

Arkansas Workforce Modernization Update

Recommendations on LEARNS 4 All
Implementation

September 11, 2026



Advisory Group Review

Vision, Goals, and Design Principles

Vision: LEARNS 4 All

Arkansas should modernize and transform its workforce development and human services system through an integrated administrative and service delivery model that streamlines state and local program administration, improves both the quality of and access to services and supports, and promotes fiscal integrity and resource efficiency for the benefit of Arkansas residents and employers.

Goals

- Promote upward mobility and increased wages for families
- Provide greater access to services that promote longer-term employment and labor force attachment
- Maintain a strategic approach to helping employers access sources of talent for well-paying jobs
- Create efficiencies that promote effective government services, outcomes, and impact
- Innovate to meet rapid changes in employment, labor markets, skills needed for jobs, and deployment of technology

Design Principles

- **Person-centric, not program-centric.** The system should be organized around what an individual needs, not around which funding stream a worker happens to be paid from.
- **Work first.** An employment or training plan should precede, and then inform, the eligibility determination.
- **Statewide consistency with regional flexibility.** Services should be delivered the same way in every part of Arkansas, with room to tailor to local economic conditions.
- **Results-based and publicly accountable.** Outcomes, such as employment, wages, credential attainment, and sustained labor force attachment, should be measured consistently and reported to the Legislature.
- **Bold action requires difficult decisions,** which must be made with the best information and data available

Recommendations

Administrative Structure, Service Delivery, Financial Management



The Foundation: Organizational Shift

Establish a system with three foundational offices; each has clear authority over one aspect of the system

- The Office of Workforce Solutions
 - the workforce agency and the front door
 - owns the employment plan and upfront “case management,” the workforce programs, newly redefined and integrated Arkansas Workforce Centers, and the employer relationship
- The Department of Human Services
 - the statewide eligibility authority
 - ARIES remains the system of record, expanded in scope, with eligibility sequenced behind the employment plan for work-capable customers
- The Department of Shared Administrative Services
 - the integration layer
 - owns CiviForm, Hope Hub platform, LAUNCH, the Arkansas Data Hub and master person index, and statewide IT governance



Recommendation 1: Integrated Administrative Structure

1.1	Establish OWS as Arkansas's single state workforce agency, consolidating all federal and state employment, training, and reemployment programs under one administrative authority.
1.2	Codify statewide workforce governance in statute, including the State Workforce Development Board carrying out local board functions and assuring equitable regional allocation, and begin the waiver renewal process well in advance of the June 30, 2028, expiration.
1.3	Confirm the DHS as Arkansas's statewide integrated eligibility authority, expand the scope of ARIES, and impose a statutory duty that an employment plan precede or accompany the eligibility determination for every work-capable customer.



Integrated Administrative Structure (con't)

1.4	Assign responsibility for common intake, shared case management platform, job matching, integrated data, and physical facility consolidation to SAS, with a statutory mandate to serve both OWS and DHS.
1.5	Establish a transition structure with an effective date of July 1, 2027, including a transition office, subject-matter work groups, and defined reporting milestones to the Subcommittee.
1.6	Align appropriations to the new structure, transferring program appropriations and federal fund authority to OWS while preserving DHS appropriations for eligibility operations.



Recommendation 2: Integrated Service Delivery

2.1	Operationalize service delivery consistently across all regions of the state while allowing for regional innovation and tailoring, with resource allocation assurances for rural areas.
2.2	Consolidate physical and virtual infrastructure, using the statewide service-location consolidation effort already underway as the vehicle, and beginning with counties where agencies already operate in the same community.
2.3	Establish a single work-first intake process in which every work-capable customer, regardless of which door they enter, receives an employment plan that is recorded in the shared case record and managed by OWS, which precedes the eligibility determination for individual programs.



Integrated Service Delivery (con't)

2.4	Consolidate eligibility functions into a dedicated division within DHS capable of supporting customers remotely as well as from physical locations and expand its scope to the work-support programs currently administered separately.
2.5	Implement integrated case management on a shared platform, separating case management from eligibility determination and giving every case manager visibility into the full array of services a customer is receiving.
2.6	Establish a single regional point of contact for employers, supported by a shared customer relationship management system across OWS, DHS, and the community and technical colleges.
2.7	Adopt a common performance and accountability framework built on outcomes rather than inputs, with a defined reporting relationship to the Legislature.



Recommendation 3: Integrated Financial Management

3.1	Develop and submit a statewide cost allocation model based on random moment time sampling, replacing the incompatible methodologies now in use across agencies.
3.2	In the absence of an approved statewide cost allocation model, braid federal funds to the extent permitted and seek federal waivers where available.
3.3	Move responsibility for partner Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) and infrastructure funding agreements to the state level.
3.4	Begin the process of requesting inclusion in the federal benefits cliff pilot and approval of an alternative cost allocation model.
3.5	Direct identified administrative savings toward direct participant services, particularly training and the supportive services that address childcare, transportation, and benefits cliff barriers.

Next Steps

- Recommendations feedback – through September 30
- Final Report to the Subcommittee – October 2026

Thank You

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