



Local Workforce Investment Area Strategy

Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board
(Carbon, Monroe, Pike and Wayne Counties)

In response to the funding that is being made available to local workforce investment areas through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board puts forward this document which is the framework of its strategy for implementing programming funded by the Act.

Response to the PA Department of Labor & Industry

1. Provide an analysis of the LWIA's economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context.

The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board is actively involved in addressing the issues relating to plant closings and divisional downsizing due to the Economic Climate of the Region. Emphasis is directed on industries located within our geographic boundaries and throughout Northeastern Pennsylvania. The Board utilizes information provided by the CareerLinks, Economic and Industrial Development Agencies, Chambers of Commerce and the Industry Partnerships to address the needs of both the Dislocated Workforce and assistance to the companies. The Board has identified a significant number of companies that have laid off or terminated approximately 950 jobs to date in 2009.

Pocono Counties is experiencing a significant increase in the unemployment rate for the area. The State's unemployment rate for March, 2009, is 7.8%, Pocono Counties rate of 8.7% for the same time period ranks seventh highest in the State, Carbon County had a 9.8% unemployment rate for the month of March. The Unemployment Rate for the Workforce Investment Area a year ago was 5.6%. Specific companies within Pocono Counties that have laid off workers and/or are relocating:

*Roadway Express – 300 jobs
Liz Claiborne – 350 jobs (plant closing)
My Choice Medical – 85 jobs (plant closing)
Weiler Brush – 30 jobs
Mt. Airy Casino & Hotel – 30 jobs
Scotty's Fashions – 47
Horsehead Resource Development Co. – 100
Silberline – 100
Amatek – 8
DSFI – 35*

Considering the Economic down turn, it is extremely difficult to have companies commit to anticipated increases in their workforce. Tobyhanna Army Depot will continue to hire individuals as retirement occurs. The number should be significant because of the age of their current workforce. Sanofi, a manufacturer of vaccines located in the Workforce Investment Area will also be in a position to increase their workforce. The Board is working with these companies to provide assistance in meeting their human capital requirements.



The Board has identified skill gaps within the region as occupations in Health Care and Life Sciences (LLPN, CAN, Registered Nurses, ambulatory health care services, pharmacy technicians, home health aides) electrical and electronic equipment mechanics, installers and repairers, avionics technicians, production supervisors, maintenance and repair workers, welders, maintenance mechanics, chemical technicians, warehousing and storage, truck drivers, construction, information technology, retail services, hospitality tourism, gaming.

2. What is the LWIA's vision for ensuring a continuum of education and training opportunities that support a skilled workforce?

The Board will integrate Recovery Act Funds to promote economic recovery within the region, preserve and create jobs through innovative training opportunities which will encourage individuals to retool their skills and meet the demands of a 21st Century Workplace. *Advances in electronics and telecommunications will provide new opportunities at the Army Depot. Clean Energy Technology will advance development of additional jobs related to the Energy Cluster. Wind Farms and Solar Panel Fields are operating and in the development stage within the Workforce Investment Area.* Training opportunities will focus on addressing the changing needs of both the displaced worker and employers. The Board will also address emerging industries related to new and emerging occupations especially in Green Sectors of the regional economy. Emphasis will be placed on the development of Competencies and Apprenticeship Programs. The Regional Energy Partnership is at the forefront of cataloging training providers that can offer training on both a local and regional basis. The Career & Technical Schools, Community Colleges and State Universities are involved. The Board is also working directly with local action agencies to meet the demands of training for Weatherization Programs and Energy Auditory Training.

The Board has and will continue to interact with Area Career & Technical Institutes, Community Colleges, and educational and training providers to meet the training requirements of a skilled workforce. The Board will utilize information provided by the Industry Partnership to be more responsive to the current and future needs of industry.

3. What is the LWIA's vision for ensuring that every youth has the opportunity for developing and achieving career goals through education and workforce training, including the young people most in need of assistance, such as out-of-school youth, homeless youth, youth in foster care, youth aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents, migrant and seasonal farm worker youth, youth with disabilities, and other youth at risk?

The Board has and will continue to provide eligible youth the opportunity to develop and achieve career goals through education and workforce training. The Board's Priority of Services Policy funding opportunities directed to Youth who face serious barriers to employment and represent a segment of the population most in need of services:

- School Dropouts
- Basic Skills Deficient
- Out-of-School Youth
- Foster Care
- Behind Grade Level
- Pregnant or Parenting
- Individuals with Disabilities
- Homeless or Runaway
- Offenders



The Board will expand this group to include youth aging out of foster care, children of incarcerated parents and migrant and seasonal farm workers. The Board has always maintained a Summer Youth Work Experience Component to Youth Activities. Recovery Act Funding will allow the Board to increase participation in Summer Programs and also allow for youth to participate for a greater amount of time. Recovery Act Youth Funds will also allow funding of a year round Work Experience Component. The Board has funded Work Experience Programs for At-Risk Incarcerated Youth at various Camp Detention Centers within the Workforce Investment Area. Participants provide Community Service Work Experience with an Educational and Vocational Training Component. Wages provided to participants are utilized to pay fines and related court costs. The Recovery Act Funds will be directed to this priority group. The additional funds will allow more youth to participate and allow for a longer period of participation and provide valuable community services to Non-Profit Organizations within the Workforce Investment Area.

Past Program Performance Requirements (Common Measures) for the Incarcerated Youth Program resulted in a relatively small program. Recovery Act Funding does not require follow-up which will allow the Board to increase significantly the number of youth served.

The Board has and will continue to target youth most in need of participation in youth funded programs. Local Public Assistance Offices, Juvenile Court System, Children and Youth and all youth related agencies will be solicited to assist in identifying eligible youth. Pocono Counties is prepared to enroll eligible youth in a Work Experience Program, effective, May 15, 2009.

The Board will ensure participating worksites understand their responsibilities to be viable worksites that mirror actual work experience and include work readiness skills. Youth Pre-Apprenticeship Programs will be funded and Private-Sector Work Experience Opportunities.

The work experience opportunities for in-school youth will be provided by public/non-profit entities in our region. Whenever possible, we try to provide work experience opportunities for this population in positions that allow the participant to explore occupations that they are interested in, such as hospitals for those considering health care occupational goals, etc. For most of this population, transportation limitations within our rural counties does not always allow us to match a participant with a specific worksite related to their area of interest. For the Out-of-School Youth served, who may have better access to transportation, we will try to develop worksites specific to their employment or training goals. These are the participants most likely to be matched with private sector worksites. The Out-of-School participants have more diverse work experience opportunities due to the fact that they are not constrained by Child Labor Law restrictions on allowable work activities. Training opportunities, either through ITA's or OJT services, are always focused on high demand occupational goals. The use of ITA's also ensures that youth served through these services receive credentials in highly marketable careers.

4. Identify the LWIA's key workforce investment system priorities and how each will lead to actualizing the LWIA's vision for workforce and economic development.

The economic climate within the region requires the Board to focus on Workforce Investment Strategies that are flexible and responsible. The Board will utilize the Recovery Act Funds to increase access to employment, training and support services to the priority groups identified in the Act to gain and/or enhance skills necessary to rejoin the



workforce. Economic conditions and the high unemployment rates within the region will require serving many more individuals in need of employment and training services. Emphasis will be placed on providing employment and training services to public assistance recipients in the adult program. Collaboration and Partnerships with agencies and organizations involved with Recovery Act activities will be required to leverage workforce resources. The Board will coordinate the alignment of basic education, post secondary, career and technical training, supportive services in providing assistance to low skill workers.

Preserve and create jobs and promote economic recovery. The Board understands the importance of preserving and creating jobs within the Workforce Investment Area and the Region. The Board has invested considerable time and resources in a number of Industry Partnerships. All partnership activities in the Northeast include three other Workforce Investment Boards: Lackawanna, Luzerne/Schuylkill and the Northern Tier Workforce Investment Areas. Interaction with the Partnership provides valuable information to assist the respective companies participating to provide Incumbent Worker Training Programs to strengthen the companies ability to compete during an economic down turn. The interaction with companies in the Partnership provides information on potential layoffs and allows our CareerLinks to interact in a very timely manner with the affected employees. The company interaction also provides information on job openings within the company. It is essential to assist our existing industry with resources to maintain a competitive edge within the region. Although Recovery Act Funds cannot be utilized for Partnership activity, we can direct Dislocated Workers to training programs identified by employers and also the *Pocono Counties WIA priority of service policy will not need to be changed to adapt to the priority service goals of the ARRA. Our past and current priority of service policy matches the goals of the ARRA, specifically serving the needs of those receiving public assistance. The only change to our current priority of service policy is to add Veterans and Spouses of Veterans to our high priority service policy guidelines*

5. What strategies are in place to address the Governor's priorities, the LWIA's priorities, and the workforce development issues identified through the analysis of the LWIA's economy and labor market?

The Board has directed WIA Formula Funding to be used to fund training programs, primarily ITA's, for eligible Adult, Youth and Dislocated Workers. The Board has expended over 65% of Formula Funds for actual training activities. The Economic Down Turn has resulted in increased numbers of individuals requiring training. The Stimulus Funds will be used to provide employment and training opportunities for said individuals. The Board will continue to direct over 60% of the Stimulus Funds for training.

The Board is committed to providing education and training assistance to Adult and Dislocated Workers including low income Adults. The Board wants to assist those most impacted by the recession. The CareerLinks are prepared to provide information and guidance to assist people during this Economic Down Turn. Interaction with our CareerLink Partners will provide an umbrella of Employment, Training and Social Services. Recovery Act Funds will provide employment, training and educational services to the needy.

Interaction with the Career & Technical Schools, Community Colleges and Universities have provided training programs for existing, emerging and high growth occupations. We are fortunate to have excellent relationships with the education and training community who have and will develop specialty training to meet the needs of regional employers. The Board's experience with Welfare Funded Training Programs allow for the development of all types of training to meet the needs of under-skilled adults.



All service strategies utilized by the CareerLinks and other service locations within the Pocono Counties WIA start with a thorough evaluation of the current skills, experience, prior educational attainment, and the financial support resources available to each customer. This information, along with the customer's occupational goals, is reviewed in order to formulate an individual employment plan. This information is reviewed with the customer to determine both the short-term steps, as well as laying out a foundation to help them with longer-term employment or training goals. The CareerLink services, along with other community resources are identified that might be of assistance in helping our customers achieve their individual goals. In many cases, entry level occupation or training goals are identified that are likely to provide for career pathways to higher level occupations within that industry or occupation.

The Board is actively engaged with community colleges, business and labor organizations, apprenticeship programs, civic groups and community based organizations aligning workforce and educational strategies both within the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area and Regionally. The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board is working with five other Workforce Investment Boards on Workforce Alignment Strategies with our Formula Fund Allocations. Recovery Act Funds will now be a part of the established partnering process.

Local and Regional Employer needs have and will continue to be determined by direct interaction from representatives of our Business Service Teams. Active engagement of employers throughout the Workforce Investment Board, especially via the Industry Partnership Networks. Employers are members of our Business Education Partnerships which organize a platform for Employers to interact directly with Education and Training Providers to assess, develop and implement relevant training needs of employers.

The Board has and continues to meet the needs of under-skilled Adults & Youth through Programs funded with Formula WIA Funds, Welfare Initiative Grants and the addition of AARA Training Funds. We are actively engaged with the Public Assistance System through weekly and monthly meetings with Public Assistance personnel. The meetings are held locally by County and monthly as Regional Local Management Committee Meetings. Training and Employment Opportunities are discussed in detail with members of the Local Management Committee which include representatives from the Board, Department of Public Assistance, CareerLink, training providers and community support agencies.

6. Describe innovative service delivery strategies the LWIA has or is planning to undertake to maximize resources, increase service levels, improve service quality, achieve better integration or meet other key LWIA goals.

The Board is prepared to address increased service levels. We have been addressing a steady increase of individuals requiring training over the past eight months with limited resources in terms of staff and training funds. Recovery Act Funding will allow the Board to provide an increase in financial assistance and longer-term training programs. The Board has increased the ITA Funding Cap from \$5,000 to \$8,000 to address longer-term programs. Recovery Act Funding will also allow increased services to workers via workshops, career counseling and supportive services provided by partners within the CareerLink.

The customer service strategies utilized by our CareerLinks and service locations are designed to provide support to all customers, including those just entering the workforce, employed customers looking to advance to better



employment opportunities, or those who are interested in or need to pursue new occupational goals. The CareerLinks and service locations start by providing new customers with a thorough overview of the services and information available to them, and then asking customers to identify what information or service they feel would be helpful in achieving their goals. In many cases, staff working with our customers identify a barrier or service that a customer is not aware of, and take it upon themselves to refer a customer or suggest that a customer explore an option not identified when they first came to our service locations for assistance. Each customer's individual needs, goals, and barriers are assessed in an effort to help them achieve their goals. Community resources, either provided by CareerLink partner agencies, or those outside our physical locations are identified. Staff then assists our customers in deciding the steps necessary to eliminate barriers, and aligning the services necessary to help them achieve their goals. Resources such as financial aid for training in high demand occupations, basic skills remediation, ESL services, supportive services, etc are identified, and customers are guided by the staff to the appropriate agency or community resource that can provide these services.

The Board will focus on work experience opportunities in new and emerging occupations. The Board will also evaluate evolving occupations which represent occupations that are changing significantly due to automation and innovation. New training programs and/or modified training programs will be developed with our partners in the educational community. Green Jobs are an example of new and emerging occupations, that can benefit the local economy. The Board will invest in On-the-Job Training Programs and encourage participation on the part of employers with apprenticeship programs. The Board has and will continue to fund summer work experience programs for youth in both the public and private sectors.

The Board has and will continue to utilize the majority of training dollars to fund training through Individual Training Accounts. Training is for High Priority Occupations. The Board has funded the most Individual Training Accounts in the State for Program Years 1999 through 2006.

The Board has and will continue to align workforce activities with education, economic and community development strategies. The Board accomplishes this goal by interacting with all relevant initiatives listed above at the County, Workforce Investment Area and Regional Level. Strategies to meet the skill needs of individuals and industries are directed to interaction with the Regional Industry Partnerships, Business Service Teams at the CareerLinks, Business Education Partnerships and direct interaction of the Six Regional Boards on a peer to peer level.

The increased numbers of customers accessing our systems does present challenges to our current customer flow chart. Increased emphasis, through the Prep Program to utilize assessment tools such as O-Net and Torque will allow us to better identify transferable skills that might assist higher skilled customers to pursue employment opportunities without further training. A high percentage of our dislocated worker customers are still those with low skill levels, or those from declining industries who are best helped through retraining for higher paying, high demand occupations in our region. Increasing the number of customers served through ITA services can and is being accomplished already through our current delivery system and customer flow design.

7. Describe the LWIB's vision for increasing training access and opportunities for individuals including the investment of WIA Title I funds and the leveraging of other funds and resources.



The Board will be able to increase access to training opportunities with additional funding from the Recovery Act. The number of Individual Training Accounts funded by the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area, with Formula Adult & Dislocated Worker Funds, ranks near the top of Workforce Investment Areas throughout the State. Recovery Act Funds will provide employment and training assistance to the priority groups recognized by the Act. The Board utilized Industry Partnership Funds, TANF Youth, Wall Street West Funds and other initiatives to contract with institutions of higher education, apprenticeship programs and the funding sources listed above to maximize funding opportunities to individuals requiring training.

Industry Partnerships are extremely important in addressing the training requirements of companies within the Northeast Region to keep the companies competitive during this economic recession. The Industry Partnerships in this Workforce Investment Area are Regional. Together with the Lackawanna, Luzerne/Schuylkill and Northern Tier Workforce Investment Areas, the Partnerships share funding resources and training plans. Curriculum developed by the Regional Industry Partnerships are shared. The Regional Boards also participate in a Pre-Apprenticeship Program targeted at youth and focused on the construction trades.

The Board has and will continue to work with the local and regional Career & Technical Institutes, Community Colleges, four year Education Institutions and private for profit trade schools to increase training capacity for all individuals in need of training. The Board will contract locally and regionally; we will cross borders to increase training access and opportunities for all individuals in need of training. The Board has met its responsibility for years to have training available in Rural Northeastern Pennsylvania. This can be documented by the high number of Individual Training Accounts written by the Board and the subsequent performance. The AARA Funding will allow the Board to training many more individuals in need of training at this time.

Increasing Training access and opportunities is based on the WIB's decision to utilize ARRA funds almost exclusively for training services, specifically ITA's and OJT opportunities. This will likely double the number of adult, dislocated workers, and Out-of-School Youth that we can serve with these funds. This aligns perfectly with the ARRA's emphasis on providing training opportunities to as many low skilled, low-income customers as possible. Since ARRA funding has been released in April, the Pocono Counties WIA has enrolled or approved ITA training services for over 60 Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Out-of-School Youth, in addition to the other customers receiving training through our regular WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth funding. The percentage of funding committed to training services is higher than any other WIA in Pennsylvania, and our service delivery structure, assessment process, and customer flow practices has, and will continue to allow us to provide timely and efficient services to our customers while still achieving the performance goals negotiated for our WIA.

8. Describe the LWIA's strategy for providing comprehensive, integrated services to eligible youth, including those most in need.

The focus of our program design for younger, in-school youth, is to assist them in acquiring the basic work readiness skills needed for any occupational goal. At the same time, we try to provide a comprehensive overview of the CareerLink services, including career exploration information and tools, that will allow younger youth to develop a long-term strategy that allows them to pursue whatever industry or occupation they are interested in. We try to inform them about the occupations and industries that are located both within our service area and in the broader labor markets we serve. We also help them identify the skills and educational requirements needed within various high demand



occupations in Pennsylvania. All youth served in our system, whether with ARRA funds, WIA funds, or through Wagner-Peyser services are encouraged to become familiar with the information and tools provided through the Commonwealth Workforce Development System. We inform all customers that most of our services are available to them regardless of their current or future employment situation, and are encouraged to come to us with any questions they have related to workforce issues.

For most older, or out-of-school youth, the service strategy is centered on assisting them in acquiring high demand occupational skills training, through the use of ITA services. Many of this age group have sufficient work experience, but lack the skills and experience needed to pursue various high demand occupational goals. Our services for these older youth will be designed to assist those with clear occupational goals pursue the training and certification necessary to succeed in their individual goals, and if necessary, help those who do not yet have a specific career choice to identify a suitable goal. The Pocono Counties has an extensive history of assisting Out-of-School Youth in a wide variety of high demand occupational goals.

The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area will spend a minimum of 70% of the Youth Recovery Act Funds on the 2009 Summer Youth Program. Remaining Recovery Act Youth Funds will be directed to the 2010 Summer Program.

The Board will provide Work Experience Programs for youth assigned to Public and Private for Profit Entities. Private-Sector On-the-Job Training Programs will also be offered. Youth will be served in the four Pocono Counties with Life Skills, Career Exploration and Job Shadowing. Emphasis will be placed on At-Risk Youth and other priority groups identified in TEGL 14-08.

Worksites selected by the Local Workforce Investment Area will be in the Public Non-Profit and Private for Profit Sectors. Worksite Selection priority will be focused on employers that are committed to helping youth receive experience and training that is required to meet the work readiness goals set for summer employment. Proper worksite supervision is imperative as is adherence to child labor laws and no violations of maintenance of effort. Summer employment should be a work experience intended to increase work readiness skills. Private for Profit and Private Sector Worksites will provide work experience and/or On-the-Job Training Opportunities for youth. Interaction with the co-op education departments of local career and technical schools will assist in placement of youth in selected industries.

The focus of the ARRA funded summer employment opportunities is the acquisition of work readiness skills, especially for in-school youth. In some worksites, especially those serving very young or special needs youth, the worksites have devoted some portion of the work day to classroom time. The purpose of the classroom time is to provide opportunities to reinforce the work readiness skills that are the focus of the summer employment experience. Due to the limited time that most participants are enrolled in the summer program, and the fact that most worksites have less than 5 participants assigned to them, it has not been possible for us to provide structured academic instruction for most participants. We attempt to provide occupational learning opportunities for those participants who express some specific interest or vocational goal by placing them in a worksite related to their area of interest, whenever possible. Applicants with interests in the health care careers are placed in hospitals, those with computer and administrative skills are placed in worksites where they can utilize and improve on these skills such as social service agency support



positions, etc. For those older youth, not subject to child labor law restrictions, we will be exploring private sector worksites related to their occupational goals.

The supportive service needs, including needs based payments, day care needs, etc. of out-of-school youth are reviewed at the time of initial assessment in developing the customer's individual employment plan. Each customer's financial support resources, including family, unemployment compensation, child support, public assistance, part-time employment, etc., is reviewed in order to ensure that their basic needs can be addressed while in training. The CareerLinks in our Local Workforce Investment Area have extensive linkages with the local supportive service providers such as the County Public Assistance Offices, Child Care Information Services agencies, and other partner agencies sufficient to assist our customers in pursuit of their occupational goal. Part-time training opportunities that allow customers to work while in training, and work experience services can also be used when appropriate to support out-of-school youth while in training.

The Board anticipates 125 youth to be served with Recovery Act Youth Funding.

The percentage of youth served through use of the ARRA funds relative to the number of youth served with our other Title I Youth funding is not easily determined. At a minimum, we anticipate doubling the number of youth that we were planning to serve this summer, prior to the availability of the ARRA funding. We expect to provide work experience opportunities to at least 400 youth this summer with the ARRA and regular Title I funding sources. Since we have always operated Summer Employment Programs for In-School and Out-of-School Youth, we have an extensive list of worksites available in each county. Youth are paid minimum wage, except for specific worksites where remedial education and other classroom training services are provided. In those instances, the students receive a stipend for the classroom time, and a wage for the time spent in work activities. These worksites are designed primarily for special needs students. The Pocono Counties Work Readiness policy submitted with the plan specifies that the Pre Assessment be completed by the worksite supervisor no later than the second week of the participants' start date. This allows the supervisor to make a preliminary evaluation of the youth's work readiness capabilities relative to the attendance benchmark. The same instrument is used for both the Pre and Post Assessment, and is designed to show the participant the areas in need of improvement as well as the progress or improvement they have made from the date of the preliminary evaluation until their participation ends.

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

The Board recognizes responsibility to insure compliance pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (P.L. 107-288) (38USC4215) relative to priority of services for veterans and certain spouses for all employment and training programs funded by the Department of Labor. Pursuant to the Jobs for Veterans Act (20CFR 1010.230) the Board will establish priority of services for Veterans and eligible spouses who will receive the highest priority within that priority group, followed by non-veteran members of the Recovery Act priority group.

The Board will direct implementation of priority of services at all One Stop Centers.



- 1.) Veterans will be identified at the point of entry and directed to the Veterans Representative stationed at the CareerLink.
- 2.) The Board will direct a marketing campaign to all Veteran Representatives within the Workforce Investment Area to inform veterans of their entitlement to Priority of Services with Recovery Act Funds. County Veteran Representatives will be contacted to direct veterans in need of employment and training services to the appropriate location for said services. The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board is committed to providing veterans with all the services they require to train, retrain and enter the workforce.

The CareerLinks will provide information and conduct outreach efforts to veterans in the following ways. Posters, pamphlets, and other related information on our Veteran's priority policy will be prominently displayed in the lobbies, Computer Resource Areas, and other public areas of our CareerLinks or access sites. In addition, information will be provided to new Veteran customers visiting our service locations, and letters or brochures are being developed that will be mailed to current Veteran customers to notify them of this policy and the potential services available through the ARRA. A list of current Veterans registered in our WIA is being completed using the Ad Hoc report capability of the CWDS. Regardless of the availability, or lack of Veteran's Representative staff in our CareerLinks or service locations, Veteran customers are assisted by WIA or BWDP staff in regards to any requests for job search assistance or information about potential training assistance.

10. **Describe the LWIA's strategies to ensure that the full range of employment and training programs and services delivered through the LWIA's PA CareerLink delivery system are accessible to and will meet the needs of dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farmworkers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and people with disabilities).**
 - Describe the strategy the LWIA will use to effectively implement the ARRA priority of service for low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance under the WIA Adult program.

The Pocono Counties WIB's current priority of service policy for WIA Adult program services is already aligned with the ARRA priority of service goals for low-income individuals and recipients of public assistance. The current priority policy for WIA Adult Training services is reserved for the following individuals:

Resident Adults who have received core and intensive services meeting the following criteria:

- A. Receiving Cash Public Assistance.
- B. Family Income at or below the poverty line or 70% of the Lower Living Standard.
- C. Receiving or Eligible for Food Stamps within the past 6 months.
- D. Homeless
- E. Foster Child
- F. Individual with a disability whose income meets the above cited income guidelines.

The only change required to comply with the priority of services policy in the ARRA is to add Veterans and eligible spouses in compliance with the requirements of 20 CFR part 1010, published at Fed. Reg. 78132. The addition of the



Veterans and eligible spouses provision of ARRA has already taken place and our CareerLink's and other WIA Program providers have been advised of the changes to our policy relative to Recovery Act Funding.

Our LWIA's strategies are also designed to ensure that our service delivery system is accessible and capable of meeting the needs of dislocated workers, migrant and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for non-traditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals and people with disabilities. Both of our full service CareerLinks have been evaluated and have met the high standards that Pennsylvania has set to be a chartered CareerLink. Our other service locations are fully integrated into our service delivery system and have demonstrated their effectiveness in meeting the needs of all job seeker customers. The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board has supported CareerLinks and service locations in all 4 counties to ensure that all job seeker customers and employers have easy access to the full range of employment and training services available through the Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, Veterans, Public Assistance, Vocational Rehabilitation, and other workforce partners. They have a long record of achievement in meeting the Federal and State performance goals to demonstrate their effectiveness. Our Title I WIA service strategy also allocates a high percentage of the funds to training services in order to increase the skill levels of as many customers as our resources will allow, while still working to achieve or exceed our program performance benchmarks. Our CareerLink's sequence of services process is also in line with the goals outlined in the ARRA. Customers are promptly and quickly assessed to determine whether they are in need of intensive or training services. This maximizes the customers' window of opportunity to explore the wide range of training options available to them, and increases their ability to access training services if they are determined in need and eligible. By streamlining the assessment practices and making our customers aware of the full array of services available to them, we have been able to develop effective strategies that allow our customers to access training services while they have the maximum amount of financial support, such as unemployment compensation, to support them while in training.

We did not feel it necessary to identify separate strategies for each priority service population listed under the ARRA. The customers, including dislocated workers, displaced homemakers, low-income individuals, migrant and seasonal farm workers, women, minorities, individuals training for nontraditional employment, veterans, public assistance recipients and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including older individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and people with disabilities), have always been high priority customers that our current systems are designed to assist. The purpose of our CareerLink service delivery structure is maximize the resources available to WIA, Labor Exchange, Veterans, and other partner agencies to assist a wide variety of customer needs and issues, as well as assist all customers in finding and accessing the services best suited to meet these needs. The availability of ARRA funding simply increases our ability to serve the needs of customers within these high priority groups. Our customer flow plan allows us to identify the needs, barriers, and priority service factors as quickly as possible, and direct the customer to those resources and services as quickly as possible.

11. Describe the competitive and non-competitive processes that will be used at the local level to award grants and contracts for activities under Title I of WIA including how potential bidders are being made aware of the availability of grants and contracts.

The Board does not operate programs within the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area. The Board solicits programs through a Request for Proposal Process outlined in the Operational Plan. Competitive Proposals are



solicited from training providers utilizing a standardized RFP Package. Solicitation of proposals are addressed through public notices placed in area newspapers, direct mailings from a list of potential bidders and other means deemed necessary to encourage participation in the process.

All Proposals are reviewed by the Workforce Investment Board and Administrative Staff. A standardized rating system is used to evaluate proposals which include criteria such as cost, effectiveness of program design, ability to meet stated performance goals and prior record of performance as a service provider.

Justification to choose providers is based upon the Board's Request for Proposal Process. Competitive Requests for Proposals will be solicited from area training providers utilizing a standardized RFP package. Solicitation of said RFP's will be accomplished through ample notice to the general public via the local newspapers, direct mailings or other means as deemed necessary to encourage as many proposals as possible. All proposals will be reviewed by the "Workforce Investment Board, the WIB Staff, and the CareerLink Operators prior to approval. A standardized rating sheet has been developed as a vehicle for the awarding of contracts and includes criteria such as cost, effectiveness of program design, ability to meet stated performance goals, and prior record of performance as a service provider to the WIA. All providers whose proposals have been rejected have the right to appeal that rejection to Joseph Sebelin, Executive Director for the Workforce Investment Area, within thirty days of the notice of rejection. All local training providers have been notified of the steps necessary to be approved for inclusion in the State's list of eligible training providers for WIA services. They have also been notified by the WIB of proposed policy changes, performance standards, and the recertification process that will be in place for their programs to remain on the State approved list of training providers. This information also includes the appeals process for those training providers who have been denied or removed from the list. The Pocono Counties WIB has made every effort to encourage quality training providers to apply for inclusion in the statewide list. This effort is necessary in order to maximize the customer choice available to our customers.

The Board has solicited providers for both formula and AARA funded programs. The Board will continue to solicit programs on an as needed basis during the duration of AARA Funding. Primary providers of training are selected from the Eligible Training Provider List for Individual Training Accounts which comprise the largest percentage of training funding.

The Board specifically requests Proposals for Innovative Youth Programs. The Board has contracts in place with institutions of higher education within the Northeast Region which will allow facilitation of training programs designed to accommodate multiple individuals in high demand occupations. The Board also has the ability to accommodate individual training slots that will not limit customer choice.

12. How will the LWIB ensure that ARRA funds will supplement, not supplant, existing resources?

The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board will utilize Recovery Act Funding which will enable the Board to serve many more individuals through training and retraining activities. The Recovery Act Funds will assist in reversing declining funding cycles from WIA formula appropriations. The Board will continue to spend formula dollars and supplement the urgent need for additional funds to support the increased numbers of individuals receiving Unemployment Compensation and Public Assistance Payments with Recovery Act dollars.



The Board understands Congressional intent that Recovery Act Funds for employment and training be spent concurrently with WIA formula funds to increase capacity to serve workers in need utilizing strategies that meet immediate needs when supporting longer term economic recovery. The Recovery Act Funds will be spent primarily on training with specific emphasis on serving the hard to serve population of our Workforce Investment Area.

13. Describe the monitoring and oversight criteria and procedures the Local Area has in place to ensure not only compliance with the laws, regulations, and guidance but also with the intent and spirit of ARRA.

The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board will use the Monitoring and Oversight Procedures developed by the Board to monitor and review Recovery Act Program Activities. The Board employs an Independent Monitor who will perform reviews of all aspects of the Recovery Act Program. The Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area's monitoring system meets the requirements of 20CFR 667.410 (b) (2). A complete copy of our Monitoring Policy and Procedures is part of our WIA Operational Plan.

Pre-employment services and summer youth employment will be monitored in accordance with the requirements of 20CRF667.410(b)(2). The Board has a comprehensive monitoring policy that has and will be followed.

14. Identify the performance indicators and goals established to track progress toward meeting strategic goals and implementing the LWIA' vision for the workforce investment system.

Accountability is a hallmark of Workforce Development Programs administered by the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board. The Board will be accountable for the goals and objectives of the Recovery Act. The Board will monitor programs to ensure our CareerLinks, service providers, educational and training entities have increased enrollments because of the increase in funding from Recovery Act Funds; insure priority of service groups are being served; increase the number of youth participating in Summer Work Experience Programs and ensure Recovery Act Funds are spent appropriately and result in jobs. The Board will monitor Recovery Act funded programs on a monthly basis.

The Independent Monitor will be responsible to conduct Performance Reviews on a monthly basis. The independent Monitor will prepare a report on the performance monitoring which will be forwarded to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will review the report and provide the information to the Board Chairman and members of the Executive Committee. Corrective Action reports will be generated by the Executive Director and the Independent Monitor to address any concerns relative to performance. A corrective action response will be required to be sent to the Executive Director within thirty days of receipt of any findings relative to performance.

The Pocono Counties Work Readiness Policy strategy and its' rationale are listed below. Work readiness skill attainment, and its' measurement, has been the focus of our summer employment prior to the passage of the ARRA.



POCONO COUNTIES WIA

**AMERICAN RECOVERY AND REINVESTMENT ACT
YOUTH PROGRAM WORK READINESS POLICY**

1. Purpose.

The purpose of this policy is to outline the implementation steps and tools established by the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Board to comply with the “work readiness skills” performance goal for Summer Employment work experience participants served with Recovery Act Funds. The procedures adopted by the Pocono Counties WIB are aligned with the policy goals outlined in the TEGL No. 14-08, Section 16, E., Program Design Consideration. To ensure that the methodology and procedures adopted by the Pocono Counties WIA are in compliance with the Recovery Act, the relevant portions are cited below:

“The work readiness portion of the skill attainment rate will be the only indicator used for youth that participate in “summer employment” only. The basic and occupational skills portions of the skill attainment rate and the literacy/numeracy gains measure will not be required for youth that participate in summer employment only. In addition, no other WIA or common measure indicator will be required for youth in summer employment only. Any youth served with only Recovery Act funds that participates in summer employment only, will only be included in the Youth Recovery Act report and the work readiness indicator will be the only measure that applies to such youth. When setting work readiness goals, local areas should follow the definition for a work readiness skill goal as specified in TEGL No. 17-05, Attachment B Definition of Key Terms found at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachB.pdf. The key part of the definition is the need for local areas to determine whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred. States and/or local areas should establish a methodology for determining work readiness skills upon beginning and completing the summer experience in order to determine whether a measurable increase has occurred. Although local areas are not required to use a specific assessment instrument to determine pre- and post-work readiness skills, local areas should choose from a variety of assessment tools including worksite supervisor evaluations, work readiness skill checklists administered by program staff, portfolio assessments, and any other relevant forms of assessing work readiness skills.”

Further policy clarifications regarding this program goal were listed in the subsequent Workforce Guidance Memo #4, issued by the PA Department of Labor & Industry. The relevant policy guidance is cited below.

Work Readiness

“The only required performance measure for the SYEP is work readiness. A pre- and post-assessment of work readiness skills must be administered to each SYEP applicant to determine whether a measurable increase in work readiness skills has occurred. Local areas are not required to use a specific assessment instrument to determine pre and post work readiness skills. For the summer employment program, pre- and post-assessments can range from nationally normed assessments of work readiness that identify the foundation skills, competencies and personal qualities youth need to compete successfully in the workplace to a checklist completed by a worksite supervisor, or a documented evaluation by an employer (public or private) before the experience and again after the experience



showing the youth's acquisition of essential work readiness skills. In all cases, the same instrument must be used for the pre- and post-assessment.

Recognizing that local areas currently use a number of reliable work readiness assessment instruments and because time is of the essence in recruiting youth and developing appropriate worksites, the commonwealth will not prescribe the use of a particular work readiness skills instrument to use for the SYEP. Examples of acceptable work readiness assessment instruments along with other tools and resources to assist with summer programming can be found at www.workforce3one.org. "

2. Pocono Counties Work Readiness Assessment Tools/Methodology

Based on the above cited policy guidance, the Pocono Counties WIA will utilize a Work Readiness Assessment Tool to determine Summer Employment Program participants' work readiness skills at the beginning and at the end of their participation. The Pocono Counties WIA has decided to use this tool for the following reasons.

- a. The Pocono Counties WIA current Summer Employment Program already utilizes a pre and post assessment tool to measure gains in work readiness skills for their program participants.
- b. The Pocono Counties WIA Summer Employment Program has always recognized the importance of providing youth with opportunities to acquire the work readiness skills necessary to succeed in any occupational goal.
- c. The use of a work readiness assessment tool will allow us to achieve the goals of the Recovery Act Program for youth quickly and efficiently, without major changes to our program model.
- d. The pre and post assessment tool we have adopted is an enhancement of our current tool. The new tool is modeled after one of the approved work readiness assessment instruments found at the [workforce3one.org](http://www.workforce3one.org) website sited in Workforce Guidance Memo #4.

Implementation/Utilization Guidelines.

1. The work readiness assessment tool will be utilized for all summer employment participants served with Recovery Act Funds. Program providers are strongly encouraged, but not required, to use the same tool to evaluate summer youth participants served with other WIA Youth Funds. Although youth served with other WIA Youth funding, or outside the summer program dates of May 1 through September 30th, are subject to the Common Measures Performance Goals for Title I Youth, the Pocono Counties WIB has always recognized that work readiness skills are an important goal for all summer youth program participants.
2. The summer participant's worksite supervisor will complete the Pre-Assessment by the end of the second week of participation. This will provide for sufficient time to evaluate the youth's work readiness skills levels relative to the 10 benchmarks that are part of the assessment instrument.
3. The summer participant's worksite supervisor will complete the Post-Assessment at the conclusion of the youth's summer program participation.



4. The Summer Employment Program provider will provide training to worksite supervisors, as part of their program orientation, to ensure that they understand the purpose of the assessment instrument, how to consistently evaluate a participant's work readiness skill levels, and how to use it as a tool to teach youth participants and reinforce the importance of the work readiness skills necessary to succeed in any future employment.

5. The youth's cumulative score for the Pre-Assessment will be compared with the score on the Post-Assessment to determine if the participant has increased their work readiness skills sufficiently to meet the Pocono Counties WIB standard of satisfactory progress. Since the program goal is an improvement in work readiness skills, rather than a minimum competency level, the Pocono Counties WIB has established a minimum level of increase in work readiness skills to be deemed satisfactory progress. Any summer employment program participant that increase's their work readiness assessment score by at least 20% will be reported as successfully achieving this standard. For example, if a youth receives a score of 24 on their Pre-Assessment, they must score at least 29 on the Post Assessment to achieve the program goals.

Attached is a copy of both the Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment Work Readiness Assessment tool that will be used by all Summer Employment Program providers receiving Recovery Act Youth funds within the Pocono Counties Workforce Investment Area.



SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM WORK MATURITY EVALUATION

PARTICIPANT: _____

WORKSITE: _____

	4 – Excellent	3 – Above Average	2 - Satisfactory	1 – Not Acceptable
RATING GUIDE	<i>Meets the work maturity skill independently with no supervision</i>	<i>Meets the work maturity skill independently with limited supervision</i>	<i>Meets the work maturity skill under normal supervision</i>	<i>Requires constant and close supervision to meet the work maturity skill</i>

Using the numbered Rating Guide above, please evaluate the participant in the following work maturity skill categories. The evaluation should be completed by the immediate supervisor. Please provide ONE response for each of the 10 work maturity skill measures.

WORK MATURITY SKILLS		<i>Prelimi</i>	<i>Final</i>
1.	Appearance <i>Participant dresses appropriately for the job. Hair groomed neatly and appropriately.</i>		
2.	Working with Others <i>Shows proper respect for others. Gives help to co-workers, if requested. Is able to ask for needed assistance from co-workers. Shows a positive attitude when working with others.</i>		



3.	<p>Following Instructions</p> <p><i>Exhibits a positive attitude toward supervisor. Listens to instructions. Asks questions if necessary. Carries out assignments as specified.</i></p>		
4.	<p>Quantity of Work/Motivation</p> <p><i>Doesn't waste time. Completes assigned work on schedule. Does his/her share on group assignments.</i></p>		
5.	<p>Quality of Work/Initiative</p> <p><i>Completes work neatly, accurately, and thoroughly. Open to constructive criticism. Corrects errors. Makes efficient use of suggestions for improvement. Willing to try new things.</i></p>		
6.	<p>Dependability</p> <p><i>Carries out assigned work effectively and efficiently without constant supervision. Shows initiative and good judgment when minimal instructions are given.</i></p>		
7.	<p>Personal Behavior</p> <p><i>Follows rules in regard to safety, use of equipment, care of property, and personal conduct. Accepts responsibility for his/her actions.</i></p>		
8.	<p>Attitude</p> <p><i>General demeanor on the job towards co-workers, supervisors, and (if applicable) the public.</i></p>		

For the following, please **CIRCLE** the appropriate rating:

PREL IM	FINA L
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9.	Attendance	<i>Excellent: 100% attendance</i>	4	4
		Above average: infrequent excused absences	3	3
		<i>Satisfactory: complies with program policy, notifies of absences</i>	2	2
		<i>Not acceptable: often absent with or without good reason</i>	1	1
10.	Punctuality	<i>Excellent: 100% on time to work and from breaks, ready to work</i>	4	4
		Above average: notifies supervisor, late to work or from break infrequently but immediately ready to work	3	3
		<i>Satisfactory: complies with program policy, notifies supervisor if going to be late</i>	2	2
		<i>Not acceptable: lacking in punctuality, frequently late</i>	1	1

If you have any comments to add please use the reverse of the form.

Preliminary Evaluation

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Final Evaluation

Supervisor's Signature: _____

Date: _____



*****THIS SECTION FOR WIA STAFF USE ONLY*****

Preliminary Evaluation Total: _____	Final Evaluation Total: _____
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COMMENTS:

Based on Pocono Counties WIA Work Maturity Benchmarks, the participant:

- Achieved the Work Maturity Skills improvement goal
- Did not achieve the Work Maturity Skills improvement goal

Staff Signature	Date
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