded by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDOE), with the training provided by the State's community college system, and with mentoring provided on the job by the public school system.

Another partnership works to alleviate the nursing shortage and looming healthcare crisis in Mississippi. The Mississippi Hospital Association and the Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce (ONW) spearheads this work. The ONW administers a survey of all the State's active nurses and all nursing faculty as part of its Nursing Education Barriers Project. The Barriers Task Force brings together representatives of the State's workforce system, the MDES, the MDOE, the Deans and Directors of Schools of Nursing, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, and administrators from hospitals and nursing homes. Strides have been made to alleviate the barriers that prevent nursing students from graduating.

E. What State strategies are in place to ensure that sufficient system resources are being spent to support training of individuals in high growth/high demand industries? (§§112(b)(17)(A)(i) and 112(b)(4)(A).)

During Program Year 2003 the State developed and issued a policy to encourage local workforce areas to develop and implement training in high growth/high demand industries. The State has also identified high growth/high demand industries as one of its initiatives for the upcoming two-year training period.

F. What workforce strategies does the State have to support the creation, sustainability, and growth of small businesses and support for the workforce needs of small businesses as part of the State's economic strategy? (§§112(b)(4)(A) and 112(b)(17)(A)(i).)

The State has identified and included services for small businesses as one of its initiatives. Refer to section II of this plan.

G. How are the funds reserved for Statewide activities used to incent the entities that make up the State's workforce system at the State and local levels to achieve the Governor's vision and address the national strategic direction identified in Part I of this guidance? (§112(a).)

Statewide funds are budgeted according to the priorities in section I of this plan, with particular attention paid to eliminating duplication and coordinating state agencies to maximize the use of Federal and State workforce dollars. All proposals presented for funding consideration will be carefully evaluated for collaboration and partnering components. Proposals demonstrating these components will stand a greater chance of receiving an award.

H. Describe the State's strategies to promote collaboration between the public workforce system, education, human services, juvenile justice, and others to better serve youth that are most in need and with significant barriers to employment, and to successfully connect them to education

**and training opportunities that lead to successful employment.
(§112(b)(18)(A).)**

Mississippi will continue to pursue opportunities for collaboration. Examples include: 1) building upon the efforts begun at the Mississippi Youth Summit and State Youth Teams; 2) supporting legislative initiatives that improve the workforce education curricula for all levels of education, but particularly for the secondary level; 3) developing and broadening the workforce preparation component of youth programs; 4) fostering and advancing relationships between businesses and youth programs, particularly as related to the mentoring and work experience elements of the programs; and 5) exploring alternative funding opportunities that will further collaboration.

I. Describe the State's strategies to identify State laws, regulations, policies that impede successful achievement of workforce development goals and strategies to change or modify them. (§112(b)(2).)

Mississippi has worked with its four local areas and One-Stop partners to identify laws, rules, policies and practices that impede customer service improvement. One tangible result was workforce development consolidation legislation signed by Governor Barbour in 2004. A second result was unemployment insurance reform, which also strengthened linkages between community and junior colleges and WIN Job Centers. These critical legislative initiatives are described in more depth throughout this plan.

WIN Job Centers across Mississippi are continuing to streamline access to employment services, unemployment insurance, veterans' services, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), WIA adult, dislocated worker and youth services, and community college programs. The granting of workflex authority will assist in piloting promising new approaches and improving the quality and quantity of customer services.

J. Describe how the State will take advantage of the flexibility provisions in WIA for waivers and the option to obtain approval as a workflex State pursuant to §189(i) and §192.

The State is submitting the following workflex request.

1. Common Performance Measures

Mississippi wishes to waive the current 17 WIA performance measures and to implement the new Common Measures statewide on July 1, 2005. It is not in the best interest of either Mississippi or DOL to spend more time, effort and funding tracking the current 17 WIA performance standards when they are likely to be scrapped and replaced by the Common Measures prior to scores on the current measures being finalized. We look

forward to working with the Regional Office to fine-tune the new Common Measures and to develop and share best practices with our One-Stop partners and our sister states. We have polled our four workforce areas, and all four concur with this approach. (See **Attachment D**)

2. Block Grants

To the maximum extent permitted under current WIA legislation and, should WIA amendments become law, to the maximum extent permitted by those amendments, Mississippi wishes to implement the block grant concept. This approach will be phased in at different times and in different ways in our four local workforce areas. As an example, local areas may request authority to implement the following practices:

- Transferring funds freely between the adult, the dislocated worker and the youth programs;
- Combining all or a portion of available funds in the three WIA programs listed above, as permitted by WIA amendments;
- Applying rules and reporting requirements for the funding stream into which funds are transferred or combined.

Again, we believe that the experience gained in allowing our workforce areas to freely shift funds where need is greatest will benefit our customers, our sister states and the Regional Office.

3. Business Services

Both pieces of pending Federal workforce legislation, HB 27 and SB 9, provide a greater level of flexibility in serving our business customers. The State requests the authority to permit its four workforce areas to begin offering any of the business services listed in either of the aforementioned House or Senate bills.

4. Participant Registration and Customer Flow

Mississippi wishes to combine Wagner-Peyser labor exchange services and WIA core and intensive services as seamlessly and effectively as possible. One or more of the State's local workforce areas may request and be granted permission to consolidate registration paperwork for WIA and MDES's labor exchange services and for WIA core and intensive services. The goal is that registration for labor exchange services will become synonymous with WIA registration. Participants may also move between core and intensive services without additional paperwork.

5. Incumbent Worker Services

Any of the four local workforce areas may treat up to 10% of their adult, dislocated worker and youth allocations as Governor's statewide funds, utilizing all or a portion of these funds for incumbent worker services. The rules that apply to statewide incumbent worker funds will apply to these new, locally designated incumbent worker funds. This approach will allow our local Boards the flexibility to stave off worker dislocations, partner with economic development initiatives, and grow industries and business sectors targeted by the State and local strategic plans.

6. Training Flexibility

In addition to the statewide list of eligible training providers, the State wishes to permit its local workforce areas to use any course or program offered by an accredited public two or four year college located in Mississippi. The cost must not exceed the catalogue price, the participant enrolled in the course or program must have a training or career plan, the course or program must logically advance their training or career plan, and the expected training completion date must be within nine months of training initiation. We believe that the increased flexibility sought will allow us to train more customers more cost effectively and to partner more effectively with State educational entities.

7. Incentives

Each local workforce area may elect to offer cash or other incentives (i.e., gas cards or clothing vouchers) to adults, dislocated workers or youth who achieve program, training, and employment or follow-up retention goals. Each proposed incentive policy will be screened to ensure cost reasonableness and that acceptable documentation is retained. This option will allow Mississippi's four workforce areas to encourage speedy return to work, shorter stays on unemployment insurance, and quick progress into and through education and training options. It will also allow the State to apply and field test lessons learned from the Personal Reemployment Account demonstration project.

8. Additions

As other states apply for and field test new waivers, as WIA amendments progress through Congress, and as DOL announces new initiatives, Mississippi intends to periodically expand this list of workflex options. We wish to offer our local workforce areas and partner agencies every chance to experiment and succeed in increasing the quality and quantity of customer services. We wish to be less proscriptive in telling our local

Boards how to deliver services while becoming better at performance accountability and strategic planning.

Other waivers currently in effect for the State of Mississippi include: the Time Limit on Period of Initial Eligibility for Training Providers (20 CFR 663.530); 20% Funds Transfer Authority to Permit 50% Transfer Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs (Sec. 133{b}{4} CFR 667.140); and Prohibition on Use of Individual Training Accounts for Youth (20 CFR 664.510). These waivers expire on June 30, 2005. The State intends to request extensions of all three waivers, pending approval of the designation of Mississippi as a workflex state.

VI. Major State Policies and Requirements

Describe major State policies and requirements that have been established to direct and support the development of a Statewide workforce investment system not described elsewhere in this Plan as outlined below. (§112(b)(2).)

A. What State policies and systems are in place to support common data collection and reporting processes, information management, integrated service delivery, and performance management? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(B).)

Current State policies and systems to comply with data collection, reporting processes, information management, integrated service delivery and performance management are in the following manuals:

- *WIA Forms Manual- requirements for data collection and maintenance; and,*
- *Operational Guide- requirements for the management information system.*

Revised policies will be drafted when workflex authority is granted and Common Measures are reported and tracked. We are anticipating a move to the Common Measures effective July 1, 2005.

B. What State policies are in place that promote efficient use of administrative resources such as requiring more co-location and fewer affiliate sites in local One-Stop systems to eliminate duplicative facility and operational costs or to require a single administrative structure at the local level to support local boards and to be the fiscal agent for WIA funds to avoid duplicative administrative costs that could otherwise be used for service delivery and training? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(8)(A).)

As noted in Section III.C.1, the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004 established four local

workforce areas that are closely aligned with the Planning and Development District boundaries in Mississippi. Planning and Development Districts perform a dual function, serving as the fiscal agents for WIA funds and supporting the local Workforce Boards.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security will work with local workforce areas, One-Stop operators and WIA partners to conduct an analysis of the current One-Stop system. Adjustments will be made as deemed necessary to increase co-location opportunities, reduce administrative costs, enhance service delivery to customers and maximize WIN Job Center productivity.

C. What State policies are in place to promote universal access and consistency of service Statewide? (§112(b)(2).)

Mississippi already registers and serves a higher number of WIA participants per dollar spent than most other states. We expect to increase the number of participants served by 20% in the coming year while exceeding every performance benchmark (common measures) and increasing the number of participants trained by at least 25%. The reason we are able to achieve these high goals is total commitment to integrated, effective service delivery at the State and local levels. Universal access to high quality services will expand and continue throughout the two-year planning period.

D. What policies support a demand-driven approach, as described in Part I. “Demand-driven Workforce Investment System”, to workforce development – such as training on the economy and labor market data for local Board and One-Stop Career Center staff? (§§ 112(b)(4) and 112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

During Program Year 2003, the State developed and issued Mississippi State Policy Number 25, High Growth/High Demand Training, to encourage local workforce areas to develop and implement training in high growth/high demand industries. The State also contracts with Mississippi State University to develop and deliver tailored additional customized labor market and economic information for the four local workforce Boards and for the WIN Job Centers.

E. What policies are in place to ensure that the resources available through the Federal and/or State apprenticeship programs and the Job Corps are fully integrated with the State’s One-Stop delivery system? (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

Currently, two (2) apprenticeship programs have training courses on the State Eligible Training Provider List. Efforts will be made to include all apprenticeship programs during the coming year. Jobs Corps recruiters are

collocated in WIN Job Centers throughout the State. Jobs Corps will also be invited to participate in the upcoming Youth Summit.

VII. Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery

Describe the actions the State has taken to ensure an integrated One-Stop service delivery system Statewide. (§§112(b)(14) and 121.)

A. What State policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of service delivery through One-Stop Centers such as development of minimum guidelines for operating comprehensive One-Stop Centers, competencies for One-Stop Career Center staff or development of a certification process for One-Stop Centers? (§112(b)(14).)

To guide the establishment, implementation and maintenance of quality One-Stop services, the State issued a policy outlining legislative and regulatory requirements. During the coming year, detailed performance information will be collected and widely disseminated to allow MDES and the four local Workforce Boards to more objectively evaluate Center quality and cost effectiveness.

B. What policies or guidance has the State issued to support maximum integration of service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for both business customers and individual customers? (§112(b)(14).)

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security has created a statewide Business Outreach Services team to help business customers access services available through the One-Stop system. Other service integration initiatives are described throughout this plan.

C. What actions has the State taken to promote identifying One-Stop infrastructure costs and developing models or strategies for local use that support integration? (§112(b)(14).)

The Governor proposed and the state legislature passed the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004 to establish a more cohesive workforce system in the State of Mississippi. The purpose of the Act is to “provide workforce activities, through a statewide system that maximizes cooperation among state agencies, that increases the employment, retention and earnings of participants, and increase occupations skill attainment by participants and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the State of Mississippi.” The Act also provided for incentives to community and junior colleges to participate more actively in the State’s One-Stop system.

D. How does the State use the funds reserved for Statewide activities pursuant to (§§129(b)(2)(B) and 134(a)(2)(B)(v).) to assist in the establishment and operation of One-Stop delivery systems? (§112(b)(14).)

The State is using Reed Act funds to support One-Stop infrastructure statewide. This approach obviates the need to use WIA funds for One-Stop delivery system, infrastructure, freeing up these funds for core, intensive and training service expansion. The State has used and will continue to use reserve funds to build the capacity of front-line staff in the One-Stops and provide more and better services to customers.

E. How does the State ensure the full array of services and staff in the One-Stop delivery system support human capital solutions for businesses and individual customers broadly? (§112(b)(14).)

The State will take the following actions to support human capital solutions for businesses and individual customers:

1. Increase services to existing workers, dislocated workers, veterans, offenders and ex-offenders, older youth and mature workers;
2. Focus resources on businesses and skill sets providing the greatest opportunities for future growth and development including existing growing businesses, high-growth and high demand occupations, the healthcare industry, small business, advanced manufacturing, and support industries;
3. Increase coordination with economic developers to increase employment and opportunities for employed workers;
4. Leverage state-supported workforce programs to increase training and retraining opportunities, reduce costs and provide services to more customers; and,
5. Explore every opportunity to alleviate cumbersome rules and procedures through workflex waivers.

VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System

A. Local Area Designations

1. **Identify the State’s designated local workforce investment areas and the date of the most recent area designation, including whether the State is currently re-designating local areas pursuant to the end of the subsequent designation period for areas designated in the previous State plan. (§112(b)(5).)**

In an effort to build a more unified workforce investment system, the Governor proposed and the Mississippi Legislature passed the Mississippi

Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004. As a result of that Act, the Governor designated and intends to continue utilizing the following four local workforce areas.

- **Delta Workforce Investment Area**
Bolivar, Carroll, Coahoma, Holmes, Humphreys, Issaquena, Leflore, Panola, Quitman, Sharkey, Sunflower, Tallahatchie, Tunica, Washington
- **Mississippi Partnership Workforce Investment Area**
Alcorn, Attala, Benton, Calhoun, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Clay, DeSoto, Grenada, Itawamba, Lafayette, Lee, Lowndes, Marshall, Monroe, Montgomery, Noxubee, Oktibbeha, Pontotoc, Prentiss, Tate, Tippah, Tishomingo, Union, Webster, Winston, Yalobusha
- **Southcentral Mississippi Works Workforce Investment Area**
Adams, Amite, Claiborne, Copiah, Franklin, Hinds, Jefferson, Lawrence, Lincoln, Madison, Pike, Rankin, Simpson, Walthall, Warren, Wilkinson, Yazoo
- **Twin Districts Workforce Investment Area**
Clarke, Covington, Forrest, George, Greene, Hancock, Harrison, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson Davis, Jones, Kemper, Lamar, Lauderdale, Leake, Marion, Neshoba, Newton, Pearl River, Perry, Scott, Smith, Stone, Wayne

2. **Include a description of the process used to designate such areas. Describe how the State considered the extent to which such local areas are consistent with labor market areas: geographic areas served by local and intermediate education agencies, post-secondary education institutions and area vocational schools; and all other criteria identified in section 116(a)(1) in establishing area boundaries, to assure coordinated planning. Describe the State Board's role, including all recommendations made on local designation requests pursuant to section 116(a)(4). (§§112(b)(5) and 116(a)(1).)**

The July 1, 2004 redesignation considered all the above factors and also was designed to increase performance and to conserve administrative funds.

3. **Describe the appeals process used by the State to hear appeals of local area designations referred to in §§112 (b)(5) and 116(a)(5).**

The designation policy adopted by the State Workforce Board includes an appeals process. A government that requests but is not granted

designation may submit an appeal to the Board. No appeals have been received.

B. Local Workforce Investment Boards -- Identify the criteria the State has established to be used by the chief elected official(s) in the local areas for the appointment of local board members based on the requirements of section 117. (§§112(b)(6) and 117(b).)

The State has a *Local Workforce Investment Board Appointment and Certification Policy*. The policy provides local elected officials with the requirements and standards for nomination, appointment and certification of local Workforce Boards. The policy has been revised once to address State conflict of interest and ethics compliance.

C. How will your State build the capacity of Local Boards to develop and manage high performing local workforce investment systems? (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(14).)

The State will continue to provide training opportunities for local Workforce Boards and their staff, including improving resource sharing, improving WIN Job Center services and cost effectiveness, increasing training choices and cost effectiveness and developing more targeted and effective youth programs.

D. Local Planning Process -- Describe the State mandated requirements for local workforce areas' strategic planning. What assistance does the State provide to local areas to facilitate this process, (112(b)(2) and 20 CFR 661.350(a)(13).) including:

1. What oversight of the local planning process is provided, including receipt and review of plans and negotiation of performance agreements?

The State has issued local planning guidance and a planning calendar to be followed during the upcoming two-year period. Besides the required parts of the local plan as prescribed at Section 118 of the Workforce Investment Act, the instructions call for the local area to share its workforce strategies and vision. State and local staff have met to discuss the local planning and review process. The State is also providing economic and labor market analysis necessary to guide each local plan. The State will negotiate local performance in a manner similar to the process used by the Department of Labor in negotiations with the State.

The Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Employment Consolidation Act of 2004 required that local workforce areas and local community and junior college workforce development councils work

together to develop a joint strategic plan for the area. We believe that joint planning will enhance seamless service delivery.

2. How does the local plan approval process ensure that local plans are consistent with State performance goals and State strategic direction?

The local plans will follow the outline and content of the State plan. The State will develop a local plan review document or checklist to ensure that all parts are addressed.

E. Regional Planning (§§112(b)(2) and 116(c).)

1. Describe any intra-State or inter-State regions and their corresponding performance measures.

NOT APPLICABLE AT THIS TIME.

2. Include a discussion of the purpose of these designations and the activities (such as regional planning, information sharing and/or coordination activities) that will occur to help improve performance. For example, regional planning efforts could result in the sharing of labor market information or in the coordination of transportation and support services across the boundaries of local areas.

N/A.

3. For inter-State regions (if applicable), describe the roles of the respective Governors and State and local Boards.

N/A.

F. Allocation Formulas (112(b)(12).)

1. If applicable, describe the methods and factors (including weights assigned to each factor) your State will use to distribute funds to local areas for the 30% discretionary formula adult employment and training funds and youth funds pursuant to §§128(b)(3)(B) and 133(b)(3)(B).

The State will not utilize the “30% discretionary formula” option described in WIA sections §§128(b)(3)(B) and 133(b)(3)(B).

2. Describe how the allocation methods and factors help ensure that funds are distributed equitably throughout the State and that there will be no significant shifts in funding levels to a local area on a year-to-year basis.

The funds allocated to the local areas for youth and adult activities will be allocated based on the formulas specified in Section 128(b)(2)(A)(I) and 133(b)(2)(A)(I) respectively. The two additional discretionary factors specified in 128(b)(3) and 133(b)(3) will not be used.

The State will apply the hold harmless provisions in the Act.

3. Describe the State’s allocation formula for dislocated worker funds under §133(b)(2)(B).

The Governor will allocate to the local workforce investment areas a minimum of 60 percent of the WIA Section 133 dislocated worker funds. Not more than twenty-five percent will be reserved for statewide rapid response activities, five percent for statewide administration, and 10 percent for statewide adult, youth, and dislocated worker activities specified in the Act.

Dislocated worker funds will be allocated to the local areas using the six factors prescribed in Title I, plus the number of dislocated workers. These factors are weighted as shown below.

<u>Allocation Factor</u>	<u>Weight</u>
Insured Unemployment	10%
Unemployment Concentrations	25%
Plant Closings & Mass Layoffs	5%
Declining Industries	10%
Farmer-Rancher Economic Hardships	5%
Long-Term Unemployment	30%
Number of Dislocated Workers	15%

Additional Factor Justification: The Mississippi Department of Employment Security generates a special printout from its active applicant new and renewal data that displays the number of applicants registered as dislocated workers. This information is an ideal addition to the elements required by WIA. A weight of 15 percent is justified because this item allows allocating funds based on the number of individuals who register with MDES as members of the target group for which these dollars are earmarked. Profiled unemployment insurance claimants are included in this data.

- 4. Describe how the individuals and entities on the State Board were involved in the development of the methods and factors, and how the State consulted with chief elected officials in local areas throughout the State in determining such distribution.**

Initially, consultation occurred in meetings and correspondence between the State WIA administrative entity and local chief elected officials and their representatives, local boards and their representatives, the State Workforce Board and its task forces, and other partner state agencies. Information and presentations have been given to these groups to educate them on the probable shifts in resources and the effects of these shifts. The State works diligently to provide information to help local elected officials understand the impact of their actions. The proposed allocations are provided to the local elected officials and other interested parties through the use of the official WIA communication system. Comments and suggestions are requested.

G. Provider Selection Policies (§§112(b)(17)(A)(iii), 122, 134(d)(2)(F).)

State Policy Number 5, Revision 1, Eligible Training Provider Certification, is the State's provider selection policy. The State followed its established procedures to adopt and revise Policy Number 5, to provide public notice and to solicit comments.

- 1. Identify the policies and procedures, to be applied by local areas, for determining eligibility of local level training providers, how performance information will be used to determine continuing eligibility and the agency responsible for carrying out these activities.**

Each local workforce area received State Policy Number 5, Revision 1 and has adopted a version of that policy for their local area. The State's policy and the subsequent local policies address eligibility determination for eligible training providers at the State or local level. These policies also establish the performance information that will be used in determining subsequent eligibility. The performance data is to be collected from voluntary reporting by the training providers on their annual application for recertification of programs. The initial and subsequent eligibility determination is to be carried out by the local workforce areas and approved by the State.

- 2. Describe how the State solicited recommendations from local boards and training providers and interested members of the public, including representatives of business and labor organizations, in the development of these policies and procedures.**

The State developed Policy Number 5, Revision 1 in conjunction with the local workforce areas and other interested parties. A workgroup meeting was held on January 14, 2003. Copies of the draft policy revision were mailed with a memorandum dated February 24, 2003 to all eligible providers on the State List at that time. Notice was also posted in the newspaper. Both the memorandum and the advertised notice provided invitation to Public Hearings to be held March 12 and March 26, 2003, and requested review and comments, to be received by the State until March 28, 2003. Public hearings were held at the Jackson Hilton and were open to the public.

3. Describe how the State will update and expand the State's eligible training provider list to ensure it has the most current list of providers to meet the training needs of customers.

The State compiles the State's Eligible Training Provider List from programs approved by the local workforce areas. The List is published on the Internet at www.mississippi.org/eplweb bi-annually on January 1 from applications received October 1-15 and on July 1 from applications received April 1-15.

4. Describe the procedures the Governor has established for providers of training services to appeal a denial of eligibility by the local board or the designated State agency, a termination of eligibility or other action by the board or agency, or a denial of eligibility by a One-Stop operator. Such procedures must include the opportunity for a hearing and time limits to ensure prompt resolution.

Policy Number 5, Revision 1 establishes procedures for providers of eligible training services to appeal a denial of eligibility by the local Board or the designated State agency, termination of eligibility, or other actions by the Board or agency. Section V. of the policy provides Denial and Appeal Processes including opportunities for hearings and time limits to ensure prompt resolution of appeals.

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).)

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security and the State have detailed procurement procedures for both competitive and noncompetitive awards. These procedures do not apply to the funds the State allocates by formula to the local workforce investment areas. The State WIA Procurement Policy complies with the uniform administrative requirements established by the Office of Management and Budget in

Circular A-102. In addition, the policy incorporates the laws and regulations set forth in the State of Mississippi /Office of Purchasing and Travel's Procurement Manual providing for the implementation of Title 31, Chapter 7, Mississippi Code of 1972, Annotated. All procurement practices and procedures are designed to avoid duplication, to focus on demonstrated ability, ensure ethical practices and ensure adequate documentation of the procurement process.

6. Identify the criteria to be used by local boards in awarding grants for youth activities, including criteria that the Governor and local boards will use to identify effective and ineffective youth activities and providers of such activities. (§112(b)(18)(B).)

Local Workforce Boards must identify in their local plans the process to be used for awarding grants for youth activities. Local areas, as a general rule, use a Request for Proposal (RFP) method of procurement. All State and local youth providers must adhere to the ten required elements of youth activities as outlined in WIA §112, either by providing the elements directly or by partnering with non-WIA funded youth service providers such as community- and faith-based organizations, educational entities, and businesses. Local areas may also choose to stipulate additional requirements specific to their areas.

H. One-Stop Policies (§112(D)(14).)

1. Describe how the services provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners will be coordinated and made available through the One-Stop system. Include how the State will consolidate Wagner-Peyser Act funds to avoid duplication of core services. (§112(b)(8)(A).)

Each of the four Mississippi workforce areas has executed a Memorandum of Understanding with all One-Stop partners. The "MOU's" deal with service coordination and delivery through the WIN Job Centers.

WIA and Wagner-Peyser funds are combined in each Center to co-fund and co-deliver core and intensive services to customers. The precise methodology for consolidating WIA and Wagner-Peyser fund streams is delegated to each Center's One-Stop operator. The standard practice is for Center-based line staff delivering core services to be partially funded from the WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs. If WIA is amended to authorize block grants or if Mississippi's requested workflex authority is granted, enhanced service coordination across all partner fund streams and greater WIA and Wagner-Peyser service consolidation can occur.

2. Describe how the State helps local areas identify areas needing improvement and how technical assistance will be provided.

Mississippi conducts joint meetings with its four local areas at least quarterly to identify opportunities for improvement and technical assistance. Technical assistance for the coming year will include Common Performance Measures tracking and attainment, improving business services, writing more OJT and customized training agreements, developing demand training in synch with the community and junior colleges, recertifying and upgrading WIN Job Centers, utilizing technology more effectively, resource identification and utilization, streamlining customer paperwork and strategic planning for local Boards.

3. Identify any additional State mandated One-Stop partners (such as TANF or Food Stamp Employment and Training) and how their programs and services are integrated into the One-Stop Career Centers.

At this time, the State has not mandated any additional One-Stop partners.

I. Oversight/Monitoring Process -- 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).)

Mississippi worked with a nationally known vendor to develop and implement a mystery shopper program that focused on customer-driven service quality and accountability by collecting, analyzing, and using real time customer service data to support high standards and continuous improvement. Appropriate questions and scenarios were developed for business clients, job seekers, and unemployment insurance claimants.

Mystery shoppers posed as WIN Job Center customers with specific needs and visited the Centers to seek services. Immediately after the interactions, the mystery shoppers reported their observations and experiences of the service interactions. These observations were compiled into a summary report, which was disseminated at the State and local levels.

WIN Job Centers also conduct periodic reviews of results, celebrate successes, identify opportunities for improvement, and plan resolution/improvement. A rating system is used to quantify the satisfaction level.

The State performs annual on-site monitoring and oversight reviews of its WIA subrecipients to verify compliance with Federal, State, and local policies and procedures. The reviews examine administrative structures, program operations, results achieved and fiscal systems.

Data Validation is conducted on-site in each of the local workforce areas on a regular basis. Data Validation insures the accuracy and reliability of program and performance information reported to DOL for Federally funded programs. Findings are compiled and submitted to DOL and used by State and local areas to improve their data reporting processes.

The State has standard practices for the development of reports on a quarterly basis regarding WIA performance measurements. The reports are based on “real time” (current) data derived from the State WIA reporting and tracking system. These reports provide planned versus actual performance data for WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, In-School and Out-of-School Youth programs.

Since the reports are based on real time data, local areas have the ability to immediately recognize and make adjustments in any areas where improvement is needed. The State provides technical assistance to local areas whose performance is failing to meet performance measures.

J. Grievance Procedures. (§§122(g) and 181(cc).) Attach a copy of the State’s grievance procedures for participants and other affected parties (including service providers.)

The State’s grievance procedure is attached to the plan (see **Attachment F**).

K. Describe the following State policies or procedures that have been developed to facilitate effective local workforce investment systems. (§§112(b)(17)(A) and 112 (b)(2).)

1. State guidelines for the selection of One-Stop providers by local boards;

Local Workforce Boards, with the approval of local elected officials, have the responsibility for selecting One-Stop providers. Pursuant to Mississippi Workforce Investment System, Policy Number 4, entitled *One-Stop certification Procedures and Minimum Certification Standards for Local Sites*, local Workforce Boards have two options for designating One-Stop operators: a competitive process or designation in accordance with an agreement reached between the Board and a consortium of entities that, at a minimum, includes three or more of the One-Stop partners. Following the selection of the One-Stop operator and providers, the fiscal agent for the local area executes appropriate financial and contractual documents.

2. Procedures to resolve impasse situations at the local level in developing memoranda of understanding (MOUs) to ensure full participation of all required partners in the One-Stop delivery system;

The State will provide technical assistance to local Workforce Boards to facilitate “MOU” development and improvement. If impasses remain after local efforts have been exhausted, local Boards are to file a report with the Governor while the partner is to report the impasse to the appropriate State administrating entity. The reports are to identify unresolved issues and describe efforts to reach agreement. The Governor or his designee will work with the relevant State agencies to resolve the impasse. If necessary, the State may seek assistance from the Secretary of Labor or the Federal cognizant agency for the partner program.

3. Criteria by which the State will determine if local Boards can run programs in-house;

A local Workforce Board may not provide core or intensive services, or be designated or certified as a One-Stop operator, unless the arrangement is agreed to by the chief elected official and the Governor. A local Board is prohibited from providing training services unless the Governor grants a waiver. This prohibition also applies to the staff of local Workforce Boards. Local Boards seeking such waivers shall provide the Governor with the information required in Section 117(f). Any training waiver granted a local Board shall apply for a maximum of one year and may be renewed for a maximum of one more additional year.

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

Each workforce area is required to track the performance of on-the-job training and customized training providers. The One-Stop operator or service provider will evaluate the performance of on-the-job training and customized training contracts against the local area’s performance standards and will consider demonstrated effectiveness prior to entering into additional contracts with the employer.

5. Reallocation policies;

The State has a reallocation policy developed in accordance with WIA to promote the timely use of funds.

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

Currently, local Workforce Boards may request the transfer of funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs. The State evaluates transfer requests.

If the State's workflex request is granted, local Workforce Boards may transfer funds freely between the adult, the dislocated worker and the youth programs. Rules and reporting requirements will be those of the funding stream into which funds are transferred or combined.

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

The State Workforce Board will continue to enhance access to programs and services for all Mississippians. To ensure that special populations are appropriately served and that non-traditional career opportunities are presented, local Workforce Boards are encouraged to provide professional development training to all front-line personnel. They are also encouraged to include service providers and community-based organizations that serve special populations on the local Board, or on its workgroups and committees.

Local plans must specify how the needs of displaced workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, public assistance recipients, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans and individuals with multiple barriers to employment including older workers, individuals with limited English-speaking abilities and individuals with disabilities, will be met.

8. If you did not delegate this responsibility to local boards, provide your State's definition regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion at section 101(13)(C)(iv) ("an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment"). (§§ 112(b)(18)(A) and 20 CFR 664.210).

The State delegates the responsibility for definitions regarding the sixth youth eligibility criterion at section 101(13)(C)(iv) ("an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment") to the local Boards.

IX. Service Delivery

Describe the approaches the State will use to provide direction and support to local Boards and the One-Stop Career Center delivery system on the strategic priorities to guide investments, structure business engagement, and

inform service delivery approaches for all customers. (§112(b)(17)(A).)
Activities could include:

A. One-Stop Service Delivery Strategies: (§§112(b)(2) and 111(d)(2).)

- 1. How will the services provided by each of the required and optional One-Stop partners be coordinated and made available through the One-Stop system? (§112(b)(8)(A).)**

The local Workforce Boards each execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) addressing this question.

- 2. How are youth formula programs funded under (§128(b)(2)(A).) integrated in the One-Stop system?**

Each local plan must explain the local Board's approach to integrating youth services into the One-Stop system.

- 3. What minimum service delivery requirements does the State mandate in a comprehensive One-Stop Center or an affiliate site?**

Comprehensive

As defined in WIA Section 134(c)(2), at a minimum, the One-Stop delivery system shall make the following programs, services, and activities accessible at not less than one physical center in each local area:

- Core services described in WIA Section 134(d)(2);
- Intensive services and training services as described in WIA sections 134(d)(3) and (4) and 134(d)(4)(G);
- Access to activities carried out under WIA Section 134(e), if any;
- Access to programs and activities carried out by One-Stop partners described in WIA Section 121(b); and
- Access to the information described in Section 15 of the Wagner-Peyser Act and all job search, placement, recruitment, and other labor exchange services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act.

Affiliate

As stated in WIA Section 134(c)(2)(B)(i), an affiliate site can provide one or more WIA programs, services and activities.

It is up to the local Board to determine if a higher threshold must be met for One-Stop designation.

- 4. What tools and products has the State developed to support service delivery in all One-Stop Centers Statewide?**

The State piloted a new case management model developed by our vocational rehabilitation partner in the Laurel and Cleveland WIN Job

Centers. This model will be recommended and made available to other WIN Job Centers. The model emphasizes a triage method of service delivery, with those customers most in need of services given priority.

The MDES Business Outreach Group is developing a streamlined, innovative service strategy for statewide use when serving business customers. This strategy focuses on the use of a business services brochure, discussion with businesses to assess their needs and how the workforce system can meet those needs, and incumbent worker training to help grow existing businesses.

Other tools and products developed or in development by the State include:

- WIA orientation videos and CDs for use in the resource rooms;
- A fully web-based Eligible Training Provider List, including an electronic submission and approval process for training program applications;
- Information packets to be used when meeting with employers; and
- Updated rapid response packets for use when meeting with dislocated workers and management at the businesses affected by layoffs and closures.

5. What models/templates/approaches does the State recommend and/or mandate for service delivery in the One-Stop Centers? For example, do all One-Stop 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 Center? Are all One-Stop Centers required to have a resource center that is open to anyone?

All comprehensive WIN Job Centers are required to have resource rooms that are open and available to all customers. These resource rooms feature computer workstations that are accessible as well as materials in a variety of formats. All other WIN Job Centers are encouraged to have resource rooms. However, due to challenges such as space limitations, the content of the resource areas varies widely. At a minimum, WIN Job Centers provide printed materials that describe services and programs available through WIA, Wagner-Peyser and partner agencies.

B. Workforce Information –

A fundamental component of a demand-driven workforce investment system is the integration and application of the best available State and local workforce information including, but not limited to, economic data, labor market information, census data, private sources of workforce

information produced by trade associations and others, educational data, job vacancy surveys, transactional data from job boards, and information obtained directly from businesses. (§§111(d)(8), 112(b)(1), and 134(d)(2)(E).)

- 1. Describe how the State will integrate workforce information into its planning and decision-making at the State and local level, including State and local Boards, One-Stop operations, and case manager guidance.**

The State will develop and maintain a workforce information data repository and analysis center that will be able to respond to the needs of the workforce system and its decision makers including WIN Job Center staff and customers, youth service providers, local Workforce Boards, Youth Councils and our economic development and business partners.

- 2. Describe the approach the State will use to disseminate accurate and timely workforce information to businesses, job seekers, and employment counselors, in easy to use formats that are readily accessible within One-Stop Career Centers and at remote locations such as libraries, schools, worksites, and at home.**

The MDES website (<http://mdes.ms.gov>) is the primary means of disseminating workforce information to the various customers. Publications are also mailed to any customers who request hard copies. In the near future, the Labor Market Information section of the site will be revised to be more customer-friendly.

- 3. Describe how the State's Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan is aligned with the WIA State Plan to ensure that the investments in core products and services support the State's overall strategic direction for workforce investment.**

The Core Products and Services Grant will be shared with the State Workforce Board for review and approval. The State Board will also determine what other types of products will be needed in the future to achieve the Board's strategic goals.

- 4. Describe how State workforce information products and tools are coordinated with the national electronic workforce information tools including America's Career Information Network and Career Voyages.**

Links to the national tools such as America's Job Bank and America's Career Information Network are provided in the MDES website. On an annual basis, the MDES LMI Department provides occupational wage and

occupational projections files that are used in the America's Career Information Network.

C. Adults and Dislocated Workers

1. Core Services. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

- 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).**

The core services listed in Section 134(d)(2) of the Workforce Investment Act are available at every comprehensive WIN Job Center. Each local plan will describe the Local Board's approach for delivering core and intensive services in their One-Stops.

- 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.**

Customers of the local WIN Job Centers receive the full range of labor exchange services available. These services include (1) self-service, (2) facilitated self-help service, and (3) staff-assisted service. Win Job Centers offer resource rooms for self-service and facilitated self-help services that include personal computers (PCs) with internet access to search for jobs, to write and post resumes and cover letters, to explore wage and job trends, to research job and labor market information, and to view specific jobs listed by the Mississippi Department of Employment Security on America's Job Bank. Resource Rooms also offer printed materials on job search and work-related skills. Telephones fax machines, copiers, and printers are also available. Resource Rooms may also offer TV/VCRs with job search, career and work-related videos, as well as videos and printed materials on interviewing tips.

WIN Job Center staff will provide services as needed to Center customers. These services include staff-assisted job search, placement assistance, career counseling, job referrals, job development and workshops.

Employers have access to MDES's database of qualified workers. Businesses may also use MDES's website to obtain labor market data, wage information, Job Fair information, Work Opportunity Tax Credit information, Rapid Response information and information on Trade

Adjustment Act (TAA) benefits for employees. WIN Job Center staffs also provide tailored recruitment and screening assistance.

These services are available to all customers at the local level through the State's network of WIN Job Centers.

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.

Adult and dislocated worker customers will be provided integrated services through the WIN Job Centers. WIN Job Center staffs are, for the most part, co-funded by the WIA and Wagner-Peyser fund streams and service integration is complete and total.

Core services provided by other One-Stop partners are present in all comprehensive and most affiliate Centers. More work needs to be done to maximize and link these partner funded core services. This will be a high priority for the State and local Workforce Boards and One-Stop operators during the upcoming two-year planning period.

2. Intensive Services. (112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

Describe State strategies and policies to ensure adults and dislocated workers who meet the criteria in §134(d)(3)(A) receive intensive services as defined.

The intensive services listed in Section 134(d)(3) of the Workforce Investment Act are available at every full-service WIN Job Center. Strategies and policies for delivering these services must be addressed in the local plan.

3. Training Services. (§112(b)(17)(A)(i).)

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.

The Governor's vision for increasing training access and opportunities is two-fold. As a result of the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, the State will leverage available State and Federal training funds and avoid duplication by encouraging various workforce development agencies to work together. Since these funds serve primarily unemployed, underemployed or dislocated workers, the Worker Training

Enhancement Fund was enacted in 2005 to provide State funds for training to incumbent workers.

In Program Year 2004, the State implemented a High-Growth and High-Demand Training Policy that encourages local workforce areas to use WIA funds in high-growth and high-demand occupations.

b. Individual Training Accounts:

(1) What policy direction has the State provided for ITAs?

State Policy Number 6, the Individual Training Account Policy, establishes the minimum requirements the local Workforce Boards must address in their local ITA policy. Each Board has developed a local ITA policy.

(2) Describe innovative training strategies used by the State to fill skills gaps. Include in the discussion the State's effort to leverage additional resources to maximize the use of ITAs through partnerships with business, education (in particular, community and technical colleges), economic development agencies, and industry associations and how business and industry involvement is used to drive this strategy.

The State has partnered with local areas and many of the State's community and junior colleges to provide non-ITA, class-sized training in programs that are in particular demand within that local area or community college service area. Of particular note was training by Holmes Community College and Southcentral Mississippi Works for newly hired workers at the Nissan automotive assembly plant and its suppliers. The State has also worked with the Mississippi Hospital Association (MHA), the MS Office of Nursing Workforce, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, and the Deans and Directors of Schools of Nursing to encourage increased involvement on the Eligible Training Provider List for ITA-eligible programs at the various nursing and allied health schools.

(3) Discuss the State's plan for committing all or part of WIA Title I funds to training opportunities in high-growth, high-demand and economically vital occupations.

State Policy Number 5, the Eligible Training Provider Certification Policy, requires that programs submitted for inclusion on the ETPL must provide training for careers deemed to be in demand in the local workforce area. The State produces a Demand Occupation

List driven by labor market information. This list is distributed to the local areas with the understanding that they should add or subtract occupations from the list as warranted by the local area's labor market data.

At Section 134(d) (4) (G) (ii) (II) the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) allows local boards to contract for group-sized training classes when there is "an insufficient number of eligible providers" on the statewide eligible training provider list to meet demand. Mississippi is a predominantly rural state that is experiencing rapid economic and workforce changes. It is essential that local workforce areas use this option to increase the supply of training in high growth/high demand areas. The presumptive high demand/high growth occupations appear on the "Fastest Growing, Most Openings, and Largest Employment" lists of overall occupations found at the America's CAREERInfoNet website at:

<http://www.acinet.org/acinet/state1.asp?soccode=&from=&Level=&keyword=&stfips=28&x=32&y=4>.

The local area may refine these lists to reflect only those occupations requiring post-secondary training or an associate's degree as appropriate. Other occupations may be targeted as indicated by local labor market information or other reliable sources. The short-term goal is to significantly increase the number of Mississippians trained using WIA resources.

(4) Describe the State's policy for limiting ITAs (e.g., dollar amount or duration).

State Policy Number 5 requires that the cost of training shall be no more than \$6,000 annually and that the length of training is limited to two years. All four workforce areas supported this limitation. Each local area may implement more restrictive policies.

(5) Describe the State's current or planned use of WIA Title I funds for the provision of training through apprenticeship.

The State currently has two apprenticeship programs with courses on the Eligible Training Provider List, with all other apprenticeship programs expected to be included in the near future.

(6) Identify State policies developed in response to changes to WIA regulations that permit the use of WIA Title I financial assistance to employ or train participants in religious activities when the assistance is provided indirectly (such as through an

ITA). (Note that the Department of Labor provides web access to the equal treatment regulations and other guidance for the workforce investment system and faith-based and community organizations at <http://www.dol.gov/cfbci/legalguidance.htm>.) (20 CFR § 667.266(b)(1).)

State Policy Number 5, Revision 1, Eligible Training Provider Certification Policy allows consideration of eligibility for and submission of programs from “other licensed public or private providers of training programs, including faith-based and non-profit providers” (II.B.1.c.).

To date, one faith-based organization is certified as an eligible training provider. Others are utilized as youth service providers, or as non-WIA funded One-Stop and youth partners. The State and the local Workforce Boards will continue to encourage faith-based and community-based organizations to apply for inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List and to participate in Mississippi’s workforce system to a greater extent.

- c. Eligible Training Provider List. Describe the State’s process for providing broad customer access to the statewide list of eligible training providers and their performance information including at every One-Stop Career Center. (§112(b)(17)(A)(iii).)

The State’s Eligible Training Provider List is published on the Internet at www.mississippi.org/eplweb bi-annually on January 1 and July 1. This list is created in conjunction with the local Workforce Boards. Staffs at the WIN Job Centers use this list and its accompanying performance data to assist clients in making informed choices concerning eligible training providers and to place participants in training that utilizes Individual Training Accounts (ITAs).

- d. On-the-Job (OJT) and Customized Training (§§112(b)(17)(A)(i) and 134(b).) Based on the outline below, describe the State’s major directions, policies and requirements related to OJT and customized training.

(1) Describe the Governor’s vision for increasing training opportunities to individuals through the specific delivery vehicles of OJT and customized training.

To address the Governor’s vision and the goals of the State stated earlier in this plan, On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Training (CT) are and will be advanced as the premier services for businesses and individuals seeking immediate employment. To

further this effort, the State will commit resources for business outreach personnel whose primary purpose will be to promote OJT and CT and to explore ways to leverage Federal, State, and local resources.

(2) Describe how the State:

- **Identifies OJT and customized training opportunities;**

This is a responsibility of the local areas and must be addressed in the local plans.

- **Markets OJT and customized training as an incentive to untapped employer pools, including new business to the State and employer groups;**

The State has a Business Services Outreach team actively engaged in marketing OJT and CT to businesses. Business outreach is primarily the responsibility of the four local areas and must be addressed in the local plan. The State has published generic brochures aimed at business that explain the advantages of OJT and CT.

- **Partners with high-growth, high-demand industries and economically vital industries to develop potential OJT and customized training strategies;**

This, too, is a responsibility of the four local Boards assisted by the Business Services Outreach team.

- **Taps business partners to help drive the demand-driven strategy through joint planning, competency and curriculum development, and determining appropriate lengths of training;**

Refer to the earlier plan sections recapping newly enacted State legislation and State and local Board mandates. Again, the State provides leadership in this area but the local areas and their WIN Job Center staffs must deliver the work product. This area will be addressed in the local plans.

- **Leverages other resources through education, economic development and industry associations to support OJT and customized training ventures.**

As stated in the goals for a unified workforce development system identified by the State Workforce Board, leveraging

funds and overall efficiency is paramount. The State Board committee established to develop an action plan to address leveraging resources will provide guidance to local areas and partners on ways to leverage other resources through education, economic development and industry associations to support OJT and customized training ventures. The local plans will provide more detail.

4. Service to Specific Populations. (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

- 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, migrants and seasonal farmworkers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, people with limited English-speaking proficiency, and people with disabilities).**

The WIN in Mississippi system and related programs and partner agencies are seeking to establish universal accessibility to services and products for all Mississippians. All services and programs will be structured to maximize access for all, with special accommodations provided when necessary.

Each Local Workforce Board will adopt and summarize in the local plan its service policies including veterans priorities, dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, people with limited English-speaking proficiency, and people with disabilities.

The State has taken the following actions:

- ❑ The State Board has adopted a universal access for all policy utilizing the publication “*Access of All: A Resource Manual for Meeting the Needs of One-Stop Customers with Disabilities*”;
- ❑ Encouraging continuing education for local staff that includes courses to promote access for all;

- ❑ Providing opportunities to expand the capacity of existing services to include customers perceived to have multiple barriers to employment;
- ❑ Using Disability Program Navigators as resources for the WIN Job Centers;
- ❑ Working with local partner agencies to develop plans to promote “One-Stop” products and services for use by targeted populations. Providing training opportunities in high growth high demand jobs designated by the Local Workforce Boards;
- ❑ Each Local Board is required to ensure that all facilities, programs, and services are fully accessible to persons with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities will be afforded opportunities for training activities designed to improve participation in the workforce and lead to higher earnings;
- ❑ Local Boards will be encouraged to provide information regarding career opportunities available in non-traditional employment, and to assist interested individuals in obtaining training for non-traditional employment. Individuals will be assessed to determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities they possess related to non-traditional employment opportunities;
- ❑ Working with the Mississippi Department of Human Services, the administering agency for Title V funds, local Boards will work to enhance services for older workers;
- ❑ Women and individuals with limited English-speaking abilities will receive equal treatment and have access to the full array of programs and services available through the One-Stop centers;
- ❑ Ensuring that displaced homemakers services are available and advertised and that displaced homemakers are identified as an eligible category of dislocated workers. Rapid response services will be made available to displaced homemakers in addition to regular One-Stop programs and services. Displaced homemakers will receive services that support entry into the workforce.

- b. Describe the reemployment services you will provide 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.**

Names of claimants who are identified as those most likely to exhaust UI benefits are prepared and delivered to the local WIN Job Center staff on a weekly basis. Those individuals are notified to report for job search skills training. The training consists of topics on dressing for success, interviewing skills and resume preparation. The training is conducted in small groups of six to ten people and may involve in-person presentations and/or video presentations. Local office staffs usually perform the training but may involve guests from business, especially if a specific business is actively recruiting at the time of the training.

- c. Describe how the State administers the unemployment insurance work test and how feedback requirements (under §7(a)(3)(F) of the Wagner-Peyser Act) for all UI claimants are met.**

Claimants are identified by certain characteristics on the AWS reporting and tracking system screen. If the claimant is called in or offered a referral for Employment Services and the claimant refuses or fails to report, a notification is sent to UI staff. The claimant will then be sent a UI notice to report and, if he/she reports, will be questioned regarding their failure to report for the ES services. If the claimant does not report after mailing of a UI notice, a stop order will be placed in the system and the claimant will not receive any further benefits until he/she reports and UI staff conducts an investigation.

If the claimant has good cause for not reporting, he/she will be referred to ES staff for services. If the claimant does not have good cause for failure to report, a report of investigation will be written and the claimant will be disallowed benefits for the week(s) he/she failed to report. In certain cases, investigation reveals that the individuals are not able to work. Those findings are reflected in the investigative reports.

- d. Describe the State's strategy for integrating and aligning services to dislocated workers provided through the WIA rapid response, WIA dislocated worker, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. Does the State have a policy supporting co-enrollment for WIA and TAA?**

Mississippi provides information on WIA dislocated worker services, rapid response services and Trade Adjustment Assistance services during orientation sessions organized by the State's Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU). General information is provided to workers on TAA services such as retraining, job search assistance, job relocation assistance, the Health Coverage Tax Credit (HCTC), Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance for older workers (ATAA) and Trade Readjustment Assistance (TRA). Workers are given written documentation of which services may become available to them if their employer's petition is approved for TAA certification by DOL, as well as the time frames in which they must apply for these services to meet eligibility requirements.

Once a petition is approved, additional sessions with affected workers may be set up to provide information about TAA services only. These sessions give the workers the opportunity to ask detailed questions or questions directly related to the workers' individual needs. The sessions may be set up through the employer if the place of business is still open or through TAA staff at the nearest WIN Job Center or at another location.

Mississippi does not have a statewide plan for co-enrollments, as guidelines and policies for co-enrollments vary by local workforce area. It is the general opinion within the WIN system that co-enrollment should be driven by what is needed and best for the dislocated worker.

- e. **How is the State's workforce investment system working collaboratively with business and industry and the education community to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skill achievement and employment experienced by the populations listed in paragraph (a.) above and to ensure they are being identified as a critical pipeline of workers?**

The State and the local Workforce Boards have initiated an incentive for community and junior colleges to become stronger partners in the One-Stop system by creating coordinator positions within the WIN Job Centers for the purpose of identifying employer needs and skill levels for specific jobs. The WIN Job Centers and Business Outreach staffs also communicate to the community and junior colleges the need for any traditional or non-traditional programs that will meet the immediate needs of both employers and job seekers.

- f. **Describe how the State will ensure that the full array of One-Stop services are available to individuals with disabilities and that the services are fully accessible.**

In Comprehensive WIN Job Centers customers with disabilities will receive the full range of services available through the State's One-Stop system. WIN Job Center staff, including Wagner-Peyser funded staff and Vocational Rehabilitation coordinators, will provide specialized services to customers with disabilities. All Centers shall adhere to ADA requirements to assure that customers with disabilities are able to access or have assistance in accessing job listings and other resources. Knowledgeable and competent staff shall be available to assist each customer as needed. The staff shall be capable of responding to the needs of persons with disabilities.

WIN Job Centers will continue to work closely with all partners to ensure programs and services are accessible for all individuals. The Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS) provides advice and guidance regarding assistive services and/or devices are available to provide easy access to information and workforce related services to persons with disabilities in the WIN Job Centers. The State of Mississippi is participating in the DOL/SSA Disability Program Navigator Initiative. There are nine Navigators distributed across the workforce system to assist with accessibility.

The State Workforce Board encourages the following activities:

- ❑ Dedicating a portion of their website to links with local and national disability resources to support staff and customers with disabilities in each workforce area:
- ❑ Ensuring that disability literature and information on local resources is available in local WIN Job Center resource libraries;
- ❑ Each WIN Job Center plans to hold an open house for local disability organizations to provide an opportunity to learn about the system with a brief orientation of services offered;
- ❑ Promoting services through local advocacy groups, community action groups, faith based community organizations and others that provide support and service to persons with disabilities;
- ❑ Designating a lead staff member in each local workforce area to provide outreach and serve as a liaison to the disability community and other individuals with barriers to employment;

- ❑ Developing marketing materials that describe persons with disabilities as a target audience;
 - ❑ Facilitating the transition of youth with disabilities to school, employment and economic self-sufficiency;
 - ❑ Conducting outreach to, and coordination with, community service providers working with people with disabilities, local Independent Living Centers, and public and private mental health and developmental disability organizations;
 - ❑ Including a case management model that provides accessible intensive services to individuals with barriers to employment.
- g. Describe the role LVER/DVOP staff have in the One-Stop Delivery System. How will the State ensure adherence to the legislative requirements for veterans' staff? How will services under this Plan take into consideration the agreement reached between the Secretary and the State regarding veterans' employment programs? (§§112(b)(7), 112 (b)(17)((B); 322, 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41; and 20 CFR §1001.120).)**

Staff serving veterans, including LVER/DVOP staff, conduct visits to employers to discuss services for veterans at the WIN Job Centers. These staff members are also visible at numerous events in the community, speaking at workshops, stand-downs and other similar events. These events are detailed in the WIN Job Center Managers' Quarterly Reports submitted to MDES.

To ensure adherence to applicable Federal legislative requirements, WIN Job Centers give veterans priority in scheduling and offering core, intensive and training services. The State also seeks and uses incentive awards to encourage the improvement and modernization of employment, training and placement services for veterans.

- h. Department of Labor regulations at 29 CFR 37 require all recipients of Federal financial assistance from DOL to provide meaningful access to limited English proficient (LEP) persons. Federal financial assistance includes grants, training, equipment usage, donations of surplus property, and other assistance. Sub-recipients are also covered when Federal DOL funds are passed through from one recipient to a sub-recipient. Describe how the State will ensure access to services through the State's One-Stop delivery system by persons with limited English proficiency and**

how the State will meet the requirements of ETA Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 26-02, (May 29, 2003) which provides guidance on methods of complying with the Federal rule.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security recognizes that the demographics of the State are changing rapidly. This fact is evidenced by the increase in the numbers of Hispanics and Asians accessing services in the WIN Job Centers. MDES has taken a proactive approach to improve services to persons with language barriers. MDES is working with the local workforce areas to address cases where language barriers may have impeded access.

One key step consists of communicating to WIN Job Center staff the rights of LEP individuals to access, in the appropriate languages, employment benefits, services and job-training programs for which they may be eligible. MDES has contracted with a translation service to create forms, brochures, booklets, outreach and recruitment information, and other materials that are routinely disseminated to the Spanish-speaking public. Interpreters are also available. Each WIN Job Center has a list of resources available to LEP customers.

The staff in the WIN Job Centers is knowledgeable about and sensitive to barriers facing the LEP customer. The staff notifies management immediately when a customer with language barriers enters the center. The goal of all staff is to render the highest level of customer service possible. In an effort to continue to provide quality service to all its customers, MDES is requiring all staff to attend diversity and sensitivity training.

This area will be addressed in local plans.

- i. Describe the State's strategies to enhance and integrate service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for migrant and seasonal farmworkers and agricultural employers. How will the State ensure that migrant and seasonal farm workers have equal access to employment opportunities through the State's One-Stop delivery system? Include the following:**

- The number of Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFWs) the State anticipates reaching annually through outreach to increase their ability to access core, intensive, and training services in the One-Stop Career Center System.**

Mississippi has identified 2,500 Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers (MSFW) living in the state. The WIN system

expects to serve approximately 2000 MSFW's each year. Intensive outreach will continue to help identify and serve a high percentage of our MSFW customers.

Partnerships have been established with community-based organizations to help seek out and identify MSFW's. Promotional materials, brochures, and flyers are translated into languages other than English so that LEP clients can understand and access One-Stop services. Resource materials in the Centers are also prepared in other languages. Access to translators will be made available in the WIN Job Centers and in WIA funded training programs. Additionally, "Menus of Services" and WIN Job Center locations will be posted in languages other than English.

5. Priority of Service

- a. What procedures and criteria are in place under 20 CFR 663.600 for the Governor and appropriate local boards to direct One-Stop operators to give priority of service to public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals for intensive and training services if funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities are determined to be limited? (§§112(b)(17)(A)(iv) and 134(d)(4)(E).)**

Priority of service for WIA adult customers will be addressed in the local plans. State review of these plans will ensure compliance with WIA requirements.

- 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], that 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 U.S. Department of Labor, in accordance with the provisions of TEGL 5-03 (9/16/03)?**

All WIN Job Centers have separate sign-in logs for veterans and specified spouses. WIN Job Center staffs check this list and provide service to veterans first. Win Job Center Managers have been instructed to distribute and discuss the Priority of Services for Veterans Policy with all partners in the WIN system.

All WIA programs and services are available on a priority basis for veterans. Veterans are interviewed and referred to One-Stop partners such as Vocational Rehabilitation on an as needed basis.

D. Rapid Response. (112(b)(17)(A)(ii).)

Describe how your State provides Rapid Response services with the funds reserved under section 133(a)(2).

- 1. Identify the entity responsible for providing Rapid Response services. Describe how Rapid Response activities involve local boards and Chief Elected Officials. If Rapid Response activities are shared between the State and local areas, describe the functions of each and how funds are allocated to the local areas.**

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) is the lead agency for rapid response services in Mississippi, and staffs the state Dislocated Worker Unit (DWU). The State also allocates a share of available rapid response funds to local workforce areas based on mass layoff or plant closure activity. Each workforce area has designated a staff person as their rapid response and dislocated worker program coordinator. Local area plans must describe how the State and local areas will coordinate rapid response services to address each area's specific labor market needs.

The MDES also provides funds to each local area to contract with local community or junior colleges. The community and junior colleges staff the area's rapid response team. The community/junior college rapid response coordinators play a significant role in facilitating the creation and delivery of training tailored to each rapid response event.

- 2. Describe the process involved in carrying out Rapid Response activities.**

- a. What methods are involved in receiving notice of impending layoffs (include WARN Act notice as well as other sources)?**

The MDES responds to both WARN and non-WARN events, that is, events involving less than 50 individuals. The MDES DWU receives official WARN notices of impending closures or mass lay off events from the affected business. To ensure that assistance and services are provided to as many dislocated workers as possible, the MDES established a policy to also respond to non-WARN events, regardless of the number of individuals affected. The MDES may learn of non-WARN events from the media, local partner agencies, including local economic development offices, one-stop center and local area staff, businesses, affected workers, community/junior college rapid response coordinators, and other local sources.

b. What efforts does the Rapid Response team make to ensure that rapid response services are provided, whenever possible, prior to layoff date, onsite at the company, and on company time?

Upon the receipt of a WARN or non-WARN notice, the MDES staff contacts the company within 48 hours to discuss available rapid response services and offers assistance to the company and the affected workers. An on-site visit with the company representative and, when appropriate, the union or employee representative is scheduled as soon as possible.

The State developed an Employee Survey form to determine the specific assistance needed by the affected workers. The survey is provided to the employer during the on-site visit for immediate distribution to the workers. The form collects information on the employees' education and skill levels, work history, employment assistance needs, and training interests. After compiling and analyzing the information provided by the employees, the team identifies the workers' specific needs and works with the local area and community/junior college to facilitate the delivery of services from the appropriate partner agencies.

Working in coordination with the local workforce area and WIN Job Center staff, a plan of action is developed to deliver services to the affected dislocated workers. Whenever possible, services are delivered on-site prior to layoff. Providing services on-site is dependent upon the company's willingness to allow workers to attend sessions during work hours and the availability of meeting space at the site.

To assist with the provision of on-site services for workers, MDES utilizes the Mobile WIN Job Center. The mobile one-stop is outfitted with twelve computer workstations, allowing access to the Internet. The separate instructor workstation has a control console that allows the instructor to assist or take control of any or all computer monitors. The workstations have Choices 2005, a career exploration program, Microsoft Office XP, and WinWay Resume Deluxe software that may be used to develop a resume. Workers can also access the Internet for job search from the computer. The mobile one-stop unit is a vital part of the rapid response team's efforts to deliver services on-site to workers, especially in rural areas where workers may not have convenient access to a comprehensive Center.

c. What services are included in Rapid Response activities? Does the Rapid Response team provide workshops or other activities in addition to general informational services to affected workers?

How do you determine what services will be provided for a particular layoff (including layoffs that may be trade-affected)?

Rapid Response services offered to the company may include general orientation sessions and, whenever possible, on-site workshops on resume preparation, job search skills, financial planning, or others. The community or junior college may provide basic introduction to computer training, or GED classes. If the company does not have adequate facilities to provide workshops on-site, the mobile WIN Job Center may be used, or workshops are scheduled at a nearby Job Center.

In instances where the company has been notified that a Trade petition was approved, a Training Fair may be held on-site. At the Training Fair, local staff are available to discuss the benefits of retraining and Training Readjustment Assistance benefits. Local training providers are also invited to offer information on available training options.

During orientation sessions with small groups of employees, the rapid response team gives workers an overview of available services and assistance. Workers are encouraged to visit the local center to access appropriate core, intensive, or training services. Local staff will interview each TAA eligible applicant regarding suitable training opportunities available to them and individual job plans are developed. A TAA brochure that describes available services and benefits is provided to each employee.

3. How does the State ensure a seamless transition between Rapid Response services and One-Stop activities for affected workers?

The MDES recognizes that one of the most significant challenges in serving dislocated workers is to encourage workers to actually access available services, either through the WIN Job Center or other partners. In Program Year 2005, the MDES will begin implementation of a new system to address this concern. During the rapid response orientation sessions, each worker receives a “WIN-ing Ticket: The key to reemployment and training services at the WIN Job Center.” Workers are encouraged to present the ticket at the nearest Center to receive special assistance. The new system will be implemented at selected Centers in each local area beginning July 1, 2005. A staff person at each site will be designated as a dislocated worker specialist.

When the dislocated worker presents the “ticket for services,” they are immediately referred to the specialist, who provides them with one-on-one individualized assessment and actively assists them in accessing needed services.

As part of the new rapid response strategy, MDES will also strive to reach those dislocated workers who did not receive rapid response services. Individuals receiving unemployment insurance must periodically report for a benefits review. The local rapid response and community or junior college coordinators will work with Centers to schedule meetings with these individuals to apprise them of the WIA employment and retraining services available to assist them. Information on other services, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program, vocational rehabilitation services, or starting a business will also be discussed.

- 4. Describe how Rapid Response functions as a business service. Include whether Rapid Response partners with economic development agencies to connect employees from companies undergoing layoffs to similar companies that are growing and need skilled workers. How does Rapid Response promote the full range of services available to help companies in all stages of the economic cycle, not just those available during layoffs? How does the State promote Rapid Response as a positive, proactive, business-friendly service, not only a negative, reactive service?**

The MDES rapid response staff has developed partnerships with local and State economic development entities. In Program Year 2004, the MDES created a Business Outreach Services team. The team works with businesses throughout the State to apprise them of available services. In addition, the Mississippi Development Authority, the State's economic and community development agency, has regional economic developers stationed locally across the state. The team coordinates with the regional MDA economic developers.

When the MDES learns of a layoff or closure through a WARN notice or non-WARN means, the MDES immediately notifies MDA staff that a company may be in need of assistance. The local economic development office is invited to attend the on-site visit with the employer to gather information about the circumstances surrounding the impending closure or layoff. The local economic development staff is in a position to assist the employer in exploring options that may help them to avert the layoff. In addition, if it is evident that a closure will occur, local economic development staff may be able to market the site to employers who will be moving to the area.

To further promote Rapid Response as a positive, business-friendly service, several methods are employed:

- The State created a WIN Job Center display booth that is used at job fair events across the state. Brochures on rapid response services and

the business services available through the local Centers are distributed to businesses and job fair participants. The State also exhibits the booth at pertinent community, business and economic development association conferences, such as the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, the Mississippi Municipal League, the Society of Human Resource Managers, and the Boards of Supervisors.

- The MDES markets rapid response and business services, including recruitment and screening of new employees and customized and on-the-job training services, to businesses through the media. Articles on business services are published in the state's business journals and local newspapers, and newspaper and radio advertisements have also been used.
- Information on rapid response and business services is provided on the MDES and MDA web sites, and links to the web sites are placed on the web sites of several business associations, such as the Mississippi Economic Council, the State's chamber of commerce association.

5. What other partnerships does Rapid Response engage in to expand the range and quality of services available to companies and affected workers and to develop an effective early layoff-warning network?

Rapid response staffs coordinate with local and State economic development agencies as well as other partner agencies to provide an effective early layoff-warning network.

6. What systems does the Rapid Response team use to track its activities? Does the State have a comprehensive, integrated Management Information System that includes Rapid Response, Trade Act programs, National Emergency Grants, and One-Stop activities?

The DWU utilizes several methods to track its activities. A file is maintained for each rapid response event that includes a checklist that describes all services provided, names of company contacts, copy of the WARN notice, and information on any follow-up activities. The unit also maintains a rapid response database. The database contains information on each closure or layoff event, and each individual affected. It provides individual contact information and the skills of the affected workers. A quarterly WARN Report is also maintained that lists all WARN and non-WARN activities, name and location of each company, type of company affected, number of workers, services provided, and if the event is Trade related. This report is posted on the agency web site and is provided to local areas and economic development entities.

7. Are Rapid Response funds used for other activities not described above (e.g., the provision of additional assistance to local areas that experience increased workers or unemployed individuals due to dislocation events)?

Rapid response funds are made available to assist local areas that experience increased unemployment due to dislocation events and in cases of unusually large layoffs that do not warrant National Emergency Grant applications. Rapid response funds are also used for other allowable activities as described at 20 CFR 665.31 and 665.320.

E. Youth.

ETA's strategic vision identifies youth most in need, such as out of school youth and those at risk, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, homeless youth, and migrant and seasonal farmworker youth as those most in need of service. State programs and services should take a comprehensive approach to serving these youth, including basic skills remediation, helping youth stay in or return to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships and enrollment in community and four-year colleges. (§112(b)(18).)

1. Describe your State's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need as described above. Include any State requirements and activities to assist youth who have special needs or barriers to employment, including those who are pregnant, parenting, or have disabilities. Include how the State will coordinate across State agencies responsible for workforce investment, foster care, education, human services, juvenile justice, and other relevant resources as part of the strategy. (§112(b)(18).)

See the response at Section III.C.4 above. **This is an area that local plans must address.**

2. Describe how coordination with Job Corps and other youth programs will occur. (§112(b)(18)(C).)

This topic will be addressed in more depth by local plans. Local Youth Councils and youth teams take the lead in designing and implementing youth strategies.

Job Corps coordinates with other youth programs through Mississippi Job Corps Consortium members' contacts with local Workforce Boards and

active participation on the Youth Councils. Job Corps is not a WIA-funded program for youth in MDES, but it is a viable WIA youth service.

Job Corps will be joining forces with the youth justice system to identify at risk youth. Partnerships will be developed with WIA programs for in-school and out-of-school youth to best serve all at risk youth. Transition out of the youth justice system will be coordinated with Job Corps and other youth services.

3. How does the State plan to utilize the funds reserved for Statewide activities to support the State’s vision for serving youth? Examples of activities that would be appropriate investments of these funds include:

a. utilizing the funds to promote cross agency collaboration;

With the implementation of the new DOL vision for serving youth, the State plans to use a portion of its statewide reserve funds for innovative youth projects. These projects will encourage collaboration among state agencies that serve youth, including but not limited to Education, Human Services, WIA, and Juvenile Justice. Mississippi will seek to replicate innovative youth program models from other states, particularly those with socioeconomic and labor market conditions similar to those of Mississippi.

The State will also seek to incorporate other State agencies into existing youth programs that have proven successful, such as the Office of Nursing Workforce-WIA Nurse Mentorship project. In this project, collaboration already exists between Labor, the local workforce area, Education (Meridian Public School District, Meridian Community College) and local business (Rush Foundation Hospital). However, other agencies such as Human Services will be encouraged to participate in the program in an effort to expand it to other sites throughout the State.

b. demonstration of cross-cutting models of service delivery;

Refer to the other paragraphs in this section. This topic will be addressed in greater depth in the local plans.

c. development of new models of alternative education leading to employment;

Addressed in local plans.

- d. development of demand-driven models with business and industry working collaboratively with the workforce investment system and education partners to develop strategies for bringing these youth successfully into the workforce pipeline with the right skills.**

This topic is more appropriately addressed in the local plans.

As previously noted, in January 2004 the State partnered with the Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce (ONW) to pilot the WIA Student Nurse Academy in Meridian, Mississippi. Other partners included the Twin Districts Local Workforce Investment Area, Meridian High School, Rush Foundation Hospital, and Meridian Community College's Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA) Program. Twenty (20) students began the 7-week academy, which included CNA instruction and clinical experience at Rush Hospital. All 20 students graduated from the initial phase; with thirteen going on to complete the second phase and successfully sit for the CNA exam. A number of students were offered employment at the hospital, while others opted to pursue further educational opportunities.

Because of the overwhelming success of the pilot site in Meridian, the program has been expanded to sites in the remaining local workforce areas: Greenville in the Delta, Pontotoc in the Mississippi Partnership, and Crystal Springs Job Corps Center in the Southcentral Mississippi Works. Implementation of the program at those sites began in January 2005, with approximately 75 students projected to participate.

It is the intent of the State to continue to pursue and encourage opportunities for pilot programs such as the ONW project. The structure of the Nurse Academy is groundbreaking because it fosters partnerships between businesses, local workforce areas, and education entities, with the ultimate outcome of preparing youth for immediate employment in demand occupations. In addition, the participants are introduced to the post-secondary academic environment and receive information about future educational opportunities in their field of training.

- e. Describe how your State will, in general, meet the Act's provisions regarding youth program design. (§§112(b)(18) and 129(c).)**

Since WIA is a locally-driven program, each local Workforce Board will be responsible for describing in the local plan the framework for the youth program as described in Section 129(c)(1) of the Act.

F. Business Services. (§112 (a) and 112 (b)(2).)

Provide a description of the state's strategies to improve the services to employers, including a description of how the State intends to:

1. Determine the employer needs in the local areas and on a Statewide basis.

This topic has already been addressed at considerable length in other sections of this plan. Local areas will provide more detail in their local plans.

2. Integrate business services, including Wagner-Peyser Act services, to employers through the One-Stop system.

The Director of Business Outreach Services supervises the activities of this team and coordinates with the Governor's Office, state agencies, community colleges, and state business groups to develop an outreach plan that is consistent with the goals and objectives of the WIN Job Centers.

3. Streamline administration of Federal tax credit programs within the One-Stop system to maximize employer participation. (20 CFR part 652.3(b), §112(b)(17)(A)(i).)

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security has a full time State Coordinator for the WOTC/WtWTC program. The State Coordinator works with the WIN Job Centers to ensure that each office has a person available to answer employer questions about the programs. Informational workshops are held in the WIN Job Centers for employers. Additional WOTC/WtWTC staff work out of the State Office. They process applications and answers to specific questions on program eligibility.

WOTC/WtWTC marketing packets and brochures are supplied to the WIN Job Centers to provide information and instructions to employers, applicants and the general public. MDES includes flyers in Unemployment Insurance quarterly mail-outs and runs newspaper ads periodically throughout the state regarding WOTC/WtWTC.

Designated WOTC staff conducts WOTC/WtWTC training as needed with state staff, participating agencies (Department of Human Services, Department of Corrections, Department of Rehabilitation Services and Social Security Administration) and other groups when necessary or as legislative changes occur. MDES's Business Outreach Developers provide WOTC/WtWTC information to the business community.

G. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies (§ 112(b)(17)(A).)

- 1. 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. Include in the description the initiative's general design, anticipated outcomes, partners involved and funds leveraged (e.g., Title I formula, Statewide reserve, employer contributions, education funds, non-WIA State funds).**

Workforce Enhancement – As a result of the State's enactment of the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Act of 2004 and the Workforce Training Enhancement Funds legislation in 2005, the State is about to launch an incumbent worker training program. The program will link funds from WIA, State funds at the community and junior colleges and contributions from businesses to provide training to incumbent and newly hired workers. There is a State Workforce Board Committee currently at work on the plan and design for this project. The outcome will be to build a better-trained workforce to meet the challenges of the future.

Health-Care – The State has a long-standing relationship with the Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce (MONW) to address labor shortages in the health care industry. Using WIA, state and private funds the MONW has 1) studied the barriers that prevent students from successfully completing health-care related training and is developing innovative training models that address those barriers, 2) operated in conjunction with local workforce areas and youth providers a youth mentorship project to recruit youth into health-care related training and careers, and 3) conducted health-care related labor surveys in cooperation with the State Department of Health, the Mississippi Hospital Association and others and analyzed and shared results with employers, trainers, and workforce entities.

The State will continue to develop innovative strategies to meet the needs of businesses and job seekers in the State.

- 2. If your State is participating in the ETA Personal Re-employment Account (PRA) demonstration, describe your vision for integrating PRAs as a service delivery alternative as part of the State's overall strategy for workforce investment.**

Two WIN Job Center sites located in Gulfport and Tunica are participating in the Department of Labor's PRA demonstration. These two locations were chosen because each represents a different kind of community in Mississippi.

Tunica is a traditionally agricultural, rural community in the Mississippi Delta. The community has experienced significant economic growth with the advent of the casino industry and due to its close proximity to the growth in the three-state Memphis Metropolitan Area.

On the other hand, Gulfport is a metropolitan area on the more densely populated Mississippi Gulf Coast. Although there is also a thriving casino industry in this part of the state, the economy is much more diverse, with shipbuilding, manufacturing and retailing making up the bulk of the area's economy.

The results of the PRA demonstration in these two different Mississippi Workforce Areas will provide sufficient information to determine the potential for using the PRA approach in other parts of the state. The State plans to identify the kinds of training and services participants choose to purchase with their personal accounts and the impact these choices make on their job search success. We can then work to adjust our system of service and training throughout the state to meet these particular needs of our customers.

H. Strategies for Faith-based and Community Organizations (§112(b)(17)(i).)

Reaching those most in need is a fundamental element of the demand-driven system's goal to increase the pipeline of needed workers while meeting the training and employment needs of those most at risk. Faith-based and community organizations provide unique opportunities for the workforce investment system to access this pool of workers and meet the needs of business and industry.

Describe those activities to be undertaken to:

- 1. increase the opportunities for participation of faith-based and community organizations as committed and active partners in the One-Stop delivery system; and**
- 2. expand the access of faith-based and community-based organizations' clients and customers to the services offered by the One-Stops in the State. Outline those action steps designed to strengthen State collaboration efforts with local workforce investment areas in conducting outreach campaigns to educate faith-based and community organizations about the attributes and objectives of the demand-driven workforce investment system. Indicate how these resources can be strategically and effectively leveraged in the State's workforce investment areas to help meet the objectives of the Workforce Investment Act.**

The State has relayed to the local workforce areas communications from DOL regarding opportunities for participation by faith-based and community organizations (FBCO) as committed and active partners in the One-Stop system. Local areas and FBCO's will continue to collaborate to provide services. FBCO's have and will continue to operate youth programs for local areas as appropriate and when approved through standard Request for Proposal (RFP) procedures.

The State recently engaged in a conference call with the DOL Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) exploring plans for expanding the Faith-Based presence in the workforce system in Mississippi. Of particular interest to the CFBCI is the State's work on a statewide resource guide of service providers that assists hard-to-serve populations and persons with barriers to employment. This resource guide is heavily populated with faith-based and community organizations. The State also plans to participate in a three-state training forum sponsored by the CFBCI to learn innovative approaches to involving these organizations in service delivery in the workforce system.

X. State Administration

A. What technology infrastructure and/or management information systems does the State have in place to support the State and local workforce investment activities such as a One-Stop operating system designed to facilitate case management and service delivery across programs, a State job matching system, web-based self service tools for customers, fiscal management systems, etc.? (§§111(d)(2), 112(b)(1) and 112(b)(8)(B).)

The State, through the Mississippi Department of Employment Security, maintains statewide data collection systems for its WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs. Currently the two programs use separate systems. However, data collection and reporting is consistently available and up-to-date. These information management systems support improved local management decisions and provide for in-depth statistical analysis at the state level. In the near future, the State will begin work on building a new system for more integrated service delivery and improved performance achievement that is designed to facilitate case management and service delivery across programs, a State job matching system, web-based self service tools for customers, fiscal management systems, etc.

Currently in production are improvements to the web-based Eligible Training Provider List that will allow training institutions to apply online to be approved providers. Approved providers will also be able to submit program applications for new programs or for recertification of existing programs.

B. Describe the State’s plan for use of the funds reserved for Statewide activities under WIA §128 (a)(1).

The State will use funds reserved for statewide activities to provide required youth and adult activities as well as projects to support the following State Board priorities.

- Targeted Industries – To ensure the growth of the economy, Mississippi recognizes it must focus limited resources on businesses and skills to provide the greatest opportunity for future growth.
 - Existing Business – Including but not limited to business with documented current demand and/or growth potential.
 - High Growth and High Demand - Including but not limited to businesses employing workers in occupations identified as high growth and high demand in the future.
 - Healthcare – Including but not limited to healthcare related occupations where training is provided in partnership with healthcare providers.
 - Small Business – Including but not limited to businesses that employ not less than 5 and not more than 50 workers in support of growth or demand occupations.
 - Advanced Manufacturing – Including but not limited to businesses actively engaged in making a better product suitable for more immediate use at less cost.
 - Support Industries – Including but not limited to businesses or services necessary to support and enhance economic growth such as construction, education, finance, and transportation.

C. Describe how any waivers or workflex authority (both existing and planned) will assist the State in developing its workforce investment system. (§§189(i)(1), 189 (i)(4)(A), and 192).)

See response in Section V. J above.

D. Performance Management and Accountability. Improved performance and accountability for customer-focused results are central features of WIA. To improve, states need not only systems in place to collect data and track performance, but also systems to analyze the information and modify strategies to improve performance. (See Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 15-03, Common Measures Policy, December 10, 2003.) In this section, describe how the State measures the success of its strategies in achieving its goals, and how the State uses this data to continuously improve the system.

- 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. For each of the core indicators, explain how the State worked with local boards to determine the level of the performance goals. Include a discussion of how the levels compare with the State's previous outcomes as well as with the State-adjusted levels of performance established for other States (if available), taking into account differences in economic conditions, the characteristics of participants when they entered the program and the services to be provided. Include a description of how the levels will help the State achieve continuous improvement over the two years of the Plan. (§§112(b)(3) and 136(b)(3).)**

The State of Mississippi is applying for a waiver of the current 17 WIA performance measures and will implement the new Common Measures as described in TEGL 28-04 effective July 1, 2005. No additional State performance measures will be added at this time.

Once the numerical level to be achieved on each Common Measure is agreed to by the Regional Office, the four local areas will negotiate their respective performance levels with MDES. The process for setting area goals will mirror the process utilized by the Region in setting the State's goals.

Performance relative to the Common Measures will be tracked and reported quarterly to the State and local Boards. Shortfalls will require discussion and corrective action as appropriate. Exemplary performance will trigger comparable discussion and an effort to identify and replicate best practices.

Since the Common Measures are new, fine-tuning is inevitable. MDES will work closely with the Regional Office and its local areas to share problems, solutions and best practices.

- 2. Describe any targeted applicant groups under WIA Title I, the Wagner-Peyser Act or Title 38 Chapters 41 and 42 (Veterans Employment and Training Programs) that the State tracks. (§§111(d)(2), 112(b)(3) and 136(b)(2)(C).)**

Mississippi recognizes that providing service opportunities to the following groups is essential to building a more vibrant workforce:

- Incumbent Workers – Including but not limited to low skill and entry-level workers and workers with no clear career path to advancement;
- Dislocated Workers – Including but not limited to trade related displacements, displaced homemakers, and the children of dislocated workers;
- Veterans – Including but not limited to recently separated veterans, families of veterans and active military personnel, and military personnel returning from active duty;
- Offenders and Ex-Offenders – Including but not limited to incarcerated individuals scheduled for release within three months;
- Older Youth – Including but not limited to individuals over 18 and less than 22 years of age who are not enrolled in school or are under employed; and
- Mature Workers – Including but not limited to unemployed or under employed individuals over the age of 55.

3. Identify any performance outcomes or measures in addition to those prescribed by WIA and what process the State is using to track and report them.

No additional outcomes or measures are envisioned at this time. In the future, effective business service delivery, increased development and delivery of training for high growth/high demand occupations and industries, youth retention and success in school and work and other areas targeted by the State’s strategic plan may result in new performance measures.

4. Describe the State’s common data system and reporting processes in place to track progress. Describe what data will be collected from the various One-Stop partners (beyond that required by DOL), use of quarterly wage records (including how your State accesses wage records), and how the Statewide system will have access to the information needed to continuously improve. (§112(b)(8)(B).)

The State is revising its MIS system to capture and collect all performance information required by the six Common Measures. No difficulty will be experienced in delivering the first quarterly report, due November 15, 2005, on time. The State Board will, in addition, require performance reporting from community and junior colleges receiving special State funds for the creation and delivery of high growth/high demand training. These measures have not yet been developed.

UI wage records will remain the primary source of employment and wage information, but supplemental information will be allowed to the extent permitted by TEGL 28-04. New information sources, as permitted by the

TEGL, will be considered and utilized as other Federal agencies and other State and local partners implement the Common Measures.

- 5. Describe any actions the Governor and State Board will take to ensure collaboration with key partners and continuous improvement of the statewide workforce investment system. (§§111(d)(2) and 112(b)(1).)**

Regular quarterly meetings will be held with State and local partners to share ideas, facilitate Common Measure implementation, analyze performance and develop effective co-enrollment and joint service delivery strategies.

- 6. How do the State and local boards evaluate performance? What corrective actions (including sanctions and technical assistance) will the State take if performance falls short of expectations? How will the State and Local Boards use the review process to reinforce the strategic direction of the system? (§§111(d)(2), 112(b)(1), and 112(b)(3).)**

Refer to section D.1 above. Since Common Measures are new, ongoing technical assistance will be offered to predict and fix performance problems. During the first year of implementation, July 1, 2005 until June 30, 2006, proactive corrective action and technical assistance will be the preferred option if performance lags. During the second year, July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007, to the extent that corrective action fails to increase performance as measured by either the Common Measures or by State strategic plan benchmarks and objectives, sanctions may be imposed in accordance with policies and procedures adopted by the State Board.

Success in meeting and exceeding Common Measures and in achieving strategic benchmarks will be rewarded in accordance with State Board policies throughout the two-year planning period, as results are analyzed on a quarterly and annual basis. The State's incentive, corrective action and sanctioning policy will be in place by January 15, 2006 and will be refined throughout the two-year period as Common Measures are implemented by partner programs and agencies.

- 7. What steps has the State taken to prepare for implementation of new reporting requirements against the common performance measures as described in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 15-03, December 10, 2003, Common Measures Policy? In addition, what is the State's plan for gathering baseline data and establishing performance targets for the common measures? Note: ETA will issue additional guidance on reporting requirements for common measures.**

See the responses to other questions in this section.

- 8. Include a proposed level for each performance measure for each of the two program years covered by the plan. While the plan is under review, the State will negotiate with the respective ETA Regional Administrator to set the appropriate levels for the next two years. States must identify the performance indicators required under section 136, and, for each indicator, the State must develop an objective and quantifiable performance goal for two program years. States are encouraged to address how the performance goals for local workforce investment areas and training providers will help them attain their Statewide performance goals. (§§112(b)(3) and 136.)**

See **Attachment D**, which reflects expected performance on the six Common Measures described in TEGL 28-04. Negotiation with the Regional Office can begin immediately and negotiation with the four local areas will begin as soon as agreement with the Region is reached.

Performance benchmarks for training providers are separately addressed in the State's Individual Training Account (ITA) policy.

E. Administrative Provisions

- 1. Provide a description of the appeals process referred to in §116(a)(5)(m).**

In each State policy governing programs and services for which an appeal process is applicable and allowable, such as the Eligible Training Provider Certification Policy, the State has included a section that describes the manner in which appeals will be handled.

- 2. Describe the steps taken by the State to ensure compliance with the non-discrimination requirements outlined in §188.**

Both the Mississippi Development Authority-Employment Training Division (MDA-ETD) and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) submitted to the DOL Civil Rights Center (CRC) and had certified "Methods of Administration" (MOA) certifying compliance with WIA Sect. 188 for the State's initial WIA Five-Year Strategic Plan. The ETD MOA applies to Workforce Investment Act programs and activities, while the MDES MOA is applicable to Wagner-Peyser programs and activities. Effective November 1, 2004, the ETD and the MDES formed a partnership that included co-location in the MDES State Office. Effective July 1, 2005, the two will be legally joined in one agency, with ETD becoming a division of the MDES.

After July 1, the MDES will develop a new, unified MOA to be certified by the CRC. This unified MOA will reference all MDES departments and offices, as well as revisiting Memoranda of Understanding with all WIA partners.

Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was partially accomplished through a contract with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services. Onsite visits were made to determine compliance with this requirement. Reports were prepared for the State, the one-stop operators, Local Workforce Investment Areas, and the WIN Job Center Managers. The reports included findings and recommendations to assist the State with ensuring compliance with the non-discrimination requirements outlined in §188.

XI. Assurances

1. The State assures that it will establish, in accordance with section 184 of the Workforce Investment Act, fiscal control and fund accounting procedures that may be necessary to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for, funds paid to the State through the allotments made under sections 127 and 132. (§112(b)(11).)
2. The State assures that it will comply with section 184(a)(6), which requires the Governor to, every two years, certify to the Secretary, that -
 - a. the State has implemented the uniform administrative requirements referred to in section 184(a)(3);
 - b. the State has annually monitored local areas to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements as required under section 184(a)(4); and
 - c. the State has taken appropriate action to secure compliance with section 184(a)(3) pursuant to section 184(a)(5), (§184(a)(6).).
3. The State assures that the adult and youth funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be distributed equitably throughout the State, and that no local areas will suffer significant shifts in funding from year to year during the period covered by this Plan. (§112(b)(12)(B).)
4. The State assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in section 134 of the Workforce Investment Act, and the activities authorized in chapters 41 and 42 of Title 38 US code. The State assures that it will comply with the veterans priority established in the Jobs for Veterans Act. (38 USC 4215.)
5. The State assures that the Governor shall, once every two years, certify one local board for each local area in the State. (§117(c)(2).)
6. The State assures that it will comply with the confidentiality requirements of section 136(f)(3).

7. The State assures that no funds received under the Workforce Investment Act will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing. (§181(b)(7).)
8. The State assures that it will comply with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188, including an assurance that a Methods of Administration has been developed and implemented. (§188)
9. The State assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of section 188. (§185)
10. The State assures that it will comply with the grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary (pursuant to the authority at section 189(c) of the Act), which are necessary to enter into grant agreements for the allocation and payment of funds under the Act. The procedures and agreements will be provided to the State by the ETA Office of Grants and Contract Management and will specify the required terms and conditions and assurances and certifications, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - General Administrative Requirements:
 - 29 CFR part 97 --Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act)
 - 29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) --Single Audit Act
 - OMB Circular A-87 --Cost Principles (as amended by the Act)
 - Assurances and Certifications:
 - SF 424 B --Assurances for Non-construction Programs
 - 29 CFR part 37 --Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and regulation) 29 CFR § 37.20
 - CFR part 93 --Certification Regarding Lobbying (and regulation)
 - 29 CFR part 98 --Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and Suspension Certifications (and regulation)
 - Special Clauses/Provisions:
 - Other special assurances or provisions as may be required under Federal law or policy, including specific appropriations legislation, the Workforce Investment Act, or subsequent Executive or Congressional mandates.
11. The State certifies that the Wagner-Peyser Act Plan, which is part of this document, has been certified by the State Employment Security Administrator.
12. The State certifies that veterans' services provided with Wagner-Peyser Act funds will be in compliance with 38 U.S.C. Chapter 41 and 20 CFR part 1001.
13. The State certifies that Wagner-Peyser Act-funded labor exchange activities will be provided by merit-based public employees in accordance with DOL regulations.

14. The State assures that it will comply with the MSFW significant office requirements in accordance with 20 CFR part 653.
15. The State certifies it has developed this Plan in consultation with local elected officials, local workforce boards, the business community, labor organizations and other partners.
16. As a condition to the award of financial assistance from the Department of Labor under Title I of WIA, the grant applicant assures that it will comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the following laws:
 - Section 188 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), which prohibits 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;
 - Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color and national origin;
 - Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, which prohibits discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities;
 - The Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of age; and
 - Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, as amended, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs.

The grant applicant also assures that it will comply with 29 CFR part 37 and all other regulations implementing the laws listed above. This assurance applies to the grant applicant's operation of the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, and to all agreements the grant applicant makes to carry out the WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The grant applicant understands that the United States has the right to seek judicial enforcement of this assurance.

17. The State assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser Act and their regulations, written Department of Labor Guidance implementing these laws, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.

Program Administration Designees and Plan Signatures

Program Administration Designees and Plan Signatures

Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency:	
Mississippi Department of Employment Security	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6000
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6004
E-mail Address:	N/A
Name of State WIA Title I Administrative Agency (if different from Grant Recipient):	
Same as Grant Recipient	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Facsimile Number:	
E-mail Address:	
Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official: James R. Lott, Deputy Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Employment Security	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6107
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6004
E-mail Address:	jlott@mdes.ms.gov
Name of WIA Title I Liaison: Wanda Land, Director, Office of Workforce and Policy Analysis	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6597
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6598
E-mail Address:	wland@mdes.ms.gov
Name of Wagner-Peyser Act Grant Recipient/State Employment Security Agency:	
Same as Grant Recipient	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Facsimile Number:	
E-mail Address:	

Name and title of State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official):	
James R. Lott, Deputy Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Employment Security	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6107
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6004
E-mail Address:	jlott@mdes.ms.gov
<p>As the Governor, I certify that for the State of Mississippi, the agencies and officials designated above have been duly designated to represent the State in the capacities indicated for the Workforce Investment Act, Title I, and Wagner-Peyser Act grant programs. Subsequent changes in the designation of officials will be provided to the U.S. Department of Labor as such changes occur.</p> <p>I further certify that we will operate our Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act programs in accordance with this Plan and the assurances herein.</p>	
Governor of the State of Mississippi: Haley Barbour	
Signature of Governor	Date