



**Workforce Investment Plan
for the
Greater Rhode Island
Workforce Investment Area**

FINAL

**For the Period
July 1, 2007 – June 30, 2009**

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for the
Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area

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INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island (WPGRI) is pleased to present its two year plan in accordance with the requirements of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. Through its past years of experience in the legislative and philosophical mandates of the Act, the organization has grown to embrace a collaborative and regional approach to developing the skills of the area's workforce. While WPGRI has emphasized the state's high growth, high demand industries, the organization remains committed to addressing the workforce needs of Rhode Island's small business community, a vital cog in driving economic growth throughout the Ocean State. The governing Board of Directors and its administrative staff share a common vision in the goals and objectives of this plan as well as a strong commitment to ensure its effective implementation.

In its capacity as the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area, encompassing thirty-seven of Rhode Island's thirty-nine communities, the organization oversees a complex and comprehensive system of services and programs. The system, designed for both employers and individual job seekers, provides an array of opportunities for both economic and personal growth throughout the region.

We are confident that the plan addresses the needs of our diverse constituencies in ways that are both responsive and germane to local and regional dynamics. However, the relevancy of the plan is contingent upon the available information used in its development. We recognize that changing economies, new policies, demographic and statistical shifts, and other unforeseen factors may necessitate periodic adjustments. The organization is confident that the plan allows for sufficient flexibility to modify its approach, while remaining committed to its primary goals and objectives.

Since its inception in 1982 under the Job Training Partnership Act, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island has been a leader in the workforce development arena. We have encouraged and facilitated partnerships among a number of agencies and organizations committed to workforce, economic, and educational development to continue to cultivate systemic approaches to meeting mutual goals. We remain committed to this role and believe that the foundation has been laid in the development and implementation of Rhode Island's One-Stop Career Center system, known as *netWORKri*. In all aspects of this plan, the organization will be guided by its vision and mission:

The Vision...

"The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will collaborate with business, labor education leaders and community based organizations to establish a dynamic, outcome

driven, visible resource providing measurable and comprehensive market based employment and training services.

These services will include the provision of information, technical assistance and life-long training opportunities to customers.

Employers will have access to a well trained, dependable workforce."

The Mission...

"The mission of the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island is to provide strategic leadership to meet the current and future human resource needs of Rhode Island's employers and to ensure a well trained, self-sufficient and adaptable workforce."

PLAN CONTENT

A. Workforce Investment Area Needs

The Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area encompasses thirty-seven of Rhode Island's thirty-nine cities and towns, excluding only Providence and Cranston. As a result of its near-statewide designation for the Greater Rhode Island area, the organization is cognizant of workforce development needs that impact all Ocean State employers and workers. Moreover, in planning program and service delivery, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island also recognizes local variations of these needs across regions, from East to West Bay, and throughout the northern and southern portions of the state. The organization remains steadfast in this dual approach, adapting to local needs while maintaining its commitment to overarching statewide goals.

Workforce services are accessed directly across the regions' urban and rural communities through the *netWORKri* One-Stop Centers, which are designed to assist a broad range of customers including employers and job seekers. In developing the service strategies, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island's Workforce Investment Board, Youth Council, and One-Stop Center Operator collaborate to consider the needs of the following segments of their populations. The workforce investment area needs of the regional customer segments are identified as follows:

- **Employers/Businesses**

Since the inception of the WIA in July 2000 through February 2007, Rhode Island's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate has averaged 5.0 percent, according to statistics provided by the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training's Labor Market Information (LMI) unit. This rate was below the United States average of 5.2 percent during this period, but represented the highest rate in the New England region. Employers throughout the state list worker skills and availability as a primary concern. Their concern is increasing as the "Baby Boomer" generation is rapidly approaching retirement age and the state's labor force is primarily being replaced with a lower skilled, immigrant population. As a result, qualified job applicant sources are diminishing, making it increasingly difficult for employers to recruit skilled workers.

Businesses are also faced with the challenge of keeping current with advancing technologies in order to maintain their competitive edge in an ever-increasing regional and global market. As a result, most employers express an increasing need for quality and effective training services, not only for their incumbent workforce but also for new hires.

The current job market places a higher premium on education and technical training than at any other time in history. Since workers are increasingly

sorted into occupations by the number of years of formal schooling, educational attainment has become an important determinant of earnings. Relatively low levels of education do not bode well for long-term employment and higher earnings experiences. Opportunities for employment and job advancement diminish for those with fewer years of schooling.

- **Job Seekers**

The projected growth in the need for skilled labor increasingly challenges the workforce development system to provide sufficient and quality training and educational resources that meet the need of employers. To meet those needs, job seekers need an effective workforce system that provides sufficient levels of education and training for the growing technical and professional positions, linkages to the employment market, as well as essential support resources in other life areas, including childcare and transportation. These resources are critical to ensure that all qualified job seekers have the support services necessary to access available jobs and maintain gainful employment.

Job seekers require a wide range of services from on-the-job skill training to advanced degrees to successfully access jobs that pay livable wages and to meet the growing demands of the labor market.

- **Incumbent Workers**

As the pool of available job applicants diminishes and advancements in technology impact all areas of the business world, companies are increasingly compelled to upgrade the skills of their existing workforce. This includes cross-training employees to fill multiple positions and perform multiple tasks. In addition, employers are increasingly faced with the complexities of training employees with limited English language skills. As a result, employers will require increased training resources for their incumbent workers in order to successfully maintain their competitive edge.

This growing concern further challenges the workforce system to ensure sufficient and timely available resources to meet evolving employer demand, while capitalizing on Rhode Island's economic strengths. It also forces the education and training provider networks to adapt services that balance the schedules and needs of both employers and workers.

- **Youth**

The strength of the economy presents both opportunities and challenges to the state's youth. On one hand, there are opportunities for viable employment and rewarding careers; on the other, there exists the need for stronger technical skills, basic functional skills, and increased educational attainment. It has become more apparent that youth need relevant educational and career information earlier in life to spark their interest in various career fields and to encourage their pursuit of academic attainment. Meanwhile, older youth entering the job market need immediate access to career and employment

services, as well as the skills training to complement their formal education and existing abilities. Beyond skills training, Rhode Island youth of all ages also need to develop the Foundation Skills and Workplace Competencies as outlined in the Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS). Employers in all industry sectors have placed great emphasis on the need for these skills.

To meet this need, a Statewide Youth Services Plan has been developed to establish access to career and employment services through a comprehensive Youth Center, based in the Pawtucket-area **netWORKri** One-Stop Career Center. In addition, the plan includes the development of satellite centers in Woonsocket and South County to ensure further access for all area youth. This plan has been formulated in conjunction with the Providence/Cranston Workforce Investment Board to mirror the services available at the Providence netWORKri Youth Center. These and other expanded services will be made possible by the infusion of additional Job Development Funds from the Governor's Workforce Board for Youth Program Services. The challenge to the system will be to ensure that youth access these centers on an ongoing basis to connect to available careers and employment opportunities as they continue their educational and training pursuits.

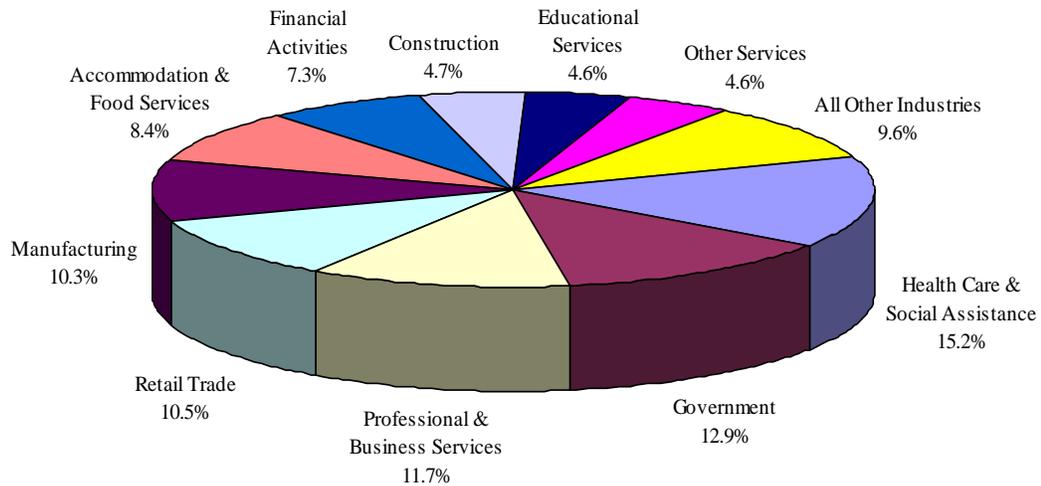
Youth who complete high school must be encouraged to continue on in post-secondary programs to access viable employment opportunities. Those who do not will most likely need additional skills training to earn a living wage. Also, area youth that leave school early face additional barriers to the labor force. Many of these young people lack the basic skills, such as language and occupational proficiencies, necessary to attain gainful employment opportunities. This segment of the population continues to present the biggest challenge to the workforce system and its limited resources. Therefore, there is a great need for effective dropout prevention program services, as well as services that support the educational system in its efforts to better serve at-risk students.

- **Labor Market Information**

According to data provided by the RI Department of Labor & Training's Labor Market Information (LMI) unit, employment at Ocean State non-farm establishments stood at 495,800 jobs (seasonally adjusted) in February 2007.¹ During that month, Health Care & Social Assistance was Rhode Island's largest industry sector employer, accounting for 15.2 percent (75,400) of statewide employment. It was followed by the Government (12.9%), Professional & Business Services (11.7%), Retail Trade (10.5%), Manufacturing (10.3%), and Accommodation & Food Services (8.4%) industry sectors.

¹ For more information on Rhode Island's establishment employment levels, visit: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/ces.htm.

Rhode Island Establishment Employment
February 2007, Seasonally Adjusted



Data identifying current employment opportunities also exists, generated by the Department of Labor & Training's Job Vacancy Survey.² During the last survey period (Spring 2006), Rhode Island-based private sector businesses had an estimated 10,900 job vacancies. This translated into 3.5 job openings for every ten unemployed people between May and June 2006. An estimated 56 percent of these openings were full-time positions offering 35 hours or more per week, and 87 percent were permanent jobs.

The Job Vacancy Survey noted employment opportunities at all educational and experience levels, indicating that local employers continue to rely upon a diverse workforce. For example, 64 percent of the vacancies measured during the survey period required a high school diploma/GED or less, while 8.3 percent asked for some vocational training. A college education was required for the remaining job openings, divided among associate (8.3%), bachelor (16.1%), and advanced (3.7%) degrees. Employers indicated that they wanted well-trained applicants - more than half (51.7%) of the state's estimated job vacancies required experience related to the position being filled. Also, one-fifth (20.2%) of the state's job openings required the applicant to have some general work experience, while 28.1 percent had no experience requirement at all.

The RI Job Vacancy Survey measured employment opportunities across numerous industries and occupations. Sixty percent of the Ocean State's estimated job openings were concentrated in three industry sectors - Health Care & Social Assistance (3,480), Accommodation & Food Services (2,001), and Retail Trade (1,347). Large numbers of vacancies were also evident in Manufacturing (965), Finance & Insurance (584), Educational Services (352),

² For more Rhode Island Job Vacancy Survey data, visit: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/jvs.htm.

Arts, Entertainment & Recreation (351), Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (332), and Transportation & Warehousing (285). Throughout the private sector, job vacancies were noted in more than 300 different occupations of various skill and earnings levels, including Registered Nurses, Waitstaff, Nursing Aides, Retail Salespersons, Personal & Home Care Aides, Cashiers, Cooks, Customer Service Representatives, Teacher Assistants, Carpenters, Bus Drivers, Security Guards, and Stock Clerks.

Projections data³ supplied by the Department of Labor & Training's LMI unit indicate that local businesses will need to find workers to fill more than 186,000 job openings by 2014. These opportunities will be the result of new growth (+63,200) and the need to replace workers (+123,100) due to employee turnover. Employment is projected to grow at all educational and skill levels through 2014. The local economy will generate employment opportunities requiring on-the-job training of various types and lengths, as well as new prospects for college-educated individuals. For example, sixty percent of expected job openings in Rhode Island during the 2004-2014 projection period are likely to occur among jobs requiring on-the-job training. Annually, the state is expected to generate more than 11,700 openings requiring short-, moderate-, or long-term on-the-job training.

Projected Employment in Jobs Requiring On-The-Job Training, 2004-2014					
	2004 Estimated Employment	2014 Projected Employment	Annual Openings due to		Total Annual Openings
			Growth	Replacement	
Total, All Occupations	518,145	573,437	6,318	12,312	18,630
<i>Employment in Jobs Requiring On-The-Job Training</i>	<i>313,320</i>	<i>340,314</i>	<i>3,351</i>	<i>8,386</i>	<i>11,737</i>
Short-term on-the-job training (< 1 month)	181,037	198,364	2,005	5,605	7,610
Moderate on-the-job training (1-12 months)	96,900	102,614	904	2,003	2,907
Long-term on-the-job training (> 12 months)	35,383	39,336	442	778	1,220

These future opportunities are projected across numerous major occupational groups, including Food Preparation & Serving Related (+26,106), Office & Administrative Support (+24,226), Sales & Related (+20,803), and Healthcare Practitioners & Technical (+11,733). More specifically, the fastest growing occupations in Rhode Island include Registered Nurses, Home Health Aides, Customer Service Representatives, Accountants & Auditors, Social & Human Service Assistants, Personal & Home Care Aides, Computer Systems Analysts, Plumbers, Pipefitters & Steamfitters, Preschool Teachers, Construction & Maintenance Painters, Hotel Desk Clerks, and Roofers. For a complete listing of Rhode Island's top fifty occupations projected to have the most annual openings through 2014, please see Attachment A.

³ Projections data includes wage and salary workers, self-employed, unpaid family members, agricultural, and private household employment. For more information, visit: www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/proj.htm.

Occupational declines result from decreasing industry employment and from technological modifications. In Rhode Island, the only occupational group with a projected job loss is Production, where the projected net employment loss is 8.3 percent, or 3,445 jobs, by 2014. However, it is important to note that while the overall number of Production jobs is expected to decline, there will still be a substantial demand for worker in this occupational group resulting from the need to replace workers who change occupations or exit the labor force. In addition, some occupations within this group are projected to grow during this period, resulting in 777 new job openings.

<u>Industry Title</u>	2004 Estimated <u>Employment</u>	2014 Projected <u>Employment</u>	<u>Numeric Change</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
Total, All Industries	518,145	573,437	55,292	10.7%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	800	830	30	3.8%
Mining	188	280	92	48.9%
Utilities	1,090	1,155	65	6.0%
Construction	21,007	25,280	4,273	20.3%
Manufacturing	56,853	50,935	-5,918	-10.4%
Wholesale Trade	16,340	17,410	1,070	6.6%
Retail Trade	52,961	58,185	5,224	9.9%
Transportation & Warehousing	9,814	10,950	1,136	11.6%
Information	10,857	12,615	1,758	16.2%
Finance & Insurance	25,604	29,895	4,291	16.8%
Real Estate and Rental & Leasing	6,673	7,160	487	7.3%
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	20,006	25,000	4,994	25.0%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	8,393	9,750	1,357	16.2%
Administrative & Waste Services	25,040	27,780	2,740	10.9%
Educational Services	45,818	51,000	5,182	11.3%
Health Care & Social Assistance	73,151	88,220	15,069	20.6%
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	7,372	9,035	1,663	22.6%
Accommodation & Food Services	42,402	50,000	7,598	17.9%
Other Services	18,241	20,055	1,814	9.9%
Government	33,602	33,955	353	1.1%
Self-Employed & Unpaid Family	41,933	43,947	2,014	4.8%

Overall, Rhode Island is projected to experience a net increase of 55,292 jobs between 2004 and 2014, a 10.7 percent rate of growth. By the end of this period, total employment throughout the Ocean State is projected to reach 573,437 jobs. Nearly every segment of the Ocean State economy is expected to contribute to this growth, led by the Health Care & Social Assistance sector. It is anticipated that local Health Care & Social Assistance firms will create an estimated 15,069 jobs by 2014, a 20.6 percent increase within the sector. This accounts for 27.3 percent of the state's total projected job growth during the projection period. All four Health Care & Social Assistance industries in the Ocean State are expected to add jobs at a faster rate than the economy as

a whole, including Ambulatory Health Care Services (+4,817; +23.3%), Nursing & Residential Care Facilities (+4,939; +27.8%), Hospitals (+3,152; +12.9%), and Social Assistance (+2,161; +20.9%).

The creation of an additional 7,600 jobs (+17.9%) is expected in the Accommodation & Food Services industries between 2004 and 2014, accounting for 13.7 percent of total projected job growth in Rhode Island. Building on the state's reputation as a premier tourist destination, Accommodation employers are anticipated to increase their employment rolls by 32.5 percent (+1,200) during the projection period. An additional 6,400 jobs (+16.5%) will be created in the Food Services & Drinking Places industry.

Significant employment gains are also expected in the Educational Services (+5,182; +11.3%), Professional, Scientific & Technical Services (+4,994; +25.0%), Finance & Insurance (+4,291; +16.8%), and Construction (+4,273; +20.3%) sectors. These economic segments are anticipated to add jobs at a faster rate than the economy as a whole. Retail Trade (+5,224) firms are also projected to add a significant number of jobs in the Ocean State by 2014. However, these gains represent a sector growth rate of 9.9 percent, slightly below the 10.7 percent growth in employment projected for the entire economy during this period.

Following national and regional trends, Manufacturing is the only sector in Rhode Island projected to lose jobs during the ten-year period. It is expected that local industry sector firms will shed 10.4 percent of their employment by 2014, a loss of 5,900 jobs. The largest job decline is anticipated to occur in Miscellaneous Manufacturing (-1,921; -17.9%), which includes Jewelry & Silverware Manufacturing. Other notable declines will likely take place in Textile Mills (-1,304; -34.3%) and Plastics & Rubber Products Manufacturing (-632; -20.8%). However, on a positive note, the state is expected to create more than 1,000 Chemical Manufacturing jobs between 2004 and 2014, a 24.5 percent increase. This highlights the growing importance of biotechnology-related industries to the Ocean State economy.

- **Assessment of Current Workforce Investment Activities**

- **Adults and Dislocated Workers**

- Workforce investment activities in the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area are provided through the One-Stop system. Upon entering the centers, customers will be greeted and, after a brief interaction with staff, will be evaluated as to whether they are able to use self-service resources or require assisted services. Those who indicate they do not require assistance in utilizing the resources and service of *netWORKri* will be offered use of the resource area. These customers will be able to independently access services, including job matching, job referrals, labor market information, internet access,

phone and fax lines, etc. One-Stop center staff will be on hand to answer any questions.

Customers who need assistance in utilizing the resources and services of **netWORKri** will first receive any number of what the WIA refers to as Core Services. These include job search and job club activities, job placement assistance, initial assessment of skills, career counseling, job retention services and information on programs, services and the labor market. A center staff member will determine the most appropriate Core Services activity for the customer.

In the event the customer is not able to obtain employment after the receipt of Core Services, he or she may be eligible to receive Intensive Services. Intensive services include comprehensive assessment, the development of an individual employability plan, case management, and short-term pre-vocational services.

After Intensive Services have been provided and the customer is still not able to secure employment, he or she may be eligible for training services.

Please note throughout the provision of core, intensive, and training services, all customers of **netWORKri** will be able to obtain supportive services referrals. These referrals focus on, but are not limited to, child care, transportation, medical services, legal services, substance abuse counseling and/or treatment, and family and domestic issues. When we refer to the supportive services referrals, we mean the network of state and local agencies that exist in the workforce investment area to provide the full range of supportive services that may be needed by customers before they can begin the core services program.

There are numerous training opportunities available for adult and dislocated workers/displaced homemakers in the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area. These training opportunities include what is referred to as "Individual Training Accounts (ITA)" in which customers who have completed core and intensive services and still are unable to obtain employment can be referred to a variety of occupational skills training programs offered by those providers who have been state-approved. These skill-training offerings are shown in Attachment B.

In addition to ITAs, customers may participate in a On-the-Job Training (OJT) program in which they are hired and trained by area employers. Unlike an ITA program, OJT customers are trained on the job while receiving paid wages. This type of training especially benefits customers who require an income during their training period. OJT

programs are written in occupational areas and for employer with labor market shortages.

➤ **Youth**

The full range of Youth Program Elements as identified under the Workforce Investment Act are available for youth in the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area. These include tutoring and similar services including dropout prevention strategies, leading to a high school diploma or GED; alternative secondary school services; summer employment opportunities, paid and unpaid work experiences; occupational skills training; leadership development, adult mentoring; comprehensive guidance and counseling; support services and follow-up services.

These program elements are available under agreements with vendors selected through the statewide joint competitive Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Also, some of these program elements are planned to be available at the Pawtucket *netWORKri* Youth Career Center and designated satellite centers.

In addition to the required WIA program elements, the WPGRI has leveraged funds from the Rhode Island Department of Education to provide pre-GED instruction for out-of-school youth whose reading levels are extremely low and inappropriate for successful WIA participation.

The WPGRI is also planning to implement several Youth Intake and Service Centers. The purpose of the Youth Career Centers will be to assist youth 14-21 to help them to access and acquire the necessary skills, training, work experience and support needed to make a successful transition to adulthood. The activities include career and labor market exploration, college readiness, peer-to-peer mentoring, tutoring, homework, basic computer skills training, job readiness training, reading/math remediation, leadership skills, life skills, support groups and resume writing.

➤ **Employers**

The WPGRI is committed to its business customers and to making the *netWORKri* offices the one-stop for employers as well as job seekers. Attachment C details the various services available to employers in the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area.

The Board, with its partners in the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training's Employer Services Representatives Unit and the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIDEDEC) offers a wide range of services to area employers. As noted earlier, the local board

is involved with RIEDC in its job attraction efforts offering employee recruitment; on-the-job training and customized training and labor market/labor supply information to prospective new employers.

netWORKri centers are available to conduct specialized testing and assessment for employers using aptitude, basic skills and interest testing. In addition, tax credit and worker training information is available to employers at the one-stop and through the WPGRI administrative office.

B. The WIB's Vision and Goals

As stated in this Plan's Introduction, the WIB's vision statement is as follows:

"The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will collaborate with business, labor education leaders and community based organizations to establish a dynamic, outcome driven, visible resource providing measurable and comprehensive market based employment and training services.

These services will include the provision of information, technical assistance and life-long training opportunities to customers.

Employers will have access to a well trained, dependable workforce."

Although the Board of Directors adopted this vision statement some years ago, its relevancy has remained constant. The WIB has consistently been in the forefront of collaboration with a broad and diverse group of partner agencies in workforce development issues. In its role as both facilitator and advocate, the WIB endeavors to view challenges as opportunities for positive change.

The WIB has adopted a proactive approach to meeting the needs of both businesses and job seekers by exploring and accessing supplementary funding and training opportunities, often in partnership, that addresses and generates mutually beneficial results. Building on the history of success in these areas, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will continue to broadly view its role in workforce development.

C. Workforce Investment Board

- **Plan Input and Review Process**

The Program Development and Evaluation Committee of the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Board will be the initial point of review for the draft and all subsequent revisions of this Plan. This committee consists of both public and private sector representatives, including labor organizations. The committee will also be responsible for recommending acceptance of the Plan to the full Board once all public comments have been considered.

Upon completion of the draft Plan, the WIB will undertake the following steps to ensure input and comment from appropriate stakeholders.

Chief and Local Elected Officials

A copy of the draft Plan will be sent to the Governor as the WIB's Chief Elected Official for comment and approval. In addition, copies will be sent to the mayors, town administrators, or town council presidents (where applicable) of each of the thirty-seven communities comprising the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area for comment.

Business Representatives

The business majority membership of the WIB will play a pivotal role in providing input to the Plan and ultimate approval by the entire WIB. In addition, business members will be asked to suggest the names of colleagues whom they feel could provide additional input and comment.

Labor Representatives

As members of the WIB, labor representatives will also have the opportunity to comment on the draft Plan. Their advice will be solicited for other individuals from the labor community who might wish to provide input.

One-Stop Partners

WIB members who are representatives of the One-Stop Partners will provide needed input to and comments on the Plan.

Economic Development Entities

WIB members who are representatives of Economic Development will provide needed input to and comments on the Plan.

Others

The WIB will publish notice of a public hearing to be held on April 26, 2007, at which time the general public will be invited to review the Plan and provide comment. In addition, the WIB will post a copy of the draft Plan on its website.

The final Plan will be amended taking into consideration all input received during this review process. At that time, it will be presented to the entire Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Board for approval. Upon approval by the organization's Board, it will be submitted to the State Workforce Investment Board.

- **Plan Comments and Responses**
Will be addressed in Attachment D.

- **Workforce Investment Board Functions**

Roles and Responsibilities

Per the Workforce Investment Act, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, in its role as the local area WIB, will undertake the following functions:

- The development and submission of the Local WIA Plan;
- Assuring coordination of workforce investment activities with economic development strategies and other employer linkages;
- Promoting the participation of private sector employers in the local and statewide workforce investment system and ensuring effective provision, through the system, of connecting, brokering, and coaching activities, which assist employers in meeting hiring needs;
- Selection of One-Stop operators and service providers;
- Development of a budget to carry out these functions and direct the disbursement of Title I-B funds;
- Monitoring the One-Stop delivery system and Title I-B programs;
- Negotiating local performance measures with Chief Local Elected Officials and the Governor;
- Assisting in developing the statewide employment statistics system;
- Monitoring access to ensure everyone has access to the One-Stop system and core employment-related services.

There are currently no additional roles or responsibilities assigned by the Chief Elected Official aside from those mandated by law and regulation.

Fiscal Agent Designation

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will continue to utilize the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training as the fiscal agent for the funds.

Legislative/Regulatory Waiver Requests

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will consult with the State Workforce Investment Office in the development of any waiver requests.

However, for purposes of this Plan, the following waiver requests have been suggested for consideration by the state:

- a. The ability to consider a certificate from an approved ITA provider as an applicable credential;
- b. The ability to use Title I Youth funds for ITA training for older youth;
- c. Removing the 50% match requirement when conducting customized training.

The latter two requests have been approved and the state is requesting that they be extended.

- **Workforce Investment Board Composition**

The Board Development Committee of the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island serves as the focal point for WIB membership activities. This role also includes the solicitation of new members when vacancies occur.

Nomination and Selection of Business Representatives

When a business member vacancy occurs, the Board Development Committee considers the vacancy in terms of regional location and industry area to ensure well-rounded business representation. Once a determination is made, the Governor's Office is contacted to determine whether they have a suitable candidate identified. If not, the Committee formally notifies the Board membership of the vacancy and the desired industry replacement and solicits names for nomination from the members and business organizations (i.e. chambers of commerce). Once the names of candidates have been received, the Committee reviews their qualifications and makes a recommendation to the Executive Committee prior to seeking endorsement from the Board. Once endorsed by the Board, the individual is placed into nomination for appointment by the Governor. The Governor will then either approve and appoint the individual or request additional nominations.

Required Membership

The membership of the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island meets the legislative requirements of the WIA. (Reference Attachment E)

Board Committees

In addition to the mandatory Youth Council, the Board has four standing committees: Executive, Program Development & Evaluation, Program Quality & Assurance, and Board Development. In addition, the Board will appoint ad-hoc committees to address a specific issue or task. Currently, there are two ad-hoc committees. These include a Budget/Operations Committee and a WIA Performance Committee.

Committee meetings are pre-scheduled for a year with changes made as needed. (Reference Attachment F)

Vacancies

As mentioned, the Board Development Committee initiates the process to solicit potential members when a vacancy on the Board occurs. As with any vacancy, the Committee considers the vacancy in terms of required classification, determines whether the Governor has a nomination in mind, and if not, solicits potential nominees from the membership and appropriate agency or business in which the vacancy occurred. Once the names of nominees are received, they are traditionally endorsed by the Board membership and then submitted to the Governor for approval and

appointment. All new appointments are provided with a New Board Member orientation, coordinated by the Board Development Committee and staff.

- **Youth Council**

The Youth Council plays a pivotal role in the WIB's overall direction and decision-making process relative to its responsibilities to youth. Comprised of individuals that include both voting and non-voting WIB members, each member brings areas of interest, expertise, and experience to the discussion around designing and implementing effective youth services.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Youth Council of the Workforce Partnership of Greater RI has assumed the roles and responsibilities described in the WIA. While all youth matters are fully delegated by the WIB to the Youth Council, the ultimate authority for binding issues is retained by the WIB (i.e. contract awards).

Conflicts of Interest

As with any group of decision makers, conflicts of interest may arise. As a committee of the WIB, Youth Council members are held to the same high standards of ethical conduct as the entire Board. The Rhode Island Ethics Law is the foundation for situations that may pose a conflict of interest. All Youth Council members are educated about conflict of interest and expected to abide by the legal standards in any matter that may raise the possibility of a conflict of interest. In addition, the Youth Council has established an RFP Subcommittee to handle matters related to procurement of youth services in an effort to mitigate, if not remove, potential conflicts of interest.

Membership

Similar to the membership of the WIB, the Board Development Committee oversees the membership of the Youth Council. Nominations for vacancies are solicited from current WIB and Youth Council members, with attention to categorical representation, interest, experience, and/or expertise in youth-serving organizations. Nominees are submitted to the WIB for endorsement and appointment. Despite its ongoing efforts, the WIB has experienced some difficulty in recruiting a parent and youth participant as required by the WIA. The Board will continue to make efforts that will allow it to comply with this mandate. (Reference Attachment G)

Activities and Meeting Schedules

The Youth Council Chair has been working to strengthen membership. These efforts have resulted in the recent appointment of new members. Non-WIB voting members often attend and participate in regular WIB meetings. In addition, the RFP Subcommittee provides oversight of the Request For Proposals development and the procurement of Youth Services. this subcommittee, while small, is dedicated to ensuring that youth providers are

held to the highest standards in offering quality programs to youth in need and achieving performance.

Youth Council meetings are usually pre-scheduled on a monthly basis. (Reference Attachment F)

- **Workforce Investment Board Support and Administration**

Support and Administrative Procedures

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island is both an incorporated, 501(c)3 non-profit entity and a division within the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training. As such, the organization directly employs staff under the corporation and is assigned staff by the Department of Labor & Training. Currently, financial support for the organization is provided by federal WIA funds, Rhode Island Job Development funds, and federal H-IB funds. At this time, the WIB is directly staffed by ten individuals, two of them are corporate staff and eight are state-employed staff. Depending on their function and projects focus, staff members are either fully or partially funded by WIA funds or are totally funded with other financial resources. The WIB's funding also contributes proportionately to the Department of Labor & Training's overhead, including personnel, financial services, maintenance, etc. While the organization directly receives and manages a small allotment of WIA funds, the majority of WIA funds are managed by the Department of Labor & Training. Both corporate and state merit staff members contribute to the overall mission of the organization, which includes the WIA focused services and non-WIA initiatives.

WIB Organizational Structure

(Reference Attachment H)

Administrative Funds Distribution

The ten-percent administrative funds portion of WIA funding is retained by the WIB to support appropriate internal operations and functions. In addition to supporting WIB staff, a portion of administrative funds is also allocated to the RIDLT to cover the costs associated with financial operations. With such limited funding, the WIB does not allocate any administrative funds to its network of program operators, including One-Stops, ITA training providers, etc.

D. Integrated, Seamless One-Stop Delivery System

The Department of Labor & Training remains the WIB-designated operator of the One-Stop Career Centers, known as *netWORKri*. Presently, five Centers are geographically located throughout the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area to afford easy access for job seekers and employers. However, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, along with the Department of

Labor & Training, is currently reviewing the volume of services accessed at each center and considering more cost-effective approaches to providing services. Where possible, the internal configurations of One-Stop Centers allow for the maximum utilization of resources through co-location and integration of Rhode Island's providers of workforce services. In addition, each location offers an array of assistive technology and accommodations to enable individuals with disabilities to take full advantage of the resources offered. The ultimate goal of the system is to meet the needs of all customers by providing a common core of information and services that are standard and universal at each entry point.

Partner stakeholder investment will continue as a priority in determining the future of Rhode Island's One-Stop Career Centers. The WIB is continuously collaborating with the Department of Labor & Training to develop approaches that provide financial stability to the system without sacrificing program services. As funds decrease and expenses rise, it has become increasingly difficult to engage partner participation that includes financial support. In any event, the WIB expects that partner agencies will fit one of the following designations:

- **Investors** - commit to providing staff, funding, space and equipment;
- **Affiliates** - support the concept and wish to be part of the extended network of the system without being part of the primary operations team.

The Pawtucket One-Stop Center will continue as the mandated comprehensive center, providing customers with access to all required partner agency programs as defined by the legislation. Required partners may have staff physically located at this Center or provide electronic access to information and services. The remaining sites may not necessarily include direct access to all workforce development partner agencies.

Customers can avail themselves of services either on-site or through electronic access. On-site, the customer may elect to use the self-service approach or may request staff assistance. A resource library offers a broad range of reference materials and current media focused on jobs and career opportunities. Through the use of computer labs, customers can gain access to the Internet, job listings, career exploration material, self-assessment surveys, resume writing, and word processing tools. Copiers, fax machines, and telephones are available to assist the job seeker in their employment search. Career counselors and specialists from Partner Agencies are on-site at the comprehensive center, as well as other center locations. Staff assistance is available for eligibility determination, assessment, development of an individualized service strategy, and assistance in determining and accessing the most appropriate support services and employment and training needs. The following is a detailed listing of services offered at the Pawtucket One-Stop Center, and to varying degrees at the other Centers:

- **Job Seeker Services**
 - Labor Market Information, including occupational demand and wage data;
 - Information on current job openings, hiring requirements, and job referral information on the local, state, national, and federal levels;
 - Internet access to labor market and career information;
 - Access to the State's Certified Training Provider Listing.

- **Labor Exchange and Career Development Services:**
 - Information on careers and skill requirements;
 - Career, education, and financial aid information;
 - Information on the availability and quality of education and training programs;
 - Job development assistance;
 - Job search skills training;
 - Resume preparation;
 - Employment-related workshops, including networking and managing change;
 - Introduction to word processing;
 - Job Referrals.

- **Assessment / Referral Services**
 - Comprehensive assessment, including academic achievement tests, vocational interest inventories, aptitude assessment, and other testing services;
 - Initial eligibility information and/or determination for *netWORKri* partner programs and services;
 - Referrals to other agencies and institutions for services not directly available through the *netWORKri* Centers;
 - Referrals to individual training accounts for vocational and occupational education;
 - Referrals for various educational services, including literacy, GED, basic computer literacy, and basic skills training as an intensive service;
 - Referrals for support services necessary for participation in training and/or work.

- **Other Programs and Services**
 - Veterans' employment services;
 - Trade Adjustment Assistance services;
 - Assistive technology and accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

- **Unemployment Insurance Services**
 - Unemployment Insurance benefit information, including assistance with telephone claims-filing procedures;
 - UI Profiling.

- **Services Available to Employers**

For employers, *netWORKri* offers a lead point of contact that will offer a connection to the entire workforce development system. DLT Employer Service Representatives staff are scheduled to provide services to employers through the centers. Offerings include:

Employee Recruitment Services

- Applicant screening and recruitment;
- Applicant/employee testing;
- Recruitment support (space, FAX, phone, copier, computer, etc.) ;
- Direct job order entry through America's Job Bank;
- Access to qualified nontraditional and minority candidates.

Consultation Services

- Consultation and assistance on employment issues;
- Information on state and local workplace regulations;
- Broad array of labor market information, including employment statistics, wages, labor market trends, census data, and planning information;
- Information and access to older worker programs, Veterans' programs, and special assistance programs.

Training Services

- Access to customized training programs;
- Training brokerage;
- State Training Inventory;
- Registered Apprenticeship programs.

Special Programs

- Rapid response;
- Alien Certification;
- Migrant and Seasonal Worker assistance.

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) developed with each partner agency at the implementation of the WIA in 2000 will serve as the model for an updated MOU. However, due to limited time constraints, a letter indicating the WIB's plans to renegotiate the MOU will be issued. Renegotiated MOUs will become a modification to this Plan at a later date. (Reference Attachment I)

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island plans to continue the practice of contracting with the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training to provide WIA funded services in its *netWORKri* centers. Service contracts include budgetary information and levels of service expected for each service component.

The Program Quality & Performance Committee of the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island Board is responsible for evaluating the system's performance. With staff assistance, this group will periodically monitor provider

performance and service delivery to insure that goals are being achieved. The Committee will maintain an on-going and open dialogue with the Department of Labor & Training's management staff to ensure continuous improvement of the One-Stop system. In addition to the seventeen federally required performance standards, the Committee may identify additional standards that it feels are necessary to insure the integrity of the system. The Committee will serve as the overseer of performance and will report to the full Board with recommendations for improvements, if necessary.

To insure that the needs of local employers and participants are met, the WIB will adhere to the State Workforce Investment Office's Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy which requires that all ITA's funded be in demand occupations and correspond to the Department of Labor & Training's Demand List of Top Fifty Occupations Based on Annual Openings. (Reference Attachment A)

E. Demand-Driven Workforce Investment System

- **Assessment of Business Needs**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater RI maintains a close working relationship with the Rhode Island Economic Development Corporation (RIEDC). In their role as the Ocean State's premier catalyst for economic development, the RIEDC willingly shares information regarding the needs of businesses on a regular basis. Staff members continuously communicate with companies across the state, linking them with services and arranging for both federal and state funding to address their workers' skill development needs whenever possible.

- **Partnerships with Business**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island applies several approaches to working with employers. Members of the Board from the private sector represent several of the demand driven industry sectors identified by the Department of Labor & Training's Labor Market information unit and the Governor's Workforce Board. Those industries include Advanced Manufacturing, Biotechnology, Health Care & Social Assistance, Information Technology, Retail Trade, and Financial Activities. As Board seats are vacated, the plan is to continue to target other high demand industries such as Construction, Leisure, Hospitality & Tourism, and the Marine Trades. In addition, the WIB meets regularly with the industry representatives of the Biomanufacturing Training Initiative Advisory Group that drive the H-1B Training Grant Initiative and has assisted the Governor's Workforce Board in its efforts to develop an Industry Partnership Initiative. It is also member of the RIEDC's "Every Company Counts" initiative.

- **Targeted Industries**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island focuses its strategies and grant funded training resources on demand-driven, growth-oriented businesses. However, with customer choice being the hallmark of training

opportunities, technical and paraprofessional occupations appear to be the primary sectors chosen by the majority of individuals. The WPGRI continuously considers the process of certifying only demand-driven training opportunities through ITAs, and consistently focuses training for growth-oriented jobs

- **Communication with Staff**

The Labor Market Information unit, housed within the Department of Labor & Training, is an excellent source of current data related to a number of labor market trends, including demand-driven occupational information. WIB, One-Stop staff, and the general public have internet access to an array of data that can be used to ensure that resources are targeted toward demand and growth occupations.

- **Planning for Growth Industries**

Historically, the WIB has utilized growth industry data provided by the Labor Market Information unit in targeting both employment and training opportunities as part of its service delivery models. This is particularly evident in decisions regarding the approval and certification of ITA providers.

- **Response to Demand-Driven Labor Market Needs**

In addition to the ITA certification process, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island constantly researches opportunities for additional funding to meet the need of growth industries. For example, in August of 2005, the WIB successfully secured a one-year extension to the \$3 million H-1B grant to support Rhode Island's growing biomanufacturing industry. This modification allowed for expanding services to develop the emerging workforce and extended the grant period through January 4, 2008. In 2000, a \$750,000 demonstration grant was awarded to assist the textile industry, some of whose member companies have transitioned into the burgeoning biotech textile field.

- **Prioritization of Efforts with Employers**

Rhode Island's small size is an asset in terms of the WIB's familiarity with local businesses and the quality of both their workplace and workforce. In addition, the WIB's collaboration with economic development agencies, local chambers of commerce, industry associations and the GWB Industry Partnerships Initiative provides opportunities for communication and information sharing about businesses. The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island has years of experience working in various capacities with local businesses and consistently strives to ensure that employers meet the quality standards for both training and employment opportunities.

F. WIA Title I Program Services

- **Adult Funding Priorities**

The most recent statistics indicate that as of February 2007, 95.6 percent (seasonally adjusted) of Rhode Island's labor force was employed. According to the 2000 Census data, women outnumber men in Rhode Island, 52.0 percent to 48.0 percent.

With a low unemployment rate, it is evident that adults who are not in the labor force represent additional challenges to the workforce system. The fact that many jobs are going unfilled indicates that individuals in the pool of unemployed adults face definite barriers to employment, such as low skills, little or no employment experience, language barriers, physical challenges, low self-esteem, and/or lack of transportation and child care. The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island has traditionally targeted low-income adults, often those receiving public assistance, and others with the aforementioned barriers to employment. Additional priorities for services include veterans and their spouses.

These priorities, particularly when funding becomes limited, are regularly communicated to the *netWORKri* One-Stop Career Centers.

- **Services Mix**

Historically, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island allocates more than three-quarters of its annual funding allocation to direct services. While reduced funding, increased operational costs and targeted service priorities may impact the mix of services, the WIB plans to continue to prioritize a services-oriented approach to funds utilization. Examples of PY 2006 allocations include:

Adults

86% of the total funding was directed to services with 34% dedicated to core and intensive services and 53% reserved for occupational skill training.

Dislocated Workers

85% of the total funding was directed to services with 35% dedicated to core and intensive services and 50% reserved for occupational skill training.

We anticipate that PY 2007 percentage allocations for core, intensive, and training services will be similar to those used in PY 2006. When these allocations are formally decided upon, the LWIB will file a modification of this plan.

In addition, the WPGRI will seek to meet State goals for training dollars set aside for individuals with disabilities and those who are economically disadvantaged. According to the State's Draft Two-Year Strategic Plan, "the

State has established the following goals for priority of service levels...:” - for Adult and Youth customers, “a minimum of 12 percent for individuals with disabilities” and for the economically disadvantaged, “a minimum of 35 percent.” Please see page 94 of the State’s Draft Plan for additional information.

- **Displaced Homemakers**

The displaced homemaker population includes individuals with a wide variety of skill levels and education. As a result, their workforce investment needs will vary accordingly from placement assistance to an intensive service plan of in depth services. This population will continue to avail themselves of all services funded by the dislocated worker category. The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will coordinate outreach, recruitment and service delivery strategies with community and faith-based organizations that serve this population.

- **Special Populations**

Both anecdotal and raw data suggests that the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island serves a significant portion of special population segments including dislocated workers, low-income individuals, TANF recipients, individuals with disabilities, etc. As previously mentioned, with low unemployment rates, individuals seeking WIA services tend to be those who face multiple barriers. The WIB expects that this trend will continue and will ensure that services remain available through the One-Stop Career Centers.

All training provided to these populations must be targeted to the demand-driven job market. Therefore, to be successful, the WIB will continue to build upon established relationships with agencies such as the Rhode Island Office of Rehabilitative Services, Department of Mental Health Retardation and Hospitals, Benefits Planners and employers to continue to develop strategies that effectively serve special populations.

- **Rapid Response**

The Department of Labor & Training is the entity responsible for providing rapid job entry services. WIB participation and coordination is an internal function of the Department and all appropriate staff are notified when a WARN notice is received. A team works with the company officials to schedule employee informational meetings and follow through.

- **Title I Core Services**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will continue to offer the full array of core services indicated in the WIA through the One-Stop Career Centers. There are no plans to expand the current offerings.

Labor Exchange Services provided by Wagner-Peyser staff in the One-Stop Centers are a value-added complement to the WIA core services.

Additionally, Labor Exchange Services are universally extended to all individuals in the One-Stop Centers; a subset of that group will be assessed as needing WIA core and beyond services. Thus, Labor Exchange Services is essentially the gateway to WIA.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island does not provide supportive services as a matter of policy. However, individuals eligible for or determined to need such services are referred to appropriate agencies for assistance, e.g., TANF sponsored child care.

- **Intensive Services**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will continue to offer the full array of intensive services indicated in the WIA through the One-Stop Career Centers. There are no plans to expand the current offerings.

In all cases, information sharing to expedite services to individuals who access WIA programs from partner agencies is encouraged. While sometimes problematic due to confidentiality issues, partners have made great progress in this matter and it is expected that information and data sharing will expand, thus improving services and reducing redundancies.

- **Training Services**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island historically allocates the bulk of training funds to the ITAs and plans to continue this practice. In PY 2006 for example, 55% of Adult Training funds and 70% of Dislocated Worker funds were earmarked for ITAs. The remaining 45% and 30% respectively were reserved for OJTs. Customized Training is not earmarked for separate funding, although the WIB always reserves the right to do so, when and if appropriate.

In keeping with the intent of the Workforce Investment Act emphasizing informed customer choice, particularly as it relates to selecting training providers, The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will continue to comply with the State's policy and procedures (Workforce Investment Notice 99-21) to establish its ITA system.

To be considered an eligible provider of training, the Board certifies organizations after completion of an application for each course of study or each occupational skills program. Training offerings are selected based on their ability to match the demand occupations as determined by the Department of Labor & Training's "Demand List of Top Fifty Occupations Based on Annual Openings." WIB staff reviews submittals to insure compliance with all eligibility criteria outlined in the policy. Particular consideration is given to past performance and the likelihood that those who complete the training are able to secure employment at a self-sustaining

wage. Once certified, applicant data is electronically transferred to the State Workforce Investment Office to verify eligibility for each program.

As required by the WIA, a consumer report card database is used for each certified program detailing such information as cost, class schedules, and success rates. The State Workforce Investment Office is responsible for transferring this information to each *netWORKri* Center, where customers are able to access the list via the Internet and, with counselor assistance, make informed choices.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island generally imposes the requirement that training be completed within two years. In an effort to serve as many individuals as possible with limited funds, the WIB historically establishes a cap for training, which will be lowered from \$4,000 to \$3,500 in PY 2007.

The WIB believes that in a demand-driven workforce environment, customized training could better serve both the employer and job seeker and reserves the option to competitively procure training services. This model would be utilized if an employer or group of employers identifies a specific training need within their organization and agrees to hire individuals who successfully complete the program. It has been a problematic option due to the requirement that the employer provide a 50 percent funded match. If the state is granted a waiver of this requirement, this option could prove more useful.

On-the-Job Training, with its individualized approach that meets the needs of both employer and job seeker, has been a successful program for the WIB, helping to target growth occupations and generate higher wages. Training contracts, tailored to meet the specific occupational skill level required and the skills of the trainee, are generally limited to not more than 26 weeks. However, the WIB does not place a cap on training, though it is judicious in negotiating the cost.

In awarding contracts for any activities under Title I, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will comply with the Rhode Island Workforce Investment Office's policy WIN99-21 regarding contracting procedures. If it is determined that exceptions to the ITA process are appropriate, the selection of service providers shall be made on a competitive basis to the extent practicable. All solicitations shall include a clear and accurate description of the technical requirements for the material, product or service to be procured; identify all requirements which the applicant must fulfill as well as other factors used in evaluating proposals; and ensure that all pre-qualified lists of persons, firms, or other organizations which are used in acquiring goods and services are current and include sufficient numbers of qualified sources to ensure maximum open and free competition.

Awards will be made to the applicant whose proposal is most advantageous to the program with price, technical, and other factors considered. Such determinations shall be in writing and take into consideration whether the organization has:

- Adequate financial resources or the ability to obtain them;
- The ability to meet the program design specifications at a reasonable cost;
- The ability to meet performance goals;
- A satisfactory record of past performance;
- A satisfactory record of integrity, business ethics and fiscal accountability;
- The necessary organizational experience, accounting and operational controls;
- The technical skills to perform the work.

A Request for Proposal will be issued, publicly advertised, mailed to the most current Potential Providers list, and posted on the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island web site.

The WIB affords staff in the One-Stop Centers wide flexibility in determining an individual's "need for training." However, in order to ensure that limited training funds are directed to those who can most benefit, staff will consider:

- The individual's skill sets and their transferability to existing employment opportunities;
- The availability of job opportunities in the individual's career field;
- Whether training would increase the individual's likelihood of obtaining suitable employment;
- The individual's prospects of successfully completing training;
- The expectations of the individual upon completion of training.

As previously stated, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island already allocates in excess of 85% of its allocations for direct services, including over 50% for training. The WIB is satisfied and confident that its administrative and operational structures are sufficiently cost efficient given the percentages. However, in an effort to increase training opportunities, the WIB is reducing the current ITA cap from \$4,000 to \$3,500 in PY 2007.

- **Youth Programs**

Over the past two years, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island redesigned its service strategies with regard to Older Youth services. The focus was shifted from the more traditional youth service models to one that is geared to occupational skill training through the ITA process. The design also included requirements that program contractors occupy space in a One-Stop or include detailed plans for utilization of One-Stop services. Contractors were also required to include strategies that ensure youth not suitable or eligible for their specific program are referred to the One-Stop for alternative options. The

design of Younger Youth program models has always included opportunities for accessing the One-Stop Centers (i.e. field trips, research, etc.).

In the current program year, the SWIO office successfully secured a waiver from the DOL allowing the LWIBs, the WPGRI, and WSPC to develop the innovative Statewide Youth Service System design to incorporate services for all youth and to encourage collaborative service strategies with partnering state agencies. This initiative led to the development of a statewide Youth Workforce Services RFP developed and issued jointly by both LWIBs, the WPGRI and WSPC. In addition, the GWBRI awarded the LWIBs state funds to allow them to expand services beyond those of the traditional WIA funded services and develop additional strategies for career awareness related to high-growth, high-demand industries through this joint effort.

The RFP process was preceded by the Youth Services CONFAB designed to solicit input from potential service providers and promote awareness of the newly developed strategies to potential service providers and stakeholders.

The WIB's Youth Council also continues to emphasize the creation of effective partnerships with youth serving organizations and the private sector as the keystone of all WIA program delivery models. Contractors are expected to establish linkages and agreements that include detailed plans for collaboration among a variety of agencies. Inclusion and evidence of these plans are required to be submitted with proposals for funding consideration. As such, the implied effectiveness of such collaboration is included in the ratings and evaluation criteria.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island requires that its contractors include strategies and mechanisms in their program design to refer youth who may not be eligible or suitable for their program to the One-Stop for alternative options.

All WIA youth contractors are required to include plans and strategies to make available to youth participants the ten elements mandated by the legislation. The WIB recognizes that contractors may not be capable of providing all the elements in-house and therefore requires that partner agreements be executed with other entities to provide the service. Individualized assessment of each participant remains the determining factor as to whether a youth is in need of any program element.

With the implementation of the WIA in 2000, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island adopted a sixth eligibility criterion for youth which states: "An individual (including a youth with a disability) who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment." No local policy specifying disability criteria exists beyond what

is required under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The WIB will retain this criterion for purposes of this Plan.

Youth who are assessed as reading below a grade point level of 8.9 on a standardized test will continue to meet the locally defined definition of "deficient in basis literacy skills" criterion as established by the WIB in 2000.

The WPGRI and its Youth Council strongly endorse the Statewide Youth Service System. This initiative was also endorsed by the Governor's Workforce Board and its Youth Development Committee who supported the strategy by awarding the LWIBS state JDF funds to provide additional workforce services to youth. This impetus led to the development of the statewide Youth Workforce Services RFP developed and issued jointly by both LWIBs, the WPGRI and WSPC for the first time in their history. The RFP process was preceded by the Youth Services CONFAB designed to solicit input from potential service providers and promote awareness of the newly developed strategies to potential service providers and stakeholders.

The statewide joint RFP has been developed to procure youth programs and services through an open and competitive RFP bid process. The RFP process adheres to the established procurement process traditionally utilized by the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, which complies with federal, state, and WIB procurement guidelines. Prospective applicant agencies are recruited through networking, advertisements, and promotional efforts.

Requests For Proposals are developed by staff with guidance and oversight by the Youth Council's RFP Committee and distributed through a public pre-bid conference. The Statement of Work, Proposal Instructions and Proposal format are thoroughly reviewed. Questions and answers are recorded and are available to anyone both in written form and on the WIB's website.

Submitted proposals are subjected to technical, programmatic, and budgetary reviews by a ratings and evaluation committee. Upon final ranking, results and recommendations are submitted to the Youth Council for endorsement and then to the Board of Directors for final approval.

In its deliberations regarding potential funding of providers, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island seriously considers each applicant agency's past performance. Areas considered include recruitment and enrollment success, service delivery, the achievement of contracted goals and objectives, and overall contract compliance. Issues of concern regarding past performance are dealt with individually. As such, agencies may be rejected for funding or funded "at-risk." "At-risk" funding implies that the WIB will impose more stringent technical assistance and oversight to ensure successful performance.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, in collaboration with the Youth Council, continues to place an emphasis on serving older, out-of-school youth. Contractors are strongly encouraged to connect to **netWORKri** Centers to access the available pool of older, out-of-school youth. Data suggests that increasing numbers of this population are using the One-Stop Centers, thus making the Centers a viable venue for recruitment. In addition to the One-Stop Centers, the WPGRI requires that its youth service providers establish collaborative linkages with agencies who serve youth most-at-risk and most-in-need. The WIB also actively participates in the Rhode Island Youth Forum established to convene youth serving agencies for discussion around shared resources, funds leveraging and mutual efficiencies.

- **Service Strategies and Failed Performance**

Challenges regarding achievement of negotiated youth performance have resulted in major revisions to the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island's approach to youth program service strategies. As a result, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island has implemented internal procedures that place greater emphasis on providing regular technical assistance to providers; convening providers to discuss and share "best practices"; fostering collaboration among providers for potential cross-referrals; etc.

- **Faith-Based and Community Organizations**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island recognizes the long-standing contributions of faith-based and community organizations to the state's population and, in particular, to those individuals most-in-need.

The WIB has worked to develop a project entitled "The Community Connections Project," which was designed as a partnership with faith-based organizations to provide workforce and employment services to their constituencies. It was funded using Faith-Based Community Organization Grant funds from DOL and proposed the formation of an "industry council" with employer representation from the hospitality, financial call center and construction trades sectors. Job openings in these growth areas have been steadily increasing and this initiative was designed to develop new avenues for greater participation from the faith-based community. Although the project was not federally funded, the WPGRI plans to revisit the project design in order to consider increasing communications with these organizations in order to access the potential workforce they serve.

The WIB will collaborate with the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training as the One-Stop Operator to expand the access of faith-based and community organizations' clients and customers to the services offered by the One-Stops. Examples of increasing awareness and participation may include:

- One-Stop representatives making presentations at board and/or committee meetings of local faith-based and community

organizations, as well as at related conferences, job fairs, etc. to explain the services provided at the One-Stops and to encourage partnerships between the One-Stops and these organizations;

- Sharing One-Stop literature with faith-based and community organizations;
- Extending invitations to representatives of faith-based and community organizations to tour local One-Stops and meet with staff.

G. Service Providers and Oversight

- **Selection of Service Providers**

WIA Core and Intensive Services will continue to be delivered by the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training's One-Stop-Career Center staff, as originally designated by the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island with the implementation of WIA in 2000. Services are provided at each of the *netWORKri* One-Stop Centers throughout the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area. A formal financial and programmatic agreement is executed each Program Year with the Department of Labor & Training detailing the number of expected enrollments and recipients of Core, Intensive, and Training services.

As previously discussed, WIA youth services are procured as group contracts through a public bid process in compliance with federal, state and WIB policies and procedures. Contracts with youth service providers include detailed descriptions of the services to be provided. In most instances, the majority of services are provided at the contracted agency site. However, some services may be provided at partner agency sites or at an employer site. Youth receive services from designated staff attached to the contract agreement.

A descriptive model of WIA service delivery is referenced in Attachment J.

- **Oversight and Training of Service Providers**

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island conducts service provider monitoring and oversight on several levels. Program monitoring is generally conducted by WIB staff responsible for the particular activity or program. For example, youth services are monitored by the Youth Programs Coordinator and WIA services by the WIA Programs Coordinator. Formal monitoring of all programs is comprehensive and includes, among other processes, a review of participant enrollment and exit data, participant eligibility documentation, assessment data, participant file content, and interviews with program staff and participants. In addition to formal monitoring, staff members conduct desk monitoring of programs, which often includes more current information.

WPGRI's monitoring procedures are guided by Workforce Investment Notice 05-05, which states:

"Monitoring.--- The State will conduct on an annual basis on-site monitoring of each local area within the State to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements. In addition, the local Workforce Investment Boards shall conduct on a semi-annual basis both internal and on-site monitoring to ensure compliance with the uniform administrative requirements. The Workforce Development Boards will forward a copy of the monitoring report to the SWIO along with documented corrective action."

In addition to staff monitoring, WIB Board members often participate. For example, the WPGRI Program Quality and Performance Committee conducts formal oversight visits of the One-Stop Centers and compiles their findings in a report that is shared with the Board. Youth Council members have also participated with WIB staff on visits to youth service providers.

Fiscal monitoring of service providers is conducted by WIB staff dedicated to this function. Conducted at the provider site, financial records, time sheets, invoices and supporting documentation are more readily accessible. This monitoring includes financial areas, as well as a review of providers to ensure contractual and operational compliance with applicable federal and state legislation and regulations.

Whether programmatic or financial, formal monitoring conducted by the WIB is reported in writing to the service provider and includes findings and recommendations. Providers are expected to respond within thirty days. All reports are shared with the WIB's Board of Directors.

The implementation of America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS) resulted in a data and case management system that will benefit the workforce development system overall. The design of this system was and continues to be heavily influenced by front-end users, thus ensuring that it continues to meet the demands of non-technical staff. During this two year period, the WPGRI will participate in the selection process for the future case management system.

Beginning with the initial implementation the RIDLT has continually provided training to all users of the system including both front-line and management staff in workforce development. Since different users have different needs, training often revolves around their particular needs. Newsletter communications on system updates and changes are issued regularly to staff.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will also rely on a locally developed WIA ACCESS data system to track participants and complete reports. This system has been in operation since the implementation of the WIA in 2000, undergoing refinements and revisions to better respond to the needs of management and staff within workforce development. The ACCESS system has been a reliable data collection and reporting method and will continue to be utilized in concert with the AOSOS system for the foreseeable future. However, it is anticipated that once fully operational, AOSOS will be the primary data collection and reporting system in use.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island staff continually reviews data provided by both the ACCESS and AOSOS systems to track the progress of participants as they move through the system. WIA Registrations, Core, Intensive, and Training data is entered and recorded by staff in the One-Stop Centers and all data relative to youth program is entered by WIB staff. Reviews of the data are conducted to determine both the accuracy and timeliness of the data. The WIA Services Agreement between the WIB and the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training contains language that requires data be entered within thirty days of the activity's occurrence. When issues or concerns are raised regarding the timeliness or accuracy of data, it is addressed with One-Stop Center management.

With the current usage of dual tracking and reporting systems, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island does not use any other data systems to record and track WIA participants.

H. Performance and Accountability

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island does not plan to develop any performance standards in addition to those that will be negotiated with the State and U.S. Department of Labor, indicated in the following chart:

STATEWIDE WIA PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

GROUP	MEASURE	YEAR 6	YEAR 7
ADULT	Entered Employment Rate	82%	N/A
	6-Month Retention Rate	85%	N/A
	Avg. Earnings Change in 6 Months	\$4,550	N/A
	Credential Rate	66%	N/A
DISLOCATED WORKERS	Entered Employment Rate	89%	N/A
	6-Month Retention Rate	92%	N/A
	Earnings Replacement Rate	(\$1,030)	N/A
	Credential Rate	78.5%	N/A
OLDER YOUTH AGES 19-21	Entered Employment Rate	71%	N/A
	6-Month Retention Rate	81%	N/A
	Avg. Earnings Change in 6 Months	\$2,830	N/A
	Credential Rate	58%	N/A
YOUNGER YOUTH AGES 14-18	Skill Attainment Rate	91%	N/A
	Diploma and Equivalent Attainment Rate	64%	N/A
	Placement/Retention Rate	62%	N/A
CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	Employer	75%	N/A
	Participant	80%	N/A

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island remains committed to continuous improvement and has always based its administrative and operational decisions in light of this guiding principle. To that end, WIB members and staff are challenged and supported by the Board of Directors to continually explore options that result in greater efficiencies and improvements that enhance the mission and vision of the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island.

Structurally, the WIB and its committees have evolved over time to embrace a global view of workforce development and become less concerned with the bureaucratic minutiae. Management of operational issues is delegated to the committee level where they are handled more effectively and efficiently. Each

committee and sub-committee plays a role in ensuring that the entire organization remains "on task," without losing sight of the "big picture."

A prime example of this practice in action was the formation of a WIA Performance Sub-Committee. As it became apparent that the WIB was challenged by its failure to achieve some youth performance measures, the WIB's response to the concern was to form this committee. Since its inception, the Committee has dedicated itself to understanding the intricacies and complexities of WIA performance, worked to educate the members at-large about the issues, and begun to consider the larger impact of performance on the WIB's constituency and the value of programs as they relate to performance. The work of this committee represents a major step forward in the overall WIB's understanding and view of performance and its relationship to its mission.

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island recognizes that achievement or failure of WIA performance is heavily contingent upon participant follow-up and retention activities. To that end, greater emphasis on the implementation of strategies designed to ensure that participants have access to services and resources beyond their exit from the programs have been required of all providers. This has been primarily problematic with the older youth programs. Providers report that this population tends to be less committed to longer-term involvement with structured programs such as those offered by the WIA. With plentiful employment opportunities, this population is more flexible and mobile in their job choices, seeking out jobs with higher wages more often than considering opportunities that are career-oriented.

As part of its overall strategy, service providers are encouraged to use financial and other incentives that are attractive to participants to ensure they remain engaged throughout the follow-up and retention periods.

I. Plan Modification

The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will follow procedures outlined in the State Workforce Investment Notice 01-05 regarding modifications to this plan.

ASSURANCES

- 1) CFR part 95 (OMB Circular A-110) as applicable -- Uniform Administrative The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, including the chief elected official of the area, and providers receiving funds under Title I of the WIA, will all maintain fiscal controls and fund accounting procedures to ensure the proper disbursement of, and accounting for all funds received through the Workforce Investment Act.
- 2) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island will assure that it shall keep records that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports required by the Act and shall maintain such records, including standardized records for all individual participants, and submit such reports as the State may require.
- 3) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island assures that it will collect and maintain data necessary to show compliance with the nondiscrimination provisions of the Act. The Board assures compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990.
- 4) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island assures that funds will be spent in accordance with the Workforce Investment Act, regulations, written Department of Labor guidance, State guidance, and all other applicable Federal and State laws.
- 5) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island assures that veterans will be afforded employment and training activities authorized in the Workforce Investment Act in compliance with the Jobs for Veterans Act.
- 6) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island assures that no funds received under WIA will be used to assist, promote, or deter union organizing.
- 7) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island assures that it developed this plan in consultation with the business community, labor organizations, and required partners.
- 8) The Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island assures that it will comply with any grant procedures prescribed by the Secretary which are necessary to enter into contracts for the use of funds under WIA; including, but not limited to the following:

General Administrative Requirements:

- 29 CFR part 97(OMB Circular A-102) --Uniform Administrative Requirements for State and Local Governments (as amended by the Act)
- 29 CFR part 95 (OMB Circular A-110) as applicable --Requirements for Institutions of Higher Education

Audit Regulations and Requirements

- 29 CFR part 96 (as amended by OMB Circular A-133) -Single Audit Act
- 29 CFR part 99 (OMB Circular A-133) Audit Requirements for recipients of Federal Financial Assistance

Cost Principles

- OMB Circular A-87 -- (as amended by the Act), Cost Principles for State, Local, and Indian Tribal Governments
- OMB Circular A-122 and A-22 Cost Principles for Non-Profit Organizations as applicable

Assurances and Certifications

- SF 424 B – Assurances for Non-Construction Programs
- 29 CFR part 37 – Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Assurance (and Regulation);

Miscellaneous Provisions

- CFR part 93 – Certification Regarding Lobbying (and Regulation)
- 29-CFR part 98 –Drug Free Workplace and Debarment and suspension; Certifications (and regulation)

SIGNATURES

In its capacity as the locally designated Workforce Investment Board, this plan represents the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island's efforts to maximize resources available under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 and to coordinate these resources with other State and Local programs in the Greater Rhode Island Workforce Investment Area, which includes thirty-seven of Rhode Island's thirty-nine cities and towns, excluding Providence and Cranston.

This comprehensive plan is submitted for the period of July 1, 2007 through June 30, 2009 in accordance with the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act. We further certify that we will operate the Workforce Investment Act Program in accordance with this plan and applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

Local Board Chair

Original Signature

Steven H. Kitchin

Name (Printed/Typed)

Date

Chief Elected Official

Original Signature

Donald L. Carcieri

Name (Printed/Typed)

Date

ATTACHMENTS

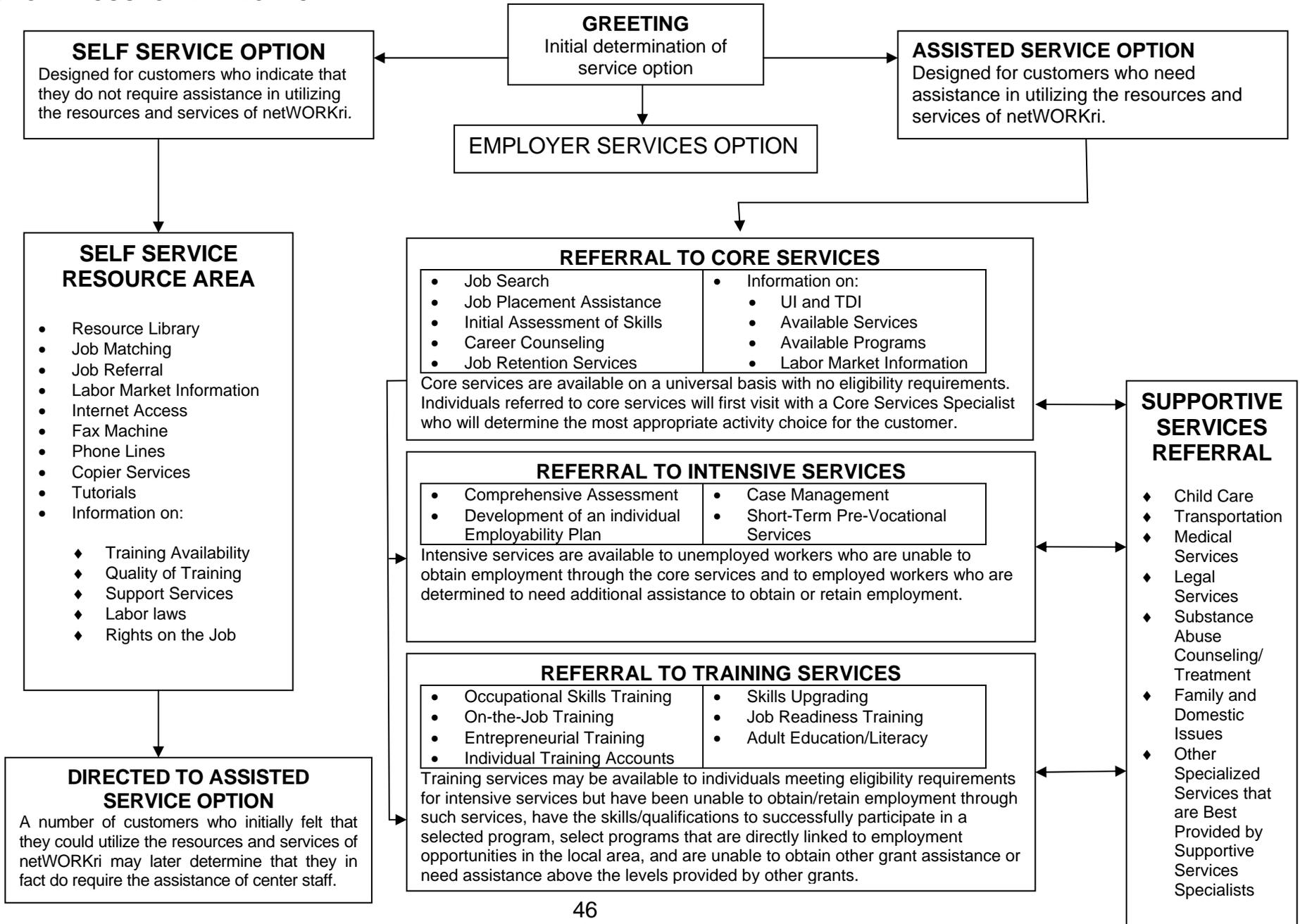
- A. RI'S TOP 50 GROWTH OCCUPATIONS BY ANNUAL OPENINGS, 2004-2014**
- B. netWORKri CUSTOMER FLOW CHART**
- C. netWORKri AVAILABLE SERVICES**
- D. PLAN COMMENTS AND RESPONSE**
- E. BOARD MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**
- F. BOARD COMMITTEES AND MEETING SCHEDULE (2007)**
- G. YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP ROSTER**
- H. WIB ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**
- I. MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)**
- J. WIA SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL**

ATTACHMENT A*RI'S TOP 50 GROWTH OCCUPATIONS BY ANNUAL OPENINGS, 2004-2014*

Top 50 Rhode Island Occupations by Annual Openings, 2004-2014			
<u>SOC Code</u>	<u>Occupational Title</u>	<u>Annual Openings</u>	<u>Training Requirements</u>
41-2031	Retail Salespersons	793	Short-term on-the-job training
35-3031	Waiters & Waitresses	787	Short-term on-the-job training
41-2011	Cashiers	581	Short-term on-the-job training
29-1111	Registered Nurses	565	Associate degree
35-3021	Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers, including Fast Food	433	Short-term on-the-job training
53-7062	Laborers and Freight, Stock, & Material Movers, Hand	290	Short-term on-the-job training
43-9061	Office Clerks, General	287	Short-term on-the-job training
35-3022	Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, & Coffee Shop	270	Short-term on-the-job training
31-1012	Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants	258	Postsecondary vocational training
43-4051	Customer Service Representatives	249	Moderate-term on-the-job training
43-5081	Stock Clerks & Order Fillers	229	Short-term on-the-job training
37-2011	Janitors and Cleaners, except Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	227	Short-term on-the-job training
47-2031	Carpenters	208	Long-term on-the-job training
35-2021	Food Preparation Workers	200	Short-term on-the-job training
31-1011	Home Health Aides	196	Short-term on-the-job training
13-2011	Accountants & Auditors	196	Bachelor's degree
25-2031	Secondary School Teachers, except Special & Vocational Ed.	188	Bachelor's degree
39-9011	Child Care Workers	187	Short-term on-the-job training
43-3031	Bookkeeping, Accounting & Auditing Clerks	172	Moderate-term on-the-job training
25-9041	Teacher Assistants	172	Short-term on-the-job training
35-3011	Bartenders	165	Short-term on-the-job training
43-4171	Receptionists & Information Clerks	162	Short-term on-the-job training
41-4012	Sales Representatives, Wholesale & Manufacturing, except Technical & Scientific Products	160	Moderate-term on-the-job training
37-3011	Landscaping & Groundskeeping Workers	155	Short-term on-the-job training
21-1093	Social and Human Service Assistants	152	Moderate-term on-the-job training
25-2021	Elementary School Teachers, except Special Education	141	Bachelor's degree
53-3032	Truck Drivers, Heavy & Tractor-Trailer	133	Moderate-term on-the-job training

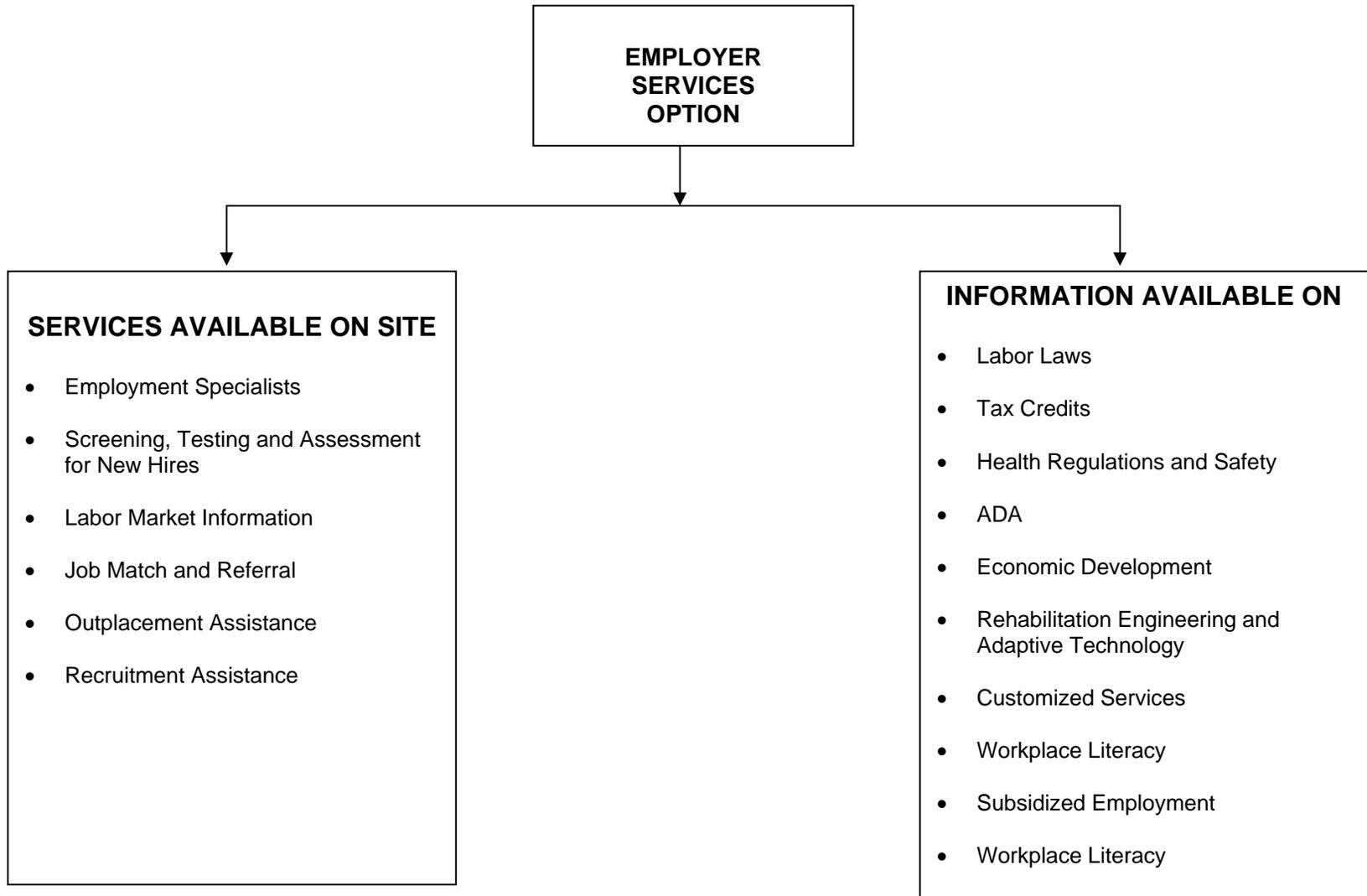
51-2092	Team Assemblers	132	Moderate-term on-the-job training
35-1012	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Food Prep. & Serving Wrkrs.	128	Work experience in related occupation
43-1011	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Office & Administrative Support Workers	124	Work experience in related occupation
35-2014	Cooks, Restaurant	124	Long-term on-the-job training
35-2011	Cooks, Fast Food	123	Short-term on-the-job training
43-3071	Tellers	122	Short-term on-the-job training
37-2012	Maids & Housekeeping Cleaners	122	Short-term on-the-job training
49-3023	Automotive Service Technicians & Mechanics	122	Postsecondary vocational training
43-6014	Secretaries, Except Legal, Medical & Executive	121	Moderate-term on-the-job training
49-9042	Maintenance and Repair Workers, General	117	Moderate-term on-the-job training
43-6011	Executive Secretaries & Administrative Assistants	117	Moderate-term on-the-job training
39-5012	Hairdressers, Hairstylists & Cosmetologists	116	Postsecondary vocational training
41-1011	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Retail Sales Workers	109	Work experience in related occupation
35-9021	Dishwashers	107	Short-term on-the-job training
39-9021	Personal & Home Care Aides	104	Short-term on-the-job training
47-2152	Plumbers, Pipefitters, & Steamfitters	103	Long-term on-the-job training
47-1011	First-Line Supervisors/Managers of Construction Trades & Extraction Workers	97	Work experience in related occupation
47-2061	Construction Laborers	95	Moderate-term on-the-job training
53-3033	Truck Drivers, Light or Delivery Services	90	Short-term on-the-job training
15-1051	Computer Systems Analysts	90	Bachelor's degree
31-9092	Medical Assistants	87	Moderate-term on-the-job training
41-2021	Counter & Rental Clerks	86	Short-term on-the-job training
47-2111	Electricians	82	Long-term on-the-job training

ATTACHMENT B
netWORKri CUSTOMER FLOW CHART



ATTACHMENT C

netWORKri AVAILABLE SERVICES



ATTACHMENT D

PLAN COMMENTS AND RESPONSES

- I. Summary of Comments by Jane Nugent, United Way of Rhode Island;*
- II. Public Hearing on WPGRI Draft Two-Year WIA Plan;*
- III. Comments submitted by Diane Cook, Rhode Island Department of Human Services.*

- I. Summary of Comments by Jane Nugent, United Way of Rhode Island*

The following is a summary of comments provided by Jane Nugent of the United Way of Rhode Island. These comments were delivered at the WPGRI Board of Directors Meeting, held on April 10, 2007 at the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training offices, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island. Ms. Nugent is also a member of the WPGRI Board of Directors:

Jane Nugent provided comment on the strategic importance of “baby boomers” in the Rhode Island economy. She stated that “baby boomers” will not be leaving the workforce, as aging workers have in the past. First, these aging workers cannot afford to stop working and require the pay and benefits earned through their continuous employment. Also, longer life expectancies are extending people’s working years. Ms. Nugent stated that this group of Rhode Islanders needs special attention and that the local economy cannot afford to lose their skill sets. She mentioned that the plan assumes “baby boomers” will age out of the workforce and suggested that their importance be further addressed in the Plan.

- II. Public Hearing on WPGRI Draft Two-Year WIA Plan*

The Public Hearing was held on April 26, 2007 between the hours of 9:00 am and 10:30 am, at the Rhode Island Department of Labor & Training offices, 1511 Pontiac Avenue, Cranston, Rhode Island. The following four pages of text are copied from the complete transcript of that hearing:

WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP OF GREATER RHODE ISLAND

1511 Pontiac Avenue
Cranston, Rhode Island 02920

Re: Public Hearing Notice - WPGRI Board Meeting
Draft Two-Year WIA Plan

Date: April 26, 2007

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Before: Doris M. Miller - Acting Executive Director

Nick Ucci - Acting Coordinator

----- Ellen Zappia, RPR -----
Capitol Court Reporting, Inc.
931 Jefferson Boulevard
Warwick, Rhode Island 02886
(401) 739.3600

1 MS. MILLER: I'm Dottie Miller.
2 I'm the acting executive director of the Workforce
3 Partnership of Greater Rhode Island, and this is
4 Nick Ucci, and he's the operations and manager of
5 operations and finance.

6 MR. UCCI: Acting coordinator.

7 MS. MILLER: Acting coordinator.

8 And we are here today to hear public
9 comments on the Workforce Partnership of Greater
10 Rhode Island Draft Two-Year Workforce Investment Act
11 Plan. And the plan was introduced through the Board
12 as a draft.

13 There has been a public hearing comment
14 period since the April 10th board meeting until
15 today. This public hearing closes that open comment
16 period.

17 We have sent executive summaries of the
18 plan to the mayors and administrators of the 37
19 cities and towns that we serve, for their review and
20 comment, and inviting them to this hearing. There's
21 also been a legal notice published in the Providence
22 Journal advertising this hearing today.

23 Being no comments and no further
24 information, we close the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

1 (Proceedings concluded at 10:30 a.m.)

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1 C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 I, Ellen Zappia, Registered Professional

4 Reporter and Commissioner of the State of Rhode

5 Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby

6 certify:

7 THAT the foregoing is a true and accurate

8 transcript of my stenographic notes.

9 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my

10 hand this 25th day of April, 2007.

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14 Ellen Zappia, RPR
15 My Commission Expires April 30, 2012

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III. Comments submitted by Diane Cook, Rhode Island Department of Human Services

The following text was submitted by Diane Cook of the RI Department of Human Services in an email to WPGRI Acting Executive Director Dottie Miller dated April 27, 2007:

Thank you for inviting early input into the development of the new WIA Strategic Plan.

The business need for a flexible and ever more technologically-competent workforce is a challenge for the pre-K to 16 system and business and economic leaders. The public workforce development system must be aware of evolutions in the economy and advise job seekers appropriately, as well as offer options to its customers that facilitate their career pathways. But the public system has a greater role to play, and one for which it is uniquely suited, in preparing and placing workers for those 58% of jobs in 2012 that are projected to require on-the-job training and those 14.2% of jobs in 2012 that are projected to require short-term vocational training or prior work experience.

The point of a strategic plan for WIA Title I and Wagner-Peyser investments is to maximize the effect of these limited public dollars for the public good. In some sense, USDOL has already determined where public investments matter: youth, especially out-of-school youth, dislocated workers, including displaced homemakers, and adults, especially those who are un- or under-employed and/or have barriers to employment. Many, perhaps most, of these individuals are low-income. Many, perhaps most, are correspondingly low-skilled. But, the State must determine how, when, through what vehicles, and specifically with whom and for whom to make these investments.

So long as the State can not or chooses not to mandate that all job openings be funneled through the public labor exchange system, then the State must make its workforce investment decisions in light of this reality: the public labor exchange system, the heart of the One-Stop system, is just one option among many in a large, competitive labor exchange industry. The One-Stop exists alongside the green boxes on street corners that hold free papers filled with want ads, the red boxes on other street corners that hold the Journal employment notices, the for-profit employment agencies that hold contracts with many RI companies, the non-profit agencies that hold business relationships dear, and a proliferation of web-based labor-exchange sites. So if the One-Stop cannot corner the market on labor-exchange services, then it should become efficient in its niche market – the people who need it most.

Arguably those in greatest need are those Rhode Islanders whose single greatest source of income is public dollars, and arguably, helping those individuals to transition from public dollars to private dollars is the wisest investment we could make with public monies. Since, however, the One-Stop neither knows all job openings nor holds all business relationships, it must have employment counselors with superior skills in helping these customers navigate the competitive labor exchange marketplace. And, since the One-Stop neither can, nor would want to, be all things to all people, it must

have superior collaborative relationships with sister agencies to ensure these customers are prepared to transition successfully to the private sector.

As we consider the questions of “how, when, through what vehicles, with whom and for whom” to make these investments, we can acknowledge that sister agencies are critically important to the One-Stop in order to successfully serve low income, low-skilled youth and adults through the labor exchange system. We can also acknowledge that considerable service delivery with public funds is accomplished through local non-profits. With an increased emphasis on monitoring and performance-based contracting, the use of non-profits is a cost-effective means of achieving the public’s goals. The impact of strategic planning in this regard is to assure that programs that are carried out with public dollars address the target customers in the volume and with the products proportionate to the need.

To make the calculation of how much of what to invest in whom, the State must face the question of how it makes its investment decisions. While evidence-based and data-driven decision-making is conceptually embraced, it cannot be exercised unless sufficient resources are allocated to timely data collection and analysis. As State budgets become more strained, the allocation of resources becomes both more competitive and critical. It may seem like the worst time, but it is actually the best time, to invest in the effort to collect and analyze statewide data on the people we serve across agencies, the types and costs of services utilized, and search for more effective and timely intervention strategies. We all know that preventative measures are cost-effective in the long run, but human nature keeps us too often focused on the short-term crises. An investment now in evidence-based, data-driven decision-making is the equivalent of preventative medicine and will bring a greater return on investment in future. Such an approach has the added value of bringing State departments into closer collaboration who otherwise make workforce development investments separately for their customers.

Finally, on the question of when to make the investments, the recent approach to the development of a 3-year adult education RFP is a good example of incremental change and successive approximations to the goal. Over 3 years ago, a statewide collection of interested parties was convened by the Governor’s Office to develop a vision and a framework for fixing a broken adult education system. Stemming from the Governor’s initiative, a joint RFP by several funding partners was developed and issued two years ago, but providers still had to apply for separate pots of dollars within the single RFP. Now, a new joint RFP is being developed where essentially all adult education funders have combined their dollars into a single pot, and providers have a streamlined proposal template. With the creation of an adult education MIS that tracks students by characteristics that correspond to criteria associated with funding streams, the intended effect is to reduce labor for all parties while assuring an audit trail for all. Yet even this RFP is just one more step along the road to strategic investing, as definitive data on need, outcomes, and cost-benefit is not yet available to drive resource allocation.

Similar to what has been happening in adult education, collaborative strategic planning and investing must occur in the training, employment preparation, and labor exchange aspects of workforce development. We might use an approach similar to the Governor's Fiscal Fitness initiative, wherein an Interagency Group, consisting of key representatives of members of the Governor's Workforce Cabinet, could be released 80% time for 4-6 weeks to develop a roadmap for future collaborative investments. A proposed plan with a 5-7 year timeline could only come to reality through a commitment of resources by the Governor's Cabinet, from their respective funding streams. At that point, the Governor's Workforce Board would consider the draft plan in light of its economic and workforce development vision and policies.

In summary, a strategic investment of WIA dollars should be made in publicly and privately-run programs that individually are high-performing in serving people who are publicly supported to transition to private competitive employment, and that collectively address supply-side and demand-side needs. To do that, the State must invest in data collection, analysis, and collaborative (particularly with sister agencies) evidence-based decision-making, investment-monitoring, and re-evaluation, with the goal of continuous improvements in our holistic (beyond WIA and Wagner-Peyser) system.

While the State's workforce development system may look forward to a day when it could be demand-side driven, it cannot deny the current reality of the supply-side. As ex-offenders prepare to leave the prisons, as welfare-recipients seek to leave the rolls, as disconnected youth leave the schools, ready or not, as the workforce is increasingly characterized by foreign-born workers, as the population ages and people with disabilities seek to make their share of meaningful contributions to our economy, then our workforce development system must be prepared to embrace them, prepare them, train them, and support them. If the public system does not do that, who will? These Rhode Islanders will be sporadically and often ineffectively serviced through the various labor exchange entities that the overall marketplace supports. If they are poorly served in that marketplace, then we can expect recidivism and continued reliance of public income supports. We, as a State, can do more to serve these Rhode Islanders better with their short-term employment needs while simultaneously appreciating the high growth, high demand industries that offer opportunities for their long-term economic well-being.

ATTACHMENT E
BOARD MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AS OF APRIL 30, 2007

MEMBERSHIP SEAT	CURRENT MEMBERS	REPRESENTING
REGULAR		
Business	Paula Santos	Training & Consulting Assoc.
Business	Ernani Vergano	VR Industries
Business	Frank Sullivan	Cameron Residential Mortgage
Business	Fred Ricci	Todays Office Staffing
Business	Richard Westlake	Independence, LLC
Business	Diane Karcz	Bank Newport
Business	Scott Seaback	RI Temps, RI Personnell Inc.
Business	Joan Lariviere	United Parcel Service
Business	Steven Kitchin	N.E. Institute of Technology
Business	Paul Ouellette	NRI Chamber of Commerce
Business	Betty Pleacher	E.Bay Chamber of Commerce
Business	Patricia Talin	Amica Insurance
Business	John Iaderosa	CVS Corporation
Business	Etalvina Leite	Unicom
Business	Fred Pendlebury	Gen. Dynamics / Electric Boat
Business	Peter Koch	Koch Eye Associates
Business	Dorothy Mattiello	Hope Global
Business	Steven Wilson	Polytop
Business	Muriel Morrisette	Amgen
Business	Joseph Cannon	CasAmerica
Education	Vincent Balasco	Community College of RI
Education	Joseph Crowley	Warwick Career & Tech Ctr.
Labor	Colleen O'Dell	RI AFL-CIO
Labor	Jeanne Brockway, RN	President, Local 5022
Community Based Organization	Jane Nugent	United Way of RI
Economic Development	Paul Harden	RI Econ. Development Corp.
Economic Development	Michael Cassidy	City of Pawtucket
ONE-STOP PARTNERS		
Title I / Welfare-to-Work / Etc.	Vacant--to be filled 6/30/07	Governor's Representative
ES / NAFTA / MSFW / TAA	Kim Weiss	RI Dept. Labor & Training
Veterans	Joseph DesRoches	RI Dept. Labor & Training
Unemployment Insurance	Raymond Filippone	RI Dept. Labor & Training
Adult Ed / Literacy	Johan Uvin	RI Dept. of Education
Post Secondary Voc. Education	Vanessa Cooley	RI Dept. of Education
Vocational Rehabilitation	Diane Cook	Office of Rehabilitative Services
Older Workers	Vacant--to be filled 6/30/07	RI Dept. of Elderly Affairs
CBO / HUD / CSDBG	Joseph DeSantis	Tri-Town Community Action
Job Corps	Joseph DiPina	Job Corps
Native Americans	Darrell Waldron	RI Indian Council
OTHER		
TANF, Food Stamps	Edward Sneesby	RI Dept. Human Services
Persons with Disabilities	Vacant--to be filled 6/30/07	

ATTACHMENT F

BOARD COMMITTEES AND MEETING SCHEDULE (2007)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Purpose/Role

The Executive Committee is responsible for the overall management, direction and oversight of the Corporation and its program of work. The Committee's primary role is to ensure the functionality and effectiveness of the Board and Corporation. Membership is limited to elected officers and chairs of both standing and ad-hoc committees. The Committee may establish subcommittees to perform any activities within its scope of responsibilities.

The Executive Committee shall:

- Establish the Corporation's strategic and operational planning cycle and calendar and oversee the implementation of the planning process;
- Periodically review and recommend amendments to the Corporation's by-laws;
- Develop and recommend the Corporation's annual operating budget;
- Establish policies and standards for personnel;
- Oversee and direct the work of all standing and ad hoc committees;
- Establish attributes and qualifications for board members;

BOARD DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Purpose/Role

The Board Development Committee is responsible for the recruitment of potential members and the retention of existing members. Board membership of the partnership is critical to the success of the Corporation. It is also critical to remain in compliance with the membership mandates established by federal law and regulation(s).

The Board Development Committee shall:

- Recommend strategies that will result in the retention of the board's active and dedicated members, along with continuous board education;
- Oversee the preparation for, and hosting the annual strategic and organizational work sessions;
- Ensure membership of the Board and Youth Council remains in compliance with the membership mandates established by federal regulation(s);
- Develop and implement educational activities for Board members;
- Organize and conduct new Board members orientation sessions;
- Periodically review member attendance and participation in Board Committee meetings and activities to ensure compliance with by-laws.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT & EVALUATION

Purpose/Role

The Program Development & Evaluation Committee is responsible for the overall planning, development and oversight of the Corporation's program of work. The committee members shall abide by the Conflict of Interest provisions described in Article VII of the Corporation's by-laws. The Committee may also establish subcommittees to perform any of the activities within its scope of responsibilities.

The Program Development & Evaluation Committee shall:

- Establish the Corporations' operational planning cycle and calendar and oversee the implementation of the process;
- Recommend strategies, priorities and action plans to the Board based on the review and evaluation of programs and labor market needs;
- Recommend to the Board the annual plans, including any modifications thereto, the selection of service providers and specific funding allocations to each as a result of any request for proposal process, except those for youth;
- Develop and maintain current and detailed plans for growth areas to guide the development of new programs;
- Ensure that program plans include appropriate performance indicators;
- Develop and oversee Employee Investment Grant processes including policies, procedures, contract awards, and evaluations.

YOUTH COUNCIL

Purpose/Role

The Youth Council is a committee required by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) federal law established as a subgroup of the Board of Directors. The Council is responsible for the planning, development and oversight of a comprehensive service delivery strategy to positively impact the provision of activities and services to local area youth.

The Youth Council shall:

- Develop the portions of the WIA plan relating to eligible youth, as determined by the chairperson of the board;
- Develop and oversee a Request For Proposals process to solicit eligible and appropriate providers of youth activities within the Greater RI region;
- Establish standards of performance acceptability for service providers;
- Recommend the award of grants or contracts to by the board to carry out the youth activities consistent with Section 123 of the WIA;
- Conduct oversight with respect to the eligible providers of youth activities, in the local area to ensure their effectiveness;
- Coordinate youth activities authorized under Section 129 of the WIA in the Greater RI Workforce Investment Area;

- Establish processes to obtain input from youth in the area;
- Promote collaboration and cooperation among all agencies, organizations and institutions serving youth to leverage available resources and expand opportunities for all youth;
- Perform other duties determined to be appropriate by the chairperson of the board.

PROGRAM QUALITY & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE

Purpose/Role

The Program Quality & Performance Committee is responsible for oversight of the service delivery of netWORKri, the state's one-stop career center system within the Greater RI Workforce Investment Area. Performance of the one-stop centers is critical to the Corporation both in terms of ensuring successful achievement of federally mandated performance standards and ensuring that service delivery meets the expectations of the Corporation's constituency.

The Program Quality & Performance Committee shall:

- Review various informational materials on performance excellence in One-Stop operations;
- Periodically review and provide input on the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between the Greater RI Workforce Investment Board (WIB), the program operator (DLT) and service partners;
- Identify performance measures for oversight of the One-Stop system;
- Establish strategies for evaluating the performance of the One-Stop system in terms of service delivery, the achievement of performance objectives and compliance with applicable statutes, regulations and policies;
- Review and analyze performance reports and data on customer satisfaction from each of the One-Stop centers and or program operator;
- Recommend to the Greater RI Workforce Investment Board (WIB) quality improvement activities, which may improve the performance of the One-Stop centers;
- Organize annual recognition awards for the Greater RI One-Stop Centers.

2007 WPGRI Board and Committee Schedule

<u>Board of Directors</u>	<u>Executive</u>	<u>Program Development & Evaluation</u>
January 9, 2007	January 4, 2007	January 26, 2007
February 13, 2007	February 7, 2007	February 23, 2007
March 13, 2007	March 7, 2007	March 30, 2007
April 10, 2007	April 4, 2007	April 27, 2007
May 8, 2007	May 2, 2007	May 25, 2007
June 12, 2007 - Annual Meeting	June 6, 2007	
September 11, 2007		
October 10, 2007		
November 14, 2007		

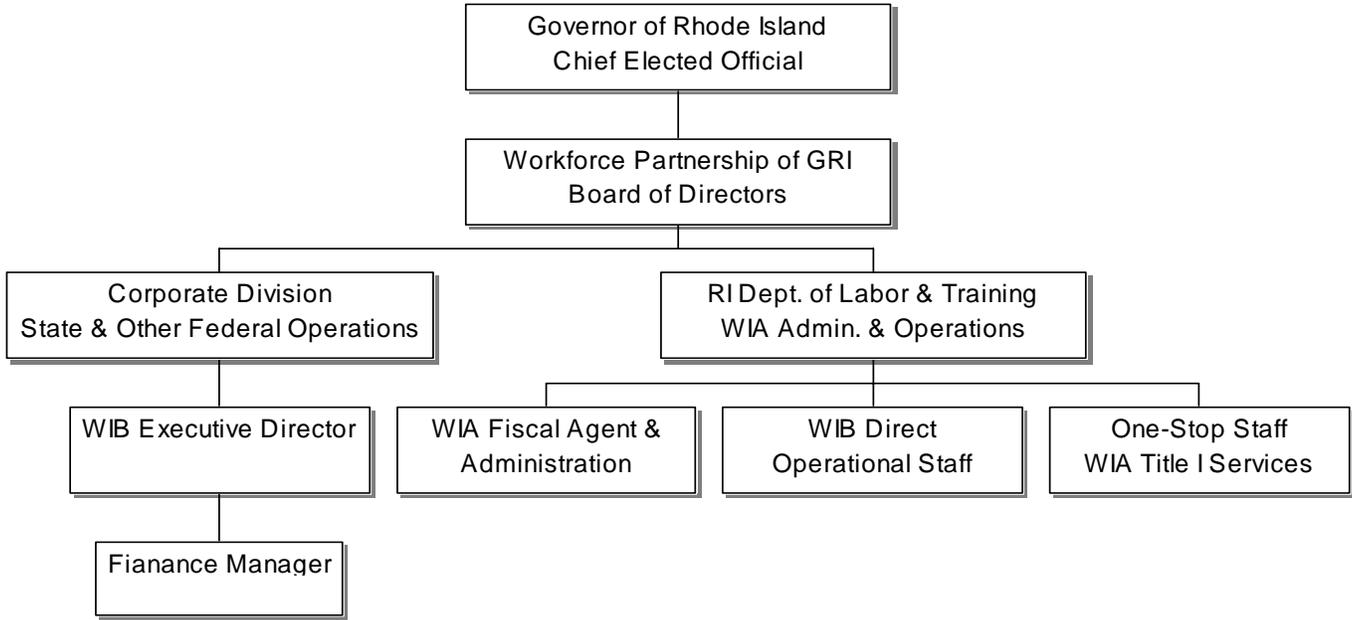
<u>Board Development</u>	<u>Program Quality & Performance</u>	<u>Youth Council</u>
January 26, 2007	January 30, 2007	January 22, 2007
February 23, 2007	February 27, 2007	February 26, 2007
March 30, 2007	March 27, 2007	March 19, 2007
April 27, 2007	April 24, 2007	April 23, 2007
May 25, 2007	May 29, 2007	May 21, 2007

* Reflects most current information as of March 30, 2007. All dates are subject to change.

ATTACHMENT G
YOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

Workforce Partnership of Greater RI Youth Council Members				GROUPS REPRESENTED					
<i>Name</i>	<i>Title</i>	<i>Organization</i>	Youth Service Agencies (at least 2)	Local Public Housing Authorities	Parents of Eligible Youth	Individuals (at least 2)	Job Corps	Voting Members of LWIB	Other YC Members
Susan Babin	Coord Comm Plans & Devel	RI Department of MHRH	X						
Joseph Cannon	President	CAS America						X	
Vanessa Cooley	Middle/High School Reform	RI Department of Education	X					X	
Joseph Crowley	Director	Warwick Career & Tech Center	X					X	
Joseph DeSantis	Executive Director	Tri-Town Community Action	X					X	
Andrew DeTora		Public				X			
Joseph DiPina	Executive Director	Exeter Job Corps Academy	X				X	X	
Lissa Dreyer	Executive Director	SER – Jobs for Progress	X						
Sharon Gainey	School to Career Coord	West Warwick School Dept.	X						X
Lizann Gibson	Executive Director	Southern RI Collaborative	X						
Elizabeth Gilheaney	Juvenile Justice Specialist	RI Justice Commission	X						
Joan Lariere	Human Resource Manager	United Parcel Service						X	
Michael Montanaro	Vocational Rehab Counselor	Office of Rehabilitation Services	X						
Dorothy Mattello	Human Resource Manager	Hope Global						X	
John O'Riley	Independent Living Coordinator	RI Dept. for Children & Families	X						
Kathleen Stoddart	Human Resource Manager	Town of Cumberland							X
Francis Sullivan	Vice President	Cameron Residential Mortgage						X	
Laura Tuscani	Youth Services Counselor	West Bay Collaborative	X						
Johan Uwin	Director, Adult Education	RI Department of Education	X					X	
Vacant	Public Housing Representative			X					
Vacant	Parent Representative				X				
Vacant	Youth Representative					X (youth)			

ATTACHMENT H
WIB ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



ATTACHMENT I

MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU)

Complete copies of the Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) between WPGRI and each of its One-Stop Partners are under development and will be forwarded to the State Workforce Investment Office prior to the start of Program Year 2007.

The following is the text of a letter mailed to the One-Stop Partners with their copy of the MOU:

April 30, 2007

Director
Agency
Street
City/Town, RI

Re: Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Two-Year Plan

Dear :

In accordance with the instructions and schedule provided by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Rhode Island State Workforce Investment Office, the Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island's Workforce Investment Board is presently developing a two-year WIA plan for implementation on July 1, 2007. This plan is being developed as a continuation of our existing two-year plan that expires on June 30, 2007.

As you know, the WIA requires the execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with each mandatory One-Stop Career Center partner. While we accomplished this with the implementation of the WIA in 2000, the new planning instructions require us to update the MOU. Given that there is a great deal of information and data required to complete the plan, the timeframe we have been given for submitting a draft version on April 5, 2007 and a final version on May 10, 2007 leaves little time for comprehensive input by our One-Stop partners. Obviously, we would prefer more time to hold meetings with all of our partners to develop meaningful agreements. However, that is not possible at this time. As an alternative, we plan to submit the current MOU agreement that we have with your agency (please refer to the attached) contingent upon its modification following meetings that will be held within the next few months. Once we have concluded the meetings, we expect to have updated agreements that will be submitted as a modification to the two-year plan.

We hope you are in agreement with this approach and appreciate your consideration and support in this matter. Please contact me either by phone at 462-8727 or by email at dmiller@dlt.state.ri.us if you have questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Doris M Miller
Acting Executive Director

ATTACHMENT J
WIA SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

**WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP OF
GREATER RHODE ISLAND**

WIA SERVICES DELIVERY MODEL

