

ARKANSAS 2008-09 CAR NARRATIVE

Implementation of State Leadership Activities

a. Required Uses of Funds

1. Assessment of career and technical education programs funded under Perkins IV

At both the secondary and postsecondary levels, the local recipients must provide an annual accountability report prior to receiving funding for the next year. The accountability report specifies what the local recipient accomplished with the Perkins funds during the previous year. The Departments' staff members review the accountability reports as part of the annual approval process.

At the secondary level, a team of Department staff makes an on-site visit to each local program on a rotating cycle – approximately 20% of the districts are visited each year. The team reviews the instructional plan and curriculum, classroom and laboratory equipment, instructional materials, and documentation regarding advisory councils and CTE student organization activities. The team makes recommendations and provides technical assistance as needed. In addition to the on-site monitoring, every program is reviewed every year to ensure that the schools are offering the courses that comprise state-approved programs of study.

Another method of assessment at the secondary level is the review of the results from the Career and Technical Student Competency Testing Program each year. The results on the assessment program are a reasonable indication of how closely the teacher followed the frameworks for the course (what students should know and be able to do).

The Department of Career Education (ACE) continues to publish a District Status Report (basically a school report card for CTE programs). The report has been very well received and caused a great number of administrators and teachers to view their programs more objectively. Among the indicators in the status report were several of the core performance indicators for Perkins: academic attainment, CTE skill attainment, graduation, and placement.

Assessment of CTE programs at the postsecondary level is carried out in several ways. State level staff conducts a comprehensive annual site visit to every campus where Perkins funds are expended. Additional site visits for technical assistance are scheduled based upon size of local grant or other factors warranting extra attention. The site visit includes a review of programmatic elements such as activity objectives and methods used to assess the impact of the activity, review of equipment purchases and discussion of program elements with staff involved with Perkins funded activities. The performance review includes analysis of previous year's results from which state level staff provides technical assistance and guidance for development of future programs as needed. State staff continues to monitor local recipients throughout the year in the areas of programs, data collection, and financial accountability and meets as requested with local Perkins implementation teams.

Supplemental monitoring based on risk factors such as size of grant, tenure of coordinator, percent of grant allocated to salaries, number of amendments, timeliness

of requests for reimbursement and final financial report, and attendance at required meetings was implemented.

An Existing Program Review Committee has been established to develop process and procedures for regular review of existing academic programs offered by all public postsecondary institutions. The purpose of the review is to identify certificate and degree programs not meeting minimum standards of quality or viability and establish schedules for either resolving these concerns or removing the programs for the AHECB approved program inventory.

The Arkansas Higher Education Coordinating Board (AHECB) revised the existing academic program review policy in 2008 to require higher minimum graduation standards for program viability. Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE) staff has identified certificate and degree programs not meeting the new minimum graduation standards for viability and will make recommendations on these programs to the AHECB in 2011.

In 2007 the Arkansas Department of Higher Education deployed the Arkansas Course Transfer System (ACTS), an online resource service that provides comparable course information to facilitate student transfer of general education courses within Arkansas public colleges and universities. Courses within ACTS are guaranteed to transfer for full credit to any Arkansas public institution. ACTS has been expanded to include CTE courses and eight courses within the Business degree program were added in 2009.

The Arkansas Transfer System (Act 182 of 2009) will be established by the AHECB in 2010 to allow for the full transfer of credits earned in Associate of Arts, Associate of Science and Associate of Arts in Teaching degrees to a bachelor's degree program without the loss of earned credits and without the receiving institution requiring additional lower-level credits. With this action, associate level students will be able to transfer to four-year institutions with a guarantee that they may enter with junior level status.

2. Developing, improving, or expanding the use of technology in career and technical education

State leadership funds were used for many diverse projects such as the development of curriculum frameworks for a Biofuel Technology program of study pilot, planning a program of study in Advanced Manufacturing in the western region of Arkansas, and implementing a proto-type of a 21st century learning environment. In addition, the state sponsored several inservice opportunities for teachers to update their technical skills on various new released of commonly used software.

At the postsecondary level, basic grant funds were used to purchase equipment for use by students in the classroom to provide an expanded range of learning experiences and to more effectively engage students in the learning experience and to improve learning outcomes. Examples include smart boards, tablet computers, Angle learning systems, and Tegrity audio-visual systems. Equipment was also purchased to provide hands-on training such as a welding simulator.

3. Offering professional development programs, including providing comprehensive professional development (including initial teacher preparation) for career and technical

education teachers, faculty, administrators, and career guidance and academic counselors at the secondary and postsecondary level.

A new initiative begun for secondary teachers and administrators is the CTE Leadership Institute, a two-year professional development series designed to “grow” leaders among CTE teachers. The series sessions include topics such as career clusters and pathways, using assessment data for decision making, etc.

A major thrust each summer for the Department staff is providing inservice training opportunities for all CTE and technical education teachers. Much of the inservice is occupational specific that assists the teachers in learning the new technology associated with their teaching specialty. However, the Department co-sponsors the annual conference of the Arkansas Association of Career & Technical Education teachers that includes sessions on effective teaching techniques and promising practices.

New teachers are provided with inservice training on using the CTE program frameworks (what students should know and be able to do). The frameworks incorporate the national standards, and the student competency testing program is directly tied to these frameworks. As new standards are published from the various national projects, the frameworks are updated, along with the competency tests, and teachers are provided with training.

Through state funds available to the Department, 15 regional career and technical education coordinators are employed in the educational cooperatives in the state. One of the functions of these coordinators is to coordinate and provide regional inservice opportunities for CTE and technical teachers. The coordinators assist teachers and administrators with strategies and modifications for special needs students, basic computer training, the development and improvement of CTE programs, etc. In addition, most of them administer a Perkins consortium for secondary school districts. The coordinators work closely with Department staff on statewide initiatives and projects.

At the postsecondary level, state staff provided leadership to encourage examination of factors that contribute to student achievement and measurement of achievement including the need for improved instruction delivery to today’s technology savvy students.

Perkins continues to collaborate with the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, the Achieving the Dream initiative, and various other programs to create a statewide professional development system for colleges and universities.

Also in partnership with the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, professional development leading to Career Pathways Leadership Re-certification was provided for approximately 30 faculty and student support staff at all community colleges in the state.

The Department of Higher Education provided professional development workshops related to programs of study which are in addition to ongoing professional development provided by colleges and universities. Those institutions that expanded their secondary to postsecondary linkages and developed additional programs of study

beyond the one required, provided professional development sessions to Perkins postsecondary coordinators.

ADHE partnered with two universities to deliver professional development related to student success and retention efforts, with special emphasis on college and career readiness and secondary to postsecondary linkages. Nationally recognized speakers were included as were best practices from within Arkansas. Post-conference surveys were conducted to determine the extent of change expected following the conference. Future professional development will take into account survey responses.

4. Providing support for career and technical education programs that improve the academic and career and technical skills of students through the integration of academics with career and technical education

One of the primary vehicles for improving the academic and CTE technical skills of all CTE students through integration of academic and CTE education are the frameworks for each CTE program – what students should know and be able to do. These frameworks include the technical skills needed as well as the academic and workplace skills. The frameworks are the basis of the state CTE assessment program – CTE Student Competency Testing Program. The Department provides for continuous updating and evaluation of the frameworks and testing program.

The department continues to provide many resources and funds to assist Career Academy development in Arkansas. Arkansas has increased its number from academies over the past few years. One of the Career Academy schools with a very successful mentoring program has developed a Mentoring Manual through a grant given by the Department. This manual will be distributed throughout the State to those school interested in starting a mentoring program.

Arkansas' *High Schools That Work* members continue to grow in number. This initiative is still the number one school improvement model used by schools that have been identified as in academic distress by the Arkansas Department of Education as well as being used by high performing districts. ACE continues to provide implementation grants to new sites to tour model sites, hire consultants, teacher in-service, etc. During 2008-09 ACE provided improved services and activities for sites that included mini-grants for program improvement activities and a data in-service for schools to better use results from the HSTW assessments in program planning/improvement. There are currently 41 sites in the state as well as 10 secondary career centers that are Technology That Work sites.

The state is also a member of other national curriculum and standards groups that help provide current, relevant curriculum and other educational products. This includes VTECS (Vocational-Technical Education Consortium of States) and MAVCC (Mid-America Vocational Curriculum Consortium).

At the local postsecondary level, funds were utilized for integrating academics into CTE through various projects such as Foundations of Excellence which provided extensive faculty support; National Academic Advisory, which provided support services to reduce barriers and focus on advising; and QTL with all faculty working on classroom management.

In partnership with the Career Pathways Initiative, focus areas were identified which included focusing on student success as a priority, improving student success support services, and strengthening partnerships to provide resources, particularly for economically disadvantaged students.

5. Providing preparation for non-traditional fields in current and emerging professional, and other activities that expose students, including special populations, to high skill, high wage occupations, except that one-day or short-term workshops or conferences are not allowable.

Financial support was provided from Perkins leadership funds for an Arkansas statewide magazine entitled *Next* focuses on nontraditional careers and is targeted to 11th and 12th grade students.

The state is a member of NAPE (National Alliance for Partners in Equity, Inc.) and draws on their resources as needed. At the postsecondary level, ADHE used NAPE resources for program improvement in nontraditional student recruiting and retention. Technical assistance related to the NAPE 5-Step Improvement Process was provided to postsecondary coordinators and institutional staff as a means of analyzing data for core indicator improvement. Both state and local staffs have participated in NAPE provided webinars related to recruitment and retention of nontraditional students.

The postsecondary resource library (hard copy and online) has been updated with additional best practices and innovative methods focused on nontraditional students. New policy guidelines were implemented to further define appropriate use of funds for nontraditional student recruiting. State staff also collaborated with the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, a program that encourages nontraditional enrollment and completion, particularly females attempting to earn higher wages.

The state provided a leadership grant to the Department of Community Correction to assist in providing training in welding for the female inmates at the Southeast Arkansas Community Correction Center. Welding is within the Production pathway which is high skill, high wage, and high demand in Arkansas.

6. Supporting partnerships among local educational agencies, institutions of higher education, adult education providers, and, as appropriate, other entities, such as employers, labor organizations, intermediaries, parents, and local partnerships, to enable students to achieve State academic standards, and career and technical skills, or complete career and technical programs of study.

Partnerships with many business/industry groups were continued. The groups included Oracle, the Arkansas Hospitality Association, the National Hospitality Business Alliance, Arkansas Automotive Dealers Association, the Center for Quality Teaching & Learning, CISCO, the Arkansas Career Pathways Initiative, and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges.

As mentioned below in the discussion of serving special population students, the Verizon Foundation will become a partner in Arkansas in support of the Jobs for Arkansas' Graduates program in the coming year. In addition, ACE and the Department of Education (general K-12) are cooperating on a JAG pilot program that resulted in the opening of 25 programs in Alternative Learning facilities during 2008-09.

The Business and Marketing staff partnered with the Arkansas Department of Education in a cooperative effort to increase Economics and Personal Finance Education in the state. Additional partners in this endeavor are Economics Arkansas, the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, and the Arkansas Securities and Exchange Commission. In addition, the partnership with Oracle has produced a statewide training for early fall next year.

Perkins staff members participate in regular coordination meetings between representatives of the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, Arkansas Department of Workforce Services, and the Arkansas Department of Economic Development in an effort to align Perkins activities with the economic and educational goals of the state.

7. Serving individuals in state institutions.

The Arkansas Career Technical Institute (ACTI) of the Arkansas Rehabilitation Services department was granted a total of \$147,000 to improve their career and technical education programs. ACTI is a residential state facility that provides training and services to persons with disabilities. Students at ACTI have been referred to the facility by field counselors and are provided with all of the support services needed to help them succeed in their training program. ACTI is focusing the improvements in their CTE programs on national certifications and teacher professional development.

The Arkansas School for the Blind was granted \$52,330 to make improvements in their business education and family and consumer sciences programs in addition to implementing other programs and technology designed to improve the graduation rate and increase the technical skill attainment of all CTE students.

The Department of Community Correction was given a grant to provide training in welding for inmates at two of the regional facilities.

8. Providing support for programs for special populations that lead to high skill, high wage and high demand occupations.

Jobs for Arkansas' Graduates (JAG-AR) is a program that is designed to assist eleventh and twelfth grade CTE students with academic, personal, and environmental barriers that are known to hinder a student's success. JAG-AR is affiliated with the national Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) program. JAG emphasizes the creation of linkages with the business community for the purpose of student job placements and to contribute to the program's ability to meet the needs of business and industry. JAG-AR continues to surpass the performance goals set by national JAG and JAG-AR specialists continue to receive national recognition for their efforts. During the upcoming 2009-10 year, the Verizon Foundation will donate \$250,000 for the implementation of new JAG programs in Arkansas. Although this was planned for implementation during 2008-09, the effort was delayed.

JAG-AR addresses the largest CTE special population category in particular – the economically disadvantaged. In Arkansas, there are more than two and almost three times the number of economically disadvantaged CTE concentrators and completers compared to the next largest group which is Individuals with Disabilities. Students in the JAG-AR program are assisted with finding a job either while in high school or within

six months of graduation. Since graduation from high school is one of the primary goals of the program, some students do not work while in high school but rather focus their attention on staying in school and succeeding in their academic and technical courses.

Development of a course to assist ninth and tenth grade career and technical students with special needs began in 2001. The intent of the STRIVE (Students and Teachers Responsibility Integrating Vocational Education) Course is to assist students with the academics that are needed to be successful in their selected career focus area. Like JAG, CTE students with academic, personal and environmental barriers are eligible to participate in the STRIVE course. Many of students who participated scored below the 25th percentile on the NCLB assessments. Approximately 438 students across the state participated in STRIVE in 11 schools.

The Department has placed a priority on providing state start-up funds for new JAG-AR and STRIVE programs. All requests for new programs are funded first before other programs are considered. In several local Workforce Investment Board areas, WIA funds are used to provide tutoring and other support services for the students enrolled.

Although JAG and STRIVE focus on economically disadvantaged students, the other special population categories also benefit from the programs. In addition, CTE teachers work with the special education teachers to help those students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs) to be successful in CTE programs.

Postsecondary state staff has worked to improvement collection of special populations data. Prior to 2008-09, collection and reporting of special populations data was accomplished through manual and separate reporting procedures. New procedures are now in place to require local institutions to capture this information at the beginning of each semester for all CTE students and to report the information directly into the Arkansas Higher Education Information System. The quality and completeness of the data should be improved which will allow more effective program improvement strategies.

Because the single largest special population category is economically disadvantaged, addressing issues of poverty has become a focus of postsecondary Perkins activities. ADHE has chosen the Bridges Out of Poverty model as a means to address issues that often challenge economically disadvantaged students in their efforts to attain a credential and prepare for targeted occupations. ADHE staff members have been certified to teach this model and frequently offer workshops and professional development to faculty and student support staff at colleges and universities. The training has been enhanced to include modules on understanding and engaging the under-resourced college student which assists college faculty and staff to develop strategies that target the economically disadvantaged. Efforts are underway to expand this to community partners that are in a position to provide the needed resources. State staff have also partnered with the Department of Education and the Department of Career Education to increase awareness of the impact that poverty has on students before they enter college. This included presentations for high school counselors with particular emphasis on those from the 25% poorest counties in the state.

9. Offering technical assistance for eligible recipients.

ACE offers a workshop for all Perkins coordinators and administrators each spring. Topics presented by staff were accountability, completion of the local application, and reporting. The second day of the workshop was a series of several presentations by various local practitioners who are doing outstanding projects that the department wanted to highlight and recommend for all districts.

A revised format for the technical assistance visits done on a rotational basis in every district includes a structured discussion by the team leader with the district administration and local Perkins coordinator to determine the progress being made in implementing the current year projects as well as to verify the outcomes reported in previous years. While the department has implemented a risk-based monitoring plan, this cyclical technical assistance will supplement and support the results of that plan.

At the postsecondary level, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education provided several activities to assist local recipients with development of programs for nontraditional students and on data analysis. Activities included workshops, professional development for local coordinators and chief academic officers of recipient institutions.

Perkins staff conducted training for new coordinators and newly appointed chief academic officers, and for institutional student services support staff. Additionally, two technical assistance workshops were provided for local coordinators with a strong focus on Perkins IV accountability requirements, and fiscal responsibility. On campus technical assistance was provided, in particular for those with new coordinators or new fiscal office staff and regional workshops provided training on the new online Perkins Grant Portal.

Approval was obtained for an additional postsecondary staff member to be added in 2009-10 whose primary focus will be on program improvement.

10. Permissible Activities

Several of our state CTE staff members hold national and state leadership positions in both student organizations as well as teacher associations: Sandra Porter, National Treasurer for the National Association of Supervisors for Business Education (NASBE); Marion Fletcher, National Treasurer of the FFA Organization and FFA Foundation; Suellen Ward, National ACTE Committee Member representing the FACS Division, FCCLA National Officer Election Taskforce and serves on the FCCLA Taskforce on Service Learning; Jim Brock, National DECA Board of Directors and President-Elect in 2009-10; Dick Burchett, Past President of the National Association for Skilled and Technical Sciences; and Ray Henson, President of the Arkansas Career Development Association and Past President of the Arkansas Career Guidance Association.

Our CTSO membership in Arkansas continues to be strong under the leadership of our state advisors and staff. The 2008-09 membership of our organizations is as follows:

DECA – 1,790
FBLA – 14,579
FCCLA – 10,519
FFA – 10,177
HOSA – 1,500

PBL - 780
SkillsUSA – 7,800

ACE has been active in promoting and implementing the Career Readiness Certificate program in the state. The program uses the KeyTrain curriculum and was piloted in 19 schools during the 2008-09 school year. This is an initiative supported by our Governor, the Economic Development agency, and the Workforce Services agency as well as ACE to improve the employability of our citizens. There have been 3,225 junior and senior students active thus far in 46 schools using KeyTrain preparing for the ACT WorkKeys assessments with the goal of receiving the Arkansas Career Readiness Certificate.

At the postsecondary level, ADHE has implemented the Arkansas Transfer System legislation which provides for smoother transition from sub-baccalaureate to the baccalaureate level. An entrepreneurship consortium has been established with participating colleges sharing curriculum development and delivery costs.

b. Progress in Developing and Implementing Technical Skill Assessments

Secondary – The assessments are based on the state-developed, industry-validated curriculum frameworks. We have used these assessments for several years and are continuing to expand the number of courses that are tested. Our plan is to have assessments for each of the core required courses for all of our programs of study. As outlined in our five-year state plan, we anticipate that by the end of the 2011-12 school year, we will have assessments for 100% of the core courses in place. For the 2008-09 school year, 32% of the core courses were assessed. (Note: The assessments that are already in place allow us to have a technical skill assessment score on over 70% of our concentrators.)

Postsecondary – At the time the Arkansas State Plan was written, ADHE stated its intention to use WorkKeys as the method of measuring technical skill attainment because there are no existing end of course or end of program assessments for statewide use. An advisory group consisting of CTE faculty and administrators was convened to discuss options but chose to remain with the use of WorkKeys even though there was not unanimous support for this choice. The decision-making process will continue in 2009-10 until a method can be agreed upon and funding mechanism identified. GPA will be used until those decisions are made.

c. Implementation of State Program Improvement Plans

Secondary – The state's CTE secondary system did not meet the threshold for one measure: Technical Skill Attainment.

The skill attainment indicator is determined by calculating the number of concentrators who score proficient (70%) on all end-of-course assessments within the cluster/pathway. Knowledge and attention to each state objective is critical to successful assessment. We believe that the lack of attention by teachers in scope, sequence, and usage has been critical in halting our progress. Our agency and our staff assume responsibility for this deficit. We must provide the leadership to bring our instructors and programs into congruence in what is taught, when it is taught, and when it is assessed.

- (1) The disaggregated categories of students for which there were quantifiable disparities or gaps in performance compared to all students or any other category of students.

We have identified two major areas in which the number of proficient students has declined. These areas are Agriculture Education and Skilled & Technical Sciences. Both of these areas have incorporated national standards into their frameworks during the timeframe that completers were assessed. Due to the use of end-of-course assessment, our sequence of objectives taught versus objective assessed is very critical. After analyzing the data, we confirmed that the framework objectives taught versus the framework objectives assessed are a source of lowered scores. It is also critical that instructors follow framework objectives and not just textbook information. Inservice for instructors in creating curriculum from identified frameworks will be a state focus. In our zeal to adopt national skill standards with accompanying certifications such as NCCER, our review shows that diligence in completing a sequence alignment with our own frameworks is critical.

In reviewing demographic data on all concentrators, it appears that females outscored males by 7%. However, this is a reflection of the fact that the two major areas experiencing a drop in proficiency levels – Skilled and Technical (primarily male dominated) and Agriculture Education (somewhat male dominated) – have more males than females.

The performance gap between the two largest racial ethnicities, white non-Hispanic and Black non-Hispanic, was 23%. The largest special population category, Economically Disadvantaged, which is composed of about 46% of all CTE concentrators performed about 7% lower than all concentrators combined.

- (2) The action steps with timeline which will be implemented, beginning in the current program year, to improve the state's performance on the core indicator(s) and for the categories of students for which disparities or gaps in performance were identified and the staff member(s) in the state who are responsible for each action step.
 - a) Program managers will evaluate all assessment results and identify objectives not mastered by all students and by each special population group. Timeline: January 15, 2010
 - b) First priority with all state leadership dollars and with agency led professional development will focus on curriculum frameworks. Timeline: Ongoing from January 4, 2010.
 - c) Extended staff in our regional cooperatives will be required to place curriculum frameworks as a first priority for all teacher inservice and to focus the majority of all activities in their Perkins Applications on areas that will improve technical skill attainment. Extended staff in the regional cooperatives will also meet with agency staff to be informed of the improvement plan and its implementation. Timeline: February 1, 2010
 - d) All Perkins applications will be reviewed to assure that any single LEA or consortium not meeting the skill attainment indicator includes professional development on the curriculum frameworks as a project. Timeline: May 1, 2010 – through completion

- e) Our agency will require an improvement plan from the staff manager and staff supervisors of each program area with an implementation plan based on data and the improvement plan outlined in this report. Timeline: February 15, 2010
- f) Monthly division-wide meetings will be held to evaluate and discuss progress and challenges to success to increase the numbers of concentrators scoring proficient on end-of-course assessments. Timeline: Monthly beginning January 4, 2010
- g) All locals not meeting an indicator will be required to submit an improvement plan. Timeline: As annual applications for next year are submitted in the spring of 2010
- h) The state's improvement plan will be reviewed at the annual Perkins grant proposal meeting in the spring of 2010. All appropriate agencies, individuals, and organizations will be invited for review and input. Timeline: April 2010

Postsecondary - Because all postsecondary core indicators were above the 90% threshold, no state level improvement plans are required for program year 2009-10.

d. Implementation of Local Program Improvement Plans

Secondary

Data on the three required performance indicators for the 2007-08 year was disaggregated to the local recipient level. The performance was compared to the targets negotiated for each local recipient. This process of comparison took place during January – March 2009. Out of 79 total secondary recipients, there were 34 recipients that were required to file an improvement plan for at least one indicator: 30 for Literacy, 7 for Math, and 3 for school completion. No recipient failed to meet the 90% threshold on all three indicators and only 6 failed two.

In almost all cases, even for the recipients who met the thresholds, the males performed better than the females on math while the females performed better than the males on literacy. One of the state's 15 secondary consortia failed to meet the threshold in math – this consortium is the smallest in the state, with fewer students than many single LEAs. One mid-size consortium failed to meet the threshold in literacy. The remaining 13 consortia met all thresholds. The median size for the single LEA recipients that were required to file an improvement plan was 65 concentrators – compared to a median of 114 concentrators for the recipients that met all thresholds. Clearly, when there are fewer concentrators in the pool, just a few students that fail to meet the proficiency level can greatly impact overall performance.

The numbers of the special population categories were, for most recipients, very small. In fact, the Economically Disadvantaged category was the only special population category that was consistent above the number that we considered for reporting purposes (10 in a subcategory) – particularly for the recipients that were required to file an improvement plan. Economically Disadvantaged students performed at a lower rate than all other students even in the recipients where all thresholds were met.

A general trend among the recipients filing an improvement plan for literacy or math was to continue to expand on efforts being made in the districts with the ESEA/NCLB improvement initiatives. Several districts are implementing SREB's High Schools That Work model as

their school improvement strategy. The graduation strategies include credit recovery and redesign of instructional strategies to encourage student engagement.

Postsecondary

Since none of the performance indicators were negotiated with the local recipients for the 2007-08 year, the 2008-09 is the first year for review of local performance and the development of local improvement plans.

The need for improvement plans varies widely. Three recipients require no improvement plans; five require one; seven require two; five require three; and three require four. 1P1-Technical Skill Attainment and 3P1-Retention/Transfer were met by most recipients; ten of twenty-four failed to meet the threshold in 2P1-Credential Attainment; eleven failed to meet 4P1-Placement in Employment; fourteen failed to meet 5P1-Nontraditional Participation; and eleven failed to meet 5P2-Nontraditional Credential Attainment.

Procedures for improvement plans and sanctions have been developed by state staff in conjunction with local recipients. Training sessions are scheduled in January 2010 to review the 2008-09 results and discuss requirements for improvement plan development, including the 5-Step Process. Professional development related to elements of data analysis is scheduled for April 2010.

The submission of local improvement plans must include a description of activities to be funded in 2010-11 annual plans. State staff will review and approve and subsequently review annual plans to assure that funds are used to address deficiencies before funds are used for other purposes.

In addition to core indicator improvement plans, state and local staff will focus on identification of members of special populations. Program year 2008-09 was the first time that this information was submitted directly into the higher education information system and institutions used a variety of means to collect this information. State staff will review program year 2008-09 data to identify institutions with gaps in reporting and take steps to assure compliance.

An online Perkins Accountability Portal was implemented in 2008-09 and is being expanded to provide additional functionality that will provide easier access to results for institutional staff in addition to the local coordinator. The portal made it possible for the first time to provide program level results. Previously, no data was available except at the institutional level. These enhancements are designed to make analysis of subgroups (race/gender/special populations/program area) more readily available for program improvement purposes. A module that allows supplemental reporting of 4P1-Placement in Employment data will be activated in 2009-10 to improve results for border towns. Currently, employment outside the state is not available.

An additional staff position was approved in the 2008-09 program year to increase the level of program improvement and technical assistance provided to local recipients. The position was filled in October 2009 and program improvement strategies are being implemented.

ADHE has a fairly sophisticated data collection system, but Perkins data has always been collected and reported separately. Beginning with Perkins IV, ADHE began drawing Perkins data from the overall system and contracted with an outside vendor to prepare the required

accountability reports. This change produced results that are somewhat higher than the original baselines but will also provide results that will be more consistent across time. State staff worked with the contractor in development various modules for data management, and all local plans are included which will provide a cohesive history of institutional plans and expenditures. Efforts to improve data collection and reporting will continue to be a priority.