

## **Section I      Context, Vision, and Strategy**

The Vision of the Workforce Board is that JobsPlus One-Stop Centers will be the “go to” places for job seekers and businesses who need workforce development services; and the Workforce Board is the “go to” place for identifying and solving workforce issues. The Mission of the Workforce Board is to “Ensure that every citizen has the opportunity and skills necessary to engage in meaningful employment throughout Okaloosa and Walton Counties, and that every business has access to educated, trained, and prepared employees that meet their needs.”

All strategies focus on maximum leveraging of resources to accomplish the adopted mission.

### **I.A.      Economic and Labor Market Context - *Provide a detailed analysis of the local economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context.***

The local labor market has two very strong components consisting of the military and defense industry and tourism with its related industries. Economic development strategies have focused on diversifying the economy to include a third “leg on the stool” that includes commercialization of defense products and services, development of alternative energies, and entrepreneurial initiatives. The solid economic base provided by the military and defense industry has buffered the region from the much wider swings in the downturn in the economy that other areas of the state have experienced. Although the housing bubble had a severe effect on the construction industry for residential and commercial construction, the impact of BRAC provides new opportunities. The planned increase of the military mission at Eglin AFB as a result of BRAC 2005 has begun to provide an injection of stimulus to the local economy with the awarding of the initial contracts for the relocation of the 7th Special Forces from Ft. Bragg to Eglin AFB and the bedding down of the Joint Strike Fighter at Eglin AFB.

While the unemployment rates for Region II have steadily climbed during the past year, they continue to remain lower than the state average. During the 2007 – 2009 time frame the unemployment rates averaged around 3-4%. The most recent unemployment rate for June of 2009 shows that Okaloosa had a 7.1% rate while Walton County’s rate was 6.7%. This compared with a state average of 10.6% with a range of 5.5% for the lowest county and 15.5% for the highest county. Within the last two years, the local labor market has reversed itself from being a job seekers market to a markedly different employers’ market. Through its WIRED initiative, Florida’s Great Northwest, the regional economic development organization for the 16 counties of northwest Florida, has conducted extensive and intensive research on the regional economic and labor market. These studies have supplemented the labor market information routinely provided by AWI. The regional studies have provided comprehensive and

timely information on the occupations most in demand and those with expected future growth in northwest Florida. Intensive interviews with local employers have indicated plans for future expansion with continued demand for skilled workers to support the Information Technology and Engineering needs of the defense and defense-related industries.

The need for skilled health-care workers continues to be a major concern in spite of the increase in the production of graduates in these areas. The demand for RN's and LPN's is being addressed by local educational agencies from secondary, post secondary, including the Bachelor's level degree. The local system for producing trained medical personnel is at capacity due to the availability of appropriate practical worksites meeting the criteria for licensing. The Workforce Board will work with the initiative of Workforce Florida and its Business Competitiveness Council for innovative approaches for increasing the system's capacity to produce trained medical personnel, especially in nursing.

During this same period of 2007-2009, the demand for JobsPlus One-Stop Services, as measured by daily visits, more than doubled in all three Centers. Similar increases were also measured in the number of website hits, work registrations, and telephone calls. The increase in demand for services can also be described with the profile of the applicant pool that includes all levels of education, skill, and experience levels. The current applicant pool consists of a diverse group of individuals ranging from a youth looking for a summer job, high school graduates looking for full time employment to the highly educated and skilled professional who has been dislocated due to economic conditions. The downturn in the economy has affected all levels of education, skill level, and experience. The range of unemployed includes the employee who had been working in a low-skilled position for over 20 years with limited skills and no computer skills to the highly experienced and skilled dislocated worker.

The general profile of the job applicant pool shows a concentration of educated and trained applicants with solid work histories. The pool also includes individuals with lower education level but an extraordinary long work history with the same company. As the job market tightens, individuals with any barrier to employment are experiencing an even more difficult task in finding suitable employment.

Fortunately, the high concentration of employment in the defense related industry has remained strong. Tourism has been hit by the downturn in the economy, but not nearly to the extent of the "fly-in" tourism of Central and South Florida. Retail sales have shown a dramatic dip. In spite of the downturn in the economy, however, the Region welcomed several new businesses into the area and provided on-site services for their mass hiring. Some of the new businesses also built new facilities while others renovated existing facilities; most based their mass hires, initial orientation and training through the local JobsPlus One-Stop Centers.

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

**I.B.1** The Workforce Board will ensure the workforce system will use both formula funds and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) funds to serve the increased number of individuals seeking workforce services. ARRA funds will be the primary source for short-term training while formula funds will be used primarily for longer term training. The Workforce Board will make every attempt to budget the use of funds that will allow ARRA funded trainees to have first priority for formula funding in the event training extends *beyond the availability of ARRA funds.*

Both regular formula funds and ARRA funds will be used to increase the level of services to be offered, Without the ARRA funding, training opportunities were extremely limited in the number of individuals who could be sponsored for an Individual Training Account (ITA) whether the customer was a dislocated worker or adult needing training for employment or reemployment. Using ARRA funding, available training includes the ITA to seek certifications and degrees, short-term jobs skills updates, customized training, and One the Job Training (OJT.) The increase in Adult Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding from ARRA allows more welfare recipients and other low income adults to be provided education, training, and support services. The decrease in local Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funding to provide comprehensive services to assist welfare recipients to move from reliance on TANF to employment negatively impacted the Board's capacity to provide training services for welfare recipients. With ARRA funding, the Board will be able to provide education, training, and support services that will lead to self sufficiency for the TANF recipient and his/her family as well. The additional funding will also allow training for employed workers who are working part time (underemployed) and needing training in order to secure full time employment or employment at a higher wage or salary.

**1.B.2** Additional outreach activities will be aimed at informing the general public of the availability of employment and training funds for reemployment services. Communications aimed at Unemployment Compensation (UC) claimants will promote easy of accessibility of services designed for reemployment. JobsPlus staff will offer Rapid Response to businesses needing to downsize for small numbers of laid off employees either at the worksite or at JobsPlus. Individuals making personal visits to the JobsPlus Center will find information and encouragement for attending special Information/Orientation sessions about new services now available at the One-Stop. The Workforce Board's website, [www.jobspluseonestop.com](http://www.jobspluseonestop.com) will contain timely information on available services and how to easily access the services.

To address the dramatic increase in demand for services, the Workforce Board has used the additional ARRA funds to employ additional staff to provide the large increase in needed services, including training services. Because the Workforce Board modified

its Plan in 2008 to provide direct services, the Board was able to respond quickly and expand its workforce to address the great increase in numbers of individuals needing services and individuals needing more intensive services. ARRA funds were also used to increase the number of AWI Career and OPS staff. Focus has been on ensuring that new staff received adequate training in order to offer competent assistance to the customers. The ARRA funds have not only provided the additional needed staff to assist the growing numbers of unemployed, but have also allowed expansion of the Business Services Team to provide for a representative for each JobsPlus Center. While the number of actual job listings has decreased significantly, the needed business services are more varied and comprehensive calling for a more customized response. The turn-around in the supply/demand of job seekers went from employers accepting far less than needed in skill level to the current employers' dream market.

***I.B.3*** To meet the needs of the existing and emerging businesses, the JobsPlus Business Services representatives will conduct an awareness campaign for businesses and employers on training services and tax incentive services available to their businesses. The joint team will assist new and emerging businesses with special training programs, including both local and state level funding depending on the needs of the business. OJT is an ideal training option for low skilled individuals who have the interest and aptitude of acquiring those skills through an On the Job Training contract where employers are reimbursed for up to 50% of the training costs of an employee. The Business representatives will work closely with the economic development staff to provide services for existing businesses to assist with lay-off aversion.

Individuals who are low skilled and unemployed will be encouraged to take advantage of education and training opportunities available through ARRA funding. These individuals will be provided Core and Intensive Services that result in a realistic employability plan. All options for training and education will be considered including OJT.

Individuals who are low skilled and employed will be considered for skills upgrade training in partnership with the employer or the low skilled individual may be considered for a change in career that will require additional education and/or training. Employed individuals in minimum wage and no opportunity for growth may be candidates for this type of training.

***I.B.4*** By combining the information provided by AWI Labor Statistics and information gained from specialized labor market studies, the Workforce Board, educational institutions, and economic development organizations are in alignment by identifying and promoting training in projected occupations in demand. Maximum use of Pell Grant funds and other scholarships will be combined and coordinated with the available ARRA funds for supportive services and needs-related payments in order to provide the best training opportunities and safety net support systems that will permit adults needing education and career preparation to enter and

complete needed training. Periodic meetings with educational partners will promote communication and coordination aimed at maximum use of local resources.

**I.B.5** The Business Competitiveness Council is the designated forum for ensuring alignment of workforce, education, and economic development as this is the primary mission of the Council. Representatives from all levels of education, local and regional economic development, and workforce representatives are engaged in collaboration to ensure information, strategies, and decisions are made to ensure alignment with business needs. All activities are designed to increase the competitiveness of local businesses through training, tax incentives, and other identified strategies both to retain jobs and to create new jobs. The need for additional short term training will be identified in this education, business, and economic forum. The Workforce Board staff will meet periodically with local education partners and eligible training providers to share the new Target Occupational List and to discuss any need for additional, short term training programs.

The partnerships between the Workforce Board and its JobsPlus Centers with local school districts, community colleges, state college, and the University are strong and have an impressive track record. Representatives of the educational communities are actively involved with the Workforce Board and its standing Councils. With the implementation of the Demonstration Project for Military Spouse Scholarships, Heroes at Home, the level of referrals for education and training have increased remarkably. The Workforce Board has been a strong partner of the two school districts of the region and has been deeply involved in the development of Career Academies. The Workforce Board intends to research further avenues for bringing more apprenticeship training to the local area as this form of training is not prevalent in the workforce region at this time.

The Workforce Board, local economic development organizations, and higher education institutions are all members of Florida's Great Northwest. This common membership facilitates the regional forum for ensuring of mutual goals and strategies aimed at the economic health of the broad region of 16 counties in northwest Florida. At the same time, the resources of Florida's Great Northwest may be accessed for local workforce, education, and economic development priorities.

The Workforce Board members and staff maintain membership and participation in each of the Chambers, its Education and Military Affairs Committees (MAC), educational foundations, economic development organizations at the county and regional levels, and local civic organizations. The Workforce Board frequently is invited to provide updates on workforce issues and services at weekly and monthly meetings of local civic and business organizations.

**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.***

**I.C.1** The Workforce Board will increase services to workers in need.

The Workforce Board has acquired a Mobile unit that is fully equipped with 12 computer workstations, internet access, printing capabilities, and full access to the software programs available through the full-service JobsPlus One-Stop Centers. ARRA funding has permitted deployment of the JobsPlus Mobile unit to provide outreach services through partnering with other local organizations to bring information and access for employment and training services as well as access to economic services, child care and pre-k eligibility and referrals services, and promotion of Kid Care insurance for those families not qualifying for Medicaid.

ARRA funding will also allow a scheduled, pre-announced deployment of the JobsPlus Mobile to remote areas of the workforce region and other areas not currently being served through a nearby full-service JobsPlus One-Stop Center.

Increased staffing will allow the JobsPlus One-Stop Centers to provide the additional assistance needed in the exceptionally tight job market. Additional staffing will allow more intensive services such as more individualized help with internet applications, updating of resumes effective in electronic job searches, instruction in computer skills, and training for credentialing. The increased level of services that are needed requires more staff to address the increased number and increased level of services needed. The JobsPlus Centers enthusiastically promote the “Ready to Work.” Credentialing has been shown to be an effective additional marketing tool in the very competitive job market.

Historically, the trend has shown that when unemployment rates rise, the number of individuals enrolling in education and training also increases. This trend has been repeated during the current economic downturn; this trend has been aided by the extensions in unemployment benefits which allows individuals to have a life-line of support while attending formal education and training courses. ARRA funding and expansion of the Pell Grant funding will allow individuals to access education and training services. The Workforce Board has modified its Supportive Services policies to increase the likelihood that an individual can afford to enter and to complete the training. The Workforce Board has also adopted a policy permitting “Needs Based Payments” to those dislocated workers who qualify. The additional funding from ARRA has made the additional supportive services possible. The additional funding has also allowed the Board to increase its cap on ITA scholarships. The Workforce Board will continue to require applicants for ITA scholarships to complete the application for Pell Grant funding. With the changes in eligibility for Pell Grant funding, more individuals will be able to qualify for this financial support which will be used before WIA funds are applied. With the ARRA funds, the JobsPlus One-Stop Centers can offer additional on-site short-term training for those individuals needing a skills upgrade, sponsor individuals in longer-term training leading to certifications and degrees, and retraining in new areas in

demand such as training for “green jobs.” Most notably, the under-skilled individuals have needed computer literacy and basic computer operations. ARRA funds have permitted instruction in these areas to be provided in the One-Stop Centers. The special designed computer classes have allowed individual attention for those individuals who have had little to no computer experience.

The Workforce Board has also identified an increased need for training seminars in budgeting, information on credit histories, ratings, and credit reports, coping with potential foreclosures, and other areas of financial counseling. The Workforce Board partners with community based organizations who provide these services as well as the University of Florida Extension Services for money management.

**I.C.2** JobsPlus One-Stop Centers serve a full range of customers from youth looking for their first job, economically disadvantaged and public assistance needing training and employment, dislocated workers, graduates from local high schools, colleges and universities, veterans retiring from military service and others exiting after the completion of the first enlistment, military spouses, individuals with disabilities, high school dropouts, youth aging out of foster care, offenders, including juvenile offenders, individuals with limited English, and homeless individuals. The triage approach of the One-Stop model is especially helpful in assessing the needs of individuals who are seeking training and/or employment. Supportive services will be used for those needing assistance in overcoming barriers in entering or remaining in training.

To accommodate the needs of the professional ranks of newly unemployed individuals, the Board and its JobsPlus One-Stop Centers have rejuvenated and updated its Professional Placement Network (PPN). The PPN features instruction and assistance on updated job searching techniques, effective networking skills and techniques, updating of resumes to match electronic search engines, and refresher interviewing skills. The sessions are designed to provide a forum for the military retiree or separating military member, four-year degreed individuals, and other individuals with a professional work history to secure employment in the chosen career or to make career changing decisions. Expanded use of employers and other guest speakers will broaden the preparation and readiness of the professional who finds him/herself suddenly unemployed.

**I.C.3** JobsPlus service delivery staff will provide information on occupations in demand, training programs designed to lead to certifications and credentials in the occupations appearing on the Targeted Occupational List (TOL) and leading to certifications and other credentials.

**I.C.4** The Workforce Board will budget ARRA Youth and WIA youth funds to maximize impact on the economically disadvantaged youth. The Workforce Board will also exercise its option to transfer a percentage of dislocated worker funds to the Adult funding to

allow more adults in need of training services to be enrolled in training. The expanded eligibility for Pell Grant funding should result in a larger number of dislocated workers being eligible for Pell funding thus maximizing the funds for training for dislocated workers.

The Workforce Board will continue to leverage other available resources to supplement activities and services available to the job seekers, particularly youth services due to the extraordinarily low funding allocations for youth services.

**I.C.5** Targeted Work Experience is a proven effective work readiness activity when good matches are made with the worksite and the participant. TANF participants have long benefitted from work experience in the not for profit and governmental sectors. The Workforce Board will implement a private sector Work Experience (Internships) component for TANF participants and is evaluating the feasibility and benefits of providing work experience for other Adult participants who are in need of work experience in order to secure unsubsidized employment. Youth will be provided work experience opportunities in both the private and public sector.

The OJT option will be promoted to businesses that may be open to providing on the job training for adults and youth who may be lacking adequate training or work experience necessary for performing the job in a satisfactory manner. Employers agreeing to provide OJT will enter into a contract with the Workforce Board to provide training in exchange for a reimbursement of a portion of the trainee's wages, up to 50% of the specified wage. Out-of-School youth will participate in a work experience or OJT in the private or public sector.

The increased flexibility of being able to purchase class size training may be helpful in addressing the needs of the unemployed in the most cost efficient manner possible. The Workforce Board and its Councils are seeking innovative strategies to better meet the needs of its customers. The Board and its Business Competiveness Council will explore a partnership with Florida Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) to expand the capacity for providing training for the manufacturing and technical businesses through its mobile unit training. The Workforce Board will continue to partner with the private sector for training opportunities such as the Energy Camp provided by the local utility companies for the ARRA Summer Youth program and the work experiences provided to youth participating in the Energy Camps and the Ecology projects at the E. O. Wilson Biophilia Center in Freeport. This partnership provided summer youth with unique experiences that would not have been possible in the traditional classroom. Building on the summer experiences, the Workforce Board and its Youth Council intends to expand the partnerships for its year-round program as well as Summer 2010 if youth funding is authorized by Congress. Both of these experiences introduced the youth to "green jobs" and the potential for new career opportunities.

While the Business Competitiveness Council is the primary forum for alignment of education, workforce, and economic development, the other two standing Councils also play an important part in ensuring that youth and adults are aware of current demand and projected future demand for skills needed in growth occupations. The Councils are: Youth Development Council, JobsPlus Council, and the Business Competitiveness Council. The JobsPlus Council provides policy-making for all programs and services provided for job seekers in the JobsPlus One-Stop Centers. Additionally, partnerships with local community based organizations are developed and strengthened to leverage other resources for the job seekers.

The Business Competitiveness Council develops policy for increasing the competitiveness of local businesses. Specifically, the Council provides oversight for Business Services, including employed worker, incumbent worker, and Quick Response training.

The JobsPlus Council and the Business Competitiveness Council provided oversight of a study to update the three-year old local Self Sufficiency study. After receiving the results of a study conducted by the Haas Center for Business and Economic Research of the University of West Florida, the JobsPlus and Business Councils updated the Self Sufficiency rates for adults, dislocated workers, and TANF participants. The newly adopted Self Sufficiency rates for Region II for 2009-2010 are as follows:

- Adults and Dislocated Workers      \$23.25
- TANF Participants                      \$15.50

## **Section II. Service Delivery**

### **II.A. Local Governance and Collaboration**

As of July 1, 2008, the Workforce Development Board adopted the Direct Services Model for Service Delivery and became the One-Stop Operator for its JobsPlus One-Stop Centers. Recruitment, selection, and hiring gave priority consideration for the experienced staff of the Service Provider at that time. Through a planned transition, the Workforce Board assumed the responsibility for providing direct services with the designation of a Chief of Operations (COO) and Center Managers for each of the three JobsPlus Centers. Administrative and program oversight and support are provided by staff of the Workforce Board.

The Workforce Board is especially well aligned with its education partners as evidenced in the Career and Professional Education (CAPE) Act. Modeled on the Okaloosa CHOICE Career Academies, the occupational demands form the foundation for the academies that are offered. CAPE requires an articulation agreement/s with post secondary education recognizing acquired credentials and

certifications and dual enrollment credits. Florida's Great Northwest, of which the Board is a member, provides additional labor/job market studies to substantiate the alignment of education with workforce needs. All workforce boards and post secondary educational organizations are active members of the Economic Development regional organization. After studies to substantiate expected and projected demand occupations, FGNW has then funded scholarships for those identified occupations. In Region II, Education, Workforce, and Economic Development, both regional and local, are aligned in order to provide education and training to meet the anticipated demands of business.

The Workforce Board and the local Economic Development Councils are launching a special initiative for providing expanded services for existing businesses through closer partnering. The additional Business Services Representatives of the JobsPlus System will allow a closer and more integrated approach with the Existing Businesses or Membership Recruitment staff of the Economic Development Councils. Using the information gained from the intensive interviews with businesses, the joint team will be in a better position to respond to the identified needs whether it is for recruitment of talent, training for its existing workforce, or taking advantage of tax and other business advantages to increase its competitiveness. Jointly developed marketing and resource materials will help relay the intended message that workforce, education, and economic development are all working together to maintain and or increase the competitive edge.

Innovative strategies include the Board-led initiative for increasing the opportunity for local businesses to gain sub-contract awards from the massive military construction projects necessitated by the expanded mission at Eglin AFB as a result of the BRAC 2005. Partnering with Small Business Development Centers and the Procurement Technical Assistance Center, Eglin AFB and Hurlburt Field military contracting offices, Corps of Army Engineers, and local business organizations such as the Building and Industry Association, the Workforce Board has held workshops, seminars, expos, and "meet and greet" sessions to help bring together the local small businesses with the larger MATOC contractors that have pre-qualified for bidding on the primary contracts. Approximately \$770 million in military construction is needed for the bedding down of the Army 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces from Ft. Bragg and the Joint Strike Fighter mission at Eglin. This amount increases significantly when including the on-going military construction and other services procurements expected during the next year. The Workforce Board has established a people infrastructure and a model that is expected to permit these piloted efforts for future federal, state, and local government procurement. The "How to Do Business with the Federal Government" series have been tremendously popular seminars that have resulted in many local small businesses learning how to acquire a competitive position to bid on sub-contracting projects with the military. The announced planned \$770 million in military construction coupled with a sharp downturn in residential and commercial construction offered the needed incentive for businesses to learn how to compete for federal and other governmental business. The strategy of the Workforce Board was to identify and create a relationship with the federal contractors and sub-contractors for streamlined services for ensuring all

job listings were posted on Employ Florida Marketplace and that local job seekers be in the best position possible for qualifying for the employment opportunities.

With the planned move from contracting positions to military and civil service, JobsPlus will offer a special job fair/s designed especially for those job seekers who are focusing on federal employment. Through active involvement of Eglin's Human Resources with the JobsPlus Business Competitiveness Council, the Business Services Team will develop a customized job fair after having delivered special workshops to help individuals work through the maze of applications for federal employment. A significant percentage of the spouses of army personnel expected to be transferred from Ft. Bragg to Eglin AFB are current civil service employees. The Workforce Board will coordinate with the Human Resources Eglin CBPO to assist in the exchange of information that spouses at Ft. Bragg will need in order to be considered for employment upon their arrival at Eglin AFB.

The Workforce Board is in the process of expanding its partnership with other agencies receiving ARRA funds for the purpose of referrals for weatherization, assistance with housing for the homeless, and services designed for individuals facing foreclosure. The Workforce Board maintains membership on the Disadvantaged Transportation Boards for Okaloosa and Walton Counties and routinely coordinates and collaborates with the service providers for transportation services. Representatives for community action agencies are members of the JobsPlus Council and provide co-located services in the JobsPlus One-Stop in Ft. Walton Beach with established referral procedures in the other two Centers.

***II.A.2 Describe the steps the TWB will take to improve operational collaboration of the workforce investment activities and other related activities and programs outlined I section 112(b)(8)(A) of WIA at the local level***

***Describe how collaboration will be supported and sustained between WIA and all and how barriers will be eliminated.***

The Workforce Board has developed operational MOU's with many One-Stop partners (see attached list) that formalize the policies and procedures for communication, coordination, collaboration, and resource sharing. The Board is always open to new and expanded relationships with organizations whose missions are mutual or related.

The JobsPlus Council is one of three standing Councils designated by the Board as the oversight body for all job seeking services provided through the three JobsPlus Centers and the Mobile JobsPlus Unit. All local organizations who have services to offer or who are in need of the services provided through the JobsPlus Centers are invited to the monthly Council meetings. Communication and coordination of services, development of additional MOU's, and planned joint activities are either initiated here or are later

implemented under the umbrella of the JobsPlus Council. An example of the coordination and integration of services include a newly expanded MOU with Tri-County Community Council who provides transportation for the disadvantaged, weatherization services, assistance with housing, and other activities for low income families. Through on-site, cost sharing, the JobsPlus customers are provided with convenient access to other related services needed for obtaining and retaining employment. The Workforce Board has had long-standing relationships with community organizations that have historically had limited resources. The existing partnership will allow ease of collaboration on use of newly received ARRA funding. The Workforce Board was one of the original sponsors and partners with Department of Children and Families to establish JobsPlus Centers as “ACCESS” points for individuals applying for economic services. Through a cost sharing arrangement, JobsPlus Centers are advertised and promoted as access points. The MOU with Vocational Rehabilitation was one of the first in place providing for co-location at all three Centers with fully integrated services on a cost sharing basis. Vocational Rehabilitation has been a very valuable resource in the planning, design, and implementation of the Disability Navigator program, especially in consultation to identify and select the most needed equipment and materials that are needed by individuals with disabilities.

The Workforce Board strongly supports its One-Stop partners and their efforts to seek additional funds to expand the services they can provide to our mutual customers. The Workforce Board plans to co-locate staff from Bridgeway, Inc., a local CBO that provides a variety of services including mental health services, substance abuse, offender rehabilitation, assistance for the elderly, homeless, and other services. The Workforce Board supported its proposal to provide services to the homeless as they are transitioning into stable housing and employment.

The local Services Delivery Model places focus on the integration of services for Wagner Peyser, Unemployment Compensation, Reemployment Services, and Core, Intensive, and Training Services provided for adults, dislocated workers, and older youth of 18-21 and also including the youth up to the age of 24 using ARRA funds, TAA, and TANF services. Apprenticeship training is currently scarce but is an area of training offering great potential. The Board will explore opportunities for apprenticeship training to meet the specific needs of the current job market.

The Standard Mode of Operations of the Workforce Board is to develop meaningful partnerships, strengthen existing partnerships and to seek new partnerships to maximize local resources in order to deliver the best services possible to the maximum number of people needing the services. Community-based organizations as well as federal and state organizations are invited and highly encouraged to participate directly in the JobsPlus Council meetings and activities to identify need for services and to provide input on the Services Delivery Model.

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

The Workforce Development Board will use Wagner Peyser resources, ARRA Reemployment Services, WIA Adult and Dislocated formula and AARA Funding in a coordinated and integrated fashion in order to be able to provide the best services to the increased demand for services in the JobsPlus One-Stop Centers. AWI staff and Board staff work in an integrated fashion under the marketing name of JobsPlus. Customers are generally uninterested and unaware of the specific employer of co-located staff in the One-Stops.

The One-Stop Triage approach is used to ensure universal services through the continuum of services beginning with the self-help unassisted core, assisted core, intensive services, and training or retraining services. Concentrated services will be targeted toward the UC claimant to ensure reemployment as soon as possible. Workshops and group activities are open to all One-Stop customers. Training opportunities will be promoted to the individuals who are receiving Intensive Services but are unable to secure employment.

### **II.B.1 Describe full array of reemployment services the RWB provides to Unemployment Insurance claimants and the worker profiling services provided to claimant identified as most likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits in accordance with the 3©(3) of the Wagner Peyser Act.**

A full menu of reemployment services is available to UC claimants, particularly those who have been identified as most likely to exhaust their unemployment benefits. Those services include:

- Special outreach to UC Claimants to inform them of services available; this notification will be coordinated with state level initiatives for communication with UC Claimants.
- Special designed Orientation and Information activities designed to attract UC claimants to seek services at the local One-Stop Centers
- Comprehensive Assessment services from the initial interview through more structured assessment interviews, educational and aptitude testing such as TABE, CareerScope, Prove-It, Success Profiler, and Ready to Work
- Information to enable UC claimants to access services through a self-help mode
- Job Search Assistance group sessions
- Resume Preparation Assistance Workshops
- Career Exploration and Career Planning Workshops
- Work Readiness Workshops
- Referrals for job listings

- Specific Job Development services
- Referrals for training opportunities including WIA training.

Reemployment Services will be coordinated with on-going core and intensive services funded by regular Wagner Peyser and WIA Adult and Dislocated Services. ARRA funding greatly expands the variety and frequency of workshops, assessments, and counseling sessions that can be offered. Individuals identified through Priority Employment Program (PREP) will be provided more aggressive outreach and more intensive services designed for reemployment. This Workforce Region has been selected to participate in the Reemployment Assessment (REA), a special project expected to be offered in select workforce regions in Florida. The UC claimants will be offered reemployment services; those identified as likely to exhaust UC benefits will be identified in PREP. Randomly selected UC claimants in the PREP pool will be selected for participation in the pilot project of Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA.) Specific tracking and reporting will identify the REA participant who receives special assessment and individualized employment development planning.

**2.** UC claimants are identified quickly through the EFM system as application for UC automatically creates a work registration in EFM. JobsPlus reemployment staff will pull the list of new UC claimants on a regular basis, weekly or bi-weekly, in order to communicate, invite, and encourage UC Claimants to attend a pre-scheduled event designed for UC claimants. Regular mail, e-mail, messages through the EFM system, and telephone calls will be used to offer on-line services for reemployment services and to urge the claimant to visit the local One-Stop for planned activities. UC claimants will be identified upon initial application, at the four-week level, selection for PREP, and selection for REA.

**3.** In addition to the services listed under II.B, UC claimants may also be provided a more enhanced, more intensive career counseling, skills assessment, individual coaching as assessment indicates, development of an Individual Services Strategy or Employability Development, Individual scheduled sessions as follow up from group workshops such as Resume Preparation, practice interviewing sessions, assistance with personal appearance and presentation that may include “Suit Up to Move Up.” The Workforce Board has been selected to provide REA services and is awaiting further instruction on specific program requirements.

**4.** The Workforce Board will use the information gained from the enhanced interface between FLUID and EFM to contact UC Claimants, (particularly if e-mail addresses are provided) analyze work history and skills level for possible job matching and job referrals. The Triage approach, designed to assist UC claimants to get back to work as quickly as possible, will be used for UC Claimants. Those UC claimants with few or low skills will be encouraged to get involved immediately with intensive services designed to increase work readiness skills.

- 5.** The Workforce Board is exploring setting up a Call Center within a JobsPlus Center to be staffed by Welfare Transition participants as part of their work experience activity. Scripts would be developed for the reemployment services for UC claimants, PREP participants, and the REA program participants. The call center would operate as both in-coming and outgoing calls to respond to and promote the ARRA services to get UC claimants back to work as quickly as possible. Attempts to locate the individuals would be recorded by the Call Center work experiences and would later be entered into the EFM system by a JobsPlus staff member. Call center work experience staff may also do follow-up Oversight of the Call Center would be supervised by the Center Manager.
- 6.** UC Claimants who have exhausted their benefits and those likely to exhaust will be assigned a Reemployment Specialist who will act as a Coach in assisting individuals in locating employment. These individuals will be encouraged to consider additional education and training services to increase their likelihood of obtaining employment. This group of individuals will also be screened for OJT opportunities.
- 7.** The Agency for Workforce Innovation and Workforce Florida are reviewing options with Geo Solutions for enhanced information technology linking UC and EFM databases as well as card scanning technology. The Workforce Board will seek guidance from AWI and WFI and its Information Technology sub-Committee on suggestions for improving the results that may be obtained through IT advances.
- 8.** At this time, the Workforce Board does not anticipate the addition of new Labor Market Information tools to be funded with ARRA funds. With the WFI approval for the Help Wanted On Line, TORQ, and the Job Vacancies Surveys, the Workforce Board has not identified other needs at this time. If the need is identified, a recommendation will be taken to the JobsPlus Council and/or the Business Competitiveness Council.
- 9.** The Workforce Board will take full advantage of the planned state-wide training on Wagner Peyser, RES, TAA, WIA, and EFM. The Board will use the maximum number of slots available to provide access to training for as many direct services personnel as possible. Additionally, the Quality Assurance Manager and Chief of Operations staff members will attend the training. Attendees will come back and provide training for those staff members unable to attend.

The Workforce Board will request additional training in any areas where need has been identified. Previously planned training sessions include: Using Labor Market Information in Career Counseling, Business Services Delivery, Using CareerScope and Career

Assessments, EFM training for job seekers and for employers. Additionally, specific training modules from Dynamic Works will be accessed.

The Workforce Board is also developing a Staff Training and Professional Development Schedule that will include pre-announced closure of JobsPlus One-Stop Centers in order to allow simultaneous training of the entire Services Delivery Staff.

### **II.B.2 Description of how the Workforce Board will ensure the three-tiered service delivery strategy for labor exchange services for job seekers and employers authorized by the Wagner Peyser Act**

The JobsPlus One-Stop Centers System is based on the three-tiered system with universal access through a well-equipped Resource Room with trained staff available to provide assistance as needed. JobsPlus Centers are marketed as open for all individuals and businesses. Orientations to One-Stop Services are held on a frequent and routine basis at each One-Stop Center. Orientations will also be available at each computer station. Because the goal is to assist individuals in developing independence and acquiring of job searching skills, Individuals will be encouraged to use self-help services to the greatest extent possible. The continuum of services is as follows:

1. Core Services: (Open to all)
  - a. Unassisted (Self-Help)
  - b. Assisted Core Services
2. Intensive Services:
  - a. Individuals who are unable to locate employment after Core services may be provided Intensive Services
  - b. Level of intensive services needed based on on-going assessments
3. Training Services
  - a. are provided for those who have been unable to find employment after Core and Intensive Services
  - b. Priority services will be given to individuals receiving public assistance; other low income individuals, Veterans, others with identified barriers, and others who are in need of training in order to obtain employment
4. Supportive Services may be provided as needed, as eligibility is indicated, and as funding permits

The JobsPlus One-Stop Centers and in particular, the Business Services Representatives will encourage all businesses to list their job listings in the state system, Employ Florida Marketplace. Federal contractors who are required to list all jobs in the state employment system will be provided information on how to easily and conveniently list their jobs in EFM. Business Representatives

will offer to list jobs in the event businesses are unable to do so. While the JobsPlus is not an enforcing agency, Business Representatives will provide information and assistance to contractors on requirements for mandatory listing of jobs.

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

### **II.C.1 Describe Local Strategies to ensure adults and dislocated workers have access to minimum required core services.**

As soon as the ARRA legislation passed, the Workforce Board and staff began to notify the public of the expected receipt of funding to allow expanded workforce services. From large Town Hall meetings to small group presentations, an aggressive campaign to “get the word out” has been pursued to inform the public of the services available to all at no costs to employers or job seekers. The Outreach and Marketing Committee provides ideas and suggestions on the most effective outreach activities to ensure the widest distribution of information on services that are available and how all residents may access services through the local JobsPlus One-Stop Centers. The Workforce Board has participated with major Town Hall type sessions designed to inform the community of the receipt of ARRA funds and how the funds may be used. The Workforce Board has also sponsored Chamber functions to alert businesses and the public at large of services available to the public at the One-Stops.

The Workforce Board and its JobsPlus Centers have a comprehensive approach to inform businesses and residents of resources available as a part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act that includes both paid and unpaid advertising. Plans also include maximum use of the JobsPlus Mobile Unit for taking the information to remote areas for those residents to have ease of access. The Board will also partner with other agencies receiving ARRA funds to combine efforts for outreach activities.

Although all adults and dislocated workers will have access to core and intensive services, the Adult training services will be provided on a priority system. The Priority System includes; Individuals receiving public assistance, low income adults, Veterans, Military Spouses, Individuals with Disabilities, Homeless, and Offenders. Dislocated workers will receive training services on a first-come first-served basis with all efforts to get the dislocated worker involved in training as soon as an effective employability plan can be developed. Eligibility for Pell Grant and continued eligibility for receipt of Unemployment Compensation benefits depends on timely entry into approved training.

Dislocated workers will be provided information on how to access services including retraining services at all Rapid Response events and/or upon his/her initial visit to a JobsPlus Center.

**II.C.2.** Resources from Wagner Peyser, WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Funding, Unemployment Compensation, Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF, and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) will be integrated to provide Core and Intensive Services for all adults and dislocated workers. ARRA funds will supplement formula funds in providing core, intensive, and training services for adults, including low income, and dislocated workers. Co-location in the One-Stops greatly facilitates timely and effective communication, collaboration, staffing, and referrals in order to ensure those in greatest need of services will receive priority services. Individuals receiving public assistance will have priority for Adult training services; Veterans who are receiving public assistance will have first priority for training. Priorities include low income adults, and others facing barriers to employment.

**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.**

The Workforce Board will collaborate with local education agencies on maximizing access for training through Pell Grants and other financial assistance that may be available, as well as WIA Adult and WIA Dislocated and ARRA Adult and Dislocated funds. Florida’s Great Northwest has awarded a \$1 million grant for tuition assistance for certifications, undergraduate degree, and post graduate for educational programs in Information Technology and Engineering to a Consortium of Higher Education Institutions coordinated and managed by the University of West Florida. Individuals will be referred to these scholarship opportunities from the JobsPlus Centers when appropriate. The expanded Pell eligibility will afford many dislocated workers eligibility and access to education and training. The Pell Grant resources will be leveraged to avoid duplication but will allow ARRA funds to assist with supportive services needs and needs-related payments which will enable the individual greater likelihood of being able to enter and complete the training program and earn certifications and other credentials.

***Contracted Training with Institutions of Higher Education***

The Workforce Board may exercise the option to contract with higher education institutions if the need is identified. Using the Job Vacancy Survey results from AWI, results from various studies conducted by Florida’s Great Northwest, and an analysis of the transferability skills of the Applicant Pool, the Workforce Board may elect to negotiate a contract/s for specific classes for occupations in demand or projected to be in demand within the next year. Emphasis will be placed on scheduling and packaging the course to focus on specific occupational skills as identified by business. Any contracted class will be compact, focused on needed skills in the workplace, and leading to industry certifications or other recognized credentials. Feasibility for a short-term special “green jobs” for retrofitting energy efficiencies will be explored with Building and Industries and the Construction Academy. Other possible short-term, class-size training will be IT classes leading to industry certifications.

#### **II.C.4. RWB should describe its models/templates/approaches for service delivery in the One Stop Centers; adjustments made with ARRA funding:**

##### **1. Describe method of organizing service delivery for Business customers**

ARRA funding has allowed the Workforce Board to expand and enhance its services to the business partners. Each Center has a full time Business Representative which allows each Center to be organized and prepared to provide specialized services for the business customers. Examples of business services include: local job fairs for specific businesses or industries, use of One-Stop facilities for on-site interviews and assessments, and for orientation and training for newly hired employees. JobsPlus Centers have a track record of serving as the primary, full-service location for new businesses to conduct mass hiring. While each Center may provide specific business services to local employers, the Business Services Team is responsible for region-wide and multi-workforce regions special events. The additional Business Services staff will allow greater outreach to businesses and business organizations and will permit closer coordination and collaboration with education and economic development organizations. The Workforce Board and its JobsPlus Centers are well designed to educate and promote business incentives including Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) with its expanded eligible groups, On-the-Job Training, Customized Training, Quick Response Training, and Employed and Incumbent Worker Training. The partnership between JobsPlus Business Representatives and economic development business services will effectively alert more businesses to the availability of the JobsPlus special incentive services. The Workforce Board will sponsor and provide programs for local Chamber meetings, economic development round tables, and special events such as Workforce Summits. The Workforce Board has successfully jointly sponsored Town Hall meetings and Economic Summits promoting the resources made available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act which emphasize resources to stimulate jobs creation. Whenever possible, the Workforce Board will seek and respond positively to requests for joint sponsorships for these events.

The Assessment Process is based on the tiered approach for core, intensive, and training services that will lead to employment and reemployment. This triaged approach will include initial assessment of needs as indicated at customers' first visits to a JobsPlus One-Stop. Beyond the results of the initial assessment of needs, the job seeker will be offered appropriate services from the full menu of services available at the JobsPlus One-Stop. Other assessment services include CareerScope, a comprehensive assessment of vocational aptitude and interest, Prove-It for specific skills assessment, Success Profiler to assess Emotional IQ, and Ready to Work Assessment and Tutorials leading to credentialing. Through One-Stop Orientations, both group and individual, the job seeker will become familiar with the assessment services provided through EFM. The Assessment Process also includes individual interviews, participation in Careers Workshops, and feedback

from interviews with employers. Based on a comprehensive assessment, selected individuals will be offered the services to develop an individual employability plan. The Individual Employability Plan or Individual Services Strategy is ideal for those individuals who have not been able to secure employment after Core services, and beginning Intensive Services. UC claimants who have been identified for Priority Reemployment Services, and individuals selected for REA Services, will be offered these more intensive reemployment services. This service is also ideal for displaced homemakers and other individuals who have been out of the workforce for a period of time and are just attempting to reenter. As disabilities are identified, the individuals will be offered and referred to specialized assessments and assistance with special equipment and materials available at all three JobsPlus Centers. The JobsPlus staff performing Disability Navigator services will ensure all JobsPlus staff are trained in the use of the special equipment.

As other assessment tools become available through state-wide initiatives, the front-line staff will be trained on best use of the new assessment tools that are designed to assist job seekers in making best career decisions that will lead to employment or reemployment.

**2. Assurances that funds will be targeted to the most in need will be met through training, commitment, and monitoring of the delivery of services.**

The Chief of Operations and the Quality Assurance Manager will be responsible for Staff Training and Development for all programs and services provided through the JobsPlus One-Stop. This training will include educating staff on established Priority of Services and how this must be tracked. The Quality Assurance Manager will also conduct compliance and performance monitoring of the delivery of all services. With the design of the JobsPlus One-Stop system, core and intensive services, can be provided to the universal population. Priority of Services will be explained and promoted at Outreach events, all One-Stop Orientations, (both electronic and in person) other information groups sessions, and individual counseling sessions. All marketing and outreach materials will also include information on the priority of services for individuals receiving public assistance, other low income individuals, Veterans, individuals with disabilities, youth aging out of foster care, homeless, dropouts, and other locally defined groups such as military spouses.

Job seekers will be encouraged to disclose if they meet the criteria for priority of services. Staff performing eligibility determinations and certifications will be instructed to identify those individuals who meet the criteria for priority of services and schedule those individuals first for consideration for training opportunities. Periodic monitoring of the delivery of

services will include a system for tracking processes and results of the tracking of individuals seeking training services and those actually provided training services.

### **3. Sequence of One-Stop Services**

JobsPlus One-Stop systems design allows an individual to enter the delivery system at any time through their first electronic visit or walk in to any JobsPlus Center. Core services and some limited intensive services are immediately available to all walk-ins. More intensive services and training services will be scheduled. Frequency of offerings of intensive services most in demand provides minimum waiting time for the job seeker to be scheduled and get fully engaged in services leading to employment and reemployment. The Tiered Approach for Core, Intensive, and Training Services is based on providing logical sequences of services.

#### **II.D. Youth Services – Attached is a copy of the Summer Youth Plan already submitted.**

1. With the limited amount of funding available through ARRA for Youth Services, the Workforce Board has chosen to invest the funds in a comprehensive Summer Youth program designed to provide a combination Work Experience and Career and Work Readiness Training program for younger youth ages 14-17 while older out of school youth (18-14) will be provided a menu of services based on a tiered approach to match the work readiness levels of the assessed youth. The Workforce Board expects to expend 98% of its ARRA youth funds by December 2009. The Workforce Board ensures that a minimum of 30% of the Youth ARRA funds will be spent on Out of School Youth. Services for Out of School youth will include:
  - Pre and Post Assessment for Work Readiness
  - Work Readiness Training for all Out of School youth participants
  - Job search assistance leading to unsubsidized employment in the private sector
  - Placement in OJT positions in the private sector
  - Paid and Unpaid Work Experience in the private and public sector
  
2. Because of the limited funding available through Youth ARRA funds (approximately \$165,000) for eligible economically disadvantaged youth and the Board's intent to meet the goal of quickly getting ARRA funds into the economy as a stimulus, the Workforce Board elected to use approximately 98% of the allocated funds for Summer 2009. These funds will be used to provide eligible youth an opportunity to earn funds through participation in a local Summer Youth Work Experience during Summer 2009.

The Year Round funding for 2009-2010 is not sufficient to provide both a summer youth program for summer 2010 and a year-round program for youth.

3. With the approval of Workforce Florida, effective July 1, 2008, the Workforce Board adopted the Direct Services Model and to operate the One-Stop Centers for Core and Intensive service for the universal population, adults, and dislocated workers. Effective July 1, 2009, the Workforce Board elected to provide youth services using the Direct Services Model rather than contracting for a Youth Service Provider. Under the guidance of the Youth Council, the Summer Program was planned and conducted in partnership with the local school districts, selected private sector Energy Sector organizations, and a unique Ecological Preservation learning laboratory and experiential learning opportunity.
4. The Workforce Board will develop public and private sector work sites that will provide a meaningful work experience with good supervision that will allow the youth to acquire both job skills and work readiness skills. Two Energy/Utility private sector partners provided work experience opportunities for younger youth who were assessed to be ready for a work site experience. Additional youth were provided work site work experiences at the E.O. Wilson Biophilia Center to assist in preparations for grand opening of the ecological preservation and learning laboratory. The worksites provided an introduction to “green jobs” and to the projected need for “green jobs” career opportunities.

The public sector learning labs were transformed into work simulation models assigned by the Supervisor. Individual and Team assignments were made to simulate real work situations. The simulated work environment includes timesheets, evaluations, compensation based on performance, and emphasis on work readiness skills continued throughout the simulation.

5. The Workforce Board in partnership with the Career Education Academies of both School Districts including Information Technology, Allied Health, Engineering, Aerospace, and Criminal Science Institutes designed the mix of school-based hands-on instruction with worksite experiences for the younger in-school youth. The design and mix permitted youth to sample multiple Career Pre-Academies designed to help youth and their parents in their career selection, career planning, and related work experience. Each career area experience emphasized career opportunities, education required for certifications, and pathways for a successful career via the appropriate Career Academy. Early results show some summer youth have already enrolled in Career Academies for School Year 2009-2010. Work experiences were provided at private sector energy utilities companies
6. Out of School Youth will be assessed for work readiness, occupational interests and aptitude. Youth who are deemed to be “work ready” will be offered job search assistance for securing unsubsidized employment in the private sector. Supportive

services may be provided to assist the youth in accepting and/or retaining employment. Dropouts will be provided a mix of academics and work experience while high school graduates will be assessed for work readiness and potential for post secondary education and training. Older youth will be afforded an opportunity to gain work experience in a private or public sector work setting. Youth who are in need of supportive services in order to participate in training or work experience will be provided supportive services as funds permit. Every effort will be made to assist the youth in accessing needed supportive services provided by community based organizations. Supportive Services may include referrals for child care, transportation assistance, or other services required to participate.

7. The Workforce Board plans to provide Work Readiness Training/ Career Exploration/Work Experience for approximately 125 in-school youth and 25 Out of School Youth with the Youth ARRA funds. Out of School youth may be dual-enrolled in ARRA and WIA Youth.

#### **II.E. Veterans Priority of Services**

##### **Description of Policies and strategies in place to ensure that, pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act priority of service is provided to veterans and certain spouses who otherwise meet the eligibility requirements for employment and training programs funded by the US Department of Labor**

The Workforce Board aggressively promotes the “Hire Vets First” campaign with priority services for veterans and eligible spouses. In addition to the priority services authorized by Wagner Peyser and Jobs for Veterans Act, the ARRA legislation specifies that priority will be provided to Veterans within each ARRA funding stream including Youth funds, Adult and Dislocated funds.

1. Local policies have been modified to collect data at the point of entry to identify whether an applicant is entitled to priority of services. Applicants who are found to have priority of services due to the Veteran status will be identified and ensured they will have first access.
2. Veterans staff have been instructed to aggressively market the availability of priority for training services for youth, adult, and dislocated worker services funding streams.
3. The Veteran or eligible spouse will be informed of the priority of services status and its meaning.
4. The Veteran or eligible spouse will be informed of the full array of employment, training, and placement services available. Veterans and eligible spouses will also be informed of the applicable eligibility requirements for the specific programs.

5. Veteran Employment services for all veterans and specifically disabled veterans are fully integrated into the full menu of services in each of the JobsPlus Centers. Services are closely coordinated with business services and all job seeking services. JobsPlus staff are aware of and enforce the priority of services for veterans; adding priority of services funded through ARRA will easily and naturally be integrated to the delivery of all services. Emphasis has been placed on the addition of veterans having priority for youth services as this was a new addition to the WIA Youth Programs.

The Workforce Board was recently awarded a BrAlve grant from the Community Foundation of Jacksonville that will provide services for eligible veterans, military members and their families. The BrAlve grants are designed to provide assistance to those military and veteran members and families of those who are preparing to be deployed, are currently deployed, or have returned from deployment in the combat zones of Iraq and Afghanistan. All services provided through this grant will be fully coordinated with the Veterans services, Military Spouse programs, including CAA, the demonstration project, and the BRAC Families Transition Council.

With the Board's leadership, the BRAC Families Transition Council was established to create a community-wide Council for welcoming the 7<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group from Ft. Bragg to Eglin AFB and the surrounding communities. The Council has representatives from both military and community groups including all levels of education from Early Learning to Post Graduate, Chambers of Commerce, United Way, health care facilities, retired and active-duty military, economic development, faith-based organizations, youth organizations, and local government. The Workforce Board has developed a special welcoming website designed to be the primary, direct communication link with the military members and their families with the local community.

Staff from the Workforce Board joined "Team Eglin" for a special visit to Ft. Bragg to provide joint Army-Air Force information and orientation sessions for the military members and their families who will be on the planned move. The Workforce Board's focus was on employment and career opportunities for spouses who would become dislocated workers when they accompany their military spouse on the move to Eglin. Plans call for a continuing dialogue with the Family Support Center and spouses via electronic mail, website, video conferencing and future planned visits to Ft. Bragg. Spouses will have the opportunity to begin education and training on-line with local educational institutions and continue in residence upon their arrival at Eglin AFB. The Workforce Board plans to offer a Virtual Job Fair for spouses planning to relocate to Eglin AFB and will be prepared for intensive job search upon their arrival and getting settled. BRAC funds and other dislocated workers funding will be used to provide training and employment services.

**II.F. Service Delivery to Targeted Populations - 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, migrant and seasonal, women, minorities, nontraditional, veterans, public assistance, multiple barriers including older, limited English, and people with disabilities**

**II.F. 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 JobsPlus One-Stop Center staff will be trained on the Priority of Services for WIA Adult applicants and instructed on procedures to determine whether or not the applicant meets the criteria for priority of services. TANF participants and FSET participants in need of training will be encouraged to consider training in order to increase their marketability and likelihood of securing employment. Veterans who meet the criteria of low income or receiving public assistance will have first priority. JobsPlus Centers offer frequently scheduled One-Stop Orientations and Information sessions on the full array of services available at the One-Stop Center. Information on priorities of services will be included in the Orientation. Job seekers will be encouraged to disclose if they believe they meet the criteria for receiving priority of adult services offered through the ARRA funding.

Other Outreach activities will include direct communication and coordination to organizations providing other services to the targeted groups of individuals meeting the criteria for priority of services. The JobsPlus Council, a standing Council of the Workforce Board, includes representatives of federal, state, and local organizations providing services to Veterans, individuals receiving public assistance, and other low income adults. Special information sessions and referral procedures will be developed with these organizations.

All Outreach materials will include information on priority of services. It will be stressed that other individuals will be provided services but priority of services will be ensured for the targeted groups as outlined above.

JobsPlus staff will promote the availability of additional ARRA services at local Community Services Network meetings as well as Access Okaloosa and Access Walton County meetings. Information on services for displaced homemakers will be provided to the Women's Center at Northwest Florida State College and the Universities as well as other community based organizations.

***II.F.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***

The Workforce Board is fortunate to receive partial funding for a Disability Navigator position to serve as an employment and career advocate for individuals with disabilities. The mission of the Navigator program is to increase an awareness of the need for and the

advantages of employing individuals with disabilities and to act as a link between organizations who provide special services for individuals with disabilities. The Navigator performs outreach services to inform other organizations of special services available at the JobsPlus One-Stop Centers. Special equipment extends the accessibility of services designed to lead to employment. The Navigator will work with the Business Services representatives to inform of tax advantages and other specialized services that may be available to individuals with disabilities who may be a part of their workforce or who are being considered for hire. The designated Navigator will provide and/or facilitate periodic training for all JobsPlus staff, including Wagner Peyser staff, to acquaint One-Stop staff of One-Stop equipment and materials and how to access community resources that assist individuals with disabilities.

The Workforce Board intends to submit an application to become an Employment Network to become an eligible provider for "Ticket To Work."

The Navigator is a member of the Business Network, school transition teams for both school districts, and routinely communicates, coordinates, and collaborates with other organizations who provide services for individuals with disabilities. Special tours of the One-Stop will be arranged for organizations serving individuals with disabilities; most notably, Horizons and COPE will be invited for special tours. If needed, space will be available for more intensive or more frequent services at the One-Stop.

### **Section III. Operations**

#### **III.A. Public Comment - 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**

A Summary of the areas to be covered in this Modification was provided to all Attendees at the Board and Council Meetings and other meetings of community agencies. The Executive Director provided an overview with requests for input on any or all of the topics covered in this Modification. Notice of the intent to develop the Plan was provided to standing Councils and Committees with encouragement for public comment or input to be included in the Modification. Notice of the availability of the Draft Plan Modification was posted on the JobsPlusOneStop.com website and advertised in the local newspaper serving the workforce region.

The Workforce Board maintains a One-Stop Partner e-mail list that includes local organizations and interested parties who provide related services. Notices of the availability of the Plan Modification were sent to parties on this list with the offer of providing electronic copies to interested parties. Additionally, the Plan Modification was presented to the JobsPlus Council, Youth

Development Council, and the Business Competitiveness Council with requests for comments or input. Instructions were provided on how to provide input either by telephone, fax, e-mail, or U.S. mail.

Beginning with Town Hall meetings held beginning shortly after the passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and continuing through September, Workforce Board members and staff will provide information to the public on funds received by the Workforce Board and services to be provided. The Public has been invited to provide input on needed services to help residents of Okaloosa and Walton County get back to work.

Soon after notice of the receipt of ARRA funds, the Executive Director appeared before the Boards of County Commissions and the School Boards of both Okaloosa and Walton Counties for the purpose of informing the public about American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds received by the Workforce Board and initial plans for services that would be provided through the use of funds. Copies of the Summary of funds received by Florida and specifically, Region 02, were provided to the Members of the Commission and School Boards, press who were in attendance, and other copies available for the general public.

Plans call for periodic reports to the Boards of County Commissions and the School Boards on the progress and results of the receipt of funds to provide services as authorized by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Periodic press releases will be provided on the progress and results of the resources made available by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Comments, including favorable and disagreements, will be provided with the submission of this Plan. The Workforce Board will continue to accept public comments regarding the Plan and its execution.

### **III. B. Increasing Services for Universal Access - Policies in Place to Promote Universal Access and Consistency of Service**

The Workforce Board has established Outreach Policies to invite and encourage the general public, but especially employers and job seekers to visit the local JobsPlus One-Stop Center to emphasize the commitment to universal access to JobsPlus services. While some programs require specific eligibility certification for access to training and supportive services, the basic, core services are open to all individuals and all businesses.

The Workforce Board makes JobsPlus facilities available for use by other community organizations provided related services for community meetings, business seminars, and information sessions on promotion of other services of interest to the public. The

One-Stop Centers are used for mass hiring for new and expanding businesses, specialized job fairs, and employer interviews. Periodic Open Houses are held to acquaint the public with services available and how to access them.

With the acquisition of the JobsPlus Mobile One-Stop, the Workforce Board plans to do extensive outreach to remote areas and other areas not having a full One-Stop services nearby.

The Workforce Board has used ARRA funds to hire additional staff to address the dramatic increase in demand for services. Additional staff has been hired through ARRA Wagner Peyser funds, attend Workforce Investment Act Adult, and Dislocated Worker funds. The additional staff will assist with outreach, assessment, job search assistance, resume preparation, career workshops, short term training, ITA's, customized training, and training for employed workers. Additional staff has made possible increased frequency of workshops and group activities as well as staff for more one on one counseling and career planning.

Plans call for an additional FTE to support staff training and development and Quality Assurance to promote effectiveness and efficiencies as well as to provide increased transparency.

### **III.C. Procurement - Description of competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used to award grants and contracts**

Although the Workforce Board has adopted the Direct Services Model which allows the Board to operate its One-Stop Centers, the Workforce Board has a competitive process in place in the event that specific services are needed. The Board's procurement policy requires specific procedures depending on the financial threshold. Both Invitation to Bid and Request for Proposals (RFP) are procurement methods that may be used for contracting for goods and services with ARRA funds.

The Workforce Board maintains an Eligible Training Provider list for issuance of ITA vouchers. The Board has an established process for adding new training providers provided they meet the minimum criteria for providing training for occupations appearing on the Targeted Occupational List for the Region, adjoining regions,, or the statewide list. The Workforce Board will encourage post secondary institutions to submit applications to become approved as an Eligible Training Provider for ITA vouchers.

The Workforce Board may elect to exercise its option to contract for class-size training for occupations appearing on the Targeted Occupational List of for a new and emerging occupation for a new or expanding employer. The class-size procurement would require a curriculum to acquire skills, knowledge, and certifications for an occupation appearing on the Targeted Occupation List (TOL). The Workforce Board will ensure that any contract would not limit customer choice.

The Workforce Board will provide its summer youth programs with selected contracts with instructors and supervisors. Incentive payments will be processed in-house. The Workforce Board may elect to competitively procure payroll services for out of school youth to avoid complications and direct conflict with its internal SEP IRA retirement plan for Board staff.

### **III.D. Technical Assistance - Identifying areas needing improvement; identifying provisions for providing technical assistance**

The Quality Assurance Manager is responsible for monitoring for compliance and programs effectiveness. Subject Matter Experts (SME) will assist in the periodic monitoring of the delivery of services for compliance and programs effectiveness.

As areas needing improvement are identified, the Chief of Operations will be notified in order to provide staff training, supervision, or other needs that may be identified through the monitoring/evaluation process.

Follow up and response to the identification of areas needing improvement will be dependent on the seriousness and frequency of the areas needing improvement and whether or not the deficiency is limited to select staff or is systemic to the delivery system. If need is indicated, the Executive Director will request Technical Assistance from AWI. A determination will be made as to whether the issue is lack of training, lack of adequate local operating procedures, lack of sufficient and proper guidance, or failure to follow established policies, procedures, and guidance. The corrective action response will be directed to the deficiency/s uncovered. Follow up may include retraining, counseling, evaluations, reassignment of staff to more appropriate positions, or other human resources actions.

To address the philosophy and practice of “Continuous Improvement,” staff training, refresher training, sharing of best practices, and cross training will form the nucleus for continuous improvement. Measuring performance, providing timely feedback to staff, and developing new and improved strategies are also critical elements of the “Continuous Improvement Plan.” Staff will be asked to identify needed tools and materials as well as needed local operating policies. The Quality Assurance Manager will be responsible for the facilitation and implementation of the Continuous Improvement Plan.

The Workforce Board has developed an Orientation and Training Plan for all new staff. This Orientation includes completion of the free and Dynamic Works One-Stop overview and Tier I training modules within the first three months of employment at a minimum. New staff will be paired with experienced staff for one-on-one mentoring and training. Staff training will be on-going throughout

the probationary period of the first three months. After probationary period has been met, new staff will participate in regularly scheduled Staff Training and Professional Development.

### **III.E. Monitoring and Oversight**

Internal monitoring and oversight is provided by the Quality Assurance Manager and the Subject Matter Experts for compliance and program effectiveness in accordance with the local Monitoring Plan. The Monitoring Report will be provided to the Chief of Operations who will develop a Corrective Action Plan to be implemented by the Center Managers. Both the Monitoring Report and the Corrective Action Plan will be provided to the Executive Director.

The JobsPlus Council, a standing Council of the Workforce Board, has oversight of the One-Stop operations. In addition to the monthly, operational reports, the Chief of Operations will also provide internal and external monitoring reports to the Chair of the JobsPlus Council. The Chair of the JobsPlus Council will report to the full Board on relevant matters involving the operations of the One-Stop System.

### **III.F. Accountability and Performance**

Accountability includes both fiscal and programmatic areas. The structure of the Workforce Board includes a Finance Committee that includes the Treasurer of the Workforce Board. This Committee is charged with oversight responsibility for the development of the annual budget and all modifications, review and analysis of comparison of Budget and Actual, oversight for ensuring all fiscal requirements are met for expenditure requirements for direct services, and minimum expenditure rate for out-of-school youth, ITA expenditures, de-obligations/re-obligations, internal controls, and AWI fiscal monitoring. The Finance Committee ensures accountability and transparency of fiscal operations. The Chair of the Finance Committee reports to the Executive Committee and full Board on all matters relevant to fiscal accountability and oversight.

The Quality Assurance Manager, with the assistance of the SME's, will perform routine monitoring of the program effectiveness. The Quality Assurance Manager will provide the Performance Report to the Chief of Operations. The Center Managers also report directly to the Chief of Operations on all operational matters involving the One-Stop Centers. The Chief of Operations will provide an Operational and Performance report to the Executive Director including any concerns on operational issues.

The system for measuring Program Performance includes: Monthly One-Stop Reports, Monthly Management Reports, Quarterly Balanced Scorecards, Internal Monitoring Reports, AWI Desk Reviews and On-Site Monitoring Visits, and other special reviews as ordered by the Chief of Operations or the Executive Director. These reports and measures will be analyzed by the Management Staff for any needed actions. The Chief of Operations will take these reports with any request or recommendation for action by the Council.

The provision for the Chair of the JobsPlus Council reporting to the full Board provides the proper forum for discussions, analysis, evaluation, and recommendations for any needed changes in order to ensure the vision and mission of the Workforce Board are being addressed. The Vision of the Board is that the JobsPlus Centers are the “go to” place for the highest quality business and job seeker services while the Workforce Board is the “go to” place to address workforce issues and concerns affecting the economy and community.

Customer satisfaction has been identified as a critical component of the Vision of the Workforce Board. Customer feedback through review and analysis of the customer comment cards will provide valuable feedback from the job seekers. The JobsPlus Council plans to implement a “mystery shoppers program” not only for identifying any weaknesses, but to also identify staff deserving of special recognition for providing outstanding services. Customer feedback from employers is a major part of all special events, especially job fairs. The solicitation of customer comments follows soon after the completion of the event with solicitations for suggestions on how to improve the next job fair or special event.

The Workforce Board has established a Business Competitiveness Council for the purpose of aligning education and workforce services to meet the needs of business in order to contribute to the competitiveness of business and its ability to create and sustain jobs. The Business Competitiveness Council will develop policy and provide direction for the delivery of Business Services.

Since the state contracted Customer Satisfaction surveys for businesses have been discontinued, the Business Competitiveness Council has been asked for its recommendations on how to measure the effectiveness of businesses services, measuring employer penetration rates, and identifying other needed business services not previously provided. The Business Council will take any recommendations to the full Board for approval and adoption. The Business Competitiveness Council has also been assigned promotion of and oversight of special training grants for the employed worker, incumbent worker, and Quick Response Training. The Council may also identify any needed labor market information or special surveys that may be needed for decision making on allocation of training resources.

**III.F. 1** The Workforce Board will report monthly on the expenditure of ARRA funds and the results of the expenditures as measured by individuals served in Core services, Reemployment Services, Intensive Services, and Training Services. These reports will be provided to the appropriate Council/s. The reports will be provided in accordance with the guidance and instructions provided by WFI and/or AWI.

The Chief of Operations will conduct monthly meetings with Center Managers and Subject Matter Experts, and the Quality Assurance Manager to review the Implementation Plan, activities, enrollments, results, and identification of needed operational actions. The Chief of Operations, Fiscal Director, Quality Assurance Manager, and the Executive Director will review both fiscal and programmatic results on a monthly basis. Adjustments will be made accordingly to ensure the goals for implementation of ARRA and formula funded programs are being met.