

AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT

PLAN FOR WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

STATE OF GEORGIA

June 2009

**State of Georgia
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) Plan
for Workforce Programs
June 2009**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Section I. Context, Vision and Strategy	
A. Economic and Labor Market Context	1
B. State Vision and Priorities	1
C. Overarching State Strategies	5
D. Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training	10
Section II. Service Delivery	
A. State Governance and Collaboration	11
B. Reemployment Services and Wagner-Peyser Act Services	13
C. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services	16
D. Youth Services	18
E. Veterans' Priority of Service	21
F. Service Delivery to Targeted Populations	21
G. Retaining Jobs	22
Section III. Operations	
A. Transparency and Public Comment	22
B. Increasing Services for Universal Access	23
C. Local Planning Process	23

	<u>Page</u>
D. Procurement	24
E. Technical Assistance	24
F. Monitoring and Oversight	25
G. Accountability and Performance	26
Attachment A: ARRA Implementation Team	28

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Section I. Context, Vision and Strategy

A. Economic and Labor Market Context

From December 2007 through April 2009, Georgia lost 241,200 jobs, or 5.8% of all non-farm jobs. In that time period, the state's unemployment rate climbed from 5.1% to 9.3%, and the number of unemployed individuals seeking work increased by 82%. According to the Atlanta Journal Constitution (June 3, 2009), the recession has hit Georgia harder than most states, even those in the Southeastern region, due largely to contraction of the housing sector (affecting construction, real estate, accounting and legal services), transportation, finance and insurance sectors and the continued decline of manufacturing in the state. In the past year, only the education, health services and government sectors have added jobs.

Among those individuals who lost jobs, approximately 38% have some college education or a college degree and 57% are high school graduates or have less than a high school education. These data are consistent with findings that a significant proportion of current job seekers lack some basic skills and knowledge sets needed by current and emerging business sectors, including reading, clerical, mathematics, writing, and time management. Members of the workforce will increasingly need these skills to be successful in the job market. Partners within Georgia's workforce system are collaborating at the state and local levels to ensure that employers will have the trained workforce they need as the economy improves and hiring resumes.

It is vital that all local workforce systems are well-informed of the skill sets needed by companies interested in relocating to or expanding within Georgia. The state encourages local areas to work closely with businesses, regional and local chambers of commerce and economic development partners to identify the skills needed for future job openings. This process will promote successful outcomes for members of the workforce and the competitiveness of businesses who will be hiring.

B. State Vision and Priorities

The Governor of Georgia is committed to taking Georgia's workforce to a higher level of work readiness to promote economic growth for the state. A major initiative that has been developed to support this commitment is Georgia Work Ready. Launched in 2006, this is the only initiative of its kind conducted through a

partnership between the state government and state chamber of commerce, ensuring that companies can more reliably match qualified workers with their available job opportunities. Work Ready uses the nationally-accredited WorkKeys® assessment system developed by ACT to help match job seekers to jobs available through skill level matching. It also incorporates a Work Habits component to help Georgians better understand the soft skills that employers value.

The Georgia Work Ready (GWR) initiative is comprised of four elements: (1) Work Ready Certificates, (2) Work Ready job profiles, (3) Certified Work Ready Communities and (4) Work Ready Regions. Designed to serve the emerging, transitioning and existing workforce, it makes sense to tap into the success of GWR for ARRA initiatives.

Work Ready Certificate: Designed for individuals, it allows Georgians to take the WorkKeys® assessments that comprise the ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) at no cost and earn a Georgia Work Ready Certificate by attaining minimum levels in core skill areas – applied math, reading for information and locating information. Each certificate is validated by ACT and includes an NCRC seal. It also includes a work habits assessment to measure work-related attitudes and behaviors that helps Georgians know their strengths and improve their weaknesses through free skills-gap training. Certificates can be earned at the bronze, silver, gold or platinum level, with gold indicating the individual is ready to be trained for more than 90% of jobs nationally. With a majority of unemployed individuals looking for jobs rather than training, using Georgia Work Ready as a tool to assist in transitioning the workforce into new jobs that will be created through ARRA funds is an effective use of public funds.

Assessments are available at no cost to individuals through the state's 33 technical colleges, through two Board of Regents colleges with technical divisions and at the State Personnel Administration's Work Ready Center. Many of the technical colleges provide Work Ready assessments at One-Stops and career centers. Technical colleges and local workforce areas also provide access to free on-line skills gap training to help workers upgrade their job skills. Adult education centers around the state provide instructors for individuals needing extra assistance. More than 64,000 Georgians have earned Work Ready Certificates since 2007.

Work Ready Job Profiling: Designed to help Georgia employers build the right workforce for their needs, no-cost Work Ready job profiling is conducted by ACT WorkKeys® authorized job profilers located at Georgia's technical colleges. This method allows employers to profile required job tasks and skill levels to more easily match candidates to job opportunities. By comparing job profiles with individuals' certification levels, companies can make reliable decisions about hiring, training and program development. Georgia companies using Work Ready reduce hiring costs and improve their bottom line. Georgia Work Ready has completed 225 job profiles in the last 18 months and the initiative is on track to complete another 125 during 2009.

Businesses of any size can take advantage of Work Ready to improve their hiring processes. While larger companies should have a job profile completed before listing the Work Ready Certificate as a part of their hiring criteria, smaller companies may use ACT WorkKeys® occupational profiles, listed at www.gaworkready.org, as a guideline and request that job candidates complete the Work Ready assessment as part of the job application process.

Certified Work Ready Community: This voluntary initiative enables communities to demonstrate that they have a pipeline of qualified workers who have earned Work Ready Certificates available to fill current and future jobs. The county-level certification also shows a community's commitment to education by improving county high school graduation rates. Both of these achievements are important factors for attracting business to an area. Community leaders, often local chambers of commerce, and those in the education, business and industry sectors all participate in helping their communities achieve the Certified Work Ready Community designation. There are currently 129 counties working toward Certified Work Ready Community status and 12 that have earned the designation. These efforts, plus those of high school graduation coaches, have helped raise the state's public high school graduation rate from 69.4 % in 2005 to 75.4 % in 2008.

Work Ready Regions: Work Ready Regions develop the emerging, transitioning and existing workforce in support of regional strategic industries. They are funded through competitive grants, led by an industry leader and guided by a regional industry network of like-minded companies. The regional team consists of visionary leaders from education, workforce, industry and economic development who have a common purpose – to achieve results and produce a quality workforce with the talent to fill the high-demand jobs of the strategic industry.

The state's 16 Work Ready Regions focus on growth industries – advanced communications, advanced manufacturing, aerospace, bioscience, energy and logistics. Each region's leadership team receives 18 months of training in a Work Ready Regions academy to implement sustainable transformational strategies for its workforce. A fundamental goal is for all regions to improve their percent of gold level certificate holders. With ARRA funds, the state is focusing on increasing the number of gold level certificates held by the transitioning workforce. In addition to improving work readiness levels by increasing the percent of gold certificate holders, these leaders also promote Certified Work Ready Community status in their counties, implement career pathways for high-demand jobs, build a regional industry network and ensure the sustainability of the effort. Georgia's Work Ready Regions have achieved success in building documented career pathways for the emerging, transitioning and existing workforce through strong collaboration among education partners at the state and local levels.

The Governor reconstituted the State Workforce Investment Board in 2006 directly underneath him and included a Coordinating Council with leadership from ten state agencies to coordinate workforce development efforts across the state. He also

created the Office of Workforce Development to support the Board and implement workforce development strategy. This Board, consisting of senior executives from Georgia's top businesses, has developed a strategic plan that the Governor is successfully implementing through Georgia Work Ready. This has prepared a solid foundation for Georgia's economic recovery. Recovery funds have been focused on new aspects of Georgia Work Ready that will increase work readiness skill levels for the unemployed by preparing them for new jobs to be created through the Recovery Act in the short-term, and long-term through the state's economic recovery. The Board continues to be strongly engaged in all aspects of Georgia Work Ready implemented by the Office of Workforce Development.

While Georgia Work Ready provides support for all industries, the Work Ready Region element focuses on developing regional talent to support Georgia's strategic industries. For Recovery efforts, there is a special emphasis on developing talent for energy-related jobs, and, in particular, for jobs involving more environmentally-friendly and/or energy-efficient products and processes. The Governor's Office of Workforce Development has published a statewide energy plan for Georgia that includes guidance on ARRA workforce development strategies. More information on Georgia Work Ready may be found at www.georgiaworkready.org.

The Governor has three key ARRA priorities for the workforce development system, with support from WIA ARRA statewide discretionary funds. The first is to continue to move forward with Georgia Work Ready and all four of its elements. The Governor's goal here is to increase the participation of dislocated workers in Work Ready, with a special focus on those customers who may not be eligible for Unemployment Insurance. The second priority during this time of economic downturn is to help disconnected youth, transitioning workforce and existing workforce members increase their foundation work readiness skills. By increasing dislocated and existing workers' basic work readiness skills, unemployed individuals will be better positioned to fill jobs that emerge as Georgia's economy improves. This will also help at-risk companies to remain competitive in these difficult times. The third priority is to encourage dislocated workers to consider acquiring additional skills, such as computer skills, along with returning to post-secondary institutions for additional training needed in high demand jobs such as strategic and energy-related industries and health care.

The Governor's vision for all youth is for them to graduate from high school ready for college and work. To enhance graduation rates, the Governor has provided funding for high school graduation coaches. These coaches are trained to target services to students based on their unique needs and to develop plans for at-risk youth to help them stay in school and graduate. Under Governor Perdue's leadership, the number of Georgia's dropouts has declined by 4,500 students in the three years since the program was implemented. In addition, Georgia Work Ready skills gap training is one of the proven tools available to high schools and graduation coaches. Georgia, like every other state, is feeling the impact of the severe economic downturn; however, the Governor has positioned Georgia well for economic

recovery. The state continues to see a steady increase in its annual high school graduation rate (moving from 63.3% in 2002 to 75.4% in 2008) and other education improvement indicators are also moving in the right direction. The state has continued to focus on attracting new industry and providing support to existing industries where needed. This includes ensuring that members of the workforce have the work ready foundation skills, positive work habits, educational and occupational skills necessary for Georgia's companies to thrive and prosper.

In addition, the Governor has asked his Office of Workforce Development to assist with the summer youth employment program. This includes identifying more than 500 summer internships and Georgia Work Ready activities for local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) summer youth programs. The Work Ready skills gap training tools are available to all local WIBs and the Office of Workforce Development will provide data to show work readiness progress for participating youth.

Local workforce areas are encouraged and assisted in incorporating the federal youth vision into their summer employment programs. This vision is supported by Georgia's Team for the Shared Youth Vision, which continues to strategize about ways in which members may partner and/or leverage resources to efficiently serve those youth who are most at risk. The team has adopted the vision of preparing Georgia's youth for life, by providing opportunities empowering them to become contributing, productive citizens. The partners are addressing the strategies identified by the U.S. Department of Labor, with an emphasis on alternative education and meeting the needs of businesses.

C. Overarching State Strategies

ARRA funds will allow the state to enhance current service strategies and develop new ones by working with workforce, community and business partners to serve individuals who are unemployed and underemployed.

The Governor, in consultation with the State Workforce Investment Board, and with implementation by the Office of Workforce Development, is using Georgia Work Ready and state discretionary ARRA funds to increase basic work readiness skills of the workforce through a holistic recovery plan (found at <http://www.gaworkready.org/pages/view/recovery>) that focuses on the following:

1. Encouraging all Georgians over the age of 18, with a special focus on unemployed Georgians who are not eligible for Unemployment Insurance benefits, earn Work Ready Certificates
2. Encouraging all unemployed Georgians to increase their Work Ready Certificate levels
3. Encouraging at-risk and disconnected youth to earn a GED and Work Ready Certificate
4. Encouraging unemployed individuals to learn basic computer skills

5. Encouraging all unemployed Work Ready Certificate holders to seek additional skills and training
6. Assisting local workforce investment areas with the STEP-UP program
7. Assisting at-risk businesses with job retention tools and training
8. Increasing partnerships with staffing agencies to assist more Georgians in finding employment
9. Providing a Statewide Energy Workforce Development Plan to assist communities and education partners with workforce planning for the energy industry
10. Providing additional skills gap training tools to assist communities in increasing their graduation rates

This plan is known as the Georgia Work Ready Recovery and Re-investment Plan and it is intended to lay a solid foundation that all state partners may build upon in implementing their ARRA strategies to assist Georgians during this difficult time. The Governor's Office of Workforce Development worked with the Executive Committee of the State WIB to review and provide comment on the Governor's plan. The Office of Workforce Development is working with local workforce areas and the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) to successfully implement this plan.

The Governor, working with Labor Commissioner Michael L. Thurmond, the state WIB and the state's overall ARRA team, is ensuring that workforce development activities involving ARRA funds are connected to Georgia Work Ready, where appropriate. This complements the extensive array of workforce strategies which serve as the foundation of Georgia's workforce system. Some of these strategies are described below.

Georgia has a long history of partnership with the technical college system. The two workforce partners work together at the state and local levels to enhance educational opportunities for workforce customers. Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding often fills in gaps in federal Pell or state HOPE grant funding and can support the needs of non-traditional students. The ARRA provides local workforce systems with funding for additional training classes, additional locations in which to provide training and the opportunity to develop new training models for effective customer outcomes. Technical colleges are working closely with their WIA partners on options such as conducting classes off-site and providing additional instructors. This will support the increased demand for occupational training.

As noted earlier, Georgia has state HOPE grants and scholarships, funded through the State Lottery. These in-state student grants are leveraged to provide workforce customers with more comprehensive packages of benefits to assist them in attending and completing training.

In 2003, Michael L. Thurmond, Commissioner of Labor, launched Georgia Works as an innovative job creation strategy, through which job seekers receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits can choose on-site workplace training for up to

eight weeks while still receiving Unemployment Insurance benefits. The employer can try out potential workers during this time, thereby taking some of the risk out of the hiring process. This successful strategy provides job seekers with the opportunity to showcase their talents, acquire new skills and network for their next permanent job. To date, more than 6,000 companies have participated and 57% of the claimants who have completed training have been hired during participation in the program. Information about the initiative is included on the GDOL website at www.dol.state.ga.us. Work Ready Certificates can assist future Georgia Works participants in achieving their employment goals, where industries require Work Ready Certificates for hiring.

Stimulus funds will significantly expand training resources throughout the state. Prior to the infusion of ARRA money, many local workforce systems had exhausted available funding and had waiting lists of customers interested in WIA-funded training. In addition to classroom occupational training, ARRA funds will enable customers to receive services such as paid work experience, internships, apprenticeships and customized training opportunities. Paid work experience and internships are win-win strategies for job seekers and businesses, as they allow companies to expand capacity at reduced cost. Stimulus funds will also permit more customers to receive supportive services and needs-related payments, in accordance with local Workforce Investment Board policies.

As a result of ARRA funding and, where applicable, connecting it to Georgia's current Work Ready Regions, Georgia will have additional resources to promote its high-growth and emerging industries, including biotechnology, advanced manufacturing and health care. Georgia's Governor was recently named BIO Governor of the Year in recognition of his support for biosciences industry growth in Georgia. Over the past three years, this industry has been encouraged and supported through funding of research, a designated venture capital fund and tax credits. In support of the bioscience industry and the work of the Innovation Crescent Work Ready Region team, there has been an expansion of biosciences curriculum at major universities in the state. Additionally, within this region, a biosciences curriculum pilot is underway in some secondary schools. This support should result in job growth in this important industry and related fields, while contributing to solutions for challenging medical and environmental conditions. For more information, visit the Regions section on www.gaworkready.org.

Local WIBs are updating their lists of demand occupations to prepare customers for emerging industries. Examples include Electronic Medical Records Technician, Patient Care Technician, Nuclear Power Engineer and Oxyfuel Welder. Local areas are also working with training providers to identify short-term training programs that can promote rapid reemployment.

Green jobs have been part of Georgia's industrial base for a number of years. With recent national focus on this significant sector, economic development and job promotion will be expanded. As previously mentioned, the Governor's Office of

Workforce Development provided overall state guidance on green jobs through its Statewide Energy Workforce Development Plan. Energy-related workforce development efforts will be guided by this plan in developing future initiatives. Some examples of initiatives underway throughout the state include:

- a. A collaboration among a workforce board, technical college and electric membership corporation to teach weatherization skills in an on-the-job training format.
- b. Efforts by local workforce boards, training providers and the Green Mechanical Council, an international non-profit organization, to establish coursework leading to a Green Awareness Certification. This will emphasize green technology, energy efficiency and the reduction of hazardous substances in manufacturing and construction.
- c. A partnership between a WIB, Green For All/Clean Energy Corps, the National Wildlife Federation, Georgia Power Company, Sustainable Atlanta and the City of Atlanta Watershed Management Office to provide green jobs work experience for older youth.

The Georgia Department of Labor has added fields in the automated database to capture Green Jobs when taking employers' job openings.

Georgia's workforce system has always focused on services to business customers. The GDOL career centers continue to have formal Employer Committees, which assist local workforce efforts through planning service strategies and connecting the workforce system to significant business developments. In return, participating employers receive information on timely topics and customized workforce services. Career centers have Business Resource Centers in which employers may conduct recruiting, screening and interviewing and/or access resources at no cost (e.g., fax machines, Internet access, etc.). Employer marketing representatives work throughout communities to assist businesses with their workforce needs. They also partner with Rehabilitation Employment Specialists in the Vocational Rehabilitation program to promote job opportunities for customers with disabilities and to provide technical assistance to employers regarding accommodations for workers with disabilities.

Local workforce boards involve private sector leaders, chambers of commerce and other industry groups in preparing the workforce for skills needed now and in the future. These partners are often members of other economic development boards, thereby broadening awareness to align workforce and economic development strategies. These partners are also working together using Georgia Work Ready tools; frequently this effort involves Certified Work Ready Communities.

Stimulus funds will permit local workforce systems to apply creative solutions to their communities' complex economic challenges. For instance, the Northwest Georgia area has been extremely hard-hit with layoffs and business closings. Many of

the jobs lost have been in the manufacturing sector, and many of the impacted workers have few transferrable skills. The Northwest Georgia WIB is a part of the leadership team for the Auto Alley Work Ready Region that is implementing a transformational strategy to move the core industry of that region from low skilled manufacturing to advanced automotive manufacturing. More information about their work is located on the Northwest Georgia web site (www.careerdepot.org) and the Georgia Work Ready web site. The Northwest Georgia WIB has also formed a Tri-State Regional Workforce Alliance in conjunction with adjoining WIBs in Alabama and Tennessee. The Alliance is promoting a regional approach to training and economic development. Some of the key activities of this partnership to date include all three states implementing Work Keys, developing a tri-state National Career Readiness Certificate database, funding a regional skills assessment, applying for federal grants and securing Volkswagen's new plant in Chattanooga. The Northwest Georgia WIB leads the tri-state alliance in documented National Career Readiness Certificate holders because of its Work Ready Region efforts and the success of Georgia Work Ready.

Local workforce systems have developed partnerships and models for career pathways to address the specific needs of their communities. For example, workforce, education and business partners are collaborating in the eastern part of the state to develop solutions for anticipated worker shortages in the energy industry. Another area is working with construction industry organizations and labor groups to ensure that trainees have the proper skills and certification to meet the needs of that industry. A third workforce area plans to develop customized training agreements with labor organizations whose apprenticeship programs are on the statewide Eligible Provider List. These projects, where applicable, are connected to Georgia Work Ready.

A local WIB is working with its technical college to develop a curriculum in logistics and supply chain management that will allow workers in that industry to progress. This effort is connected to implementation of a logistics Work Ready Region funded through a Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) grant for the three bases that will be closing in the metro Atlanta and Athens region. Areas in which Job Corps facilities are located are strengthening those linkages to promote career laddering for youth participants.

Several areas that have operated successful on-the-job training, work experience, or apprenticeship programs for years will consider expanding the capacity of these training models with the infusion of ARRA funds. Two areas that have apprenticeship programs in the health care field for youth are working to expand these opportunities to adult trainees. Further, some areas are developing occupational internships or targeted work experience opportunities for customers completing skills training. This provides customers with valuable experience and income until the job market rebounds.

D. Service Delivery Strategies, Support for Training

Through the Be Work Ready initiative, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development is providing the opportunity for statewide access to ARRA funds. To streamline the process and ensure that all eligible individuals, community organizations, government agencies and businesses have equal access to ARRA funds, the Office of Workforce Development has created an ARRA web site linked from the home page of Georgia Work Ready. Through this site, a new process has been developed for Georgians to access ARRA funds for Be Work Ready through an on-line application process.

With the availability of ARRA funds, local workforce boards plan to increase the number of customers served by expanding both the array of services and service capacity. Examples of strategies under consideration include the following:

1. Funding additional classes in demand occupations
2. Expanding outreach to identify low-income adults through partnership with community action agencies and community- and faith-based organizations
3. Funding GED preparation classes
4. Hiring additional career advisors and support staff to work with the expanded customer base
5. Placing WIA-funded staff in community centers to reach eligible customers
6. Working with technical colleges to develop short-term training programs that involve stackable credentials
7. Developing more opportunities for work experience, pre-vocational intensive training and on-the-job training
8. Using on-line, self-paced curriculum for incumbent, entry-level health care workers so they can advance their careers and fill critical jobs
9. Connecting these efforts to Georgia Work Ready, where applicable

Local workforce systems are also extending their hours of operation and expanding service capacity through the use of mobile units. Throughout the state, creative approaches are being developed to ensure that customers with disabilities, limited English proficiency or low literacy levels have the services and supports needed to make successful use of the workforce system. Areas are also offering additional support services and needs-based payments (e.g., for emergency rent, car repairs, eye glasses, and other unexpected needs) to help customers succeed in reaching their training and employment goals.

ARRA funding has already been provided to local WIBs and they are responding quickly to provide services to those in need. Areas are expanding their array of service providers and working with industry groups to identify critical jobs with worker shortages. This will allow them to provide businesses with the trained workers they need. Local WIA and Employment Services staff are collaborating to address employers' needs by providing a

continuum of workforce services. Technical colleges and economic developers are also involved in community projects to rebuild local economies.

For Georgia's summer youth employment program (STEP-UP), described in detail later in the plan, local workforce systems have expanded publicity to recruit youth, engaged additional community partners and involved a broad variety of public, non-profit and for-profit businesses to contribute to successful work experiences for thousands of Georgia's youth.

Section II. Service Delivery

A. State Governance and Collaboration

Governor Sonny Perdue has established a state-level ARRA Implementation Group, in which key senior staff from agencies receiving Recovery Act funds are involved. The group meets regularly to discuss strategies and to develop cross-agency teams to better leverage Recovery funds in Georgia and to reduce duplication of services. These meetings provide the opportunity for participating agencies to share ideas and gain an understanding of the larger context for the state's Recovery Act funds. The structure of Georgia's ARRA implementation team is depicted in Attachment A.

One example of cross-collaboration with ARRA is in energy-related jobs. The Governor's Office of Workforce Development provided guidance to all state agencies receiving any energy-related Recovery Act funds through its Statewide Energy Workforce Development Plan. The Office is also assisting by connecting Georgia Work Ready to all agencies' ARRA efforts.

This approach already had a strong foundation prior to enactment of ARRA; the education, economic development and workforce agencies in Georgia are part of an ongoing coordination initiative under the direction of the Governor. The Growing Georgia cluster has been meeting monthly for several years to strategize on economic development efforts within the state. The discussions and presentations keep these agencies abreast of work underway and also provide a platform for agencies to work together to promote positive outcomes.

The state WIB serves as a mechanism for promoting interagency collaboration, through the involvement of agencies and community partners. The Commissioner of Labor serves as Vice-Chair of the WIB Coordinating Council and state and local workforce staff participate in the board's activities on a routine basis. With implementation of the WIB Strategic Plan underway, workforce partners have a solid structure around which to integrate education, economic development and workforce development systems to promote the success of Georgia's businesses and workforce.

The State WIB has also established a working relationship with the local WIBs and meets regularly with them. As part of ARRA implementation, the leadership of both

state and local boards is meeting more often to discuss how best to accomplish the objectives of the Recovery Act. The State WIB serves in an advisory role to the Governor; thus, any state-level barriers identified and recommended solutions will be provided to the Governor for consideration.

Within the state's workforce development programs, Georgia is fortunate to have the Unemployment Insurance, Wagner-Peyser, Workforce Investment Act, Trade Act and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs and the labor market information division united under the leadership of the Commissioner of Labor. These programs also coordinate closely at the state and local levels with the Department of Human Resources (Food Stamp and TANF programs and services to older workers), the Department of Community Affairs (housing assistance to homeless and low-income individuals) and the Technical College System of Georgia (technical college training resources and many of the state's Adult Education programs). Stimulus funds will provide the resources to allow these partners to collaborate even more closely on behalf of the state's job seekers and businesses.

The additional funding provided through ARRA will give local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) greater opportunities to expand outreach and to collaborate with a greater array of community partners on behalf of job seekers who need training and supportive services. For instance, local systems will have the resources to partner with community- and faith-based partners. This will assist in meeting the additional customer needs that are surfacing due to the depth of the economic downturn. Thus, food banks and food pantries, churches providing clothing and rent assistance, domestic violence organizations and others increasingly have a role to play in helping workforce customers and their families sustain themselves until their next job is secured. Local areas are expanding outreach and partnerships with organizations such as Family Connections, ministerial associations, public libraries, the YouthBuild program, housing authorities, the Veterans Administration and apprenticeship programs. Through these avenues more customers who need the assistance will be trained using approaches and in settings that make sense in these economic times.

The Georgia Department of Labor and its partners have collaborated in new and creative ways to address the needs of workforce customers. During the first few months of 2009, the Georgia Department of Labor joined forces with major media outlets to sponsor two career expos in metropolitan areas (Atlanta and Macon). Nearly 20,000 customers attended the Atlanta Career Expo, at which they had the opportunity to: work with experts to enhance their résumés; attend workshops on timely topics; conduct on-line job searches; learn about Georgia Work Ready Certificates; learn about training opportunities; talk with community organizations that could assist them with resources; explore other state-and federally-funded services; and meet employers who are currently hiring. The Macon Career Expo had a similar array of services, with more than 5,000 customers attending that event.

B. Reemployment Services and Wagner-Peyser Act Services

The State of Georgia has developed a seamless service delivery system through which workers who lose their jobs are able to apply for Unemployment Insurance benefits, have their Profiling score determined, register with the Employment Service and begin reemployment services all during their first visit to a career center. This structure ensures that customers are exposed to the full range of core and intensive services funded by Wagner-Peyser as soon as they enter the workforce system. Coordination among the One-Stop partners has contributed to Georgia's status as a national leader in getting customers back to work quickly. The American Institute for Full Employment awarded its 2008 "Full Employment Award" to the Georgia Department of Labor in recognition of the department's excellence and commitment to the reemployment of Unemployment Insurance claimants. Despite the challenging economy in the state, Georgia continues to maintain an average Unemployment Insurance duration that is significantly lower than the national average.

The Georgia Department of Labor has established a consistent set of reemployment services, including job search workshops, one-on-one résumé preparation assistance, career guidance, job referral and job development, and mechanisms to explore training opportunities and other community services. Unemployment Insurance benefit recipients who have been assessed as likely to have difficulty in returning to work are scheduled to report to the local career center to review their work search efforts, typically during the 5th, 9th and 14th weeks of their claim. During these visits, reemployment services are provided. A standard menu of service offerings is available to all customers throughout the state. However, career center staff work with each customer to identify his or her specific needs and tailor the service offerings to address those needs. For example, career centers provide a variety of workshops from which customers may choose, including interviewing skills, financial management, job retention and others.

A continuum of services is available for customers so they may access those resources and types of assistance pertinent to their particular needs. Support and assistance are provided using a triage approach that enables staff to direct customers to appropriate services. Each program is integrally involved in the system through the provision of core or intensive services to job seekers. At the beginning of the continuum, all career centers have resource areas in which customers may obtain core information and core self-services, including: exploring career paths; determining which of their transferrable skills may be in demand in their local economy or beyond; developing or enhancing their résumé; conducting on-line job searches; taking skill-based tests; and accessing other self-service tools and resources. These areas are also equipped with fax machines, copiers, books and DVDs to help customers succeed with reemployment. All of these resources are available to job seekers at no charge. Assistive technology is available for customers with disabilities and staff provide customers with assistance in using resources as needed.

To expand service options and to promote all possible job opportunities, the department launched Jobs 4 Georgia in December 2008. Jobs 4 Georgia permits businesses to post job openings through e-mail, fax or a statewide toll-free telephone contact. GDOL central office staff respond by providing information and assisting with job postings, as needed. This effort supports and assists career centers by allowing them to focus on their on-site workload while expanding the pool of job openings to which qualified job seekers may be referred. Jobs 4 Georgia provides an additional mechanism to assist the business community with their workforce needs in a way that does not add to local staff workload.

The capacity of Georgia's nationally-recognized Rapid Response system will also be enhanced through the inclusion of ARRA funds. The department provides comprehensive Rapid Response services throughout the state; in 2008, 18,000 workers from 145 companies were assisted. Supported by close coordination with career centers, local Workforce Investment Boards, Trade Act staff, employers, economic development officials and elected officials, the department developed a system for efficient and effective deployment of resources and services customized to the needs of the community and impacted workers. Considerations underway for ARRA-funded service enhancements include support of regional training labs, distance learning hardware to deliver staff and customer training, and technology enhancements for Rapid Response documentation as well as linkages with Trade Act, Wagner-Peyser and WIA data.

While all claimants receive quality reemployment services, targeted customer groups have the opportunity for customized services. For example, workforce staff are addressing the needs of veterans, their spouses and other dislocated workers through the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) initiative in several parts of the state. At two of the bases, GDOL and WIA staff members are working with the Governor's Office of Workforce Development, an industry group and community partners to build a career pathway in logistics/supply chain management for workers who are losing their jobs. The non-profit organization TechBridge is working with a local WIB to offer a computer training curriculum for beginning and intermediate levels of computer literacy. These classes, taught by volunteers at the workforce center on Saturdays, help customers learn basic computer functionality, how to search the Internet for jobs and to develop résumés. Additionally, where sufficient need exists within particular communities, career expos for segments of the workforce (e.g., veterans, youth or professionals) are developed.

Technology is a key component in the state's workforce system. The Georgia Department of Labor's web site includes the state's job bank, career exploration tools, training resources and ways to fund training, extensive national, state and local labor market information and a variety of other resources. The department has worked since passage of the ARRA to determine how to best use hardware, software, and information technology staff and contractors to provide even more comprehensive service offerings to members of the workforce and business community.

The department is actively engaged in developing a job seeker on-line application process; this project will be accelerated by ARRA funding. The department is also exploring the purchase of additional e-tools for assessment, career exploration and other resources to assist job seekers in becoming reemployed quickly. On-line business services will also be expanded and new ones developed with the use of Recovery Act funds.

In addition, the department is evaluating current labor market information services and tools to determine opportunities for enhancement. The staff of the Workforce Information and Analysis Division solicit and respond to customer feedback regarding resources to ensure that needs of the diverse workforce system customers and partners are met. Consideration will also be given to adding labor market analysts with Recovery Act funds. This would assist job seekers, career advisors and education curriculum developers to more quickly make decisions that will promote rapid reemployment. Many of the local WIBs have established web sites, which will include ARRA-funded services and initiatives.

Other creative reemployment service strategies under consideration using ARRA funds include more career expos, training expos and mechanisms for effective customer networking. Hiring of time-limited staff is already underway and just-in-time training modules are under development at the state level, to ensure rapid deployment of additional staff to handle the expanded volume of job seekers.

As noted earlier, Georgia's workforce system provides a full range of services for job seekers including self-service options (within career centers, partner locations and via the Internet), facilitated self-help services and staff-assisted services (e.g., workshops, one-on-one career guidance, job search assistance, résumé preparation assistance, job development and referral to other services). There are 53 full-service sites throughout the state at which customers can receive these resources and assistance. Local workforce areas work closely with career centers to ensure a seamless continuum of core and intensive services to meet diverse customers' needs. Additional One-Stop sites, temporary service locations and transition centers expand the reach of these services to ensure they are accessible and available to all customers who need them. Local workforce systems have also expanded service hours, including Saturdays, to increase access for the unprecedented number of customers visiting career centers. Staff are accommodating this change through use of four, 10 hour day schedules.

Job listings are included in the state job bank and uploaded nightly to the national JobCentral site. Local WIBs have been encouraged to post jobs generated through ARRA on the GDOL job bank. Data fields for capturing and tracking ARRA-related and Green job openings have been added to the automated system. Georgia has also recently expanded the ways in which businesses can receive workforce assistance through Jobs 4 Georgia.

C. Adult and Dislocated Worker Services

The GDOL career centers and the statewide Rapid Response network serve as the "front door" to Georgia's workforce services, ensuring the availability of core services for all workforce customers. With its integrated customer information and reporting database, known as the Georgia Workforce System, or GWS, Unemployment Insurance, Employment Service and WIA staff can identify all services provided to a particular customer and quickly determine next steps. This integrated database also means that customers provide demographic information only once, no matter which services they access. ARRA funds will permit additional linkages between this database and the ones used for Trade Act services and Vocational Rehabilitation. Universal access to the workforce system is also promoted through self-service tools included on the GDOL web site, cross-training of staff and collaborative service strategies, highlighted throughout the plan.

ARRA funds will help Georgia build additional capacity for the workforce system. Since ARRA was passed, 11 training providers and 43 programs have been added to the statewide Eligible Training Provider List. Of the programs added, nearly half are medical services and several are in emerging biotechnology fields. These new programs will help prepare unemployed and underemployed Georgians for quality jobs that will be available in the near future.

A noteworthy facet of the current economic downturn is the number of men that have been laid off. In prior recessions, layoffs have more often involved industries and occupations dominated by women - low-skill manufacturing, telecommunications, call centers, and others. The current recession has resulted in layoffs across virtually all industries, but with the financial and housing crises, the construction, finance and transportation sectors have been forced to lay off portions of their workforce. One strategy Georgia is using to respond to the increased need for support is the Fatherhood Program. This is a partnership among the Georgia Department of Human Resources/Office of Child Support Enforcement, the Technical College System of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Labor and the Board of Pardons and Parole. Through this collaborative effort, non-custodial parents who are unemployed or underemployed are provided education, training and job search assistance. For Program Year 2008, 27,000 non-custodial parents participated and 59% of them obtained employment. Of these, 1,677 customers were provided specialized services and 899 (54%) entered employment.

Local WIBs will continue to work with the Department of Family and Children Services, housing authorities, Family Connections and other organizations that serve low-income individuals to ensure that all persons in need receive core workforce services. In addition to the standard set of core services, some One-Stops offer free tax preparation, clothing for interviews and screening for other services on-site.

Local workforce areas collaborate extensively with partners to identify and develop a continuum of services to support the needs of customers, particularly those who are

low-income or low-skilled. Examples of partners and the resources made available to workforce customers include:

- TANF, Food Stamps and Women, Infants and Children (WIC) programs
- State Children's Health Insurance Program
- Office of Emergency and Transitional Housing
- Housing Authorities
- Community- and Faith-based Organizations
- Community Services Block Grant programs
- Community Action Agencies
- Area Agencies on Aging
- Family Connections
- Georgia Work Ready
- Technical Colleges
- Adult Literacy and English as a Second Language services

Stimulus funds will provide local systems with the opportunity to add additional strategies, such as a transportation coordinator to help training customers identify job opportunities they can realistically access based on their transportation constraints, and on-line job clubs providing resources to customers with particular skills sets.

Developing additional training capacity, given the state's reduced budget status, has been a challenge. Local workforce systems are developing a variety of solutions using ARRA funds that can expand capacity to serve the large volume of customers interested in training. Some examples include:

1. Funding classes at technical colleges in demand occupations
2. Developing expanded Memoranda of Understanding for new options with existing training providers (e.g., on-line training, short-term certificate programs, new courses in emerging industries, and others)
3. Soliciting providers for green job skills training

The Unemployment Insurance and Employment Services programs provide a fairly uniform set of services across all career centers, while models and approaches for the delivery of WIA services are more customized to meet the needs of specific communities. The specific menu of WIA services is determined by local WIBs working with their business and community partners. State staff support local workforce systems through federal and state policy guidance and ongoing technical assistance. Roundtable meetings provide opportunities for policy guidance, information-sharing and peer support on timely topics. There is a statewide integrated database for customer information and reporting that is supported from the state level; however, each WIB determines how it will organize its service delivery strategies for businesses and job seekers, including which methods and tools to use for customer

assessment. Instruments such as the TABE, CareerScope and Work Keys are commonly used by the local areas.

Within the broad federal and state guidelines, local areas determine the approaches for outreach and services to customers they deem most in need. GDOL is encouraging local areas to review their processes, timeframes and eligibility requirements in order to streamline service delivery for the increased number of customers to be served with ARRA funds.

D. Youth Services

Local workforce areas have a variety of effective youth service strategies in place. ARRA funds provide the opportunities to increase the level of these services and the number of youth that can be served.

Activities for older youth currently include GED/employability programs, on-the-job training, achieving Georgia Work Ready Certificates and improving levels through skills gap training, work experience, internships, apprenticeship, occupational training, leadership development, mentoring, career exploration and job search assistance. These activities are carried out through partnerships with community- and faith-based organizations, technical colleges, secondary education partners and alternative schools, the juvenile justice system, housing authorities, foster care programs and other workforce partners. Stimulus funding will permit the 20 local workforce areas to work with these organizations to recruit additional youth who might benefit from WIA services.

A few of the strategies under consideration with ARRA funding include: combining GED preparation with construction training, through which youth will build and renovate homes for low-income families; work experience with community organizations on energy conservation projects; and a program designed to mentor and promote successful workforce outcomes for young fathers.

The Georgia Department of Labor has provided funding to local workforce areas for the past several years for summer work experience jobs. Since 2003, more than 6,000 youth have been assisted through this approach. By committing state funds, Georgia continued the concept and philosophy of the Summer Youth Program from the Job Training Partnership Act, which provided dedicated federal funding for summer employment.

With this infrastructure in place, Georgia's local WIBs are well-positioned for the tremendous opportunities provided by the ARRA summer youth funding. For the summer of 2009, Georgia has designed a large-scale summer program, called Summer Training and Employment Program - Unlimited Potential, or STEP-UP. The goal of STEP-UP is to get young people prepared to succeed in the world of work. To plan this effort, strategic discussions were held with local workforce staff and board members, service providers and others to determine methods for increasing service

capacity and the breadth of partners/providers participating in the summer employment program. Tools have been developed and technical assistance provided to help local areas engage youth and service providers quickly. The state-level guidance provided to date includes program planning documents, templates for contract work and service agreements, submittal of waiver requests to the U.S. Department of Labor, service provider implementation training, basic skills assessment policy and models, a comprehensive monitoring tool and other technical assistance. A STEP-UP program readiness tool was developed at the state level, and on-site reviews will be conducted in all local areas. Additionally, the automated system has been modified to capture necessary information for the STEP-UP program.

Work experience is the core component of STEP-UP and public, private non-profit and for-profit work sites will be used. Worksites developed to match the interests and goals of youth will offer young Georgians an opportunity to earn wages and develop valuable employment skills necessary to succeed in the challenging labor market. Classroom-based learning will also be provided for youth needing academic assistance, such as leadership, work ethic, SAT/ACT preparation, summer school and basic skills training. The work readiness of each youth participant will be measured to ensure that the services provided have added value. Several workforce areas are using Georgia Work Ready skills gap training and receiving support from the Governor's Office of Workforce Development to document improvement in work readiness levels for youth participants, where appropriate.

Older, out-of-school youth participating in the summer employment program will undergo basic skills testing. This will provide participants with more meaningful experiences through better matching of skills and interests to worksites, as well as creating more productive outcomes for participating employers. These youth will also receive remedial and developmental training, in addition to work experience, where test results indicate the need for such assistance. With the extension to age 24 for ARRA youth activities, it is anticipated that Georgia will provide services to many young adults with low reading and math skills. This is another area in which local workforce areas use Georgia Work Ready Certificates and Work Habits tools to help prepare "disconnected" youth for work, where appropriate.

The STEP-UP initiative focuses on demand industries, especially those linked to energy conservation and green jobs. An example of a successful private/public partnership is that of Georgia Power/Southern Company, the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia and affiliates to expose youth to in-demand "green jobs" and the energy industry. This partnership has resulted in the identification of more than 50 locations statewide that are interested in supporting older, out-of-school youth in a summer internship program.

The local workforce areas have engaged in aggressive public awareness and recruitment campaigns to identify a diverse group of youth aged 14-24 for STEP-UP. These efforts included multiple media outlets and partners who work with youth, such

as agencies who work with youth with disabilities, youth who are offenders or part of the juvenile justice system, youth in foster care, youth enrolled in Jobs for Georgia Graduates, high school dropouts, and others in need who meet eligibility requirements. Outreach and recruitment efforts will continue until service capacity is reached. The department's vision is for 10,000 or more Georgia youth to be served this summer, at an average cost of \$2,600. Georgia expects to spend virtually all of the summer youth ARRA funds during the summer of 2009.

Georgia has requested and received waivers from the U.S. Department of Labor to assist local workforce areas in more effectively and efficiently using youth ARRA funds. The first waiver allows local areas to conduct expedited, limited competition to select service providers for the STEP-UP program. This has allowed areas to implement summer youth employment opportunities effectively in the short timeframes available. The second waiver allows areas to use the work readiness indicator as the sole measure for older, out-of-school youth who participate in work experience only with ARRA funds.

The state requires the workforce areas to have a comprehensive plan for demonstrating transparency and accountability. Examples of steps local areas are taking include: aggressive media campaigns to increase public awareness; enhanced web sites; meetings and presentations at public forums; web blasts; outreach at schools, chambers of commerce, economic development and other business partners; posting of jobs on local and GDOL web sites; creation of WIB oversight sub-committees for ARRA; checklists and processes for financial accountability; extensive publication and distribution of requests for proposals; Youth Council oversight; specific documentation for all ARRA activities; and participant tracking sheets.

Ongoing recognition of successes and end-of-summer celebrations will be major components of STEP-UP. These will promote individual achievement and public awareness and appreciation of the initiative. Commissioner Thurmond plans to provide each youth participating in the summer employment program with a certificate, and many local appreciation events are planned as well. The department and all 20 of Georgia's local workforce areas are committed to ensuring that STEP-UP is the best summer employment program in the nation and provides outstanding experiences for Georgia's youth and employers.

Each of Georgia's local Workforce Investment Boards has policies in place regarding supportive services. In many instances, they are considering increasing the levels of support and/or the types of assistance provided. For example, in addition to the customary transportation and child support assistance, areas are contemplating stipends for miscellaneous expenses, emergency rent or utility assistance and incentives for satisfactory attendance in school or occupational training.

E. Veterans' Priority of Service

Staff members in Georgia's workforce system currently identify all veterans at their point of entry into the workforce system, for purposes of ensuring priority of service. Procedures are under development for identifying and extending this priority of service to eligible spouses, as defined by the Jobs for Veterans Act.

Each local WIB has established written policies regarding veterans' priority of service in accordance with federal regulations. The annual review process allows state staff to ensure that service priority is carried out locally in accordance with federal laws, regulation and policy guidance. Georgia has a long-standing commitment to ensuring quality services to veterans and their families. Some examples of this are the successful demonstration project to provide training grants to spouses of active duty military personnel and Operation Welcome Home - an initiative highlighted on the department's web site with services and resources available to assist returning veterans as they transition to civilian life.

In addition, Georgia Work Ready Regions incorporate strategies for including veterans in career pathways developed for high demand jobs. In the Fort Benning area, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development, in coordination with one of the GDOL career centers and the local workforce area, has successfully implemented the Career Advancement Account (CAA) mil spouse grant; more than 400 spouses of active Fort Benning soldiers have participated in the program to date.

F. Service Delivery to Targeted Populations

Georgia's workforce system has developed a variety of strategies to address the diverse needs of the workforce. The current recession has changed, to some extent, the type of customers served through the workforce system. More professionals and workers displaced from virtually all industries are now seeking services. Even the health care and education sectors have laid off portions of their workforce. Thus, the workforce system is developing creative strategies to effectively serve new customer groups with different needs and expectations. Approaches will remain consistent with the prioritization of services currently in place throughout the state. The following guidelines assist local WIBs in determining service priority:

- Priority for services, including training, will be given to covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses)
- Public assistance recipients and low-income customers will receive priority under ARRA funds
- WIBs may also choose to prioritize services for other target populations. Typically this will involve priority for individuals with one or more barriers to employment (e.g., school dropouts, offenders, residents with limited English

proficiency, underemployed individuals and other factors relevant to the local community)

- Training funds should assist individuals to build on existing skills

Stimulus funding will allow local systems to add career counselors and job coaches, regional Rapid Response coordinators and other staff who can provide targeted services to particular customer groups. New service strategies are also underway to promote employment and training solutions. For example, the Georgia Department of Labor has launched an innovative service integration strategy to promote employment of job seekers with disabilities. Customers applying for Vocational Rehabilitation services and job-ready customers with disabilities are offered an orientation to career center services and resources. The strategy is known as OASIS - Orientation, Ability and Service Identification Seminar. The workshop is followed by a detailed assessment of the job seeker's abilities, skills, interests and job readiness, conducted jointly by Employment Service and Vocational Rehabilitation staff. Customers who are job-ready enter structured job search activities targeted to their skills and workforce strengths. Individuals needing additional services or supports are referred to appropriate providers. The service integration strategy is envisioned as a win-win effort for businesses needing qualified workers and job seekers with disabilities.

For the past year and a half, Disability Program Navigators have been working with all career centers throughout the state to provide staff with information, tools and resources to effectively serve additional customers with disabilities. Georgia's Disability Program Navigators will continue their efforts in Program Year 2009, conducting outreach to job seekers with disabilities and promoting service strategies across workforce partners, to increase the employment of individuals with disabilities.

G. Retaining Jobs

The Governor's Office of Workforce Development, on behalf of the Governor, has submitted a waiver request to allow up to 20% of ARRA Rapid Response funds to be used for Incumbent Worker Training at facilities adversely impacted by the economic downturn. The intent is to provide a strong offensive to assist companies in keeping a competitive edge through improved productivity and reduction in waste - thereby saving jobs across the state.

Section III. Operations

A. Transparency and Public Comment

Georgia's current WIA State Plan has been posted on the GDOL web site for several years and public comment has always been encouraged and welcomed. Request for public comment for the Program Year 2009 modification, including waiver requests,

was posted in April 2009. Local workforce plans are posted on the department's web site as well. Additionally, state-level workforce partners have been invited to review the current plan and offer recommendations for the Program Year 2009 update.

This ARRA plan was reviewed by and includes suggestions and revisions from the Executive Committee of the State WIB.

GDOL requires each of Georgia's 20 local workforce areas to have a comprehensive plan to demonstrate transparency and accountability. Examples of steps local areas have taken include: aggressive media campaigns to enhance public awareness; meetings and presentations at public forums; web site enhancements; posting of jobs on local and GDOL sites; the creation of WIB oversight committees for ARRA; processes and instruments for financial accountability; Youth Council oversight; and designated documentation for ARRA-funded activities.

B. Increasing Services for Universal Access

Georgia's workforce system includes an extensive network of full-service offices, community access points and electronic services. Stimulus funding will provide the opportunity to consider additional options for customer self-services, staff training and technology solutions to expand the reach of existing universal services. Hiring of staff is already underway to serve the increased number of customers requesting assistance throughout the state.

C. Local Planning Process

The local planning process has been designed to gather needed information while allowing local WIBs time to plan the summer employment program and adjust their strategies given the influx of funding through ARRA. Shortly after receiving information about the ARRA funding, state staff provided local areas with written guidance and conducted a roundtable discussion focused on the STEP-UP program. In late March, areas were asked to provide a preliminary overview of their summer youth program by completing a STEP-UP implementation plan. Focus groups that included local workforce staff were then conducted to discuss and strategize on topics such as data collection, performance outcomes, reporting, finance and programmatic issues. Local planning guidance, which included a Template for Contract Work and Services for STEP-UP, was then issued. Formal local STEP-UP plans were due in mid-April. The state has continued to provide information as additional federal policy guidance and additional state tools have been produced. This communication process will continue throughout ARRA implementation.

Local WIBs provided informal input into their plans for the use of ARRA funds so that their strategies could be included in this state-level plan. Guidance for formal local WIA plan modifications will be provided late this summer, with the modifications due in October.

D. Procurement

With the additional funds available through ARRA and the need to develop innovative service strategies in these challenging economic times, Labor Commissioner Michael Thurmond encouraged local workforce areas to increase both service capacity and the number/configuration of partners and providers to assist with implementation and operation of STEP-UP. In accordance with TEGL 14-08, local areas were able to expand existing contracts, as long as ARRA-specific provisions were included. However, local areas are also expected to solicit and use new providers for STEP-UP and other ARRA-funded activities.

The state requested and has received a waiver to allow local areas to expedite procurement for activities such as Outreach and Recruitment, Intake and Eligibility Determination, Counseling, Specialized Assessments, Worksite Development, Monitoring and others. Local areas also have the option to use existing contractors and providers to sub-contract with additional partners for services. Another possibility is for areas to use an expedited procurement process for targeted groups, such as out-of-school youth, who will be served in greater numbers due to the availability of ARRA funds. All procurements are conducted by local WIBs under state oversight. Finally, GDOL will encourage local areas to engage their local technical college partners in contracts that permit expanded training opportunities.

E. Technical Assistance

GDOL provides ongoing technical assistance to local workforce areas through the use of Field Representatives. State staff are assigned to specific local areas and serve as the single point of contact for two-way communication, dissemination of new information, program design assistance, staff training, assistance with local governance issues and other technical assistance. This provides an effective way to ensure that local areas receive timely information and support. The Field Representatives attend local WIB and Youth Council meetings, job fairs and other local events.

Training roundtables, facilitated by state staff, are conducted regularly on topics of interest to local areas. Examples of sessions held include performance management, use of the WIA/TAA Tracking and Reporting System and use of the Georgia Workforce System (GWS). Specific written guidance, statewide meetings and on-site technical assistance have been provided to local areas to prepare for the ARRA summer youth program.

GDOL career centers are supported through a strong regional and statewide structure. The 53 career centers are grouped geographically into eight districts, each with a District Director who reports to the Assistant Commissioner for Field Services at the state level. The Field Services Division assists District Directors and career centers with operational and personnel issues on a day-to-day basis. Programmatic technical assistance and training is provided by staff in the Employment Services (ES) and

Unemployment Insurance (UI) Divisions in the state office. The UI Policy and Procedures Section has spearheaded the policy and system changes needed to implement provisions of the ARRA. The ES Management Information and Customer Support Section, assists career centers and local workforce areas with technical assistance on the automated system, performance issues and other technical topics. Staff members in this section also design system enhancements, in coordination with the Career Development Services Division, and provide training to local workforce staff.

Routine communication among management staff in the various divisions of GDOL facilitates coordinated and integrated strategies to address the complex challenges of the workforce system. Recovery Act funds will be used for state-level technical assistance, training and ongoing support to workforce staff throughout the state.

F. Monitoring and Oversight

Georgia has had a comprehensive monitoring process in place for local WIA programs for many years. These annual program reviews assess the strength and quality of local systems and explore opportunities for continuous improvement. The monitoring process includes an evaluation of performance, compliance and programmatic aspects of local systems. A uniform approach is taken across local areas, using a standardized Program Review Guide that covers all aspects of WIA, Trade, service provider activities and the core services provided by career centers and other partners.

The review team is led by Career Development Services staff and includes representatives from Field Services, Employment Services, Trade, Rapid Response and Financial Services. Technical assistance and resolution of issues is an integral part of the on-site review process, which typically takes two to three days. Observations identified by review team members are discussed with local staff. The team prepares a formal report following the review, and the area's Field Representative facilitates resolution of any findings. ARRA accountability will be assured by building relevant items into the established formal review process. In addition to formal reviews, state staff provide ongoing technical assistance to areas on timely topics, including ARRA.

A STEP-UP monitoring guide has been developed, with particular attention to ARRA rules and regulations. Monitoring the use of youth Recovery Act funding will be conducted in two phases. Phase I will involve on-site visits to all local WIA areas to review program design and customer participation, with a focus on younger youth. Using the results of these reviews, Phase II will focus on youth services after the summer, to specifically address older youth services, as well as management of financial and reporting activities.

Career centers have additional processes, in both Employment Services and Unemployment Insurance, which are monitored at the district level. Written review

results are submitted to the Assistant Commissioner for Field Services as part of the overall career center performance review process.

G. Accountability and Performance

In addition to the formal monitoring process just described, GDOL addresses WIA and Employment Service performance issues through routine reviews of performance data. The state also uses the WebFOCUS software package to retrieve and analyze data from the integrated automated system. Local staff are encouraged to use this software to create customized reports for a 'real-time' look at their activities and customer and program characteristics. A series of reports has been developed by state-level WebFOCUS experts for ease of use by local staff.

Standard reports are provided to local area staff at weekly, monthly and quarterly intervals to assist in identification of potential performance concerns or potential data entry errors. Technical assistance is provided as appropriate. The value of regular performance monitoring at the state and local levels is to manage customer data to accurately show the services provided and outcomes achieved. Through this process, workforce areas have the opportunity to adjust program design to enhance performance outcomes.

Additionally, GDOL has developed a WIA/TAA Tracking and Reporting System. This system allows local staff to create cost commitments for training and other activities, track the training expenses incurred by participants, print necessary training vouchers and other financial tracking activities. This system is integrated with the on-line customer database (GWS), for ease of use and to eliminate duplication in tasks. Modifications have been completed so that the system can capture and track obligations and expenditures related to ARRA.

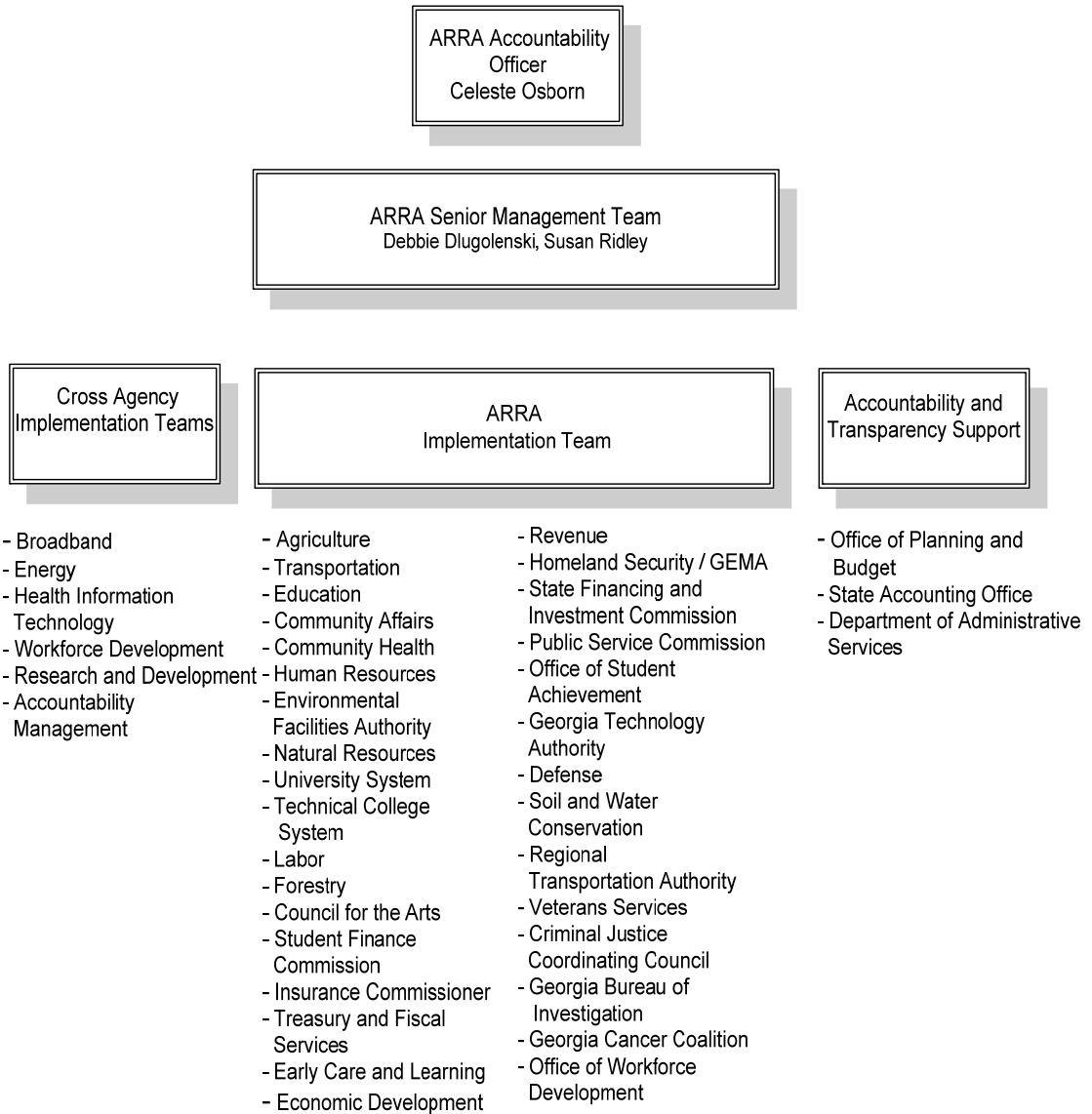
For the ARRA summer program (STEP-UP), the state has provided local areas with several work readiness tools, including the nationally-recognized SCANS Skills and Competencies checklist, CASAS and other federally-recommended examples. Local areas may adopt an existing tool, adapt one for local use or develop their own work readiness measures to gauge the effectiveness of services. Service effectiveness, measured by pre- and post-tests, will be monitored by local staff through review of sub-recipients and at the state level during on-site program reviews. In addition, the Governor's Office of Workforce Development is providing support to local areas using Georgia Work Ready skills gap training, to assist them in meeting youth reporting requirements through the documentation of improvements in work readiness skills.

The Governor's Office of Workforce Development is tracking the number of unemployed Georgians who have utilized Georgia Work Ready Certificates to find a job. The results to date may be found at www.gaworkready.org/pages/view/georgia-work-ready-recovery-data.

With a solid monitoring and reporting system already in place, Georgia has not yet identified any additional ARRA state-level system measures needed, but will continue to evaluate the current system to determine if additional measures are warranted. Critical automated system enhancements have already been made to enable identification and tracking of ARRA-funded services and additional programming changes will continue. Georgia will incorporate ARRA resources into ongoing efforts to build a world-class workforce.

Attachment A

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act Implementation Team



NOTE: The Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts will serve as the primary state auditor for the ARRA funds. As such, they will provide guidance and training to the implementation team as needed.

NOTE: The Georgia Office of the Inspector General will serve as the executive branch inspector for the ARRA funds. As such, they will provide accountability and investigative support to state government and respond to complaints of fraud.

Updated – May 29, 2009