



Detailed Capabilities Statement

MOBIS Contract GS-10F-0536N

**Global Evaluation & Applied Research Solutions (GEARS) Inc.
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Who we are

Global Evaluation & Applied Research Solutions (GEARS), Inc. is a management consulting firm founded in 2002. We are a woman-owned business with two locations: Decatur, Georgia; and Lanham, Maryland. We have a staff of 21 full-time employees, one part-time permanent employee, and more than 40 subject matter experts who provide technical expertise in various subjects to multiple federal agencies. In 2004, GEARS was certified as a participant in the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) business development program and qualifies as a small disadvantaged business. Additionally, GEARS was awarded the GSA MOBIS contract in 2003 (GS-10F-0536N) and agency-specific contracting vehicles, one from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC NCHM IDIQ) in 2007 and the other from the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Program Support Center (PSC IDIQ) in 2008. Our website address is www.getingears.com.

We are organized into an institute and three divisions, reflecting our primary core competencies: GEARS Research Institute, Division of Evaluation & Applied Research, Division of Organizational Management, and Division of Information Technology Services. Listed below are services provided by each Division.

Division of Evaluation & Applied Research (DEAR)

- program evaluation
- applied research
- focus group research
- customer/client satisfaction assessment
- culturally competent research designs

Division of Organizational Management (DOM)

- organizational development
- organizational assessment and diagnosis
- management studies
- development of organizational policies and procedures
- strategic planning
- team building
- staff augmentation (all types)
- executive coaching
- conference and meeting planning
- work group, committee and panel coordination and logistics
- meeting facilitation
- employee assessments
- cultural competence training
- leadership and professional development training

Division of Information Technology Services (DITS)

- database development
- data management and warehousing
- graphics design
- website design and maintenance
- content management design and development
- quality assurance software testing
- Intranet design and development
- application design and development (Unix and Windows OS)
- computer networking
- ASP, ASP.NET and .NET development

Our Clients

Government Agencies	Foundations/Non-profit Organizations/Academia	Community Based Organizations	Commercial
<p>Federal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ➤ U.S. Department of Commerce ➤ U.S. Department of Education ➤ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services ➤ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ➤ U.S. Food and Drug Administration ➤ U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration ➤ National Science Foundation <p>Local</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Boston Public Health Commission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CDC Foundation ➤ Ford Foundation ➤ Healthcare Georgia Foundation ➤ National Association of Chronic Disease Directors ➤ National Estuarine Research Reserve Association ➤ National Minority AIDS Council ➤ University of Massachusetts/Boston 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Multicultural AIDS Coalition (Boston) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ RTI International

Our work

Presented below are brief statements of our experience which are organized by task area: Organizational Management, Program Evaluation, and Logistics and Event Management.

Organizational Management

- In the task order, **CDC Community Transformation Grants (CTG) Planning and Management Support**, GEARS will support CDC by providing comprehensive management and support services for two objective reviews of extramural applications submitted in response to Community Transformation Grants and Non-governmental Organization Funding Opportunity Announcements. The Community Transformation Grants (CTG) program, funded through the Prevention and Public Health Fund, is authorized under Section 4002 of ACA to provide grants to state and local governmental agencies, tribes and territories, and national and community-based organizations for the implementation, evaluation, and dissemination of evidence-based community preventive health activities in order to reduce chronic disease rates, prevent the development of secondary conditions, reduce health disparities, and develop a stronger evidence base for effective prevention programming. These objective reviews are scheduled for August 2011.

Another component of this task order is for GEARS to provide all administrative and logistical support in conducting the CTG Kick-Off Meeting. The target audience for this meeting includes selected representatives of CTG large city/community, rest-of-state, and tribal organization cooperative agreement recipients. It is anticipated that approximately 250 participants will attend this 4-day meeting in October 2011.

To meet the administrative and logistical requirements of this task order, GEARS will identify, negotiate, secure meeting space, and A/V services (including digital recording); prepare and deliver invitation letters; coordinate sponsored guests' travel to the meeting; coordinate ground transportation for all meeting participants; develop and host a registration and logistics website; provide stipends for participation and provide onsite support for the reviews and the meeting. Our

team will also develop and administer a meeting evaluation during the CTG Kick-Off Meeting and report the results to CDC.

- GEARS will provide logistical support for the **HRSA Title V Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Block Grant Program**. The Title V MCH block grant program is a federal-state partnership that provides federal funds to 59 States and Jurisdictions to improve the health of the nation's mothers and children. Block Grant reviews will take place during July and August 2011. GEARS will arrange and coordinate travel and lodging for the non-federal reviewers in close proximity to the eleven HRSA field offices. Our team will also be responsible for arranging and coordinating support to assist the MCH Directors and Children with Special Health Care Needs Directors in addressing their priority programmatic needs. This will be accomplished through the promotion and facilitation of Technical Assistance (TA) and Best Practice Exchange activities. GEARS will use its experience and infrastructure to ensure the appropriate TA Consultant is selected to successfully address the needs of the grantee.
- Managed by the Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), National Institute on Disability and Rehabilitation Research (NIDRR), GEARS provides daily support to staff **the administrative, technical and logistical needs of the Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR)**. This project requires extensive project management services to ensure oversight of multiple tasks being developed simultaneously. Political sensitivity and knowledge and awareness of persons living with disabilities are also required to ensure delivery of accessible information, services, and products to the ICDR membership and stakeholders. GEARS provides solutions to complex and simultaneous tasks including: committee support for seven ICDR subcommittees, each of which meets quarterly (includes developing and distributing save-the date notices and meeting announcements, managing venue logistics, maintaining participants lists, developing meeting agendas, creating meeting folders and meeting materials [e.g., signage, wall posters used during meetings, etc.], providing audio visual services including CART for hearing impaired participants, and developing 508 compliant materials); conducting research for ad hoc requests and in the development and maintenance of an electronic database for disability and rehabilitation research; administration of ongoing ICDR activities including development of a government-wide strategic plan for long-term disability and rehabilitation research; evaluation of government-wide activities; and reports and publications. GEARS developed and manages the ICDR website for use as an internal interactive tool for committee members to share information and data on research and a publicly available site to provide stakeholders with information on the work being accomplished by the committee. GEARS is developing a process and tools to ensure that the ICDR is a partnership broker for interagency disability research by developing memorandums of understanding and Interagency Agreements and a broker guide for use by partner agencies. GEARS manages strategic planning activities for the ICDR subcommittees as well as the ICDR as a whole to identify goals and outline implementation plans. GEARS developed and is implementing a branding and marketing strategy that is used to disseminate information about the ICDR, recruit new membership to the ICDR and inform relevant communities about ICDR accomplishments. Additionally, GEARS is developing an annual report to the President and Congress about the ICDR's progress in fulfilling its mandate for joint federal research and funding recommendations. Our team is also developing, implementing and reporting proceedings and outcomes of an expert panel on the feasibility of achieving mandated ICDR goals, gaps in assistive technology research and recommendations for a strategy to formulate a program of assistive technology research.
- GEARS has been engaged **to provide support services** for two contracts with the **National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)**. In the first contract, GEARS provides consultants to NCHS to conduct two annual surveys: (1) the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS) of non-federal physicians in office-based practices and clinicians in community health centers and (2) the National Hospital Ambulatory Care Survey (NHAMCS) of non-federal hospitals with emergency departments or outpatient departments, including ambulatory surgery centers and of free-standing

ambulatory surgery centers. GEARS is providing computer programming support to the Technical Services Branch, Division of Health Care Statistics (DHCS) in conducting these surveys, which were previously implemented using paper and pencil. In the second contract, GEARS is providing expert consultants in Health Information Technology (HIT) and Electronic Health Records (EHR) for the transformation of two surveys, the NHAMCS and the National Hospital Discharge Survey (NHDS) of discharges from the inpatient departments of non-federal hospitals, from paper and pencil to electronic submission.

- In the contract, **CDC/Technical Assistance Contract for Projects and Tasks in Support of the Applied Sciences Branch (ASB), Division of Reproductive Health (DRH)**, GEARS supports DRH in achieving its mission of working collaboratively with external partners (e.g., state and national coalitions, national organizations, regional training centers, etc.) and internal partners (e.g., Youth at Risk Cluster in the Women's Health and Fertility Branch) to identify and respond to reproductive health needs. GEARS supports ASB by providing a ready source of management, coordination and technical expertise in carrying out projects to identify, develop and implement interventions that promote reproductive health and contribute to the prevention of unintended pregnancy, HIV and STDs.

GEARS provides DRH/ASB with expert consultants in the areas of teen pregnancy data analysis, maternal and child health epidemiology, capacity building, health communications, and policy assessments. These consultants provide technical assistance to ASB constituents, national and community organizations, international ministries of health and partners, state and local health departments and universities.

GEARS has developed reliable systems and tools to ensure objective, credible, timely, and high-quality work in the conduct of this task order contract. We are responsible for coordinating activities in support of project tasks including arranging consultant travel, executing subcontractor contracts, tracking delivery and completion of technical assistance and training, and prompt payment of all subcontractors. GEARS requires all subcontractors to submit monthly progress reports with their invoices, which are shared with CDC project officers for review and approval prior to payment. GEARS maintains regular communications with CDC and project site staff to ensure quality service delivery.

- GEARS supported **CDC/Office of Surveillance, Epidemiology, and Laboratory Services (OSELS) (a project formerly implemented for the Coordinating Center for Health Information and Service or CCHIS)** in its efforts to build upon financial and business improvement processes and automated solutions. Additionally, GEARS identified and placed a consultant to help OSELS facilitate, track, and monitor the Management Business Services Organization (MBSO) project timeline, as well as help leadership stay within the MBSO project timelines. With GEARS' support, OSELS created a new portfolio of services, developed a portfolio plan, and improved the automated financial management system within OSELS/Office of Director (OD).
- GEARS provides writing, editing, and copy editing services to develop news and interview articles monthly for **CDC Connects, CDC's intranet-based employee communications vehicle**. *CDC Connects* is published daily and accessed by CDC employees worldwide, providing immediate information about accomplishments of the agency and individual employees. We develop important news articles on topical public health issues (such as hand washing, reproductive health, global health initiatives, etc.), offering the expertise required to conduct comprehensive research, develop high-quality articles, interview a variety of health professionals to create informational and educational articles. We conduct interviews with senior CDC leadership, CDC employees, and other health professionals to supplement important research findings. GEARS also conducts interviews with CDC employees to create "employee of the month" profiles.

- Working with the National Center for HIV/AIDS, Viral Hepatitis, STD, and TB Prevention (NCHHSTP), GEARS planned, designed, and executed all activities associated with the **Coordination of Behavioral Assessments and Rapid HIV Testing (BART) Among African American Adolescents and Adults, Men Who Have Sex with Men, and Other Groups At-Risk for Infection**. BART was an initiative designed to foster cross-sector collaborations to facilitate strategic approaches in addressing the social determinants associated with the disproportionate impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic among at-risk groups. BART solicited health departments, community based organizations, and other service providers to conduct rapid HIV testing activities at national community events. To effectively address these goals, GEARS developed a comprehensive social marketing and partnership development plan to engage individuals at multiple levels.

Strategic partnerships were essential to the successful development and implementation of BART. The GEARS team mobilized and fostered relationships with community based organizations, state and local health departments, and other HIV testing groups to assist us in advertising and offering support for national BART events. The GEARS team secured a significant amount of rapid HIV testing kits at a discounted rate from OraSure Technologies, Inc., which relieved a considerable amount of financial strain for testing partners. GEARS carefully selected and negotiated appropriate networks within the private and public health sector to ensure that BART target audiences were effectively reached.

The BART social marketing campaign was central to managing the high visibility and complexity of this project. Our media experts are heavily connected in different segments, including print, broadcast, and cyber networks, which facilitated the success of our strategy. They strategically maneuvered multiple markets to gain access to diverse target groups, while also remaining sensitive to the needs of CDC and the target population. GEARS media experts designed press packets and developed a detailed tracking system to ensure that BART information was disseminated properly. Additionally, the GEARS social marketing team successfully assembled, prepared, packed, and exhibited the necessary exhibit materials for BART display and distribution at the National AIDS Education & Services for Minorities MSM Leadership Conference as required by the host site.

While our media experts are well-established in their field, they understand the progressive nature of the social market. Thus, they embraced several different social marketing techniques, including the development of a Facebook page to ensure that the appropriate audiences were reached. The team also constructed a comprehensive and secure website, www.bartevents.com, as a marketing strategy to promote the initiative that included a social media profile with a newly designed BART logo and tagline to assist our target population in embracing the notion of HIV testing; a blogging space linked to the Facebook profile; and an extranet website to capture requests for proposal submitted by interested organizations and inquiries from persons interested in volunteering. While browsing the site, visitors have access to searchable full-text documents that report HIV/AIDS research and statistics, alternate formats for documents (i.e., adobe files), feature boxes, links, animation, and online applications. The BART website also links consumers to HIV educational materials and testing facilities in fifty states.

- CDC engaged GEARS to provide project management, information dissemination, technical assistance, logistics, and web support to the intervention focus area (IFA) of the **Diabetes Primary Prevention Initiative (DPPI)**. The DPPI was conducted through three focus areas, including surveillance, systems dynamics modeling and interventions. This project, which was based in the Division of Diabetes Translation (DDT), was a collaboratively co-created plan of action for federal, state, and local public health implementation of diabetes primary prevention. Pilot states conducted activities that focused on screening and identifying populations at-risk for developing type 2 diabetes, the development of workplace prediabetes awareness programs, and the implementation of interventions that impacted primary prevention and health policy. GEARS'

support assisted CDC in the management of voluminous state-based information on intervention activities, best practices, and meeting activities. GEARS organized DPPI's five years of extensive research by creating a DPPI website that provided links to a database of tools and curriculum developed by the individual focus areas, as well as, listed the DPPI's annotated bibliography. GEARS activities included documenting and reporting outcomes from bi-weekly meetings with CDC and the pilot states, and synthesizing state reports from all three focus areas (intervention, surveillance, and systems modeling) into one comprehensive report which was submitted to Congress.

GEARS provided direct support to the intervention focus area, which involved five pilot states: California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and Washington. In preparation for the DPPI comprehensive report, GEARS conducted a review of CDC diabetes initiatives that have contributed to the current literature on prediabetes. The comprehensive report required that GEARS work with each pilot state to determine how their interventions could best be incorporated into a document that would serve various diabetes stakeholder groups. This included reviewing information from multiple sources (i.e., IFA reports, meeting notes, interviews with state leaders, and their key partners to determine which materials were pertinent to CDC's purpose for the final report). We also provided on-going technical assistance in the identification of key stakeholders, and the development of conference and meeting materials and presentations. A key function of writing the comprehensive report was the analysis of outcomes data, and understanding their implications for further DDT studies. Upon completion of the comprehensive report, GEARS was able to provide DDT with recommendations that included indicators for future work and how similar applications may be expanded to include other states in providing significant information for developing interventions to identify and prevent type 2 diabetes. In order for GEARS to successfully complete this report, it was necessary that GEARS be judicious in editing the report and balancing the needs of the individual states with the overall goals of the DPPI. Finally, GEARS delivered a 508c compliant manuscript entitled: *The Diabetes Primary Prevention Initiative: 2005 – 2009 – Final Comprehensive Report*, which is scheduled to be posted on the Chronic Disease website.

- GEARS provided the **CDC Coordinating Center for Health Promotion** with background research on four health promotion goals for which it had responsibility. These goals included: Infants and Toddlers, Adults, Older Adults and Healthy Schools. This contract required intense project management skills to ensure that multiple activities were efficiently implemented simultaneously. GEARS created a repository of information for policy and program development around all four goal areas utilizing several sources including scholarly public health journals, conference reports, surveillance reports, and key informant interviews. GEARS also created a data management system to allow CDC to archive and retrieve data efficiently. This was a two-year project. Another phase of this project was the compilation, analysis and reporting of an inventory of CDC-sponsored projects and activities related to obesity and overweight and college and university-based health promotion programs and activities. For the internal scan of obesity and overweight projects and activities, the final product also included a literature review and recommended strategies for program development for this issue. These compilations included over 100 programs and activities across multiple CDC centers and divisions.
- GEARS was **engaged by CDC to assist in creating a federally-approved survey** to gauge the opinions of the leadership of state and local public health agencies regarding **crisis management emergency communications**. Utilizing three different surveys, GEARS created an online survey instrument, hosted the website and provided technical assistance to all respondents. GEARS also conducted a mass mailing to all potential respondents (1,100) and managed all the logistics for mailing to such a large group, including working with Federal Express and the U.S. Postal Service for the efficient delivery of survey materials. GEARS also provided the statistical analysis of all the resulting data from over 400 respondents. The survey was administered on a Section 508c compliant website that was created and maintained by GEARS.

GEARS also provided event support for the **2008 Crisis Emergency Risk Communication Training** held on August 26 - 28, 2008, in Houston, Texas. The conference provided crisis communication training to stakeholders who would be involved with pregnant women during a pandemic influenza outbreak in the United States. At this event, GEARS provided logistical assistance, note taking, and event summary.

- GEARS **facilitated a series of meetings with CDC CHAPS Branch** in order to provide its expertise in the development of a **health disparities strategic plan**. GEARS assisted the CHAPS/Expert Center/REACH US teams with developing a strategic plan that included a definition of health disparities, delineated the CHAPS Expert Center and REACH US goals, clarified the roles and required professional development of staff, and identified potential program and agency collaborations. These meetings were instrumental in assisting CHAPS to accomplish its mission to provide leadership in eliminating health disparities.
- GEARS supported the development of the CDC Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Action Institute, which was conducted to provide **capacity building to community based organizations engaged in the fight against health disparities**. This activity was sponsored by the CDC Division of Adult and Community Health (DACH) in the National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP) to address health behaviors of diverse communities. GEARS was charged with leading the planning committee to identify a date and location for the institute, determining the number of and profile for appropriate participants, and developing learning objectives. These activities were accomplished through a series of meetings for which GEARS developed and distributed the agenda and summaries. To test the proposed methodology for determining the appropriate participants, GEARS also assisted with the development, implementation, and reporting of a focus group. This group was conducted with leaders from community based organizations located around the country, representing a diverse make up of cultural and health related experiences. Specifically, GEARS assisted CDC to develop criteria and recruitment documents for focus group participants. Additionally, GEARS co-facilitated and reported findings from the focus group. The results of this rich experience provided further enhancements which GEARS helped to ensure were incorporated into the final methodology.
- GEARS assisted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, **National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (NCCDPHP)** to **develop a national model for partnership development**. Specifically, GEARS created an historical perspective of the creation of the partnership between CDC and the Y - MCA of the USA from original discussions to the present time. Our work on previous projects that included partnership activities, such as the Healthcare Georgia Foundation (see description below), provided us with a strong understanding of the necessary components of and techniques and strategies for building effective strategic partnerships.

GEARS devised a qualitative approach to capturing these data including telephone interviews with CDC and Y-USA staff, focus groups with CDC partnership committees, and individual in-person and telephone interviews with selected CDC steering committee members. Initial discussions with stakeholders were mapped into a strategic work plan for ensuring that the most appropriate individuals were included in the data collection process. Based on initial discussions, review of existing documentation related to the partnership formation (including meeting minutes, emails, publications, and website materials) and detailed discussions with the CDC Partnership Steering Committee, GEARS developed data collection instruments to collect information from CDC and Y-USA staff involved in the initial phase of the partnership. We were especially interested in identifying motives for entering into the partnership, pre-partnership perceptions, challenges, successes, and communication activities. Interviews were recorded, with permission of the respondent, and transcribed for more efficient data capture. GEARS developed an interviewer's protocol including an introductory script to inform participants of the nature of the interview, audio

recording activities, how the data will be used, and of the voluntary nature of the data collection. All of the interviews were conducted by the same GEARS staff member to retain consistency in data capture and interpretation. The qualitative data were coded and organized into a database to capture response frequencies prior to analysis. A comprehensive report, including the creation of what GEARS developed and called the “Eight Keys” to a successful partnership, was shared with multiple levels of employees within CDC and with the Y-USA corporate staff. The report also identified significant accomplishments that were overcome to forge the partnership, lessons learned and conclusions.

GEARS designed a protocol to conduct focus groups among Y-USA and CDC staff to glean information about the community impact of the partnership. We also facilitated all sessions. GEARS designed focus group questions relevant to the purpose and goals of the partnership. These sessions defined partnership issues, problems, successes and accomplishments. GEARS developed a report of findings, including recommendations.

GEARS provided CDC with a comprehensive literature review of public-nonprofit partnerships resulting in the identification of best practices, effective model components, and strategies for overcoming challenges. CDC also engaged GEARS to conduct follow up activities including the incorporation of local perspectives from the Activate America Program into an updated partnership model, development of communication strategies and materials for disseminating national partnership information, and conducting a value assessment of the Activate America Program at the local level.

- GEARS assisted the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Office of Diversity with developing a **Diversity Communications Plan**. The plan included communication strategies suggested by a cross-section of CDC employees, CDC management, and relevant internal affinity groups. GEARS also used the results of a review of best practices for developing effective diversity communications plans conducted among organizations who have developed and implemented successful plans. This plan was developed to assist CDC in educating and informing both CDC employees and the public about CDC’s philosophy related to diversity, how diversity impacts the everyday work life of CDC employees, and how the diversity initiative benefits the agency. Communications products include posters, forums, presence on CDC’s website, and web blogs.
- GEARS was engaged by CDC to design, implement, and report a series of 22 discussion sessions of CDC employees conducted in eight locations throughout the United States. The results of these sessions were used to assist CDC management in developing the future direction of CDC, a process called the **CDC’s Futures Initiative**. This project was very complex, involving the management and conduct of multiple and simultaneous activities and critical contact with the CDC Director of Strategy and Innovation. In addition to staff located in Atlanta, GEARS worked with CDC’s human resources office, employee union stewards, and staff offices in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Colorado, Alaska, Puerto Rico, and Maryland. This project was half the budget of the listening tour project (see below) and was developed and completed within three months. Final results were developed and presented to the Director, Strategy and Innovation, CDC. Correspondence noting GEARS’s exceptional performance for accomplishing such an exhaustive procedure in a limited time frame is on file with the CDC contract’s office.
- GEARS designed, implemented, and reported statewide **listening tours for the Healthcare Georgia Foundation (HGF)**. The results of these tours assisted the Foundation in developing grant making guidelines and enhanced the Foundation’s knowledge of healthcare consumers in Georgia, ultimately affecting grant making priorities. The initial tour in 2002 involved convening leaders from among Georgia’s healthcare provider community (including public health departments, community based organizations, community health centers, school nurse programs, law enforcement, homeless shelters, etc.) in nine regions of the state. The 2003-2004 tour

involved convening sessions with Georgia healthcare consumers to learn their opinions of and experience with the healthcare system. The project involved a complex design of identifying appropriate public health and other health officials throughout the state, developing interview instruments, conducting over 40 focus groups with diverse audiences, working closely with community based organizations to recruit consumers, and managing, analyzing, and reporting quantitative and qualitative information. This activity required management of multiple and simultaneous activities in five regions of the state for two years. GEARS established a time table for the two years and met each scheduled deliverable on time and completed the project within budget. GEARS was the only HGF grantee to present at the Foundation's annual grantees conference held in November 2003. The listening tour project was also selected for presentation at the 2004 American Public Health Association annual meeting.

- GEARS designed and maintained a website to provide **support for the 2004 Healthcare Georgia Foundation** consumer-based listening tours (www.listeningtours.com). The website was used during the 2004 tour to support recruitment efforts by providing potential sponsoring organizations information related to the tour, meeting information for participants, and session report summaries. Other design features used to engage the visitors to the site included pop-up windows, PDF file attachments, a scrolling information box and drop-down menus. The website played a critical role in recruitment and information dissemination.
- GEARS completed a project with the DHHS/Office on Women's Health (DHHS/OWH) entitled, **Lupus Community Education and Awareness Outreach Program**. This project involved raising awareness about lupus through community seminars and development of a community health leader program. GEARS developed partnerships with local and national lupus organizations to work collaboratively in designing ADA compliant seminars and a model for the community health leader program. GEARS conducted four lupus seminars focusing on women of African descent. These seminars addressed the physical, mental, social, and legal issues involved in lupus. Women were provided lupus related resources such as brochures and pamphlets, as well as information about clinical trials. The community health leader program was implemented to train community women, who volunteer, to serve as lupus educators to raise awareness about lupus in their communities. The model that was developed is one that is sustainable in that women who serve as community health leaders will be connected with appropriate resources to allow continuation after the end of our contract. GEARS also conducted an evaluation of the seminars to assess how well the seminars met the needs of participants and raised awareness about lupus. The anticipated accomplishment of this project was that it would raise awareness about Black women's increased risk for lupus and the resources available to cope with lupus.
- GEARS designed and facilitated a retreat to **clarify the vision of the core injury program for the Division of Injury Disabilities Outcomes and Programs (DIDOP)/National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC)**. The process resulted in DIDOP refining the definition of the core injury program and requirements for its funding opportunity announcement. The retreat goals were to: 1) Define the term "core"; 2) Develop a vision of the core injury program; and 3) Develop elements of the 2004 core injury program announcement. This project required that GEARS learn about the core injury program to effectively advise senior management on how to revise the funding announcement to better meet the needs of respondents and the program. Processes similar to those required for developing performance metrics were required such as: 1) developing a comprehensive understanding of the program, 2) conducting an analysis of procedures and systems, 3) making recommendations for program and systems, 4) conducting fact-finding and satisfaction-focused interviews with important stakeholders to the injury program, and 5) deriving correlations between program announcement specifics and desired program outcomes.

Program Evaluation

- GEARS has been engaged by **DHHS/OWH** to evaluate four tool kits designed to cross-train **professionals on strategies to address the intersection between HIV and intimate partner violence** during their work with clients. Professionals that represent the intended population (ethnic/racial communities) for these interventions include counselors, service providers, advocates, and case managers. GEARS is determining which tool kit or combination of aspects from the four involved in this project is most effective and will use the findings to propose one final tool kit. GEARS is conducting a case study of the tool kits and is using existing evaluation data (secondary data analysis) to answer best practice questions posed by the Office on Women's Health (OWH). GEARS is using a study logic model to plan, describe, manage, communicate and assess the efficacy of the four tool kits. In addition, GEARS is conducting secondary data analysis on both qualitative and quantitative data, as well as conducting site visits to the organization implementing a toolkit. All related findings and recommendations will be detailed in a report to OWH.
- In the **DHHS/OWH project, Education and Training of Healthcare Providers and Pre-Professionals as a Coordinated Public Health Response to Violence Against Women**, GEARS is partnering with Futures Without Violence (formerly the Family Violence Prevention Fund). The Futures Without Violence will develop a curriculum to educate and train healthcare and allied healthcare providers and students on the assessment, treatment, and referral of patients that may be victims of domestic violence and/or sexual violence. The curriculum will be implemented in three states using web-based education modules, online materials, and hard copy educational resources. GEARS will conduct a process and outcome evaluation of the training provided. Our planned evaluation model is participatory and collaborative whereby stakeholders will be involved in planning, conducting, and disseminating evaluation findings. The intended outcome of this project is to assist providers to understand the impact of domestic and sexual violence and coercion on health and better understand how to assess and respond to patients' needs in specific settings.
- The primary goal of the **DHHS/OWH Girls at Greater Risk for Juvenile Delinquency and HIV Program** is to increase knowledge about HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and individual protective factors against juvenile delinquency among girls between the ages of 9 and 17 years using gender responsive prevention strategies. The program hopes to build the capacity of community based organizations to service the needs of female adolescents and youth. The program also focuses on building girl's self-esteem, overall sense of well-being and mental health and on educating girls on how to cope with adverse circumstances and situations.

The GEARS' evaluation of the *Girls at Greater Risk Program* includes the following tasks: developing an evaluation logic model and writing an evaluation plan; providing grantees that serve girls from diverse ethnic/racial groups and communities with technical assistance during the evaluation period; and reviewing all grantee proposals and quarterly reports. This information will be summarized to provide a "snapshot" of programs with respect to program core elements. Additionally, we are conducting a literature review of risk factors related to juvenile delinquency and HIV. This literature review will be used to develop a comprehensive evaluation instrument and a manuscript will be developed and submitted to OWH. GEARS has also collaborated with OWH and grantees in determining the core variables (performance metrics) that will be evaluated in the national evaluation. In this regard GEARS planned and conducted a two-day meeting with grantees and OWH to discuss the evaluation plan and to review GEARS recommendations for core evaluation measures. In addition, four conference calls were held to continue refining the evaluation instrument.

The evaluation also includes the following additional tasks:

- Identifying and working with three Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to provide consultation and guidance on the evaluation;

- Developing the OMB clearance package for the evaluation and assisting with questions that arise as the package is reviewed;
- Conducting site visits to grantees - The first site visit was conducted during the first year to get to know the program and to conduct data collection training with the community based grantee programs. A second site visit will be held during the last year of the evaluation to conduct focus groups with participants, parents, and partners;
- Conducting telephone interviews with program staff and program partners will be held on a yearly basis;
- Creating a web interface, allowing grantees to have access to evaluation related information, share information with other grantees and to input data directly into a data repository (GEARS will use the data to compile quarterly analyses to generate its quarterly report to OWH. OWH will use the web interface to communicate with programs and to have access to program data); and
- Analyzing data - provide OWH with preliminary data briefings, write a final evaluation report, and make two national presentations on the evaluation findings.

OWH will use the evaluation findings in making programmatic and funding decisions for their *Girls at Greater Risk* program. Evaluation findings will also be used to identify best practices and lessons learned that could be transferred to other organizations and communities attempting to replicate services for at risk girls and female adolescents. Furthermore, because this program was developed as part of the national effort to eliminate health disparities, evaluation findings will help OWH understand how the program is contributing to closing the health disparities gap and to improving care for underserved populations of women and girls across the country.

- GEARS is implementing a **summative evaluation of the Centers of Research Excellence in Science and Technology (CREST)** program for the National Science Foundation (NSF). CREST promotes the development of new knowledge, enhances institutional capacity and faculty and institutional research productivity, and expands the involvement of students in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. Since 1987, NSF has awarded funds to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to cultivate a world class, diverse workforce (inclusive of underrepresented minority groups) in STEM research and practice. Eighteen CREST programs are being evaluated to determine their success in broadening minority students' participation in the STEM fields. GEARS proposes a mixed methods design with case studies and time series analysis (four assessment points) to determine CREST's achievements of NSF's program-level and strategic goals. In addition, the evaluation will assess the purposes of CREST funding: integrate education and research; contribute to and advance new disciplinary and/or STEM education knowledge; increase the research capability, productivity and institutional leadership of MSIs in STEM disciplines; and promote collaboration between CREST centers and nationally recognized research centers and/or STEM related business and industry community. GEARS receives input on the evaluation design and implementation activities from a national CREST Evaluation Advisory Panel. The panel membership includes experts in the STEM and evaluation fields. The projected end date of the evaluation is April 2012.
- **The Improving Literacy Through School Libraries (LSL) Program** in the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Secondary and Elementary Education was established under Title I, Part B, Subpart 4 of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)* by the *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB)*. The purpose of the LSL program is to improve student reading skills and academic achievement by providing students with increased access to up-to-date school library materials; well-equipped, technologically advanced school library media centers; and well-trained, professionally certified school library specialists. This program is a competitive one-year grant program for local educational agencies (LEAs, i.e., school districts) in which at least 20 percent of the students are from families with incomes below the poverty line. GEARS is responsible for collecting performance measurement data on school grantees for the following performance indicators:

- ✓ The percentage of students in schools served by the program who are proficient in reading;
- ✓ The number of books and media resources purchased per student, pre- and post-grant, compared to the national average; and
- ✓ The difference in the number of purchases of school library materials between schools participating in the program and the national average.

GEARS collects this performance indicator data from final grantee reports, state and district websites, the Common Core of Data (2006–07), and the Schools and Staffing Survey (2007–08). GEARS then analyzes the data to provide GPRA measures and to write an annual report to Congress. This report to Congress provides an analysis of the performance data for the grantee year by comparing it with data that GEARS collects for the year prior to funding and the year after funding. This at times involves more than 400 schools, each with its own system of reporting data. In conducting this data collection, GEARS has developed a data collection procedure manual, developed a quality assurance procedure, and kept a log of all data anomalies. In the course of collecting data, GEARS has encountered anomalies in reporting data which are kept in a log with decisions that have been discussed with our Project Officer.

- GEARS recently completed the **Evaluation of the HIV Prevention Program for Young Women Attending Minority Institutions** funded by OWH. The evaluation measured HIV prevention knowledge, self-reported risk behaviors and attitudes among college women attending minority institutions, including six Historically Black Colleges and Universities, two Tribal Colleges and Universities, and four Hispanic Serving Institutions located across the country. Utilizing its expertise in cultural competence and gender-specific interventions, GEARS assessed the extent to which the interventions employed impacted knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about high risk behaviors among the young women served. In addition to conducting a thorough review of the literature on HIV prevention and risk among minority college women, GEARS used a participatory approach in developing the evaluation instrument that was used to assess outcome variables (HIV-related knowledge, attitudes, behaviors) from an ethnically diverse group of college women. This instrument was administered by project staff to participants at baseline, post-test and three months after post-test. GEARS trained project staff in survey implementation and data entry and wrote standard operating procedures for these procedures. GEARS also developed process evaluation questionnaires and collected this data from project staff on a yearly basis. Archival data was also collected and analyzed.

GEARS was responsible for developing the project's OMB package and responding to any questions asked regarding the data collection. GEARS also developed an IRB application and provided annual reports to its IRB Board with respect to data collection activities. Although site visits were originally proposed for this evaluation, the Project Officer and GEARS saw the benefits of reverse site visits. Consequently, reverse site visits were held with small groups of grantees. During these site visits GEARS provided technical assistance and guidance with respect to the evaluation and clarified programmatic issues identified by GEARS.

GEARS submitted a final evaluation report that consisted of both a process and outcome evaluation findings. The report was helpful in clarifying issues regarding data collection procedures and methods with ethnic minority college women (e.g. in-person versus online administration); identifying similarities in outcomes regarding multi-session versus single session interventions; and providing information regarding the impact of the interventions on HIV knowledge and sexual risk behaviors.

- For the project **Collaboration with CDC's REACH 2010 Program to Develop and Evaluate Culturally Competent Interventions**, the Division of Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention (HDSP) is collaborating with CDC's Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health (REACH) program to develop a culturally competent system level intervention to address cardiovascular disease. Specifically, HDSP intends to use the best practices from the REACH 2010 Program in developing

a state-level intervention. GEARS has been contracted to identify the best practices and processes of REACH 2010 grantees and develop a culturally competent system-level intervention to address cardiovascular disease in state HDSP based on lessons learned and best practices of REACH 2010 programs. In addition, GEARS is conducting a process evaluation to assess the implementation of the intervention that we develop and following-up with participating states to ascertain how the training has been utilized. To date, GEARS has conducted a best practice and evaluability assessment of 12 REACH 2010 programs. GEARS developed a protocol including a set of criteria with which to assess public health practices to determine whether programs can be considered a “preferred or best practice” or “best processes.” Our team conducted a systematic document review of existing REACH 2010 projects, using the protocol, to identify those projects that appear to be best processes/best practices. Subsequently, GEARS also developed a protocol for an evaluability site visit assessment, which was implemented and reported with three REACH 2010 programs, recommended by GEARS and approved by HDSP. Additionally, our staff coordinated all logistics related to these visits.

Based on the best practice assessments and the evaluability site visits, GEARS proposed two interventions that could be implemented by states. HDSP decided on the Community Health Worker (CHW) Training for states, with an emphasis on providing those states that were indecisive about utilizing CHW with training. Consequently, GEARS is developing a CHW training for states that covers the roles, functions, setting and models of care for using CHWs; arenas of public policy affecting employment of CHWs; workforce development issues for CHWs; occupational regulation; sources of sustainable funding for CHW positions; and prospects for support of CHWs under federal health care reform.

GEARS will also develop a process evaluation plan to monitor a state program’s fidelity to the intervention design. GEARS is also tracking short-term benchmarks of three states that participate in the training. Data and information will be analyzed to develop conclusions and recommendations on preferred practices and/or best processes for replication of the intervention with additional states’ programs. GEARS will also develop a guidance document that details the intervention implementation. We will identify a list of potential adopters of the intervention(s) and provide technical assistance as appropriate to assist in intervention(s) adoption and evaluation, and analyze and interpret data from the process evaluation. A final written report will be developed in the format of a peer-reviewed journal manuscript.

- GEARS conducted a three-year evaluation contract with the DHHS/Office on Women’s Health (DHHS/OWH) on the project entitled, **Evaluation of HIV Prevention Programs for Women**. This project measured the effectiveness of HIV prevention programs funded by OWH in three categories: women living in the rural south, incarcerated/newly released women and model mentorship programs. The results of this evaluation enhanced the understanding of how to conceptualize and assess gender-specific prevention strategies. This evaluation assisted OWH in refining future grantee requirements regarding gender specific activities and provided GEARS with a more in-depth understanding of how different communities of women respond to gender-specific questions in general and questions about sexual behavior in particular. Additionally, the results of this evaluation provided OWH with information that will inform the programmatic development of future HIV Initiatives for women.

This was a large, complex evaluation project involving fourteen grantees from among the three categories listed above. GEARS developed ten different data collection instruments used for a range of purposes including enhancing grantees’ buy-in and measuring client satisfaction. GEARS also developed the OMB Clearance package for this evaluation. Additionally, GEARS developed and submitted an application package to an independent Institutional Review Board (IRB) to ensure human subject protection during the evaluation study. GEARS conducted training with each contractor during annual site visits and provided contractor technical assistance on programmatic and data collection issues on a regular (monthly) basis.

- In two separate projects related to the CDC REACH 2010 program, GEARS conducted focus group research to assess how culture influences the process of building and maintaining a coalition and how coalitions ensure that their training is culturally competent. For one study, GEARS was contracted by the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD) and for the other, GEARS contracted directly by NCCDPHP/DACH/Community Health and Program Services Branch (CHAPS). Collectively, GEARS conducted **focus group research among a subset of CDC REACH 2010 community coalitions** from diverse racial and ethnic groups including African American, Asian Americans, Latinos/Hispanic Americans, and Native Americans who were selected to participate in this study. The focus groups also reflected a diverse set of health priority areas. These areas include breast and cervical cancer, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, HIV infections and AIDS and infant mortality. GEARS designed and implemented the protocol to conduct this assessment. Further, this study investigation of CDC's REACH 2010 grantees aimed to answer the following questions: (1) Were REACH coalitions culturally competent? (2) What was the relationship between cultural competency and the coalitions' outcomes for the racial/ethnic populations they serve? and (3) Based on the performance and experiences of these coalitions, what recommendations could be offered toward future efforts.

The objective of this project was to determine the extent to which these coalitions have adopted and utilize effective cultural competence strategies within their communities. Both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were employed to obtain desired measures. GEARS was responsible for partnership development, recruiting, and reporting focus group results. GEARS developed recruitment materials (including reminder emails and post cards), focus group materials, and post focus group materials (including thank you letters and follow up evaluations). Additionally, GEARS collected, analyzed the data, and reported the results. Results were analyzed using NVivo, a state-of-the-art statistical software. NVivo is a program for qualitative data analysis that allows one to import and code textual data, edit the text; retrieve, review and recode coded data; search for combinations of words in the text or patterns in your coding; and import or export data from and to quantitative analysis. GEARS analysts were trained in the collection, coding, and input of focus group and other qualitative data for NVivo. The results of this project provided CDC an understanding of how cultural competence is understood, operationalized, and implemented among REACH grantees.

Lastly, CDC requested an additional phase of this project which entailed the identification of components to include in a cultural competency training manual and materials for coalitions addressing health disparities among racial/ethnic populations. This manual will be based on the results of focus groups conducted with a subset of REACH 2010 coalitions and as well as best practices as outlined in the literature. These materials will provide technical assistance to CDC and community coalitions.

- GEARS conducted an **evaluation of the Coastal Management Fellowship Program for the Department of Commerce**, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA), Coastal Services Center (CSC). The results of this evaluation helped NOAA meet the high priority coastal zone needs of states and improve its prevention of coastal emergencies. This project assessed the effectiveness of the fellowship program, impact of the fellowship on state coastal zone programs, and the professional goals of fellows. Both quantitative (e.g. survey) and qualitative (e.g. interview) methods were used in the evaluation. Participants included current and past fellows, a control group similar to fellows, state coastal zone program mentors, and CSC partners. Since this was a government authorized data collection, GEARS developed the required OMB Clearance package for the evaluation.
- **Lupus Qualitative Research Focus Groups and Analysis:** GEARS has been very involved in lupus research and has conducted two qualitative studies pertaining to lupus that utilized focus group methodology. Both studies were performed under contract with Brigham and Women's

Hospital, Department of Rheumatology. Dr. Patricia Fraser was the principal investigator for the first federally funded study which examined connective tissue disease in high-risk groups. For this study, GEARS designed recruitment and focus group methodology to investigate the views of women of African descent on participating in medical research, especially studies investigating genetics and requiring a blood sample. The results of these focus groups were summarized by GEARS and the information used to design study methodology to investigate connective tissue disease among women of African descent. Following the implementation of this study, GEARS conducted follow-up focus groups to determine those factors that influenced the decision of women of African descent to participate in the research study.

Dr. Matthew Liang was the principal investigator for the second federally funded study. Dr. Liang contracted with GEARS to conduct focus groups to investigate those factors that influence lupus patients' participation in prevention research. Dr. Liang encountered difficulty in recruiting sufficient lupus patients to participate in a prevention study that he was conducting that required patients to participate in clinical trials. GEARS was hired to conduct focus groups with patients who had refused to participate in his study, who had participated in his study and a comparison group (diabetes patients). The results of this project are used to better understand those factors that influence patient participation and to make recommendations for future research designs.

- GEARS also designed and implemented **the evaluation of two grants awarded to the Multicultural AIDS Coalition (MAC)**, Boston, Massachusetts, from 2000 to 2008. These projects, funded by the DHHS/Office of Minority Health (OMH), evaluated the effectiveness of the MAC's organizational technical assistance and organizational capacity building services to minority community based organizations (CBOs) working in the HIV/AIDS area. The goal was to help these CBOs improve and increase their ability to deliver HIV/AIDS services. In collaboration with MAC, GEARS had responsibility for: (1) designing the organizational capacity and technical assistance assessment tools, workshop/seminar evaluation surveys, and interview protocols and assessment tools for faith-based organizations participating in the project; (2) conducting meetings with MAC staff to review evaluation procedures and progress, (3) conducting interviews with participating organizations, (4) developing databases to manage the disparate data sources, and (5) analyzing the data from these sources. GEARS also provided bi-annual and annual reports throughout the project period. The results of the evaluation assisted MAC in designing a more efficient and focused technical assistance and capacity building program. This redesigned program was funded by OMH for three additional years.
- GEARS conducted a **cultural needs assessment for the National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)** (a network of nationwide providers and researchers interested in child traumatic stress). The purpose of this cultural needs assessment was to determine the ways in which culture has been conceptualized and integrated into the work of the network and to what extent these cultural values influence organizational products and outcomes. NCTSN has used the results of this assessment to design a program to increase cultural competence in the network and among its partners.
- GEARS conducted a **qualitative evaluation and meta-analysis of 92 Final Reports for Cohort I of the Family Strengthening Program Grant** funded by SAMHSA. GEARS conducted this project as a subcontractor to McFarland & Associates (2002 - 2003). The purpose of the meta-analysis was to identify those program attributes that correlate with improved youth substance use and individual outcomes as a result of participating in an evidence-based (or empirically supported) family strengthening intervention. In conducting this meta-analysis, GEARS identified key research questions, developed coding methodology, established reliability of coding methods, trained coders, and analyzed data using a statistical software package.

Logistics & Event Management

- GEARS recently planned and implemented the 2011 State of the **Science in Disability Research Conference, Interagency Committee on Disability Research (ICDR)** held July 12-13 in Arlington, VA. The main focus of the conference was to identify research and knowledge gaps, and promote collaborative research and a coordinated disability and rehabilitation research agenda to scientifically and practically address the promotion of Health, Wellness, Quality of Life, and Knowledge Translation. GEARS facilitated planning sessions with the ICDR Executive Director, ICDR subcommittee co-chairs and a 12-member Steering Committee in order to plan the conference. The conference included two (2) general sessions with keynote speakers and an expert panel and two 90-minute blocks of six (6) concurrent breakout sessions with more than 40 speakers and a total of 110 participants. GEARS created and managed a registration web site for the event, which was designed to solicit information about participants, including special accommodations as well as dietary needs. GEARS provided registration reporting to the ICDR to help with managing the number of participants for which to plan and special accommodation requests, which enabled GEARS to secure appropriate vendors to provide services. GEARS planned and managed all of the logistical aspects of the conference including conducting venue site visits, coordinating AV requirements and checking set up, confirmed all special accommodations and securing appropriate vendors, managing food and beverage requirements and providing onsite staffing for registration, facilitator support and note taking during breakout sessions. GEARS worked directly with each speaker to obtain their bios, presentations, and secure their travel and hotel accommodations. GEARS created a speakers' package that included a Speaker Information Form, Travel Profile and Confirmation Form, Permission to Post (presentations), and Photo Permission slip. GEARS developed and disseminated conference materials for each participant which included an overview of the conference, Speaker bios, Session materials and a Participants List. GEARS managed a registration table where all registered participants checked in and received name badges and conference materials. On-site registration was available as well to individuals who had not previously registered. At the close of the conference, GEARS updated the ICDR website with all of the speaker presentations and finalized conference proceedings to also post on the website and disseminate as a deliverable.
- GEARS was awarded a task order to provide logistical support services to plan and implement the **Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Grantee Orientation Meeting** in January 2011. This meeting was the first of its kind with the objective of convening newly funded grantees to provide them with an understanding of the Funding Opportunity Announcement, CDC expectations and an opportunity to meet with Project Officers. GEARS developed the meeting branding as well as the registration and logistics website. We also facilitated logistics planning aspects, including meetings, with the CDC/DRH project leads. Additionally, our team coordinated sponsored guests' travel to the meeting and ground transportation for all meeting participants. The GEARS team also provided onsite support during the three-day meeting. Finally, our team developed and administered a meeting evaluation during the conference and reported the results to CDC.
- GEARS provided logistics and meeting management services for the **Third ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting**, sponsored by the Department of State. The purpose of the meeting was to continue a discussion about disarmament and nonproliferation among the 27 member nations of the ASEAN Region. GEARS managed the meeting of 100 participants and secured meeting space in Las Vegas, Nevada, which was conducted February 23-25, 2011. Additionally, GEARS developed and oversaw a registration website, catering for sponsored meals and ground transportation for a site visit conducted during the two-day meeting. Our team also developed, packaged and shipped meeting binders as well as vetted and secured a local copier rental company to produce over 200 pages of presentation materials onsite. GEARS staff coordinated with the hotel staff and the Department of State to develop banquets planned for participants during the meeting. GEARS staff also provided onsite event management including, coordinating the meeting room setup, managing the registration table, assisting in operation of the control room and managing additional meeting vendors.

- As the lead federal agency for comprehensive tobacco prevention and control, the CDC Office on Smoking and Health (OSH) develops, conducts, and supports strategic efforts to protect the public's health from the harmful effects of tobacco use. OSH's goals are to prevent initiation of tobacco use among youth and young adults; promote tobacco use cessation among adults and youth; eliminate exposure to secondhand smoke; and identify and eliminate tobacco-related disparities. Many tobacco related programs need to increase their evaluation capacity. One strategy for addressing this need is to develop a Tobacco Evaluators Network, which will help ensure that states will receive adequate evaluation support beyond that of OSH's 8 member evaluation team. CDC has engaged GEARS to **provide project management, information dissemination, technical assistance, and logistics support services for the Tobacco Evaluators Network (TEN)**. GEARS is responsible for scheduling, hosting, and reporting meetings with various committees and entities related to the TEN to gain input on the development of the Tobacco Control Network (TCN) and applicable lessons learned that will inform the development of the TEN. Also included in the outreach conducted by GEARS is a series of one-hour discussion groups (N=5) held with National Tobacco Control Program (NTCP) evaluation staff from programs around the country. The discussion groups and a subsequent online survey were conducted as part of a needs assessment to identify the structure, strategies, and resources that evaluation staff believe would be most useful to support peer-to-peer exchanges of technical assistance support. Additional activities include providing a written report containing an outline for the development of the TCN, major challenges and barriers, major milestones and enabling factors, lessons learned, and lessons applicable to the development of the TEN. GEARS implements meetings in-person and through conference call capabilities. Our team maintains attendance records of all invited participants and provides all logistical and technical support for meetings and conference calls to include distributing save-the-date announcements and reminders, and digital recording of the meetings. Our staff also facilitates each call and works with our writer/editor to develop summaries which are used to develop the final summary.
- GEARS is supporting RTI in its **CDC project, *Adapting Evidence-Based Interventions and Assessing Readiness and Capacity to Prevent Teen Dating Violence in High Risk Inner-City Settings***. CDC's proposed Teen Dating Violence Prevention Initiative (TDVP) is based on the emergence of promising approaches to help communities implement a comprehensive model of prevention. The initiative will initially be focused and developed within two to four inner-city communities and then expanded to other places once the existing evidence base is adapted to the culture of inner cities and the effectiveness in these settings is assessed. The long range goals of the initiative are to decrease incidence of teen dating violence and create the necessary local support and collaborative infrastructure to implement comprehensive TDVP program through state and/or local health departments. The GEARS team is providing meeting logistics and expert work group implementation for this project which will include two meetings of experts to assist CDC in the adaptation process, two sessions to conduct pilot testing of the family-based intervention and two sessions to conduct pilot testing of the school-based intervention. GEARS is also providing logistics management support for meetings between CDC and RTI for planning and analysis activities. As needed, GEARS identifies and secures appropriate meeting space and audio/visual services, provides invitations for participants, travel sponsored experts and pilot session participants, conducts on-site note taking, develops meeting transcripts, and provides honoraria and stipends for participation.
- CDC convened its **2010 Asthma Partners Meeting** in Chicago, **Illinois**. This meeting served as the platform for CDC to continue its ongoing exchange of information with state programs funded by the CDC National Asthma Control Program to continue or establish and maintain effective state asthma programs. The meeting provided quality sessions, training, and networking opportunities for CDC-funded and non-funded states, national asthma focused stakeholders (e.g., non-governmental organizations), and CDC's federal partners and staff with a total of 225 participants attending this meeting. CDC engaged GEARS to provide project management, information dissemination, technical assistance, logistics, and web support services. GEARS worked together with a sub-

contractor on the content and had overall project responsibility. Our team also worked with the CDC planning committee to refine meeting and break-out session topic areas, confirm identified speakers, and develop the meeting agenda. GEARS functioned as a liaison between CDC and the hotel to ensure that meeting rooms, A/V equipment, and food and beverage accommodations met stated requirements. GEARS also organized the logistics for the group outing that was attended by meeting participants. Finally, the GEARS team managed the dissemination and summary of the meeting evaluation and assisted CDC in organizing and facilitating work groups that resulted from grantee reaction to this meeting.

- **Logistics Services for Expert Panels, Workgroups and Advisory Committees**

GEARS has provided expert logistical support to federal agencies in the conduct of expert panels, workgroups, and advisory committee meetings. The meetings for these groups range from one to two days and vary in participant numbers from 10 participants to 35. GEARS convenes experts from throughout the country to provide clients with guidance and recommendations related to a variety of subject matters. GEARS is responsible for securing facilities and A/V services (including digital recording of the meeting); developing review materials and agendas; conducting pre-meeting conference calls with panel members and steering committees; coordinating travel, lodging, transportation, on-site meals and honoraria; providing facilitation services; and developing meeting summary/reports. Our model also includes the development of a meeting website where pertinent background materials and travel and logistics information are posted in an environmentally sustainable manner. All services described above were provided for each meeting presented below.

Summary of Expert Panel, Workgroup and Advisory Committee Meetings	
Meeting Title	No. of Participants
CDC Mental Health/Mental Illness Expert Panel/Working Group Meeting (2008)	13
National Science Foundation (NSF) CREST Advisory Panel (2 meetings in 2009)	6
CDC Mental Health/Mental Illness Expert Panel Meeting (2009)	12
CDC Mental Health/Mental Illness Expert Working Group Meeting (2010)	4
CDC Expert Work Group on the Role of Public Health in Screening Programs in an Era of Health Reform (2010)	34
CDC 2010 Expert Working Group to Develop a Public Health Plan to Address Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)	9
CDC Expert Working Group Review of the Applications of ACE Findings to Medical Care and Public Health (2010)	15
CDC Expert Work Group on Adolescent Sleep and School Start Times Policy (2010)	9
CDC Work - Group on Measuring Alcohol Outlet Density at the Local Community Level (2011)	10

For the 2009 CDC Mental Health/Mental Illness Expert Panel/Working Group Meeting, GEARS also provided support for the development of manuscripts for the January 2010 edition of CDC's online journal, *Preventing Chronic Disease: Public Health Research, Practice, and Policy*. This edition, focused on mental health promotion and mental illness prevention, provides key implications for the future direction of related CDC and public health programming.

- GEARS was engaged to **support the US Department of Education in its 2008 review of grant applications** using the E-Reader electronic review and rating system. This project included providing travel and lodging arrangements for out of town reviewers, on-site support to the full panel of 18 reviewers (including developing final scoring packages and appropriate notification letters to

applicants) analyzing and summarizing grant reviews, preparing applications in the Departments GAP program, and processing and paying per diem and travel for all 18 reviewers. The US Department of Education provides grant awards to operate regional equity assistance centers that provide technical assistance and training, at the request of school boards and other responsible governmental agencies, on the preparation, adoption, and implementation of plans for the desegregation of public schools. The result of our efforts under extremely tight deadlines ensured continuation of the program.

- GEARs provided **logistics and planning support to US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region 4, 2008 Collegiate Environmental Sustainability Conference**. Support services included: securing appropriate “green” lodging space for out of town participants and speakers, identifying and managing appropriate audio/visual equipment with Spelman College, and providing ground transportation for conference participants to/from lodging and event facility. GEARs also provided on-site registration and support services during this two-day conference. GEARs collected speaker presentations for web posting as well as developed and collected evaluation tools which were disseminated during the conference, and summarized results to provide recommendations and lessons learned for future meetings of this type. EPA partnered with Spelman College to promote green building strategies among colleges and universities which can maximize both economic and environmental performance. To that end, EPA Region 4 and Spelman College were co-sponsors of the 2008 Collegiate Environmental Sustainability Conference on October 23-24, 2008. The conference goal was to serve as a catalyst for promoting, sharing, and initiating “green” campus initiatives throughout the nation. GEARs supported their effort to bring together leaders from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Minority Academic Institutions (MAIs), and other institutions of higher learning from Region 4 states and the Southeast. Green requirements included recycling activities, linen/towel re-use options, accessibility to public transportation and water conservancy programs. In addition to developing the logistics page for the conference webpage, we also assisted EPA and Spelman to promote this conference by disseminating marketing materials and serving as the primary point of contact for conference inquiries.
- GEARs supported **EPA Region 4 for the development and implementation of the two-day 2009 Southeastern Lifecycle Construction Conference** held in February 2009 by providing logistics, developing and disseminating marketing materials for the conference, and developing and hosting a conference website. The conference website included functionality for posting general information, collecting registration information and fees, and hosting post-conference information such as speaker bios and presentations and participant list. The website also included information about Atlanta, the host city, and hotel accommodations. GEARs was also responsible for identifying appropriate partners and sponsors for this conference. The purpose of this conference was to initiate a dialogue between the construction industry, federal and state regulators, and local government officials to introduce a comprehensive approach to building design, construction, and demolition; materials re-use; construction site emissions; hazardous waste; storm water and sediment loading; and revitalization. This dialogue will help ensure that all parties involved in these issues have a context for each others’ activities and that building and demolition outcomes have improved environmental implications. GEARs staff provided on-site registration and support during this two-day event.
- In December 2006 and January 2007, GEARs was engaged by the **CDC Coordinating Center for Infectious Diseases to record and report expert panel proceedings to discuss the placement of the Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Research Program**. Participants were charged with developing placement recommendations for the program. GEARs documented and summarized two-day meetings for both the Internal Planning Group held in December (22 participants) and the External Blue Ribbon Panel held in January (16 participants). GEARs consultants also audio recorded the proceedings and provided our client with CDs and meeting notes from the discussions.