

**State of Mississippi
Strategic Plan Modification
Program Years 2007 and 2008
List of Changes**

Original Plan		Plan Modification	
Section:	I. Governor's Vision	Section:	N/A
Page(s):	1-6	Page(s):	N/A
Comments:	Revised to delete this section from the Two-Year Strategic Plan for Program Years 2007 and 2008.		
Section:	Table of Contents- Attachments Page	Section:	Table of Contents- Attachments Page
Page(s):	Page ii	Page(s):	Page ii
Comments:	Attachment D changed from "Proposed State Levels for New Common Measures" to "Requests for Waivers.;" Attachment F changed from "Methods of Administration" to "ETA Regional Administrators;" Attachment G renamed Attachment F.		
Section:	Plan Development Process	Section:	Plan Development Process
Page(s):	Page 7	Page(s):	Page 1
Comments:	Revised to reflect changes in the plan development and review process.		
Section:	I. State Vision	Section:	I. State Vision
Page(s):	Pages 1-4	Page(s):	Pages 2-5
Comments:	Revised to reflect changes in the State's economy due to Hurricane Katrina and industrial growth in certain geographical areas and industry sectors, and subsequent adjustments to the Governor's approach to workforce development. Revised to delete reference to the Blueprint Mississippi Initiative.		
Section:	III. State Governance Structure, Part B.1.- State Workforce Investment Board	Section:	III. State Governance Structure, Part B.1.- State Workforce Investment Board
Page(s):	Page 7	Page(s):	Page 8
Comments:	Revised to describe the renaming of existing committees and the creation of new committees for the State Workforce Board and deleted the former names of the committees.		
Section:	III. State Governance Structure, Part C.4- Structure/Process for State Agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the workforce investment system	Section:	III. State Governance Structure, Part C.4- Structure/Process for State Agencies and State Board to collaborate and communicate with each other and with the workforce investment system
Page(s):	Page 12	Page(s):	Pages 12-14
Comments:	Revised to describe the formation and goals of the Mississippi Shared Youth Vision Team and its approach to serving at-risk youth.		
Section:	IV. Economic and Labor Market Analysis	Section:	IV. Economic and Labor Market Analysis
Page(s):	Pages 12-20	Page(s):	Pages 14-24
Comments:	Revised to include updated State labor market information, including current employment and projected growth/decline by employment sector, current and projected		

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	wage information, and current and projected demand occupations. Deleted outdated labor market information related to past Program Years.		
Section:	V. Overarching State Strategies, Part A- Use of WIA funds to leverage other resources	Section:	V. Overarching State Strategies, Part A- Use of WIA funds to leverage other resources
Page(s):	Page 20	Page(s):	Pages 24-25
Comments:	Revised to add language related to use of WIA funds to supplement the Workforce Enhancement Training Fund (WETF) overseen by the State Workforce Board.		
Section:	V. Overarching State Strategies, Parts C and E- Strategies to identify and target high-growth industries	Section:	V. Overarching State Strategies, Parts C and E- Strategies to identify and target high-growth industries
Page(s):	Pages 22-24	Page(s):	Pages 26-29
Comments:	Revised to update list of industries projected to add a substantial number of new jobs to the State's economy and the average wages for those industries, and to describe methodology for promoting training opportunities in high-growth industries. Deleted outdated information related to projected growth by industry.		
Section:	V. Overarching State Strategies, Part J- Waivers and Workflex	Section:	V. Overarching State Strategies, Part J- Waivers and Workflex
Page(s):	Pages 25-28	Page(s):	Pages 30-34
Comments:	Revised to request extension through June 30, 2009 of workflex authority and existing waivers, and to submit requests for new waivers. Deleted references to Block Grants, Training Flexibility, and the Personal Reemployment Account (PRA) Project in the workflex section. Added statement that proposed performance levels for the common measures will be submitted to the Department of Labor under separate cover and included with the final draft of the State Plan.		
Section:	VI. Major State Policies and Requirements, Part A- Common data collection and reporting, information management, integrated service delivery and performance management	Section:	VI. Major State Policies and Requirements, Part A- Common data collection and reporting, information management, integrated service delivery and performance management
Page(s):	Page 28	Page(s):	Pages 34-35
Comments:	Revised to describe actions taken for implementation of common measures and development of a unified reporting system.		
Section:	VII. Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery, Part D- Use of funds for Statewide activities to assist with establishment and operation of a one-stop system	Section:	VII. Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery, Part D- Use of funds for Statewide activities to assist with establishment and operation of a one-stop system
Page(s):	Page 31	Page(s):	Page 37
Comments:	Revised to add reference to the establishment of a One-Stop University to be used for training and development of one-stop staff and delete reference to using Reed Act funds to support one-stop infrastructure Statewide.		
Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce	Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce

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	Investment System, Part D- Oversight of the local planning process		Investment System, Part D- Oversight of the local planning process
Page(s):	Pages 33-34	Page(s):	Pages 40-41
Comments:	Revised to add reference to TEGL 13-06 and additional guidance on the content of local plan modifications.		
Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System, Part G.3- Update and expansion of the Statewide Eligible Training Provider List.	Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System, Part G.3- Update and expansion of the Statewide Eligible Training Provider List.
Page(s):	Page 37	Page(s):	Page 44
Comments:	Revised to describe the methodology for adding training programs to the Eligible Training Provider List outside the regular application period to meet employer needs.		
Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System, Part I- Oversight/Monitoring Process	Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System, Part I- Oversight/Monitoring Process
Page(s):	Pages 39-40	Page(s):	Pages 46-47
Comments:	Revised to include updates on Mystery Shopper Project and local area reviews of WIN Job Centers.		
Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System, Part J- Grievance Procedures	Section:	VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System, Part J- Grievance Procedures
Page(s):	Page 38	Page(s):	Page 47
Comments:	Revised to remove reference to including the State Unified Methods of Administration (MOA) as Attachment F and to add reference that the MOA is on file at DOL and MDES and available upon request.		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part C.3- Training Services	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part C.3- Training Services
Page(s):	Pages 47-52	Page(s):	Pages 55-61
Comments:	Revised to: update information on the Workforce Enhancement Training Fund (WETF) and Mississippi State Policy 25 on high-growth, high-demand training (C.3.a); describe WIA collaboration with community and junior colleges to develop short-term training programs in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina (C.3.b{2}); reference local area guidelines for targeting training in demand occupations (C.3.b{3}) and for setting limits on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) (C.3.b{4}) ; refinements to State policies to ensure compliance with Equal Treatment provisions (C.3.b{6}); enhancements to the Statewide Eligible Training Provider List application and certification process (C.3.c); and streamlining of On-the-Job Training (OJT) and customized training processes (C.3.d).		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part C.4- Service to Specific Populations	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part C.4- Service to Specific Populations
Page(s):	Pages 52-59	Page(s):	Pages 61-69

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Comments:	Revised to update language pertaining to the Unemployment Insurance work test (C.4.c), the role of Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists in the one-stop system (C.4.g), and to update service delivery strategies for Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFW) (C.4.i).		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part C.5- Priority of Service	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part C.5- Priority of Service
Page(s):	Page 59	Page(s):	Pages 70-71
Comments:	Revised to update service delivery strategies for ensuring priority of service to veterans.		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part D- Rapid Response	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part D- Rapid Response
Page(s):	Pages 60-65	Page(s):	Pages 71-76
Comments:	Revised to: delete reference to provision of WIA funds to community/junior colleges for rapid response assistance (D.1); add information on the use of mobile WIN Job Centers to provide services such as workshops to dislocated workers onsite at businesses experiencing layoffs or closures (D.3); delete reference to WIN-ing Ticket project (D.3); replace reference to Mississippi Development Authority web site with reference to MDES web site (D. 4); and add language describing the MDES partnership with the Society of Human Resource Managers (D.4).		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part E- Youth	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part E- Youth
Page(s):	Pages 65-67	Page(s):	Pages 76-79
Comments:	Revised to add reference to Department of Labor's use of private companies for recruitment and placement aspects of Job Corps (E.2) and to add reference to the MDES submission of a Youth Vision Phase III grant proposal (E.3.a).		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part F.2- Business Services	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part F.2- Business Services
Page(s):	Page 68	Page(s):	Page 79
Comments:	Revised to change the supervisor of the Business Outreach Services unit <u>from</u> the Director of Business Outreach Services <u>to</u> the Director of Customer Operations.		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part G.2- Innovative Service Delivery Strategies	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part G- Innovative Service Delivery Strategies
Page(s):	Pages 69-70	Page(s):	Pages 80-81
Comments:	Revised to provide updated information on the Personal Re-employment Account (PRA) Initiative.		
Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part H- Strategies for Faith-based and Community-based Organizations	Section:	IX. Service Delivery, Part H- Strategies for Faith-based and Community-based Organizations
Page(s):	Pages 70-71	Page(s):	Pages 81-83
Comments:	Revised to: add references to Equal Treatment provisions, including identification of the MDES Point of Contact (POC) for ensuring that the Equal Treatment requirements are met; add information about regional resource guides developed by the Disability Program Navigators; and add information about collaboration with the United Way of the Capital Area on the Mississippi 2-1-1 Project.		
Section:	X. State Administration, Part A-	Section:	X. State Administration, Part A-

Original Plan		Plan Modification	
	State technology infrastructure and information systems		State technology infrastructure and information systems
Page(s):	Page 71	Page(s):	Pages 83-84
Comments:	Revised to describe the State's plans to work with Mississippi State University to develop a unified participant reporting system, and plans to develop an ITA component of the Eligible Training Provider List.		
Section:	X. State Administration, Part D- Performance Management and Accountability	Section:	X. State Administration, Part D- Performance Management and Accountability
Page(s):	Pages 72-76	Page(s):	Pages 85-89
Comments:	Revised to provide updates on implementing the common measures (X.D. 1-4), methodologies for negotiating performance levels and evaluating performance (X.D.6), required changes to reporting requirements to accommodate the common measures (X.D.7), and plans to negotiate with the Department of Labor to establish performance levels for Program Years 2007 and 2008 (X.D.8).		
Section:	X. State Administration, Part E.2- Administrative Provisions- Compliance with the non-discrimination requirements outlined in §188	Section:	X. State Administration, Part E.2- Administrative Provisions- Compliance with the non-discrimination requirements outlined in §188
Page(s):	Pages 76-77	Page(s):	Pages 89-90
Comments:	Revised to provide updates on compliance with Equal Treatment provisions, information on the revised State Unified Methods of Administration (MOA), and language on MDES reviews of WIN Job Centers to ensure compliance with §188. Deleted reference to the Mississippi Development Authority-Employment Training Division (MDA-ETD) and references to separate MOAs for the MDA-ETD and the MDES.		
Section:	Plan Signature Page	Section:	Plan Signature Page
Page(s):	Pages 81-82	Page(s):	Pages 94-95
Comments:	Revised to <u>remove</u> James R. Lott as WIA Title I Signatory Official and State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official) and <u>add</u> Ms. Tommye Dale Favre as WIA Title I Signatory Official and State Employment Security Administrator (Signatory Official).		
Section:	Attachment B- State Workforce Investment Board Roster	Section:	Attachment B- State Workforce Investment Board Roster
Page(s):	Pages 86-87	Page(s):	Pages 99-104
Comments:	Revised to reflect changes in State Workforce Investment Board membership.		
Section:	Attachment C- Economic and Labor Market Analysis Report	Section:	Attachment C- Economic and Labor Market Analysis Report
Page(s):	Pages 89-113	Page(s):	Pages 106-118
Comments:	Revised to reflect updated labor market information.		
Section:	Attachment D- Proposed State Levels for New Common Measures	Section:	Attachment D- Requests for Waivers
Page(s):	Pages 115-120	Page(s):	Pages 120-134
Comments:	Revised to delete proposed performance levels for Program Years 2005 and 2006 and		

Original Plan		Plan Modification	
	add Requests for Waivers.		
Section:	Attachment F- WIA Methods of Administration	Section:	Attachment F- ETA Regional Administrators
Page(s):	Pages 124-189	Page(s):	138-139
Comments:	Revised to delete WIA Methods of Administration and add ETA regional administrators.		
Section:	Attachment G- ETA Regional Administrators	Section:	Attachment F- ETA Regional Administrators
Page(s):	Page 191	Page(s):	138-139
Comments:	Revised to rename this attachment as noted.		
Section:		Section:	
Page(s):	Page	Page(s):	
Comments:			

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. **Comments will be accepted through Monday, April 30, 2007 at 5:00 p.m.** by emailing MDES at: wland@mdes.ms.gov or by writing **ATTN: State Plan Review and Comments, Post Office Box 1699, Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699.**

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.

Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act Plan:

- I. State Vision
- 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
- V. Overarching State Strategies
- VI. Major State Policies and Requirements
- VII. Integration of One-Stop Service Delivery
- VIII. Administration and Oversight of Local Workforce Investment System
- IX. Service Delivery
 - A. One-Stop Service Delivery Strategies
 - B. Workforce Information
 - C. Adults and Dislocated Workers
 - D. Rapid Response
 - E. Youth
 - F. Business Services
 - G. Innovative Service Delivery Strategies
 - H. Strategies for Faith-based and Community-based Organizations
- X. State Administration
- XI. Assurances
- XII. Plan Signature Page

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, 2007 through June 30, 2009

FULL PLAN

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
Two-Year Strategic Plan
For the Period of July 1, 2007- June 30, 2009
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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 Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) plan modification team has worked to review the existing plan, assemble the plan modification and prepare the draft for partner and community review and comment. MDES has sought input from the local workforce areas, economic developers and business leaders, workforce development professionals, educators, partner agencies and stakeholders.

The State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) continues to refine its Strategic Plan for the State's unified workforce system.

- 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 for 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 13, 2007, for public review and comment.
- Public Notices were placed in the State's major daily newspapers with statewide circulation 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 four Local Workforce Investment Area directors and his/her Workforce Investment Board chair were invited to review and make plan recommendations;
- The plan was discussed at meetings attended by local Workforce Investment Area directors and other stakeholders.
- No comments have been received to date. Any comments received after this date will be carefully considered by the plan modification team and will be shared with the SWIB and forwarded to the Department of Labor.

STATE OF MISSISSIPPI
DRAFT TWO-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN
July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2009

- 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 continues to support the long-range economic development plan for the State, “*Momentum Mississippi.*” *Momentum Mississippi’s* Advisory Committee, a broad-based group from every region of the State, continues to make 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).

Since its formation, *Momentum Mississippi* has helped to guide the State through the disasters of Hurricane Katrina and toward burgeoning growth in many areas of the State. Nissan and its suppliers continue to increase production in Central Mississippi. Recently, Toyota announced that it will build a manufacturing plant in Northeast Mississippi. Business and industries almost daily announce plans to invest in Mississippi and reap the benefits of the Gulf Opportunity (GO) Zone incentives.

The Governor’s economic development strategies mirror the goals of the Department of Labor’s WIRED Initiative to rebuild infrastructure, develop the talent of the workforce, and transform the State’s workforce system into a truly business led and demand driven system.

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).)

Governor Barbour continues to move forward his 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.

The initiatives introduced during the first two years of this plan are now flourishing. The new State Workforce Board appointed by the Governor continues to oversee the use of State workforce training dollars and provide valuable advice on program direction and accountability.

The new Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) envisioned by the Governor continues to make strides in streamlining services and maximizing program efficiencies. Many of these efficiencies were the direct result of the challenges posed by providing services after Hurricane Katrina. 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.

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’s long-range goals for the year 2010 include:

- 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.) The Governor continues to 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 and other training entities. These valuable new training options for Mississippi's businesses and workers improve and expand 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 coordinates this new fund stream. In addition, a continued emphasis upon cost effectiveness and accountability allows 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 continues to work toward and refine its 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 State Workforce Investment Board will continue to review and update its Strategic Plan. This process will reflect and support 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 primary 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 continue 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 Governor:

- 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**.

2. 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 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 Investment 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 seven (7) other committees that have been established to address the Board's various goals. These committees are: Integrated Workforce Performance; Addressing the Prisoner Recidivism Rate through Workforce Training; Building the Workforce of the Future; Business Outreach and Targeting Industry; High School Drop-Out Challenge; Incumbent Workers and Association Training Programs; and Workforce Policy Guidance and Best Practices.

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 members, including the organization each member represents, is included as **Attachment B**.

3. 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, identifies potential Board members. The Appointment Secretary consults with business organizations, including the Mississippi Economic Council and the Mississippi Manufacturers Association, to ensure that individuals representing both small and large businesses are included on the Board and that an appropriate mix of employers is considered. Efforts are made to select business representatives who serve on local Workforce Boards or who lead 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 are appointed to secure their input and experience.

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

The demographics and regions of the State are taken into consideration when appointing State Workforce Board members. The appointment process ensures 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.

4. 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 passage of The Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, the Governor and the legislature have outlined the duties of the State Workforce Board, including functions in Section 111(d) of the Workforce Investment Act.

5. 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 Board develops accountability standards for State funded community and junior college workforce development programs.

6. 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 is 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 at www.mdes.ms.gov, and e-mails are sent to anyone requesting meeting information.

In addition, each meeting is held in a location that is accessible to the general public and that is handicapped accessible. Adequate seating is 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.

7. 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.

8. 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. The transfer of WIA to MDES further enhanced 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 issues regular, written communications to the local Workforce Boards. These communications 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.

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 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. Another Youth Summit will be held in the coming year to continue and to build upon collaborative efforts to better serve Mississippi's youth.

In order to realize DOL's new vision for serving the neediest youth, Mississippi reconvened its Youth Team as the Mississippi Shared Youth Vision Team. This team includes representatives from the United Way Greater Jackson Area, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Mississippi Department of Education Dropout Prevention Unit, Juvenile Justice, U.S. Social Security Administration, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, State Board for Community and Junior Colleges-Adult Basic Education (ABE) Unit, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development/ YouthBuild, the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians, the State's four local workforce areas, youth representatives, and other youth advocacy groups.

The Shared Youth Vision team is excited to have the continued support of Governor Barbour. In keeping with the Governor's vision for Mississippi, the team has made the education and preparation of youth for tomorrow's workforce a top priority. The initial focus of the Shared Youth Vision Team is on outreach to secondary school dropouts and at-risk youth to inform them of available services, advise them of educational opportunities, and assist them with obtaining and retaining employment.

The first step in the outreach process is the development of a collaborative information sharing process between State, regional and local youth service providers via a Web portal. The site will provide data about

available services including, but not limited to: mentorship programs; employment opportunities for youth; Big Brother/Big Sister programs; educational programs such as GED instruction; scholarship opportunities and other financial assistance for post-secondary education; and other information of interest to the target group of at-risk youth and dropouts 14-18 years old.

The Shared Youth Vision Team is strongly committed to its mission of decreasing the number of high school dropouts and increasing the number of high school graduates to give Mississippi a more competitive edge in today's marketplace. The team acknowledges that achieving these goals will require long-term obligation and collaborative effort from their respective organizations and other groups with a vested interest in developing a more highly skilled workforce and a stronger, more diversified State economy.

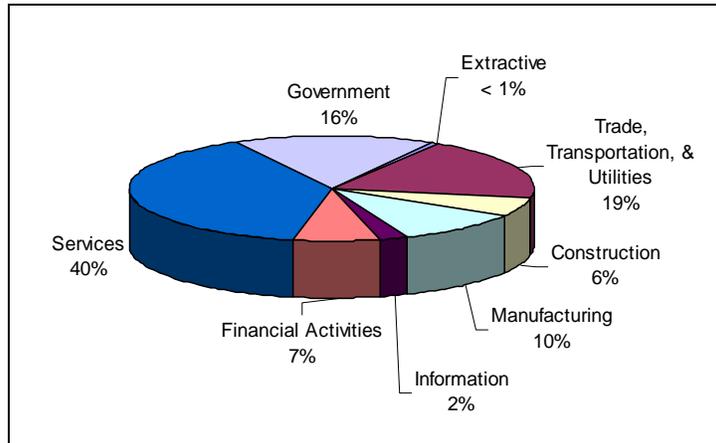
Additionally, the target youth population must be led to recognize the importance of higher education and the connection between lifelong learning and success in the workplace. The Shared Youth Vision Team's efforts will help lay the foundation for an enhanced quality of life for Mississippi's at-risk youth.

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, 10 percent in manufacturing, and the remaining are shared across several sectors (see Figure 1).

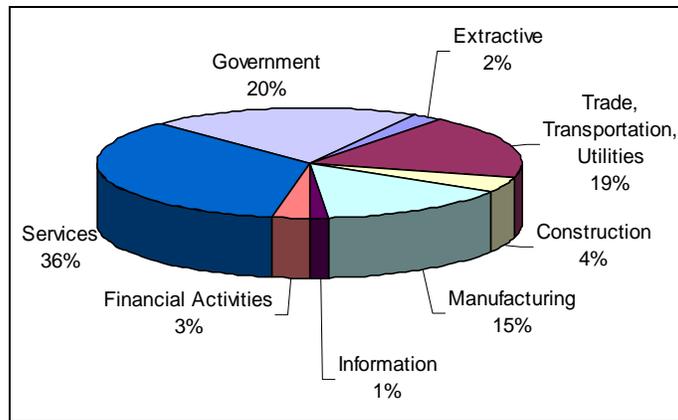
Figure 1: U.S. Economic Base by Industry, 2006



Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Employment Statistics, 2006

Industry Structure. Mississippi has followed national industrial trends and has a current industry structure characterized by 36 percent of the workforce employed in service and 15 percent in the manufacturing sectors (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, 2006



Source: MS Department of Employment Security Current Employment Statistics, 2006

Service Sub-Sector. The two largest sub-sectors are health care and social assistance and accommodation and food services, accounting for approximately 58 percent of all service sector jobs. The former sub-sector pays an average annual wage of \$29,000 and the latter sub-sector pays \$17,000. The third largest sub-sector is administrative and support, followed by professional, scientific, and technical services, accounting for approximately 19 percent. The former pays an average annual wage of \$20,000 and the latter \$41,000 (see Table 1).

Table 1: The Service Sector, Mississippi, 2006-2008

	2006	2008	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
Professional & Business Services	87,420	92,190	5.46	
Professional, Scientific and Technical	33,450	35,330	5.62	41,034
Management of Companies	10,060	10,230	1.69	55,603
Administrative and Support	43,910	46,630	6.19	19,791
Educational and Health Services	141,470	148,790	5.17	
Educational Services	17,340	17,890	3.17	29,519
Health Care and Social Assistance	124,130	130,900	5.45	29,352
Leisure and Hospitality	133,250	137,640	3.29	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	14,910	15,660	5.03	19,984
Accommodation and Food Services	118,340	121,980	3.08	16,922
Other Services	54,660	55,930	2.32	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>416,800</i>	<i>434,550</i>	<i>4.26</i>	

Source: Employment data come from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2007. Wage data come from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005.

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 (see Table 2).

Table 2: Size of Mississippi Service Businesses, 2005

Number of Employees	% of businesses	% of employees
1-5	65.1	6.1
6-10	14.3	5.2
11-20	9.1	6.6
21-50	6.1	9.6
51-100	2.4	8.4
100+	3.0	64.2

Source: Mississippi Business Tax Records, 2007

Manufacturing Sub-Sector. The three largest sub-sectors are transportation equipment, furniture and related products, and food manufacturing, accounting for 47 percent of all jobs in manufacturing. Of these, transportation equipment pays the highest average annual wage with \$43,000, followed by furniture and related products and food manufacturing paying \$28,000 and \$23,000 respectively. Other large sub-sectors include wood products manufacturing, machinery manufacturing, and fabricated metal, accounting for approximately 20 percent of all jobs in manufacturing. Of these, machinery manufacturing pays the highest

annual average wage, \$37,000, and wood products pays the least, with an annual average of \$33,000. Employment in the remaining sub-sectors ranges between 3,000 and 9,000, with an average annual wage ranging between \$20,000 and \$55,000 (see Table 3).

Table 3: The Manufacturing Sector, Mississippi, 2006-2008

	2006	2008	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
Durable Manufacturing	107,690	110,280	2.41	
Wood Product Manufacturing	13,240	13,410	1.28	33,061
Fabricated Metal	11,230	11,400	1.51	34,388
Machinery Manufacturing	12,530	12,930	3.19	36,671
Computer and Electronic Equipment	3,090	3,140	1.62	37,176
Electrical Equipment	9,150	9,250	1.09	33,491
Transportation Equipment	29,990	31,080	3.63	43,050
Furniture and Related Products	28,460	29,070	2.14	27,882
Non-Durable Manufacturing	45,510	46,570	2.33	
Food Manufacturing	27,670	28,650	3.54	23,406
Apparel Manufacturing	5,000	4,900	-2.00	19,941
Paper Manufacturing	5,740	5,810	1.22	54,521
Chemical Manufacturing	7,100	7,210	1.55	50,253
Other Manufacturing	31,050	31,510	1.48	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>184,250</i>	<i>188,360</i>	<i>2.23</i>	

Source: Employment data come from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2007. Wage data come from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005.

Eighty-eight percent of those employed in manufacturing work for businesses with over 50 employees. These large employers account for 20 percent of all manufacturing businesses (see Table 4).

Table 4: Size of Mississippi Manufacturing Businesses, 2005

Number of Employees	% of businesses	% of employees
1-5	35.4	1.1
6-10	14.6	1.5
11-20	14.4	2.9
21-50	15.4	7.0
51-100	7.4	7.5
100+	12.9	80.1

Source: Mississippi Business Tax Records, 2007

Other Industry Sectors. In Mississippi, the government and trade, transportation, and utilities sectors are also among the largest employers, accounting for 20 and 19 percent of all employment, respectively (see Table 5 and

Table 6). The largest sub-sectors are local government and retail trade. The latter pays an average annual wage of \$22,000.

Table 5: The Government Sector, Mississippi, 2006-2008

	2006	2008	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
Federal Government	25,180	25,440	1.03	n/a
State Government	70,240	71,920	2.39	n/a
Local Government	156,890	160,290	2.17	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>252,310</i>	<i>257,650</i>	<i>2.12</i>	

Source: MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2007

Table 6: The Trade, Transportation, and Utilities Sector, Mississippi, 2006-2008

	2006	2008	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
Utilities	9,240	9,320	0.87	55,738
Wholesale Trade	35,940	36,950	2.81	45,170
Retail Trade	143,900	148,750	3.37	21,739
Transportation and Warehousing	41,200	42,590	3.37	36,354
<i>Total</i>	<i>230,280</i>	<i>237,610</i>	<i>3.18</i>	

Source: Employment data come from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2007. Wage data come from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005.

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

Occupations. Specific information on occupational growth is reported in **Attachment C, Appendix A.**

Service. In the short term (2006 – 2008), employment in the service sector is projected to grow by 4.3 percent. The four sub-sectors with the largest percent projected growth are: (1) administrative support (6.2 percent); (2) professional, scientific, and technical services (5.6 percent); (3) health care and social assistance (5.5 percent); and (4) arts, entertainment, and recreation (5.0 percent). None of the service sub-sectors for Mississippi are projected to decline.

In the long term (2004 – 2014), the service industry in Mississippi is expected to grow by 22 percent (see Table 7). The following four service sub-sectors are expected to grow more than 25 percent: (1) administrative and support services; (2) professional, scientific, and technical services; (3) health care and social assistance; and (4) arts, entertainment and recreation.

Table 7: The Service Sector: Mississippi, 2004-2014

	2004	2014	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
Professional & Business Services	82,643	106,517	28.89	
Professional, Scientific and Technical	31,572	40,976	29.79	41,034
Management of Companies	9,883	10,756	8.83	55,603
Administrative and Support	41,188	54,785	33.01	19,791
Educational and Health Services	134,144	170,767	27.30	
Educational Services	16,780	19,554	16.53	29,519
Health Care and Social Assistance	117,364	151,213	28.84	29,352
Leisure and Hospitality	128,852	150,833	17.06	
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	14,163	17,906	26.43	19,984
Accommodation and Food Services	114,689	132,927	15.90	16,922
Other Services	53,383	59,748	11.92	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>399,022</i>	<i>487,865</i>	<i>22.27</i>	

Source: Employment data comes from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2007. Wage data comes from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005.

Manufacturing. In the short term (2006 – 2008), employment in the manufacturing sector is projected to grow by 2.2 percent. The five sub-sectors with the largest percent projected growth are: (1) transportation equipment manufacturing (3.6 percent); (2) food manufacturing (3.5 percent); (3) machinery manufacturing (3.2 percent); (4) furniture manufacturing (2.1 percent); and (5) computer and electronic equipment (1.6 percent). One sub-sector, apparel manufacturing, is expected to experience negative growth.

In the long term (2004 – 2014), the manufacturing industry is expected to grow by 11 percent (see Table 8). Four manufacturing sub-sectors are expected to grow more than 10 percent: (1) transportation equipment (18.9 percent); (2) food manufacturing (18.3 percent); (3) machinery manufacturing (16.5 percent); and (4) furniture and related products (11.1 percent). Three sub-sectors are expected to grow more than 7.5 percent: (1) computer and electronic equipment (7.9 percent); (2) chemical manufacturing (7.7 percent); and (3) fabricated metal (7.7 percent). Three sub-sectors are expected to grow less than 7.5 percent: (1) wood products manufacturing (6.6 percent); (2) paper manufacturing (5.5 percent) and (3) electrical equipment (5.4 percent). Finally, apparel manufacturing is expected to decline by 10.3 percent.

Table 8: The Manufacturing Sector: Mississippi, 2004-2014

	2004	2014	Percent Change	Avg. Annual Wage
Durable Manufacturing	105,087	118,076	12.36	
Wood Product Manufacturing	13,067	13,933	6.63	33,061
Fabricated Metal	11,063	11,911	7.67	34,388
Machinery Manufacturing	12,134	14,133	16.47	36,671
Computer and Electronic Equipment	3,040	3,281	7.93	37,176
Electrical Equipment	9,051	9,537	5.37	33,491
Transportation Equipment	28,896	34,350	18.87	43,050
Furniture and Related Products	27,836	30,931	11.12	27,882
Non-Durable Manufacturing	44,475	49,684	11.71	
Food Manufacturing	26,691	31,577	18.31	23,406
Apparel Manufacturing	5,108	4,580	-10.34	19,941
Paper Manufacturing	5,680	5,994	5.53	54,521
Chemical Manufacturing	6,996	7,533	7.68	50,253
Other Manufacturing	30,583	32,887	7.53	n/a
<i>Total</i>	<i>180,145</i>	<i>200,647</i>	<i>11.38</i>	

Source: Employment data comes from the MDES Current Employment Statistics, 2007. Wage data comes from the MDES Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, 2005.

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 52,299 new jobs. Of the 51,341 for which education/training data are available, 21,024 (41 percent) will require between moderate and extensive education and/or training and 30,317 (59 percent) will require little or no preparation.

Among occupations that require extensive education and training, the top five are chief executives, lawyers, financial managers, child, family, and school social workers, and medical and health services managers. The top five occupations requiring considerable preparation are registered nurses, general and operations managers, elementary school teachers, secondary school teachers, and accountants and auditors. The top five occupations requiring medium preparation are maintenance and repair workers, teacher assistants,

first-line supervisors/managers of office and administrative support workers, licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses, and restaurant cooks (see **Attachment C, Appendix A**).

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 (\$29,100) and are expected to be the fastest growing. These are the jobs that provide the greatest source of tax revenue and, therefore, support for State development initiatives. Over the next decade, overall, Mississippi will have 1,509,970 jobs. Of those, 199,420 jobs will be in occupations that will pay an annual average wage less than \$15,000 (13 percent), 928,360 jobs paying between \$15,000 and \$35,000 (61 percent), 253,610 jobs paying between \$35,000 and \$50,000 (17 percent), and 128,580 jobs paying over \$50,000 (9 percent) (see **Attachment C, Appendix B**).

Current trends also show that within the next decade, 84 percent of the 50 fastest growing occupations will provide annual wages of \$35,000 or less. In contrast, 65 percent of occupations projected to have little or no growth provide annual wages of \$35,000 or less. This clearly shows that the Mississippi economy is on a path to be dominated by low and medium wage jobs. The implication is that in order to move Mississippi ahead, more emphasis should be placed on creating and retaining jobs that pay high wages. In doing so, workforce development initiatives will be more likely to generate higher returns on investment with a long-term positive impact on the overall well being of Mississippi.

Also critical are jobs provided by small and medium sized businesses, as they are rooted in communities and less likely than larger companies to be footloose and 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**).

Zone One. Of all jobs, 415,790 (28 percent) fall within zone one. These jobs 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.

Zone Two. Of all jobs, 432,510 (29 percent) fall within zone two. These jobs 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.

Zone Three. Of all jobs, 308,400 (20 percent) fall within zone three. These jobs 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.

Zone Four. Of all jobs, 270,000 (18 percent) fall within zone four. These jobs 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.

Zone Five. Of all jobs, 79,220 (5 percent) fall within zone five. These jobs 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).

In sum, of all projected occupations in Mississippi, 56 percent fall within zones one and two, and the remaining within zones three through five. However, of the 50 fastest growing occupations, 72 percent will fall within zones one through two. In contrast, only 38 percent of the jobs with little or no growth will be in zones one through two. These trends show that the needs for skilled workers are predominately in occupations not expected to grow substantially. However, a long-term plan for workforce development should place more emphasis on jobs with higher skill demands so that a greater return on investment can be achieved in terms of retaining and expanding jobs that pay higher wages.

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 59 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.

For gender, there are almost an equal number of men and women in the workforce. For all males, 70 percent participate in the labor force, and for all females 53 percent participate in the labor force.

For race, the workforce is comprised predominantly of whites with 68 percent, followed by blacks at 31 percent and others at one percent. For all whites, 61 percent participate in the labor force, and for all blacks 55 percent participate. In the next 10 years, the labor force in Mississippi is expected to experience an increase in minority participation.

For age, seventy percent of the workforce falls within the age group 25-54, 16 percent within the age group 16-24, and the remaining percentage within the age group over 55. In the next 10 years, the labor force in Mississippi is expected to experience an 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 2000 and 2004 Mississippi experienced a net out-migration of 10,348. This general trend is also reflected in the young, single, and college educated population. If these migration patterns continue, older and less skilled workers will comprise a larger part of the Mississippi labor force than they otherwise would.

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?

Based on Mississippi’s economic trajectory, the State is well-positioned to meet its training and educational demands. However, the current workforce goal is to move toward a more information/knowledge-based economy/high-tech economy. Meeting this goal requires a greater investment in training and education so that Mississippi can continue to move toward an economy that will be more competitive on a national and global scale.

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

Among the several issues the State has identified, increasing per capita income emerged as one of the most 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. The unemployment rate also remains higher than the national average. These are all issues that are now being addressed through workforce and economic development initiatives under a unified workforce system (see **Attachment C, Appendix E**).

The State has also made reaching out to hard-to-serve populations a priority, including discouraged workers, welfare recipients, and ex-offenders.

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

The State has identified six directional goals for establishing a unified workforce system.

1. Install an accounting system that tracks money spent with results achieved, and then follow a best practices approach.
2. Consolidate workforce training efforts and reduce redundancy and administration.
3. Engage business involvement in what they need to train their existing and future workforce.
4. Develop an easy to use process for users of services and employers.
5. Develop clearly defined action plan with deliverables and implementation schedule.
6. Continue to leverage the community college system.

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 SWB's goals. The key to accomplishing this goal is to work more closely with the State's strong community and junior college system. The 2005 Workforce Enhancement Training Fund (WETF) is essential to that partnership. The Fund allows the State Workforce Board to assist the community and junior colleges in increasing services to business through incumbent worker training, utilizing

funds generated by the unemployment tax system. WIA funds will be used to leverage the Workforce Enhancement Training Funds when possible or necessary to meet the demands of businesses and put more people to work.

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 accomplishes 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. One of the State Workforce Board’s six goals is ensuring business leadership 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 is realized through clearly defined, regularly updated action plans 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 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 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, 13 Mississippi industries are expected to generate a total of 105,414 new jobs that will account for 63 percent of all expected new

jobs (167,353). Five of these industry sectors will pay at or above the Mississippi average annual wage (\$29,100) and account for 24 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 2005 annual average wage at or above the state average of \$29,100.

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 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 area's automotive industry. 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 partnered on the Wellsprings Project, which was recently selected as the site of a new Toyota automotive assembly plant.

- Through a contract with the Mississippi Office of Nursing Workforce (MONW), 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 has expanded to new sites around the State. MDES is also partnering with MONW and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to address nursing school faculty shortages.

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) spearhead 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).)

The State has developed and issued Mississippi State Policy Number 25, High Growth/High Demand Training Policy, to encourage local workforce areas to develop and implement training in high growth/high demand industries.

Consequently, the local workforce areas have established protocols for inclusion on the Statewide Eligible Training Provider List that give priority to training programs 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.

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 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 are 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) updating the Youth Vision and increasing collaboration through the State Youth Team; 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 State workforce development consolidation legislation. A second result was State 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. Workflex authority assists 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 submitted a request for workflex authority as part of its State Plan for the period of July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2007. Mississippi obtained approval from the Department of Labor to become the first workflex state on September 30, 2005. The State hereby requests extension of workflex authority to cover the period of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009.

Incumbent Worker Services

Any of the four local workforce areas may treat up to 20% 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.

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.

On-the-Job-Training (OJT)

Each local area may elect to pay a flat, fixed fee to employers who enter into OJT agreements and who accomplish training and employment objectives. The flat fixed fee must be less than the local area's average, per trainee OJT reimbursement amount during the preceding year. The "flat fee" option may be implemented throughout a given workforce area or may be implemented on a trial basis for a smaller region, employment sector or target group. The reimbursement amount need not be tied to each trainee's earnings during the training period. This option will substantially streamline employer and workforce area paperwork and will make OJT far more marketable while ensuring that program and administrative costs are reduced.

Customer Flow

Each local area may elect to allow its WIN Job Centers to offer the full range of core, intensive and training services to customers in whatever order is necessary to best achieve each individual's employment and training goals. It will not be necessary to first receive a core service and then receive an intensive service before accessing training. This will expedite the flow of dislocated workers and barriered adults into training, conserving unemployment insurance and increasing earnings gains while encouraging development of high demand, open entry training options.

Additions

As other states apply for and field test new waivers, if 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.

A copy of the workflex request is included as **Attachment D**.

Mississippi was granted the following waivers for the preceding two year planning period. Mississippi hereby requests that each of these waivers

remain in effect during the two year period covered by this plan, July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009.

- **Common Performance Measures (Sect. 136{b}{2}{A-B} & 20 CFR 666.100)**

Mississippi was granted approval to replace the 17 current performance measures for the WIA adult, youth and dislocated worker programs. The State became an early implementer of the new Common Measures effective July 1, 2005. The State has successfully implemented the Common Measures and has now focused its attention on continuous improvement strategies.

Mississippi requests that the waiver of the requirement to track the current 17 WIA performance standards be extended through June 30, 2009. We wish to continue to operate and evaluate State and local WIA programs based on the Common Measures. The State will continue to assist the Department of Labor Region 3 Office with fine-tuning the Common Measures and sharing best practices with our WIN Job Center partners and our sister states. Proposed performance levels will be submitted to the Department of Labor under separate cover.

- **Waiver of Time Limit on Period of Initial Eligibility for Training Providers (20 CFR 663.530)**

Mississippi continues to refine and enhance the eligible training provider application process and the training program submission process. The State has implemented a web-based Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) application and approval system that has simplified program functions for training providers, local areas and the State Administrator.

This waiver allows training providers sufficient time to design and refine processes for collecting adequate data to meet subsequent eligibility requirements and allows time for substantial numbers of WIA participants to exit training programs and be eligible for follow-up performance measures. Additionally, providers recently added to the ETPL need more time to compile the necessary data for subsequent eligibility and to have WIA participants enroll in, and exit from, their training programs.

Finally, the State plans to link participant performance information from ETPL training providers with the separate, State funded training accountability tracking system developed at the request of the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB). This will allow us to track provider performance in a more organized, unified manner. For these reasons, the

State requests an extension of the period of initial eligibility for WIA training providers through the end of the two year planning period, June 30, 2009.

- **Waiver of 20% Funds Transfer Authority to Permit 100% Transfer Between Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs (Sec. 133{b}{4} CFR 667.140)**

This waiver coincides with language in last year's House and Senate WIA reauthorization legislation regarding the consolidation and transferability of WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated Worker funding streams. The State requests an extension of the authority to transfer amounts of up to 100% of local area allocations between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs.

- **Waiver of Prohibition on Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for Youth (20 CFR 664.510)**

This waiver permits the use of WIA Youth funds for Individual Training Accounts, resulting in more efficient use of youth funds, greater flexibility for preparing youth for today's workforce, and increased availability of WIA Adult funds for ITAs for eligible Adult participants. The State requests an extension of the waiver to support continued flexibility at the local level to ensure that WIA funds and activities serve youth participants as effectively as possible.

- **Waiver of the Language that Limits the Authority to Provide the Activities Identified in WIA Section 134 to the State**

This waiver will allow the four local workforce areas to elect to utilize up to 20% of their formula funds to conduct any of the WIA section 134 statewide activities, including incumbent worker and rapid response services. The primary purpose of this waiver is to allow local areas greater flexibility in meeting the training and employment needs of expanding Mississippi businesses and to facilitate post-Katrina growth and recovery. The State requests an extension of the waiver to provide local areas with continued flexibility in serving area job seekers and employers.

If extension requests are not granted, these waivers will expire on June 30, 2007. The State requests extensions of these waivers, as well as an extension of the designation of Mississippi as a workflex state, through **June 30, 2009**.

The requests for waiver extensions and documentation of justification are included as **Attachment D**.

The State is also submitting the following new requests for waivers:

- **Waiver of WIA section 101(31)(B) to increase employer On-the-Job Training reimbursement to 75 percent for small businesses**

This waiver will afford the four local workforce areas the option of increasing the reimbursement for On-the-Job Training to up to 75 percent reimbursement for small businesses, defined as employers with 100 or fewer employees. This waiver will allow the local workforce areas to utilize WIA funds where they are needed most to support training at businesses that might not otherwise be able to upgrade employees skills to meet the increasing demands of today's marketplace.

- **Waiver to permit exclusion from local performance calculations individuals who receive entrepreneurial training with WIA formula funds (WIA Sect. 189(i)(4)(B) & 20 CFR 661.240)**

This waiver will allow local workforce areas to expend local Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds on entrepreneurial training with participant performance to be tracked at the State level but not aggregated with other performance data. This waiver will encourage local workforce areas to increase the delivery of entrepreneurial training programs to WIA customers and to develop appropriate partnerships to support such programs. Examples of such partners include economic development organizations, businesses, industry and trade organizations, and education entities.

These new waiver requests are also included in **Attachment D**.

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.*

Mississippi was granted workflex authority to move to the Common Measures effective July 1, 2005. Current policies are in the process of being revised as a result of the implementation of the Common Measures, and in anticipation of the USDOL mandated move to the Workforce Investment Streamlined Performance Reporting (WISPR) system expected to occur on July 1, 2007. We have entered into an agreement with one of Mississippi's institutions of higher learning, Mississippi State University, to produce the unified WISPR reports. We are also in the process of contracting with Mississippi State University to develop a unified participant reporting system.

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).)

The Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004 established four local workforce areas that are closely aligned with 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 continue to work with local workforce areas, One-Stop operators and WIA partners 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 serves a higher number of WIA participants per dollar spent than any other state. We expect to continue national leadership on cost effectiveness while exceeding every performance benchmark. 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).)

Mississippi Policy Number 25, High Growth/High Demand Training, encourages 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 is a member of the Statewide Youth Team and 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, regulatory and service quality requirements. Detailed performance information is 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 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. A new initiative, the “One-Stop University,” has been established and is collocated in the Madison County WIN Job Center just north of Jackson, Mississippi. The primary purpose of this initiative is to train every partner’s front line and management staff in customer service strategies.

The State may also use reserve funds to leverage other activities including but not limited to WIRED related activities and other activities aimed on collective, regional approaches to providing 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:

- Increase services to existing workers, dislocated workers, veterans, offenders and ex-offenders, older youth and mature workers;
- 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;
- Increase coordination with economic developers to increase employment and opportunities for employed workers;
- Leverage state-supported workforce programs to increase training and retraining opportunities, reduce costs and provide services to more customers; and,
- 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, which consolidated six workforce areas into the current four workforce areas, considered all the above factors and resulted in increased performance and conservation of 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 in place Mississippi Policy Number 2, Revision 3, 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 was revised 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 planning 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 areas to share their workforce strategies and visions as well as changes to the local systems that occurred during Program Years 2005 and 2006 and changes planned for the future. Local plans must reflect the Employment and Training Administration's emphases and strategic priorities set forth in Training Employment and Guidance Letter (TEGL) 13-06. State and local representatives 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 benchmarks 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 their areas. 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 utilize a local plan review 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.

Courses may be added to the List on an as-needed basis outside the regular application periods to respond to employers' workforce needs in demand occupations such as the health care and construction fields. Such requests must be approved by the local workforce area(s) in which the training will be provided. The State will maintain written justification documenting the need to add these courses to the List outside the application periods.

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.

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 has developed and implemented a mystery shopper program that focuses 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. Mississippi plans to

conduct the mystery shopper process on a regular basis, with refinements added to the process as necessary.

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. Additionally, local workforce areas conduct regular visits to their respective WIN Job Centers to evaluate customer flow, service delivery and other functions related to WIA programs.

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 negotiated performance measures and incentive grants to local areas whose performance meets or exceeds negotiated levels.

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 included in the State Unified Methods of Administration (MOA). A copy was submitted to the Department of Labor in June 2006. A copy of the MOA is also on file at MDES and is available upon request.

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 provides 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. To date, no “impasse” has occurred.

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. To date, no Local Workforce Board has elected to directly provide any core, intensive or training services.

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 30%) 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 transfer waiver is extended through June 30, 2009, as requested by this plan, local Workforce Boards may continue to transfer funds freely between the adult and the dislocated worker 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 is 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 has developed 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. During Program Year 2006, copies of the *Occupations in Demand* publication were mailed to every School District and WIN Job Center in Mississippi.

- 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 Plan 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 national products and tools are provided on the MDES website. On an annual basis, the MDES LMI Department provides and shares occupational wage and occupational projections files to interested parties.

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. 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 are provided integrated services through the WIN Job Centers. WIN Job Center staffs are primarily 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 remain 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 three-fold.

- As a result of the Mississippi Comprehensive Workforce Training and Education Consolidation Act of 2004, the State leverages available State and Federal training funds and avoids duplication by requiring that workforce development agencies work together.
- The Worker Training Enhancement Fund was enacted in 2005. This new State fund, overseen by the State Board, provides about

\$20 million each year for additional incumbent worker skill training.

- In Program Year 2004, the State implemented a High-Growth and High-Demand Training Policy, Mississippi State Policy Number 25, which encourages local workforce areas to use WIA funds in high-growth and high-demand occupations. This successful initiative continues and has resulted in the creation of many new training options for Mississippi workers and employers including, but not limited to nighttime nursing classes, open entry construction worker training and high tech welding classes. These initiatives expanded exponentially as Hurricane Katrina recovery efforts began.

b. Individual Training Accounts:

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

Mississippi State Policy Number 6, the Individual Training Account Policy, establishes the minimum requirements the Local Workforce Investment Boards must address in their local ITA policy. Each Local Board has developed a local ITA policy that reflects the minimum ITA requirements set forth in the State policy as well as any additional requirements adopted by the Local Board.

(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 Mississippi 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.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast counties in August 2005, the Twin Districts Local Workforce Area and community and junior colleges that serve the most heavily affected counties collaborated on a series of short-term training programs to assist with the reemployment of hurricane impacted individuals in demand occupations. Fields of study included construction skills such as welding and carpentry, healthcare occupations such as Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN), Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) and phlebotomy, and transportation related training such as truck driving. These programs provided needed skills to workers in a relatively short time, enabling displaced workers to obtain unsubsidized employment. In addition, these programs helped meet the critical workforce needs of employers in an area where the labor pool was severely diminished by the hurricane. Similar short-term training was conducted on a smaller scale in the State's other workforce areas to serve individuals who were displaced or otherwise affected by the storm and were in need of retraining in order to regain employment.

Additional short-term training programs will be implemented throughout the State as employer demands and WIA participant interest warrant.

(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.

Mississippi State Policy Number 5, Revision 1, 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. The local areas have established guidelines for denying inclusion on the Eligible Training Provider List to those courses that provide training for occupations that are not in demand in their respective areas.

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?socode=&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).

Mississippi State Policy Number 5, Revision 1 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. The State Policy does, however, allow the local areas to make exceptions to the ITA duration and cost limits as the merits of the course require or as deemed justifiable by the Local Workforce Investment Board. Local Boards should also have an established set of priorities for referring individuals to training in the event of a shortage of training funds. Each local area may implement policies that are more restrictive than the State policy.

(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 Investment 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.

The State will ensure that State policies, guidelines, and regulations are updated by December 31, 2007 to comply with Federal Equal Treatment Regulations published in the Federal regulations at 20 CFR Parts 667 and 670 and 29 CFR Parts 2 and 37, and with Training Employment and Guidance Letter (TEGL) Number 1-05 issued on July 6, 2005.

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 Investment Boards. The List contains multiple levels of electronic access, from public access for individuals interested in training to password-protected levels of access for local workforce areas, training providers and State ETPL Administrator staff. The web-based List allows providers to submit training programs to be considered for inclusion on the List and to update provider and course information on

a yearly basis, including performance data. Local areas and State ETPL staff are able to perform review and approval/disapproval functions for programs submitted for consideration. WIN Job Center personnel 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.

On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Training (CT) are and will continue to be high priority services for businesses and individuals seeking immediate employment. The State will continue to 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. Mississippi has revised and streamlined OJT and customized training paperwork. The result has been a rapid and continued increase in the number of OJT’s written. Mississippi leads the nation in the number of WIA participants trained per dollar spent. The waivers requested in this plan build upon and will add to our success.

(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,*” and this continues to be the guiding policy for universal access;
- ❑ 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 America's Workforce System (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, his/her eligibility for unemployment benefits may be disallowed or terminated. The WIN Job Center staff will send the claimant an unemployment insurance notice to report. If the claimant reports, he/she will be questioned regarding the failure to report for the employment services. If the claimant does not report after the notice is mailed, a stop order will be placed in the system, and the claimant will not receive any further benefits until he/she reports and an investigation is conducted.

If the claimant has good cause for not reporting, he/she will be referred for employment services. If the claimant does not have good cause for failure to report, a report of investigation will be completed and the claimant will be disallowed benefits for the week(s) he/she failed to report. In certain cases, the investigation may reveal 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 is 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 Americans with Disabilities Act (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. Thirty WIN Job Centers are now equipped with special ADA compliant computers to be used by individuals with disabilities to conduct a job search, complete resumes, and access other services that are provided at the WIN Job Centers.

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; and
- ❑ 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.)**

Local Veterans Employment Representatives (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) specialists are considered part of the WIN Job Center team. They promote all WIN Job Center services, especially services in the employer marketing arena.

DVOP and LVER staff provides services to all veterans that Title 38 indicates are eligible for their services, but their efforts are concentrated, according to their respective roles and responsibilities, on outreach and the provision and facilitation of direct client services to those who have been identified as most in need of intensive employment and training assistance. DVOP and LVER staff, through outreach with employers, develops increased hiring opportunities within the local work force by raising the awareness of employers of the availability and the benefit of hiring veterans.

DVOP specialists provide intensive services to meet the employment needs of disabled veterans and other eligible veterans, with the maximum emphasis directed toward serving those who are economically or educationally disadvantaged, including homeless veterans, and veterans with barriers to employment. DVOP specialists are actively involved in outreach efforts to increase program participation among those with the greatest barriers to employment, which may include, but should not be limited to: outplacement in Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA) Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program offices; DVA Medical Centers; routine site visits to Veterans' Service Organization meetings; Native American Trust Territories; Military installations; and other areas of known concentrations of veterans or transitioning service members. The case management approach, taught by the National Veterans' Training Institute, is generally accepted as the method to use when providing vocational guidance or related services to eligible veterans identified as needing intensive services.

Local Veterans' Employment Representatives conduct outreach to employers and engage in advocacy efforts with hiring executives to

increase employment opportunities for veterans, encourage the hiring of disabled veterans, and generally assist veterans to gain and retain employment. LVER staff conducts seminars for employers and job search workshops for veterans seeking employment, and facilitate priority of service in regard to employment, training, and placement services furnished to veterans by all staff of the employment service delivery system.

To meet the specific needs of veterans, particularly veterans with barriers to employment, DVOP and LVER staff are thoroughly familiar with the full range of job development services and training programs available at the WIN Job Centers and Department of Veterans' Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program locations.

MDES will use the Automated Workforce System (AWS) to maintain participant data, and to monitor and assess the success of the accomplishments of the LVER and DVOP staff in relation to priority of services to 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. The MDES Equal Opportunity (EO) Department conducts staff training during each office evaluation on serving LEP customers.

This topic will be also 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 established partnerships with community-based organizations to assist in seeking out and identifying Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs). Promotional materials, brochures, flyers and resource materials are translated into languages other than English so that Limited English Proficient (LEP) clients can understand and access One-Stop services.

WIN Job Center staff has access to translators via an 800 telephone number. Staff also have a listing of local individuals who can provide translation services for a reasonable fee should the need arise.

Mississippi anticipates reaching 25% more MSFWs than we did in Program Years 2005 and 2006. This will be accomplished through community outreach and partnerships with organizations that serve MSFWs.

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)?**

Veterans' priority of service is provided through continuing education of all personnel. TEGL No. 5-03 on implementing veterans' priority is provided during staff training. Office assessments are used to monitor customer service to ensure priority of service is provided. In addition to advising veterans of their preferred status, signs are posted in each WIN Job Center to make veterans aware of their priority of service entitlement. MDES personnel are made aware of their responsibilities to provide priority of service during staff training sessions, employee assessments and during local office visits by MDES State Office staff. Veterans are made aware of the special assistance provided by DVOP and LVER staff when WIN Job Center staff conducts outreach activities for the veteran community. MDES enforces procedures through the issuance of Employment Service Bulletins to ensure the prioritization of service to the special populations of veterans as identified by VETS.

In order to maximize job and training opportunities, information on such services as WIA approved training courses, Work Opportunity Tax Credits (WOTC), and On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts are available to eligible veterans at WIN Job Centers. For those veterans with barriers to employment, referrals are made to the VARO and

other One-Stop partners and staff such as Program Navigators. These individuals serve as WIN Job Center staff and are funded through the Disability Program Navigator Initiative, an innovative partnership between the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) and the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services (MDRS). The Navigators work with employers and job seekers to provide assistance with recruiting, screening, hiring and training people with disabilities and other barriers to employment.

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.

- 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 Centers. Each 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 to conduct job searches from the mobile unit. The mobile one-stop units are 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 other topics. 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, or through the mobile WIN Job Centers, workshops are scheduled at a nearby WIN 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 is 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 develop individual job plans. 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 through the WIN Job Center or other partners. The Mobile WIN Job Centers allow rapid response staff to bring services directly to workers. Local center personnel who staff the units and provide services to workers are able to develop a relationship and rapport with the workers prior to layoff. Workers are then more likely to access services of the local center.

Whenever possible, workshops and reemployment activities are scheduled at the local WIN Job Center for workers prior to layoff. Workers are encouraged to register for workshops and classes at the center prior to layoff.

As part of the new rapid response strategy, MDES also strives to reach those dislocated workers who did not receive rapid response services. Individuals receiving unemployment insurance must periodically report for an eligibility 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. Information on other services, such as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), 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. The MDES Business Outreach Services team works with businesses throughout the State to apprise them of available services. In addition, the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA), the State's economic and community development agency, has regional economic developers stationed locally across the state. The MDES Business Outreach Services team coordinates with the regional MDA economic developers.

When the MDES learns of a layoff or closure, 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 MDES display booth is used at job fair events across the state. Brochures on rapid response services and the business services available through the local WIN Job 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 are used as appropriate.
- ❑ Information on rapid response and business services is provided on the MDES web site, and links to the web site are placed on the web sites of several business associations, such as the Mississippi Economic Council, the State's chamber of commerce association, and the Society of Human Resource Managers.

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 describing 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 whether 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 is not a WIA-funded program for youth in MDES, but it is a viable WIA youth service.

The Department of Labor (DOL) now contracts with private companies for the recruitment and placement aspects of the Job Corps program. These companies, in some locations, are partners in the WIN Job Centers. Referrals of interested participants are made to the appropriate contractor that handles Job Corps activities.

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, Rehabilitation Services, 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 has applied for a Youth Vision Phase III grant to further develop our cross-agency collaborative approach to serving at-risk youth. In the event that Mississippi receives this grant, the State will use a portion of its statewide reserve funds as leveraged funds to support the development of a web site to provide information to at-risk youth and dropouts on employment, vocational training and other educational opportunities, and support services.

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 areas, Education (secondary school districts and community

colleges) and local businesses (hospitals). Other agencies such as Human Services will be encouraged to participate in the program in an effort to continue the expansion of this program and to develop similar programs for other demand occupations.

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 (MONW) 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.

4. 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 Investment 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 Customer Operations supervises the activities of the Business Outreach Services team and coordinates with the WIN Job Centers, other 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 MDES 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.

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 launched an incumbent worker training program. The program links funds from WIA, State funds at the community and junior colleges and contributions from businesses to provide training to incumbent and newly hired workers. A State Workforce Board Committee oversees this project. The anticipated outcome is 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.

Mississippi is in its second year of the PRA demonstration. Two WIN Job Centers located in Gulfport and Tunica participated in the Department of Labor's PRA demonstration in year one. Mississippi received a second grant allocation to expand the demonstration to four additional sites in Program Year 2006. Each demonstration location was selected based on geographic locations with unique community characteristics. The four additional sites are the Clarksdale WIN Job Center (Tallahatchie County) in the Delta Local Workforce Area, the Columbus WIN Job Center (Lowndes County) in the Mississippi Partnership Local Workforce Area, the McComb WIN Job Center (Pike County) in the Southcentral Mississippi Works Local Workforce Area, and the Pascagoula WIN Job Center (Jackson County) in the Twin Districts Local Workforce Area. Having sites in each of the four workforce areas allows assessment of diverse populations from different segments of the State.

The results of the PRA demonstration in each of the State's four Local Workforce Areas will provide sufficient information to determine the potential for expanding the PRA approach to other parts of the state. The State plans to identify variations and characteristics associated with customer choice and the impact of those factors on their job search success. Based on this information, MDES will assess the effectiveness of incorporating process improvement, beneficial preferred support services, and training or cash incentives into the PRA model.

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 reviewed Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 1-05 and Federal regulations at 20 CFR Parts 667 and 670/29 CFR Parts 2 and 37 related to Equal Treatment in DOL programs for Faith-Based Community Organizations. As required, Mississippi will ensure that state level policies, guidelines and regulations are in compliance with the Equal Treatment regulations by December 31, 2007. The State has already revised its procurement policies and practices to incorporate "Fair Treatment" requirements transmitted by DOL. Additionally, we will ensure that all appropriate state staff and organizations complete the Web-based training on this topic by June 30, 2008. The Point of Contact (POC) responsible for ensuring that these goals are accomplished is Wanda Land, Director of the Office of Grant Management of the Mississippi Department of Employment Security.

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 FBCOs will continue to collaborate to provide services. FBCOs have operated and will continue to operate youth programs for local areas as appropriate and when approved through standard Request for Proposal (RFP) procedures.

The State, through its Disability Program Navigator Initiative, has developed regional resource guides detailing service providers that assist hard-to-serve populations and persons with barriers to employment. These resource guides are heavily populated with faith-based and community organizations. Plans to integrate these regional guides into a Statewide, Web-based resource directory were sidelined when Hurricane Katrina

devastated the State. However, the State plans to renew its efforts to develop a web-based resource guide. In the meantime, the Mississippi Disability Program Navigators have continued to update their regional resource guides on a regular basis. These guides have been made available in CD format to all WIN Job Centers and local workforce areas. The Navigators rely heavily upon input from State and local FCBOs about the assistance those organizations offer to their communities. Often, FCBOs are the primary service providers in rural communities, with strong local ties and high visibility within their service delivery areas.

The State has engaged in several conference calls 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.

The Navigators also collaborate with the Mississippi 2-1-1 project, administered by the United Way of the Capital Area, to link customers with the support services they need. Mississippi 2-1-1 is a phone number that individuals may use to access information about a variety of resources including, but not limited to, rent assistance, food banks, affordable housing, shelters, health resources, after-school programs, care for children and the elderly, financial literacy, and job training programs. As they identify new service providers or receive updated data for existing providers, the Navigators share this information with Mississippi 2-1-1 using forms provided by the United Way for this purpose. The Mississippi 2-1-1 project staff also refers customers to the Navigators and WIN Job Centers for access to WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other services available through one-stop partners. This process ensures that individuals in need gain access to valuable services offered through FCBOs, as FCBOs figure prominently in the 2-1-1 network of services.

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.

MDES is in the process of negotiating a contract with Mississippi State University to develop a unified participant reporting system that will be designed to offer fully integrated service delivery and improved performance achievement in order to facilitate case management and service delivery across programs. A State job matching system, web-based self service tools for customers, fiscal management systems, and other enhancements will also be included.

Improvements to the web-based Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) allow training institutions to apply online to be approved providers. Approved providers are able to submit applications for new programs or recertify existing programs. Currently in production is an Individual Training Account (ITA) function of the web-based ETPL, which will allow WIN Job Center staff, training providers, and MDES staff to complete various steps of the ITA process electronically, including ITA approvals, payments, and refunds.

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

The State will continue to use funds reserved for statewide activities to provide additional 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 to extend the waiver of the current 17 WIA performance measures and will continue to utilize the new Common Measures. No additional State performance measures have been or are anticipated to be added at this time.

Once the level to be achieved on each Common Measure is agreed to by the Regional Office and MDES, 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 to set the State's goals.

Performance relative to the Common Measures is 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.

Fine-tuning has been inevitable and ongoing since the implementation of the Common Measures. 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 dislocation due to natural disasters;
- 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.

- 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 has revised its MIS system to capture and report all performance information required by the six Common Measures. No other data collection (beyond that required by DOL) is anticipated at this time. The State Board, in addition, requires performance reporting from community and junior colleges receiving special State funds for the creation and delivery of high growth/high demand training. These measures are in the process of being 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 17-05. 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 are 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. During Program Year 2005, the first year of implementation of the new Common Measures in Mississippi, technical assistance was provided to the local workforce areas to predict and fix performance problems. Proactive corrective action was the preferred option for addressing low performance levels. Ongoing technical assistance continues to be made available to the local areas. During Program Year 2006, 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. Mississippi State Policy Number 15, Change 2, WIA Performance Measures and Goals, the State's incentive, corrective action and sanctioning policy, was revised as the common measures were implemented by partner programs and agencies and to reflect the negotiated performance levels for Program Years 2005 and 2006. The policy will be revised for the upcoming two-year period of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009 to include negotiated performance levels for Program Years 2007 and 2008.

Local Workforce Investment Areas negotiate with the State to establish local performance levels for the common measures. Local Areas may choose to adopt additional performance standards to measure provider and program success. Local standards may be set higher than those set by the State. Local Areas may also elect to utilize sanctions and incentives for their local providers based upon established local levels of performance.

- 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.**

As noted in responses to other questions in this section, Mississippi implemented the Common Measures on July 1, 2005. Changes to the State's MIS systems were made to effectively implement the Common Measures at that time. The State continues to evaluate baseline data in a process to improve performance targets.

- 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.)

The State is working with Mississippi State University to develop proposed State performance levels for the Common Measures for Program Years 2007 and 2008. The State will submit its proposed performance levels for Program Years 2007 and 2008 to the Department of Labor under separate cover. Once the negotiation process with the Regional Office is complete and State performance levels finalized, negotiation with the four local areas on local performance levels will begin. The final negotiated State performance levels will be included with the final version of the State Plan for Program Years Three and Four (2007 and 2008).

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.

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) submitted to the DOL Civil Rights Center (CRC) on July 6, 2006 the "Methods of Administration" (MOA) certifying compliance with WIA Sect. 188. The MOA applies to Workforce Investment Act programs and activities and Wagner-Peyser programs and activities. Effective July 1, 2005, with the legislative and physical transfer of WIA to the MDES, the MDES developed the above referenced unified MOA, which has been certified by the CRC. This unified MOA references all MDES departments and offices as well as contracts with all WIA partners. A copy of the MOA is on file at MDES and is available upon request.

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. The MDES equal opportunity team also conducts regular reviews of WIN Job Centers to ensure compliance with the requirements of §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

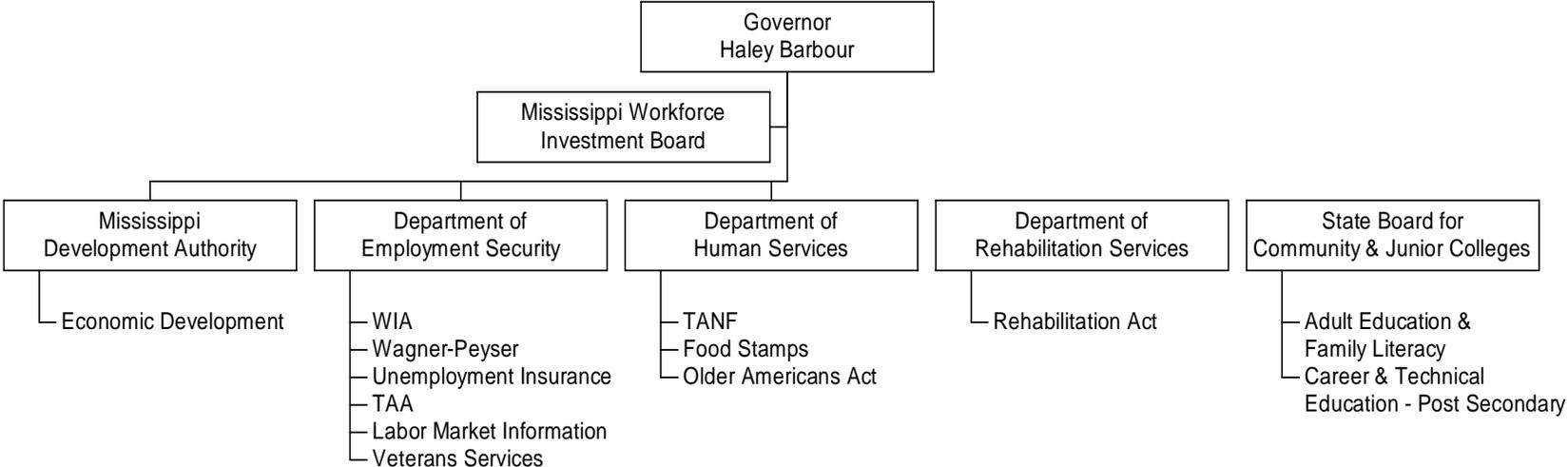
Name of WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency:	
Mississippi Department of Employment Security	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6000
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6004
E-mail Address:	N/A
Name of State WIA Title I Administrative Agency (if different from Grant Recipient):	
Same as Grant Recipient	
Address:	
Telephone Number:	
Facsimile Number:	
E-mail Address:	
Name of WIA Title I Signatory Official: Ms. Tommye Dale Favre, Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Employment Security	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6102
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6004
E-mail Address:	tdfavre@mdes.ms.gov
Name of WIA Title I Liaison: Wanda Land, Director, Office of Grant Management	
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):	
Ms. Tommye Dale Favre, Executive Director, Mississippi Department of Employment Security	
Address:	Post Office Box 1699 Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1699
Telephone Number:	601-321-6104
Facsimile Number:	601-321-6004
E-mail Address:	tdfavre@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: May 1, 2007

Attachment A

Organizational Chart

Organization of State Agencies in Relation to the Governor



Attachment B

State Workforce Investment Board Roster

MISSISSIPPI STATE WORKFORCE BOARD MEMBERS

Member		Address	Occupation	Category Representative
Aldridge	Ronald	1709 Peachtree St. Jackson, 39202	National Federation of Independent Business	Business
Alexander	Jimmy	Post Office Box 1265 Meridian, 39202	President A & B Electric Company	Business
Bounds	Hank	6295 Old Canton Rd Jackson, 39211	State Superintendent Mississippi Department of Education	Dept of Education
Brown	Yvonne	Post Office Box 280 Tchula, 39169	Mayor of Tchula	Area Workforce
Clark	Robert	217 Clark Road Pickens, 39146		Business
Crane	Larry	3854 Kendale Drive Gautier, 39533	Northrop Grumman Corporation Ship Systems	Business
Davis	Lee	302 40th Place Hattiesburg, 39402	State Representative House of Representatives	Legislature - House
Davis	Tim	627 Sandpiper Brandon, 39047	International Representative CWA	Labor

Member		Address	Occupation	Category Representative
Epps	Chris	723 North President Street Jackson, 39202	Commissioner Mississippi Department of Correction	Governor
Evers	Charles	1018 Pecan Park Place Jackson, 39209		Youth
Favre	Tommye	1100 Pinecone Drive Gautier, 39533	Executive Director Mississippi Department of Employment Security	MDES
Furr	Richard	Post Office Box 83 Wesson, 39191	President, State Bank & Trust	Business
Gates	Linda	1948 Elmview West Point, 39773	Job Placement & Work- Based Learning Coordinator East MS Community College	Workforce Area
Hall	Michael	1367 CR 86 New Albany, 38652	Director of Human Resources Ashley Furniture	Business
Holder	Charles	348 CR 1525 Bay Springs, 39422	Chief Executive Officer Hol-Mac	Business
Holmes	Clarke	118 Overlook Pointe Dr Ridgeland, 39157	Chief Executive Officer Central Mississippi PDD	PDD

Member		Address	Occupation	Category Representative
Jones	Joe	5872 Seven Springs Rd Raymond, 39154	Publisher, Mississippi Business Journal	Workforce Area
Kell	Roland	1623 Gallery Street Pascagoula, 39581	General Manager Chevron-Texaco	Business
Kokaisel	Dennis	Rt. 3 Box 80 Carrollton, 38917	Plant Manager Viking Range Corporation	Business
Lambert	Lida	1302 Robb Street Summit, 39666	Director of Training Tower Loan	Business
Lee	Perry	108 Tiger Drive Mendenhall, 39114	Senator Mississippi Senate	Legislature - Senate
Lehner	Edward	1409 Highway 45 South Columbus 39701	Executive Vice President & CFO SeverCorr, Columbus	
Lewis	George		Executive Director MS Municipal League	Ms Municipal League
Little	Travis	Post Office Box 540 Corinth, 38834	President Pro Tempore Senator Mississippi Senate	Legislature - Senate

Member	Address	Occupation	Category Representative
Lott	Willis	President Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College	Workforce Area
McMillan	H.S. Post Office 2785 Madison, 39130	Executive Director Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services	Ms Department of Rehabilitation Services
Moon	Jay 231 Coachman's Road Madison, 39110	Chief Executive Officer Mississippi Manufacturers Association	Business
Morton	Joe Post Office Box 8 Ripley, 38663	President, Ripley Insurance Agency	Youth
Mullins	Robert 20 Lakeview Drive Raymond, 39154	Manager Training, Organization Development & Communication Nissan North American, Canton	Business
Mulloy	Trent 63 Northgate Drive Laurel, 39440	Vice President Laurel Machine & Foundry	Business
Otis	Larry 645 W. Jefferson St. Tupelo, 38804		Mayor

Member		Address	Occupation	Category Representative
Schloegel	George	800 Commerce Gulfport, 39507	President Hancock Bank	Business
Stonecypher	Wayne	302 Overlook Drive Brandon, 39042	Executive Director State Board for Community and Jr. Colleges	State Board for Community & Jr. Colleges
Swoope	Gray	101 Misty Cove Madison, 39110	Executive Director Mississippi Development Authority	Ms Development Authority
Taylor	Don	15018 New Zion Rd. Crystal Springs, 39059	Executive Director Mississippi Department of Human Services	Dept of Human Services
Thomas	Michael	179 S. Dewey St. Ackerman, 39735	MS Lignite Mining Co.	Business
Walker	George	1422 Shady Lane Clarksdale, 38614	President, WWW Corp.	Business
Watson	Paul	104 Bayou Oaks Circle Greenville, 38701	Supervisor Washington County Board of Supervisors	Supervisor

Member		Address	Occupation	Category Representative
Will	Stephen	3502 Bluebird Lane Corinth, 38834	Mill Manager Kimberly-Clark Co.	Business
Yelverton	Joel	113 Green Oak Cove Clinton, 39056	Asst. Exec. Director MS Association of Supervisors	Supervisor Association
Vacant				House of Representatives
Vacant				Labor
Vacant				Business

Attachment C

Economic and Labor Market Analysis Report

Appendix A

Top 50 Fastest Growing Occupations in Mississippi, 2004-2014

Table 1: Top 50 Occupations with Highest Projected Growth in Mississippi, 2004-2014

Rank	Occupation	2004 Employment	2014 Employment	Annual Openings	Annual Wage	Job Zone
1	Cashiers	42,920	47,790	2,575	14,860	1
2	Retail Salespersons	38,660	47,480	2,288	21,240	2
3	Registered Nurses	28,620	36,980	1,435	48,460	4
4	Waiters and Waitresses	16,030	18,490	1,071	13,500	1
5	Laborers and Freight, Stock, and Material Movers, Hand	21,630	24,220	966	20,200	1
6	Team Assemblers	18,520	22,380	865	23,740	1
7	Food Preparation Workers	14,520	18,030	864	14,100	1
8	Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	25,740	29,810	827	32,890	2
9	Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	19,710	23,730	776	16,900	1
10	Nursing Aides, Orderlies, and Attendants	19,080	23,720	714	16,860	2
11	Child Care Workers	15,290	17,470	634	14,590	1
12	General and Operations Managers	15,810	19,030	620	68,910	4
13	Cooks, Fast Food	12,890	15,100	620	13,440	2
14	Stock Clerks and Order Fillers	16,310	16,390	611	19,170	2
15	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	21,980	24,060	604	29,930	2
16	Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	18,710	20,370	559	14,550	1
17	Bookkeeping, Accounting, and Auditing Clerks	19,500	21,370	553	27,270	2
18	Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	8,980	10,590	550	13,630	1
19	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	13,510	16,070	516	26,800	3
20	Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical, and Executive	25,740	25,920	512	22,450	2
21	Teacher Assistants	13,630	15,900	490	14,530	3
22	Elementary School Teachers, Except Special Education	15,960	17,280	484	36,260	4
23	Customer Service Representatives	11,120	14,280	481	24,580	2
24	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office and Administrative Support Workers	14,160	15,870	475	39,020	3
25	Meat, Poultry, and Fish Cutters and Trimmers	9,810	12,410	475	17,460	1
26	Tellers	6,710	8,070	467	19,370	2
27	Office Clerks, General	15,370	16,600	464	19,950	2
28	Secondary School Teachers, Except Special and Vocational Education	12,040	13,290	463	36,160	4
29	Licensed Practical and Licensed Vocational Nurses	11,060	13,280	463	28,140	3
30	Sales Representatives, Wholesale and Manufacturing, Except Technical and Scientific Products	9,060	10,910	423	43,240	2
31	Receptionists and Information Clerks	8,460	10,270	389	18,830	2
32	Clergy	8,880	10,790	373	31,780	5
33	Cooks, Restaurant	7,710	8,990	366	16,880	3
34	Gaming Dealers	6,400	7,890	351	15,450	2
35	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Production and Operating Workers	9,100	10,620	343	40,960	3
36	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Preparation and Serving Workers	8,120	9,540	335	22,960	3

Table 1a Continued

Rank	Occupation	2004 Employment	2014 Employment	Annual Openings	Annual Wage	Job Zone
37	Carpenters	11,860	13,250	332	26,430	3
38	Security Guards	9,400	10,610	326	17,900	1
39	Automotive Service Technicians and Mechanics	7,420	8,640	320	28,040	3
40	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	7,860	9,000	317	27,520	3
41	Landscaping and Groundskeeping Workers	8,810	10,060	317	18,280	1
42	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	6,940	8,140	316	31,950	2
43	Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	10,990	12,960	298	24,200	1
44	Cooks, Institution and Cafeteria	8,420	8,720	291	15,960	2
45	Helpers--Production Workers	5,980	7,070	277	19,750	1
46	Industrial Truck and Tractor Operators	8,180	9,410	277	23,720	1
47	Shipping, Receiving, and Traffic Clerks	8,460	9,410	269	23,110	1
48	Chief Executives	7,420	8,670	265	108,220	5
49	Packers and Packagers, Hand	7,150	8,430	262	17,570	1
50	Bus Drivers, School	6,920	7,950	253	15,400	2
<i>Total, top 50 occupations</i>		<i>697,550</i>	<i>807,310</i>	<i>29,122</i>		
<i>Total, all projected occupations</i>		<i>1,341,170</i>	<i>1,537,060</i>	<i>52,299</i>		

Note: Highlighted in gray are those occupations with an average wage that is above Mississippi's 2005 average annual wage for all occupations (\$29,100). Source: 2004-2014 projections come from MDES, 2007. Annual wage data come from the November 2005 State Occupational Employment and Wages report, MDES. Job zone information comes from the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Information Network, 2007.

Appendix B
Annual Wages (2004-2014)

Table 1b: Wages for Projected Mississippi Occupations, 2004-2014

	All Occupations		Top 50 Occupations		Other Occupations	
Average Wage						
Less than \$15,000	199,420	13.2%	163,740	20.3%	35,680	5.1%
\$15,000 – \$35,000	928,360	61.5%	510,920	63.3%	417,440	59.4%
\$35,001 – \$50,000	253,610	16.8%	104,950	13.0%	148,660	21.2%
Greater than \$50,000	128,580	8.5%	27,700	3.4%	100,880	14.4%
Total	1,509,970	100.0%	807,310	100.0%	702,660	100.0%

Source: 2004-2014 projections come from MDES, 2007. Annual wage data come from the November 2005 State Occupational Employment and Wages report, MDES. Job zone information comes from the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Information Network, 2007.

Appendix C
Education/Training Characteristics (2004-2014)

Table 1c: Job Zones for Projected Mississippi Occupations, 2004-2014

Job Zone	All Occupations		Top 50 Occupations		Other Occupations	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
One: little or no prep.	415,790	27.6%	283,430	35.1%	132,360	18.9%
Two: some prep.	432,510	28.7%	296,680	36.7%	135,830	19.4%
Three: medium prep.	308,400	20.5%	121,160	15.0%	187,240	26.8%
Four: considerable prep.	270,000	17.9%	86,580	10.7%	183,420	26.3%
Five: extensive prep.	79,220	5.3%	19,460	2.4%	59,760	8.6%
Total	1,505,920	100.0%	807,310	100.0%	698,610	100.0%

Source: 2004-2014 projections come from MDES, 2007. Annual wage data come from the November 2005 State Occupational Employment and Wages report, MDES. Job zone information comes from the U.S. Department of Labor Occupational Information Network, 2007.

Appendix D
Current and Projected Labor Force

Table 1d: Labor Force Projections by Gender

Year	Male	Female	Total
% in Labor Force, 2000	69.88	52.85	59.12
Number in Labor Force			
2005	690,804	664,392	1,355,196
2010	718,969	689,652	1,408,621
2015	741,208	710,150	1,451,358
2020	759,571	727,446	1,487,017
2025	774,303	742,112	1,516,415
Percent Change			
2005-2010	4.08	3.80	3.94
2010-2015	3.09	2.97	3.03
2015-2020	2.48	2.44	2.46
2020-2025	1.94	2.02	1.98
Percent by Gender			
2005	50.97	49.03	100.00
2010	51.04	48.96	100.00
2015	51.07	48.93	100.00
2020	51.08	48.92	100.00
2025	51.06	48.94	100.00

Source: Compiled by Mississippi State University, 2005

Table 2d: Labor Force Projections by Race

Year	White	Black	Other
% in Labor Force, 2000	61.03	55.21	63.15
Number in Labor Force			
2005	905,978	418,534	12,610
2010	939,723	448,910	16,231
2015	973,870	482,942	19,505
2020	1,001,497	514,524	22,578
2025	1,024,181	540,740	25,322
Percent Change			
2005-2010	3.72	7.26	28.72
2010-2015	3.63	7.58	20.17
2015-2020	2.84	6.54	15.75
2020-2025	2.27	5.10	12.15
Percent by Race			
2005	67.76	31.30	0.94
2010	66.89	31.95	1.16
2015	65.97	32.71	1.32
2020	65.09	33.44	1.47
2025	64.40	34.00	1.59

Source: Compiled by Mississippi State University, 2005

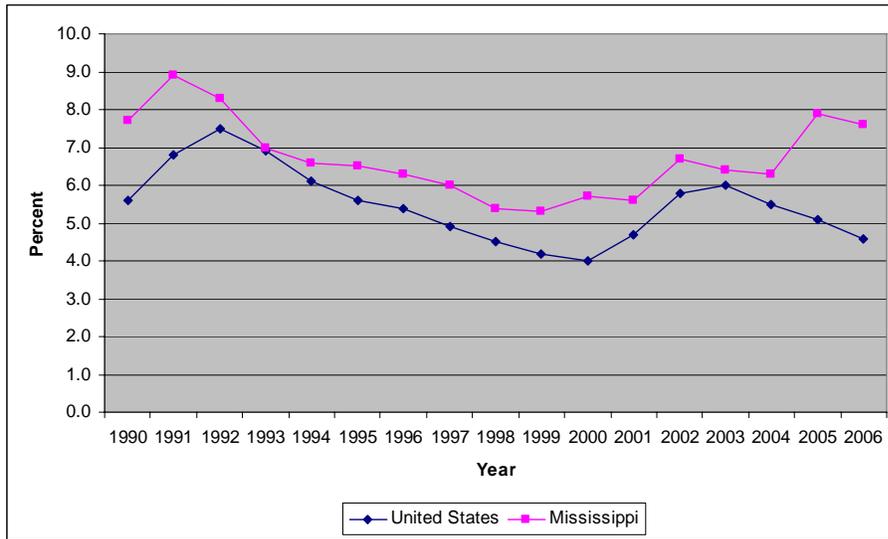
Table 3d: Labor Force Projections by Age

Year	Ages 16-24	Ages 25-54	Ages 55 or Greater
% in Labor Force, 2000	56.89	75.39	28.56
Number in Labor Force			
2005	207,927	930,970	184,150
2010	215,451	931,615	253,427
2015	228,563	926,470	322,649
2020	230,062	930,936	388,636
2025	225,200	936,143	451,712
Percent Change			
2005-2010	3.62	0.07	37.62
2010-2015	6.09	-0.55	27.31
2015-2020	0.66	0.48	20.45
2020-2025	-2.11	0.56	16.23
Percent by Age			
2005	15.72	70.37	13.92
2010	15.38	66.52	18.10
2015	15.47	62.70	21.83
2020	14.85	60.07	25.08
2025	13.96	58.04	28.00

Source: Compiled by Mississippi State University, 2005

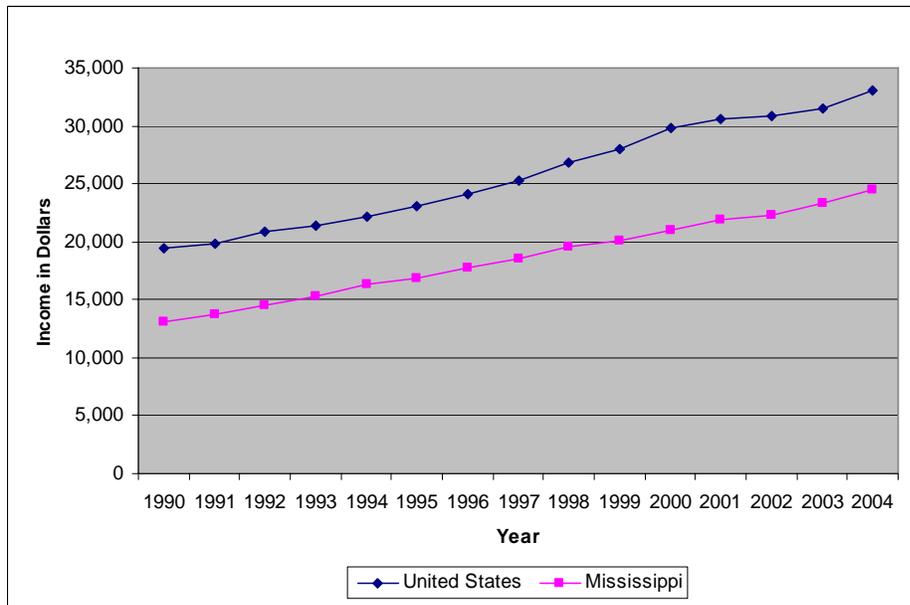
Appendix E
Economic Trends in Mississippi

Figure 1e: Unemployment



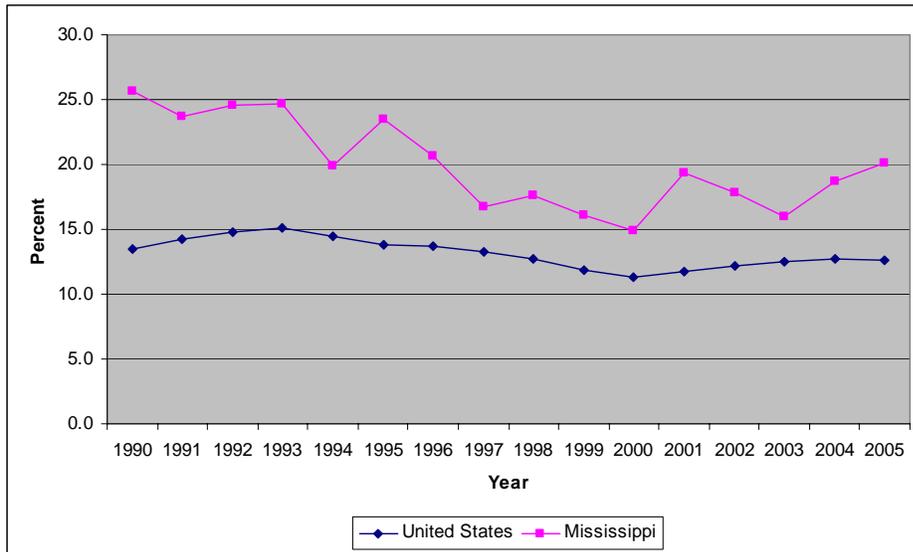
Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2007

Figure 2e: Per Capita Income



Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2007

Figure 3e: Poverty



Source: Current Population Survey, 2007

Attachment D

Requests for Waivers

Appendix A
Requests for Extension of Waivers

State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Request for Extension of Waiver:
Workflex Authority

The State of Mississippi hereby requests an extension of the following components of the workflex request. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM) asks that the expiration date of the workflex waiver be extended from June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

A number of reasons cited by the MDES when we submitted the initial request for workflex authority in June 2005 still exist. They include, but are not limited to: the need for greater flexibility in designing, implementing, and administering Workforce Investment Act (WIA) employment and training programs for eligible adults, youth and dislocated workers; increased capacity for piloting promising new approaches in service delivery and program administration; and improvement in the quality and quantity of customer services. The highest level of flexibility offered to States is available through the workflex provision.

The State of Mississippi hereby requests that extensions be approved for the following:

Incumbent Worker Services

Any of the four local workforce areas may treat up to 20% 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.

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.

On –the-Job-Training (OJT)

Each local area may elect to pay a flat, fixed fee to employers who enter into OJT agreements and who accomplish training and employment objectives. The flat, fixed fee must be less than the average, per trainee OJT reimbursement amount during the preceding year. The “flat fee” option may be implemented throughout a workforce area or may be implemented on a trial basis for a smaller region, employment sector or target group. The OJT reimbursement amount need not be tied to each trainee’s earnings during the training period, requiring a waiver of WIA Sections 101(31)(B) and 20 CFR Part 663.710. This option will substantially streamline employer and workforce area paperwork and will make OJT far more marketable while ensuring that program and administrative costs are reduced.

Customer Flow

Each local area may elect to allow its WIN Job Centers to offer the full range of core, intensive and training services to customers in whatever order is necessary to best achieve each individual’s employment and training goals. It will not be necessary to first receive a core service and then receive an intensive service before accessing training. This will expedite the flow of dislocated workers and barriered adults into training, conserving unemployment insurance and increasing earning gains while encouraging development of high demand, open entry training options.

Additions

As other states apply for and field test new waivers, if 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.

State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Request for Extension of Waiver:
Current 17 WIA Performance Measures

The State of Mississippi hereby requests an extension of the waiver of the current 17 Workforce Investment Act (WIA) performance measures. The State wishes to continue to operate and evaluate State and local WIA programs based on the Common Measures, which were implemented statewide in Mississippi on July 1, 2005. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM) asks that the expiration date of the waiver be extended from June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

A number of reasons cited by the MDES when we submitted the initial request for a waiver on May 24, 2005 exist. 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. Additionally, Mississippi has successfully implemented the Common Measures and has now focused its attention on continuous improvement strategies. We look forward to working with the Department of Labor Region 3 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.

Proposed performance levels will be submitted to the Department of Labor under separate cover.

State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Request for Extension of Waiver:
Time Limit on Period of Initial Eligibility for Training Providers

The State of Mississippi hereby requests a third extension of the waiver of the Eligible Training Provider List requirement for subsequent eligibility that all mandated performance items must be submitted, and acceptable levels met, for programs and courses to remain on the List. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM) asks that the expiration date of the waiver be extended from June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

The State Workforce Board recently adopted a new reporting system for State funded Community College incumbent worker training programs. The first reports are now being published and discussed. During the upcoming two-year planning period, the ETPL and the new State reporting system may merge or share data and reporting elements. The State needs time to consider and implement these changes.

A number of reasons cited by the MDES when we submitted the initial request for a waiver on April 1, 2002 still exist. They include, but are not limited to: the lack of sufficient data to meet the subsequent eligibility requirements; the continued lack of an adequate data collection and reporting system and the lack of manpower to produce such data; the lack of a significant number of WIA participant enrollments to produce WIA performance data; and insufficient time for a substantial number of WIA participants to exit programs and be eligible for follow-up performance measures.

Additionally, Mississippi has certified all existing and new providers based upon the guidelines set forth in the State Eligible Training Provider Certification Policy. Refinements were made to the policy to ensure that only the most highly qualified providers and courses are placed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), thereby enhancing customer choice. Those providers that have been recently added to the List will need time to compile the required data for subsequent eligibility and to have WIA participants enroll in, and exit from, their programs. Policy changes also reflect the State's focus on including only those courses on the List that offer training for occupations that are in demand throughout the State and/or local areas, as determined by the analysis of labor market data. This requires careful examination of current courses on the List as well as the pursuit of training programs not currently on the ETPL that prepare individuals for in-demand occupations.

Mississippi continues to refine and enhance the eligible training provider application process and the training program submission process. The State has implemented a web-based Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) application and approval system that has simplified program functions for entities applying to be training providers, approved training providers, local workforce areas, and the State Administrator. Another benefit of electronic application submission and approval is the reduction in time needed to complete the assorted transactions, thereby leading to increased productivity of all staff involved in the process.

Finally, the State plans to link participant performance information from ETPL training providers with the separate, State funded training accountability tracking system developed at the request of the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB). This will allow us to track provider performance in a more organized, unified manner. For these reasons, the State requests an extension of the period of initial eligibility for WIA training providers through the end of the two year planning period, June 30, 2009.

State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Request for Extension of Waiver:
30% Funds Transfer Authority to Permit 100% Transfer between Adult and
Dislocated Worker Programs

The State of Mississippi hereby requests an extension of the waiver to increase the transfer authority of Local Workforce Investment Boards from the current 30% to 100% for Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM) asks that the expiration date of the waiver be extended from June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

A number of reasons cited by the MDES when we submitted the initial request for a waiver in 2005 still exist. They include, but are not limited to: the need to provide local workforce investment boards with greater flexibility in allocating and expending Adult and Dislocated Worker funds in these times of limited funds and fiscal challenges; the need to ensure more effective delivery of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs and services in Mississippi; and the need to design and develop comprehensive systems that better serve the needs of WIA customers and heighten a local area's ability to respond to changes in the local labor market. Granting Local Boards the ability to move substantial funds to the areas of greatest need will ensure optimum service to the general population of that workforce area.

This request was developed as a result of concerns expressed by local areas. As with all other major policy and procedural decisions made by the State, we relied heavily upon input from local area staff and boards. Mississippi continues to endorse local flexibility and is committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to help our local workforce areas best serve the state's job seekers, underemployed, dislocated workers, youth, and employers. We believe that our local workforce areas are most successful when given the latitude to make decisions based upon their in-depth knowledge of their areas, while still operating within the parameters of the Act.

This waiver request also matches provisions in last year's WIA reauthorization bills mandating full consolidation (the House) or allowing 100% transfer (the Senate) between the adult and dislocated worker programs.

State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Request for Extension of Waiver:
Prohibition on Use of Individual Training Accounts for Youth

The State of Mississippi hereby requests a second extension of the waiver of the provision of 20 CFR 664.510 to allow local areas to use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for youth participants. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM) asks that the expiration date of the waiver be extended from June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

A number of reasons cited by the MDES when we submitted the initial request for a waiver on March 29, 2004 still exist. They include, but are not limited to: the lack of options for workforce training available to youth who do not complete secondary educations or who do not wish to pursue post-secondary education opportunities; the need for skilled workers who will be able to fill the projected shortages in the workforce as more workers retire; and the need for increased flexibility at the local level to ensure that Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds and activities serve youth participants as effectively as possible.

The Workforce Investment Act prescribes a strong role for local workforce investment boards and the private sector in strategic planning, policy development and oversight of the local workforce investment system and its activities. WIA recognizes local flexibility as a key element in the process of developing comprehensive systems designed to meet the needs of the local labor market. Mississippi likewise endorses local flexibility and remains committed to taking whatever steps are necessary to help our local workforce areas best serve the state's job seekers, underemployed, dislocated workers, youth, and employers.

State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Request for Extension of Waiver:
Limitation on Provision of Activities Identified in WIA Section 134 to the State

The State of Mississippi hereby requests an extension of the waiver of the language that limits the authority to provide the activities identified in WIA section 134 to the State. The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM) asks that the expiration date of the waiver be extended from June 30, 2007 to June 30, 2009.

A number of reasons cited by the MDES when we submitted the initial request for waiver in June 2005 still exist. The State is seeking continued flexibility to use local funds to deliver services described in WIA section 134 that heretofore have been restricted to the State. This will allow the local areas increased capacity for piloting promising new approaches in service delivery and program administration as well as promoting improvements in the quality and quantity of customer services.

This waiver will allow the four local workforce areas to elect to utilize up to 20% of their formula funds to conduct any of the WIA section 134 statewide activities, including incumbent worker and rapid response services. The primary purpose of this waiver is to allow local areas greater flexibility in meeting the training and employment needs of expanding Mississippi businesses and to facilitate post-Katrina growth and recovery. The State requests an extension of the waiver to provide local areas with continued flexibility in serving area job seekers and employers.

Appendix B
Requests for New Waivers

**State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Waiver Request:
On-the-Job Training Employer Match**

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM), as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Mississippi, submits this request for a general waiver to increase the employer reimbursement for on-the-job training (OJT) to up to 75 percent reimbursement for small businesses. For the purposes of this waiver, “small business” is defined as an employer with 100 or fewer employees. WIA Section 101(31)(B) and 20 CFR 663.710 currently provide for reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an OJT participant for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the OJT.

In keeping with the guidelines set forth at WIA Section 189(i)(4)(b) and 20 CFR Part 661.420, please accept the following as a request for a waiver.

1. Identification of Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived-

Federal regulations at WIA Section 101(31)(B) and 20 CFR 663.710 govern employer reimbursements for extraordinary costs associated with on-the-job training. The current limit on employer reimbursements for OJT is 50 percent.

2. Actions Undertaken by the State to Remove State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers-

There are no State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the proposed waiver.

3. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted-

The anticipated goals are as follows:

- Increased flexibility for local workforce areas to serve those businesses that demonstrate the greatest need for financial assistance to support employee training and skills development.
- Small businesses provide approximately 75 percent of the net new jobs added to the economy. Small businesses hire a large proportion of employees who are younger workers, older workers, and part-time workers. **However, these**

businesses often lack the resources to sufficiently develop employee skills in order to keep pace with the ever increasing demands of the marketplace.

- Encourages the State's further recovery from the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina, and is consistent with the U.S. Small Business Administration's strategic goal to restore businesses affected by the disaster.

4. Individuals Impacted by the Waiver-

WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants, local workforce areas, and business customers will benefit from the waiver. Local Workforce Investment Boards will have greater flexibility to utilize WIA financial resources where the greatest impact will be felt, while linking employers with job seekers capable of learning the required skills sets.

5. Process Used to Monitor Progress Upon Implementation of the Waiver-

The MDES, as the State administrator and overseer of WIA, will monitor all OJT programs implemented by the Local Areas.

6. Local Board and Public Review and Comment-

This request was published for public comment as an attachment to the Mississippi Two Year Strategic Plan for Program Years 2007 and 2008. The waiver request was provided to the local areas for review and comment prior to its submission. Local areas were encouraged to enlist input from Local Boards when considering this waiver request. To date, the MDES has received no comments on the request but will forward to the Department of Labor any comments received after the submission of this waiver to DOL. No other formal public review process was undertaken.

**State of Mississippi
Workforce Investment Act
Waiver Request:
Entrepreneurial Training**

The Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES) Office of Grant Management (OGM), as the administrative entity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in the State of Mississippi, submits this request for a general waiver to fully implement the guidelines in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) Number 16-04, which encourages States and local workforce boards to consider entrepreneurial training programs for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) customers as part of their menu of services and to explore the appropriate partnerships to support these training programs. Mississippi has taken this position based upon the results of other projects and has recommended that self-employment assistance be emphasized as a reemployment strategy for dislocated and/or underemployed workers.

The State's specific request is to allow local Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds to be expended on entrepreneurial training with participant performances to be tracked at the State level but not aggregated with other local performance data. The waiver will apply to Program Years 2007 and 2008.

In keeping with the guidelines set forth at WIA Section 189(i)(4)(b) and 20 CFR Part 661.420, please accept the following as a request for a waiver.

1. Identification of Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived-

WIA Federal regulations at 20 CFR 666 govern State measures of WIA performance, while 20 CFR 667.300 sets forth reporting requirements for WIA programs. Should the above request to allow local Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds to be expended on entrepreneurial training, with performance tracked at the State level and not aggregated with local area data, be found to be out of accord with these regulations, the State requests a waiver of same.

Additionally, Mississippi requests a waiver of the provisions of 20 CFR 667.300 and TEGL 14-00, Change 1 to allow the State to submit an addendum to WIASRD to accommodate the exceptions related to the waiver regarding local level WIA performance and reporting requirements. Performance outcomes for the above referenced at-risk populations will be included in State measures. The Federal WIASRD methodology, as now designed, counts everyone served with local funds in whole or in part, in local level performance measures.

2. Actions Undertaken by the State to Remove State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers-

There are no State or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the proposed waiver.

3. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted-

The anticipated goals are as follows:

- Increased collaboration with economic development organizations, businesses, industry associations, and educational entities to foster business innovation, small business start-ups and expansions, and job creation.
- Small businesses provide approximately 75 percent of the net new jobs added to the economy. Small businesses hire a large proportion of employees who are younger workers, older workers, and part-time workers.
- Encourages the State's further recovery from the devastating impact of Hurricane Katrina, and is consistent with the U.S. Small Business Administration's strategic goal to restore homes and businesses affected by the disaster.

Mississippi continues to reap the benefits of the receipt of National Emergency Grant funds to assist with humanitarian and clean-up efforts as a result of Hurricane Katrina. These funds, and the participant performances associated with them, are not aggregated with other local performance data.

- Existing State policy promotes the maximum investment of limited Adult and Dislocated Worker funds and increased levels of service. Typically, Mississippi's local workforce areas refer individuals interested in starting their own businesses to providers of entrepreneurial training but do not sponsor/fund such training. This is partially due to the restrictions about what is currently considered a positive performance outcome (i.e. entered employment, average wages, and credential attainment). The proposed waiver will count entrepreneurial training toward the State performance measures, rather than local workforce area performance measures, thus spurring more local engagement in entrepreneurial training.

4. Individuals Impacted by the Waiver-

All WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker participants, local workforce areas, and business customers, will benefit from the waiver. Local Workforce Investment Boards, identifying unmet needs and individuals interested in self-employment opportunities in their areas, will have greater flexibility to refer those individuals to entrepreneurial training without fear of adverse impact on local performance levels.

5. Process Used to Monitor Progress Upon Implementation of the Waiver-

The MDES, as the State administrator and overseer of WIA, will monitor all entrepreneurial training programs implemented by the Local Areas. The State will also monitor the State and local performance levels to ensure that participant data for individuals participating in self-employment training programs are being aggregated in State performance data rather than in local performance data.

6. Local Board and Public Review and Comment-

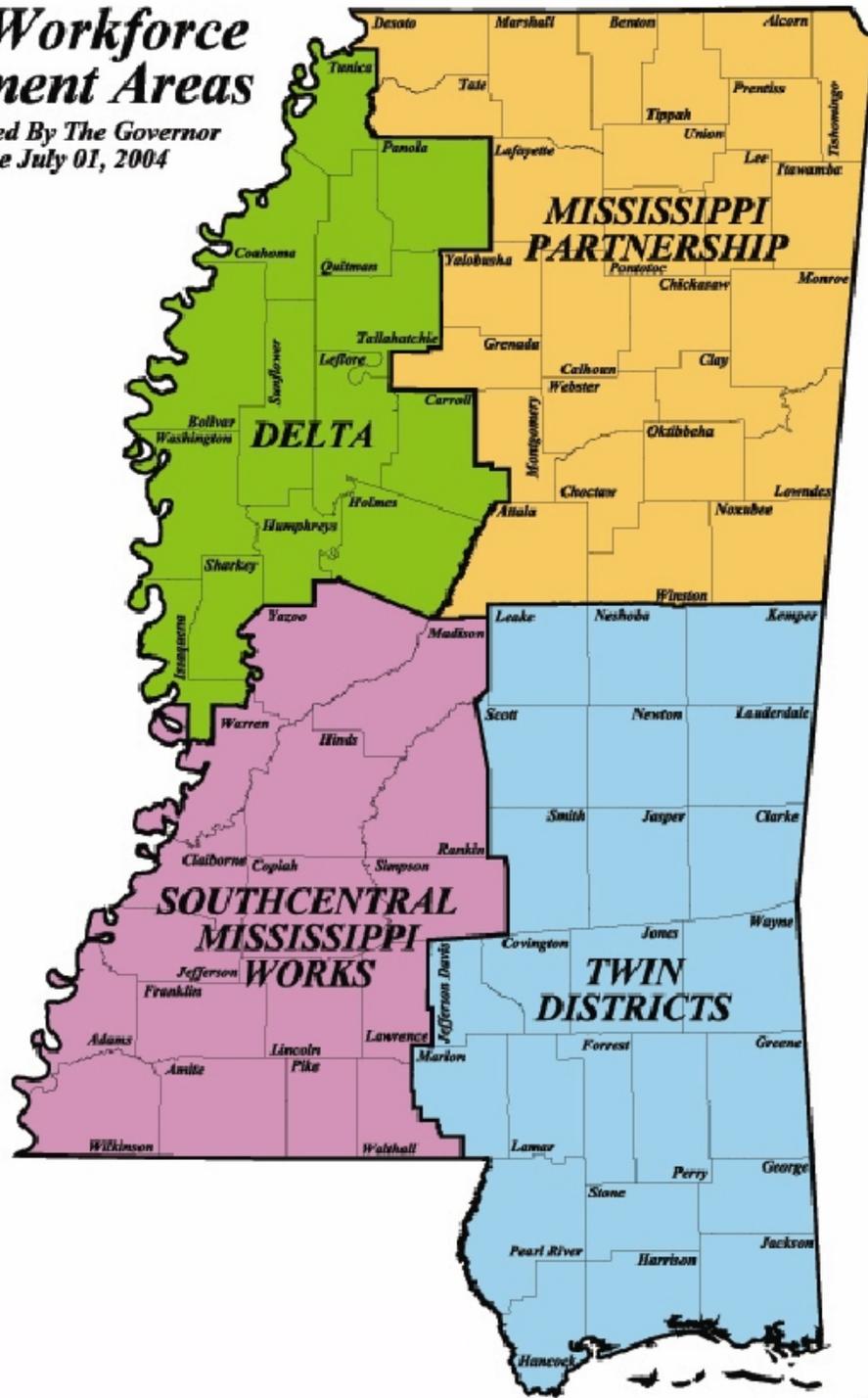
This request was published for public comment as an attachment to the Mississippi Two Year Strategic Plan for Program Years 2007 and 2008. The waiver request was provided to the local areas for review and comment prior to its submission. Local areas were encouraged to enlist input from Local Boards when considering this waiver request. To date, the MDES has received no comments on the request but will forward to the Department of Labor any comments received after the submission of this waiver to DOL. No other formal public review process was undertaken.

Attachment E

Local Workforce Investment Area Map

Local Workforce Investment Areas

As Designated By The Governor
Effective July 01, 2004



11/18/04

Attachment F

Employment and Training Administration Regional Administrators

**U.S. Department of Labor
Employment & Training Administration**

Regional Administrators

Note: Contact information is listed alphabetically by city.

REGION 1

Mr. Douglas F. Small

Region I - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
J.F.K. Federal Building, Room E-350
Boston, MA 02203
Phone: (617) 788-0170
Fax: (617) 788-0101
Email: RO1-RA-BOS@DOL.GOV

Note: This Regional office serves the following states: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, the Virgin Islands and Vermont.

REGION 2

Ms. Lenita Jacobs-Simmons

Region II - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration
Suite 825 East The Curtis Center 170 South Independence Mall West
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 861-5200

Note: This Regional office serves the following states: Delaware; Washington, DC; Maryland; Pennsylvania; Virginia; and West Virginia.

REGION 3

Dr. Helen Parker

Region III - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
Atlanta Federal Center 61 Forsyth St. Rm. 6M12
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone: (404) 562-2092
Fax: (404) 562-2149

Note: This Regional office serves the following states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

REGION 4

Mr. Joseph Juarez

Region IV - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
525 Griffin Street Room 317
Dallas, TX 75202
Phone: (214) 767-8263
Fax: (214) 767-5113

Note: This Regional office serves the following states: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Colorado, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Wyoming and Texas.

REGION 5**Mr. Byron Zuidema**

Region V - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA Foreign Labor certification
230 South Dearborn Street 6th floor
Chicago, IL 60604
Phone: (312) 596-5403
Fax: (312) 596-5401
Email: Zuidema.Byron@dol.gov

Note: This Regional office serves the following states: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska and Wisconsin.

REGION 6**Mr. Richard Trigg**

Region VI - Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor/ETA
P.O. Box 193767 71 Stevenson St., Suite 830
San Francisco, CA 94119-3767
Phone: (415) 975-4610
Fax: (415) 975-4612

Note: This Regional office serves the following states: Arizona, California, Hawaii, Nevada, Alaska, Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Guam.