



Seventh Planning District Consortium WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PLAN PY 05- PY 06

I. Special Populations and Other Groups

- 1. Describe the LWIA's strategies to insure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the LWIA's One-Stop delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals such as MSFWs, 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).**

WIA 70's strategies to insure that training programs and services are accessible, include special emphasis on serving the needs of special applicant groups.

The following populations with special needs have been identified:

- Offenders;
- Disabled individuals;
- Displaced homemakers;
- Low-income individuals;
- Migrant and seasonal farm workers;
- Individuals training for non-traditional employment;
- Veterans;
- Individuals with multiple barriers to employment;
- Older workers; and
- Hurricanes Katrina and Rita Evacuees

Veterans will continue to receive priority of service. Priority of service will be provided to dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low income individuals, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment, including older individuals, people with limited English speaking proficiency, and people with disabilities in all areas of service delivery, counseling/vocational guidance, referral to training, referral to jobs, job development, and referral to supportive services.

In response to the natural disaster caused by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005, federal assistance was made available through the National Emergency Grant for Hurricanes Katrina

and Rita.

This was a grant awarded by the United States Department of Labor, pursuant to Section 173 of the Workforce Investment Act, as amended to provide disaster relief employment assistance, including customized and entrepreneurial training and supportive services. The enactment of the Flexibility for Displaced Worker Act allows for expanded eligibility provisions. This contract provides the continuation of Phase 1, the Disaster Mode, and Phase II, the Recovery Mode.

Phase I of this program provides for the continuation of services provided under the Disaster Mode, which are temporary jobs for up to twelve (12) months with maximum wages excluding fringe of \$12,000 to individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina and/or Rita. Temporary jobs were created to return affected individuals to full time unsubsidized employment, by providing humanitarian services for disaster victims and also to assist with demolition, cleaning, repair, renovation, and reconstruction of structures, facilities, and lands damaged or destroyed by the hurricanes.

The Region 7 LWIAs will conduct Phase I activities, which include the recruitment and placement of participants in temporary jobs in public and non-profit entities that include projects that provide food, clothing, shelter, and other humanitarian assistance for individuals impacted by the disaster. Services and activities provided under this program will be coordinated through the One-Stop system. Recruitment will be limited to individuals who were impacted by either Hurricanes Katrina or Rita. The Region 7 LWIAs will determine eligibility and maintain records to verify eligibility as required by LDOL. Temporary job placement will be coordinated with Wagner-Peyser, Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) recipients and other non-profit organizations and local governments in the area.

The Region 7 LWIAs will provide temporary jobs for dislocated workers at a rate of pay that reflects the average wage commensurate with similar jobs in the area plus fringe benefits (including Social Security and FICA), with maximum payments (excluding fringe benefits) not to exceed \$26,000 and twelve (12) months.

Phase II of this program is a continuation of Phase I with the addition of activities included in United States Department of Labor Training an Employment Guidance Letter No. 16-03, Change 3 allowing for the full array of employment and training related assistance available at WIA Section 173(a)(1). Such assistance includes classroom training and On-the-Job Training (OJT), and supportive services to address the needs of individuals impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Training programs will focus on jobs in high-growth occupations, and where feasible, linked to credentials and career pathways.

The Region 7 LWIAs will conduct Phase II activities, which include the allowable activities and services authorized under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). All impacted individuals will be assessed in core and intensive services prior to placement in employment or enrollment in training programs under this grant to determine ability to benefit from such training and supportive services necessary to allow them to successfully enter employment or enter training and obtain or retain employment in a related field of employment.

NEG funds may be utilized for training activities including but not limited to Individual Training Accounts, Class-size/Customized Training, and On-the-Job Training for individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

LWIA's 70 and 71 are responsible for verifying eligibility of individuals participating in the program. Eligible individuals are those who lived in or worked in a FEMA declared disaster parish as a result of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and are eligible to participate in this NEG Disaster project if they meet the following criteria:

- temporarily or permanently dislocated from home or work due to Hurricane Katrina;
- qualify as eligible dislocated workers as defined in WIA 101(9) who were impacted by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita; and
- individuals who are long-term unemployed who were impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

In addition, under the Flexibility for Displaced Worker Act, P.L. 109-72, dated September 23, 2005 expanded eligibility includes evacuees and individuals affected by Hurricanes Katrina or Rita living in a disaster area state who:

- were unemployed at the time of the disaster; and
- are without an employment history, and are also eligible to participate in the program.

The participant file must document the participants' eligibility. Because of the circumstances surrounding the disaster, documentation of eligibility may be difficult to obtain. Self-certification and/or data from partner agencies may be used to complete participants' files. Local Workforce Investment Areas should have a system in place to verify eligibility for individuals once better data is available. Subsequent identification of individuals who are not eligible may not result in disallowed costs provided the local area routinely reviews eligibility documentation and takes necessary action to terminate participation of ineligible individuals. Enrollment of any other individuals outside the affected areas requires prior approval of LDOL.

Services to individuals with disabilities will be coordinated with other One-Stop system partners, and vocational rehabilitation. All One-Stop centers will be fully accessible in accordance with USDOL TEIN 16-99.

WIA 70 recognizes the high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities and the qualified shortages businesses are facing. Our local workforce area is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services and facilities. Each one-stop will self evaluate their current level of accessibility and plan to meet the accessibility needs of customers with disabilities who come to One-Stop centers for services.

The Seventh Planning District Workforce Board assures that all one-stop centers are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requirements that accessibility encompasses physical accessibility of the one-stop sites including the removal of barriers in addition to program accessibility for the various partner programs and service providers.

Access to the provision of services offered at each of the one-stop centers is available to all individuals, including those individuals with disabilities. We will make sure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages, and education. This program accommodation includes, as appropriate upon request, the provision of interpreters for

individuals with hearing impairments who require such assistance in order to participate in a One-Stop center program, use of Braille and large print material and enlarged computer screens for individuals with visual disabilities, and earphones with enhanced sound for individuals with hearing disabilities.

Another group that has gained a tremendous amount of emphasis is offenders. Through the J-CORE (Judicial Core Opportunity Referral to Employment) initiative, we will engage offenders through a referral process at our one-stop facility.

The offender's probation officer will have the prospective client to complete a LAVOS application prior to coming to the One-Stop. The client must complete a minimum of information that includes his/her name, address, and educational background and job skills.

The probation officer will e-mail the names of the referrals to the One-Stop at the end of a designated day. A case manager will assess the client's needs and refer him/her to job opportunities or training activities. The case manager will also e-mail a weekly attendee list back to the Probation Officer.

2. Describe the re-employment services you will provide to unemployment insurance claimants and the Worker Profiling services provided to claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their unemployment insurance benefits.

Re-employment services to claimants, in accordance with the Wagner-Peyser Act, will utilize assessment as part of the core services in the one-stop to determine the level of service needed to rapidly assist the claimant in returning to work. Re-employment services available to worker profiling and re-employment services claimants include the full array of core, intensive, and training services.

Current job openings are reviewed and appropriate referrals are made if possible. If no current openings are available, one-stop staff conducts job development activities. Claimants receive intensive placement services by core partners, when indicated by assessment. Intensive group activities and job clubs are an integral part of the service mix for worker profiling and re-employment services claimants.

3. Describe the LWIA's strategy for integrating and aligning services to dislocated workers provided through the WIA Rapid Response, WIA dislocated worker, and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs. Describe how the LWIA will co-enroll WIA and TAA participants.

The Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Unit is integrated with the Rapid Response unit. LDOL is in the process of moving delivery of the TAA program to the local WIAs with state oversight. This will allow certified trade-impacted workers to receive seamless employment transition services through the same service delivery system.

All TAA funded participants will be co-enrolled in the dislocated worker program if funds are available. This integration will provide greater flexibility and maximize limited resources to provide efficient services to job seekers, displaced workers, and the employer community.

4. How is the LWIB working collaboratively with business and industry and the educational

community to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skills achievement and employment experienced by the populations listed above in this section and to insure they are being identified as a critical pipeline of workers?

The various agencies, including the WIAs in Region 7 involved in workforce development, and the Task Force on Workforce Competitiveness are working to develop strategies to overcome barriers to skill achievement and employment by special populations. The system is using a sector approach to identify businesses with growth potential that are currently experiencing or projecting workforce shortages and determining how to service their workforce needs.

LDOL is conducting a job vacancy survey twice a year to help determine these shortages. Economic development and both secondary and post-secondary education are using career clusters to align workforce preparation at all education and training levels. LDOL is working to display job openings in these same career clusters. The STEP program, created through state legislation, provides TANF recipients with integrated services from LDOL, Adult Education, and the Technical and Community College systems, helping them move from dependency to self-sufficiency. This collaboration assists the four (4) entities to improve services to all low-income individuals. LDOL is working on a pilot project with the parole system to develop a strategy to expand support and increase job opportunities for transitioning ex-offenders.

5. Describe how the LWIA will insure that the full array of one-stop services are available to individuals with disabilities and that the services are fully accessible?

WIA funded services for persons with disabilities are coordinated with other one-stop system partners, especially Vocational Rehabilitation. WIA services are available to all persons, including persons with disabilities.

All one-stop centers will be fully accessible in accordance with USDOL TEIN 16-99. Recognizing the high unemployment rate among individuals with disabilities and the qualified employee shortage businesses are facing, WIA 70 is committed to providing reasonable accommodation to all programs, services, and facilities. Each one-stop center will self evaluate their current level of accessibility and plans to meet the accessibility needs of customers with disabilities who come to one-stop centers for services.

WIA 70 assures that all one-stop centers are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 requirements that accessibility encompass physical accessibility of the one-stop sites including the removal of barriers in addition to program accessibility for the various partner programs and service providers. Access to the provision of services offered at each of the one-stop centers is equitably available to all individuals, including those individuals with disabilities.

WIA 70 continues to insure all materials and delivery methods are appropriate to diverse cultures, languages and education. This program accommodation includes, as appropriate upon request, the provision of interpreters for individuals with hearing impairments who require such assistance in order to participate in a one-stop center program, use of Braille and large print material and enlarged computer screens for individuals with visual disabilities, and earphones with enhanced sound for individuals with hearing disabilities. WIA 70's EO Coordinator will provide technical assistance to the one-stop centers if necessary and monitor the system for compliance.

6. Describe the role LVER/DVOP staff have in the One-Stop Delivery System?

The role of the LVER/DVOP staff locally is to contact the veteran population, as well as other one-stop staff throughout the Seventh Planning District Consortium. DVOP and LVER staff are available to work with the one-stop job developers, program advisors, and other partners, to coordinate and offer a full array of networked or direct services for veterans. Outreach to employers, veterans, and community service providers is one of the most important program segments that benefit veterans. DVOP and LVER roles and duties have been amended by the Jobs for Veterans' Act of 2002, implementing a clearer distinction between their duties. Additionally, priority of service for veterans was extended to all Workforce Investment Area offices that are funded by USDOL. The DVOP/LVER is directly involved with other one-stop staff to offer direct services, and coordinate services to veterans. They are available to assist, advise, inform, and train WIA/WP one-stop staff, and fully network with all one-stop partners, employers, and community providers.

While DVOP's are primarily involved with staff-assisted intensive services, including case management, to meet the needs of economically or educationally disadvantaged veterans with barriers to employment, the LVER's conduct outreach to employers to develop jobs or training opportunities for veterans, as well as coordinate with the one-stop partners to assist, facilitate, or act directly to serve the needs of veterans.

The LVER is an advocate for veterans, by enhancing employer knowledge and recognition of the skills and abilities of military veterans, and conducts seminars and networking events with employer organizations and trade associations.

7. Describe how the LWIA will insure access to services through the one-stop delivery system by persons with limited English proficiency?

WIA 70 will insure compliance with all Federal and State regulations, and upon request, each office has identified staff and/or local contacts who can assist with service delivery for job seekers of limited English proficiency.

8. As appropriate, describe the LWIA's strategies to enhance and integrate service delivery through the One-Stop delivery system for migrant and seasonal farm workers and agricultural employers. How will the LWIA insure that MSFW's have equal access to employment opportunities through the One-Stop delivery system? How will the LWIA coordinate services with the USDOL funded MSFW service providers?

WIA 70 will continue to comply with the requirements of 20 CFR 653, Subpart B, Service to Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers (MSFWs). WIA 70 will continue to make use of all available resources to accomplish the task of providing information and services to MSFWs. Region 7 is not designated as a significant MSFWs area.

We will continue to make sufficient penetration into the farm workers' community so that as large a number of MSFWs as possible are made aware of the full range of services available to them, through our region's network of one-stop centers, including job referrals, counseling, testing, and training referrals. These services are readily available through the one-stop centers or LAVOS. In order to promote and facilitate the provision of services to MSFWs, WIA 70

through the one-stop centers, will coordinate the services of one-stop partners, community based organizations, the State MSFWs contracts, MSFWs groups, State cooperative extension service, and county agents to do the following:

- Give local presentations on one-stop center services,
- Set up an integrated referral system to provide maximum services to MSFWs,
- Meet on a regular basis to exchange information, discuss problems, and coordinate efforts,
- Offer to distribute their information pamphlets during outreach contacts and provide materials for them to distribute to MSFWs,
- Offer services that are relative to their needs, and
- Advise them of all employment changes affecting their community.