

FLORIDA CROWN WORKFORCE BOARD, INC.

RWB Region 7 – Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist & Union Counties



LOCAL WORKFORCE SERVICES PLAN

(Board Approved Sept. 8, 2009)

Funding Sources: CFDA

93.558 Temporary Assistance for Needy Families; 17.258 WIA Adult Program; 17.260 WIA Dislocated Workers; 17.259 WIA Youth Activities; 17.207 Wagner-Peyser/Reed Act; 17.225 UC; 17.804 Local Veterans' Employment Representative Program; 17.801 Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program; 17.235 Senior Community Service Employment Program; 10.551 Food Stamps; 17.253 Welfare-to-Work Grants (not applicable for 04-05); 17.255 WIA Toll Free Help Line

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Section I. Context, Vision, and Strategy
I.A. Economic and Labor Market Context

Provide a detailed analysis of the local economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context. (§112(b)(4)).

In responding to this question, the RWB should update its analysis to indicate how the economic downturn has impacted the local labor market context.

Compared to the ten most populous states, Florida had the fifth highest unemployment rate (10.2 percent) in May 2009. This projects a snapshot in time that is projected to become worse during the period of this Plan. These statistics represent 943,000 jobless out of a labor force of 9,232,000. The state's current unemployment rate is 0.8 percentage point higher than the national unemployment rate of 9.4 percent. The last time the unemployment rate was higher than May 2009 was October 1975 when it was 11.0 percent. The May 2009 job loss continues the trend of annual declines that began in August 2007. The downturn started with declines in construction jobs, but has now spread to most all other major industries. At the end of May 2009, the four (4) counties of Region 7 had unemployment rates as follows: Columbia County - 8.4%, Dixie County - 10.4%, Gilchrist County - 8.5% and Union County - 7.2%, for a regional average of 8.6% which is well below the Florida and United States' (9.1%) averages.

While the recession may be finally coming to an end, significant challenges remain. The construction/housing industry problem is still ongoing although credit continues to flow within the Region. While home sales and residential construction remains slow, there continues to be activity in this industry in renovations and additions of existing homes. No regional banks or credit institutions have been closed or gone out of business or forced under Federal control during this economic cycle. We had one major plant closure in Dixie County causing significant unemployment in that County. The remaining counties have seen a number of employers who have instituted limited layoffs, some permanent loss of jobs, and reduction in work hours, but no significant plant closures. The aircraft maintenance industry has been adversely affected and resulted in reduction in force in Columbia County. Job losses in the manufacturing and transportation/warehousing industries have been somewhat mitigated by continued growth in the health services and corrections industries. Agriculture, which continues to be the underlying economic base for three of the rural counties, has continued to remain viable despite the adverse impact caused by fuel and fertilizer increases. The limited transportation infrastructure and the lack of a broadband communications network are limiting factors that severely impact the entire Region. Broadband is the single-most significant shortfall that could help the greatest number of businesses and residents and is an absolute priority for the future development of this Region. After a short decline in fuel costs, the trend is now increasing upward again

which will negatively affect the household income of local residents already struggling with wages that are not keeping pace with the cost of living.

Overarching Local Strategies

I.B. Describe the strategies that are in place to address the local strategic direction, local priorities, and workforce development issues identified through the local economy.

The RWB should describe the following local actionable strategies it is deploying to achieve the state and local vision for the use of Recovery Act and regular formula funds.

1. How the local workforce investment system resources, both stimulus and regular formula funds, can and will be used to serve the increased numbers of workers in need.

RWB-7 has used ARRA funds to open satellite One-Stop sites in two additional rural counties. These increased strategic locations are helping to relieve the burden on our customers from having to drive over fifty miles one-way to take advantage of One-Stop services. The satellite sites are staffed by two full-time personnel, plus volunteers, in each location. A Resource Room is equipped and staffed to assist customers in these rural counties to go on-line and search for employment as well as utilizing the computers to apply for and update their weeks for unemployment compensation. Staff provides core and intensive services and assists customers with applications for WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs. All three programs use a combination of formula funds and stimulus funds to meet the customers' needs. Long-term training is being paid for primarily out of formula funds, while short-term training is being paid for primarily out of stimulus funds. Employers requesting skills upgrade training for existing employees in order to prevent layoffs or terminations are served under Employed Worker Training or referred to the State for Incumbent Worker Training, as appropriate.

RWB-7 is using the following local actionable strategies to achieve our vision for the use of ARRA and regular formula funds:

- Get money into our customer's pockets timely;
- Create or save jobs in the near-term;
- Create strategic alliances with faith/community-based organizations and partner agencies to align goals and leverage resources.

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

As previously stated, we have opened satellite One-Stops in Gilchrist and Union Counties. These sites are staffed with fully qualified personnel capable of addressing the needs of WIA, Wagner-Peyser and Welfare Transition customers. These personnel provide eligibility determination and assist with preparation of applications for WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and youth programs. The Resource Room provides computer access to assist in job searches and Labor Market Information.

RWB-7 operates a wide-range of educational programs including Job Club, MoneySmart, and Microsoft as well as GED preparation in conjunction with the County's Adult Education Program. RWB-7 is working with the local school districts and their CAPE Programs for the youth and enrollment of adults into vocational programs, such as welding, in order to enhance their work skills for return to employment. RWB-7 believes it is imperative that a green jobs talent network be coordinated to encourage green job growth within the Region and effectively meet employer demand as it evolves. This collaborative network would create a coalition of educational institutions, workforce and economic development system stakeholders, labor and community-based organizations, green energy companies, and industry associations in order to prove and support a trained and job-ready workforce for green jobs.

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

As employers identify their requirements, RWB-7 will continue to work with them to either bring skilled instructors to the worksite in order to facilitate mass instruction or will send designated employees to training providers, either within or outside the Region, for the required skills upgrade training. We provide employers with information on the Incumbent Worker Training Program and assist with filling out the requisite requests. RWB-7 provides Employed Worker Training within the constraints of our limited budget to further assist in meeting the identified training requirements of the employers. RWB-7 has placed ads in all the rural newspapers to remind employers of the Employed Worker Training and Incumbent Worker Programs as well as highlighting this information on our website at www.floridacrown.org, in our brochures, and by letter to area employers.

While RWB-7 has posted information throughout the counties concerning the availability of funds, customers are already aware of and are actively availing themselves of our services. Customer walk-in traffic has increased from 1,000

customers per month to over 2,700 customers per month. To further address the needs of our customers, we have added seven new staff positions beginning with the FY 09-10 contract year.

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

RWB-7 will face two growth challenges over the upcoming years. The first is the Federal and State priorities to create a green economy and the second is the Regional vision as an “in-land port” to serve as a hub for distribution. This plan is to develop the capability to receive bulk cargo that comes from the Port of Jacksonville and will then trans-dock to smaller packages for distribution to final destinations. It is our belief at this time that many of the distribution positions will, in fact, also meet Federal and State definitions as green jobs.

Transforming Florida into a green economy will be the defining challenge of the future. Under the leadership of the Executive Office of the Governor, cross-agency collaboration and coordination will be required with every agency and activity within the Region in order to develop green jobs and train the workforce for these positions. Efficient energy use, reducing pollution and protecting natural resources by using renewable power sources will be the driving factors of the 21st century for this Region, Florida and the Nation. Major investment will be required to create new opportunities and high-skill, high-wage jobs. Many of the occupations already in existence will be modified and transformed to realize their “green” potential. One of the primary goals and objectives of green jobs is to support the development of high-skilled jobs that are resistant to downturns in the economy. An immediate requirement is for a concise definition of green jobs that includes existing positions in the workforce and the steps necessary to move them into compliance with the full definition of a green job. How well Florida navigates these challenges will depend greatly on the quality of our State’s workforce.

RWB-7 believes that, in the immediate future, many green jobs will not be in new occupations but rather traditional occupations that may require an additional layer of “green skills and knowledge”. For instance, a sheet metal worker who does welding may need to learn how to manufacture a wind turbine or a carpenter may need to learn how to install energy efficient windows. For those seeking a new career pathway, RWB-7 will work to enhance our existing Veterans, Dislocated Worker Youth Programs which already oversees seven after-school sites for children with disabilities. We are dedicated to providing knowledge and skills training, both traditional and green, that will be necessary to meet the new demands of the future.

Currently, RWB-7 has a very strong adult education program that includes our own in-house GED classes in our Lake City and Old Town One-Stops as well as additional GED and computer classes that we operate after hours and on week-ends in conjunction with the Columbia County School District. The focus is to ensure that our workforce has the basic education skills necessary to enable them to obtain and retain self-sufficient employment and to grow into the high/skill high/tech jobs that are projected for the future. Utilizing our WT and WIA Programs, we are providing basic skills and skills upgrade training for the workforce of our Region. The WIA Program is being used extensively to put students through post-secondary education with local community colleges. These students are receiving degrees to address critical needs identified on our Region's Targeted Occupations List. The local Community College has been designated as the Banner Center for the transportation and logistics career field. This post-secondary education program aligns perfectly with the regional vision of an "in-land port". RWB-7 promotes the Banner Center and expects to expand the number of WIA customers being trained in this emerging green career field.

The Employed Worker Training Program, along with the Incumbent Worker Training Program operated by the State, is being used to provide skills upgrade training in order to promote career advancement. RWB-7 has limited opportunities to engage in apprenticeship programs due to lack of local training providers in our Region. However, we are working to ensure that programs and strategies are developed to ensure workers with limited initial education and skills have access to green jobs. For the future, the Targeted Occupations List may have to be expanded and modified to fully recognize and provide opportunity for funding jobs with green potential.

To date, RWB-7 has not had to utilize needs based payments. In the event that our customers exhaust their UI benefits and still require assistance to complete education or training, we are prepared to provide such assistance through our Dislocated Worker or Adult funds. Payments will only be made while the customer is enrolled in training as a continuation/replacement of UI benefits. If UI benefits are reinstated, the need-based payments will be discontinued.

RWB-7 makes wide use of supportive services in the form of gas cards, books, uniforms, fees, tools and auto repairs to help our customers participate in post-secondary education and training and to retain their positions once they have been secured. Without extensive use of supportive services, most of the RWB-7 customers would be unable to sustain themselves long enough to complete post-secondary education or even short-term training programs. The lack of mass transportation, quality of roads, lack of quality vehicles and vast distances turns supportive services into essential services. RWB-7 believes that supportive services such as these will reduce the potential for social and economic inequities in the emerging green economy by ensuring that workers with limited initial education and skills have access to green collar jobs.

RWB-7 has taken the position that it is more important to assist our customers in acquiring training and re-entering employment than to meet the Federal wage standards which have been set for performance. We are putting people through training and placing them in employment but will not achieve the wage rate assigned against the Region, which will impact our performance.

RWB-7 continues to place ads in all the rural newspapers to remind employers of the Employed Worker Training and Incumbent Worker Programs as well as highlighting this information on our website at www.floridacrown.org, in our brochures, and by letter to area employers. Additionally, ads have been placed that address the availability of job training for customers. For those local green collar jobs that do not require high levels of education, RWB-7 will continue to work with local employers so employees may obtain necessary green skills through training paid for by Employed Worker Training or Incumbent Worker Training.

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

RWB-7 already has in place partnerships with the organizations listed in this response and below in response II.A.1. In the future, RWB-7 will participate with these partners in a voluntary collaboration network around the green energy industry. This sector will create a coalition of educational institutions, workforce and economic development system stakeholders, labor and community-based organizations, green energy companies, and industry associations in order to provide and support a trained and job-ready workforce for green jobs that will include the “in-land port” concept.

RWB-7 is partnering with Lake City Community College (LCCC) and the Banner Center which have new short-term programs that will be aided by mobile training units and simulators as well as on-line courses. LCCC has added some short-term medical training programs, a new eight (8) week CDL training course that will now cost 30% less and include simulator training, water/wastewater courses, a fourteen (14) week corrections course and twenty (20) week law enforcement course. Process Technology Engineering which includes AutoCad training is being addressed under a Community-Based Job Training Grant that will include a three to four week summer camp program. RWB-7, the educational facilities and area businesses are addressing the necessity to go green through renewable energy, forestry, alternative forms of transportation, construction, etc., through programs such as solar panel retrofitting.

The Banner Center's baseline objectives include: (1) supporting pipeline workforce needs by aligning educational and career pathways and marketing these pathways to entry and advanced-level workers; (2) listening to the needs of industry and letting the industry drive appropriate workforce development through recommendations on the skills and competencies that address current and future workforce needs; (3) becoming a statewide hub for industry with respect to curricula, research, employment data and forecasts; (4) creating programs/products that address the needs of industry and ensure that the target workforce has statewide access to those products and services; (5) delivering products and services collaboratively with industry, education and training partners so that blanket coverage is provided statewide; (6) providing support to partners, industry and the workforce in the form of curriculum, faculty, research and development and access to expertise; (7) promoting economic development through leadership on alignment of issues and filling identified gaps in services; (8) creating viability through sustainable programs/products that can be successfully marketed to industry; and (9) continued collaboration with Workforce Florida on the overall mission and direction of the Banner Center. The mission of the Employ Florida Banner Center for Logistics and Distribution is to be part of developing a globally competitive workforce for Florida.

The following partners represent and provide access to Florida workforce regions that anticipate job growth fueled by this industry sector. Included in this collaborative effort are industry partners which include JAXPORT, Bilden Safety and Training, Florida Trucking Association, American Society of Transportation and Logistics, Brazil-Jacksonville Alliance, Material Handling Industry of America, Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals, and numerous chambers of commerce and economic development organizations. At least four regional workforce boards, Florida Crown Workforce Board, WorkSource, Chipola Regional Workforce Board and Polk Works, are also directly engaged with the Banner Center. These relationships will be memorialized through contract, memoranda of understanding, letters of agreement and other formal and informal documents and meetings, including duties related to trainee data capture and completing Employ Florida Marketplace registration.

One of the critical aspects of the Banner Center initiative is to further solidify and strengthen partnerships between the business community, public and private education providers and the public workforce system, both regional and statewide, to coordinate and focus on: a) curriculum development and curriculum standards; b) educational research with application to current and emerging workforce needs; c) the cost effective replication of valuable industry-driven curricula and programs to serve all regional economies throughout the state and to prove market validation of the need for the curricula and services; d) incubating spin-off business development opportunities; and e) generating a pipeline of skilled workers—from entry level to advanced—including continuous skills upgrade training as needed by the industry. The Employ Florida Banner Centers will use continuing industry direction to achieve the primary goal of developing skill sets

for entry level to advanced jobs and also for skills upgrades for existing workers. The Employ Florida Banner Centers will function as a resource for all educational institutions in the state and will be expected to provide leadership in the on-going process of keeping Florida's workforce competitive in identified industries, in this case, the logistics and distribution sector.

RWB-7 believes that by working together for economic and demographic changes, we can enhance the prosperity of the businesses and residents of our Region.

I.C. Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training

Describe innovative service delivery strategies the RWB has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality and achieve better integration.

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

1. Increase services to workers in need.

RWB-7 has used ARRA funds to open satellite One-Stop sites in two additional rural counties. This is helping relieve the burden on our customers from having to drive over fifty miles one-way to take advantage of One-Stop services. The satellite sites are staffed by two full-time personnel plus volunteers in each location. We have tripled the number of days in which we provide UC PREP for dislocated workers. Expanded services including Introduction to Computers, MoneySmart and resume writing are offered to improve job skills and life skills for entry/re-entry into employment. Job Fairs are held for unemployed workers and workers seeking transition to inform them of Labor Market Information and availability of jobs in the Region. We have increased the number of one-on-one interviews in order to provide in-depth assistance to those that are experiencing long-term unemployment.

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

Despite the increasing unemployment numbers and lack of jobs throughout the Region, RWB-7 is innovatively using ARRA funding to help customers acquire or improve skills that will assist them in obtaining employment in high growth, high-wage industries and occupations. We are targeting three high-growth/high-wage sectors: medical/health/nursing,

corrections/law enforcement and manufacturing/logistics. Each of these three sectors is still showing growth and providing new openings and new job opportunities in our Region. Training for these three (3) sectors is also readily available through the local Community Colleges and private training providers. Supportive services are critical to the customers of this Region due to the lack of transportation, high cost of fuel, and other living expenses. Supportive services are an integral part of the calculation when providing educational and training opportunities for our customers. ARRA funds have been used to expand our Job Club Program to include all the following: MoneySmart, Introduction to Computers, resume preparation, mock interviews, Dressing for Success, and guest speakers from the local business community. RWB-7 has instituted its own in-house GED Programs, currently operating five days a week in two counties, as well as operating evening and weekends. We award a home computer to completes our program and passes their GED test, thereby helping to bridge the digital divide and putting computers in the hands of those most in need and most unlikely to be able to afford a home computer. All this facilitates their entry into self-sufficiency employment and to develop technical skills which may eventually lead to green employment.

RWB-7 was just named by The Governor's Able Trust Program as the Outstanding High School/High Tech Program of the Year for services to youth with disabilities. FCWB was also recognized by the Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc. as the Business Partner of the Year and the Most Valuable Contributor to the Columbia County School District's Adult Education Program.

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

RWB-7 Career Managers utilize the Region's Targeted Occupations List to work with customers seeking advanced education and training. We focus on 3 key sectors, medical/health/nursing, corrections/law enforcement, and manufacturing/logistics. Each of these three sectors is still showing growth and providing new openings and new job opportunities in our Region. Training for these three (3) sectors is also readily available through the local Community Colleges and private training providers. Supportive services are critical to the customers of this Region due to the lack of transportation, high cost of fuel, and other living expenses. Each of these three (3) sectors offer high-wage entry level positions but each one also offers a career path that will allow for promotion and growth and entry into the next level of employment. RWB-7 has a very high return on investment rate of putting people to work; 98% go to work and meet or exceed Region's EEWR.

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

RWB-7 immediately used youth dollars to put over two hundred (200) youth into summer work programs that involved job shadowing, actual hands on job skills, as well as certification programs such as CNA, welding or green jobs. The Youth to Work (Y2W) utilizing ARRA serves out of school youth ages 17-24, providing 20-25 hours of work readiness training and seven weeks of real on the job experience in both the public and private sector. The goal is not only to provide solid valuable job skills for youth but move as many as possible to permanent employment with those employers at the end of the program. Currently the program is enjoying 95% attendance and five youth have already received offers for employment.

ARRA funds enabled us to stretch our formula dollars and combine them with grant dollars to expand our Year Round Youth Program to serve the in-school population. This award winning program provides job shadowing, work readiness, education and fun for these young people working to strengthen their life and employment skills. This year's work experience was highlighted with an educational field trip to Washington DC.

Dislocated Worker funds have been used for advertising, hiring additional staff dedicated to outreach and in-person staff-assisted interviews with prospective dislocated workers to explain the full extent of available core and assisted services, and to help customers develop a career plan for quick return to employment. PREP classes have been expanded and are offered a minimum of four (4) times per week to make information available on a more timely basis and thereby accelerate the return to work process. PREP is provided to groups and, then, each customer is afforded the opportunity and encouraged to schedule an in-person staff assisted interview for more in-depth information and assistance.

Innovative new handouts have been developed to identify the services available to both adult and dislocated worker customers and combined with information provided by the community colleges, VoTechs, and training providers on the various programs they offer to assist the customers in making career choices. LMI is provided to both adult and DW customers with emphasis on those career fields (such as medical/health/nursing and corrections/law enforcement) that are continuing to expand despite the economic downturn. E-Choices and TABE are being used to determine the customer's interest and aptitude for a chosen career field and TABE is used to determine if they have the level of proficiency necessary for that field. Adult and DW customers are afforded the opportunity to upgrade their job skills through participation in Job Club I and II, MoneySmart and Microsoft Basic.

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

RWB-7 has combined ARRA funds, local formula funds and grant funding to provide summer work experience for over two hundred (200) youth in all four (4) counties of our Region. Currently we are targeting 70 youth within our four county region to gain valuable work readiness skills, WorkKeys credentialing, and meaningful work experience in both the public and private sectors under a program entitled Youth 2 Work (Y2W). We have partnered in this innovative effort with Arbor Education & Training and 23 local employers (more on the way!) to move youth ages 17-24 to employment success using new skills and experiences gained through this program. The first week of the program involves intensive classroom training related to life skills, financial skills including bank account and timesheet preparation, dressing for success, human resources requirements, resume building, and actual employer interviews on the last day of classes for work experience site selection. The remaining 6 weeks of this program are dedicated to true on-the-job work experience. The Veterans Administration Domiciliary, City of Lake City, Partnership for Strong Families and Hunter Printing are a few of the partnering employers for this initiative utilizing Certified Nursing Assistants (CNAs), certified childcare workers, certified food service workers and entry-level utility positions. This program is enjoying 96% attendance and we have already confirmed five permanent employment placements for our participants at the end of the program. We are appreciative of the opportunity to serve participants in RWB-7 through this program.

We have very limited access to apprenticeship and on-the-job training programs within this Region. Employed Worker Training and Incumbent Worker Training are used to advance the skills of employed workers within the Region.

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

RWB-7 is providing training in accordance with the TOL for the Region and based upon the programs offered by the local community colleges. These are primarily focused on medical/health/nursing, corrections/law enforcement and manufacturing/logistics. These are high demand career fields within the Region. The local training/education providers have excellent programs that prepare customers for entry level and for intermediate and advanced education in these fields. These career fields align with the community's current economic structure with three (3) major hospitals, ten (10) incarceration facilities and numerous manufacturers and warehouse/distribution centers as well as the Region's long-range vision.

Lake City Community College (LCCC) and the Banner Center have new short-term programs that will be aided by mobile training units and simulators as well as on-line courses. LCCC has added some short-term medical training programs, a new eight (8) week CDL training course that will now cost 30% less and include simulator training, water/wastewater courses, a fourteen (14) week corrections course and twenty (20) week law enforcement course. Process Technology Engineering which includes AutoCad training is being addressed under a Community-Based Job Training Grant that will include a three to four week summer camp program. RWB-7, the educational facilities and area businesses are addressing the necessity to go green through renewable energy, forestry, alternative forms of transportation, construction, etc., through programs such as solar panel retrofitting.

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One of the critical aspects of the Banner Center initiative is to further solidify and strengthen partnerships between the business community, public and private education providers and the public workforce system, both regional and statewide, to coordinate and focus on: a) curriculum development and curriculum standards; b) educational research with application to current and emerging workforce needs; c) the cost effective replication of valuable industry-driven curricula and programs to serve all regional economies throughout the state and to prove market validation of the need for the curricula and services; d) incubating spin-off business development opportunities; and e) generating a pipeline of skilled workers—from entry level to advanced—including continuous skills upgrade training as needed by the industry. The Employ Florida Banner Centers will use continuing industry direction to achieve the primary goal of developing skill sets for entry level to advanced jobs and also for skills upgrades for existing workers. The Employ Florida Banner Centers will function as a resource for all educational institutions in the state and will be expected to provide leadership in the on-going process of keeping Florida's workforce competitive in identified industries, in this case, the logistics and distribution sector.

Section II. Service Delivery

Local Governance and Collaboration

II.A.1. Describe how the local partners involved in the workforce investment system interrelate on workforce economic development, and education issues.

In its response, the RWB should describe how it is ensuring cross-agency and partner collaboration so that workforce investments are tied to other investments funded by the ARRA outside of workforce development.

RWB-7 ensures cross-agency and partner collaboration by operating programs with the following community/faith based organizations. RWB-7 combines formula funds and ARRA as well as the funds and resources contributed by our partners to ensure a comprehensive network of services is provided to the residents of this Region.

- Trinity United Methodist Church is a faith-based organization that operates an after-school youth program that provides mentoring and remediation for at-risk WIA youth. The purpose is to enable them to pass the FCAT and to ensure that they remain in school and graduate. Additionally, Trinity operates the only Pregnancy Prevention Program in Region 7 for WT youth. RWB-7 and Trinity share responsibility for the youth remaining in school, passing the FCAT and graduating.

- On Eagles' Wings (OEW) is a faith-based organization operating under a grant from the Department of Corrections (DOC) to provide transitional housing for ex-offenders with substance abuse backgrounds. These ex-offenders receive a full range of workforce services and RWB-7 and OEW share responsibility for obtaining employment for these ex-offenders.
- Greater Lake City Community Development Corporation, Inc. (CDC) is a community-based organization that provides a number of short-term training programs to include Introduction to Computer Basics as well as general remediation and GED assistance. RWB-7 refers customers to CDC for counseling and assistance and contracts with them for delivery of short-term training.
- Service Corps of Retired Executives Association, Inc. (SCORE) is a community-based organization integrated into the One-Stop that provides information and guidance to entrepreneurs and small businesses to assist with growth and development.
- Three Rivers Legal Service is a community-based organization integrated into the One-Stop that provides free legal assistance to those unable to pay for professional services. RWB-7 and Three Rivers Legal Service share referral services.
- CARC is a community-based organization that aids in the identification of disabilities and provides training and operate small businesses that employ persons with disabilities. RWB-7 utilizes CARC to place customers at their facilities for worksite experience and training. RWB-7 and CARC share referral services.
- Job Corps is a federally funded organization that provides in-residence education and training to at-risk youth. RWB-7 provides office space within the One-Stop, as needed. RWB-7 and Job Corps share referral services.
- Adult Education is provided by the County School Districts and provides basic remediation and GED as well as basic computer classes for adults without diplomas. RWB-7 was recently recognized by the Florida Literacy Coalition, Inc. as the Business Partner of the Year and the Most Valuable Contributor for our work with the Columbia County School District's Adult Education Program.

- The Governor's Able Trust Program provides resources to RWB-7 to operate after-school remediation services to youth with disabilities at six (6) high schools in the four (4) counties our region. Classes also prepare disabled youth to enter the workforce by teaching life/employability skills through field trips, job shadowing and a special speakers program. This program also provides resources to RWB-7 to operate the ENABLE Program to assist disabled veterans obtain self-sufficiency employment.
- The Navigator Program is funded by the Social Security Administration (SSA) and provides resources to RWB-7 to work with adults with disabilities to expand their access to workforce services and to ensure that disabled workers are fully integrated into the workforce. RWB-7 is also a full participant in the Ticket to Work Program provided by SSA.
- The Department of Children and Families (DCF) provides resources to RWB-7 to operate the ACCESS Program which provides an overview of DCF services as well as electronic access to DCF's website and other information sources. DCF is an active workforce partner and holds a seat on our Board.
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) is integrated into the One-Stop and provides counseling services to those who have been injured and are seeking to return to gainful employment. RWB-7 and VR share referral services and VR holds a seat on our Board.
- Experience Works (EW) is integrated into the One-Stop and provides employment training and services to the elderly seeking to return to gainful employment. RWB-7 and EW share referral services and RWB-7 employs EW customers throughout the One-Stops and holds a seat on our Board.
- American Legion (AL) provides a wide-variety of information and counseling services to veterans. RWB-7 and AL share referral services and they are an active participant in the ENABLE Program and our Veteran's Stand Down Programs. AL has a seat on our Board and represents veterans in that capacity.

II.A.2. Describe the steps the RWB will take to improve operational collaboration of the workforce Investment activities and other related activities and programs outlined in section 112(b)(8)(A) of WIA at the local level (e.g., joint activities, memoranda of understanding, planned mergers, coordinated policies, etc.).

In responding to this question, the RWB should describe how collaboration will be supported and sustained between the organizational entities responsible for WIA, Wagner-Peyser Act, Unemployment Insurance, Trade Act services, and Registered Apprenticeship. Additionally, how will barriers to coordination be eliminated.

RWB 7 will maintain the existing collaboration and partnerships identified above. We utilize the resources provided by WIA, WP and UI to continue our partnerships and we are constantly seeking grants and other opportunities to expand into new areas of community need. Trade Act services, should they arise, will be referred to the Gainesville office in Region 9. To date, this Region has never been impacted by a Trade Act issue. RWB-7 has limited opportunities to engage in apprenticeship programs due to lack of local training providers in our Region.

We are seeking to expand our outreach to ex-offenders through grant opportunities that will provide shelter and transition services for additional numbers of ex-offenders that are being released from incarceration facilities within our Region. Job skills training, core/intensive services and bonding will be offered to eligible candidates to help them transition into self sufficiency employment. Additionally, RWB-7 has pioneered the Incarcerated Veterans Transition Program (IVTP) not only within our Region but Statewide. This program assists the numerous veterans that are presently incarcerated to prepare for transition into the workforce upon their release.

RWB 7 has partnered with Community Mercy enter and Victory House of Refuge to provide shelter and sustenance for the homeless. Homeless persons will be brought to the One-Stop for a full range of services. The full range of workforce services will be offered to assist this target population obtain and retain employment and to acquire affordable housing.

RWB 7 has recently expanded our GED Preparation Program into Dixie County. We are presently assessing the feasibility of also offering these services in Union and Gilchrist Counties.

RWB 7 is exploring ways to assist youth enrolled in the CAPE Academies of the School Districts of this Region.

II.B Reemployment Services and Wagner-Peyser Act Services

The ARRA makes funding available for reemployment services (RES). RES funding provides job search and other employment related services to UI customers. These funds are to be used to provide RES through the one-stop career centers, in addition to regular Wagner-Peyser Act funded employment services in order to accelerate UI customers' return to employment. Under the Wagner-Peyser Act, Section 7(a) through (c), allowable activities include job search and placement services to job seekers including counseling, testing, occupational skills, labor market information, assessment, referral to employers, and appropriate recruitment services and special technical assistance services for employers. These services may include:

- Services provided to UI claimants identified through the UI profiling system;
- In-person staff assisted services;
- Initial claimant reemployment assessments;
- Career guidance and group and individual counseling, including provision of materials, suggestions, or advice which are intended to assist the job seeker in making occupation or career decisions;
- Provision of LMI occupational, and skills transferability information that clarifies claimants' reemployment opportunities and skills used in related or other industries;
- Referral to job banks, job portals, and job openings;
- Referral to employers and registered apprenticeship sponsors;
- Referral to training;
- Assessment, including interviews, testing, individual and group counseling, or employability planning; and
- Referral to training by WIA-funded or third party service providers.

II.B.1. Please describe the full array of reemployment services the RWB provides to Unemployment Insurance claimants and the worker profiling services provided to claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits in accordance with section 3(c)(3) of the Wagner-Peyser Act (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv)).

In responding to this question, the RWB should describe:

1. How RES will be coordinated with other services provided at the One-Stop Career Center under WIA. Describe any changes to the reemployment services including the ARRA funded services that will be provided to unemployment insurance claimants and the Priority Reemployment Planning (PREP) services that are provided to include a discussion of the increased numbers of ARRA job seekers entering the One-Stop Career Centers. Also describe how PREP will advance the local ARRA funded RES efforts. For those RWBs participating in the Re-employment and Eligibility Assessment Program pilot please also describe how this effort will be coordinated with RES.

With a regional unemployment rate of 8.6%, RWB-7's purpose with RES is to improve the quality of service and to make it more effective in achieving its ultimate goal which is enabling dislocated workers to find new jobs as rapidly as possible at wages comparable to or better than their prior wages. Customer walk-in traffic has increased from 1,000 customers per month to over 2,700 customers per month. To further address the needs of our customers, we have added seven new staff positions beginning with the FY 09-10 contract year. RWB-7 is profiling and performing follow-ups on all claimants who file a new initial claim. To better serve the widest possible group of dislocated workers, RWB-7 is calling and sending letters to schedule the claimants for an in-person staff assisted interview. Early intervention is one of the primary objectives of our efforts to reach out to claimants as soon as they are identified to us.

RES differs from WP core services in that claimants receive an orientation to UI rights, responsibilities, and benefits early in the process at a group orientation and a job search compliance review. UI claimants are identified earlier in the claim – usually within the first 2-3 weeks. The following criteria are used in profiling and in the targeting of services to claimants most likely to exhaust benefits:

- Low weekly benefit amount;
- Deficient in basic skills, no high school completion, no basic computer skills;
- Recent work history with multiple employers;
- UI reason for leaving last job was quit, fired, lacks “social skills”;
- Mature worker;
- Lacks technical skills for online job searching.

RWB-7 has been operating the basic PREP Program as outlined by the State. Now, utilizing ARRA funds, RWB-7 has expanded this program and is offering PREP group classes at a minimum of four (4) times a week. This is being done to identify workers most “at-risk” of long-term unemployment and then linking them with the services they need to accelerate their early return to employment. Using ARRA funds, we have incorporated information from educational and training centers as well as LMI into our information brochures. Additional staff has been hired to work in the Resource Room and as in-person staff assisted interviewers. Our intent is to shorten the claimants' unemployment duration, thereby also providing a savings to the State UI trust fund. RWB-7's WP and WIA personnel, working together, are streamlining and accelerating the profiling and referral process to be certain that those individuals identified as likely to exhaust UI benefits and referred to reemployment services truly receive early intervention assistance. We are endeavoring to provide services beyond the mandatory core services such as those already identified above (i.e. Job Club) to get claimants into education and training or back into comparable employment as quickly as possible. It is our belief that providing intensive

reemployment services early in the unemployment cycle is the beneficial and the most effective course of action to shorten the period of unemployment.

- Services provided to UI claimants identified through the UI profiling system:
 - RWB-7 interviews each customer at reception to determine if they are a dislocated worker. Interviewers, which are WP personnel, have the authority to schedule all DW for in-person staff assisted interviews with WIA Career managers.
 - PREP, which is conducted by WP personnel, provides detailed information on both core and intensive services during group presentations and schedules customers for in-person staff assisted interviews.
 - In-person staff assisted interviews are conducted by WIA Career Managers to reiterate the full extent of available core and assisted services with focus on return to education or training, and to help customers develop a career plan for quick return to employment.
 - PREP is provided to groups and each customer is afforded the opportunity and encouraged to schedule an in-person staff assisted interview. Handouts are provided that identify the services available to DW customers and information is available from the community colleges, VoTechs, and training providers on the various programs that they offer to assist the customers in making career choices.
 - LMI is provided to all DW customers with emphasis on those career fields (such as medical/health/nursing, corrections/law enforcement and manufacturing/logistics) that are continuing to expand within our Region despite the economic downturn. The customer is tested using TABE and E-Choices to ensure they possess the qualifications necessary to pursue the desired course of training/education before enrollment is approved.
 - DW customers receive assistance from trained professionals in the Resource Room to obtain job search, job referral and resume services. The Resource Room provides access to EFM, national and international job banks, and job placement services.
 - RWB-7 provides referrals to employers for qualified applicants but we have limited opportunities to engage in apprenticeship programs due to lack of local training providers in our Region but information on sponsors in adjoining regions is obtained via internet.
 - Once eligibility is determined DW customers review the Targeted Occupations List with the WIA Career Manager to determine their training/education preferences. The customer is tested using TABE and E-Choices to ensure they possess the qualifications necessary to pursue the desired course of training/education before they are referred and approved for training.

- Assessment, testing, counseling and employability planning is provided to each DW customer during the group and in-person staff assisted meetings.
- DW customers that are determined eligible are enrolled in the WIA Program with an Individual Training account (ITA) and provided supportive services to help them complete their education/training and secure self-sufficiency employment in the shortest period of time.

2. How UI claimants will be identified quickly and RES provided as early as possible following initial receipt of UI benefits or referrals through UI profiling systems. What methods will be used to assess claimants to identify the mix of interventions and services for different groups of UI claimants?

RWB-7 is identifying claimants at the reception point at sign in. The names are also being sent to us by the State as part of the PREP Program. Everyone identified either at sign in or by PREP notification is sent a letter advising of our services and asking them to contact us for an in-person staff assisted interview. Claimants first attend a group information session which lays out all of our core and intensive services. All claimants are encouraged to then avail themselves with the opportunity for an in-person staff assisted interview.

ARRA funds are making it possible to place additional staff where needed most to provide RES. Better assessment at intake and registration of the job seeker in the system will facilitate a more effective use of EFM to match and refer job seekers to the inventory, including green jobs.

3. The model used to ensure that UI claimants receive the full array of services as indicated above, including an enhanced level of service in the one-stop career centers. The description should include all services that will be provided under RES, including in-depth services such as skill assessment, career guidance, individual service plans, labor market information, job clubs, expanding UI profiling systems for referring UI claimants through the one-stops, etc.

RWB-7 offers the basic core services of job search, referrals and resume writing to all claimants. Using ARRA funding, we have expanded our services to include Job Clubs I and II, MoneySmart and Microsoft Basic Programs. We try to offer a wide range and variety of programs tailored to meet the individual needs of the claimants. Using our in-person staff assisted interview process, claimants may be tested under E-Choices and TABE to determine skills assessment and knowledge as well as their compatibility for advanced education and training. Career Managers will provide career counseling and develop an Individual Training Account as appropriate to help guide the claimants in their future career. This interview will also provide information on LMI and details on the career fields offering the greatest opportunities for

employment within our Region. A review of the TOL serves as the basis for helping claimants determine their future career paths.

4. How the RWB will use information from the enhanced FLUID-EFM interface to provide enhanced services.

RWB-7 uses trained Resource Room personnel to provide guidance and assistance, if necessary, to customers seeking to file a claim for unemployment compensation benefits using the Internet at www.fluidnow.com. Customers are advised that the internet is available 7 days a week, 24 hours a day and that a claim may also be filed by telephone by calling toll free 1-800-204-2418 or by mail. Claim booklets are handed out at our One-Stop Career Centers throughout the Region. The booklet contains the form required to file the claim. We also advise customers that they may file their claim using the computers at the library or from home, if internet is accessible.

5. The specific population among UI claimants (including exhaustees and those most likely to exhaust benefits) that the RWB intends to target with Recovery Act funds for RES. Also describe the process used by the RWB to effectively serve UI claimants and businesses in need of a job ready, LMI connected workforce. Describe how the RES process will be coordinated with other services provided at the One-Stop Career Center under WIA. How will staff collaborate with UI to identify claimants who would benefit most from RES or WIA services?

RWB-7 endeavors to shorten the claimants' unemployment duration, thereby also providing a savings to the State UI trust fund. RWB-7's WP and WIA personnel, working together, are streamlining and accelerating the profiling and referral process to be certain that those individuals identified as likely to exhaust UI benefits and referred to reemployment services truly receive early intervention assistance. We are doing screenings, groups counseling and follow-ups to try to engage claimants as early as possible and not permit them to exhaust their benefits. Claimants identified as dislocated from targeted occupations are immediately interviewed to determine their education and skill levels and are matched to any job openings in their field and given referrals, as appropriate. Our Employer Services Team is out in the community meeting with employers every working day to try to prevent layoffs and then to capture workers at the earliest moment of their unemployment. Every claimant receives a detailed orientation focusing on our core and intensive services and are encouraged to schedule an appointment with a WIA Career Manager for an in-person staff assisted interview.

6. How the RWB intends to integrate information technology into its RES program to better identify and serve UI claimants, including the percentage of funds that will be used for integrating RES and UI technology requirements to identify and serve the needs of UI claimants.

ARRA funds have enabled RWB-7 to upgrade its Resource Room and server equipment with new computers and servers, many of which were ten (10) years old and were past their life expectancy. Of the total ARRA funds received by RWB-7, approximately twenty percent (20%) has been spent to upgrade information technology which is in direct support of RES and UI.

RWB-7's vision for Reemployment Services (RES) is a more integrated approach implementing a new customer flow that effectively helps direct customers through One-Stop services toward the goal of successful employment outcomes based on customer choice and customer needs. Claimants receive universal access to all labor exchange services and will have more choices for modular skill development and full-training options. One of the ways that RES differs from Wagner-Peyser core services is that claimants receive an orientation to UI rights, responsibilities, and benefits early in the process at a group orientation and a job search compliance review. UI claimants are identified earlier in the claim - usually within the first 2-3 weeks. The following criteria are used in profiling and in the targeting of services to claimants most likely to exhaust benefits: low weekly benefit amount, deficient in basic skills, no high school completion, no basic computer skills, recent work history with multiple employers, UI reason for leaving last job was quit, fired, lacks "social skills", mature worker, or lacks technical skills for online job searching.

E-Choices, TABE WorkKeys Credentialing (through LCCC and the local school system) are an integral part of the process for referring or attempting to refer UI claimants who are required to seek work to jobs for which they are qualified and detecting any possible issues that may affect their eligibility to receive UI benefits. Accurate testing and evaluation are the foundation of all employment and training programs because it functions to link workers who are prepared and employers who need the right workers for open positions.

7. Any labor market information tools that will be funded and integrated into RES.

RWB-7 utilizes the full range of labor market information presently provided by the State which continues to be adequate for our current needs. We have no funds available to acquire any unique systems or sources of LMI data. As the State enhances its LMI capabilities and imbeds them into the EFM system, RWB-7 will take full advantage of this information.

8. What type(s) of training will be provided to one-stop center staff on assessments, UI profiling, LMI, technology, etc., to help staff understand how to use and apply the tools to target RES and increase proficiency.

Extensive on the job training has been provided to all new personnel and refresher training has been provided to existing staff on assessments, UI profiling, LMI, technology, etc. to help them understand how to use and apply the tools to target RES and increase proficiency. Staff has been trained to look for and ask for information to help us identify any dislocated worker or UI claimant to immediately enroll that person into the group orientation session and to schedule them for an in-person staff assisted interview. The urgency for early intervention and rapid return to employment has been instilled in each staff member.

II.B.2. Describe how the RWB 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 the local level. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

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

RWB-7 has developed the following strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as migrants and seasonal farm workers, 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).

(1) All universal customers and walk-ins are authorized to utilize the Resource Room in a self-service mode. Our computers are user-friendly and we provide informational handouts and flyers on a plethora of community/faith-based organizations and training programs for the self-service customer. We also provide information on accessing EFM services from the library and other computers for self-service.

(2) Most first-time customers do require and receive some facilitated self-help service primarily in establishing PIN and password IDs and accessing LMI and targeted occupations information.

(3) Once a PIN and password are established, staff assisted service is accessible and available to all customers upon request. This level of service includes accessing EFM, job search, interviews for job referral, resume and cover letter preparation as well as counseling, mock interviews and dressing for success.

RWB-7's staff provides labor exchange services to job seekers and businesses through the Workforce One-Stop system. Three levels of service apply: self-service options; facilitated self-help services; and staff-assisted services. Services include assisting customers in computer equipped resource centers.

The Governor has directed all state agencies to list American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funded job opportunities with the state's Workforce system. RWB-7 has tasked the Employer Services Team to work closely with regional businesses to identify current job openings created as a result of ARRA. In addition, ARRA funds have made it possible for RWB-7 to upgrade the infrastructure of self-service computer resource rooms, as some of the computers were up to ten years old. Staff-assisted job seeker services include job search and placement services; assessment and counseling; labor market information; rapid response for dislocated workers (pre- and post-layoff whenever possible); bonding; direct services and referrals for veterans, claimants, offenders, migrant and seasonal farm workers, and individuals with disabilities; unemployment insurance information and assistance; training and education; and support services. Employer services include free posting job orders; recruitment, and referral of qualified job applicants; job fairs; labor market information; Work Opportunities Tax Credits; and layoff aversion assistance, rapid response, and dislocated worker assistance. All services are provided in coordination with local One-Stop partners. In order to ensure that jobs generated through ARRA are accessible and available to all customers, RWB-7's Employer Services Team communicates with employers through on-site visits, e-mail, telephone and fax to solicit job orders which, in turn, are listed on the statewide EFM system. The purpose is to identify job openings throughout the Region as quickly as possible and to get them listed in EFM in order to make them available to the customers in a timely manner. All customers receiving career management services, regardless of program, receive job counseling and job referral assistance during the course of their interview with a career manager. Applicants may also utilize the Resource Room at any time.

Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

II.C.1. Describe local 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 RWB should address core services for adults, dislocated workers, and target populations; especially those given preference in the WIA Adult program in the Recovery Act (recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals).

RWB-7 adult, dislocated workers and targeted occupation population customers, especially those given preference in the WIA Adult Program in the Recovery Act, are referred by intake personnel to a Career Center Orientation which includes an overview of WIA core and intensive services. WIA Career Managers then meet with the customers during in-person staff assisted interviews to determine whether the individuals are eligible to receive assistance under WIA. Assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs are performed. Job search and placement assistance is provided, as appropriate, in conjunction with career counseling. Employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas are included as part of the Labor Market Information service. This LMI will provide more detailed and in-depth information on job vacancy listings in such labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations. Performance information (job placement information) and program cost information is provided on eligible education and training providers. Information is also provided on the availability of supportive services and information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation.

ARRA funds will expand the capacity of RWB-7 to provide universal access to core services in a more efficient and timely manner. All available WIA services will be utilized to accomplish this end and provide the necessary services to substantially increase the numbers of adults, dislocated workers and target populations to support their entry or reentry into the Region's job market.

II.C.2. Describe how the RWB will integrate resources provided under the Wagner-Peyser Act and WIA Title I for adults and dislocated workers, as well as resources provided by required One-Stop partner programs to deliver core services. (§112(b)(17)(a)(i).)

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

Wagner-Peyser and WIA resources serve as the primary funds used for the personnel, facilities and technologies that support core services available for adults and dislocated workers. ARRA funds along with Wagner -Peyser and WIA funds will increase access to self-directed core services and will substantially increase the numbers of adults, particularly low-income adults, dislocated workers, and target populations to support access to services, and training needed to pursue self-sufficiency wage jobs. WP and WIA resources will be used in conjunction with partner programs as listed above to serve target populations including such individuals as recipients of public assistance, low-income adults, veterans, migrant

and seasonal farm-workers, minorities, women, individuals training for non-traditional jobs, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English speaking individuals, and people with disabilities). ARRA funds will provide the necessary services to substantially increase the numbers of adults, dislocated workers, and target populations to support their entry or reentry into the job market. As the initial service that is provided, core services are critical in expanding this number of registrants. ARRA funds will expand the capacity of our Region to provide universal access to core services in a more efficient and timely manner. All available WIA services will be utilized to accomplish this end. ARRA is supporting local area efforts to enhance the quality and integration of services. ARRA is providing funds to improve front end services, services to veterans, expansion of intensive services, and targeted occupations including dislocated workers, etc.

RWB-7 WP/universal customers are referred by intake personnel to a Career Center Orientation which includes an overview of WIA core and intensive services. WIA Career Managers then meet with the customers during in-person staff assisted interviews to determine whether the individuals are eligible to receive assistance under WIA. Assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs are performed. Job search and placement assistance is provided, as appropriate, in conjunction with career counseling. Employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas are included as part of the Labor Market Information service. This LMI will provide more detailed and in-depth information on job vacancy listings in such labor market areas, information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs described and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings and skill requirements for such occupations. Performance information (job placement information) and program cost information is provided on eligible education and training providers. Information is also provided on the availability of supportive services and information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation.

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

The RWB should describe how it will increase training access and opportunities for individuals, including the investment of WIA Title I funds and Recovery Act funds, and the leveraging of other funds and resources. How will the RWB's contract with and use contracts with institutions of higher education and other training providers to maximize funds to the greatest benefit.

All customers are provided universal and equal access to training opportunities. The programs are well advertised and the residents of the Region are well familiar with our programs and services. ARRA has allowed us to increase the number of adult and dislocated workers served under the WIA Program. ARRA and formula funds are being combined to provide the maximum amount of long- term and short-term training opportunities. As stated above, we have an extensive

network of partners that we work with to leverage funds and expand both the depth and breadth of our services to the Region. RWB-7 is partnering with Lake City Community College (LCCC) and the Banner Center which have new short-term programs that will be aided by mobile training units and simulators as well as on-line courses. LCCC has added some short-term medical training programs, a new eight (8) week CDL training course that will now cost 30% less and include simulator training, water/wastewater courses, a fourteen (14) week corrections course and twenty (20) week law enforcement course. Process Technology Engineering which includes AutoCad training is being addressed under a Community-Based Job Training Grant that will include a three to four week summer camp program. RWB-7, the educational facilities and area businesses are addressing the necessity to go green through renewable energy, forestry, alternative forms of transportation, construction, etc., through programs such as solar panel retrofitting.

II.C.4. The RWB should describe its models/templates/approaches for service delivery in the One-Stop Career Centers, particularly whether it is adjusting its approach to deliver increased levels of services with funds received under the Recovery Act.

The RWB should:

1. Describe the method of organizing service delivery for Business customers in the One-Stop Career Centers.

The RWB-7 Employer Services Team works directly with regional businesses to identify current job openings created as a result of ARRA. At the time of initial contact with the employer EST staff discusses labor market information, Work Opportunities Tax Credits, layoff aversion assistance, rapid response, dislocated worker assistance and other Workforce services that may be of value to the employer. Once an employer identifies a job opening, the Employer Services Team will post the job order on EFM. They then send a notice to the WP personnel working in the Resource Room, the WIA and WT Program Managers, as well as the VETS, Navigator and One-Stops in the outlying regions advising them that a new job order has been posted. The Resource Room and Program staffs review the Job Order and begin recruitment and referral of qualified job applicants to fill the vacancy as quickly as possible. If the job remains unfilled, the EST will consult with the employer and may employ a job fair or mass recruitment to fill the vacancy. All services are provided in coordination with local One-Stop partners. In order to ensure that jobs generated through ARRA are accessible and available to all customers, RWB-7's Employer Services Team communicates with employers through on-site visits, e-mail, telephone and fax to solicit job orders which, in turn, are listed on the statewide EFM system. The purpose is to identify job openings throughout the Region as quickly as possible and to get them listed in EFM in order to make them available to the customers in a timely manner. All customers receiving career management services, regardless of program, receive job counseling and job referral assistance during the course of their interview with a career manager. Applicants

may also utilize the Resource Room at any time. RWB-7 requires employees in the One-Stops to possess the following minimum qualifications in order to assist customers:

- Experience or training in delivering employment and training services;
- Knowledge of the purpose and functions of One-Stop delivery systems;
- Knowledge of methods and techniques of registering, interviewing and placing customers;
- Familiarity with a variety of occupations and industries, including a broad knowledge of conditions, skills, abilities and personal qualifications needed and the training required for jobs in the local area labor market; and
- Knowledge of community resources available to increase the employability of job seekers.

2. What assessment process will be utilized in the One-Stop Career Centers?

RWB-7 currently utilizes two (2) assessment tools; E-Choices and TABE. E-Choices is a component of EFM and is used for interest inventory and to determine compatibility of the applicant to the job. TABE is used to measure reading, language, spelling, applied math and math computation skills to ensure that the applicant has the competency levels required by the employer for the position.

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

All customers entering RWB-7's One-Stops receive equal access and opportunity to services. However, we are actively recruiting through handouts, flyers and media advertisement, those most in need including low-income assistance recipients, persons with disabilities, etc. We have combined ARRA funds with grant funding from the Navigator Program, Ticket to Work, and The Able Trust Programs to assist people with disabilities ranging from youth to adult and veterans.

4. How will the RWB streamline the sequence of services to facilitate individual access to needed services and training?

RWB-7 has streamlined the sequence of services to facilitate individual access to needed services and training by opening two (2) additional One-Stop locations in outlying counties, adding additional staff to the Resource Room and Programs, and replacing obsolete computers and servers with new and modern equipment.

Youth Services

In preparing responses to the questions identified below, please consult the RWB's Summer Youth Plan submitted in May 2009 and attach a copy of that plan. In your responses, you may also make reference to the Summer Youth Plan where appropriate rather than repeating the same language.

II.D. Describe the RWB's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need (§112(b)(18).)

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

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

Reference the Plan, Sections A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Plan attached.

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

Through June 30, 2009, approximately forty-five thousand dollars (\$45,000) of ARRA youth funding was expended. The Youth Program is ongoing in FY 09-10 and all remaining funding will be expended. The money is already under contract and obligation for full expenditure. ARRA youth funds will be fully expended by the end of summer 2009. RWB-7 will continue to use formula funds and grant funding from The Able Trust to continue to operate a summer youth program if ARRA funds are not available.

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

Reference the Plan, Section D. RWB-7 contracted the program to Arbor Education & Training, LLC, which operates our Year-Round Youth Program.

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

Reference the Plan, Section F.

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

Reference the Plan, Sections D, E and F.

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

Reference the Plan, Section D.2. and D.3.

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

Seventy (70).

Veterans' Priority of Service

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

In response to this question, the RWB should outline the changes to local policies and strategies that make them sufficient to meet the requirements of 20 CFR 1010.230, published at 73 Fed. Reg. 78132 on December 19, 2008, of the Jobs for Veterans Act regulations issued on December 19, 2008 implementing priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses in Department of Labor job training programs. This includes providing the following information and/or attachments to the local Plan modification:

1. The RWB should describe the changes to its local policies for the delivery of priority of service by the One-Stop Career Centers for its qualified job training programs. The description must include how:

a. The local policies ensure that covered persons are identified at the point of entry and given an opportunity to take full advantage of priority of service.

The following is quoted from our Plans and Policies (OPS-001-02, Supportive Services):

- Veterans will receive priority of service. All One-Stop service staff will provide services to Veterans. Veterans need not be served only by LVER or DVOP staff.
- Severely injured military members and their families, disabled veterans, veterans of all wars, Florida National Guard members and Military Reservists and families of military members killed in action will also receive priority of service.

The Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) are both located in the One Stop immediately adjacent to the Resource Room. At the time of sign in with the receptionist, customers are requested to identify their military status. Veterans and their families have priority of service in the Resource Room and for all programs operated by FCWB and are immediately seen by VETS staff. Should no VETS staff be available, then the first available staff person is required to provide services. All personnel, not just Veteran Education and Training Staff (VETS), are required to see Veterans as their first priority. The VETS are fully trained and attend all annual and on-going training offered by the State and Federal programs. Veterans are offered the full range of One Stop services to include job counseling, job search/referral, resume services, as well as specialized assistance on Veterans rights and benefits as well as assistance and interface with the Veteran's Administration (VA) programs. VETS also conducts an annual stand down that provides medical health, workforce, VA, Social Security services and provides food and clothing to homeless veterans.

b. That local policies ensure that covered persons are aware of:

1. Their entitlement to priority of service;

2. The full array of employment, training, and placement services available under priority of service; and

3. Any applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/ or services.

In response to b.1., b.2. and b.3. above, RWB-7 has signage in the Resource Room that advises VETS of their priority status and competent receptionists/in-take staff that will advise VETS of their priority status and the full array of employment, training, and placement services available. VETS or other Program staff will discuss applicable eligibility requirements for those programs and/or services either during the group orientation sessions or in-person staff assisted interviews.

Service Delivery to Targeted Populations

II.F. Describe the RWB's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and people with disabilities). (§112(b)(17)(A)(iv).)

The RWB should:

1. Describe the strategy it will use to effectively implement the Recovery Act priority of service for low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance under the WIA Adult program.

All customers entering RWB-7's One-Stops receive equal access and opportunity to services. RWB-7 has developed the following strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as migrants and seasonal farm workers, 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).

RWB-7's staff provides labor exchange services to job seekers and businesses through the Workforce One-Stop system. Three levels of service apply: self-service options; facilitated self-help services; and staff-assisted services. Services include assisting customers in computer equipped resource centers. WT customers are also being screened to identify those customers who may be interested in education/training and who are qualified for services that could be transferred to the WIA Program.

2. Indicate how the RWB will use Wagner-Peyser resources to support individuals with disabilities, such as funding disability program navigators in One-Stop Career Centers or assisting other targeted populations.

RWB-7 has two (2) Navigators on staff who are actively involved in incorporating people with disabilities into the workforce. We have two (2) grants from the Governor's Able Trust Program which allows us to provide enhanced employment services to disabled veterans and to operate a Year-Round Youth Program with a summer work experience component for youth with disabilities.

Section III. Operations Transparency and Public Comment

The Recovery Act places a high priority on transparency. The public, including partners, must have an opportunity for public comment and input into the development of the local Workforce Services Plan update prior to its submission to the State.

III.A. The RWB should provide a description of the process it used to make the Plan available to the public and the outcome of its review of the resulting public comments. (§§111(g) and 112(b)(9).)

The RWB should describe:

- 1. Local efforts to promote transparency.*
- 2. The process used to make the Plan modification available to the public and the outcome of its review of the public comments received. The RWB should describe the updated process used to ensure public comment on and input into the development of the local Workforce Services Plan. Include as an attachment, all comments including those that express disagreement with the plan. Include a description of specific steps taken to include input from members of the local board and members of businesses and labor organizations. Comments received after submission of the local Workforce Services Plan modification that express disagreement with the plan should also be forwarded to WFI at the address previously indicated.*

Before staff began writing this Plan, requests for input were forwarded to all Board members, local Chambers of Commerce, Economic Developers, Community Colleges, County Commissions, County Managers and local school systems to solicit the widest possible input from stakeholders. The draft Plan was submitted for public comment and noticed on our website at www.floridacrown.org, and local newspapers. Notices of the availability of the draft Plan were sent to all interested parties of the Board and included Board members as well as business and labor organizations represented on the Board. The comments received from the public, if any, are attached.

Increasing Services for Universal Access

III.B. The RWB should describe what policies are in place to promote universal access and consistency of service. (§112(b)(2).)

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

RWB-7 has used ARRA funds to open satellite One-Stop sites in two additional rural counties. These increased locations are helping to relieve the burden on our customers from having to drive over fifty miles one-way to take advantage of One-Stop services. The satellite sites are staffed by two full-time personnel plus volunteers in each location. A Resource Room is equipped and staffed to assist customers in these rural counties to go on-line and search for employment as well as utilizing the computers to apply for and update their weeks for unemployment compensation.

Procurement

III.C. The RWB should describe its competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used to award grants and contracts for activities under title I of WIA, including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts. (§112(b)(16).) (Note: All procurements must comply with OMB requirements codified in 29 CFR Parts 95.40-95.48 and 97.36.)

In answering this question, the RWB should describe:

1. How providers of all youth services will be procured under the Recovery Act. If using funds for summer employment opportunities and the fiscal agent is not operating this program element, please specifically describe procedures for procuring summer employment operational entities and job opportunities. (Note: If this question was answered in the local Summer Youth Plan, please attach a copy).

RWB-7 extended the existing Youth Services Contract with Arbor Education & Training, LLC, as approved under USDOL Waiver and in order to ensure timely start of the Summer Youth Program. RWB-7 encompasses a small, rural region comprised of the counties of Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist and Union. We initiated the service provider selection process by contacting all qualified vendors on our Approved Vendors' List to inquire if they would be interested in submitting a proposal should we issue an Invitation to Negotiate. This notice was also posted on our website at www.floridacrown.org. We received no positive responses from these vendors expressing interest in providing a summer youth program other than Arbor Education & Training, LLC (Arbor), with whom RWB-7 has a five (5) year contract to provide One-Stop and Youth Services. This includes out-of-school youth, year-round in-school youth, and summer youth programs. With the addition of the stimulus funds and no positive responses from the other providers on our Approved Vendor's List, the Board elected to simply expand the scope of the existing Arbor contract. The existing contract was already designed to address special youth participants facing a variety of barriers. All local Board procurement policies and procedures were followed in expanding the scope of the contract. The Arbor contract was competitively awarded in 2006. RWB-7 published an Invitation to Negotiate (ITN) in all four (4) County newspapers of our Region as well as newspapers in Gainesville, Tallahassee, Jacksonville and Ocala. We also sent personalized letters inviting all companies on our Approved Vendors' List to participate and posted notice on our website at www.floridacrown.org. Sealed bids and

proposals were received. A committee of Board members reviewed the written proposals and then entertained oral presentations by all vendors meeting the ITN standards before selecting Arbor as the most qualified provider.

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

Other than the Summer Youth Contract, RWB-7 is not awarding any contracts. Education and training services are provided by organizations that are already on our Approved Vendor's List and funds are being spent under ITA or EWT, which is negotiated with the employer. We foresee no specialized or additional contracts being let under this program.

Technical Assistance

III.D. The RWB should describe how it identifies areas needing improvement and how technical assistance will be provided. (§112(b)(14).)

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

The entire RWB-7 staff has gone through several training sessions on the ARRA Program which included representatives from WIA, WP and VETS. Staff participates in weekly "All Hands" meetings where all questions are addressed. Policies and procedures are in effect and ensure that all customers are addressed under their appropriate program. A supervisor handbook was distributed to all summer youth worksite supervisors. A section by section informational session was held with the Project Coordinator. Training for supervisors included a review of the supervisor handbook and training on the modules to be used in the work-readiness workshops. The site supervisors visited each worksite one to two times per week to address needs of the participant or employer. The worksite coordinator used a laptop and wireless card to communicate with the worksite, AWI and RWB-7 staff for support and technical assistance. We have called upon AWI and WFI for technical assistance throughout the course of our planning and program development. Questions have always been answered promptly and thoroughly. RWB-7's Summer Youth Program is almost complete and has been a great success, no further technical assistance is required on this program.

Monitoring and Oversight

III.E. The RWB should describe the monitoring and oversight criteria and procedures it utilizes to move the system toward achieving the local vision and goals, such as the use of mystery shoppers, performance agreements, etc.

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

RWB-7 has a monitor on staff that continuously reviews programs, contracts, plans, policies, performance and files to ensure compliance with all applicable Federal and State guidance. The contract with Arbor Education & Training, LLC, is a performance based contract and no payments are made until performance standards are achieved and validated. Summer employment worksites were visited to ensure compliance with contract deliverables.

Accountability and Performance

III.F. The RWB should describe its performance accountability system, including any system measures and any performance goals established. The RWB should identify the performance indicators being tracked to measure its progress toward meeting its strategic goals and vision. (§§112(b)(3) and 136(b)(3).)

1. The Recovery Act emphasizes the importance of accountability. The RWB should describe its overall efforts to account for the results of activities funded by the Recovery Act, and how it will measure whether it has achieved its local implementation goals.

RWB-7 is using the same measurement standards that are found on the Monthly Management Report for our programs. We are holding ARRA performance to the same standards of excellence that we apply to all of our programs.

*2. The Recovery Act requires RWBs to report on work readiness to assess the effectiveness of summer employment opportunities for youth. The RWB should identify its methodology for determining whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred, and what tools will be used for this determination. **(Note: If this question has been answered in the Summer Youth Plan, please refer that plan where appropriate).***

As described in our Workforce Services Plan for Summer Youth, a Pre-Work Readiness Test was performed during orientation of all applicants and a Post-Work Readiness Test was performed at the end of their work readiness skills

modules. An Individual Employment Plan (IEP)/Pre-Assessment was used to develop an individual service strategy and was prepared for every participant. The IEP addressed education and career assessment, work-readiness assessment, employment history, youth element solutions, objectives of the program, employability barriers, and the youth's individual responsibilities and goals. Staff matched the interests of youth to available jobs, manage the placement of youth at workplaces, provide mentoring services, and provide on-the-job supervision of youth at workplaces. RWB-7 used a Post-Work Readiness skill exam scoring eighty percent (80%) or better to document work readiness skill levels. Seven (7) modules were included, which were: self-inventory, basic employment applications, creating your resume, interview skills, workplace success, team work and enhancing financial literacy.

Section IV. Signature Page

Please complete the attached signature page and ensure that it is signed by both the Chairperson of the Regional Board and the Chief Elected Official (see 29 USC 2841 Section 121). The original signed signature page must be mailed to WFI as instructed on page four of these instructions.

Signature Page attached.