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# Workforce Development in Rural Areas: Changes in Access, Service Delivery and Partnerships

Final Report  
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**Prepared by:**

Kate Dunham  
Annelies Goger  
Jennifer Henderson-Frakes  
Nichole Tucker

**Prepared for:**

U.S. Department of Labor/  
Employment and Training  
Administration  
200 Constitution Ave., N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20210

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1330 Broadway, Suite 1426  
Oakland, CA 94612  
Tel: (510) 763-1499  
Fax: (510) 763-1599  
[www.spra.com](http://www.spra.com)

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- North Central Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board
- Southeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board
- Northern New Mexico Local Workforce Development Board
- Northwest Iowa Planning—Regions 3 and 4
- Linn, Benton, and Lincoln County Workforce Investment Board

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

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<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>ES-1</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>I-1</b>
Methodology.....	I-2
Design and Literature Review.....	I-3
Analysis of Local Office and One-Stop Distribution .....	I-3
Site Visits .....	I-3
Analysis and Reporting.....	I-7
Limitations of the Study.....	I-7
Background on Sites Visited .....	I-9
Overview of the Report .....	I-12
<b>II. CHANGES IN RURAL AREAS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS OVER TIME.....</b>	<b>I-1</b>
Demographic and Economic Changes in Rural Areas.....	I-1
Demographic Trends .....	I-2
Economic Trends.....	I-8
Changes to Workforce Development Access Points.....	I-15
Changes in Workforce Development Access Points between 1979 and 2004.....	I-16
Number of Access Points in 2004.....	I-19
Reasons for Changes in Numbers of Access Points and the Development of Current Networks.....	I-24
Conclusion .....	I-27
<b>III. ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN RURAL AREAS .....</b>	<b>III-1</b>
Rural One-Stop Access Points.....	III-2
Access Point Typology .....	III-2
Rural One-Stop Networks.....	III-12

Supplementary Strategies for Providing Rural Customers with Access to Workforce Services .....	III-24
Transportation Assistance to Customers .....	III-25
Internet Services .....	III-26
Services over the Phone .....	III-29
Staff Travel to Customers .....	III-31
Outreach and Marketing .....	III-32
General Outreach and Marketing .....	III-32
Outreach Challenges and Strategies for Special Populations .....	III-34
Availability of Workforce Development Service Providers .....	III-37
Availability of One-Stop Operators, and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Providers .....	III-38
WIA Youth Services .....	III-39
ITAs and Eligible Training Providers .....	III-40
Summary .....	III-43
<b>IV. RURAL ONE-STOP PARTNERSHIPS .....</b>	<b>IV-1</b>
Key Rural One-Stop Partners .....	IV-4
Specialized Rural One-Stop Partners .....	IV-7
FBOs .....	IV-7
CBOs .....	IV-10
National Farmworker Jobs Program .....	IV-11
Agricultural Extension .....	IV-12
Inter-Partner Service Delivery Coordination .....	IV-13
Cost and Funding of Rural One-Stops .....	IV-15
Summary of Benefits and Challenges of Rural Partnerships .....	IV-18
Summary .....	IV-21
<b>V. CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>V-1</b>
Similarities in Systems and Challenges .....	V-1
Differences in Systems and Challenges .....	V-3
Reaching Widely Scattered Customers .....	V-3
Overcoming Transportation Barriers .....	V-4
Scarcity of Workforce Development Providers .....	V-6
One-Stop Partnership Differences .....	V-6
Overall Adequacy and Accessibility of Rural Workforce Services .....	V-7

<b>APPENDIX A: DETAILED CHARACTERISTICS OF EACH TYPE OF ACCESS POINT.....</b>	<b>A-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: LOCAL AREA PROFILES.....</b>	<b>B-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX C: NATIONAL MAPS AND TABLES .....</b>	<b>C-1</b>
<b>APPENDIX D: ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>D-1</b>

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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As part of a rapid response contract from the U.S. Department of Labor, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) conducted a study of *Workforce Development in Rural Areas: Changes in Access, Service Delivery and Partnerships*. The broad objective for this study was to better understand the provision of workforce development services in rural areas and the challenges rural One-Stop systems face in providing those services. Key research questions were concerned with understanding: rural One-Stop service networks of access points and their challenges, other means of providing workforce development services to rural residents, rural One-Stop partnerships and the role of different partners, cost and support for One-Stop centers, competition for workforce development services and availability of workforce development providers, and changes over time to workforce service delivery systems and services.

In order to explore the key research topics above, SPR designed a mixed-methods study that involved four principal tasks that were carried out from August 2004 to May 2005: (1) study design and literature review, (2) a quantitative and geospatial analysis of local office and One-Stop center distribution, (3) qualitative site visits to five rural local workforce investment areas in five states, and (4) analysis and reporting.

The findings of this report are primarily based on the five qualitative site visits conducted in five states and rural areas. These states and the local areas were chosen in consultation with DOL, and were aimed at including a diverse group of sites in terms of degree of rurality, DOL regions, and number of workforce development access points. Site visitors spent four days at each of these sites, interviewing a variety of local respondents and visiting different types of access points.

In addition to the site visit data, the report also contains maps and tables that display access points nationwide, changes over time, and locations in metropolitan versus non-metropolitan counties—both nationally and by state. These maps and tables were created based on each state's local office and One-Stop distribution at three different points of time over the last 25 years: 1979, 1999 and 2004. Sources for these data were DOL ETA (for 1979), America's Job Link Alliance (for 1999), and America's Service Locator (for 2004).

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Based on this qualitative and quantitative data, this report presents findings on changes over time in rural areas' service delivery and accessibility and One-Stop partnerships.

## **Changes in Rural Areas and Workforce Development Networks Over Time**

Examining the broader context of how rural areas have changed over time is a natural first step in analyzing the workforce development needs and challenges in rural areas over time. These demographic and economic changes set the broad context for analyzing how and why the workforce development system has changed over the past 25 years.

### **Demographic and Economic Changes in Rural Areas**

Over the past 25 years, rural areas in the U.S. have experienced multiple changes in their populations and economies. In terms of demographics, non-metro areas have experienced overall population growth albeit at a slightly lower rate than the U.S. as a whole. Non-metro areas have also seen a “graying” of their population, and some areas, particularly in the South and Midwest, have also faced a surging Hispanic population. Finally, low rates of post-secondary education have continued to be an issue in some rural areas.

In addition to these demographic changes, rural areas have had to deal with major economic transformations. Many rural areas have experienced significant declines in employment in manufacturing, mineral and fossil fuel extraction and agricultural industries. Jobs in these industries have been replaced by employment in services, government and trade. High-paying jobs in these newly dominant industries—such as in health care—typically require higher levels of education than the manufacturing and extraction jobs they replaced.

The result is what many local areas call a “job/skills mismatch,” where workers do not have the right skills to obtain the high wage jobs available in the new economy. In addition, the lack of high-skilled workers is impeding economic growth in these areas. To deal with this challenge, rural areas are implementing efforts to both upgrade worker skills and retain highly educated workers. They are also working more closely with current employers to keep those employers in the area and trying to attract new employers.

### **Changes to Workforce Development Access Points**

In addition to experiencing these economic and demographic changes, local areas have also experienced major changes to their networks of workforce development access points. Between 1979 and 1999, the number of access points—both overall and in non-metro area—fell by over a

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quarter. However, from 1999 to 2004, the number of access points rebounded strongly, particularly in non-metro areas, where the number of access points in 2004 was nine percent higher than in 1979. The reasons for this growth in the number of access points from 1999 to 2004 may be due to the effect of WIA, which was enacted in 1998.

However, despite WIA's likely overall positive impact on the number of access points, the experience of individual states and local areas has been mixed. For example, among the five local areas we visited for this study, only one experienced absolute increases in the number of access points following WIA implementation. In this area, the reason for the increase was due to the development of a large number of new access points operated by non-traditional workforce development providers such as libraries and churches.

In the other four areas, by contrast, local One-Stop partners relied primarily on renovating already existing networks of ES offices to serve as One-Stop access points. When new One-Stop access points were developed, they were typically comprehensive centers that often resulted in an absolute decline in the total number of access points.

## **One-Stop Service Delivery and Accessibility in Rural Areas**

Making workforce development services accessible to the residents of rural workforce investment areas—who live scattered over thousands of square miles in multiple counties—is truly challenging. To do this, rural areas use multiple strategies, including networks of access points, supplementary strategies to make services accessible, and outreach activities. Some local areas also reported developing strategies to deal with shortages of workforce development providers, which sometimes impact the quality and accessibility of service delivery.

### **Rural One-Stop Access Points**

The principal service delivery strategy used by the five rural areas visited for this study is networks of two or more physical One-Stop access points. To be accessible to the majority of local residents, these access points are typically located in every county, in the largest cities and towns. They can be classified into six types, each with its own distinct characteristics: enhanced comprehensive centers, basic comprehensive centers, affiliates, satellites, computer-only and temporary centers. Comprehensive centers are the largest staffed access points, offering the most services, followed by affiliates and then satellites. Computer-only sites, meanwhile, are the smallest access points and are completely unstaffed. Temporary centers, which are located on-site or close to an affected workplace, are used by rural areas primarily with the aim of making services more accessible to laid off workers and vary in size depending on the size of the lay-off.

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Although all five areas continue to operate systems that include some smaller access points such as affiliates and satellites, they are increasingly concentrating their resources and efforts on comprehensive centers because of the greater efficiency and convenience of these centers.

### **Supplementary Strategies for Providing Rural Customers with Access to Workforce Services**

Because of the transportation barriers faced by many rural customers in reaching these access points, rural areas also use other service delivery strategies including transportation assistance (transportation vouchers, assistance with forming carpools, and using public vans), Internet services, services provided over the phone, and having staff travel to customer locations.

However, each of these supplemental strategies is problematic for a variety of reasons. For example, each type of transportation assistance is either very expensive, difficult to schedule or causes liability problems. The major snag with online services, is that, despite rapid growth in usage, only slightly over half of all rural residents use the Internet. Services by phone are only effective for uncomplicated services such as basic job referrals, while having staff travel to customer locations is also costly, inefficient and hard on staff.

### **Outreach and Marketing**

In another effort to improve the accessibility of workforce development services, the five local areas conduct marketing and outreach activities to ensure that customers know about available services. Because of small or nonexistent marketing budgets, general outreach and marketing are largely based on low cost strategies, such as presentations to partners and local organizations, Internet websites, and advertising on local radio stations.

In addition to this general marketing, some rural areas also conduct outreach specifically focused on certain groups such as Native Americans and limited English-speaking Hispanics. These outreach strategies include hiring bilingual and bi-cultural staff, assigning staff to conduct outreach in certain communities and establishing small One-Stop access points in those communities. Local area respondents were somewhat mixed on whether these strategies have been successful in improving access, particularly for limited English-speaking Hispanic customers, with a few asserting the need for additional efforts.

### **Availability of Workforce Development Service Providers**

Rural areas also often face scarcity in the number of workforce development providers. However, most local area respondents asserted that, although the number of providers is limited, it is sufficient for the provision of quality and accessible WIA services. The only exceptions are

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in the case of certain types of WIA youth services and ITA-related training services. In these cases, local areas are pursuing strategies to overcome these service delivery challenges, including implementing special training programs for staff and distance learning programs.

## **Rural One-Stop Partnerships**

Partnership lies at the heart of the WIA legislation and the effective implementation of One-Stop delivery systems. Partnership assumes even greater importance in rural local areas, where providers and resources are in shorter supply, and no one organization can afford to meet all the needs of each customer. With this in mind, partnership is one of the principal themes we explored during our visits to rural local areas.

### **Key and Specialized Rural One-Stop Partners**

The rural local areas we visited are characterized by relatively few key One-Stop partners. ES and WIA play enormous roles with regard to service provision, One-Stop operation, and financial support of the local One-Stop system. Roles for other public, non-profit and private partners range widely by local area and by One-Stop center. Overall, though, while faith-based organizations may provide important supportive services, they are not major paying or co-located One-Stop partners in any of the local areas we visited. The role of community-based organization partners is quite diverse, with some serving as One-Stop operators and/or fulfilling mandatory One-Stop partner roles (e.g., WIA adult services provider), and others simply serving as occasional referral partners for supportive services. Only in one locale is there a local National Farmworker Jobs Program partner, though it is not a co-located partner, and there is not much evidence of a strong partnership to serve the migrant and seasonal farmworker (MSFW) population—perhaps due to a relatively small MSFW population, more general partnership challenges, and cultural competency issues. Agricultural extension plays a small or non-existent partnership role in most of the rural areas we visited because of weak local agricultural sectors and/or limited capacity to engage as a One-Stop partner.

### **Inter-Partner Service Delivery Coordination**

Inter-partner coordination of services appears quite informal in the rural local areas that we visited. However, the extent to which this level of informality is effective or not depends largely on the quality of partners' interpersonal relations and their ability to work frequently in close physical proximity. Open interpersonal or inter-organizational conflict can not only stymie effective partner coordination, but can also negatively impact customer knowledge or accessibility of various partner services.

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## **Cost and Funding of Rural One-Stops**

Local areas differed quite a lot in the way they described operational costs for their One-Stop systems, making cross-site comparisons difficult. However, staffing and rent emerged as the largest specific costs when partners do not own the One-Stop sites, and resource sharing emerged as the most significant partnership challenge in most of the rural areas we visited. Ironically, while limited rural partner resources appear to make cost sharing critical—particularly when covering large geographic areas—limited resources was also cited by some local areas as the very reason for why they could not afford to share resources or engage in strong partnerships. All local areas rely heavily on ES to financially support the One-Stop system, though North Central Pennsylvania and Region 4 Oregon serve as significant models of resource sharing among diverse partners. One important source of in-kind support for all the local areas has been state workforce agency websites, which typically provide a range of job seeker and employer information and services.

## **Summary of Benefits and Challenges of Rural Partnerships**

Overall, the particularly limited resources of rural partners, as well as the often close relations between rural One-Stop staff, are two factors that can have incredibly beneficial or detrimental effects on rural One-Stop partnerships. Limited resources may bring partners together out of necessity, or they may be used as justification for why partners cannot build effective collaboratives. Interpersonal relations between individuals, who in rural areas may know each other through multiple personal and professional contexts, can help develop and maintain professional ties. On the other hand, a rural or small-town atmosphere can magnify interpersonal conflicts that can in turn hinder professional linkages between One-Stop partners.

## **Conclusion**

In general, we found that rural workforce development systems and the challenges they have faced are generally very similar to those of urban areas in most respects: adjusting to economic changes, utilizing access points to provide most services, developing One-Stop systems and partnerships, and dealing with conflicts over resource sharing and support for these systems. Despite these many similarities, in certain ways, rural workforce development systems and partnerships are also quite different from those in urban areas. One important reason for these differences is that rural areas confront different challenges than do urban areas. For example, one of the biggest challenges faced by rural workforce investment areas is making services accessible to widely scattered customers. Other major challenges include overcoming the significant transportation barriers that customers face, providing customers with all of the

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services they need despite a scarcity of available workforce development providers and utilizing overstretched staff effectively.

Overall, workforce development services in rural areas appear to be meeting the needs of the majority of rural customers. However, it also seems that some groups of rural residents may not be able to access necessary workforce services as successfully as others. For example, a number of respondents noted that certain groups of racial or ethnic minorities, due to linguistic and cultural differences, are not accessing workforce services as readily as other groups. Perhaps the most significant group of rural customers who may not be able to effectively access services are poor residents of the most rural localities. Because of the importance of developing a clear understanding of these non-users for the purpose of developing strategies for more effectively reaching them, additional research to explore this issue further would be helpful.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

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Though the rural U.S. population has been generally decreasing for over 200 years,<sup>1</sup> it still accounts for a significant percentage of the nation's total population. In 2003, the Office of Management and Budget classified 2,052 counties as non-metropolitan.<sup>2</sup> These counties account for 75 percent of the nation's land area and are home to 17 percent of the U.S. population (49 million individuals). Furthermore, the period from 1990-2000 witnessed a rebound of sorts—an increase in the non-metropolitan population by 10.2 percent, compared to just 2.6 percent growth in the preceding decade.

A host of economic and demographic factors—including a decline in manufacturing, extraction and agriculture-based employment, as well as growth in service sector employment—are inextricably intertwined with fluctuations in the rural population and its labor patterns. The last decade's changes in workforce development organizational structures and explosive advances in technology have also arguably affected the ways in which rural individuals seek jobs and access workforce development services.

However, rural areas face a number of unique challenges in delivering workforce development services, such as serving widely

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<sup>1</sup> According to the U.S. Census, approximately 94 percent of the total population lived in rural areas in 1800, compared to 60 percent in 1900 and 25 percent in 2000.

<sup>2</sup> Throughout the report, for the sake of simplicity, we use the terms rural and non-metropolitan interchangeably due to their conceptual overlap. Both definitions—rural, as defined by the Census and non-metropolitan as defined by OMB—are provided in footnotes 3 and 4 below.

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scattered customers over large geographic areas, a fundamental shortage of service providers and infrastructure, and limited resources to provide services across large areas. Given these challenges, rural areas often need to devise distinct service delivery and partnership strategies in response.

With this backdrop in mind, Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) conducted this study of *Workforce Development in Rural Areas: Changes in Access, Service Delivery and Partnerships*, as part of a rapid response contract from the U.S. Department of Labor. The broad objective for this study is to better understand the provision of workforce development services in rural areas and the challenges rural local workforce investment areas face in providing those services. Key research questions were concerned with understanding:

- Rural One-Stop access point systems and their challenges
- Other means of providing workforce development services to rural residents
- Rural One-Stop partnerships and the role of different partners
- Cost and support for One-Stop centers
- Competition for workforce development services and availability of workforce development providers
- Changes over time to workforce service delivery systems and services.

*The broad objective for this study is to better understand the provision of workforce development services in rural areas and the challenges rural local workforce investment areas face in providing those services.*

## **Methodology**

In order to explore the key research topics above, SPR designed a mixed-methods study that involved four principal tasks that were carried out from August 2004 to May 2005: (1) study design and literature review, (2) a quantitative and geospatial analysis of local office and One-Stop center distribution, (3) qualitative site visits to five rural local workforce investment areas, and (4) analysis and reporting. These tasks are described below.

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## Design and Literature Review

The study began with a review of the literature on One-Stop delivery system implementation in rural areas, as well as issues specifically pertaining to rural living, to determine what is known about the effectiveness of One-Stop centers in rural areas and what knowledge gaps currently exist. The literature review—which focused on reports published since 1994 from government sources, independent rural research/advocacy organizations, and academics—allowed us to finalize our research questions, study design and data collection tools based on the latest knowledge.

## Analysis of Local Office and One-Stop Distribution

Following our literature review and design work, we began a quantitative analysis and mapping of local office and One-Stop center data. We compared national “snapshots” of each state’s local office and One-Stop distribution, whether in urban or rural areas, at three different points of time over the last 25 years: 1979, 1999 and 2004. Sources for this data were DOL ETA (for 1979), America’s Job Link Alliance (for 1999), and America’s Service Locator (for 2004). Using ArcView mapping software, we geocoded the access points for each year and created a series of maps and tables that display access points nationwide, changes over time, and locations in metropolitan versus non-metropolitan counties—both nationally and by state. These maps and tables serve as rich companions to our discussion of the reasons behind the changes in access point distribution over time in Chapter II.

*We compared national “snapshots” of each state’s local office and One-Stop distribution, whether in urban or rural areas, at three different points of time over the last 25 years: 1979, 1999 and 2004.*

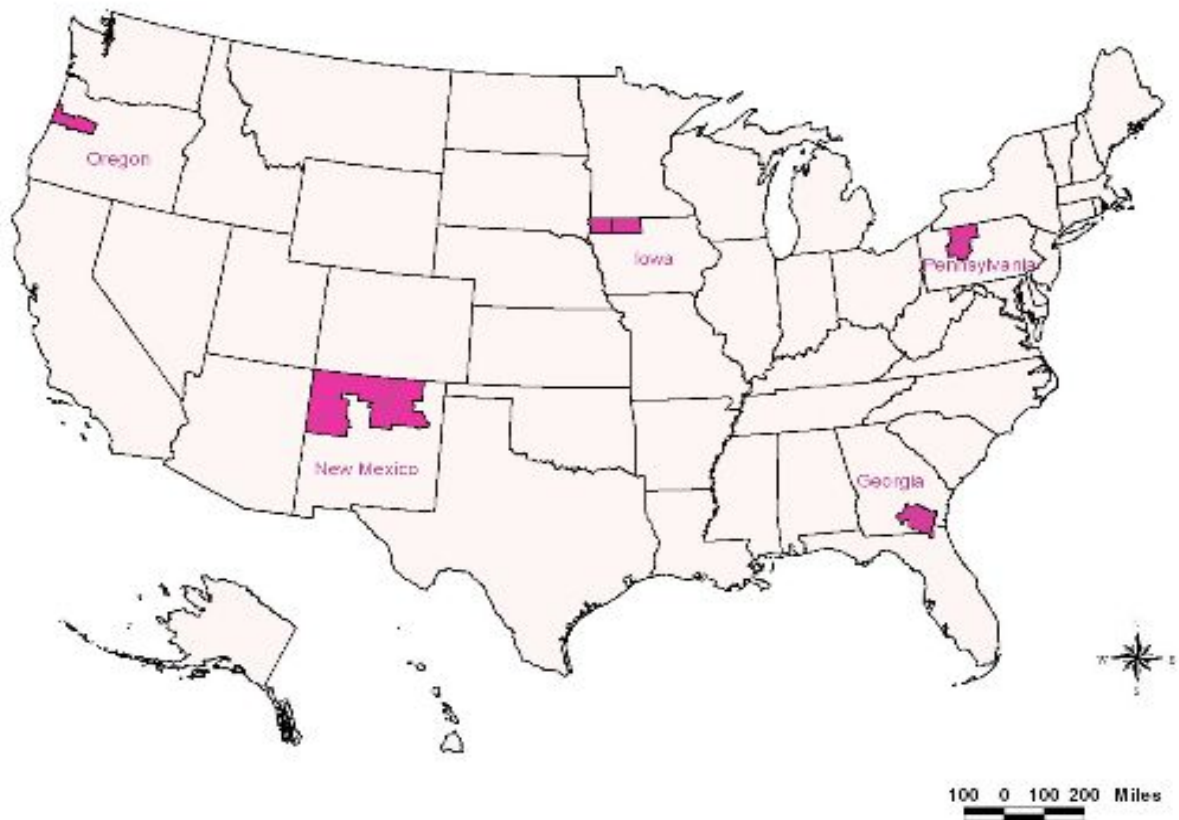
## Site Visits

Our third major task involved four-day site visits in November and December 2004 to five local workforce investment areas (local areas) in five states, listed and visually depicted below in Exhibit I-1:

- North Central Pennsylvania Workforce Investment Board (North Central Pennsylvania)

- Southeast Georgia Workforce Investment Board (Southeast Georgia)
- Northern New Mexico Local Workforce Development Board
- Northwest Iowa Planning—Region 3 and 4 (Northwest Iowa)
- Linn, Benton, and Lincoln County Workforce Investment Board—Region 4 Oregon (Region 4 Oregon)

**Exhibit I-1:  
Locations of Site Visits**



*\*Please see the "Guide to the Reader" in Appendix C for map data sources.*

These states and the local areas were chosen in consultation with DOL ETA. Our aim was to visit one LWIA in all six DOL regions, though project resources allowed us to conduct only five site visits. DOL also expressed interest in specific states that a

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priori seemed to display different workforce strategies or serve different populations, which helped to finalize our selection.

The choice of local areas within these states was based on a more complex process that involved determining which local areas in each of the five states should be considered rural. While there are three primary federal definitions often used in classifying an area as rural or urban (Census, OMB, and Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service definitions), we found that all of these had significant limitations in their ability to select rural local workforce investment areas. For instance, the Census definition is based on census blocks rather than counties,<sup>3</sup> and therefore is not particularly useful in selecting local areas comprised of counties. Meanwhile, the OMB and ERS definitions do not reflect the fact that very few local areas are *entirely* metropolitan or non-metropolitan, with the result that some *predominantly* rural local areas—that may contain one or more metropolitan counties—might have been wrongfully excluded as potential site visit sites.

To address the limitations of the federal definitions and effectively select rural local areas for our site visits, we created a hybrid definition of rural. Because of its simplicity and use of counties for its classification process, we relied primarily on OMB’s definition of metropolitan and non-metropolitan (metro and non-metro) counties as the foundation of our own definition.<sup>4</sup>

However, to increase the number of local areas in our selection pool, we also considered the population of each local area’s largest city. This allowed us to include local areas that are primarily rural

*To select rural local areas for our site visits, we created a hybrid definition of rural based primarily on OMB’s definition of metropolitan and non-metropolitan counties as the foundation of our own definition.*

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<sup>3</sup> Core Census blocks are considered urban if they have a population density of at least 1,000 people per square mile; surrounding Census blocks that have an overall density of at least 500 people per square mile are also considered urban. All areas not classified as urban are considered rural.

<sup>4</sup> OMB’s definition uses Census data to define groups of counties as metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), classifying all counties as either metropolitan (part of an MSA) or non-metropolitan. MSAs are made up of central counties that have at least one urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more, plus adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the core county based on a commuting threshold of 25 percent.

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but also contain some metropolitan counties with small or medium-sized urban populations.

We then used these criteria to develop three categories of rural: I (extremely rural), II (primarily rural with small cities), and III (primarily rural with larger cities), defined as follows:

- Local areas deemed extremely rural were those with no metropolitan counties and no cities with populations larger than 50,000.
- Local areas deemed primarily rural with small cities were those with no more than a one to three ratio of metro to non-metro counties, and no cities with populations greater than 75,000.
- Local areas deemed primarily rural with larger cities were those with no more than a one to three ratio of metro to non-metro counties, and no cities with populations greater than 100,000.

We then sorted all local areas in the five states into one of these three rural categories and decided to focus on those local areas that were either category I or II. In making our final selection of local areas, we then looked for diversity in terms of including a mix of both categories I and II. We also worked to ensure diversity in terms of including local areas with relatively few or many access points so that we could explore different strategies regarding access point networks.

We spent four days on site at each of the five local areas. The site visits were structured around a set of interview and observation protocols designed to inform the research questions identified earlier. Site visits were scheduled to include time spent at a variety of different access points—ranging from large comprehensive centers to small satellite or computer-only offices—so that we could gain an in-depth understanding of the various services and strategies employed within a rural One-Stop network.

Furthermore, to ensure that our data collection efforts incorporated a range of rural viewpoints, we interviewed a diverse group of local respondents from different counties and cities within the local area. Key respondents included the local area administrator, One-Stop or access point managers and staff, mandatory public One-

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Stop partners (e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, Employment Service), representatives of community and faith-based organizations, and job seeker and employer customers of the local One-Stop system. Observation time was structured to take note of key physical features of the different access points (e.g., size, layout, amenities), as well as of other aspects such as the level of foot traffic and nature of client-staff interaction.

## **Analysis and Reporting**

This report represents this study's fourth and final task. Based primarily on a cross-site analysis of qualitative data collected during the site visits in late 2004, this report presents findings on the nature of workforce development service delivery in rural areas and its challenges. Some sections of the report are also based on the national quantitative data on access points. An overview of the remainder of the report can be found at the end of this chapter. In addition to this final report, SPR will also provide all national data and maps to DOL ETA on a CD-ROM.

## **Limitations of the Study**

Before providing an overview of the report, it is important to review the limitations of this study. The first limitation concerns the number of local areas visited during the qualitative portion of our study. We chose five local areas that reflect diversity along a number of dimensions (e.g., region, number of access points), so that a range of rural phenomena might be explored. However, because we visited such a small sample of sites, these five sites represent case studies of rural One-Stop systems; specifically, they cannot be said to be representative of rural local areas in the U.S. Thus, the findings presented in this report based on these five case studies are correspondingly limited.

On a related note, our small study means that we have no basis to compare aspects of what we observed in the five local areas (e.g., costs of operating a rural One-Stop system) with other rural areas. This presents a significant limitation, in that we cannot evaluate

*Because we visited such a small sample of sites, these five sites represent case studies of rural One-Stop systems; specifically, they cannot be said to be representative of rural local areas in the U.S.*

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certain observed factors or practices (e.g., whether the five local areas' operating expenses are relatively expensive or inexpensive compared to other rural areas).

Another set of limitations concerns our use of the local workforce investment area as a unit of analysis. We chose local area boundaries because workforce development programs are primarily administered at this level and it would be difficult to collect data on workforce services at an alternate level. However, in general, local areas vary tremendously in terms of their composition and size. For instance, some local areas encompass an entire state, while others are based on city boundaries. This lack of consistency in the definition of local areas hinders comparisons across states and local areas.

Finally, the findings in this study that are based on qualitative data reflect what was true when we visited local workforce investment areas in November and December 2004. Because several months passed between our data collection and the completion of this report, some characteristics of the local One-Stop systems we visited may have changed. However, because we lacked the resources to update the information we collected in late 2004, some of the information presented here may no longer be up-to-date.

There are also several technical limitations to the national data embedded in the maps and tables included in this report. The first concerns inconsistencies in how access point data are defined and reported. For instance, the types of access points measured in each time period vary considerably. In 1979, access point types included in the data were Job Service, Unemployment Insurance (UI), and Work Incentive Program offices. In our 1999 data, access points included Labor Exchange, UI, One-Stop, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and other offices. By 2004, the data show only comprehensive and affiliate One-Stop offices. As a result of these differences, an analysis of change in the number of access points may be due to the inclusion or exclusion of different types of access points in each of the three data sets, rather than real changes

*There are inconsistencies in how access point data are defined, reported and collected. For instance, the types of access points measured in each time period vary considerably.*



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in the number of access points.

Finally, the methods used to collect access point data have limitations of their own. First, data collected by America's Workforce Technology Solutions in 1999 do not appear to be all inclusive. Although all states had JTPA offices at the time, many did not report any. Thus, access point data for some states include only ES or UI offices, not JTPA offices. Second, there were also serious challenges with the method used to collect the 2004 data provided by America's Service Locator (ASL). A comparison of the ASL data to data obtained from site visits conducted for this and prior evaluations revealed important inconsistencies in the types and numbers of access points across states. These inconsistencies appear to stem mainly from different decisions that states made over what types of access points to report to ASL, and/or inconsistencies in how to classify them. Furthermore, the 2004 data available through America's Service Locator (ASL) are reported by states voluntarily rather than being collected with a consistent methodology by a central agency. Thus, the ASL data are extremely inconsistent from state to state, which causes major challenges in comparing across states and time periods, and causes us to present our final maps and tables with a degree of caution.

For a discussion of some of the more minor technical limitations and explanations to the national data and maps/tables, please see Appendix C.

## **Background on Sites Visited**

The five sites we visited for this study represent great diversity in terms of their geography, demographics, and economic landscapes. With regard to physical size and population, Northern New Mexico is by far the largest local area we visited at 35,986 square miles and 482,493 individuals, though it has the lowest population density, at 13.41 persons per square mile. Meanwhile, Region 4 Oregon has the smallest land area (3,948 square miles) and Northwest Iowa has the smallest population with only 137,590 individuals. Among all five sites, the *median* land area and

*The five sites we visited for this study represent great diversity in terms of their geography, demographics, and economic landscapes.*

population count is 5,091 square miles and 225,701 individuals, and the median population density is 31.14.

The data presented in Exhibit I-2 also show the extent of variation in local areas' rural composition as defined by the Census and the size of the largest city. For example, the local areas in the West (Region 4 Oregon and Northern New Mexico) are 31 percent and 43 percent rural respectively, while the other local areas are over 56 percent rural. These two Western local areas also contain the largest cities of all the local areas we visited (Santa Fe and Corvallis). Santa Fe and Corvallis are also the two cities that account for the greatest percentage of their local areas' total population (13 and 22 percent respectively, compared to just six percent in St. Mary's/North Central Pennsylvania, eight percent in Spencer/Northwest Iowa, and ten percent in Waycross/Southeast Georgia).

**Exhibit I-2:  
Demographic Information on Local Areas Visited**

	<b>Population</b>	<b>Area (sq. miles)</b>	<b>Population Density (sq. miles)</b>	<b>Percent Rural</b>	<b>Largest City</b>	<b>Population of Largest City</b>
North Central Pennsylvania	234,416	5,091	46.04	60.6%	St. Mary's	14,502
Northern New Mexico	482,493	35,986	13.41	43.0%	Santa Fe	62,203
Northwest Iowa	137,590	5,210	26.41	56.2%	Spencer	11,317
Region 4 Oregon	225,701	3,948	57.17	30.7%	Corvallis	49,322
Southeast Georgia	154,268	4,954	31.14	63.9%	Waycross	15,333

Source: 2000 Census.

Three of the five local areas (North Central Pennsylvania, Northwest Iowa, and Region 4 Oregon) have populations that are over 90 percent white. However, both Region 4 Oregon and Northwest Iowa report small but growing Latino populations, as does Southeast Georgia. Northern New Mexico is characterized by significant percentages of Latinos and Native Americans as well as

*Three of the five local areas (North Central Pennsylvania, Northwest Iowa, and Region 4 Oregon) have populations that are over 90 percent white.*

whites, while Southeast Georgia’s population is approximately 75 percent white and 21 percent African American.

In terms of median income, none of the five local areas meets or exceeds the median income of their states as a whole (See Exhibit I-3).<sup>5</sup> The largest difference between local area and state median household income is in Southeast Georgia, with a gap of just over \$14,000. The smallest gap is in Region 4 Oregon, with a gap of just over \$3,000. Of the 37 individual *counties* that make up the five local areas, just four exceed their respective states’ median household income.<sup>6</sup>

**Exhibit I-3:  
Median Household Income of Local Area Counties and States**

	<b>Median Income for all Local Area Counties</b>	<b>State Median Income</b>
North Central Pennsylvania	\$32,232	\$40,106 (PA)
Northern New Mexico	\$28,601	\$34,133 (NM)
Northwest Iowa	\$35,758	\$39,469 (IA)
Region 4 Oregon	\$37,518	\$40,916 (OR)
Southeast Georgia	\$28,360	\$42,433 (GA)

*Source: 2000 Census data.*

Unemployment rates in the five local areas ranged dramatically by county, from one to 20 percent. Major employment barriers in the local areas include a shortage of living wage jobs and a fundamental mismatch between the education and technical skills required for local jobs and the educational background and skills that rural residents tend to possess. Other specifically named barriers to employment include basic and computer illiteracy, the lack of soft skills, substance abuse, grossly inadequate public transportation, and insufficient affordable child care.

*Unemployment rates in the five local areas ranged dramatically by county, from one to 20 percent.*

<sup>5</sup> Median income for the local area was calculated by taking the median of the local area counties’ individual median household incomes.

<sup>6</sup> One county in Oregon, one in Iowa, and two in New Mexico.

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## Overview of the Report

The remainder of the report is divided into four major chapters. Chapter II begins the report by painting a critical backdrop for our five local areas by examining nationwide trends in rural areas and workforce development networks over the last 25 years. This chapter provides a summary of major demographic trends—including those related to age, education, poverty and the influx of Hispanics—as well as key economic trends in rural areas, such as the declines in manufacturing and extraction-based employment. Chapter II also details changes in the number of workforce development access points over the last 25 years in both metro and non-metro areas, and discusses some of the factors that have been influential in this evolution. A series of national maps and tables is used to visually depict the demographic, economic and workforce development trends discussed in this chapter.

Chapter III delves into issues of One-Stop service delivery and accessibility. We examine how the five local areas address time and distance challenges endemic to rural America to ensure that residents receive needed workforce development services. Key aspects of interest are (1) the various types and networks of physical access points developed in the local areas and the services provided at each; (2) supplementary strategies to ensure accessibility of services, such as transportation assistance, Internet services and mobile staff; and (3) outreach activities, such as presentations and advertising, designed to promote awareness and accessibility of One-Stop services among rural residents in general, and sometimes key subgroups in particular. Finally, Chapter III also looks at how the supply of workforce development providers has played a role in the quality and accessibility of services for rural residents.

Partnership is the focus of Chapter IV. Given that the concept of One-Stop partnership arguably assumes even greater importance in rural areas, where providers and resources are in shorter supply, in this chapter we look at how partnership is manifested in the five local areas we visited. Specifically, we look at which partners are involved in their local One-Stop systems and the nature of their

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roles; the ways in which partners coordinate to provide services; patterns that emerge with regard to cost sharing for rural One-Stop systems; and more generally, the challenges and strategies involved with developing and maintaining One-Stop partnerships in rural areas. A fundamental shortage of resources, a relatively small number of key partners, and close-knit community members are all factors that we examine as both facilitators and impeters of rural partnerships.

In the last chapter of the report, the Conclusion, we examine the similarities and differences between workforce development service delivery structures and challenges in rural and urban areas. We particularly focus on the unique issues faced by rural areas and the innovative ways they have attempted to address those challenges. We conclude with a few suggestions for ways to support workforce development in rural areas.

Finally, this report concludes four appendices. Appendix A contains a detailed table with information on different types of access points discussed in Chapter III. Appendix B contains profiles and maps of each local area visited for the study, with economic and demographic information, as well as details on the nature of each area's local One-Stop system, services and partnerships. Appendix C provides the reader with detailed maps and tables of access point data from 1979, 1999 and 2004, including information on the specific types of access points included and changes in numbers of access points between those three years. Appendix C also includes more in-depth information on the methodology, data sources and limitations of this national data. Finally, Appendix D includes an annotated bibliography of reports on workforce development in rural areas.

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## **II. CHANGES IN RURAL AREAS AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT NETWORKS OVER TIME**

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Examining the broader context of how rural areas have changed over time is a natural first step in analyzing the workforce development needs and challenges in rural areas over time. Hence, this chapter will paint a cohesive picture of changes in rural areas and workforce development access point networks from 1979 to 2004. The first section of the chapter starts with a summary of the major demographic changes that have occurred in rural areas during the past 25 years, from the rise of the Hispanic population in many rural areas to age, education, and poverty trends. Next, the chapter will discuss the economic trends in rural areas since the late 1970s, exploring the growth in service sector employment and declines in manufacturing and extraction-based employment.

The second half of the chapter then explores changes to workforce development networks more specifically. First, we examine national-level changes to the number of workforce development access points between 1979 and 2004. Then we examine the number and location of workforce development access points in 2004. Finally, we will identify some of the factors that have influenced the evolution of workforce development networks over time, particularly since the late 1990s and the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act.

### **Demographic and Economic Changes in Rural Areas**

Over the last 25 years, and especially the last 15 years, rural areas in the United States have experienced significant demographic and

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economic changes. This section explores the nature of these changes and sets the context for understanding how workforce development needs have changed in rural areas over time.

## Demographic Trends

Rural population growth was very low in the 1980s, but sped up significantly in the 1990s. The population of non-metropolitan (non-metro) counties<sup>1</sup> grew by only 2.6 percent (1.3 million) from 1980 to 1990. By contrast, between 1990 and 2000 the non-metro population grew by 5.1 million people, or 10.2 percent.<sup>2</sup> The non-metro counties that tended to exhibit high-growth were recreational and retirement destination counties, as well as counties near expanding metropolitan areas.<sup>3</sup> Non-metro counties with a concentrated economic base in farming and mining tended to grow slower or lose population from 1990 to 2000.<sup>4</sup>

*Non-metro population growth since 1990 has been overwhelmingly concentrated in the West and South, while non-metro decline is disproportionately occurring in the Great Plains region.*

Partly reflecting these differences, population growth has not been even across all regions. Exhibit II-1 shows the geographical distribution of population growth in non-metro counties in the U.S. It is clear from the map that non-metro population growth since 1990 has been overwhelmingly concentrated in the West and South, while non-metro decline is disproportionately occurring in the Great Plains region.

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<sup>1</sup> The Office of Management and Budget defines counties as metropolitan or non-metropolitan in the following way: Census data are used to define groups of counties as metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), classifying all counties as either metropolitan (part of an MSA) or non-metropolitan. MSAs are made up of central counties that have at least one urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more, plus adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the core county based on a commuting threshold of 25 percent.

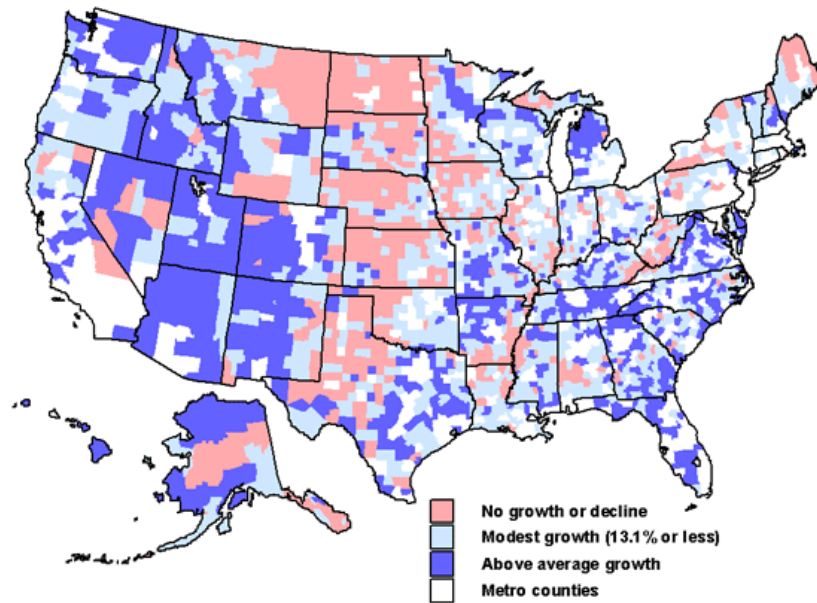
<sup>2</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> Johnson, Kenneth M. and C. L. Beale, *The Rural Rebound: Recent Non-metropolitan Demographic Trends in the United States* [online, cited 22 March 2005], available from: <http://www.luc.edu/depts/sociology/johnson/p99webn.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.



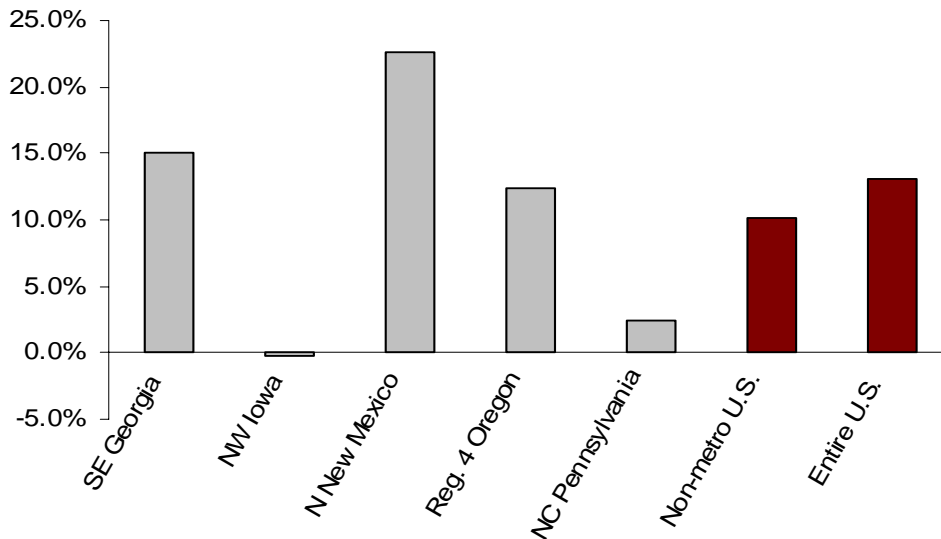
**Exhibit II-1:  
Non-metro Population Change 1990-2000**



Source: Compiled by ERS using data from 1990 and 2000 Census data, U.S. Census Bureau. Designation of counties as metro or non-metro based on 1993 OMB classification.

Variation in non-metro population growth is also evident in the sites we visited for this study. This can be seen in Exhibit II-2, which shows population changes from 1990 to 2000 in the five local areas, compared to national non-metro and national overall population growth.

**Exhibit II-2:  
Percent Change in Population in Local Areas Visited 1990 - 2000**



Source: Local data from the 1990 and 2000 Census; national data from U.S. Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2003.

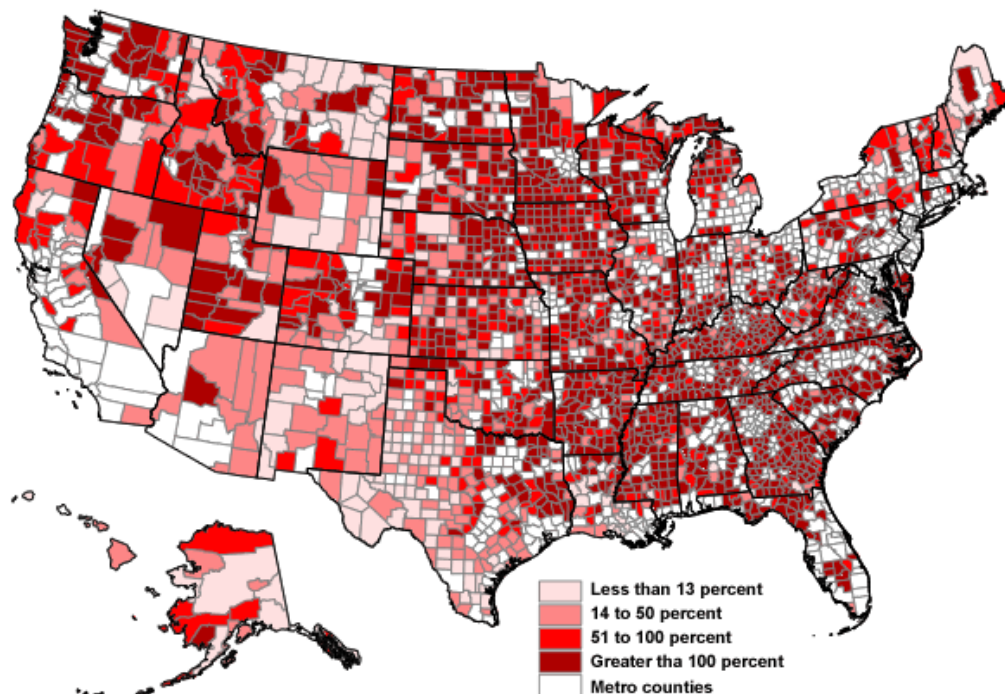
Compared to the rest of the country, Northern New Mexico and Southeast Georgia grew at a faster rate, Region 4 in Oregon grew at about the same rate, and North Central Pennsylvania grew more slowly than the nation as a whole. Northwest Iowa actually lost population from 1990-2000.

### **Hispanic Migration to Non-Metro Areas**

Explosive growth in the Hispanic population is one of the most significant demographic changes in rural areas over the last 25 years. Although the bulk of the non-metro Hispanic population continues to be concentrated in the Southwest, in percentage terms, some of the fastest growth between 1990 and 2000 occurred in 149 counties in the South, Midwest, Northwest and states on the edge of the Southwest such as Colorado, Utah, and Oklahoma. Exhibit II-3 shows these high-growth non-metro counties.

*Explosive growth in the Hispanic population is one of the most significant demographic changes in rural areas over the last 25 years.*

**Exhibit II-3:  
Percent Change in the Non-metro Hispanic Population 1990-2000**



Source: Compiled by ERS using data from 1990 and 2000 Census data, U.S. Census Bureau.

High growth in the Hispanic population was evident in some, but not all of the local areas we visited. Exhibit II-4 below shows that

the Hispanic population grew the most in Northwest Iowa, Southeast Georgia, and Region 4 Oregon. However, despite the very large growth in percentage terms experienced by these three areas, their local Hispanic populations in 2000 were still less than five percent of their total populations. In Northern New Mexico, which experienced the largest *absolute* growth in its already sizeable Hispanic population, the percentage change was slower than for the nation as a whole.

**Exhibit II-4:  
Change in the Hispanic population in local areas visited**

Local Areas Visited	1990	2000	2000	1990 – 2000 change	
	Hispanic Pop.	Hispanic Pop.	Percent Of total population	Pop. Change	% change
Northwest Iowa	409	2,238	1.6%	1,829	447.2%
Southeast Georgia	1,496	5,898	3.8%	4,402	294.3%
Region 4 Oregon	4,510	10,278	4.6%	5,768	127.9%
North Central Pennsylvania	940	1,423	0.6%	483	51.4%
Northern New Mexico	149,096	182,298	37.8%	33,202	22.3%
<b>Non-metro U.S.</b>	<b>1,607,515</b>	<b>2,632,528</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>1,025,013</b>	<b>63.8%</b>
<b>Entire U.S.</b>	<b>22,354,059</b>	<b>35,305,818</b>	<b>12.5%</b>	<b>12,951,759</b>	<b>57.9%</b>

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000; U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service, 2004.

Recent Hispanic migrants to high-growth non-metro counties have several distinct demographic characteristics of relevance for workforce services. These migrants are disproportionately young, male, undocumented, and face language barriers.<sup>5</sup> Often, employment is the impetus for migrating to the local area, and many come with pre-existing connections to employment through informal networks. However, poverty rates are still higher for Hispanics than non-Hispanic whites, suggesting that the long-term

*Recent Hispanic migrants to high-growth non-metro counties are disproportionately young, male, undocumented, and face language barriers.*

<sup>5</sup> Kandel, William and J. Cromartie. *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 99, May 2004, p.31.

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economic well-being of the Hispanic population is not solely determined by employment.<sup>6</sup>

### **Other Population Trends**

In addition to overall population growth and explosive growth in the Hispanic population, rural areas have been affected by several other important demographic trends of relevance to workforce development systems. First, rural areas have experienced a graying of their populations<sup>7</sup> and are poised to see more growth in the number of elderly residents. This growth stems from a trend among retiring baby-boomers to move into rural areas. Consistent with this trend, respondents in Region 4, Oregon and North Central Pennsylvania reported a steady increase in the elderly populations of their areas.

*Rural areas have experienced a graying of their populations<sup>7</sup> and are poised to see more growth in the number of elderly residents.*

In addition, current population trends indicate that non-metro areas will face not only an aging population, but also a population where householders are increasingly elderly and living alone.<sup>8</sup> Between 1990 and 2000, rural household composition changed such that non-family households increased at three times the rate of family households. As this demographic trend continues to develop, service providers will need to prepare for the logistical challenges of reaching a less mobile, more isolated, and less technologically savvy populace.

*Another demographic trend affecting rural areas is their populations' lower levels of post-secondary education as compared to urban areas and the nation overall.*

Another demographic trend affecting rural areas is their populations' lower levels of post-secondary education as compared to urban areas and the nation overall. For example, although the percentage who attained a high school diploma among the five

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<sup>6</sup> Access to workforce services for Hispanic workers is discussed in Chapter III

<sup>7</sup> Housing Assistance Council. *Taking Stock: Rural People, Poverty, and Housing at the Turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. [online, cited 25 March 2005], available from: <http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/hsganalysis/ts2000/index.htm>, 2002, p.14.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, p.15.

local areas we visited compares favorably to the nation as a whole, attainment of a bachelor degree or higher is much less common.

**Exhibit II-5:  
Education Levels in Local Areas Visited Compared to the Nation**

	Local Area Counties <sup>9</sup>	
	Percent of Residents with HS Diploma or higher	Percent of Residents with BA or higher
Southeast Georgia	56 - 73%	6 - 11%
Northwest Iowa	79 – 89 %	13 – 21 %
Northern New Mexico	70 – 96%	12 – 61 %
North Central Pennsylvania	79 - 83%	11 - 14%
Region 4, Oregon	82 - 94 %	14 - 52 %
United States	80.4 %	24.4 %

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000.

Finally, persistent poverty is another demographic trend that is increasingly a rural phenomenon.<sup>10</sup> Non-metro counties that are not adjacent to metropolitan counties are more likely to have poverty rates higher than 20 percent and to be persistently poor than metropolitan counties and the non-metro counties adjacent to them.<sup>11</sup>

*Non-metro counties that are not adjacent to metropolitan counties are more likely to have poverty rates higher than 20 percent and to be persistently poor.*

Furthermore, high poverty rates and persistently poor counties are not evenly distributed across rural areas.

<sup>9</sup> Ranges refer to the highest and lowest percentages among all of the local area's counties.

<sup>10</sup> Persistent poverty is defined as counties with a poverty rate of 20 percent or higher in each decennial census since 1960.

<sup>11</sup> Miller, Kathleen K. and B. A. Weber. *Persistent Poverty and Place: How do Persistent Poverty Dynamics and Demographics Vary Across the Rural-Urban Continuum?* Measuring Rural Diversity, VOL. 1, No. 1, Southern Rural Development Center, January 2004.

**Exhibit II-6:  
Persistent Poverty Counties**

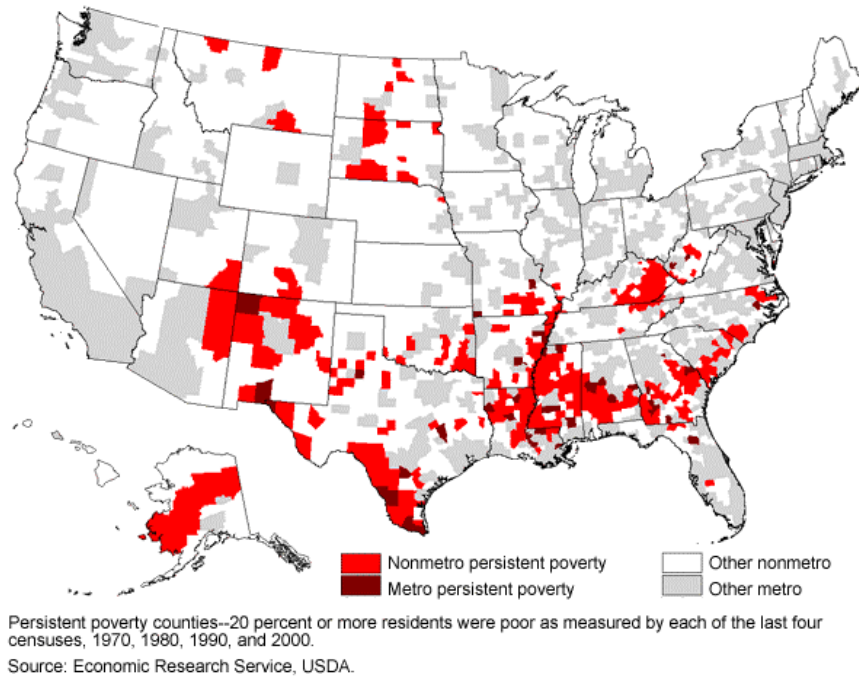


Exhibit II-6 shows that persistent poverty is overwhelmingly concentrated in the South, Appalachia, the lower Rio Grande Valley, and on Native American reservations.

Two of the local areas we visited for this study contained counties that displayed persistent poverty: Northern New Mexico and Southeast Georgia. These counties include McKinley (36 percent), Mora (25 percent), Cibola (24 percent), and San Miguel (24 percent), in Northern New Mexico; and Clinch, Bacon, and Atkinson counties in Southeast Georgia, with poverty rates between 23-24 percent.

**Economic Trends**

Economic trends are also critical to understanding the workforce development needs and challenges of rural workforce development areas. In rural areas throughout the United States, one of the major trends over the last 25 years is a shift in the economic base away from manufacturing and extraction industries and toward service-

*In rural areas throughout the United States, one of the major trends over the last 25 years is a shift in the economic base away from manufacturing and extraction industries and toward service-producing industries.*

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producing industries. For example, according to ERS, manufacturing dependent counties had reasonably low unemployment rates in the 1990s, but unemployment has increased drastically since 2000.<sup>12</sup> The reasons for this shift stem from multiple factors, including liberalization of international trade, sizable decreases in transportation costs, and the rise in global competition for labor. Many companies, particularly in rural areas, have been driven by import competition to either shift production overseas or shut down completely.

*Another significant economic trend impacting rural areas has been a shift away from smaller, family-run farms and toward large-scale corporate farming.*

Another significant economic trend impacting rural areas has been a shift away from smaller, family-run farms and toward large-scale corporate farming. This shift has resulted in major declines in agriculturally-based employment in rural areas throughout the nation. However, recent trends also indicate that employment in resource-dependent counties—including agriculture and timber—has not been as negatively affected as it has in manufacturing counties since 2000.

In place of manufacturing, extraction and agriculture, employment in rural areas has come to be based more and more on services, trade and government. For example, ERS found that counties with large percentages of workers employed in services and government were more likely to experience employment growth during the 1990s, and these trends have continued since 2000.

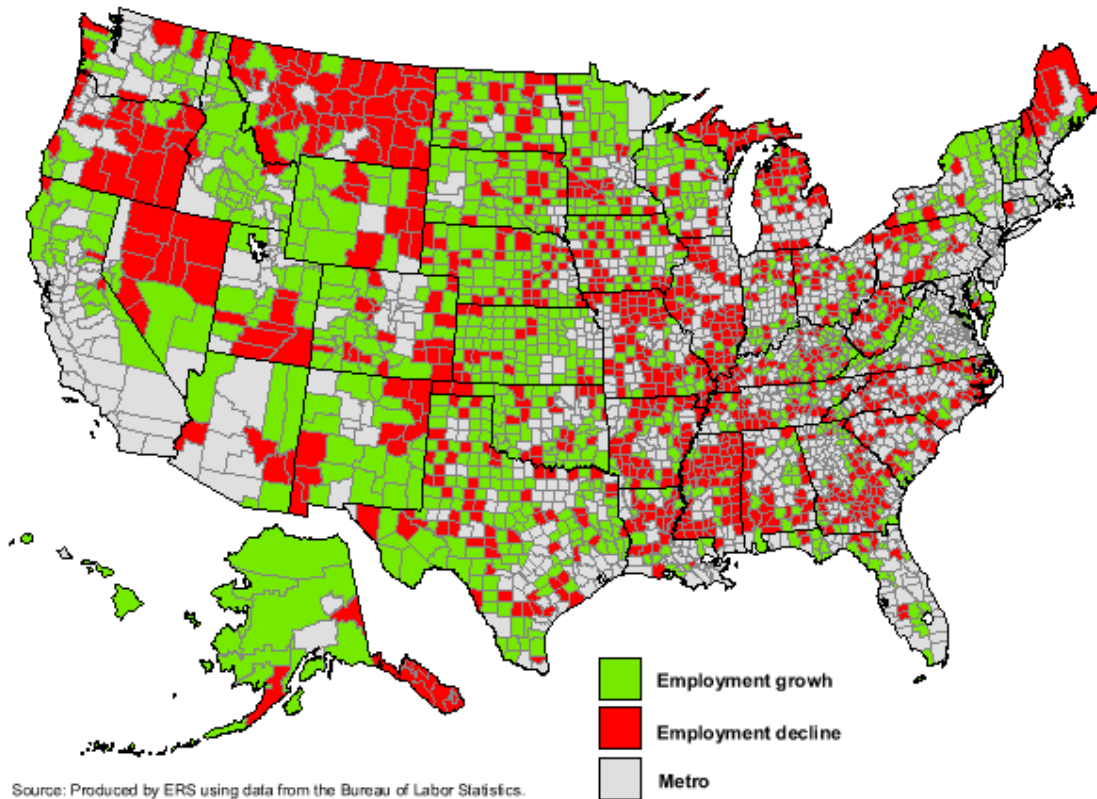
*In place of manufacturing, extraction and agriculture, employment in rural areas has come to be based more and more on services, trade and government.*

These economic trends have unfolded unevenly across non-metro counties. Exhibit II-7 from the Department of Agriculture's Economic Research Service (ERS) shows that declines in non-metro employment are concentrated in certain states and regions—Montana, Nevada, Missouri and the Mississippi Delta—while growth is evident elsewhere.

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<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, *Rural Labor and Education: Rural Employment and Unemployment*, a Briefing Room cited 5/4/2005 from: <http://www.ers.usda.gov/Briefing/LaborAndEducation/employunemploy/>.

**Exhibit II-7:  
Non-metro Employment Change, July 2000 – 2003**



The economic shifts in the local areas we visited largely reflect the national trends described above. For example, several local areas reported severe declines in manufacturing and extraction industries, which have led to large-scale plant closures and layoffs, particularly in textiles, timber production, powdered metallurgy, and extraction industries. In fact, respondents in Southeast Georgia described the last two years as a “crash course” in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, because the local area has seen several large plant closures resulting in hundreds of layoffs. In Lincoln County in Region 4 Oregon, with unemployment rates of nearly eight percent, the local fishing industry has been decimated by federal policies to limit fishing and buy out fishing boats in the 1990s.

*Several local areas reported severe declines in manufacturing and extraction industries, which have led to large-scale plant*

Region 4 Oregon and Southeast Georgia reported that local agricultural industries have been declining. In Southeast Georgia,



respondents said that family farms have been replaced in the last 25 years by large industrial farms. During the same time, they have seen an increase in migrant and seasonal farm work and a corresponding increase in migrant laborers, especially from Mexico and other countries of Latin America. Linn County Oregon, considered the “grass seed capitol” of the U.S., has unemployment rates approaching 20 percent due to declines in agriculture and timber production.

While manufacturing and extraction industries were in decline in some areas, other local areas bucked the national trends. Northwest Iowa, for example, maintains a large, relatively healthy manufacturing base. The area has experienced less decline due to having fewer companies in industries such as textiles that face intense international competition. The mining industry in Northern New Mexico also remains strong, with wages much higher than average.

Finally, trucking and transportation industries have remained strong in North Central Pennsylvania, Northern New Mexico, and Southeast Georgia. In fact, some local areas have focused targeted training programs in trucking because the jobs are still in demand and the wages are relatively high.

*While manufacturing and extraction industries were in decline in some areas, other local areas bucked the national trends.*

**Exhibit II-8:  
Industries Reported to be in Decline**

	<b>Manufacturing</b>	<b>Extraction</b>	<b>Agriculture</b>
Southeast Georgia	✓		✓
Northwest Iowa			
Northern New Mexico			
North Central Pennsylvania	✓	✓	
Region 4, Oregon	✓	✓	✓

Consistent with national trends, all of the local areas that we visited have experienced growth in service sector and trade employment, mainly concentrated in health care, hospitality, high technology, and retail. The health care industry is particularly strong in Southeast Georgia, Region 4 Oregon, and North Central Pennsylvania. Tourism and hospitality are also strong in Northwest Iowa, Region 4 Oregon, North Central Pennsylvania, and Northern New Mexico.

**Exhibit II-9:  
Industries Reported as Growing**

	<b>Health Care</b>	<b>Hospitality</b>	<b>High Tech</b>	<b>Retail</b>
Southeast Georgia	✓			✓
Northwest Iowa		✓		✓
Northern New Mexico		✓	✓	✓
North Central Pennsylvania	✓	✓	✓	
Region 4, Oregon	✓	✓	✓	

High tech is another important industry in some of the local areas we visited. For example, the Los Alamos National Laboratory has helped to create a well-developed high tech industry in Los Alamos County in Northern New Mexico. In other local areas, high tech is still important, but has recently declined. For instance, Region 4 Oregon experienced high growth in information technology when Hewlett Packard located there in the 1990s; however, the company has cut its workforce by one-third and they have plans for further cuts.

Finally, retail has been a major area of growth in non-metro areas over the past 25 years, especially in larger rural towns. Much of this growth has stemmed from the rise of big-box retailers and

*Retail has been a major area of growth in non-metro areas over the past 25 years, especially in larger rural towns.*

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large-scale distribution centers (such as Wal-Mart).<sup>13</sup> These mass merchandisers, typically located on the outskirts of town, have become a hotbed of community activity and a needed source of entry-level jobs. For example, in Georgia, the Wal-Mart distribution center in Douglas is a sizeable local employer. In Oregon, the local workforce agency was in the process of recruiting a Super Wal-Mart, which they estimated would provide 30,000 jobs to the local area.

While service and retail-sector employment has grown considerably, several local areas reported struggling with the fact that many service and most retail jobs tend to pay lower wages and offer fewer benefits, compared to the manufacturing jobs that have been lost. In addition, many of these service and retail jobs are part-time positions with high turnover rates.

### ***Dealing with the Impact of Economic Changes***

Many local areas said that these economic changes have created a “jobs/skills mismatch.” This mismatch stems from the fact that economic growth in industries that pay high wages and offer benefits, such as health care and high-tech, is increasingly dependent on a highly-skilled workforce. Unfortunately, rural areas are at a disadvantage in this regard, because education and skill levels of rural residents tend to be lower than they are in urban areas for several reasons:

- The median age in non-metro areas is higher than metro-areas, and older populations are more likely to have low education levels.<sup>14</sup>
- Recent Hispanic migrants to high-growth Hispanic counties tend to have low education levels.<sup>15</sup>

*Several local areas reported struggling with the fact that many service and most retail jobs tend to pay lower wages and offer fewer benefits, compared to the manufacturing jobs that have been lost.*

*Many local areas said that these economic changes have created a “jobs/skills mismatch” stemming from the fact that economic growth in industries that pay high wages and offer benefits is increasingly dependent on a highly-skilled workforce, which they don’t have.*

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<sup>13</sup> Stone, Kenneth. *Impact of the Wal-Mart Phenomenon on Rural Communities*. Chicago, Illinois: Farm Foundation, Published in Proceedings [online, cited 28 March 2005], available from: [http://www.seta.iastate.edu/retail/publications/10\\_yr\\_study.pdf](http://www.seta.iastate.edu/retail/publications/10_yr_study.pdf), 1997.

<sup>14</sup> Housing Assistance Council. *Taking Stock: Rural People, Poverty, and Housing at the Turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. [online, cited 25 March 2005], available from: <http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/hsganalysis/ts2000/index.htm>, 2002

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- “Brain Drain” has occurred, in that younger people who do reach higher levels of education tend to leave remotely rural areas to pursue better employment opportunities in metropolitan areas.

In keeping with this, employers in several local areas we visited complained about having difficulty in finding workers with sufficient basic skills and soft skills

To solve this mismatch, local areas are developing both supply-side and demand-side approaches to closing the gap between the skills possessed by the local workforce and skills in demand in the economy. For example, in North Central Pennsylvania, the local area received a state grant to try to deal with the problem of the “brain drain.” This grant, which was called the “Stay and Invent the Future Grant,” funded local summer internships for youth with high school degrees.

*North Central Pennsylvania had employers identify their highest concerns (soft skills for entry-level workers), and then they developed twenty soft-skill Work Readiness Skills Standards.*

Other local areas have started to increase their emphasis on skill upgrading. For example, North Central Pennsylvania had employers identify their highest concerns (soft skills for entry-level workers), and then they developed twenty soft-skill Work Readiness Skills Standards. Job seekers can now become “certified” in soft skills and receive a credential that is recognized by local employers. In Southeast Georgia, the local area teamed with a neighboring area to commission a strategic plan that calls for upgrading the skills of the current workforce.<sup>16</sup> However, implementation of the plan has been hindered by a surge in trade-related layoffs.

On the demand side of the jobs/skills mismatch, several local areas we visited are placing an increased emphasis on economic development and employer recruitment. First, two local areas we

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<sup>15</sup> Kandel, William and J. Cromartie. *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 99, May 2004

<sup>16</sup> Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, *2003 State of the Workforce Report*, Developed by the South and Southeast Georgia Regional Development Centers, February 2003.

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visited have begun developing customized training programs with local employers. In Northern New Mexico, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider facilitated a Commercial Driver's License training program for incumbent workers of the Santa Clara Pueblo. In another example of customized training, Southeast Georgia has set up a CMS and QuickStart training program with Simmon's Mattress. This customized training program was used to filter job applicants to a new production plant, and the employer was very satisfied with the results. However, the training program did not guarantee employment upon completion, and job seekers have been disappointed that they did not get a job after dedicating extensive time to the training.

*In Northern New Mexico, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider facilitated a Commercial Driver's License training program for incumbent workers of the Santa Clara Pueblo.*

## **Changes to Workforce Development Access Points**

The demographic and economic changes described above set the broad context for analyzing how and why the workforce development system has changed over the last 25 years. This section explores changes to one of the main components of the workforce system itself—the number and spread of workforce development access points.<sup>17</sup> The section first describes national changes to the number of workforce development access points, both overall and for non-metro areas, between 1979 and 2004. It next examines those networks in more detail in 2004, both by state and for the five local areas we visited for this study. Finally, the section explores some of the main factors that have influenced the development of workforce development networks, particularly focusing on the period following the issuance of state One-Stop Implementation grants and the Workforce Investment Act.

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<sup>17</sup> Workforce development access points include offices of certain state and local organizations that provide federally-funded programs. In 1979, they included programs such as Job Service and UI, while in 1999 they included all of those offices as well as One-Stop centers and JTPA offices. In 2004, they included comprehensive and affiliate access points included in One-Stop systems. See Appendix C for more information on the specific types of access point included in each year's data.

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To analyze national changes in workforce development access points and the current numbers of access points across the country, we collected data on access points from three time periods, 1979, 1999, and 2004. Before presenting any findings based on this data, it is useful to reiterate its limitations as discussed in more detail in the Introduction. First, the types of access points measured in each time period differ substantially. For example, One-Stop centers did not exist in 1979, while few UI offices exist in 2004. Second, the access point data were collected for each of the different years using different methodologies and including different types of offices. For example, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) offices were not included in the data collected for 1979. Finally, because states voluntarily report their access points to America's Service Locator (ASL), they sometimes choose to report only certain types of access points. Thus, some differences in the number of access points between states in 2004 (based on ASL data) may stem from a difference in which types of access points were reported to ASL, rather than a real difference in how many access points exist on the ground.<sup>18</sup>

### **Changes in Workforce Development Access Points between 1979 and 2004**

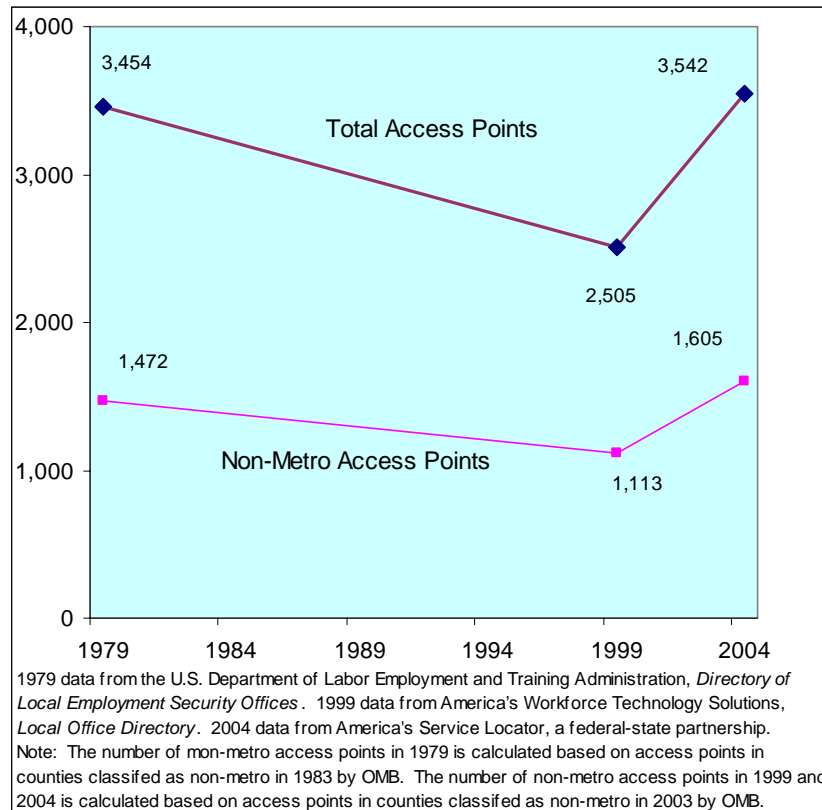
The number of workforce development access points remained nearly the same in 1979 as in 2004 despite a major drop during the intervening years. As shown in Exhibit II-10, although the overall number of access points nationwide declined by nearly 1,000 (27.5%) between 1979 and 1999, by 2004 the number of access points had bounced back to over 3,542, 2.5 percent more than in 1979.

*The number of workforce development access points remained nearly the same in 1979 as in 2004 despite a major drop during the intervening years.*

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on the limitations of national data, please see Appendix C.

**Exhibit II-10:  
Workforce Development Access Points Nationwide  
1979, 1999, 2004**



The number of access points in non-metro counties also experienced similar fluctuation over the 25 year period, with the number of access points decreasing by 359 between 1979 and 1999, but then increasing by 492 between 1999 and 2004.<sup>19</sup> The overall increase in the number of non-metro access points between 1979 and 2004 was nine percent, significantly higher than the 2.5

*The number of non-metro access points decreased by 359 between 1979 and 1999, but then increased by 492 between 1999 and 2004.*

<sup>19</sup> Some of the 24.4 percent decline in the number of access points in non-metro areas between 1979 and 1999 may be due to a 14 percent (344 counties) decrease in the number of counties classified as non-metro. This decline in the number of non-metro counties was caused primarily by re-classification of those counties as metro by the Office of Management and Budget due to population increases and other changes related to increasing urbanization. However, because the number of access points in the nation as a whole, a calculation unaffected by OMB's re-classification, also decreased by over 27 percent during the same period, it is unlikely that the entire decline in non-metro access points is due to this re-classification. The change in access points between 1999 and 2004 is unaffected by OMB re-classification, since non-metro counties in both years were defined based on OMB's 2003 classification.

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percent growth in total access points. The fact this increase occurred despite a decline of 14 percent (344 counties) in the number of non-metro counties over the same period<sup>20</sup> makes it even more significant.

This slightly faster growth in non-metro access points resulted in an increase in the percentage of access points located in non-metro areas from 42.6 percent in 1979 to 45.3 percent in 2004. This increase in the percentage of non-metro access points occurred despite the fact that only 17.3 percent of Americans live in non-metro counties.

Although the total number of access points changed only slightly between 1979 and 2004, the number of access points in individual states typically changed by 10 percent or more. However, these changes were often in opposite directions, as approximately half (26) of all states lost access points, while 23 gained access points. (see Exhibit II-11). Most of the growth in centers is concentrated in the Western mountain region and the South, and the decline concentrated in the Mid-Atlantic and Midwest states.

There was similar fluctuation for individual states in the numbers of access points in non-metro counties, as 39 states experienced a changes of greater than 10 percent (see Exhibit II-12).

Approximately the same number of states experienced increases of any size in the number of access points in non-metro counties (22) as experienced decreases of any size (24).<sup>21</sup> Many of the states that saw increases in the number of access points in non-metro counties are also in the South and Southwest, and are many of the same states that saw dramatic increases in their non-metro population (see Exhibit II-1).

*Although the total number of access points changed only slightly between 1979 and 2004, the number of access points in individual states typically changed by 10 percent or more.*

*Many of the states that saw increases in the number of access points in non-metro counties are also in the South and Southwest, and are many of the same states that saw dramatic increases in their non-metro population.*

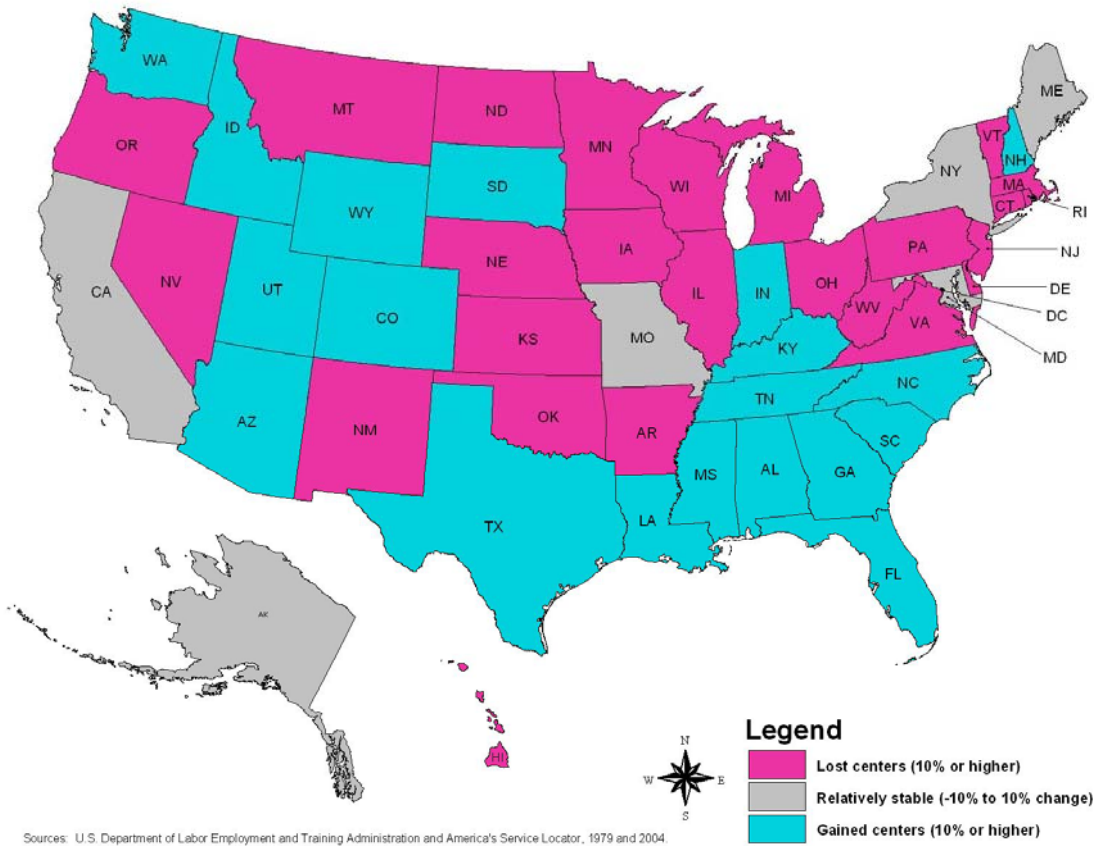
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<sup>20</sup> This decline in the number of non-metro counties was caused primarily by re-classification of those counties as metro by the Office of Management and Budget due to population increases and other changes related to increasing urbanization.

<sup>21</sup> Of the remaining four states, two (Rhode Island and New Jersey) had no non-metro counties in either 1979 or 2004, and two (Georgia and Tennessee) had no change.



**Exhibit II-11:  
Change in Total Number of Access Points 1979 – 2004**

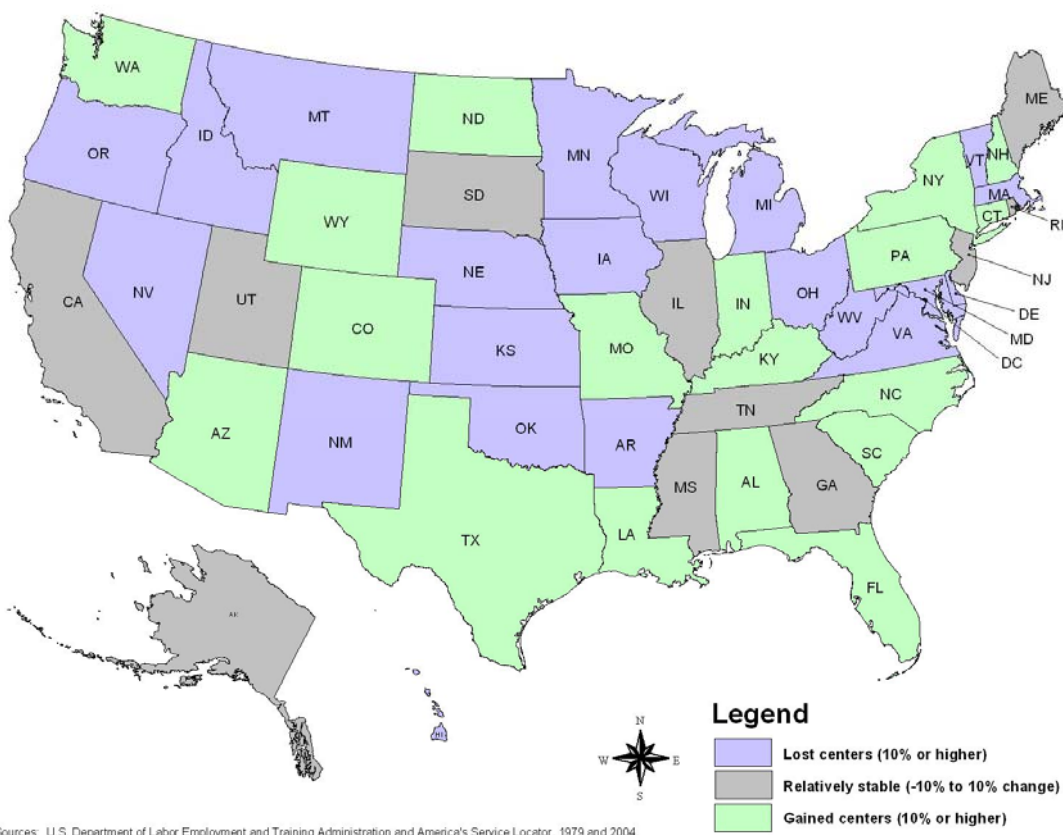


**Number of Access Points in 2004**

The number of workforce development access points in each state in 2004 ranged widely across the country (see Exhibit II-13). In general, states with smaller populations, such as some in the West or Midwest, reported relatively few access points, while states with the largest populations such as California, Texas and New York had some of the highest numbers of access points in 2004 (see Exhibit II-14). However, states also seem to be displaying the principle of local flexibility embedded in WIA. Thus, despite the general correlation between the number of access points and population size, several states with medium-sized populations, such as Kentucky, Arizona, Alabama and Tennessee, also had some of the highest numbers of access points in the nation. Consequently, because of their lower populations, these states also had far fewer people per access point.

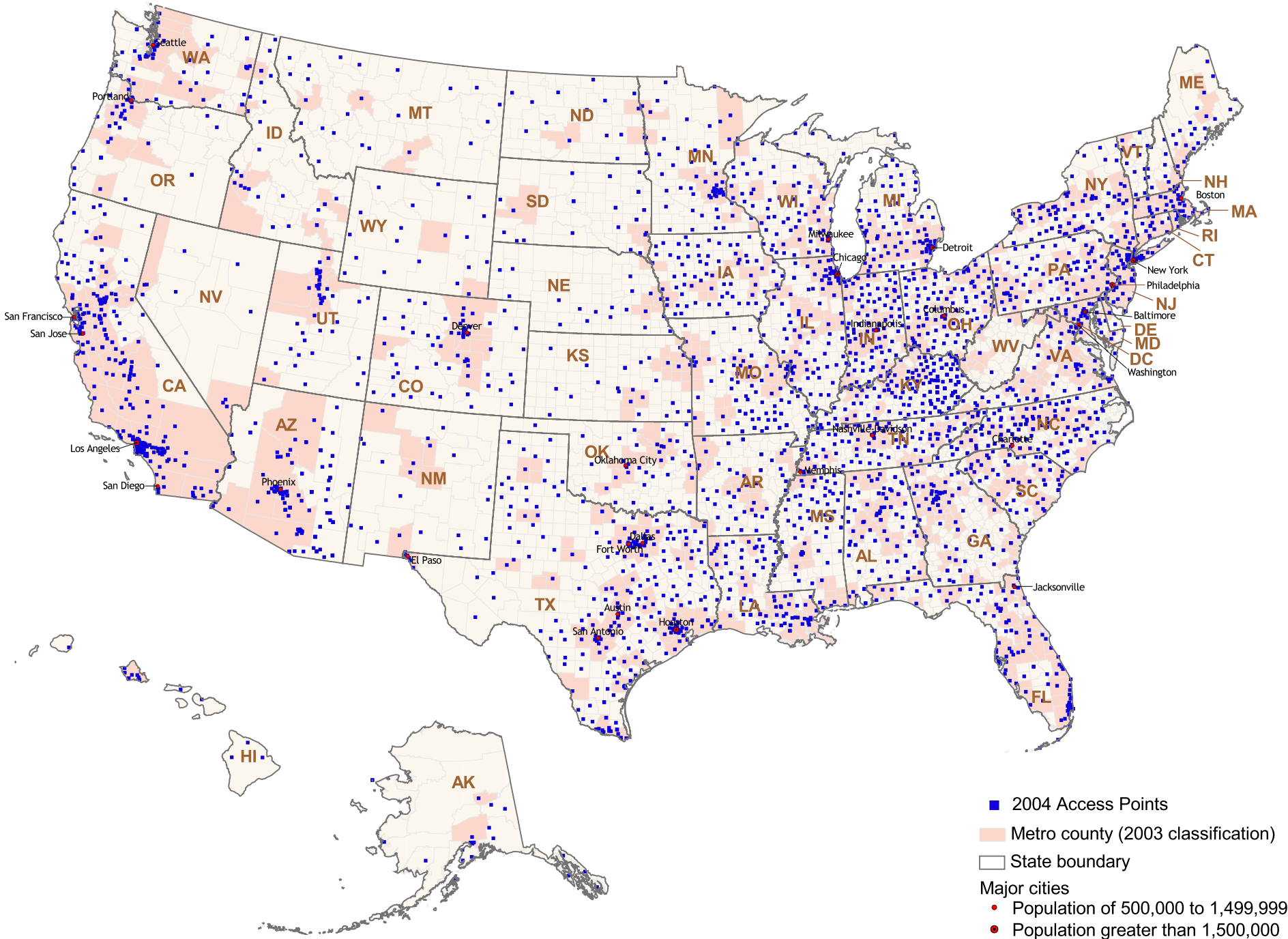
*Several states with medium-sized populations, such as Kentucky, Arizona, Alabama and Tennessee, had some of the highest numbers of access points in the nation.*

**Exhibit II-12:  
Change in Number of Non-Metro Access Points 1979 – 2004**



As Exhibit II-15 shows, states with the highest number of access points in non-metro counties tend to be many of the same states with the highest numbers of access points overall. For example, Texas, Kentucky, North Carolina, Arizona, Alabama, Tennessee and Ohio all are among the top ten states both in terms of total access points and access points in non-metro counties. In states with the highest numbers of non-metro access points, those access points also make up 50 percent or more of the state's total access points. In the nation as a whole, the number of people per access point in non-metro counties is 79,453, while the comparable figure in metro counties is much lower at 30,417.

**Exhibit II-13:  
2004 Workforce Development Access Points**



Created by Social Policy Research Associates, 2005  
Please see the "Guide to the Reader" for Appendix C for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.

**Exhibit II-14:  
States with Highest Number of Access Points, 2004**

State	No. of Access Points	2000 Population	People per Access Point
California	322	35,893,799	111,471
Texas	286	20,851,820	72,909
Kentucky	184	4,041,769	21,966
New York	173	18,976,457	109,691
North Carolina	163	8,049,313	49,382
Arizona	151	5,130,632	33,978
Florida	115	15,982,378	138,977
Ohio	110	11,353,140	103,210
Indiana	103	6,080,485	59,034
Alabama	100	4,447,100	44,471
Michigan	100	9,938,444	99,384
Tennessee	100	5,689,283	56,893

*Access Point data source: America's Service Locator, 2004; Population data source: Census 2000.*

In the five local areas we visited for this study, we also found wide variability in the number of access points in 2004. For example, as shown in Exhibit II-16, the total number of access points ranged from only two in Southeast Georgia to 21 in North Central Pennsylvania.

There was also diversity in the number of access points when compared to the number of residents in each local area and the total land area. For instance, in terms of the number of people per access point and square miles per access point, North Central Pennsylvania has the lowest numbers. Northwest Iowa and Region 4 Oregon also have relatively good access on a per person or per square mile basis. Meanwhile, Southeast Georgia and Northern New Mexico, have much poorer access, at least by these measures.

**Exhibit II-15:  
States with Highest Number of Access Points in Non-metro Counties, 2004**

	<b>Total No. of Access Points</b>	<b>No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties</b>	<b>Percent of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties</b>	<b>Non-Metro population as percent of total population</b>	<b>Non-Metro residents per Non-Metro Access Point</b>
Kentucky	184	142	77.2%	43.8%	12,460
Texas	286	115	40.2%	13.9%	25,281
North Carolina	163	95	58.3%	31.9%	26,988
Arizona	151	75	49.7%	11.5%	7,882
Missouri	95	67	70.5%	26.9%	22,425
Iowa	72	56	77.8%	46.6%	24,335
Alabama	100	55	55.0%	29.5%	23,888
Tennessee	100	50	50.0%	27.5%	31,340
Mississippi	64	49	76.6%	58.0%	33,676
Ohio	110	49	44.5%	19.5%	45,150

*Access Point data source: America's Service Locator, 2004; Population data source: Census 2000.*

**Exhibit II-16:  
Number of Access Points in Study Sites**

<b>Local Area</b>	<b>Total Access Points</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>People per Access Point</b>	<b>Land Area (square miles)</b>	<b>Square miles per Access Point</b>
Southeast Georgia	2	154,268	77,134	4,954	2,477
Northwest Iowa	8	137,590	17,199	5,210	651
Northern New Mexico	11	482,493	43,863	35,986	3,271
Region 4 Oregon	11	225,701	20,518	3,948	359
North Central Pennsylvania	21	234,416	11,163	5,091	242
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>1,234,468</b>	<b>23,292</b>	<b>55,189</b>	<b>1,041</b>

*Access Point data source: America's Service Locator, 2004; Population data source: Census 2000*

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## Reasons for Changes in Numbers of Access Points and the Development of Current Networks

Based primarily on our site visits to five rural areas, we have identified a number of reasons for the changes in the numbers of access points between 1979 and 2004. However, because few local area respondents were familiar with workforce development systems or access points prior to the late 1990s, we have focused most of our explanation on the time period following the passage of the Workforce Investment Act.

### ***Decline in Access Points between 1979 and 1999***

One reason for the decline in access points between 1979 and 1999 may stem from decreases in funding for workforce development services. Research on federal funding for workforce development services has shown that workforce development funding levels were at their peak in the late 1970s at around \$250 per labor force member, and they have since declined to about \$50 in recent years.<sup>22</sup> Respondents in several of the local areas we visited also reported significant declines in federal workforce funding during the mid-1980s.

However, in some cases, supplemental funding and mandates by states counteracted these federal funding cuts to maintain large systems of access points. For example, in 1987, the state of Iowa enacted an employer surtax to fund workforce development offices in rural areas. Nine years later, in 1996, the state also passed a law requiring the state employment security agency to operate an office in each of the state's 99 counties, further reinforcing the desire by the state to maintain a large network of access points throughout the state. Despite these state efforts, the number of access points in Iowa still declined by 27 percent between 1979 and 2004.

*One reason for the decline in access points between 1979 and 1999 may stem from decreases in funding for workforce development services.*

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<sup>22</sup> Barnow, Burt S. and Christopher T. King, *The Workforce Investment Act in Eight States*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration by the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, February 2005.

The restructuring of Unemployment Insurance programs during the late 1990s was a second major change that may have caused the decline in access points between 1979 and 1999. Most states have changed their UI system from a face-to-face service delivery model to a call center and Internet-based model, thus reducing the traffic to physical access points and the need to maintain UI staff in each local area. Consequently, many states reduced the number of access points operated by their state employment security agency to reflect this decreased traffic.

*The restructuring of Unemployment Insurance programs during the late 1990s was a second major change that may have caused the decline in access points between 1979 and 1999.*

National data on the specific types of access points that declined between 1979 and 1999 provide further evidence that a significant portion of the overall drop in access points was due to changes in UI service delivery. As shown in Exhibit II-17, the number of UI-only access points dropped by 63.7 percent between 1979 and 1999, representing 33 percent of the total decline in access points during that period.

**Exhibit II-17:  
Change in UI Only Access Points between 1979 and 1999**

<b>Access Point Type<sup>23</sup></b>	<b>1979</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>Percentage Change</b>
All Access Points	3,454	2,505	- 949	- 27.5%
UI Only	498	181	- 317	- 63.7%

*Source: 1979 data from the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Directory of Local Employment Security Offices. 1999 data from America's Workforce Technology Solutions, Local Office Directory.*

***Increase in Access Points between 1999 and 2004***

The implementation of WIA during the late 1990s and the early part of this decade may be one of the reasons for the increase in the number of access points between 1999 and 2004. This is likely due to the legislation's requirement that each state and local area develop a network of One-Stop access points that would integrate services from multiple workforce development agencies. However, although the overall effect of WIA may have been to

*The implementation of WIA during the late 1990s and the early part of this decade may be one of the reasons for the increase in the number of access points between 1999 and 2004.*

<sup>23</sup> UI = Unemployment Insurance; LE = Labor Exchange; JS = Job Service; Other in 1999 includes: J Partnership Act, OS = One Stop, and combinations of LE, UI, and JTPA.

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increase the number of access points, the effect on individual states and local areas has been decidedly mixed. For example, in some states, WIA has resulted in little change to already existing access point systems, while in other states the implementation of WIA has resulted in an increase in the number and types of access points.

In the five rural areas we visited, the implementation of WIA on local One-Stop systems has had a similar mixed effect. For example, four local areas, Northwest Iowa, Northern New Mexico, Region 4 Oregon and Southeast Georgia, have experienced no increase or even a decrease in their total number of access points following the implementation of a local One-Stop system. In these areas, the primary response to WIA's One-Stop mandate has been to retrofit existing workforce development access points, especially Employment Service offices, and turn them into One-Stop access points, thus resulting in little or no change in the number or location of access points.

Even when new access points have been developed in these areas, they have been comprehensive centers that typically replaced already existing ES and WIA offices located nearby that were too small to host co-located partners, thus leaving the absolute number of access points in the area unchanged, or even decreasing it. For example, in Spencer, Iowa, neither the WIA nor the ES offices were large enough to accommodate on-site partners, so the Spencer comprehensive center was established in a new and larger location.

By contrast, in North Central Pennsylvania, implementation of WIA and the development of One-Stop systems has resulted in an absolute increase in the number of workforce development access points. In North Central Pennsylvania, the increase in access points stemmed from the development of a large number of small access points, which the local area initially felt was an important way to reach many rural customers. Consequently, in 2004, 14 of the local area's 21 access points consisted of non-comprehensive locations composed primarily of computer-only access points

*Even when new access points have been developed in these areas, they have been comprehensive centers that typically replaced already existing ES and WIA offices located nearby that were too small to host co-located partners, thus leaving the absolute number of access points in the area unchanged, or even decreasing it.*



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operated by non-traditional One-Stop partners such as community-based organizations, churches and libraries.<sup>24</sup>

Thus, one reason for the jump in the number of access points from 1999 to 2004 may be due to the fact that WIA has provided local areas with the flexibility to establish small access points operated by One-Stop partners such as TANF agencies, state vocational rehabilitation offices, and even libraries or churches. Few of these types of access points existed in 1999, and, where they did exist, were unlikely to be captured in the 1999 access point data source we are using.

*One reason for the jump in the number of access points from 1999 to 2004 may be that WIA has provided local areas with the flexibility to establish small access points operated by One-Stop partners such as TANF agencies, libraries or churches.*

## Conclusion

Over the last 25 years, rural areas in the U.S. have experienced multiple changes in their populations and economies. In terms of demographics, non-metro areas have experienced overall population growth albeit at a slightly lower rate than the U.S. as a whole. Non-metro areas have also seen a “graying” of their population, and some areas, particularly in the South and Midwest, have also faced a surging Hispanic population. Finally, low rates of post-secondary education have continued to be an issue in some rural areas.

*Many rural areas have experienced significant declines in employment in manufacturing, extraction and agricultural industries.*

In addition to these demographic changes, rural areas have had to deal with major economic transformations. Many rural areas have experienced significant declines in employment in manufacturing, extraction and agricultural industries. Jobs in these industries have been replaced by employment in services, government and trade. High-paying jobs in these newly dominant industries—such as in health care—typically require higher levels of education than the manufacturing and extraction jobs they replaced.

The result is what many local areas call a “job/skills mismatch,” where workers do not have the right skills to obtain the high wage

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<sup>24</sup> The different types of One-Stop access points and their effectiveness is explored in Chapter 3.

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jobs available in the new economy. In addition, the lack of high-skilled workers is impeding economic growth in these areas. To deal with this challenge, rural areas are implementing efforts to both upgrade worker skills and retain highly educated workers. They are also working more closely with current employers to keep those employers in the area and trying to attract new employers.

*The result is what many local areas call a “job/skills mismatch,” where workers do not have the right skills to obtain the high wage jobs available in the new economy.*

In addition to experiencing these economic and demographic changes, these local areas have also experienced major changes to their networks of workforce development access points. Between 1979 and 1999, the number of access points—both overall and in non-metro area—fell by over a quarter. However, from 1999 to 2004, the number of access points rebounded strongly, particularly in non-metro areas, where the number of access points in 2004 was nine percent higher than in 1979. The reasons for this growth in the number of access points from 1999 to 2004 may be due to the effect of WIA, which was enacted in 1998.

However, despite WIA’s possible overall positive impact on the number of access points, the experience of individual states and local areas has been mixed. For example, among the five local areas we visited for this study, only one experienced absolute increases in the number of access points following WIA implementation. In this area, the reason for the increase was due to the development of a large number of new access points operated by non-traditional workforce development providers such as libraries and churches.

*The reasons for this growth in the number of access points from 1999 to 2004 may be due to the effect of WIA, which was enacted in 1998.*

In the other four areas, by contrast, local One-Stop partners relied primarily on renovating already existing networks of ES offices to serve as One-Stop access points. When new One-Stop access points were developed, they were typically comprehensive centers that often resulted in an absolute decline in the total number of access points. The networks of One-Stop access points developed by each of these five rural areas are further explored in the next chapter on service delivery in rural areas.

### III. ONE-STOP SERVICE DELIVERY AND ACCESSIBILITY IN RURAL AREAS

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Making workforce development services accessible to the residents of rural workforce investment areas—who live scattered over thousands of square miles in multiple counties—is truly challenging. To meet this challenge, the five rural areas we visited utilize networks of two or more physical access points. These access points can be classified into five types, each with its own distinct characteristics. Typically, these access points are located in a local area’s largest communities, with at least one in every county. Although the specific types of access points utilized in each local area’s One-Stop network vary, these rural areas have begun focusing more of their attention on larger, more comprehensive physical access points due to the drawbacks of operating smaller physical locations. In addition to networks of permanent One-Stop access points, some rural areas also establish temporary access points, particularly to deal with major layoffs.

*Making workforce development services accessible to the residents of rural workforce investment areas—who live scattered over thousands of square miles in multiple counties—is truly challenging.*

Because of the serious transportation barriers faced by many rural customers in reaching physical access points, rural areas have also developed supplementary strategies to make services accessible. These strategies include transportation assistance, Internet services, services provided over the phone, and itinerant staff who travel to customer locations.

Each of the five local areas also conducts critical outreach activities to ensure accessibility. These activities include presentations, Internet websites and local radio advertising. Some local areas also utilize specific strategies aimed at certain special

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populations, such as limited English speaking Hispanics, who are less likely to use services.

Finally, the local areas reported they have few qualified workforce development providers. This relative shortage of providers limits competitive procurement efforts and sometimes impacts the quality and accessibility of service delivery.

This chapter explores each of the topics above, including rural One-Stop access point types and networks; supplementary service delivery strategies aimed at overcoming transportation barriers; outreach and marketing activities, including strategies aimed at certain special populations; and the availability of workforce service providers and the impact of that availability on service delivery.

## **Rural One-Stop Access Points**

WIA envisions that physical One-Stop access points should be a part of “seamless system(s) of service delivery” designed to “integrate multiple workforce development programs and resources for individuals.”<sup>1</sup> Indeed, by providing “one right door” for all workforce development services, One-Stop access points are the Workforce Investment Act’s principal means of facilitating customer access to these services.

Because of WIA’s emphasis on One-Stop access points, the five rural workforce investment areas we visited have all invested significant resources in developing and maintaining systems of access points and use them as a primary means of service delivery.

## **Access Point Typology**

In delineating the requirements for systems of One-Stop access points, WIA lays out only a few broad definitions that allow for significant local customization. One basic requirement is that each

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<sup>1</sup> 20 CFR Part 652 et al., p.49307.

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local area must have at least one comprehensive center, which is to provide all core services via technology or various staffing arrangements such as co-location of personnel, cross training, or agreements between service providers, and which must provide access to other One-Stop partner programs and services. In addition to requiring the existence of at least one comprehensive center, WIA also allows for supplementary arrangements such as networks of “affiliated sites” that provide access to one or more partner programs or networks of One-Stop partners linked physically or technologically. Finally, the development of specialized centers focused on specific groups such as dislocated workers is also allowed.<sup>2</sup>

*We found great diversity in the characteristics of physical access points in the five rural areas we visited.*

Because of the flexibility inherent in these Federal guidelines, we found great diversity in the characteristics of physical access points in the five rural areas we visited. We also found varying definitions and titles for different types of access points. Consequently, to more clearly describe and analyze these systems and access points, we developed our own typology of One-Stop access points. Based on an analysis of co-located partners and available services, we have classified each physical access point in the five study sites into five different types: enhanced comprehensive centers, basic comprehensive centers, affiliates, satellites and computer-only locations. These types are summarized in Exhibit III-1 and are described in more detail below (Also see Appendix A. Typology Table for more details).

### ***Enhanced and Basic Comprehensive Centers***

As noted above, every local area is required under WIA to have at least one comprehensive center. Consequently, we found that all five local areas had at least one such access point and most had more than one. However, because we encountered such wide variation among these comprehensive centers, we decided to divide them into two groups, enhanced comprehensive centers and basic comprehensive centers.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid. p. 49398-9.

**Exhibit III-1:  
Access Point Typology Criteria for Sites Visited**

<b>Access Points</b>	<b>Co-located Partners/Services</b>	<b>Services Available On-Site</b>
Enhanced Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker staff on-site full-time</li> <li>• Employment Service (ES) staff on-site full-time</li> <li>• At least one other <i>core</i>* One-Stop partner on-site full-time</li> <li>• At least one other <i>non-core</i> One-Stop partner on-site part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core, intensive and preparation for training services</li> <li>• Core and intensive workshops</li> </ul>
Basic Comprehensive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker staff on-site full-time</li> <li>• ES staff on-site full-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core, intensive and preparation for training services</li> <li>• Core and intensive workshops sometimes available on-site and sometimes at a partner location</li> </ul>
Affiliate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker or ES staff on-site full-time;</li> <li>• At least one other <i>core</i> or <i>non-core</i> One-Stop partner on-site part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either ES or WIA services</li> <li>• Services from one other One-Stop partner</li> </ul>
Satellite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FTE or less WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker or ES staff on-site</li> <li>• No partners (except passive host) on-site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either ES or WIA services</li> </ul>
Computer-Only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No <i>core</i> One-Stop staff on-site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-service core</li> </ul>

\* “Core” One-Stop partners include partners who provide basic workforce development services such as job search assistance, career counseling, and occupational training. Typically these partners include WIA providers, ES, VR, TANF and community colleges

Enhanced comprehensive centers are typically the largest, newest, and most extensive access points in a local area. With an average size of 8,749 square feet and resource rooms with an average of 14 computers available for customer use, these very large access points are often characterized by local One-Stop managers as “flagship” centers, representing the local area’s fullest realization of One-Stop ideals.

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One reason for their large size is to allow for a large number of co-located partners. For example, these centers all have WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker and Employment Service (ES) staff, as well as at least one other core<sup>3</sup> One-Stop partner on-site full-time, with each of these programs often represented by multiple staff. Enhanced comprehensive centers also typically have one or more *non-core* One-Stop partners co-located full or part-time. Perhaps because of the large number of co-located partners, the majority of enhanced comprehensive centers in our study sites are operated by consortium (11 of 15 centers).

*Enhanced comprehensive centers also have the widest variety of services available.*

Because none of the rural areas we visited has engaged in extensive cross-training, the services available at enhanced comprehensive centers typically mirror the access point's staffing. Consequently enhanced comprehensive centers also have the widest variety of services available. In addition to providing core and intensive services, these centers also have staff who can assist job-seekers with accessing training services such as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). They also offer a wide variety of core and intensive workshops, such as job search and resume preparation workshops, as well as employer services. The enhanced comprehensive centers in our study also almost always offer other services typically provided by ES staff or other staff from the state employment security agency, such as Veteran's Employment and Training Services (VETS) and Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). Furthermore, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services are almost always available on-site at enhanced comprehensive centers, at least part-time, while TANF and WIA youth services are also sometimes available. A Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) and Job Corps recruitment services are also usually available at these centers, although only for a few hours a week or month. Finally, a few enhanced comprehensive centers, such as the one in East Linn, Oregon,

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<sup>3</sup> 'Core' One-Stop partners include those entities such as WIA Title I B providers, ES, UI, VR, community colleges and TANF (work-related) that provide basic workforce development services such as job search assistance, career counseling and occupational training.

provide support services such as child care centers, clothes closets and even hot showers available on-site

As is the case with all but the smallest access points, the enhanced comprehensive centers in our study are typically open regular business hours, from 8 am to 4:30 or 5 pm. However, two enhanced comprehensive centers do offer extended hours one day a week. The additional hours offered by these two centers are fairly limited. For example, the center in Waycross, Georgia, only extends its closing hour from 4:30 to 5:30 pm on Mondays, while the center in Corvallis,

Oregon, extends its hours on Monday from 7:30 am to 7:30 pm (instead of its normal 8 am to 5 pm schedule on Tuesdays through Fridays).

Respondents in North Central Pennsylvania said that they had also piloted keeping one of their enhanced comprehensive centers open evenings, but found that the low customer usage during those hours did not justify the staffing costs.

*As is the case with all but the smallest access points, the enhanced comprehensive centers in our study are typically open regular business hours, from 8 am to 4:30 or 5 pm.*

#### **East Linn, Oregon, Enhanced Comprehensive Center**

*Region 4 Oregon's East Linn One-Stop is considered to be the "dream One Stop center," which truly embodies WIA's "no wrong door" ideal. All of the area's core One-Stop partners have a large on-site presence, including Linn Benton Community College (WIA provider), the Community Service Consortium (WIA provider), Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Department of Human Services and Oregon Department of Vocational Rehabilitation. The center's resource room is approximately 3,300 square feet and has over twenty computers for Internet access and job searches. The center also has numerous cubicles and conference rooms throughout the 10,000 square foot building for customers to meet with case workers privately. All WIA core, intensive and even some training services (taught by instructors from the community college) are available on-site. The center also has on-site support services, including a clothes closet, where customers can find interview clothes, a day care center, and even hot showers for homeless customers. The office is open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.*

In contrast to enhanced comprehensive centers, basic comprehensive centers—while still meeting the legislative definition of a comprehensive center—are typically much smaller, have fewer partner staff on-site, and offer fewer services. For example, among the six basic comprehensive centers we encountered in three of our five study areas, the average size is only 2,245 square feet and resource rooms have an average of only nine computers. Because of their smaller size, several of these comprehensive centers can not offer workshops on-site. Although basic comprehensive centers do have WIA Adult and Dislocated

*In contrast to enhanced comprehensive centers, basic comprehensive centers—while still meeting the legislative definition of a comprehensive center—are typically much smaller, have fewer partner staff on-site, and offer fewer services.*



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Worker and ES staff on-site full-time, these programs are sometimes represented by only one staff person. In addition, few and sometimes no other partners are co-located on-site. Consequently the bulk of the services available at these sites are WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker and ES services, including basic employer services. Mirroring this heavy focus on WIA and ES, five of these six centers are operated by the state employment security agency, while the remaining center is operated by the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker services provider.

**Affiliate Access Points**

Compared to enhanced and basic comprehensive centers, affiliate offices have fewer on-site partners and available services. For example, we found that although all six affiliate access points in our study sites have multiple staff from ES on-site full-time, they typically have only one other One-Stop partner available on-site full- or part-time. In fact, in five of them, WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program staff are not co-located at all.<sup>4</sup> Thus, services provided at affiliate access points have a heavy ES focus, with access to WIA intensive or training services or other One-Stop partner services typically only available via referral. This ES focus stems from the fact that all six of these affiliate offices are former employment service offices operated by the state employment security agency.

**Sheldon, Iowa, Basic Comprehensive Center**

*Although the One-Stop access point in Sheldon, Iowa, is a comprehensive center, it is only 1,728 square feet in size. The center, located in a small strip mall behind a bank, consists of a small resource room with six Internet accessible computers, a printer, and desks for the two full-time Iowa Workforce Development (ES/UI) staff and one IWD volunteer. In the back of the center are two small conference rooms, while on the right are two private offices, one used by the full-time WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker staff person and one by the part-time Iowa Workforce Development staff person who works with TANF clients. Experience Works and Veteran's Employment and Training services are provided on an as-needed basis by itinerant staff. Because of the center's small size, core or intensive workshops cannot be held on-site, but take place at the local community college campus across town. All other One-Stop services are provided on a referral basis. The office is open Monday through Friday, 8 am to 4:30 pm.*

*Services provided at affiliate access points have a heavy ES focus, with access to WIA intensive or training services or other One-Stop partner services typically only available via referral.*

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<sup>4</sup> In the remaining office (Algona), WIA staff are co-located on-site only a few hours a week.

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Despite the small number of partners on-site, these affiliate sites are typically about the same size as basic comprehensive centers, with an average size of about 2500 square feet.<sup>5</sup> In addition, as with both types of comprehensive centers, they are typically open regular business hours.

**Satellite Access Points**

In contrast to affiliate offices, which are about the same size as basic comprehensive centers, the satellite offices we encountered in our study sites are very small, with an average size of only 410 square feet. They have minimal staffing, with one FTE or less from either ES or the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider. These offices are so small that they have no partners on-site; consequently, the only services universally available are core services that can be provided by either ES or WIA staff. Access to WIA intensive or training services is available only by referral, unless the satellite is run by the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider.

*Satellite offices are very small, with minimal staffing of one FTE or less from either ES or the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider.*

**Douglas, Georgia, Affiliate**

*The Douglas, Georgia affiliate office is 3,800 square feet, with a small resource room in the middle of the office with nine computers, a printer, fax, telephone, and copier. There are no conference or training rooms. The office is staffed by 16 full-time staff from the Georgia Department of Labor who provide core and intensive services as well as other services such as Veteran’s Employment and Training Services and Trade Adjustment Assistance. Due to space limitations, no other partners are on-site full-time, although staff from the local National Farmworker Jobs Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, and Job Corps are on-site once or twice a month. WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker services are available by referral. The office is open Monday to Wednesday and Fridays from 8 am to 4:30 pm and Thursdays from 8 am to 5:30 pm.*

Although several of the satellites we encountered are located within the office of another organization, typically these host entities are only minimally involved with the operation of the satellite. For example, in Estherville, Iowa, the state employment security agency operates a satellite in part of the office of the Estherville Chamber of Commerce. Although the Chamber Office is open Monday to Friday, the satellite is only open four days a week, as it shuts down

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<sup>5</sup> Excluding the New Mexico Department of Labor affiliate office in Santa Fe which is 15,897 square feet.

on Fridays when the ES employee who staffs it works at another office.

As the above example suggests, because of their limited staffing, satellites are the only type of access point that is commonly not open regular business hours. For example, three of the six satellites we visited were not open five days a week, as the lone staff person assigned to them also spends certain weekdays at other One-Stop system locations.

### **Computer-only Access Points**

Computer-only access points comprise another type in our typology. These access points, although found in only three of five local areas, are the most numerous type of access point that we encountered, and consist of a single computer with Internet access located on-site at a host entity. The home page for these

computers is usually the state employment security agency's website, which provides customers with access to on-line job matching, UI filing, and information on other services available on-line or through the state's One-Stop system.

In two of the three areas with this type of access point, the network of computer-only sites is operated by the state employment security agency. However, the host entities for computer-only access points vary more widely. Those in Region 4 Oregon include several grocery stores, a mall, and two postsecondary educational institutions. By contrast, hosts in North Central Pennsylvania and Northwest Iowa

*Computer-only access points, although found in only three of five local areas, are the most numerous type of access point that we encountered, and consist of a single computer with Internet access located on-site at a host entity.*

#### **Emmetsburg, Iowa, Satellite**

*The Emmetsburg, Iowa satellite is located in the former Carnegie Library, a block off Emmetsburg's main street. The overall building is operated by Iowa State University (ISU) Extension, but the satellite portion is staffed by an ES/UI worker from Iowa Workforce Development (IWD) who provides core and UI services. There is little collaboration between ISU and IWD staff except that the ISU receptionist will direct customers to the satellite and keeps an eye on the resource room when the IWD staff person is not there. The one-stop satellite portion of the office is only 269 square feet and consists of a desk for the IWD staff person and three Internet-connected computers with IWD software, a printer and a copier. In the basement, ISU Extension has large meeting room that can be used by IWD for private interviews and rapid response meetings. The office is staffed by an employee from Iowa Workforce Development only on Tuesdays and Fridays from 8 to 4:30, although the resource room is also open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays during regular ISU Extension office hours.*

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include social service agencies, community centers and churches. Iowa State University (ISU) Extension also hosts one computer-only access point in Northwest Iowa.

The method of operation of computer-only access points also varies somewhat. Those in Iowa and Pennsylvania require administrative staff from the host agency to provide minimal assistance and supervision of customers using the computer. In contrast, computer-only access points in Oregon operate as stand-alone “kiosks” that are designed to be used by customers with no assistance or supervision.

Because several of the hosts for these computer-only access points—including retail stores and libraries—are typically open evening hours, many computer-only access points are available longer hours than staffed access points.

**North Central Pennsylvania’s Computer-Only Access Points**

*North Central Pennsylvania has 12 computer-only access points located at many different types of host organizations in each county. These hosts include: Northern Tier Community Action Corporation, Central Pennsylvania Community Action, DuBois Public Library, Johnsonburg Community Center, Mengle Memorial Library, Brookville YMCA, Punxsutawney Community Center, Rebecca M. Arthurs Memorial Library, Kane Community Center, Gospel Tabernacle, and two sites operated by the Potter County Education Council.*

**Temporary One-Stop Access Points**

Temporary One-Stop centers are one additional type of physical access point used by some rural areas. These access points, which can be large or small, are used by rural areas primarily in response to major layoffs. In many cases, temporary access points are located on-site or very close to the affected worksite with the aim of making services more accessible to laid off workers.

One local area in our study that uses this type of access point is Southeast Georgia. For example, in March 2004, the local area set up a small temporary access point in Pearson, Georgia, at a local senior citizens’ center located close to a factory that was laying off 276 workers. This access point, which was open every Wednesday for two months, was intended to provide affected workers with easy access to One-Stop services. Without this temporary access point, laid off workers from the factory would have had to travel

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30 miles round trip to receive services at the Douglas, Georgia affiliate office, the nearest permanent access point. Similarly, in June, 2004, the same local area opened a temporary access point in

Douglas, Georgia to serve 535 workers laid off by a small engine manufacturing plant. This temporary access point, which was only a few blocks from the local area's Douglas affiliate office, was set up because the Douglas affiliate was judged to be too small to deal with all of the customers affected by the dislocation in addition to its normal client flow. The temporary access point in Douglas was similar to the

permanent affiliate office with a full resource room, full-time ES staff, and WIA staff on-site two to three days a week.

Although temporary One-Stop centers have the advantage of providing ready access to One-Stop services at critical

times, there are several challenges associated with them. To begin with, establishing these centers further stretches the already limited staffing available in rural areas. Consequently, rural local areas are careful to use this strategy only when faced with very large layoffs that cannot be accommodated through their regular One-Stop access points. Another challenge related to temporary One-Stop centers is that they often operate like affiliate or satellite centers, providing relatively few on-site services. As a result, many customers still have to travel to the nearest comprehensive center to have their needs met, which can be inconvenient. Finally, because these centers are temporary, many customers may not know about them and customer flow may be limited unless local staff conduct significant targeted marketing efforts.

### **Southeast Georgia's Temporary One-Stop Centers**

*In June 2004, due to the small size of the local affiliate office, the local area opened a temporary One-Stop access point called the Tecumseh Transition Center to accommodate 535 workers who had been laid off by Tecumseh Products, Inc., a small engine manufacturer. This temporary One-Stop access point included a full resource room with seven Internet-linked computers and a resource library comprised of resource books, videos, and pamphlets. The access point was staffed by five Georgia Department of Labor staff temporarily redeployed from the nearby affiliate office. A local staff person from the WIA Dislocated Worker program was also co-located at the access point two to three days a week. Services provided at the access point included job referrals, career counseling, job search workshops, UI filing, and assessment and counseling related to WIA training services. Although the access point was targeted at dislocated workers from Tecumseh Products, it was open to any eligible customer. During the nine months this temporary access point was open, it served 2,047 customers.*

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## Rural One-Stop Networks

Among the five rural areas we visited, networks of One-Stop access points share a number of similarities and differences, both in terms of the mix of different types of access points and their locations. This section explores both of these subjects, beginning with an exploration of where access points are typically sited and the criteria used by local areas in determining those locations.

*With the exception of Southeast Georgia, all of the rural areas we visited have at least one access point in most counties.*

### **Locations of Access Points**

With the exception of Southeast Georgia, all of the rural areas we visited have at least one access point in most counties. In addition, in North Central Pennsylvania, Northern New Mexico and Region 4 Oregon, a majority of counties have at least one comprehensive center.

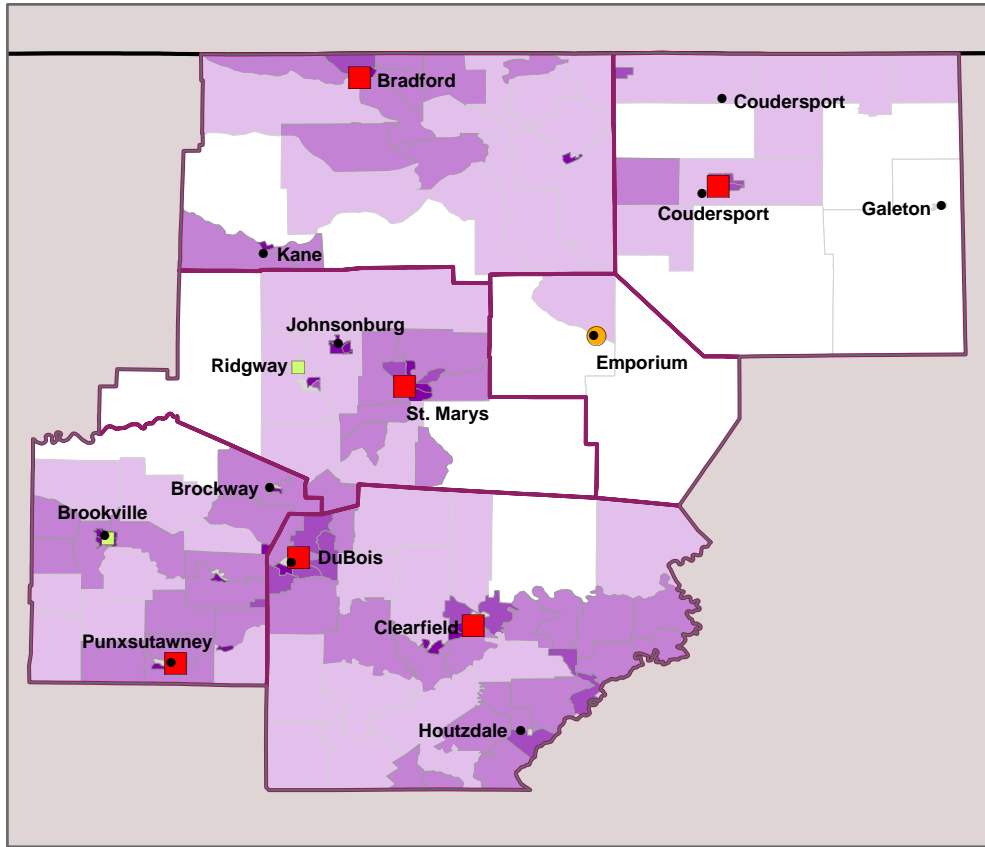
In all five local areas, access points are typically located in the largest communities, are often county seats. Exhibit III-2 displays this geographically. For example, North Central Pennsylvania has One-Stop access points located in most of its large communities around which Exhibit III-2 also shows that most access points in North Central Pennsylvania are also located in close proximity to the largest populations of low income people in each county, a characteristic that is also largely true for the other local areas.

Usually, comprehensive centers are located in a local area's largest cities, while affiliate and satellites are sited in smaller rural hubs. Computer-only access points are also sometimes located within the same cities as comprehensive centers, to provide residents of that city with additional access.

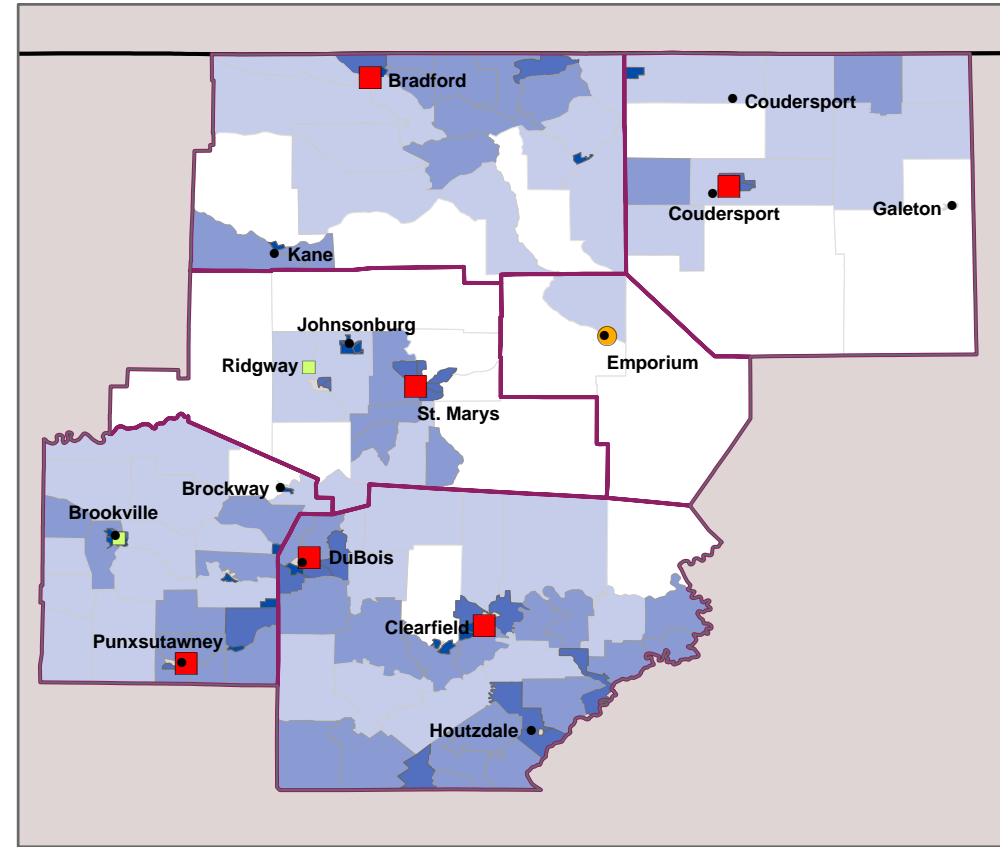
*Usually, comprehensive centers are located in a local area's largest cities, while affiliate and satellites are sited in smaller rural hubs.*

In addition to being situated in county population centers, most access points are also located in the heart of those communities. For example, many access points are located on or very near their host city's main thoroughfare. This central location also means that, if the city or county has a public transit system, access points are usually within easy walking distance of a bus stop.

Access Points and Population Density



Access Points and Density of Persons in Poverty



Legend

Access Point Types

- Enhanced Comp
- Basic Comp
- ▲ Affiliate
- Satellite
- Computer Only

Boundary Types

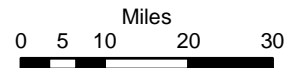
- LWIA boundaries
- County boundaries
- State boundaries

Persons per Square Mile  
(Block groups classified in quintiles.)

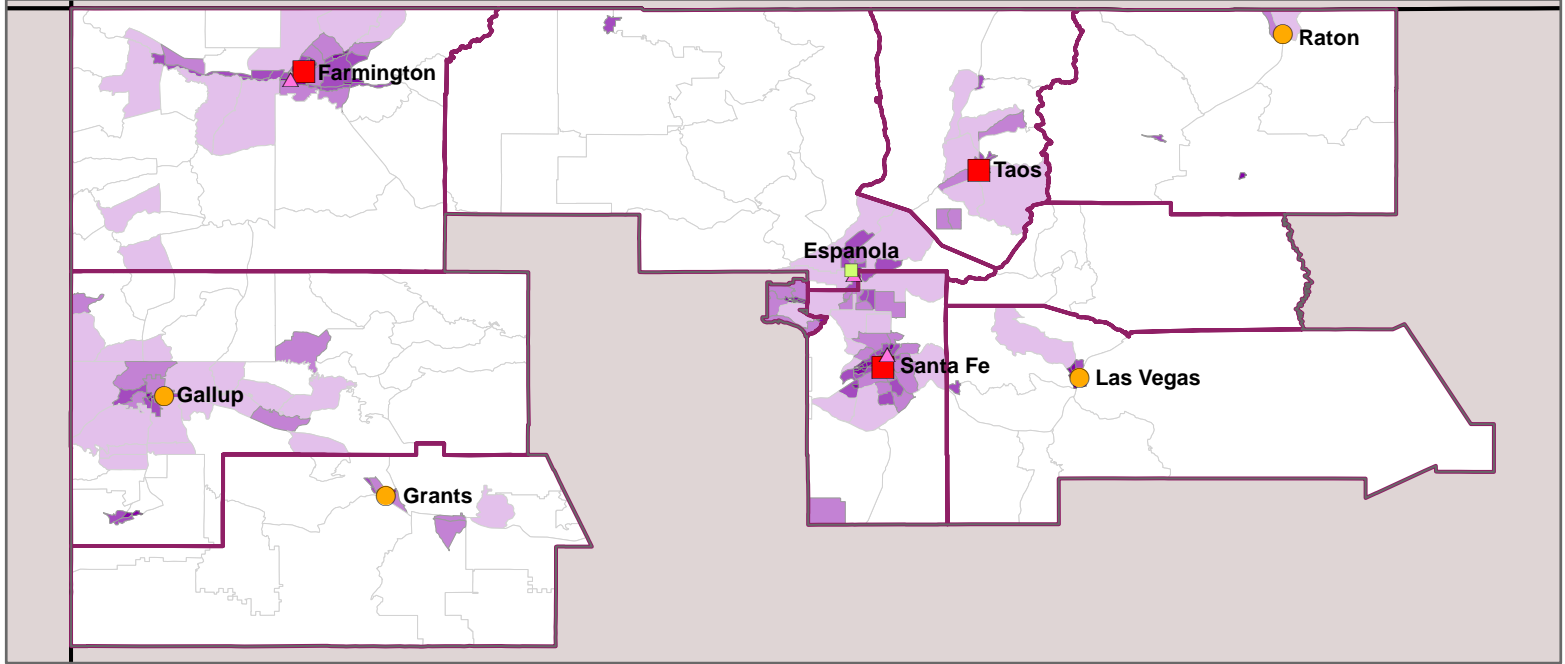
- 0.0 - 11.8
- 11.8 - 39.5
- 39.5 - 153.5
- 153.6 - 625.0
- 625.1 - 4940.0

Persons in Poverty per Square Mile  
(Block groups classified in quintiles.)

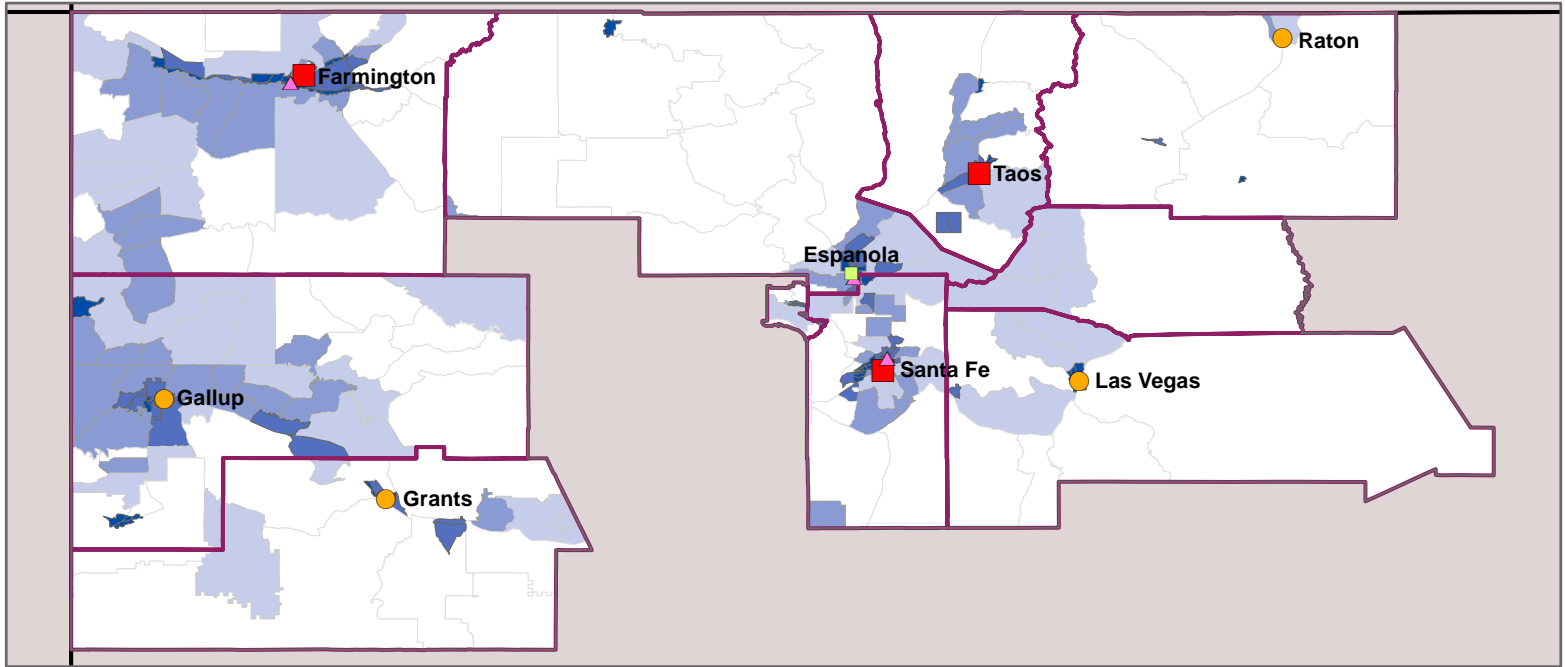
- 0.0 - 1.3
- 1.3 - 4.3
- 4.3 - 13.0
- 13.0 - 64.7
- 64.7 - 828.0



### Access Points and Population Density



### Access Points and Density of Persons in Poverty



### Legend

**Access Point Types**

- Enhanced Comp
- Basic Comp
- ▲ Affiliate
- Satellite
- Computer Only

**Boundary Types**

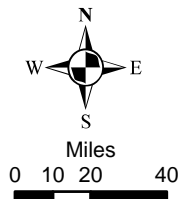
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**Persons per Square Mile  
(Block groups classified in quintiles.)**

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**Persons in Poverty per Square Mile  
(Block groups classified in quintiles.)**

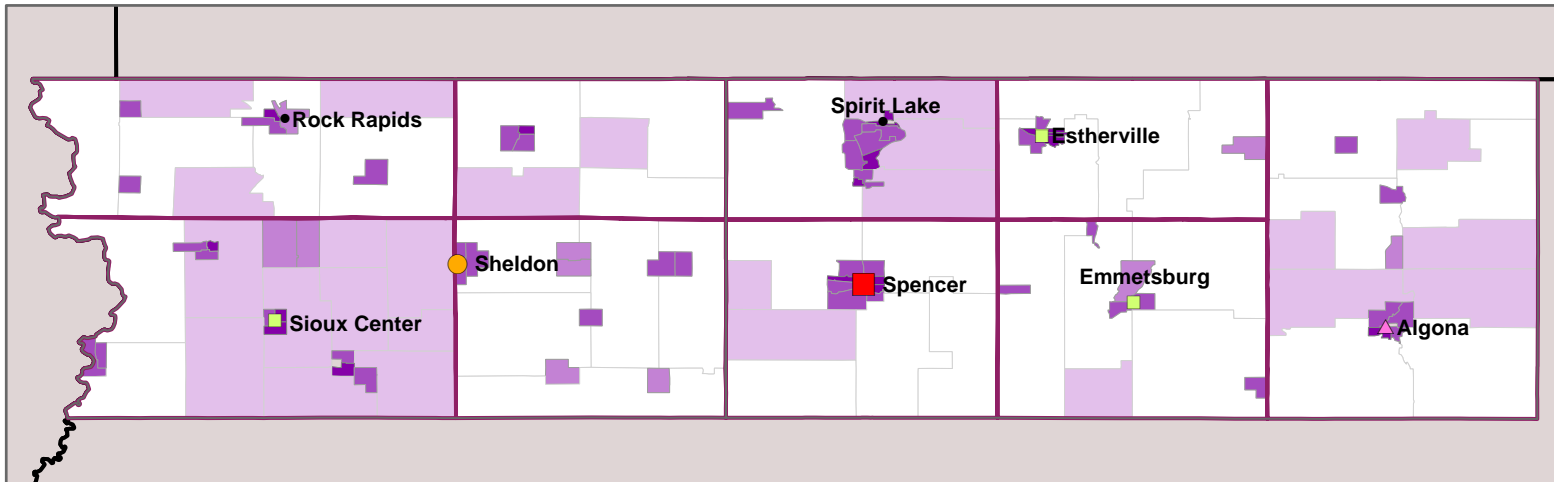
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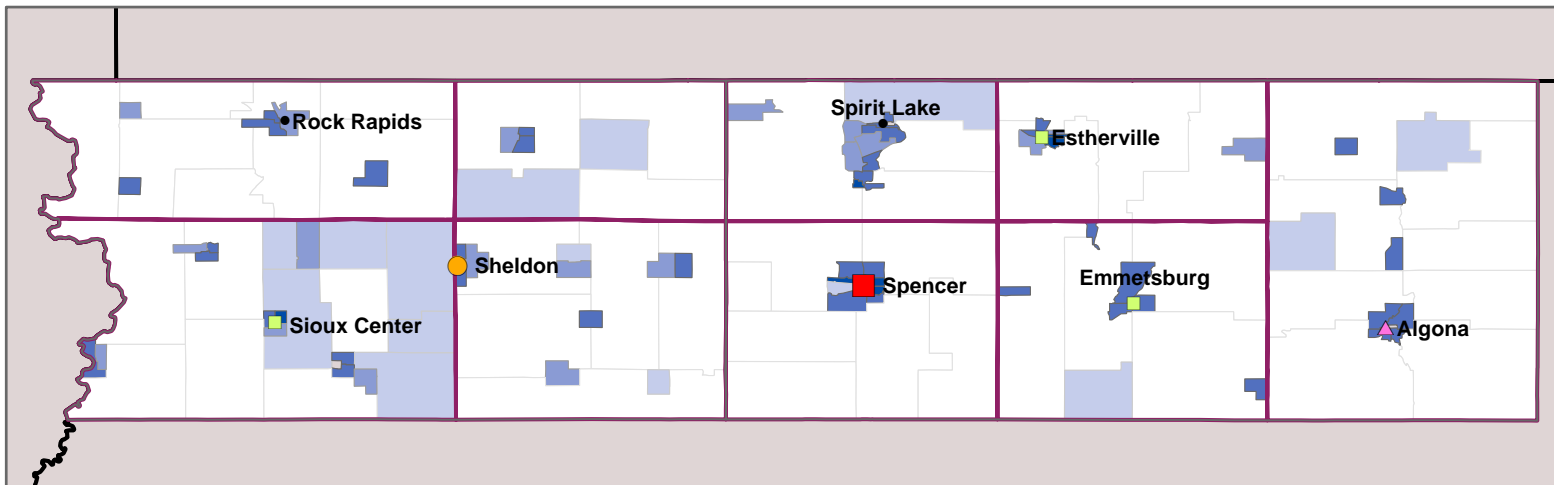
Maps created by Social Policy Research Associates, 2005.  
Sources are listed in Appendix B, Exhibit 6: Sources for Local Area Access Point Maps.



### Access Points and Population Density



### Access Points and Density of Persons in Poverty



#### Legend

##### Access Point Types

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- Basic Comp
- ▲ Affiliate
- Satellite
- Computer Only

##### Boundary Types

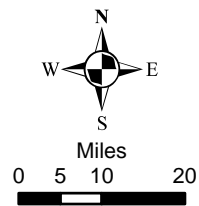
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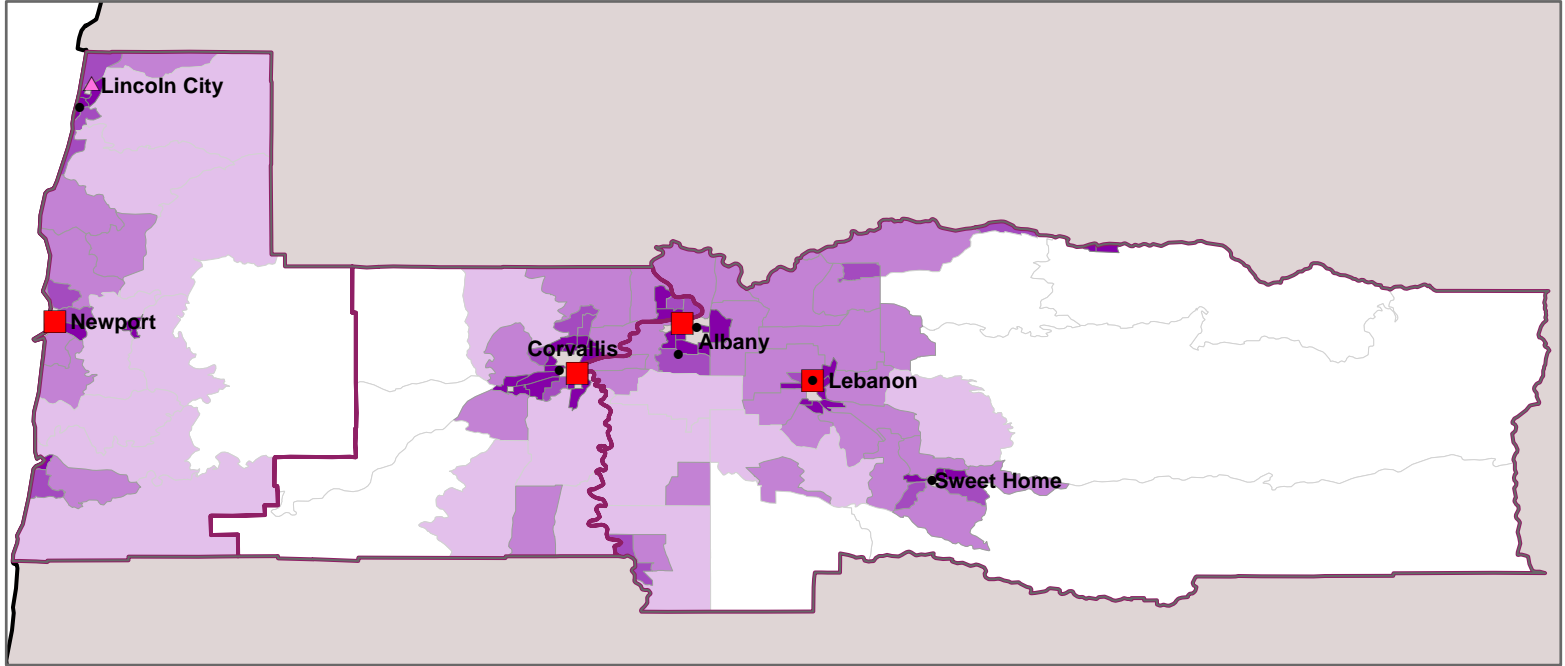
##### Persons in Poverty per Square Mile (Block groups classified in quintiles.)

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- 4.3 - 13.0
- 13.0 - 64.7
- 64.7 - 828.0

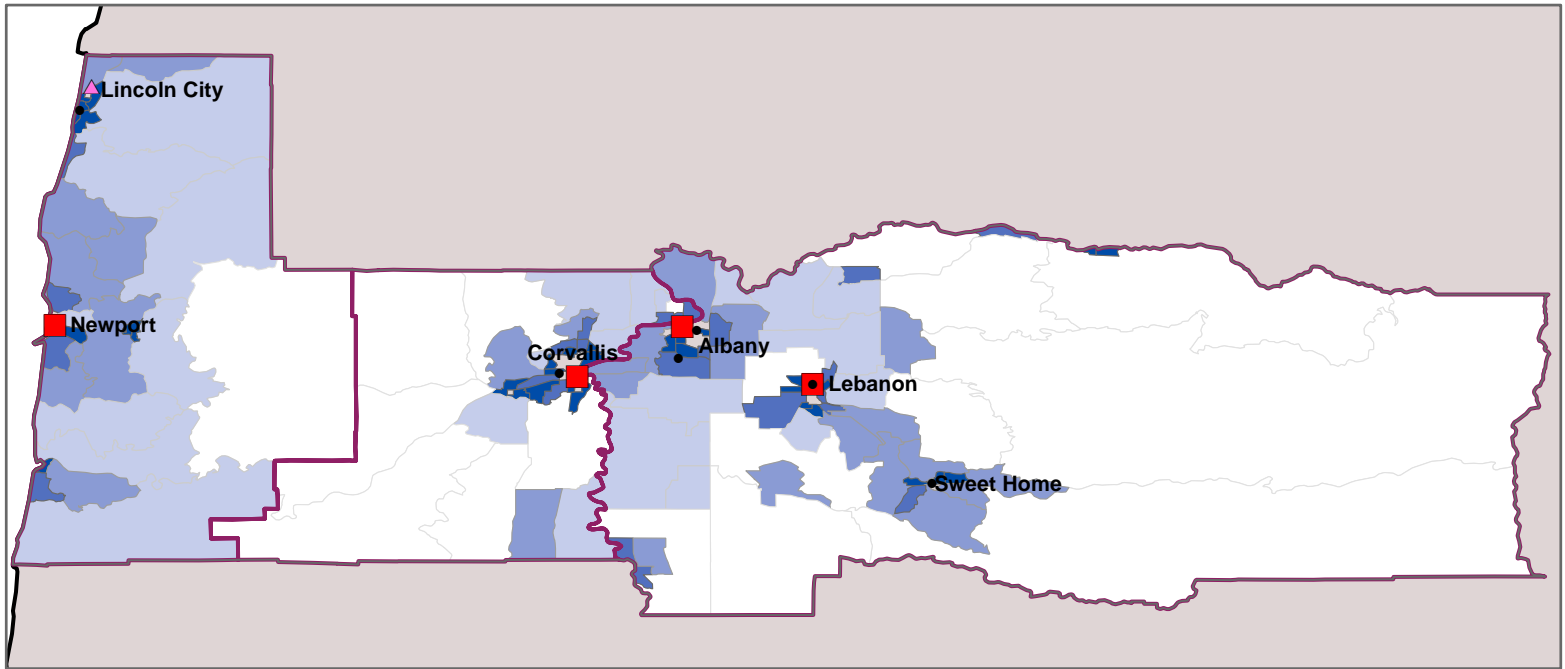


Maps created by Social Policy Research Associates, 2005.  
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### Access Points and Population Density



### Access Points and Density of Persons in Poverty



### Legend

#### Access Point Types

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- Basic Comp
- ▲ Affiliate
- Satellite
- Computer Only

#### Boundary Types

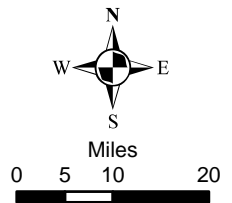
- LWIA boundaries
- County boundaries
- State boundaries

#### Persons per Square Mile (Block groups classified in quintiles.)

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- 625.1 - 4940.0

#### Persons in Poverty per Square Mile (Block groups classified in quintiles.)

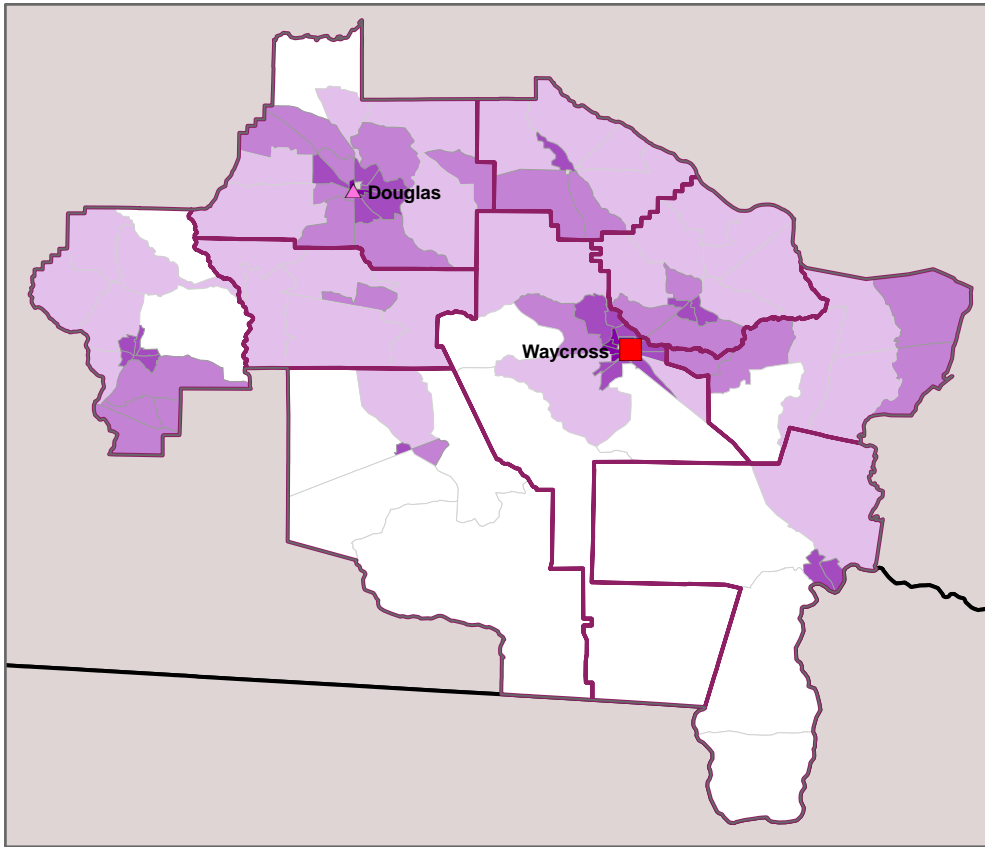
- 0.0 - 1.3
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- 64.7 - 828.0



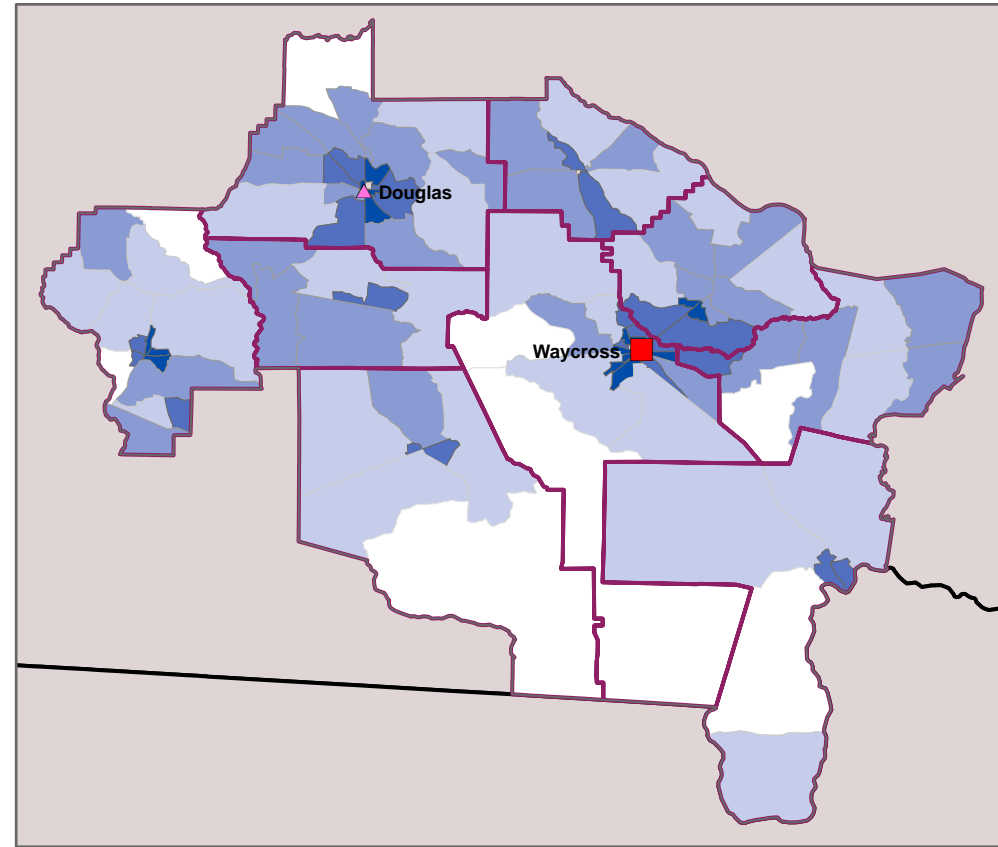
Maps created by Social Policy Research Associates, 2005.  
Sources are listed in Appendix B, Exhibit 6: Sources for Local Area Access Point Maps.

Southeast Georgia

Access Points and Population Density



Access Points and Density of Persons in Poverty



Legend

Access Point Types

- Enhanced Comp
- Basic Comp
- ▲ Affiliate
- Satellite
- Computer Only

Boundary Types

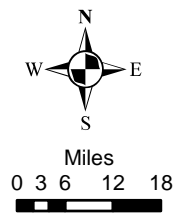
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Despite the many similarities between local areas in where access points are located, distances between access points vary. In Pennsylvania, Iowa, and Oregon, for instance, the average distance between cities with access points is about 24 miles (see Exhibit III-3). By contrast, in Northern New Mexico, the average distance between cities with access points is about 93 miles. Similarly, the local areas appear to vary in how well all major population clusters are covered. For example, in Southeast Georgia, a number of major clusters are quite far from the nearest access point of any type. By contrast, access seems much better in the remaining four areas.

**Exhibit III-3:  
Average Distance Between Access Points**

	<b>Average Distance Between Access Points</b>
North Central Pennsylvania	22 miles
Northern New Mexico	93 miles
Northwest Iowa	27 miles
Region 4 Oregon	24 miles
Southeast Georgia	46 miles*

*\*Not an average; actual distance between the two access points.*

Local area respondents identified a number of important criteria they attempt to follow when determining the best location for access points. The most important criterion noted by all five areas is to locate access points within their largest cities or towns. In this way, the access points are situated close to the majority of the area’s residents. In addition, the largest communities in an area typically are home to other important services such as doctor’s offices, banks and major retail establishments, which rural residents have to visit periodically.

*The most important criterion noted by all five areas is to locate access points within their largest cities or towns.*

Another criterion mentioned by some local area respondents is to locate access points in city or town centers. They noted that this is important because it ensures good visibility for access points, provides many residents the option of walking to an access point,

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and makes it much more likely that access points are close to bus stops.

However, other respondents asserted that locating access points downtown is less important than other criteria because the small size of most of these communities mitigates the effect on accessibility of a downtown location. Instead, these respondents noted the importance of finding locations that are affordable, have sufficient space for all access point activities and partners, or are located near the offices of important partners. Indeed, several access points have moved from downtown locations to be able to afford larger spaces or be located next door or across the street from partner offices.

*Respondents noted the importance of finding locations that are affordable, have sufficient space for all access point activities and partners, or are located near the offices of important partners.*

Finally, in addition to these locational criteria, politics also plays a role in where access points are located. Several respondents reported that local elected officials are often very interested in ensuring that their jurisdictions have at least one access point. For example, in one local area, the reason why one of the access points is not located in a county seat is because of the influence of a powerful local elected official who pushed for it to be located in his own jurisdiction.

Typically, the local areas did not report using a formal process to determine the location of One-Stop access points. One reason for the lack of formal site selection processes is that the majority of access points have been in the same cities or town in approximately the same locations for many years. Because these long-time locations are judged to be generally effective or the sites are locked in because of long-term leases or building ownership, there has been no need for a new selection process.

*Politics sometimes plays a role in where access points are located.*

### **Types of Access Points in Networks**

In addition to varying locations for access points, the types of access points included in the five rural areas' One-Stop networks also varied extensively. For example, as demonstrated in Exhibit III-4, the only type of access point we found in all five areas is enhanced comprehensive centers, although the number ranged

from a high of six in North Central Pennsylvania to a low of one in Southeast Georgia and Northwest Iowa. The numbers of other types of access points in each local area also varied widely.

**Exhibit III-4:  
Number & Types of Non-Temporary Access Points in Study Sites**

<u>Local Area</u>	<u>Enhanced Comprehensive</u>	<u>Basic Comprehensive</u>	<u>Affiliate</u>	<u>Satellite</u>	<u>Computer-Only</u>	<u>Total</u>
Southeast Georgia	1	0	1	0	0	2
Northwest Iowa	1	1	1	3	2	8
Northern New Mexico	3	4	3	1	0	11
Region 4 Oregon	4	0	1	0	6	11
North Central Pennsylvania	6	1	0	2	12	21
<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>53</b>

*Data is as of December 2004.*

Despite this variation in the One-Stop network configuration, all five local areas are focusing their networks on comprehensive centers rather than on smaller staffed access points such as affiliates and satellites. For example, 21 of the 33 staffed access points we encountered (excluding temporary access points) are either basic or enhanced comprehensive centers. Only two local areas in our study—Northwest Iowa and Northern New Mexico—have more than one or two satellite or affiliate sites. Local managers in Northwest Iowa explained that one reason for this area’s relatively high number is an Iowa law that requires ES to maintain a physical access point in each county, but they felt that staff from some of these smaller offices could probably be more efficiently deployed to the local area’s enhanced comprehensive center. Likewise, respondents from North Central Pennsylvania, which has two satellite offices, indicated that, after experimenting with smaller access points, they are focusing more of their resources on fewer, more comprehensive centers. One-Stop managers in Southeast Georgia also said that they are seeking state

*All five local areas are focusing their networks on comprehensive centers rather than on smaller staffed access points such as affiliates and satellites.*

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funding to move their affiliate office in Douglas into a larger building so they can have more co-located partners and turn it into a comprehensive center. Only one area—Northern New Mexico—is actively looking to open or re-open several small offices, although two of these are to provide better access for the local Native American population that prefers for cultural reasons to seek services on their reservations.

This focus on more concentrated One-Stop networks composed of fewer comprehensive centers represents a shift from the findings of a previous SPR report on rural One-Stop centers, which found that rural areas often developed One-Stop networks primarily made up of satellite and affiliate offices. Respondents at that time said that their local areas did not have resources for more than one or two comprehensive centers and relying solely on those centers would force customers to travel very long distances to access One-Stop system services. They argued that such travel would be particularly difficult for customers who lacked reliable cars, since public transit in rural areas is either extremely limited or non-existent. These respondents, while admitting that these small access points could not provide customers with all of the services they needed, emphasized that affiliates and satellites could at least start the process of getting customers' needs met by providing core services and referrals.<sup>6</sup>

However, according to local area respondents we interviewed for this study, a shift to fewer but more comprehensive centers may be underway. A primary reason is that comprehensive centers may ultimately be more convenient than satellites of affiliates, because customers can get all of their needs met in one location. Respondents argued that, because so few services are available in small access points, most customers end up having to drive to more comprehensive access points anyway. Thus, a network of many small access points, they feel, is actually less efficient for

*This focus on more concentrated One-Stop networks composed of fewer comprehensive centers represents a shift from the findings of a previous SPR report on rural One-Stop centers, which found that rural areas often developed One-Stop networks primarily made up of satellite and affiliate offices.*

*“Other areas say they have a center in every county, but when you look at it [the center], there are not many services there.”  
Respondent in Southeast Georgia*

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customers. As respondents in Southeast Georgia put it, “Other areas say they have a center in every county, but when you look at it [the center], there are not many services there.”

Although having fewer, more comprehensive One-Stop access points forces customers to travel further to reach the nearest access point, local area respondents felt that this would not seriously affect accessibility. The reason they gave is that “rural people are used to driving” to the larger cities in their areas to meet most of their service needs, including medical or dental care and shopping. As long as the One-Stop system’s access points are located in each local area’s major administrative and retail hubs, local staff emphasized their belief that customers are able to readily overcome transportation barriers to reach those locations, either by driving themselves or catching a ride with a relative or friend.

A few respondents also noted that the increasing availability of core services on the Internet—which more and more rural customers can access from home—is lessening the need for smaller access points. They argued that, because many of the services available at these small access points are now available on-line, there is less need for local areas to stretch their limited staffing to cover numerous satellite or affiliate offices.

Respondents in several local areas also mentioned a few other drawbacks to relying on large networks of affiliate and satellite offices. One issue that was mentioned by respondents in both Southeast Georgia and North Central Pennsylvania is that it is harder to supervise and train staff who are stretched across many different locations.

Another challenge particular to satellite offices is that the inconvenience of their limited hours sometimes pushes customers to ignore them, even when they are nearby, and simply drive to the

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*The increasing availability of core services on the Internet—which more and more rural customers can access from home—is lessening the need for smaller access points.*

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<sup>6</sup> *Rural One-Stops: Issues in WIA Implementation.* Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Kate Dunham. Social Policy Research Associates. January 2003.



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nearest comprehensive center. Furthermore, because they are so small, satellite offices are also less visible to customers.

Consequently, some satellites have very limited client flow compared to comprehensive centers. Thus, deploying staff to these small access points may result in staff serving fewer customers than if they were located at comprehensive centers.

Finally, because satellites and affiliates have few or no partners co-located, referrals are critical to ensuring that customers receive the services they need. However, because staff who are not co-located have fewer opportunities to work together and get to know each other, there is often less synergy between partner staff and consequently referral systems do not work as well.

In addition to these challenges with the smallest staffed access points, two of the three local areas with computer-only access points indicated these access points also have serious drawbacks. One such drawback is that they are simply not used very much. Local respondents speculated that this lack of usage stems from the fact that many rural residents increasingly have Internet access at home. Consequently, customers have no need to go to an office just to use the Internet to connect to the state employment security agency's website. On the flip side, many of the customers who do visit computer-only access points need more assistance than can be provided to them over the Internet. However, host agency staff are not trained on how to assist customers beyond giving basic instructions on how to use the computer and ensuring that customers can access the proper website.

As a consequence of these twin facts, in the words of the director of North Central Pennsylvania's workforce investment board, many of these computer-only access points have basically "died on the vine" as customers have stopped using them. North Central Pennsylvania originally invested heavily in computer-only access points because it thought that this type of access point would use very few resources and would be self-sustaining once established. However, the director said that the local area has now realized that for these access points to work, it would need to provide much

*Many of these computer-only access points have basically "died on the vine" as customers have stopped using them.*

*For these access points to work, the local area would need to provide much more extensive support and training for hosts, something it does not plan to do because of its current policy of focusing resources on the local area's comprehensive centers.*

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more extensive support and training for hosts, something it does not plan to do because of its current policy of focusing resources on the local area's comprehensive centers.

By contrast, Region 4 Oregon reported fairly high usage for its six computer kiosks. One reason for the greater success of Oregon's computer-only access points may be because they are designed with an interface that allows them to be operated without any assistance or supervision. For this reason, they can be situated in locations with extended weekend and evening hours such as supermarkets, thus providing customers with more opportunities to use them.

## **Supplementary Strategies for Providing Rural Customers with Access to Workforce Services**

Despite the reassurances of local area respondents that rural residents are able to successfully travel to local One-Stop access points, many rural residents face serious transportation barriers in each of the five local areas we visited. Most importantly, due to extremely limited or nonexistent public transportation<sup>7</sup> and long distances between access points, the primary means of traveling to One-Stop access points is by driving, but as many as 57 percent of poor rural households do not own a car.<sup>8</sup> In addition, even those with cars encounter the obligation of paying for repairs and gasoline, which are prohibitively expensive for some.

Without access to a private vehicle or the ability to drive, rural residents are left with few options for traveling to access points. While in some cases, residents can use expensive private taxi

*The primary means of traveling to One-Stop access points is by driving, but as many as 57 percent of poor rural households do not own a car.*

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<sup>7</sup> For example, in Southeast Georgia, only one county out of nine has a public transit system, while in Northwest Iowa, some towns are served by public transit only once or twice a month.

<sup>8</sup> Rucker, George. *Status Report on Public Transportation in Rural America, 1994.* Rural Transit Assistance Program, Federal Transit Administration.

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services or public transit systems,<sup>9</sup> most of the time they are left with no alternative but to find rides with relatives, neighbors or friends. This ride-sharing, while often successful, is not particularly reliable, especially for on-going activities such as workshops.

Because of these serious transportation barriers faced by many rural customers, local areas have developed a number of supplementary strategies to ensure customer access to One-Stop access point services. These strategies include providing customers with some form of transportation assistance, providing services over the Internet or by phone, and having staff travel to customer locations. Each of these strategies is discussed in more detail below.

## **Transportation Assistance to Customers**

Rural areas use different strategies to provide transportation assistance to customers. These strategies include providing transportation vouchers, encouraging customers to form carpools, and using public vans to transport customers.

The most common strategy used by rural local areas is to provide customers with transportation vouchers to cover the cost of gas or vehicle maintenance. These vouchers are most commonly provided by TANF agencies or local community or faith-based social services organizations. Sometimes, these same organizations will also provide customers with subsidies to cover the cost of making necessary vehicle repairs.

Another less common strategy used by some rural areas is to encourage customers to form carpools. For example, One-Stop staff in Region 4 Oregon refer customers to a toll-free, state-run carpool hotline. One-Stop staff in Northwest Iowa also informally advise customers to form carpools.

*Because of these serious transportation barriers faced by many rural customers, local areas have developed a number of supplementary strategies to ensure customer access to One-Stop access point services.*

*The most common strategy used by rural local areas is to provide customers with transportation vouchers to cover the cost of gas or vehicle maintenance.*

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<sup>9</sup> In North Central Pennsylvania, the cost of using the local public transit system can be as much as \$10 one-way to travel a fairly short distance.

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Finally, some rural local areas arrange for customers to be transported to services in public vans. For example, some areas have worked out arrangements with other public programs such as Head Start to make use of idle school buses.

Unfortunately, there are significant challenges related to the use of these strategies. First, covering rural customers' travel costs through transportation vouchers can be very expensive. For example, the WIA provider in Northwest Iowa reported that transportation costs for customers in training could run as high as \$3,000 per customer. Due to this costliness, many rural areas, including both North Central Pennsylvania and Northern New Mexico, feel that they cannot afford to use this strategy.

*In Southeast Georgia, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider may spend as much as \$2,000 in transportation subsidies for a single customer to attend a nine-month training.*

The use of carpools is also a problematic strategy for providing customers with transportation assistance. The primary challenge with using carpools is that customers who live near each other rarely have similar schedules. Liability issues are another challenge. Because of concerns that they will be held liable for injuries that occur while customers carpool, many workforce programs are unwilling to formally arrange carpools. Without staff assistance with carpool arrangements, many local areas have found that relatively few customers are motivated enough to set up a carpool on their own.

Liability issues and scheduling problems also make the use of vans belonging to other public programs problematic. As with carpools, the use of public vans requires that rural workforce development customers who live near each other have relatively similar schedules. In addition, the start and end times for workforce development activities, such as occupational training, cannot coincide with the start and end times of programs operated by the public agency to whom the vans belong.

*Respondents from all five local areas asserted that Internet services have played a critical role in increasing rural customers' access to core job seeker and employer services.*

## **Internet Services**

Because of the challenges to providing transportation assistance, most rural areas also rely on other supplemental means of providing customers with access to services. One increasingly

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important method is providing services via the Internet. Indeed, respondents from all five local areas asserted that Internet services have played a critical role in increasing rural customers' access to services, particularly core job seeker and employer services. In addition, they also noted that the provision of services over the Internet frees up limited staff time and allows staff to focus on those customers who need more help. They see increasing reliance on the Internet as inevitable in light of continued budget and staffing cuts, improvements in technology, and the increasing Internet-savvy of rural users.<sup>10</sup>

The primary provider of Internet services in these five local areas is the state employment security agency. For example, three of the five rural areas we visited do not even have their own customer-focused local website,<sup>11</sup> but rather direct customers to their state employment security agency's website. According to respondents from the three areas without a local website, the primary reason for their heavy reliance on the state for Internet services is the expense of developing and maintaining a local customer-oriented website. In addition, these respondents argued that their states' websites are very extensive and accessible to readers of other languages, and they do not feel that they can significantly improve on the state's efforts.

Some local areas did report problems related to relying on the state to develop and maintain Internet services. One major drawback is that state websites typically contain very little specific information on local access points, services or partners. For example, the Georgia Department of Labor provides only the address, contact information and a map for the Waycross and Douglas access points

*Local respondents see increasing reliance on the Internet as inevitable in light of continued budget and staffing cuts, improvements in technology, and the increasing Internet-savvy of rural users.*

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<sup>10</sup> Recent data from the U.S. Commerce Department showed that Internet use among people in rural households has grown at an average annual rate of 24 percent, several percentage points faster than for people in urban households. *A Nation Online: How Americans are Expanding their Use of the Internet*. U.S. Department of Commerce. 2002.

<sup>11</sup> All five have a local board website, but these websites typically contain only information on local board operation rather than on services.

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in Southeast Georgia, but does not have any information on hours of operation, specific services provided at those One-Stops, or co-located partners. Another challenge is that local One-Stop partners—including the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider—have little or no input on the development or maintenance of state websites. This typically results in state websites having a heavy focus on state-operated programs, particularly programs operated by the state employment security agency. For example, one state website has no mention of One-Stop centers operated by the local board-designated One-Stop operator, referring customers only to One-Stop access points operated by the state employment security agency.

*Although Internet use among rural households is increasing rapidly, still only a little over half of all rural residents report using the Internet.*

Moreover, despite the Internet's growing role in improving access for rural customers, there are a number of reasons why services provided on-line are still problematic for many rural customers. First, although Internet use among rural households is increasing rapidly, still only a little over half of all rural residents report using the Internet.<sup>12</sup> In addition, certain groups that may need One-Stop services the most, such as those who are poorer, less educated, or members of minority groups, are even less likely to use the Internet.<sup>13</sup> In some extremely remote areas of the five local areas we visited, such as on the Navajo Reservation in New Mexico, rural residents may lack even the basic means to use the Internet, such as phone lines or electricity. Thus, over-reliance on the Internet for service delivery in rural areas may result in much lower access for some.

Even for residents with access to the Internet, reliance on online services can be frustrating. One reason for this is that high-speed

*Even for residents with access to the Internet, reliance on online services can be frustrating.*

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<sup>12</sup> Although Internet use in rural areas is approaching the national average, in 2002 it was still only 52.9 percent, nearly 5 percentage points lower than in urban areas. Op. Cit.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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Internet access is not available in many rural areas.<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, a higher percentage of rural Internet users than their urban counterparts are forced to access the web via slow dial-up connections. For example, in 2002, the U.S. Commerce Department reported that 87.8 percent of rural households who used the Internet at home connected to the web via a low speed form of access such as dial-up—nine percentage points higher than among urban households.<sup>15</sup>

Using the Internet is also sometimes more expensive in rural areas. For example, some rural residents have to dial long distance to access an Internet Service Provider (ISP). ISPs also sometimes charge rural residents more for their services because of the higher cost of operating in rural areas.<sup>16</sup>

Further some local area respondents asserted that rural residents are less comfortable with technology than their urban counterparts and thus may simply prefer to receive assistance from staff rather than via a computer.

Finally, One-Stop staff in North Central Pennsylvania pointed out that another drawback to reliance on Internet services is that access point staff do not have the opportunity to get to know their customers as well, something they see as an important benefit to service delivery in a rural area.

## Services over the Phone

A third supplementary strategy used to ensure rural customers with access to services is telephone assistance. One-Stop staff emphasized that they try to do as much as possible over the phone

*One-Stop staff emphasized that they try to do as much as possible over the phone so that customers only have to travel to a One-Stop access point when absolutely necessary.*

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<sup>14</sup> *Rising to Meet the Digital Challenge in Rural Communities: A Growing Divide?* Christian Tscheschlok. Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. Rural Research Report, Volume 12, Issue 3, Spring 2001.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> *Rural Internet Connectivity*. Sharon Strover. Rural Policy Research Institute. Presentation at the Telecommunications Research and Policy Conference, September, 1999.

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so that customers only have to travel to a One-Stop access point when absolutely necessary. This focus on telephone services is particularly common for job search and referrals, employer services and unemployment insurance (UI) services.

Job referrals are one of the services often provided at least partially over the telephone. For example, while many job-seekers conduct job searches on-line with their state's electronic job matching system, many online job referrals also require customers to contact a local One-Stop access point. While this contact might often occur in-person in urban areas, in rural areas telephone contact is quite common. Indeed, One-Stop center staff in Northwest Iowa reported that fielding calls from job-seekers interested in jobs they saw on the Internet is a frequent occurrence.

*The majority of interaction between employers and workforce system staff is over the phone.*

Another set of services commonly provided over the telephone is employer services. Just as we found in an earlier study of business services under the Workforce Investment Act,<sup>17</sup> respondents in each of these five areas reported that the majority of interaction between employers and workforce system staff is over the phone. According to local area staff we interviewed for the study of WIA business services, this focus on contact by phone stems from the fact that most business customers are too busy to come into a One-Stop access point on a regular basis, but also want more customized assistance than can be provided online. Use of the phone to provide employer services is even greater in rural areas, where many employers are located relatively far away from One-Stop access points, thus making in-person visits even more inconvenient.

*In four of the five states we visited for this study, customers can file UI claims by contacting a centralized call center.*

The other service area where phone contact has become the norm is in filing a UI claim. As discussed in Chapter II, states have increasingly shifted administration of their UI programs to call

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<sup>17</sup> *Business as Partner and Customer under WIA: A Study of Innovative Practices.* A Report Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration as part of the National Evaluation



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centers. Although this reliance on call centers has typically been initiated due to budget shortfalls, another rationale is to provide customers with more convenient access to the unemployment compensation system. Thus, in four of the five states we visited for this study,<sup>18</sup> customers can file claims by contacting a centralized call center (usually via a local or toll-free number). In fact, in three of those four states, UI-related services are no longer available at local One-Stop access points.

Although providing services by phone is another important way that rural One-Stop systems try to provide customers with access to services, the phone is often not an efficient way to deal with complicated issues. When faced with issues such as complex eligibility questions, it can be far easier for both customers and staff to address those issues in person. This is one reason why so many job-seeker customers and One-Stop staff interviewed for this study criticized the fact that UI issues are no longer handled at the local level. Rather than coming to a local office to meet with staff for half an hour to work out UI-related challenges, customers reported spending lengthy and frustrating periods on the phone. These customers and staff asserted that the move to call centers has made UI services both less accessible and less efficient.

### **Staff Travel to Customers**

Another strategy for ensuring that rural customers have access to workforce development services is for One-Stop staff to travel to meet with customers near their homes, in their workplaces, in schools, at partner offices and even in local restaurants or cafes. This strategy lessens the transportation burden on customers, making it easier for them to keep appointments. Staff travel is particularly common for WIA Title I B program staff and staff from programs serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers. As one

*One-Stop staff travel to meet with customers near their homes, in their workplaces, in schools, at partner offices and even in local restaurants or cafes.*

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of the Implementation of WIA. Kate Dunham, Jeff Salzman and Vinz Koller. Social Policy Research Associates. June 2004

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rural WIA administrator put it, “My staff have to go where their customers are and sometimes that means meeting in the county courthouse building in a borrowed office and other times in a booth at the local café.”

However, there are several major challenges to this approach as well. One such challenge is a lack of funding for staff travel budgets. In addition, traveling to meet with customers means that staff spend a great deal of their time behind the wheel rather than meeting with customers or completing paperwork at their desks, a particularly difficult problem in rural areas where the distances staff have to travel are likely great and where staffing is limited. Extensive travel is also hard on staff, especially during poor weather conditions, and may lead to challenges in retaining staff.

*“My staff have to go where their customers are and sometimes that means meeting in the county courthouse building in a borrowed office and other times in a booth at the local café.”*

*Rural WIA Administrator*

## **Outreach and Marketing**

In addition to utilizing supplemental service delivery strategies, outreach and marketing are also critical to ensuring that local residents can access services. Unless residents know about services and locations, they cannot access them. Despite limited budgets, all five local areas conduct at least some general marketing and outreach activities. In addition, to counteract serious access problems faced by certain special populations, some local areas have also created special outreach strategies for those groups.

*Small or nonexistent marketing budgets dictate that general outreach and marketing are largely based on low cost strategies, such as presentations to partners and local organizations, Internet websites, and advertising on local radio stations.*

## **General Outreach and Marketing**

In the five rural local areas we visited, small or nonexistent marketing budgets dictate that general outreach and marketing are largely based on low cost strategies, such as presentations to partners and local organizations, Internet websites, and advertising on local radio stations.

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<sup>18</sup> All but Georgia allow initial claims to be filed remotely, either by phone or via the Internet. Even Georgia allows subsequent UI-related communication to take place by phone or on-line.

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One of the most common and successful types of marketing in rural areas is when One-Stop staff make presentations on One-Stop services to local groups and organizations, such as churches and social services organizations. These presentations often result in increased customer referrals to the One-Stop system from these organizations.

Internet websites, discussed previously, are another important form of marketing for these local areas. Marketing through the web is free for three of the five local areas since the state provides information on local area access point networks on the state employment security agency's website. But even for the other two local areas, the cost of developing and maintaining their local websites is relatively cheap. For example, in Northern New Mexico, the One-Stop operator developed its website in-house for a fairly minimal cost, while in Region 4 Oregon, the cost of developing a local customer-oriented website was \$22,500.

Although the five rural areas can afford little paid advertising, several do advertise on local radio stations, either by purchasing time or through public service announcements. Local area respondents said that local radio is a very effective and relatively inexpensive way to reach local residents. Other types of advertising used by at least one local area in our study include billboards, local newspapers, and public service announcements on local cable TV.

For employers, the local areas typically conduct marketing efforts through presentations to local business organizations such as chambers of commerce, manufacturing groups, rotary clubs, and economic development organizations. Several also partner with local economic development agencies to make sure that One-Stop materials are provided to employers interested in re-locating to the area. Other employer outreach methods used by individual local areas include mass mailings, surveys conducted at business events, and cold calls to employers to set up meetings to discuss available services.

*For employers, the local areas typically conduct marketing efforts through presentations to local business organizations such as chambers of commerce, manufacturing groups, rotary clubs, and economic development organizations.*

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One characteristic of these areas that has made marketing easier is that an overwhelming majority of staffed access points are housed in former Employment Service or UI offices, many of which have been in the same location for years. For example, in Region 4 Oregon, four of five staffed One-Stop access points are located in former ES/UI offices, all of which have been in the same location for a number of years. The stable presence of these access points is a common reason for how customers know of their existence. For example, a typical answer from customers in resource rooms about how they learned about One-Stop access points was that they had “always known” about the local “unemployment” or “employment” office. Indeed, because of the importance of UI in drawing customers to access points, the shift in UI filing to call centers or via the Internet has caused a significant drop—estimated by one access point manager to be as much as 33 percent—in the number of customers coming in to One-Stop access points. This has led the staff at one access point to conduct outreach to UI claimants to make sure they know about the available services.

*One characteristic of these areas that has made marketing easier is that an overwhelming majority of staffed access points are housed in former Employment Service or UI offices, many of which have been in the same location for years.*

Another drawback to One-Stop access points’ being known as “employment” or “unemployment” offices is that this reputation drives away “universal” customers who are not unemployed. In addition, other respondents said that this reputation results in many customers’ being unaware of the many other services available at access points, such as training.

*A typical answer from customers in resource rooms about how they learned about One-Stop access points was that they had “always known” about the local “unemployment” or “employment” office.*

## **Outreach Challenges and Strategies for Special Populations**

Due to community or cultural norms, certain special populations face additional barriers in accessing services in rural areas.

Among the five local areas we visited for our study, the main groups that were noted to face these types of barriers are limited English-speaking Hispanics and Native Americans.

One group that was noted as less likely to use One-Stop services in three of the five local areas is limited English-speaking Hispanics. As noted in Chapter II, Hispanics represent a new and rapidly growing population in many rural areas, including Region 4

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Oregon, Southeast Georgia and Northwest Iowa. Despite this growth in population, local area respondents said that limited English speaking Hispanic customers are less likely to access One-Stop services because they are too busy working long hours, have a basic distrust of government and a fear that no One-Stop staff will speak Spanish. Many of these potential customers are also migrant and seasonal farmworkers who face additional difficulties in accessing services due to their great mobility.

Because of these difficulties, two of the local areas we visited—Region 4 Oregon and Southeast Georgia—have developed special strategies for reaching their growing populations of limited English speaking Hispanic customers. One of the main strategies for improving Hispanic customers’ access to services is to hire staff who are bilingual in Spanish. For example, Region 4 Oregon has at least one bilingual (Spanish-English) staff member assigned to each staffed access point, while in Southeast Georgia both of the area’s access points have at least one bilingual staff person. These bilingual staff are then assigned to work with Hispanics when they come to access services.

In addition, both Region 4 Oregon and Southeast Georgia have One-Stop partners who send their staff out into the local Hispanic community to provide services and develop relationships with potential customers. For instance, in Region 4 Oregon, ES has a staff person who is assigned to visit factories and farms to meet with limited English-speaking Hispanic workers. Once these workers get to know her and the services she offers, they are then sometimes willing to visit her at an access point. In Southeast Georgia, staff from the local National Farmworker Jobs Program grantee, Telamon, also try to spend time in places frequented by limited English-speaking Hispanic farmworkers, such as churches, hair salons and even bars, to meet with them and let them know about available services. This strategy is similar to what a recent study of MSFW customers and One-Stops found, noting that it is

*Limited English speaking Hispanic customers are less likely to access One-Stop services because they are too busy working long hours, have a basic distrust of government and a fear that no One-Stop staff will speak Spanish.*

*In Region 4 Oregon, ES has a staff person who is assigned to visit to factories and farms to meet with limited English-speaking Hispanic workers.*

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critical to conduct outreach and recruitment activities aimed at building trust with farmworkers.<sup>19</sup>

An additional strategy employed by Region 4 Oregon to increase the number of limited English-speaking Hispanics who access One-Stop services is to develop partnerships with local social service organizations that have extensive ties with the Hispanic community. For example, in Newport, Oregon, the enhanced comprehensive center has close ties with a local organization called Centro do Ayuda (Help Center). As a result of this partnership, many limited English-speaking Hispanic customers are referred to the One-Stop center for services.

However, a few local area respondents asserted that these strategies have been unsuccessful in improving access to One-Stop services for limited English-speaking Hispanic customers. One criticism leveled by these respondents is that, despite efforts to bring on more bilingual staff, there are still too few Spanish-speaking staff at One-Stop access points. These critics also asserted that, in addition to being bilingual, these staff also need to have an understanding of Hispanic culture and how it might impact workforce development service delivery issues. Furthermore, because of its effectiveness in reaching this community, these respondents urged for more One-Stop staff to be assigned to do outreach in the Hispanic community. They said that because so little outreach is currently being conducted, few limited English-speaking Hispanics know about available services. Finally, these critics pushed for more collaboration regarding outreach strategies among One-Stop partners who serve this community, such as between WIA, ES and local or state NFJP grantees.

According to respondents in two local areas, Native Americans are also less likely to access One-Stop services due to cultural and language differences. For example, in Northern New Mexico, a member of the Santa Clara Pueblo who is also on the local

*Respondents urged for more One-Stop staff to be assigned to do outreach in the Hispanic community to ensure that limited English-speaking Hispanics know about available services.*

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<sup>19</sup> Serving Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers through the One-Stop System:

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workforce investment board said that members of her tribe are less likely to make use of workforce development services that are not provided by the Pueblo due to cultural and language differences between themselves and One-Stop staff. In Northern New Mexico, making services to Native Americans culturally and linguistically appropriate is made particularly challenging by the wide array of different Native American groups who live in the area.<sup>20</sup>

*A WIB member from the Santa Clara Pueblo Sand Tribe said members of her tribe are less likely to make use of workforce development services that are not provided by the Pueblo due to cultural and language differences.*

To overcome these access problems among Native Americans, Northern New Mexico has developed several strategies. One strategy being used by One-Stop partners is to hire Native American staff who are also bilingual. For example, at access points near the Navajo Nation Reservation, the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider has several Navajo staff who are fluent in both English and Navajo. In addition to hiring Native American staff, One-Stop partners in the local area are also beginning the process of establishing small access points on several area reservations, including those belonging to both the Laguna and Santa Clara Pueblos. These access points would be staffed jointly by Native American staff from the Pueblo and itinerant staff from either ES or the local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program.

## **Availability of Workforce Development Service Providers**

The availability of sufficient workforce development service providers—to run One-Stops, provide WIA Title I B services and offer training services—is also critical to ensure that rural customers have access to the services they need. However, the rural areas we studied are to some degree characterized by a shortage of available providers to deliver these services. Moreover, many rural areas lack sufficient numbers of workforce providers to allow for a competitive procurement process, which

*One-Stop partners in the local area are beginning the process of establishing small access points on several area reservations, including those belonging to both the Laguna and Santa Clara Pueblos.*

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A Case Study. Social Policy Research Associates, 2004.

<sup>20</sup> The local area is home to 11 different Pueblo communities, the Jicarilla Apache, and many Navajo.

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WIA attempts to promote. This section examines the availability of providers to operate One-Stops, provide WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services and serve as eligible training providers for ITA customers. It also examines the impact of provider scarcity on service delivery.

*Many rural areas lack sufficient numbers of workforce providers to allow for a competitive procurement process.*

### **Availability of One-Stop Operators, and WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Providers**

WIA requires that any entity receiving WIA funding to operate a One-Stop center must “be designated or certified as a One-Stop operator...through a competitive process...or in accordance with an agreement reached between the local board and a consortium of entities that, at a minimum, includes 3 or more of the One-Stop partners...”<sup>21</sup> One exception to this rule is that local boards or other entities that were already operating One-Stop centers prior to the enactment of WIA may serve as One-Stop operators with the agreement of key state and local officials. Once One-Stop operators are designated, they can also serve as local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program service providers or the local area can competitively contract for those services.

In the five rural areas that we visited for our study, there was typically little competition for designation as a One-Stop operator. Indeed, a local One-Stop operator was designated through a competitive process only in Northern New Mexico. In three other local areas, a consortium serves as the designated One-Stop operator, and, in the fourth area, the state employment security agency was grandfathered in as the local One-Stop operator.

One reason for this lack of competition is due to a scarcity of providers with the capacity to operate One-Stop centers in these areas. For example, Northern New Mexico, uses a competitive process, but few organizations responded to its RFP.

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<sup>21</sup> WIA Section 121.



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Although there was somewhat more competition to provide adult and dislocated worker services, this competition was also severely limited. For example, in two of the three areas that used an RFP process to select Adult and Dislocated Worker program providers, a lack of interested and qualified providers meant that there was basically no real competition. In Northwest Iowa, the current provider asserted that this lack of competition was due to the extremely small size of the local area's WIA allocations, which has made other potential providers unwilling to invest in developing the capacity to compete for the contract. In another area, a local board staff member said that there was no real competition because there was only one local organization that had sufficient workforce development experience to effectively provide WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker services.

*In two of the three areas that used an RFP process to select Adult and Dislocated Worker program providers, a lack of interested and qualified providers meant that there was basically no real competition.*

However, local area respondents asserted that this lack of competition for One-Stop operator or Adult and Dislocated Worker program providers has had no negative impact on service delivery. They argued that the existence of a single qualified provider and an effective network of One-Stop partners has enabled these local areas to provide customers with quality One-Stop and Adult and Dislocated Worker services.

## **WIA Youth Services**

According to WIA Section 123, local workforce investment boards are required to "...identify eligible providers of youth activities by awarding grants or contracts on a competitive basis, based on the recommendations of the youth council and on the criteria contained in the State plan..." Due to this requirement for the competitive identification of youth service providers, all five local areas used an RFP process to select local providers for at least some of the required 10 service elements. However, the level of competition and number of bidders varied by local area. For example, in two areas, Northern New Mexico and Southeast Georgia, local workforce investment board staff reported that the number of organizations bidding for contracts was sufficient to meet all of their needs. Indeed, in Northern New Mexico, the local

*Three local areas reported experiencing no response or an insufficient response to their youth RFPs.*

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board currently contracts with seven youth providers who each cover different geographical portions of the area or provide services to different special populations such as Native Americans.

By contrast, the other three local areas reported experiencing no response or an insufficient response to their youth RFPs. For example, in Northwest Iowa, the local WIA administrative entity said that it had received no response to its youth RFP and thus has been forced to provide nearly all services directly. In Region 4 Oregon, the local board received only one response to its youth RFP, which was from a consortium of local nonprofit organizations that also provided youth services under JTPA. Finally, in North Central Pennsylvania, the local area did receive a number of responses to its youth services RFP, but none of these were from providers who wanted to provide services in the area's four northern counties.

Local board staff primarily attributed the lack of response to their youth services RFPs to a scarcity of youth-serving organizations within their areas. In two of these three areas, local board staff also asserted that the small size of their WIA youth funding does not make it worthwhile for out-of-area providers to move into the area.

In the face of this lack of competition, some areas adopted creative strategies to ensure that negative impacts on service delivery were minimized. For example, in North Central Pennsylvania, local WIA administrative entity respondents said that the lack of providers has forced their youth staff to become experts in the ten required program elements to ensure that the program had the capacity to provide them well. Despite this effort, local area staff still reported that they had difficulty providing youth with access to leadership development and mentoring services.

## **ITAs and Eligible Training Providers**

Another WIA requirement is that local areas must use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to provide training services, except under certain limited circumstances. These ITAs can then be used

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*In North Central Pennsylvania, local WIA administrative entity respondents said that the lack of providers has forced their youth staff to become experts in the ten required program elements to ensure that the program had the capacity to provide them well.*

by customers to pay for training services from training providers who are on the state’s Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). To be on a state’s ETPL, training providers must submit applications to local boards for the training programs they want ITA-holders to be able to access. They must also submit performance information for those programs and meet or exceed certain performance standards.

As shown in Exhibit III-5, the numbers of training programs and providers on state ETPLs in each of the five local areas vary widely. For instance, the number of providers varies from a high of 35 in Northern New Mexico to a low of only three in Northwest Iowa. The number of approved training programs offered by these providers varies even more widely from a high of 450 programs in Northern New Mexico, to a low of only 62 in Region 4 Oregon.

**Exhibit III-5:  
Programs on ETPLs in the Five Areas**

<b>Local Area</b>	<b># of Training Programs</b>	<b># of providers</b>
Southeast Georgia	128	4
Northwest Iowa	88**	3**
Northern New Mexico	450	35
Region 4 Oregon	62	9
North Central Pennsylvania	138	18

\*\*Providers and programs located within local area rather than only those approved by the local board.

The variation in numbers of approved providers and programs in the different local areas stems both from underlying differences in the number and types of training programs and providers actually operating in the local area and from provider willingness to participate in the ETPL system.

For example, in North Central Pennsylvania, which has about half the number of providers of Northern New Mexico, but only 31 percent of Northern New Mexico’s approved training programs, the problem is that the local area does not have a well-developed local community or technical college system. Consequently, the

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bulk of the providers on the ETPL are either small, not focused on workforce training programs, too expensive, or located out of the area.

By contrast, in Region 4 Oregon, the number of local programs on the ETPL is limited because of local training provider unhappiness with ETPL performance requirements. For this reason, the two local community colleges have chosen to place only a very small number of their training programs on the list.<sup>22</sup> Primarily due to this very low number of approved training programs available for its customers, Region 4 Oregon was the only local area that expressed unhappiness with WIA's ITA system and argued that it has limited customer choice by decreasing the already small number of training programs available for WIA customers. Region 4 Oregon respondents also took issue with the fact that training programs in dog grooming and cosmetology—occupations that are not in demand and pay low wages—are on the state ETPL, while most community college training programs are not.

One impact of the relatively low number of approved programs in Region 4 Oregon is that the local area issues relatively few ITAs. For instance, in PY 2003, Region 4 Oregon issued the smallest number of ITAs among the five rural areas we visited, despite serving the second highest number of Adults and Dislocated Workers. (See Exhibit III-6)

Several local areas are actively working to overcome the shortage of local training programs on their state's ETPL. For example, WIA board staff in Region 4 Oregon are working hard to try to convince local community colleges to submit more training programs for inclusion on the ETPL. In North Central Pennsylvania, the local area is trying to increase the number of affordable local training programs by setting up distance learning arrangements through public postsecondary education providers

*In Region 4 Oregon, the number of local programs on the ETPL is limited because of local training provider unhappiness with ETPL performance requirements.*

*In North Central Pennsylvania, the local area is trying to increase the number of affordable local training programs by setting up distance learning arrangements through public postsecondary education providers*

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<sup>22</sup> By contrast, in both Iowa and Georgia, the major local training providers—public community or technical colleges—have made sure that the majority of their training programs are on the state ETPL.

located in other parts of the state. As an instance of this, the local area has helped to broker a pilot distance learning radiology training program between a regional medical center and a college in southern Pennsylvania.

**Exhibit III-6:  
ITAs Issued in PY 03**

	<b>Number of Adults &amp; Dislocated Workers with ITAs</b>	<b>Total Number of Adults &amp; Dislocated Workers Served*</b>
Southeast Georgia	220	347
Northwest Iowa	74	74
Northern New Mexico	778**	881
Region 4 Oregon	36	628
North Central Pennsylvania	209	532

\* Source: Table O, PY 2003 Annual Reports. \*\*Figure in October 2004, no new ITAs have been issued since January 2003.

## Summary

The principal service delivery strategy used by the five rural areas visited for this study is networks of physical One-Stop access points. To be accessible to the majority of local residents, these access points are typically located in every county, in the largest cities and towns. Although all five areas continue to operate some smaller access points, they are increasingly concentrating their resources and efforts on comprehensive centers because of the greater efficiency and convenience of these centers. Because of the transportation barriers faced by many rural customers in reaching these access points, however, these local areas also use other service delivery strategies including transportation assistance, Internet services, services provided over the phone, and having staff travel to customer locations.

In another effort to improve the accessibility of workforce development services, the five local areas conduct marketing and

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outreach activities to ensure that customers know about available services. These activities include efforts specifically focused on certain groups such as Native Americans and limited English-speaking Hispanics.

Finally, rural areas also often face scarcity in the number of workforce development providers. However, most local area respondents asserted that although the number of providers is limited, it is sufficient for the provision of quality and accessible WIA services. The only exceptions are in the case of certain types of WIA youth services in North Central Pennsylvania and ITA training services in Region 4 Oregon and North Central Pennsylvania. In all local areas, One-Stop partners are pursuing strategies to overcome these service delivery challenges, including special training programs for staff and distance learning programs.

## IV. RURAL ONE-STOP PARTNERSHIPS

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Partnership lies at the heart of the WIA legislation and the effective implementation of One-Stop delivery systems. Partnership among the entities responsible for administering separate workforce investment, educational, and other human resource programs and funding streams enables a “seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to programs’ services and improve long-term employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance.”<sup>1</sup> WIA section 121 (b) (1) identifies 17 required One-Stop partners who must fulfill the following responsibilities:

- A. Make available to participants through the One-Stop delivery system the core services that are applicable to the partner’s programs (WIA section 121 (b) (1) (A)).<sup>2</sup>
- B. Use a portion of funds made available to the partner’s program, to the extent not inconsistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner’s program, to:
  - Create and maintain the One-Stop delivery system; and
  - Provide core services; (WIA sec. 134 (d) (1) (B).)
- C. Enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Local Board relating to the operation of the One-Stop system that meets the requirements of Sec. 662.300, including a description of services, how the cost of the

*Partnership lies at the heart of the WIA legislation and the effective implementation of One-Stop delivery systems.*

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<sup>1</sup> Workforce Investment Act, Final Rule, Section 662.100, Federal Register, August 11, 2000.

<sup>2</sup> According to 662.260, in addition to core services, One-Stop partners must provide access to the other activities and programs carried out under the partner’s authorizing laws. Access to these services must be described in the local MOU.

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identified services and operating costs of the system will be funded, and methods for referrals (WIA sec. 121 (c).)

- D. Participate in the operation of the One-Stop system consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorizing laws; (WIA sec 121 (b) (1) (B).)
- E. Serve as a representative on the local workforce investment board (WIA sec. 117 (b) (2) (A) (vi).)

Partnership assumes even greater importance in rural local areas, where providers and resources are in shorter supply, and no one organization can afford to meet all the needs of each customer. With this in mind, partnership is one of the principal themes we explored during our visits to rural local areas.

In a previous SPR report, *Rural One-Stops: Issues in WIA Implementation* (January 14, 2003), we found key partnership challenges to be related to the large physical size of many rural local areas, which made it difficult for partners to meet face to face and build effective relationships. The large size of these areas also meant that partners and staff involved at each individual One-Stop center often varied greatly, since the centers were situated so far away from one another. This made it very difficult for local WIB staff to be involved in each of these One-Stop partnerships, as they are required to be by WIA.<sup>3</sup> Another primary partnership challenge in rural areas identified by the previous report is the limited budgets of most rural partners and their resulting difficulty in committing funding to support One-Stop centers and co-locating staff for more than very limited periods.

*Partnership assumes even greater importance in rural local areas, where providers and resources are in shorter supply.*

In this earlier 2003 study, we found that, in order to overcome these partnership challenges, rural local areas employed a number of strategies. These strategies included relying on conference calls and video-conferences rather than in-person meetings, rotating the

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<sup>3</sup> Specifically, WIA requires that One-Stop partners enter into an MOU with the local WIB regarding what services will be provided at One-Stop centers, methods for referral, and how One-Stop centers will be funded. Workforce Investment Act, Final Rules, Section 662.100, Federal Register, August 11, 2000.



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location of partnership meetings, emphasizing in-kind rather than direct resource partner contributions, and formally dividing local areas into sub-regions so that partnerships might be developed within smaller areas.

In the present study, we found that in many ways, the factors that facilitate partnerships in a rural area are the same factors that may hinder them. Chief among these factors are resource constraints and interpersonal relationships. The limited budgets of a relatively small group of local partners can help bring organizations together out of necessity and result in a more streamlined collaborative. This finding has been echoed by other rural studies, including our previously cited report. In addition, a September 2004 GAO report (GAO-04-921), *Rural TANF Programs Have Developed Many Strategies to Address Rural Challenges*, found that “caseworkers and service providers said that the limited resources available in rural areas force people to work together to solve problems.” However, in our present study, some rural local areas cited the shortage of resources as a key reason for why individual organizations were unwilling or unable to engage in the One-Stop system.

*In many ways, the factors that facilitate partnerships in a rural area are the same factors that may hinder them. Chief among these factors are resource constraints and interpersonal relationships.*

Likewise, the strong interpersonal ties common in rural areas can strengthen professional ties between agencies and allow partners to conduct business in a more informal manner. The GAO report on rural TANF programs (previously cited) also found this to be true: “caseworkers and service providers from different programs and agencies often get to know each other and can call each other directly, without going through another bureaucratic level, to get help in solving a client’s problem.” On the other hand, the present study found that interpersonal feuds can assume a more prominent status in a small-town atmosphere and potentially spill over to relationships between organizations. As a result, informal partnership mechanisms can become a weakness, in that their success depends on the strength of interpersonal relations and contact.

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Overall, while the five local areas exhibited many similarities in terms of some of the key partners and their roles, they represented diverse case studies of the extent to which a rural community facilitated and/or impeded One-Stop partnerships. While time and distance challenges were less emphasized than what might be anticipated for rural areas, cost-sharing emerged as the largest rural partnership challenge by far, with ES and WIA playing particularly large roles in One-Stop support. Individual budget constraints and poor personal relations often lay at the root of the cost-sharing challenge. As we will see later in this chapter, Region 4 Oregon and North Central Pennsylvania were exceptions; neither area noted cost-sharing as a major partnership challenge.

The remainder of this chapter is organized into an examination of: which entities are active in their local One-Stop systems and the nature of their roles; the coordination of services between partners; shared costs of rural One-Stop systems; and the overall strategies and challenges involved with developing and maintaining One-Stop partnerships in rural areas.

*Overall, the rural local areas we visited were characterized by relatively few key One-Stop partners.*

## **Key Rural One-Stop Partners**

Overall, the rural local areas we visited were characterized by relatively few key One-Stop partners. As one local respondent in North Central Pennsylvania observed, in a rural area there is relatively little need for the more specialized organizations and services that might be required in urban or even suburban areas—such as social support services targeted toward particular ethnic groups. Alternatively, there may be a need for more specialized services, but the organizations may simply not exist in rural areas.

However, ES and the local WIA provider—the mainstays of One-Stop systems across the country—were also very much in evidence as key partners in the rural local areas we studied. Indeed, they were the primary One-Stop partners in all but one of the local areas, with ES often providing the majority of core and intensive services, and WIA’s involvement coming primarily or only with training services. ES and WIA also typically own, lease and/or

operate the majority of the access points. Secondary One-Stop partners were most commonly VR, TANF, community colleges that are key training providers, and some community-based organizations/consortia that are social service providers.

While their main role is providing services via One-Stop access points and/or stand-alone offices, these partners also play other administrative roles. In Northern New Mexico, Northwest Iowa and Southeast Georgia, ES and WIA partners act as One-Stop operators,

leaders, managers and/or fiscal agents. In North Central Pennsylvania, ES and WIA act as administrators or co-administrators of all the individual One-Stop centers, though a wider range of local partners fulfill roles on the One-Stop Operator Consortium (WIA, ES, VR, economic development and county offices of education). The North Central Pennsylvania WIB in particular decided on a consortium model because it felt that such a body would be more representative of a true One-Stop partnership, help ease worries of potential turf issues among partners, realize cost savings in that none of the consortium members would receive extra compensation for their role, and ensure that its representatives had authority to immediately address local partner staff issues and challenges.

Key One-Stop partners are also involved in less “official” collaborative bodies that may allow them to build inter-agency relationships. For instance, in Southeast Georgia, key One-Stop partners, including TANF, ES, WIA, VR, and NFJP, are part of the TANF Collaborative, which meets quarterly to provide updates on

#### **Region 4 Oregon’s One-Stop Partners**

*Region 4 Oregon’s principal One-Stop partners are: the state’s ES agency ,the Oregon Employment Department, Oregon Department of Human Services (TANF), Oregon Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR), a consortium of CBOs called the Community Service Consortium (CSC),and the area’s two local community colleges, Linn Benton Community College and Oregon Coast Community College . The consortium of CBOs serves on the operator consortium and plays a key role in providing WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth services. The two community colleges are key training providers and one also provides WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program services. Less involved One-Stop partners in the local area are Experience Works, Disabled American Veterans, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, and Angell Job Corps. Though there is no National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee in the local area, one ES staff person works closely with the MSFW population.*

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recent activities, ask one another questions, and discuss specific referral cases. Partners indicated that the meetings have served as an informal cross-training opportunity, as well as helped avoid inter-partner conflict by providing space to solve challenges collaboratively.

Likewise, in Region 4 Oregon, Facility Operation Groups (FOGs) allow the partner administrators of each comprehensive One-Stop center to meet regularly in order to promote cross-agency communication and collaboration. Inter-partner trust is further developed by the fact that the chair of the FOG rotates; thus each partner agency has an opportunity for leadership of the FOG, and indirectly, of the One-Stop center. Partner line staff at each center also have meeting groups, which correspond to the administrator-level FOGs.

Numerous rounds of manufacturing layoffs and the provision of Rapid Response services have served as additional vehicles for partnership in some local areas. In North Central Pennsylvania, for example, major local layoffs have resulted in a more streamlined regional Rapid Response Team. Whereas in previous years multiple One-Stop partners might have attended a single Rapid Response meeting so that each could get their “five minutes on stage,” due to greater experience, trust, cross-training, and shared Rapid Response resources in the local area, there is now a single point of contact in each county who is responsible for presenting at such meetings and covering *all* of the One-Stop partners and services available to laid off workers.

Southeast Georgia has also seen Rapid Response information sessions and service provision effectively increase contact and coordination among One-Stop partners, particularly since major layoffs have been quite frequent in the local area. The local area feels that relationships between agencies—especially WIA, ES, VR and Adult Education—have been strengthened as a result.

In some local areas, logistics can present more of a challenge to the effectiveness of collaborative meetings or other partnership

*In Region 4 Oregon, Facility Operation Groups (FOGs) allow the partner administrators of each comprehensive One-Stop center to meet regularly in order to promote cross-agency communication and collaboration.*

*Numerous rounds of manufacturing layoffs and the provision of Rapid Response services have served as additional vehicles for partnership in some local areas.*

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vehicles. For instance, in Northwest Iowa, there exists a partnership group of all MOU signatories, but scheduled meetings and partner attendance are both highly irregular, since the travel time required for a meeting is considerable and the level of informal communication between at least some of the partners is quite high.

## **Specialized Rural One-Stop Partners**

Outside the group of key rural One-Stop partners described above, the five local areas involved a wide range of additional public, non-profit and private partners such as the New Mexico Commission for the Blind, Job Corps, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz, Disabled American Veterans, Manpower (temporary staffing firm), TechConex (trains workers for the call center industry) and Transport Tech (a trucking school). Though never considered main partners, these organizations' roles varied considerably, from serving as the occasional recipient of client referrals, to being co-located part-time at a local One-Stop center. Some of the national non-profit partners had relatively larger roles—e.g., as NFJP grantees (Telamon and Proteus), or as a provider of SCSEP services (Experience Works).

*FBOs do not play roles as major partners of the local One-Stop systems we visited due to limited organizational knowledge, staff and volunteer capacity, and/or resources to engage as a partner.*

Specialized One-Stop partners that we were particularly interested in covering for this study were (1) FBOs, given their important role in many rural residents' lives and their potential as service providers, (2) CBOs, because we wished to explore the perception of limited CBO capacity in rural areas, (3) NFJP grantees, given their work in rural areas and with hard-to-serve populations, and (4) agricultural extension, given its long history of state-run support for rural farmers. We discuss each of these specialized partners below.

### **FBOs**

FBOs do not play roles as major partners of the local One-Stop systems we visited. This is often due to limited organizational knowledge, staff and volunteer capacity, and/or resources to

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engage as a partner. One local area pointed to a significant degree of organizational instability among churches at any given time, as well as fluctuating inter-FBO relations. FBOs may also display an inherent distrust of government, or at least a distance that reflects this nation's traditional separation of church and state. Wariness of entanglement with government regulations and requirements may also be a factor in at least one local area.

*North Central Pennsylvania and Northwest Iowa are the local areas with the most significant, if limited, examples of FBO involvement with the One-Stop system.*

North Central Pennsylvania and Northwest Iowa are the local areas with the most significant, if limited, examples of FBO involvement with the One-Stop system. Through a faith- and community-based initiative grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, North Central Pennsylvania was able to more fully explore the potential of FBOs as an engaged One-Stop partner. However, the current role of FBOs in North Central Pennsylvania is mostly as a referral partner for some supportive services, and as a host for some computer-only access points.

In Northwest Iowa, Lutheran Social Services was a major partner in the local One-Stop system, providing numerous services via referral. However, resource constraints have led this organization to focus its efforts in other areas. Hope Haven, another faith-based organization, remains in the local area providing housing and employment services to disabled individuals. Hope Haven's relationship with the One-Stop system is largely through client referrals, not co-location (due to resource constraints). The referral-based relationship appears to function well, particularly given the many informal, interpersonal contacts between representatives of Hope Haven and One-Stop partner agencies. Hope Haven was also involved in the WIA planning process and has one staff person who participates in the local Youth Council, though their formal involvement with the One-Stop system has since decreased.

*Hope Haven's relationship with the One-Stop system is largely through client referrals, not co-location (due to resource constraints).*

### **“Faith Goes to Work;” North Central Pennsylvania’s FCBO Initiative**

*In 2003, the North Central Workforce Investment Board received a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor for a FBCO initiative. The funded project was led by a local pastor-coordinator and aimed to develop relationships and resource-sharing between faith and community-based organizations and one of the local area’s comprehensive One-Stop centers.*

*A key assumption of the project was that, though church leaders are cornerstones of the community, they are under-utilized as informational and referral hubs and/or as colleagues in assisting the unemployed and underemployed. To help rectify this, one project aim was to take complete inventory of faith-based and community-based resources, whether they were a food pantry or human resources, so that they might be more efficiently funneled to those in need. Churches were found to hold many of the more typical resources, such as food, clothing and emergency cash, as well as some more untraditional offerings, such as a music program for youth. Project staff also made contact with as many church and community leaders as possible, providing them with the orientation and information they would need to make quality referrals to the One-Stop center as well as to other community services.*

*As part of this outreach to church leaders, just under one-third of the 129 contacted clergy groups immediately agreed to serve as One-Stop computer-only access points, and others agreed to raise the possibility with their boards. Many of these access points have since “died on the vine” due to a shortage of dedicated individuals to assist clients.*

*One of the key challenges involved with the project was addressing what was perceived to be an inherent distance or distrust of government by church leaders, as well as this nation’s traditional separation of church and state. The pastor-coordinator felt that he had to work hard to help church leaders “understand [employment] issues in theological terms”—for instance, by conveying jobs as a health and spiritual issue. He also worked to help others rethink the role of church leaders as larger community resources. Overall, he felt the project was successful in helping church leaders to understand the true capacity of the One-Stop system for helping the unemployed and underemployed.*

*As a result of project outreach, church leaders were able to help their parishioners through more informed referrals, although grant resources did not allow for tracking the number or nature of such referrals. Though funding for the project ended, the pastor-coordinator considered it a successful pilot, with good response from the clergy and from neighboring counties, and emerging lessons on how One-Stop and WIB staff should make concerted efforts to develop and nurture relationships with faith-based leaders.*

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Despite limited *formal* roles for FBOs, One-Stop staff in many of the local areas are well aware of the important supportive services and resources that some individual FBOs have to offer, such as food and clothing assistance, and will very often refer clients informally—e.g., by handing the client a list of FBO resources and contact numbers.

## **CBOs**

The roles of CBOs in One-Stop systems ranges from prominent paying partner to non-contributing, off-site referral partner. The nature of a CBO's role is critically tied to whether or not they receive funding to fulfill a role as a mandatory One-Stop partner—e.g., as a NFJP service provider. If they do not, then they are not likely to contribute resources to the local One-Stop system or co-locate staff at access points, though they may be important referral partners in the community for a range of supportive services.

*CBOs' role in the One-Stop system ranges from prominent paying partner, to non-contributing, off-site referral partner.*

As instances of CBOs that are more engaged, those in Region 4 Oregon and Northern New Mexico serve as Adult/Dislocated Worker service providers and play key roles in operating the One-Stop system. A CBO also serves as the local NFJP grantee in Southeast Georgia, and CBOs are contracted to provide WIA youth services in a number of local areas. In Region 4 Oregon, a CBO serves as the *primary* provider of youth services.

Individual community action agencies play a significant role in some local areas. For instance, in Northwest Iowa, one of the two community action agencies provides a wide range of services in seven of the nine counties, including Head Start, Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC), maternal and child health services, child care resource and referral services, weatherization assistance, TANF-related services, and emergency food and clothing. The agency is an MOU signatory, though only one of its programs—a senior internship program funded by SCSEP—is co-located at a local One-Stop center (for two hours per week).



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In North Central Pennsylvania, Community Action, Inc. provides an even wider range of services to eligible individuals, including but not limited to: literacy tutoring, GED classes, a homeless shelter, job search and child care assistance, and domestic violence counseling services. This community action agency is co-located at one of the comprehensive One-Stops with two staff persons for a half-day per week, during which time they often help provide various job skills workshops.

## **National Farmworker Jobs Program**

In North Central Pennsylvania, Northern New Mexico and Northwest Iowa, there is either no local National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantee office and/or there are extremely few migrant and seasonal farm workers (MSFW). For instance, in Northwest Iowa, where there is no local NFJP office, the statewide grantee (Proteus) is not an MOU signatory<sup>4</sup> and is a minor partner in the local One-Stop system. A bilingual staff person from the grantee office spends one day once a month at one of the local One-Stops to provide assistance as needed. Only seven NFJP customers were in training at the time of the visit.

*The lack of a strong, effective partnership to serve the MSFW population may be due to the fact that MSFW population, while present, are still quite small.*

Only two local areas— Region 4 Oregon and Southeast Georgia— have significant MSFW populations, though only the latter has a local NFJP office. However, in neither of these locales is there much evidence of a strong, effective partnership to serve the MSFW population. This may be largely due to the fact that the MSFW populations, while present, are still quite small. More general partnership challenges and cultural competency issues also play a role.

In Southeast Georgia, Telamon Corporation is the NFJP grantee and a MOU signatory, with a main office located in Macon and three offices in the local area in Douglas, Blackshear and Pearson. As is the case with many of the partners in Southeast Georgia,

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<sup>4</sup> In the spring of 2005, Northwest Iowa's MOUs were updated and Proteus became a signatory on the local One-Stop MOUs.

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Telamon is not co-located at the One-Stop—in part because of resource sharing concerns—and only receives occasional referrals; there is no formalized referral process in place. Thus, Telamon does much of its own recruiting for MSFW participants, though its representatives feel that co-location would be a positive development for their customers who ordinarily shuttle between the NFJP office and the One-Stop for different services, and are thus limited in their ability to receive culturally competent One-Stop services in Spanish. Telamon’s partnership with TANF is also hindered due to the fact that MSFW customers are reluctant to reveal their status, since TANF will count their NFJP benefits as income and thus reduce their TANF payment amount.

### **Agricultural Extension**

Agricultural extension plays a small or non-existent partnership role in most of the rural areas we visited because of a weak local agricultural sector and/or limited capacity to engage as a One-Stop partner. Only in Northwest Iowa is there a substantial partnership between agricultural extension (Iowa State University Extension) and the One-Stop system. In Northwest Iowa, ISU Extension, which provides agricultural advice, financial management advice, nutrition programs and 4-H, hosts two One-Stop access points—a part-time office as well as a computer-only access point. The arrangement is mutually beneficial in that both ISU Extension and ES in Iowa are required to have an office or access point in every county. ISU Extension also provides trainers for a One-Stop workshop on financial management and the One-Stop system refers clients to ISU Extension for educational services, leadership activities, economic development, and employment opportunities.

In other local areas, relationships with agricultural extension are weak or non-existent. For example, in North Central Pennsylvania, where agriculture employs few workers, agricultural extension is not considered a strong One-Stop partner, though it is involved in 4-H outreach to youth in the local area. The agricultural extension office is based at the county seat and staffed with county

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employees; it did not make financial sense for the office to relocate to a new One-Stop location.

## **Inter-Partner Service Delivery Coordination**

Inter-partner coordination of services was exceedingly informal in the five rural local areas we visited, and seemed to work particularly well only when partners worked in close proximity, had strong interpersonal relations, and/or shared a long history of working together. North Central Pennsylvania and Region 4 Oregon demonstrate the importance of these factors. In these areas, partners stressed that they had embraced the “One-Stop” concept of collaboration long before WIA, and that collaboration was “just the way things were done” in a rural area such as theirs. Actual coordination of services in these two areas, as well as in Northwest Iowa, was usually accomplished by virtue of co-location and the ability to simply walk over clients to different partner staff in the same building. These “walkover referrals” were facilitated by partner staff working in close physical proximity, as opposed to partner staff who might be co-located in the same building but in different wings, or working together but not as frequently. The informality and ease with which many partners referred clients to one another meant that there was generally no perceived need for an extensive “paper trail” of referrals.

Northwest Iowa demonstrated a more formal or “advanced” attempt to coordinate partner services through the integration of staff into functional teams. In this local area, ES and WIA staff join together as a functional team in order to provide re-employment services for UI recipients who are deemed unlikely to find a job. WIA provides an assessment of skills and interests, as well as advice on training options, while ES staff are available to answer questions about UI and job searches. Functional teams also provide TANF job search and training-related services. Not surprisingly, these cross-partner functional teams appear to work best when the staff members involved share a strong interpersonal

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relationship, which may initially develop by virtue of working as a functional team and co-location.

Where co-location does not occur, inter-partner coordination can be more challenging. For example, inter-partner coordination of services does not appear as effective or seamless at access points where partner staff are not co-located or are co-located only for a few hours per week. In these cases, clients might be referred by staff simply handing the client a contact name and number at another partner agency, or by making a call on the client's behalf to non-co-located partner agencies.

In these situations, interpersonal relationships between partners' staff can play an important role in helping to ensure that these customers do not "fall through the cracks" when making the initial call, and when conducting any follow-up communication to make sure that the referred client was actually assisted by the partner agency.

Where interpersonal and inter-organizational relations are weaker or newer, and/or co-location not as frequent, referrals tend to be weak as a vehicle for the inter-partner coordination of services. For example, in one local area, partners are generally not co-located, which hinders the development of interpersonal relations. These partners tend to operate independently, and refer clients to one another only from time to time via phone, email, or quarterly meetings. However, even this sporadic, informal type of coordination was seen as difficult to "break into" by one of the newer partners in the local area.

Open interpersonal and inter-organizational conflicts can not only hinder the effectiveness of partner referrals and coordination, but can also go so far as to apparently undermine the One-Stop concept. In one local area we visited, such conflicts have resulted in a fragmented system where key partners maintain separate offices located a short distance away from one another, and customers likely know very little about the services available from various partners. Referrals are informal and unsatisfactorily

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infrequent according to a number of partners in this local One-Stop system.

Poor management information systems (MIS) were another factor in weak inter-partner coordination. At least three of the local areas were not able to provide figures on co-enrollment, sometimes because of the state MIS's inability to capture this information, or because of a lack of access to partner and/or client information.

While the nature of co-enrollment naturally varied by local area, as well as by specific One-Stop centers, the most frequently cited forms of co-enrollment were between WIA and ES, VR and TANF. In Northern New Mexico, WIA staff estimated that close to 100 percent of their clientele was co-enrolled in ES, given the fact that most of these individuals first receive services from ES and then move on to WIA only if they need training services. In North Central Pennsylvania, individual One-Stop administrators estimated that anywhere between zero and 70 percent of their Adult/Dislocated Worker clientele was co-enrolled, usually in VR or TANF.

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## **Cost and Funding of Rural One-Stops**

For this study we were particularly interested in how partnership manifested itself in a financial sense—specifically, which partners contributed to rural One-Stop systems and the nature of their ongoing contributions. However, local areas differed significantly in their descriptions of costs involved with One-Stop system operation, making comparisons across systems difficult.

Furthermore, the figures that we obtained from local areas cannot be assessed in a truly meaningful way, given that we lack comparison cost data from other rural local areas. However, we did discover some themes or patterns with regard to cost, which we describe below.

As is the case with many local areas across the nation, the five rural local areas rely heavily on ES to support the costs of the One-Stop system directly and/or in-kind. This is especially the case in Northwest Iowa, Southeast Georgia, and Northern New Mexico.

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In Northwest Iowa, the ES agency, with some measure of support from the WIA agency, is providing for nearly all One-Stop resources in terms of rent, staffing and electronic access. The ES agency's ability to provide the lion's share of support is, in turn, dependent on earmarked state funds. (Initially, this support was drawn from a surtax on employees, paid by employers.) Without this state funding, the ES agency would likely be able to support only limited staff at one One-Stop center. While the cost allocation arrangement in Northwest Iowa is not seen as fair since only ES and WIA are financial supporters, it is considered somewhat inevitable given the budgetary limitations of CBOs and FBOs, and paying partners' unwillingness to continue their long battle with other partners to contribute a fair share to the One-Stop system.

In Southeast Georgia, ES owns the two building sites of the One-Stop centers and covers the full cost of One-Stop facilities, equipment and services. WIA, which is co-located at one access point, does not pay rent; the extent of its resource sharing was to provide for the installation of a new telephone system and some new furniture at one access point. In general, resource sharing is hindered by the limited budgets of individual partners, as well as by a vaguely worded resource sharing agreement that states only that "partners will contribute resources."

Finally, in Northern New Mexico, neither ES nor WIA receives considerable contributions from other partners. At ES-operated access points, WIA is typically the only co-located partner to pay rent. Likewise, among the access points operated by the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider, partner contributions are limited. For instance, at one enhanced comprehensive center, ES pays \$18/square foot for its one co-located staff person, Job Corps pays approximately \$7,440 per year to rent two small offices, and the other two co-located partners contribute only in-kind resources because of limited budgets.

*Partners in some local areas cited limited budgets as the reason why they are unable or unwilling to financially contribute to the local One-Stop system, particularly when they have existing leases at other building sites.*

Another major theme concerned difficulties around cost sharing. Partners in some local areas cited limited budgets as the reason why they are unable or unwilling to financially contribute to the

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local One-Stop system, particularly when they have existing leases at other building sites. Given their limited budgets, partners may be particularly protective of their own funds and fearful that they will end up worse off by pooling resources. At least two local areas indicated that resource sharing is particularly difficult in rural areas given the need to stretch especially limited partner budgets further to reach a widely dispersed population.

Only two local areas—Region 4 Oregon and North Central Pennsylvania—are characterized by extensive resource sharing among partners. In both local areas, FTE is used as the basis for cost allocation and a range of partners are contributors, though ES and WIA are allocated the greatest portion of shared costs. For instance, in Region 4 Oregon, ES is responsible for nearly 43 percent of allocated costs, and the WIA provider 31 percent.

**Resource Sharing Agreements in North Central Pennsylvania**

*In North Central Pennsylvania, resource sharing agreements (RSAs) for all seven comprehensive centers total just over \$500,000. Building costs account for the lion's share of this budget amount at just over \$400,000. Percent staffing FTE is used as the basis for cost allocation among partners (except for UI, which has a rent-only cost allocation). Though a wide variety of partners are contributors—including VR, TANF, county education offices and private companies—the local WIA provider and administrative agency and the state's ES agency are allocated the greatest portion of shared costs. The WIA provider pays \$177,097 for its space at the seven centers (35 percent of shared costs) and has 31 FTE staff covering all access points. ES pays \$150,991 for its space at the seven centers (30 percent of shared costs) and has 25 FTE staff covering all access points.*

While FTE was considered a comparatively fair and effective basis for cost allocation in North Central Pennsylvania, Region 4 Oregon found it a somewhat rigid and inaccurate tool. Specifically, the local area found that the FTE formula does not accurately reflect the total amount of partners' contributions, nor does it allow for more responsive and flexible contributions. While prior to WIA, partners with more resources simply "stepped up" to "take care of things," now they are restricted to contributions in accordance with the FTE formula. As one local respondent specifically noted, "We already had a history of sharing resources . . . we need a formula better for us and our philosophies."

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## Summary of Benefits and Challenges of Rural Partnerships

In many ways, the factors that facilitate partnerships in a rural area are the same factors that may hinder them. A fundamental shortage of resources and a relatively small number of key partners can help bring organizations together out of necessity, and result in a more streamlined collaborative. As one North Central Pennsylvania respondent noted, “If you are to be successful in a rural area, you can’t be independent.” Likewise, Region 4 Oregon noted that local agencies had been partnering long before WIA because “doing so was necessary for survival in a rural area.” However, other rural local areas cited the same two factors—especially the shortage of resources—as key reasons for why individual organizations were unwilling or unable to engage in the One-Stop system.

Personal relationships also represent a double-edged sword for rural partnerships. A number of respondents commented on how living in a rural environment means really knowing residents intimately and in multiple ways—e.g., as co-workers, friends, fellow parents, etc. Strong interpersonal ties, coupled with partners who frequently work in close proximity, can help develop and maintain professional ties between agencies, make more formal partnership mechanisms (such as referral forms) largely unnecessary, and help ensure that customers do not “fall through the cracks” when they are referred between partners.

On the other hand, interpersonal feuds can assume a more prominent status in a small-town atmosphere and spill over to undermine potential relationships between organizations. For instance, in one local area, squabbles over petty personal issues have played a role in leading one partner to pull out co-located staff. In situations such as these, reliance on *informal* partnership mechanisms can become a liability since these mechanisms depend on the strength of personal relations and relatively frequent interaction. Clients may suffer as a result—e.g., by not having access to as many partners at a single site, or not even being referred to alternate partner locations.

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Another aspect of rural workforce systems with both positive and negative implications is that rural partners often wear multiple professional hats, given limited personnel. For instance, one local respondent in North Central Pennsylvania acts as a One-Stop site administrator, office manager for WIA Title I services, Dislocated Worker employability counselor, and representative on the local area's Performance Team and Information Technology Team. Her multifaceted role means that she must frequently attend various meetings with other, similarly multifaceted workforce leaders. This is undoubtedly an advantage to maintaining interpersonal relationships and professional partnerships. Moreover, in her multiple roles, she is able to informally address multiple agenda items via a single meeting with partners. However, one key challenge to rural partners wearing multiple hats is that they may be stretched too thin, and called away from the One-Stop center and direct service provision.

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Time and distance challenges, which we expected to play a critical role in rural partnerships, were not nearly as emphasized by the local areas as much as resource- and cost-sharing challenges. According to local respondents, time and distance challenges—in particular, needing to drive a considerable distance for any purpose—is simply a part of rural residents' daily life. In addition, because partners may know each other well personally and may be meeting in multiple contexts, time and distance may not be as much of a concern specific to One-Stop partnerships.

Cost sharing emerged as the largest partnership challenge in rural areas, as it is in many other local areas in the country. Key contributing factors are the limited budgets of individual partner organizations paired with a need to cover an extensive geographic area; protectiveness of individual funds and a fear of ending up worse off by pooling resources; pre-existing building leases; poor personal relations that either prevent or result from a failure to share resources; and vaguely worded resource sharing agreements that lack “teeth.” Some local areas also cited relatively small WIA allocations, new entities serving as One-Stop operators and WIA providers, and the admittedly weaker financial and staff capacity of

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FBOs and many CBOs to engage and contribute as One-Stop partners.

With specific regard to WIA allocations, in local areas such as Southeast Georgia and Northwest Iowa, relatively small allocations may contribute to a situation where WIA is too small to play much of a partnership role, particularly compared to the state ES agency. Overall, in a number of the local areas, there existed a significant dependency on ES as the primary or sole financial supporter of the One-Stop system in terms of physical facilities, staffing, and equipment.

Region 4 Oregon and North Central Pennsylvania represent interesting counterpoints in that neither area raised these resource sharing challenges. Both local areas are satisfied to some extent with FTE as a basis for cost allocation, though Region 4 Oregon maintained that the FTE formula is too rigid and does not allow local partners the flexibility of simply “stepping up” with as many resources as needed.

It is difficult to pinpoint what exactly Region 4 Oregon and North Central Pennsylvania have in common that have allowed them to escape many of the cost-sharing and other partnership challenges so significant in other local areas. Both of these local areas appeared to particularly prize flexibility and informality in their partnerships—e.g., in providing referrals, meeting resource challenges, and even in designing the layout of their One-Stops to meet the needs of their particular community. Both of these local areas reacted somewhat nonchalantly to the question of partnership—by noting that partnership was simply “the way things are done” in rural areas, or that the One-Stop partnership and referral concept was old hat to them long before the passage of the WIA. Both also noted that One-Stops merely made official what was already in practice. As one North Central Pennsylvania respondent observed, One-Stops simply led them to focus more on the “bricks and mortar” aspect of partnership by formally bringing all partners together under one roof.

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Perhaps the most salient common denominator of these two local areas is the presence of positive interpersonal relationships between partners that have, in turn, allowed strong professional collaborations to “naturally” occur. In the end, however, it is difficult to say whether positive interpersonal relationships represent the chicken or the egg, or whether there is, in fact, anything about rural *areas* in particular that facilitate or impede One-Stop partnerships.

## Summary

The rural local areas we visited are characterized by relatively few key One-Stop partners. ES and WIA play enormous roles with regard to service provision, One-Stop operation, and financial support of the local One-Stop system. Roles for other public, non-profit and private partners range widely by local area and by One-Stop center. Overall though, while FBOs may provide important supportive services, they are not major paying or co-located One-Stop partners in any of the local areas we visited. The role of CBO partners is quite diverse, with some serving as One-Stop operators and/or fulfilling mandatory One-Stop partner roles (e.g., WIA adult services provider), and others simply serving as occasional referral partners for supportive services. Only in one locale is there a local NFJP partner, though it is not a co-located partner, and there is not much evidence of a strong partnership to serve the MSFW population—perhaps due to a relatively small MSFW population, more general partnership challenges, and cultural competency issues. Agricultural extension plays a small or non-existent partnership role in most of the rural areas we visited because of a weak local agricultural sector and/or limited capacity to engage as a One-Stop partner.

Inter-partner coordination of services appears quite informal in the rural local areas that we visited. However, the extent to which this level of informality is effective or not depends largely on the quality of partners’ interpersonal relations and their ability to work frequently in close physical proximity. Open interpersonal or inter-organizational conflict can not only stymie effective partner

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coordination, but can also negatively impact customer knowledge or accessibility of various partner services.

Local areas differed quite a lot in the way they described operational costs for their One-Stop systems, making cross-site comparisons difficult. However, staffing and rent emerged as the largest specific costs when partners do not own the One-Stop sites, and resource sharing emerged as the most significant partnership challenge in most of the rural areas we visited. Ironically, while limited rural partner resources appear to make cost sharing critical—particularly when covering large geographic areas—limited resources was also cited by some local areas as the very reason for why they could not afford to share resources or engage in strong partnerships. All local areas rely heavily on ES to financially support the One-Stop system, though North Central Pennsylvania and Region 4 Oregon serve as significant models of resource sharing among diverse partners. One important source of in-kind support for all the local areas has been state workforce agency websites, which typically provide a range of job seeker and employer information and services.

*Ironically, while limited rural partner resources appear to make cost sharing critical—particularly when covering large geographic areas—limited resources was also cited by some local areas as the very reason for why they could not afford to share resources or engage in strong partnerships.*

Overall, the particularly limited resources of rural partners, as well as the often close relations between rural One-Stop staff, are two factors that can have incredibly beneficial or detrimental effects on rural One-Stop partnerships. Limited resources may bring partners together out of necessity, or they may be used as justification for why partners cannot build effective collaboratives. Interpersonal relations between individuals, who in rural areas may know each other through multiple personal and professional contexts, can help develop and maintain professional ties. On the other hand, a rural or small-town atmosphere can magnify interpersonal conflicts that can in turn hinder professional linkages between One-Stop partners.

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## V. CONCLUSION

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Although rural areas make up the majority of our nation's land area, they are home to only a small fraction of the population. Consequently, most rural areas are characterized by low population density, with residents widely scattered across large swathes of land. Because of this and other unique characteristics of rural areas, rural workforce development systems must adapt to these characteristics to be effective, and thus may be substantially different from those established in urban areas. Alternatively, due to their many shared features and challenges, workforce development systems may appear relatively similar throughout the nation, regardless of an area's urban or rural status

The aim of this report has been to explore workforce development systems in rural areas, focusing on changes that have occurred over the past 25 years, service delivery structures and their impact on accessibility and rural One-Stop partnerships. In this concluding chapter, we will examine the uniqueness of rural workforce development systems and the challenges they face, exploring the similarities and differences between workforce development in rural and urban areas.

*Overall, we found that rural workforce development systems and the challenges they have faced are generally very similar to those of urban areas in most respects.*

### **Similarities in Systems and Challenges**

Overall, we found that rural workforce development systems and the challenges they have faced are generally very similar to those of urban areas in most respects: adjusting to economic changes, utilizing access points to provide most services, developing One-Stop systems and partnerships, and dealing with conflicts over resource sharing and support for these systems.

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One similarity between rural and urban areas is that both have had to adjust to major changes in the nation's economy and job market. For example, both rural and urban areas have had to deal with long-term declines in the number of manufacturing jobs and increases in service-sector employment. Similarly, both have responded to these economic changes by shifting their job training and placement efforts to ensure that customers are able to successfully compete for jobs in the labor market.

*Rural and urban areas also have broadly similar service delivery structures, as both have long relied on systems of physical access points located in major population centers to provide workforce development services.*

Rural and urban areas also have broadly similar service delivery structures, as both have long relied on systems of physical access points located in major population centers to provide workforce development services. Both types of areas have also experienced similar changes to these access point systems. For example, after a decline in these access points between 1979 and 1999, both types of areas experienced an increase in numbers of access points between 1999 and 2004, likely brought on by implementation of One-Stop systems mandated by the enactment of WIA.

These newly created One-Stop systems also share many similarities in rural and urban areas. In both types of areas, One-Stop systems are made up of various types of access points ranging from very large enhanced comprehensive centers with numerous co-located partner staff, to tiny, unstaffed, computer-only sites. In addition, in both rural and urban areas, ES staff are present in a majority of One-Stop access points, many of which are located in former ES offices.

One-Stop partnerships in rural and urban areas are also generally similar. For example, in both types of areas, One-Stop partnerships are usually dominated by WIA and ES, while VR and TANF agencies, though often involved, play less of a role. In both rural and urban areas, community colleges are also important partners who provide the majority of local training programs, while faith-based organizations (FBOs) are not typically formally involved.

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Finally, both rural and urban areas report that resource sharing to support local One-Stop networks is their biggest challenge. In both types of areas, WIA and ES provide the bulk of the financial resources to support these systems, with other partners contributing only limited, often in-kind resources.

## **Differences in Systems and Challenges**

Despite these many similarities, in certain ways, rural workforce development systems and partnerships are quite different from those in urban areas. One important reason for these differences is that rural areas confront different challenges than do urban areas. For example, one of the biggest challenges faced by rural workforce investment areas is making services accessible to widely scattered customers. Other major challenges include overcoming the significant transportation barriers that customers face, providing customers with all of the services they need despite a scarcity of available workforce development providers and utilizing overstretched staff effectively. Each of these challenges is discussed in more detail below.

*Despite these many similarities, in certain ways, rural workforce development systems and partnerships are quite different from those in urban areas. One important reason for these differences is that rural areas confront different challenges than do urban areas.*

## **Reaching Widely Scattered Customers**

Reaching widely scattered customers given resource limitations is one of the chief difficulties facing rural areas. In a previous study of rural One-Stop systems,<sup>1</sup> we found that rural areas often attempted to make services accessible to customers by developing wide networks of very small access points. Even though these access points offered few services, local areas asserted that they at least allowed customers to conduct basic job searches and receive information about other available services.

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<sup>1</sup> *Rural One-Stops: Issues in WIA Implementation*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. Kate Dunham. Social Policy Research Associates. January 2003.

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However, in this study, we found that rural areas appear to be shifting to a strategy of having fewer, more comprehensive access points located in only their largest hub cities. The primary reason for this shift is that a network of fewer but more comprehensive centers allows customers to meet all of their needs in one location and is thus more convenient. Even though customers may have to travel further to reach an access point, local area respondents did not feel that this change would negatively affect accessibility. The reason they gave is that rural customers are accustomed to traveling relatively long distances to the largest cities in their areas to take care of other service needs.

*We found that rural areas appear to be shifting to a strategy of having fewer, more comprehensive access points located in only their largest hub cities.*

This increasing focus on fewer, more comprehensive One-Stop access points appears to be different from the strategy pursued by a number of large urban local areas. For instance, both Chicago and Philadelphia have established relatively large numbers of small access points aimed at reaching ethnic or racial sub-groups within their populations. However, due to the limitations of this study, more research is needed to determine whether urban and rural areas are really moving in opposite directions in terms of access point strategies.

## **Overcoming Transportation Barriers**

Another important set of service delivery differences and challenges between rural and urban areas is related to assisting customers with overcoming transportation barriers. Although urban areas also face the challenge of helping their customers overcome transportation barriers, rural areas typically place greater emphasis on this type of assistance. One reason for this heavier emphasis on transportation assistance is that rural residents—who might have to travel dozens of miles to reach their nearest One-Stop access point—often face much greater transportation challenges than do urban residents, given the greater distances involved and the lack of public transportation.

*Although urban areas also face the challenge of helping their customers overcome transportation barriers, rural areas typically place greater emphasis on this type of assistance.*

One additional difference between rural and urban areas regarding transportation challenges has to do with the kinds of strategies used



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to overcome these barriers. For example, in urban areas, one of the main strategies used to assist customers with transportation barriers is to provide them with public transit vouchers. However, because public transit in rural areas is either unavailable or extremely limited, rural One-Stop systems typically cannot use this strategy. Instead, they place greater emphasis on strategies such as providing vouchers to customers to pay for gas or necessary vehicle repairs, forming carpools, or transporting customers in vans belonging to other agencies. Because of significant challenges related to the use of all three of these common strategies, rural areas also place heavy emphasis on alternative service delivery avenues such as providing services over the phone and having staff travel to meet customers in out-of-the way locations.

Although our previous study of rural One-Stop systems found that providing rural customers with electronic access to services was not as effective as in urban areas,<sup>2</sup> respondents in this study reported that Internet services are another important way to assist customers in overcoming transportation barriers. These respondents asserted that, despite the fact that only a little over half of all rural residents reported using the Internet,<sup>3</sup> increasing reliance on the web for service delivery in rural areas is inevitable. They attributed this increasing dependence to continuing budget cuts, improving technology and the rapidly growing use of the Internet among rural users.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> *A Nation Online: How Americans are Expanding their Use of the Internet.* U.S. Department of Commerce. 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Recent data from the U.S. Commerce Department showed that Internet use among people in rural households has grown at an average annual rate of 24 percent, several percentage points faster than for people in urban households. Ibid.

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## Scarcity of Workforce Development Providers

The scarcity of workforce development providers is another service delivery issue commonly faced in rural areas that is uncommon in more populated areas. As an example of this scarcity, we found that the rural areas we visited typically lacked sufficient numbers of providers to allow for competitive procurement processes in selecting One-Stop operators, and WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth providers. In most of the areas we visited, we also found low numbers of local training providers, resulting in a lack of sufficient numbers of local training programs on state Eligible Training Provider Lists (ETPLs) in at least two cases.

However, local respondents contended that, in most cases, the scarcity of local workforce providers has not negatively impacted service delivery. These respondents stated that the existence of even one qualified provider and an effective network of One-Stop partners has enabled local areas to provide customers with the services they need.

In the few cases where an adverse impact from workforce provider scarcity was noted, local area respondents are pursuing strategies to mitigate this impact. For example, one of the areas with a shortage of local training programs on their state's ETPL is developing distance learning arrangements with public postsecondary education providers. In the other area that reported a shortage of training programs, local WIA staff are determinedly attempting to persuade local training providers to submit more programs for inclusion on the list.

## One-Stop Partnership Differences

Although both rural and urban areas have One-Stop partnerships that are broadly similar in composition and face some similar difficulties, One-Stop partnerships in rural areas also differ in important ways and face dissimilar challenges. One way that they differ is that rural One-Stop partnerships are typically smaller and include fewer specialized partners than many urban partnerships.

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For example, few rural partnerships include CBOs that are targeted at specific ethnic or racial groups as is common in urban areas.

Another difference is that, in rural areas, coordination between partners is often less formal. According to local respondents, one reason for this lack of formality is that many rural One-Stop staff play multiple professional roles, given limited personnel. On the plus side, One-Stop partner staff often see each regularly without there being a need to organize formal One-Stop partnership meetings. However, on the down side, wearing multiple professional hats may also result in staff being stretched too thin to effectively perform all of their duties.

*Close interpersonal ties between partner staff is another reason for the lack of formality in rural One-Stop partnerships.*

Close interpersonal ties between partner staff is another reason for the lack of formality in rural One-Stop partnerships. Numerous respondents asserted that strong personal relationships between staff from different partner agencies are common in a rural environment where people know each other in multiple personal and professional contexts. These ties typically mean that staff regularly check in with each other on an informal basis, thus lessening the need for formal opportunities for communication.

Sometimes, however, personal relationships in rural areas can also become personal feuds. In the small-town environment of a rural area, these feuds can spill over and have a deeply destructive effect on both the local One-Stop partnership and service delivery.

Although urban areas are certainly not immune to interpersonal conflict, because of the greater number of organizations and partners staff typically involved in urban partnerships, the effect of such feuding is likely to be less damaging.

*Overall, workforce development services in rural areas appear to be meeting the needs of the majority of rural customers.*

## **Overall Adequacy and Accessibility of Rural Workforce Services**

Overall, workforce development services in rural areas appear to be meeting the needs of the majority of rural customers. The rural areas we visited also seem to be doing a good job in making services accessible to most rural residents—whether via a One-

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Stop access point or through an alternative strategy such as online services.

However, it also seems that some groups of rural residents may not be able to access necessary workforce services as successfully as others. For example, a number of respondents noted that certain groups of racial or ethnic minorities, due to linguistic and cultural differences, are not accessing workforce services as readily as other groups. Although some rural areas have implemented special strategies to reach these groups of customers, they continue to struggle with this challenge.

*A number of respondents noted that certain groups of racial or ethnic minorities, due to linguistic and cultural differences, are not accessing workforce services as readily as other groups.*

Perhaps the most significant group of rural customers who may not be able to effectively access services are poor residents of the most rural localities. Because many of these residents lack their own means of transportation,<sup>5</sup> they are likely to find it difficult to travel to the nearest One-Stop access point. The recent shift by many rural areas to more concentrated networks of access points will probably make this challenge even more formidable as these residents will have to travel even greater distances to reach their nearest access point. Moreover, because Internet use is negatively correlated with poverty,<sup>6</sup> these residents are also unlikely to be able to successfully access services via the web.

*Perhaps the most significant group of rural customers who may not be able to effectively access services are poor residents of the most rural localities.*

Unfortunately, due to resource constraints, this study was not able to conduct extensive research on rural non-users of services. Because of the importance of developing a clear understanding of these non-users for the purpose of developing strategies for more effectively reaching them, additional research to explore this issue further would be helpful.

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<sup>5</sup> Rucker, George. *Status Report on Public Transportation in Rural America, 1994.* Rural Transit Assistance Program, Federal Transit Administration.

<sup>6</sup> *A Nation Online: How Americans are Expanding their Use of the Internet.* U.S. Department of Commerce. 2002.

**Appendix A**  
**Detailed Characteristics of Each Type of Access Point**

	<b>Enhanced Comprehensive</b>	<b>Basic Comprehensive</b>	<b>Affiliate</b>	<b>Satellite</b>	<b>Computer-only</b>
<b>No. in Study Sites</b>	15	6	6	6	20
<b>No. of Study Sites with this Access Point</b>	5	3	4	3	3
<b>Typical Operator</b>	Consortium	State employment security agency (SESA)	SESA	WIA or SESA	SESA/ Local Board organizes; hosts include stores, libraries, CBOs, churches
<b>Staffing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program and Employment Service (ES) staff on-site full-time; typically multiple ES and/or WIA staff are on-site</li> <li>• At least one other core* One-Stop partner on-site full-time</li> <li>• At least one other One-Stop partner on-site part-time; typically more than one</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program and ES staff on-site full-time; sometimes represented by only one staff</li> <li>• Sometimes other One-Stop partners on-site full or part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Either WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program or ES staff on-site full-time</li> <li>• At least one other One-Stop partner on-site part-time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 FTE or less WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program or ES staff on-site</li> <li>• No other partners on-site</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No core One-Stop staff on-site</li> </ul>

	<b>Enhanced Comprehensive</b>	<b>Basic Comprehensive</b>	<b>Affiliate</b>	<b>Satellite</b>	<b>Computer-only</b>
<b>Typical Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core, intensive and preparation for training services</li> <li>• Large resource room with avg. of 14 computers (range 5-21)</li> <li>• Core &amp; intensive workshops such as job search, interviewing, resumes, occasionally GED prep</li> <li>• Employer services</li> <li>• Full SESA services such as Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) usually available</li> <li>• Vocational Rrehabilitation (VR) services almost always available</li> <li>• Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) services usually available on a limited basis</li> <li>• Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) services often available</li> <li>• Job Corps recruiting often available on a limited basis</li> <li>• WIA youth services sometimes available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core, intensive and preparation for training services</li> <li>• Resource rooms are smaller with avg. of 9 computers.</li> <li>• Employer services</li> <li>• Typical SESA services such as VETS and TAA</li> <li>• Occasionally TANF and VR services on-site on a limited basis</li> <li>• Core &amp; intensive workshops sometimes unavailable due to space limitations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core services</li> <li>• Typical SESA services such as VETS and TAA</li> <li>• WIA intensive &amp; preparation for training services occasionally available</li> <li>• Occasionally other services (such as TANF, SCSEP, Job Corps, etc)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core services</li> <li>• WIA intensive &amp; preparation for training services sometimes available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-service core only</li> </ul>
<b>Typical Hours and days Available</b>	8-4:30 or 5 Mon-Fri	8-4:30 or 5 Mon-Fri	8-4:30 or 5 Mon-Fri	8-4:30 or 5; three open less than M-F	Most open business hours; seven open later
<b>Average Size</b>	8,749 sq. ft. Large rooms for workshops and meetings	2,245 sq. ft. Sometimes room for meetings only	2,568 sq. ft.** Sometimes room for meetings only	410 sq. ft. Usually no meeting room space	Space for a computer

Data is as of December 2004. \* "Core" One-Stop partners include partners who provide basic workforce development services such as job search assistance, career counseling, and occupational training. Typically these partners include WIA providers, ES, VR, TANF and community colleges. \*\*Excluding the satellite ES office in Santa Fe, NM which is 15,897 sq. ft.

# **Appendix B. Local Area Profiles**

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# NORTH CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA

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## **Local Area Demographics and Economy**

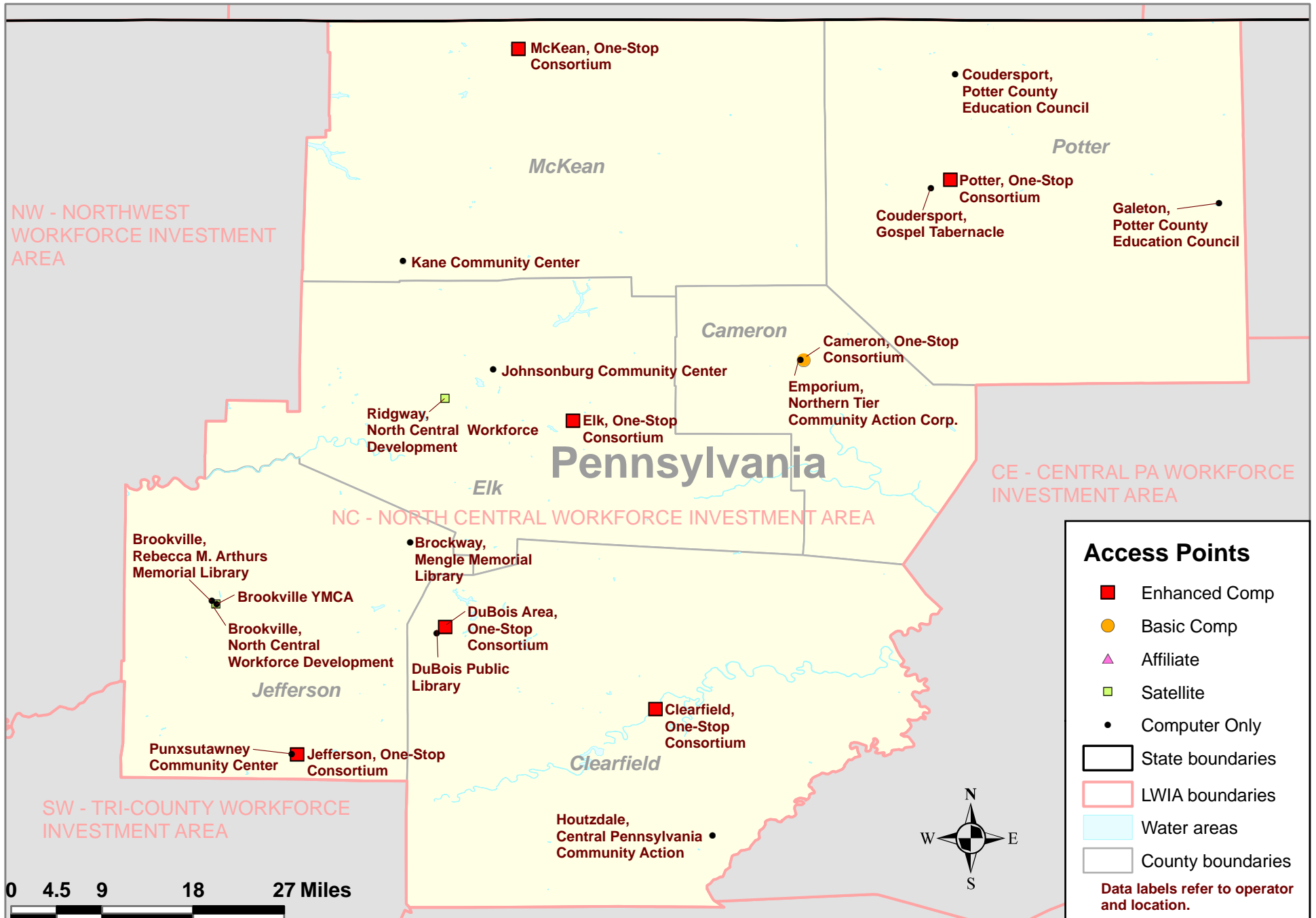
The North Central local workforce investment area encompasses six counties: Cameron, Clearfield, Elk, Jefferson, McKean and Potter. The local area spans 5,091 square miles and has a population of 234,416. The area has a population density of 46.04 people per square mile. The area's largest city is St. Mary's City, with a population of 14,502, and has no metro counties. The population of the local area is overwhelmingly White and each of the six counties exceeds the state's percentage of persons 65 years old and over, reflecting local respondents' perception of an aging local population and an exodus of youth. The six counties' median household income ranges from \$31,357 to \$37,550 (compared to \$40,106 for the state). Between 79%-83% of each of the county's 25 and over population has graduated high school, and between 11%-14% of each county's 25 and over population has a bachelor's degree or higher.

Powdered metals is the dominant, though declining, industry of the local area. Two of the largest powdered metals companies in the area employ between 800-900 workers. Recent outsourcing to countries in Southeast Asia has translated to local slowdowns and bouts of layoffs. There are also a number of other manufacturing sectors in the local area. In all, manufacturing comprises approximately 35% of all jobs in North Central Pennsylvania. Other than manufacturing, the local area's key and/or growing industries are extraction, health care, transportation, and the public sector. The local area's unemployment level hovers around seven percent.

## **Local One-Stop System (See Exhibit B-1)**

There are 21 access points in the local area, seven of which are comprehensive centers, two of which are satellite centers, and 12 of which are computer-only access points. These access points are located an average of 22 miles from each other in the largest cities and towns in the local area, with at least one comprehensive center in each county. The hours of operation for all comprehensive centers are from 8:00—4:30pm daily.

# North Central Pennsylvania Access Points



All of the local area's centers are run by a five-member Operator Consortium (OC), whose members include: Economic Development, WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, Wagner-Peyser, Vocational Rehabilitation, and county offices of education.

Comprehensive centers all have WIA and ES staff on site and at least one additional mandated partner. They are operated by chartered CareerLink partnerships according to business plans approved by the local WIB. Among the comprehensive centers, the few differences in service delivery that exist are primarily a function of the differences in the key/paying partners (aside from WIA and ES) that are involved at each center, including Vocational Rehabilitation, TANF and county offices of education. The two satellite centers have only WIA staff available either part- or full-time and are housed at a technical school and a CBO. With regard to service delivery, the computer-only access points differ from the comprehensive and satellite centers most obviously in that there are generally no staff present at the former; the only services provided are Internet access to the state CareerLink website.

The local area prioritizes comprehensive centers as the vehicles for service delivery in order to meet the original One-Stop vision and to prevent staff from being even further stretched across sites. The local area also feels that since local residents are accustomed to traveling a reasonable distance for services, they would prefer to have a comprehensive range of services available upon reaching their destination rather than reduced availability.

## **Training Services, Youth Services and Employer Services**

With regard to training services for Adults and Dislocated Workers, ITAs have outnumbered OJT in recent years. For example, in PY 2003, 209 adults/dislocated workers received training through ITAs and 91 received training through OJT. The ITA funding cap is \$7,500. There are 18 relatively local training providers on the eligible training provider list, with many clustered in manufacturing, truck driving, and medical technicians. Training options are somewhat limited for individuals and families who are not willing to travel considerable distances.

North Central Workforce Development (NCWD) serves as the primary youth services provider. NCWD operates the Youth Development System, based on five modules which encompass the ten required WIA program elements for youth. NCWD works with a youth consortium in each of the six counties to ensure youth service provision. Though an RFP was issued for other youth providers, response was weak given the small supply of service providers; only five were ultimately contracted to provide one or more of the required program elements. Leadership and mentoring are the program elements most lacking in the local area. WIA youth counselors often

serve as direct service providers (e.g., as mentors) and work closely with schools as non-contracted service providers. Schools are also a key member of the youth consortium.

Employer services can be broken down into the following major categories: Internet-based CareerLink system (job orders and job matching); membership to the local industry consortium; basic and upgrade skills training for new and current employees; OJT and customized training; employment workshops; testing and assessments; and labor market information. Training appeared to be the most popular component of employer services. Employers have access to training funded by each county's industry consortium, as well as state funding for employers to train new and existing employees through two programs—the Technology Training Program and the Basic Skills Training Program—offered by the Guaranteed Free Training Program.

## **Description of On-line Services**

The local area refers all job-seekers and employers to the state website:

[www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us](http://www.pacareerlink.state.pa.us). The job seeker services page allows individuals to enroll in the CareerLink system, search for jobs using a wide variety of criteria, view profiles of participating employers with job openings, review WIA eligible training providers, and access a variety of self-help information, such as resume preparation tips, labor market information, assistance related to self-employment, and links to external job search listings and/or resources. The employer services page allows employers to register with CareerLink, post their company profile, submit and update job orders, search for qualified applicants, and access economic development and labor market information. The local area feels that core services are very effectively provided online to rural customers, though there are some groups of customers, typically older in age, who are sometimes hesitant to use online services. To augment and complement the PACareerLink site, the local area developed two websites for use by employers, partners, and job seekers: [www.pajobconnection.org](http://www.pajobconnection.org) and [www.ncwib.org](http://www.ncwib.org).

## **Rural One-Stop Partnerships**

The local area's strong and long tradition of collaboration is facilitated by relatively few key entities in the workforce development system: WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, ES, Vocational Rehabilitation, and TANF—all of which are co-located at least part-time at all of the comprehensive centers. In addition, organizational partnerships appear to be facilitated by the interpersonal connections unique to a rural area. With one exception, FBOs and CBOs are not paying partners of the CareerLink system, though some CBOs are utilized as key referral partners for supportive and other services. Community Action Inc.—which provides a wide

variety of education, employment, and supportive services—is the only paying CBO partner and is co-located part-time at one of the comprehensive CareerLink centers.

In general, partners work together and provide services via co-location. Referrals usually occur for supportive services outside the CareerLink system. Methods for inter-partner communication and coordination are exceedingly informal—typically taking the form of “walkovers” to other partners. Estimates of co-enrolled adults/dislocated workers ranged significantly across the CareerLink centers visited, from very low to nearly 70 percent. Adults/dislocated workers are most commonly co-enrolled in Vocational Rehabilitation or TANF.

## Financial Arrangements

Many of the development costs for the local CareerLink system were absorbed locally, though state funding provided for resource room computers and the local WIB-provided funds for additional technology and marketing efforts. State and local funds were considered adequate for getting the CareerLink centers up and running, after which point resource-sharing between partners has been considered adequate for *maintaining* the centers.

Resource-sharing budgets for the comprehensive centers total just over \$500,000. Building costs account for most of this amount at just over \$400,000. Percent staffing FTE is used as the basis for cost allocation among partners. The local WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider and the state’s ES agency are allocated the greatest portion of shared costs. The WIA provider pays \$177,097 for its space at the seven centers. WIA has 31 FTE staff covering all centers. The state’s ES agency pays \$150,991 for its space at the seven centers. ES has 25 FTE staff covering all centers.

## Promising Practices

Following are components that stand out as key features or promising practices of the local area:

- Work Readiness Skills Standards (WRSS)—using the CareerLink system to deliver WRSS training that responds directly to employers’ articulated needs for employees and asking employers to endorse WRSS on their shop windows.
- Employer/industry consortia—organizing consortia per each of the six counties as a way to better serve employers specific to the immediate local area (e.g., one area might be comprised heavily of manufacturing companies, while another might be dominated by health care.) Membership in the consortium not only serves as a gateway to services and an opportunity to discuss potential workforce solutions with CareerLink staff, but also provides employers with networking opportunities as another service or benefit. The employer consortia are comprised of more than 150 employers among the six groups.

- Rethinking the role of clergy—through its FBO/CBO grant, the local area was able to rethink the role of clergy as community-wide partners and referral hubs in assisting the unemployed and underemployed. Particularly useful strategies included a massive outreach effort to educate the clergy on CareerLink resources for their parishioners, resource mapping of faith-based resources, and housing of CareerLink computer-only access points at churches.

# NORTHERN NEW MEXICO LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

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## Local Area Demographics and Economy

The area governed by the Northern New Mexico Local Workforce Development Board (Northern New Mexico) includes 10 counties: Cibola, Colfax, Los Alamos, McKinley, Mora, Rio Arriba, San Juan, San Miguel, Santa Fe and Taos.

Northern New Mexico has a population of 464,484 spread over 35,957 square miles, resulting in a population density of only 13.41 per square mile. The local area's largest cities include Santa Fe, which in 2000 had 62,203 residents, followed by Farmington with 37,844 residents. Both cities are located in the local area's two metropolitan counties, San Juan and Santa Fe. Northern New Mexico has significant populations of Native Americans and Latinos as well as Whites, with populations varying dramatically by county. Native Americans in the local area include members of 11 Pueblo communities, the Jicarillo Apache Nation and the Navajo Nation. Although counties in the local area report large numbers of residents where a language other than English is spoken at home (typically over 50%), the percentage of foreign-born residents is small. In terms of education, the local area is also diverse, with most counties reporting lower percentages of high school and college graduates than the state average, and one county well above the state average.

The local area is composed of a very economically diverse set of counties, ranging from the wealthiest and most economically vibrant in the state (Los Alamos and Santa Fe) to some of the poorest and most economically depressed (Mora and Taos). For example, in 2003, Northern New Mexico had both the county with the lowest unemployment rate in the state (Los Alamos, 1.7%) and the county with the second highest (Mora, 14.4%). According to the Census, the local area also has the distinction of having the county with the highest percentage of residents considered poor in the state (McKinley, 36.1%) and the county with the lowest such percentage (Los Alamos, 2.9%).

Northern New Mexico is also fairly diverse in terms of industries. For example, two of the counties (Santa Fe, Taos) have very strong hospitality and tourism industries. Los Alamos and Santa Fe counties, also have a strong high tech industry. Other counties in the region have typical government, health services, and retail mixes, although mining is an important industry in some areas, particularly in McKinley and San Juan Counties.

## **Local One-Stop System (See Exhibit B-2)**

Northern New Mexico has a network of 11 One-Stop access points, including three enhanced comprehensive centers, four basic comprehensive centers, three affiliate offices and one satellite. These access points are located in the largest city and county seat of eight of the local area's 10 counties, an average of 93 miles apart. One-Stop access points in the local area are generally open Monday through Friday from 8 am to 5 pm.

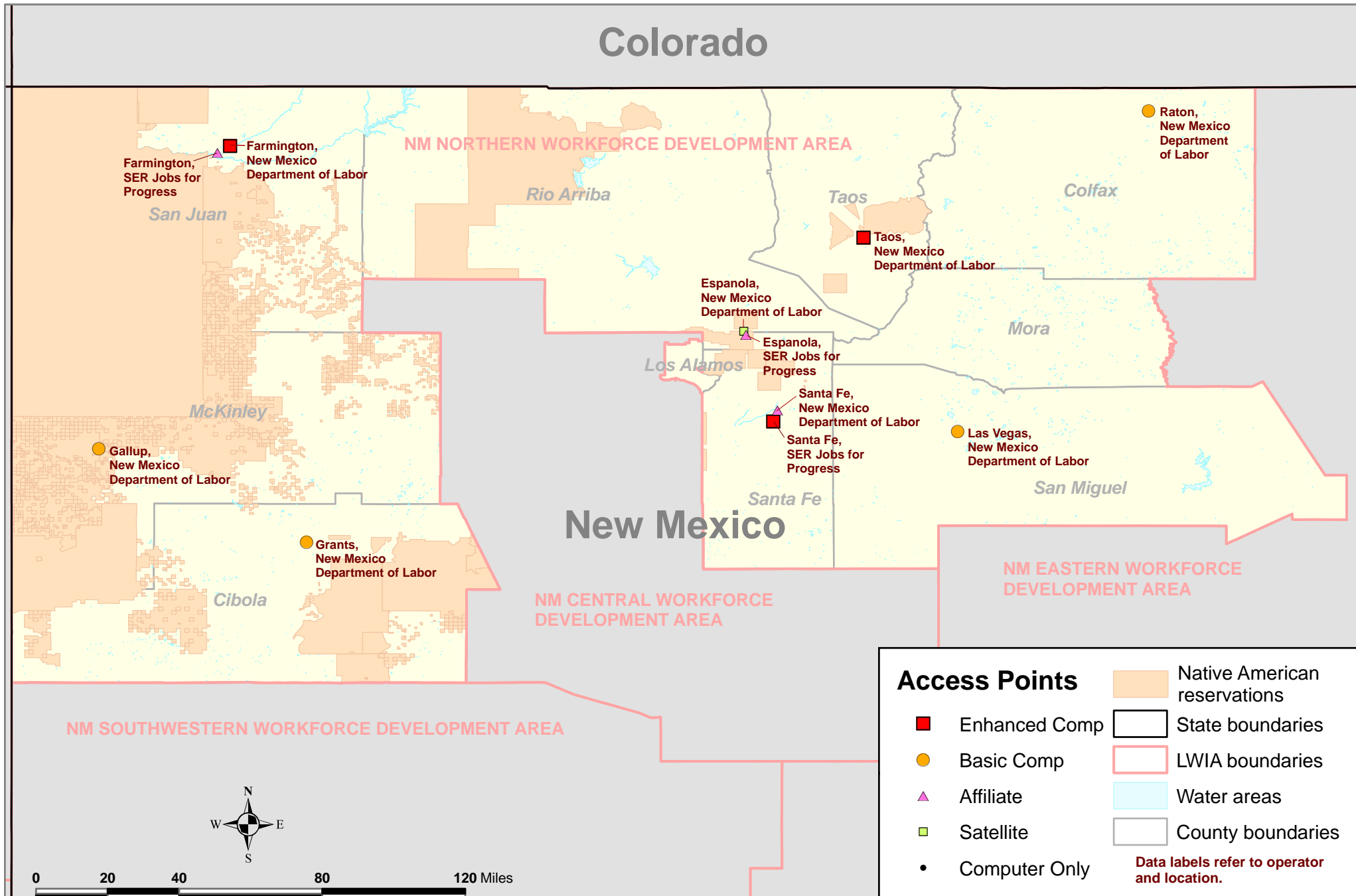
SER Jobs for Progress (the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider) is the designated One-Stop operator and operates the two enhanced comprehensive centers in Santa Fe and Farmington and the satellite office in Espanola. The New Mexico Department of Labor (NMDOL), the state employment security agency, operates the other eight access points.

The mix of available services and partners varies widely by type of access point. The three enhanced comprehensive centers have the widest range of services and co-located partners, with WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker staff and ES staff on-site full-time as well as at least one other partner. Farmington has the most *additional* on-site partners with staff from Job Corps, the New Mexico Commission for the Blind, Worker's Compensation, and five other non-profit agencies on-site. All four basic comprehensive centers also have WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program staff and ES staff on-site full-time, while the affiliate offices are primarily staffed by NMDOL. The lone satellite office is staffed by a single staff person from the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider.

The local area's philosophy in establishing its One-Stop access point network is to locate them in county seats and population centers where rural residents typically travel to do their shopping, receive health services, etc. Generally, this has meant that the access points are located in or near former ES/UI offices operated by NMDOL. Currently eight of 10 counties have an access point and SER Jobs for Progress is looking into opening satellite offices in the other two counties. Although three counties have two access points in the same city, local area respondents generally did not think there was a need for more than one access point in each county.



# Northern New Mexico Access Points



## **Training Services, Youth Services and Employer Services**

Few customers have received ITAs in Northern New Mexico since January 2003 (no new customers were issued ITAs in PY 03) due to previous overspending. However, the local area is still working with a fairly large number of customers who were put into training by the previous WIA provider. In October 2004, the local area had 603 adults and 175 dislocated workers with ITAs. As a result of funding limitation, Northern New Mexico is in the process of lowering its ITA cap from \$7,000 to \$3,000.

Respondents universally agreed that there are sufficient numbers of local training providers and programs, as the local area has a well-developed system of public community colleges and state universities. The local area has 35 training providers offering 450 approved training programs on the ETPL.

Currently, the local area contracts with seven different providers to provide WIA youth services. Each of these providers serves either a specific geographical area or a certain sub-population. For example, an organization called Eight Northern, operated by the eight northernmost Pueblo Indian tribes, provides services to Native American youth from those pueblos.

Employer services are provided by regional managers from the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider, NMDOL staff and staff from TechConex. The WIA managers have developed several arrangements between the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider and employers to provide customized training, primarily for incumbent workers. One example of this is the Commercial Driver's License training, which is provided for Santa Clara Pueblo employees by a local community college, and was brokered by SER staff. NMDOL staff provide other more traditional employer services such as helping employers to post jobs on the state's job matching system. Another major set of employer services is provided by a New Mexico nonprofit organization called TechConex. TechConex recruits and assesses potential employees for local call centers, and then provides them with employability training and information on what to expect in a call center environment.

## **Description of On-line Services**

The WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider and One-Stop operator has its own internally developed customer website: <http://www.onestopnmm.org>. This website's job-seeker page includes a link to the state's virtual One-Stop registration website, locations of One-Stop access points, and information on the types of services available at local access points. For the

two enhanced comprehensive centers operated by the WIA provider, there are pages with more detailed information about the specific services available from each co-located partner. The website also has a page with links to all of the major statewide One-Stop partners, including NMDOL.

NMDOL, the state employment security agency, also has a customer focused website: <http://www.dol.state.nm.us/>. This website has pages allowing customers to file for UI, register for services, search for jobs, explore information about local labor markets, and learn about employment and training services for veterans. It also has a page with links to on-line job search resources and provides information on One-Stop access points operated by NMDOL.

## **Rural One-Stop Partnerships**

The main partners common across all 10 counties are SER Jobs for Progress and NMDOL, the WIA and ES providers. Other state-wide partners, such as the Commission for the Blind and Vocational Rehabilitation, are not very active. The major CBO involved in the One-Stop system is the WIA Adult and Dislocated worker program provider, SER Jobs for Progress. Otherwise, most of the major providers are public agencies. Other than SER Jobs for Progress, TechConex is probably the most involved nonprofit with two staff co-located at two different access points. The Educational Opportunity Center (one staff co-located at the Santa Fe One-Stop one day a week) and the nonprofits co-located at the Farmington One-Stop center are the next most involved. There are also several CBOs that provide WIA youth services, but are not connected to the access system. No FBOs are involved in local One-Stop partnerships. Respondents said that one reason CBOs are not more involved is that they are typically small and often provide services in only one or two of the local area's 10 counties.

Currently, it appears that few referrals are made between One-Stop partners. Moreover, the local area has a very informal referral system. Although the state's MIS has the ability to capture referrals, it is seldom used. One local provider argued for the need to create a formal referral process in order to increase the number of referrals.

SER Jobs for Progress staff estimated that nearly all WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker customers are also enrolled in ES, although the reverse is not true. However, because they do not have access to each other's screens on the state's MIS, neither ES nor WIA staff really know how many customers are co-enrolled.

## Financial Arrangements

Nearly all costs for maintaining the local area's One-Stop systems comes from the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker provider and NMDOL. For example, the WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider reported spending approximately \$265,395 per year renting space at eight One-Stop access points. These access points are staffed by the WIA provider with approximately 15 FTEs, the majority working out of the two comprehensive centers which have approximately 4 WIA staff each. By comparison, NMDOL reported spending \$678,837 in PY 03 to cover all non-staffing costs for the eight One-Stop access points it operates. At the Santa Fe enhanced comprehensive center, NMDOL also pays \$18/sq. foot for an office for its one co-located staff person. NMDOL said that it has approximately 35 FTEs working across the local area's access points, with the majority in locations it operates.

Some other partners also contribute much smaller amounts to the One-Stop system. For example, Job Corps pays approximately \$7440 per year to rent two small offices at the Santa Fe enhanced comprehensive center. At the Farmington enhanced comprehensive center, all co-located partners negotiate and pay rent directly to the building owner, the local community college.

## Promising Practices

Following are components that stand out as key features or promising practices of the local area:

- Providing Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training to help overcome transportation barriers—The WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider facilitated a CDL training for employees of Santa Clara Pueblo. Once they attain their CDLs, the Pueblo will be able to use these employees to transport more Pueblo residents to services or employment.
- TechConex—TechConex, a New Mexico nonprofit, recruits potential employees for rural call centers, assesses those employees and then provides them with employability training and information on what to expect in a call center environment. Local call center employers have been very pleased with these services, which have helped them to succeed in rural areas.

## **NORTHWEST IOWA (REGIONS 3 AND 4)**

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Northwest Iowa is technically comprised of two local workforce investment areas. However, it is basically operated as one unit by the WIA administrative entity, Northwest Iowa Planning and Development Commission (NWIPDC) and the local manager for Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), the state employment security agency.

### **Local Area Demographics and Economy**

Northwest Iowa includes nine counties: Clay, Dickinson, Kossuth, Emmet, Palo Alto, Lyon, O'Brien, Osceola and Sioux counties.

The local area extends over 5,210 square miles and has a population of 137,590. The area is not very densely populated, with only 26.41 people per square mile. Eight of nine of the area's counties have decreased in population since 2000. The area has no metro counties and its largest city is Spencer, Iowa, with only 11,317 residents. The area is overwhelmingly White, although it does have a small (1.6%) but rapidly growing Hispanic population. The percentage of residents with high school diplomas varies by county, from about 80 to nearly 90 percent. In all but two counties in the region, the percentage of residents with college degrees is about 14 percent, well below the state-wide average of 21.2 percent. The average household median income for the entire area is \$35,838, nearly \$4,000 less than the state median income.

In 2003, the largest industry in the region was manufacturing, which employed 11,957 or 19.6 percent of all workers, followed closely by trade, which employed 19.5 percent of workers. The largest employers in the area include a major window manufacturer, a furniture manufacturer, a manufacturer of promotional products, a meat packing company, Wal-Mart and a vehicle manufacturer (motorcycles, personal watercraft and all-terrain vehicles).

In 2004, Northwest Iowa had a labor force of 71,720 and an average annual unemployment rate of about 4.2 percent.

## **Local One-Stop System (see Exhibit B-3)**

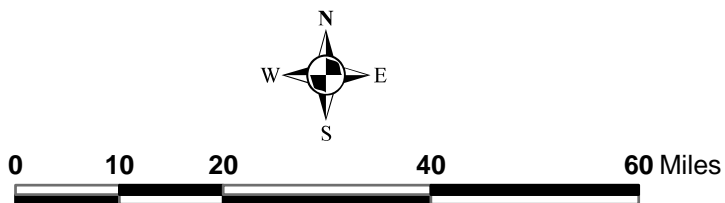
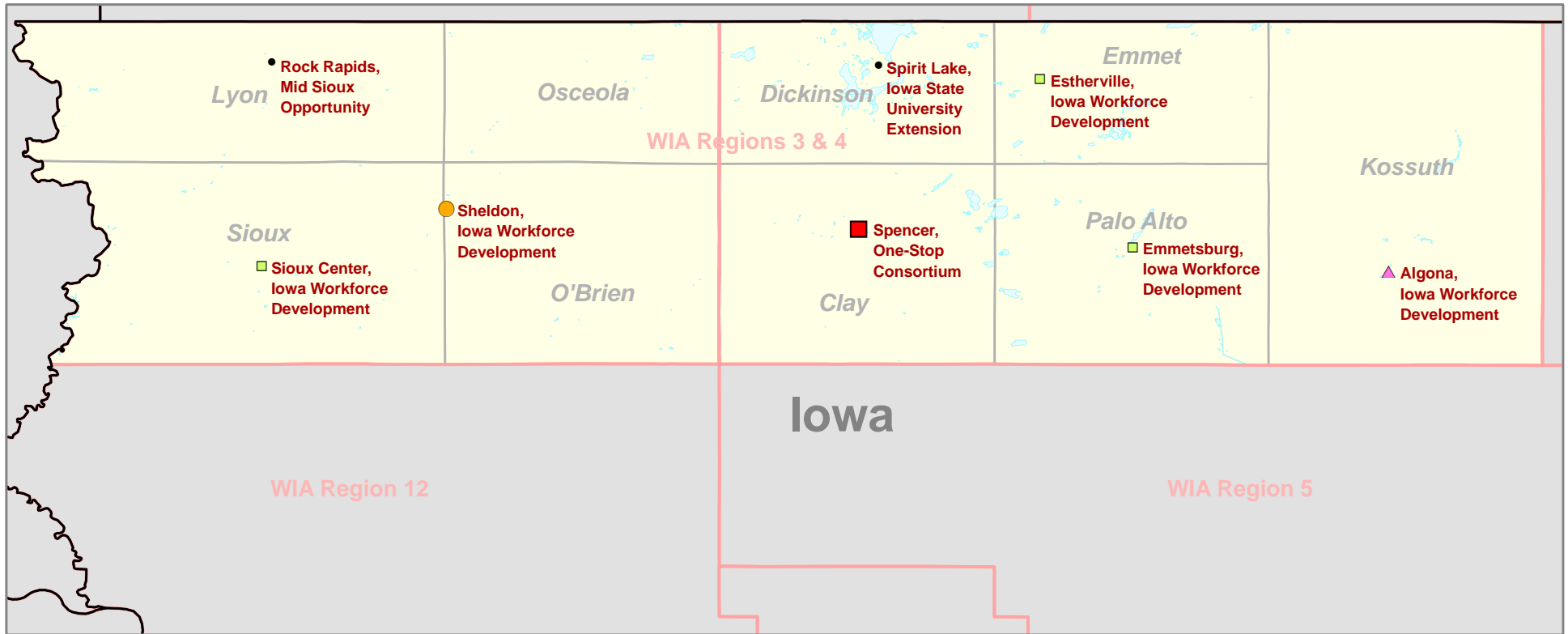
Northwest Iowa has a network of eight One-Stop access points. These access points include an enhanced comprehensive center, a basic comprehensive center, an affiliate office, three satellites, and two computer-only access points. Access points are located an average of 27 miles apart in the largest city or town in eight of nine counties. The comprehensive centers, the affiliate office, and the one full-time satellite in Sioux Center are all open from 8-4:30 pm, Monday through Friday. Of the remaining two satellites, one is open Monday through Thursday, 8-4:30, while the other is staffed only two days a week, although the resource room is open five days a week. The Spencer enhanced comprehensive center is operated by a consortium, while all other access points are operated by the state employment security agency, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD).

The area's flagship One-Stop, the Spencer enhanced comprehensive center, is far larger than any of the other access points and consequently has the most co-located partners and on-site services. The Spencer center has full-time staff from NWIPDC (WIA provider), IWD (ES/UI), Vocational Rehabilitation and the Iowa Department of Human Services (TANF). In addition, staff from two local Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) providers and Job Corps hold weekly hours on-site. A staff person from the state's provider for the National Farmworker Jobs Program visits monthly.

Other access points have fewer co-located partners and offer more limited services. For example, the Sheldon basic comprehensive center and Algona affiliate are regularly staffed only by NWIPDC and IWD who provide WIA, ES and limited TANF services. In Algona, WIA staff are on-site only one afternoon a week. The three satellites are staffed only by IWD.

To understand Northwest Iowa's One-Stop network, it is important to understand two items of Iowa history: the enactment of an employer surtax to fund rural offices in 1987 and the enactment of a law that requires an IWD office or electronic access to IWD services in each of the state's 99 counties. First, because of declining Wagner-Peyser funding and a desire to ensure that employers and job-seekers in even the most rural areas had access to services, the state enacted a law charging employers up to a maximum of \$7 per employee. These funds were to be used to support staffing and facility costs for IWD offices in rural areas. Although this funding is now supplied from state General Funds, it allows the state to staff and operate far more access points than would be possible with only Wagner-Peyser funds.

# Northwest Iowa Access Points



### Access Points

■ Enhanced Comp	□ State boundaries
● Basic Comp	▭ LWIA boundaries
▲ Affiliate	■ Water areas
■ Satellite	□ County boundaries
• Computer Only	<b>Data labels refer to operator and location.</b>

The other piece of Iowa history that relates to the local area's One-Stop network is the passage of a law in 1996 requiring IWD to operate a physical office or provide computer access in each of the state's 99 counties. As a result, the local IWD manager developed partnerships to locate such access points in all local area counties without IWD offices. Consequently, in 1999, when the local area began planning its One-Stop network, a network of IWD offices and access points in all counties was already in existence. One-Stop system planners, because of serious resource constraints, utilized most of these existing IWD locations as One-Stop access points since there were only enough resources to develop one new enhanced comprehensive center in Spencer.

Some respondents in the local area support the current system of numerous small access points, because they feel that it is the best way to ensure that rural residents have access to at least basic workforce development services. However, other local respondents said that the current system may not be efficient because "in very rural areas like this, people are used to driving." In addition, local managers stated that the area's computer-only access points are not effective since they are so seldom used.

## **Training Services, Youth Services and Employer Services**

Northwest Iowa basically provides all WIA training services via ITAs. In Program Year 2003, the area served 74 participants and issued an ITA to each of these customers. Currently, customers can receive ITAs for up to \$500 of tuition per semester (\$1,500 a year) as well as unlimited support services. These support services, to cover transportation and child care expenses, have sometimes totaled as high as \$3,000 a year. However, because of limited funding, the local area is considering capping ITAs at \$2,000 over two years, including support services.

Local area respondents affirmed that there is no shortage of local training programs on the state's Eligible Training provider List (ETPL). Although the local area has only three training providers located in the area., these providers have 88 training programs on the ETPL. Two of these providers, both community colleges, offer the bulk of these programs.

NWIPDC has two staff people who provide WIA youth services in the area. Most of these services are provided at local school sites to make it easier for youth to access services.

Although the state attempted to competitively select WIA youth providers for the area, NWIPDC was the only respondent to the RFP. The director of NWIPDC attributes this lack of response to the very low level of WIA youth allocations the area receives (only \$64,292 in PY 03).



Employer services in Northwest Iowa are provided by IWD and consist primarily of taking job orders, attempting to match local job seekers with those job orders, answering questions about tax credits, providing labor market information, and assisting employers with obtaining work permits for their employees, and coordination of job fairs. IWD also organizes employer councils in each region that meet over lunch and feature speakers of interest to employers—particularly human resource professionals—and cover such as information as funding for incumbent worker training. IWD has a business services specialist based at the Spencer center who works with employers throughout the local area.

## **Description of On-line Services**

The primary website for customers in Northwest Iowa is IWD's website:

<http://www.iowaworkforce.org/>. This website includes two sections with a number of sub-pages that are specific to the local area, one each for Region Three and Region Four. These local pages have extensive information and links for both employers and job seekers. Under job-seeker services, there is information on ES services, WIA, SCSEP and TANF. On the same page, job-seekers can file for unemployment and use the state's online job matching system, Iowa Jobs. There are links to information on all of the area's One-Stop access points and information on local partners. There is also advice on conducting job searches via the Internet, a calendar of workshops around the state, a local Frequently Asked Questions page, and a page with many government and employment-related links, including a link to the state's labor market information website. For employers, the local IWD web pages have business services pages that includes an online business customer satisfaction survey, links to Iowa Jobs, America's Job Bank and Smart Career Move, and a business directory where employers can list their businesses for free.

## **Rural One-Stop Partnerships**

The primary One-Stop partners in the local area include NWIPDC (WIA), IWD (ES), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the two local community colleges. Other less-involved public partners include the Iowa Department of Human Services (TANF) and the Iowa Department for the Blind.

Community and faith-based organizations also play a role in the local area, although none have full-time staff co-located at One-Stop access points. For example, two non-profits, Experience Works and Upper Des Moines Opportunity, have a staff person who spends a few hours a week at the Spencer center to provide SCSEP services. In addition, Hope Haven, a faith-based

disability services provider, is a member of the Region 4 Youth Council and participated in WIA planning.

Northwest Iowa also has a partnership Iowa State University Extension. ISU Extension, which provides agricultural advice, financial management advice, nutrition programs and 4-H, hosts two One-Stop access points in Northwest Iowa—a part-time office as well as a computer-only access point. The arrangement is mutually beneficial in that both agricultural extension and ES in Iowa are required to have an office or access point in every county. ISU Extension also provides trainers for a One-Stop workshop on financial management and the One-Stop system refers clients to ISU Extension for educational services, leadership activities, economic development, and employment opportunities.

The local area has a formal partnership group involving all of these partners, but it meets infrequently. Instead, partners rely on regular informal communication to address most issues.

The local area does not have a formal referral system, but relies on informal referrals. Basically, when staff determine that a customer needs additional services, they provide the customer with a number and name to call. Where partners are co-located at access points, staff will often walk a customer to the office or desk of a colleague from the appropriate agency. Even when not co-located, partners who often work together and know each other well will often inform each other of a referral by phone.

The local area does not keep track of co-enrollment.

## **Financial Arrangements**

The development and maintenance of the One-Stop system in Northwest Iowa has been financially supported only by IWD and NWIPDC. IWD provides the most support to the system, spending approximately \$45,000 a year to lease space for five of the eight access points (IWD does not pay for space in one satellite and the two computer-only locations) and supporting approximately 11 FTE staff located at six access points. NWIPDC pays \$33,780 to lease space in two access points (\$31,200 for the Spencer center alone) and supports approximately 9 FTEs who provide workforce development services or administrative support for those services. The local area also spent \$100,000 from their One-Stop Implementation grant on renovations to the Spencer center.

These contributions, which were negotiated during the initial leasing of the buildings, are not perceived as “fair” by IWD and NWIPDC, but realistic because of budgetary limitations of partners, particularly CBOs and FBOs.

Most of IWD's funding to support the costs of rent and staff in the area comes from the state rather than Wagner-Peyser funding. Beginning in 1987, this state funding was generated by a surtax paid by employers. In 2004, this surtax was abolished, but the state has pledged to maintain this funding out of its General Fund in the short-run and eventually from interest on Reed Act revenues. Without this funding, the local IWD manager asserted she would probably only be able to pay for limited staffing at the main center in Spencer, while all other centers would have to close and their staff be laid off.

## **Promising Practices**

Following are components that stand out as key features or promising practices of the local area:

- IWD Employer Councils—These well-attended employer councils bring together local employers to network and share information on human resource issues.
- Partnership with ISU Extension—Northwest Iowa is the only local area in Iowa and in our five study sites to have developed a significant partnership with their local agricultural extension agency.

## REGION 4 OREGON

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### **Local Area Demographics and Economy**

The Region 4 Oregon local workforce investment area encompasses three counties: Linn, Benton, and Lincoln spanning 3,968 square miles.

According to the 2000 Census, the local area has a population of 225,701, with a population density of 57 individuals per square mile. The population is over 90 percent white, but has a growing Latino population (5%). Benton County also has small but growing Asian American and Ukrainian populations. Corvallis, which has 50,800 residents, is the local area's largest city. Corvallis is located in Benton County, the local area's only metropolitan county. Lincoln County has many retirees and exceeds the state average for senior residents. Median household income ranges from \$32,769 to \$41,897 across the three counties. Between 82 to 94 percent of each of the county's 25 and over population has graduated high school, and between 14 and 52 percent of each county's 25 and over population has a bachelor's degree or higher.

Key local industries in the area include timber, grass seed, other types of agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, and high tech. In the past few decades, the fishing and timber industries have steadily declined, although they remain important to the local area's economy. Linn County, which once depended on the timber industry for many jobs, has begun to turn its attention to attracting retail industry and distribution headquarters with its availability of freeway-accessible shovel-ready sites. The area's high tech industry has also declined. For example, Hewlett Packard, which once employed 6,000 workers, has reduced its staff by more than two-thirds. Oregon State University remains a major employer in Benton County.

Region 4's unemployment rate ranges from 3.5 percent in Benton County to 9.5 percent in Linn County, although unemployment is closer to 20 percent in rural remote towns of east Linn County.

## **Local One-Stop System (See Exhibit B-4)**

The local area has 11 access points, four of which are enhanced comprehensive centers, one of which is an affiliate, and six of which are computer-only access points.<sup>1</sup> These access points are located an average of 24 miles from each other in the largest cities and towns in the local area, with at least one enhanced comprehensive center in each county. The hours of operation for staffed access points are from 8:00-5:00, Monday through Friday. The resource room for the Benton County enhanced comprehensive center in Corvallis stays open until 7:00 pm on Mondays. Each of the enhanced comprehensive centers is run by an operator consortium, called the Facilities Operation Group (FOG), whose members include: Oregon Employment Department (ES), Community Services Consortium (CSC, a consortium of non-profits in the local area), Oregon Department of Human Services (TANF), Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VR), and Linn Benton Community College or Oregon Coast Community College. These centers all have an Adult and Dislocated Worker program provider (either CSC or Linn Benton Community College), ES, TANF and at least one other partner on site. The differences in service delivery among these centers are primarily related to which of the area's two partnering community colleges is on-site.

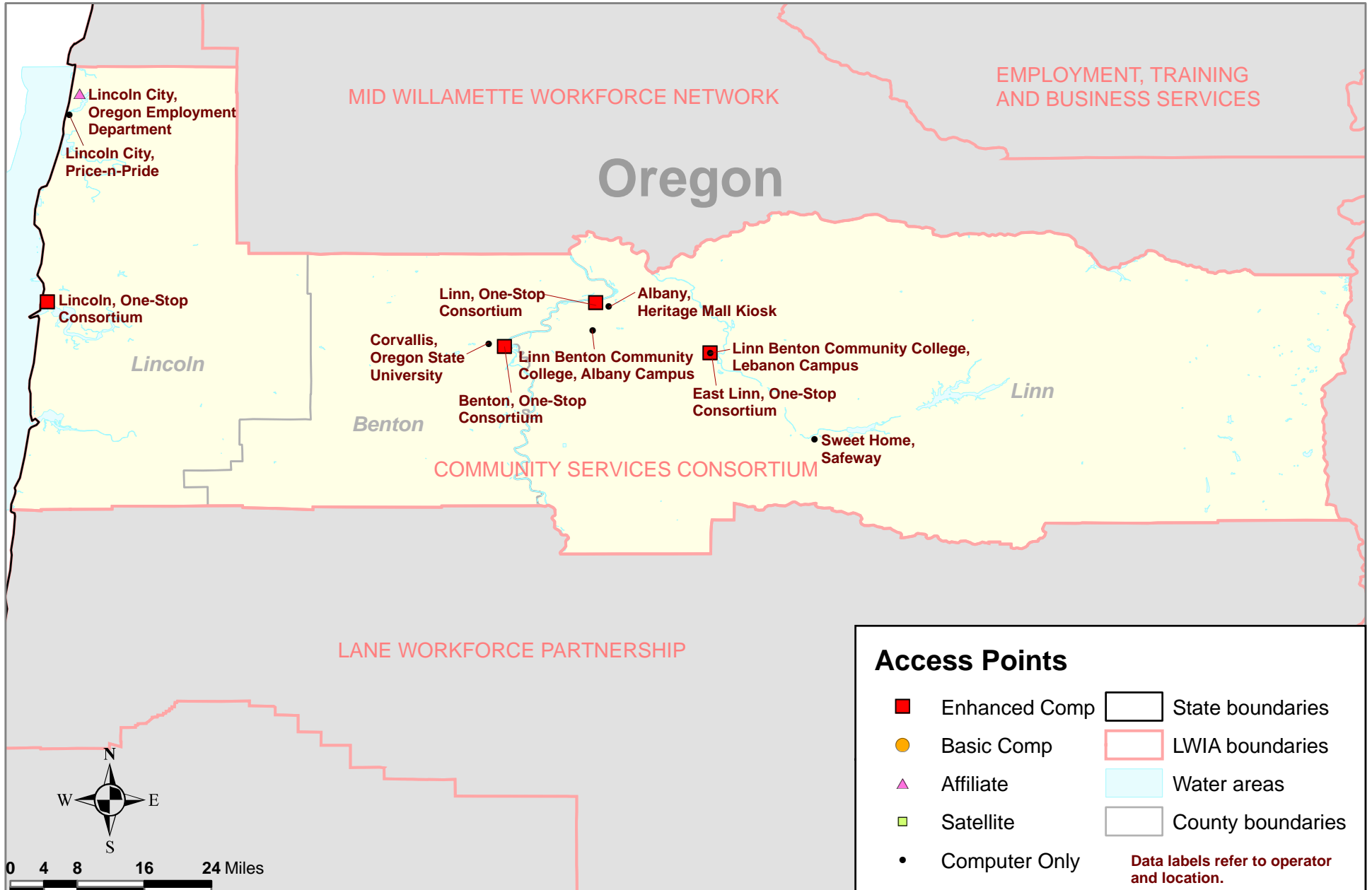
The other two types of local access points are both operated by ES. The local area's only affiliate access point has only ES staff present full-time, but a Veteran's Affairs staff person and TANF Jobs Program representative both hold regular hours at the office. None of the computer-only access points have any staff. These "kiosk" access points are located in a variety of places: supermarkets, a mall, a community college and a university.

The local area prioritizes comprehensive centers as the best service delivery vehicles for meeting the One-Stop vision and preventing staff from being stretched across too many small access points. They say that they do not have the staff or resources to provide itinerant access points to customers in remote areas, and that local residents are accustomed to traveling to the nearest hub city or town to receive services. Consequently, they prefer offering a complete range of services at high-traffic comprehensive access points.

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<sup>1</sup> The local area also has stand-alone computer kiosks in the lobbies of its comprehensive centers; however since these kiosks are in the same location as the local area's comprehensive centers, they are not counted as separate access points.

# Region 4 Oregon Access Points



Increasingly, the local area is encouraging customers to access services remotely via the Internet. Although many rural customers do not have Internet access, staff encourage them to access the Internet at their local libraries or at the computer-only access point to view job openings and labor market information.

The local area does not currently track use of One-Stop access points, but is in the process of developing one.

## **Training Services, Youth Services and Employer Services**

The local area has been unable to provide many training services recently. For example, contract training and customized training are rarely provided because employers do not want to be required to hire trainees or provide training when so many other qualified job applicants are already available. In addition, the local area has issued only 36 WIA Adult or Dislocated Worker program customers received ITA training.

There are several reasons why the local area has issued so few ITAs. One reason is due to the scarcity of local training providers and programs on the state's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The area has only nine providers and 62 training programs on the list. One reason for the scarcity of providers and programs is that, due to onerous reporting requirements, many trainers have chosen not to apply for inclusion of their programs on the ETPL. Another reason for the small number of ITAs is due to the length of many of the ETPL training programs. Often, these training programs are a year or more in length and rural customers typically lack the financial resources to support themselves during such an extended training. Finally, the small number of local eligible training providers covering such a large geographical area means that many ITA customers would have to travel long distances to receive training, something that many WIA customers are unable or unwilling to do.

WIA Youth services in the local area are provided by CSC. The local area attempted to use a competitive process to select a WIA youth service provider, but only CSC responded to the RFP. Local area managers said that this was because the contract amount was not lucrative enough to interest out-of-area providers and CSC is the only local provider of this type. Despite this lack of competition, the local area feels that the quality of the youth services has not been compromised because CSC is well-qualified to provide these services. The only youth services that CSC has difficulty providing is mentoring due to difficulty in finding a sufficient number of adult mentors.

The local area provides a number of employer services at its enhanced comprehensive One Stop centers. For example, businesses can use the centers to recruit and pre-screen applicants and conduct interviews. Certain One-Stop partners provide fee for service criminal background checks and drug tests. One-Stop partners also offer first source hiring agreements, wage subsidies, and tax credits for businesses that qualify. Finally, Linn Benton Community College, provides assistance with business plan development through its Training and Business Development Center.

## **Description of On-line Services**

The local One-Stop system has its own customer-focused website ([working4you.org](http://working4you.org)). This website has information about each of the four comprehensive centers, including a listing of available partners and services available at each center, as well as addresses of partner agencies that are not co-located in the One Stop. In addition, this website is linked to the Oregon Employment Department's website which includes labor market information System, an on-line job matching system and a system to register for ES.

The local area does not have a tracking system to determine usage of on-line services.

## **Rural One-Stop Partnerships**

The local area's One Stop partnership consists of ES, TANF, CSC, VR, and Linn Benton Community College and Oregon Coast Community College. Faith-based organizations (FBOs) are not formally involved in this partnership, although One-Stop access points often refer customers to FBOs for services such as food and clothing.

Local One-Stop partners use a variety of methods to communicate with each other. For example, monthly meetings of administrators and line staff are held at each comprehensive One-Stop center to promote cross-agency communication and collaboration. The chair of these meetings rotates; thus each partner agency has an opportunity to lead the meeting, and indirectly, of the One-Stop center. There is also extensive informal communication among co-located staff regarding services to customer and referrals. The referral process usually involves informal "walkovers" to other partner staff located in another part of a One-Stop center.

## **Financial Arrangements**

A mixture of grants and partner support was used to develop the One-Stop system. For example, the local area was given a One-Stop Implementation Grant of \$400,000 and an infrastructure



grant of \$87,000 to help cover initial development costs. One-Stop partners also contributed development funds, including \$22,500 to develop the One-Stop website.

Resource sharing budgets for the enhanced comprehensive centers total \$1,080,383, and an additional \$15,000 has been budgeted for marketing One-Stop services. Salaries account for the largest portion of this amount, at \$492,068. Percent staffing FTE is used as the basis for cost allocation among partners. ES and CSC cover 42.7 percent and 31.3 percent of shared costs, respectively. The preferred method of support is through in-kind services.

## **Promising Practices**

- *Strong cross-agency collaboration and communication.* The monthly Facilities Operation Group holds a monthly meeting among One Stop partners, in which administrators from each of the agencies discuss One Stop strategies and logistical issues. The One Stops also hold monthly meetings for front-line staff from all partner agencies to discuss operational issues and share information regarding the availability of partner agency services.

## **SOUTHEAST GEORGIA**

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### **Local Area Demographics and Economy**

The Southeast Georgia local area is comprised of nine counties: Atkinson, Bacon, Berrien, Brantley, Charlton, Clinch, Coffee, Pierce, and Ware, a total of 4954 square miles.

The total population of the local area in is 154,268 according to the 2000 Census. The population is 75 percent White, 20.7 percent African-American and 3.8 percent Hispanic. The bulk of the population is between the ages of 24 and 55. Between 56 and 73 percent of the 25 and over population has attained a high school education or higher, and between 6 and 11 percent has attained a bachelor's degree or higher education. These educational attainment figures are significantly below the national average.

Poverty is high in Southeast Georgia with approximately 20 percent of local area residents considered low income, compared to 13 percent for Georgia overall. Median household income in the area is only \$28,597, compared to \$42,433 for the state as a whole.

The largest industries in Southeast Georgia include manufacturing, educational social and health services and retail. Manufacturing is by far the largest industry in Southeast Georgia, with the 2000 Census reporting 21 percent of local employment in manufacturing. However, the local area has been hard-hit by trade-related manufacturing plant closures over the last few years. Some of the largest employers in the local area are the Satilla Hospital, the CXX Railroad, and the Wal-Mart Distribution Center. Agriculture has steadily become less important to the local area's economy.

Most counties in the local area had unemployment rates near four percent. By contrast, Atkinson County's unemployment rate was 6.4 percent.

### **Local One-Stop System (See Exhibit B-5)**

There are two access points in the local area—one enhanced comprehensive center located in Waycross and one affiliate office in Douglas. Both of the access points are operated by the

Georgia Department of Labor, the state ES agency. The Waycross center has ES, WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Experience Works (Senior Community Service Employment Program), and other staff from the state's employment security agency (Georgia Department of Labor). ES staff provide most core and intensive services, while WIA staff assist customers with accessing training services. The Douglas affiliate only has ES and other Georgia Department of Labor staff on-site. These access points are located 46 miles from each other, a drive that takes a little over an hour. The hours at the Waycross center are 7:30 am to 5:30 pm on Monday; 7:30 am to 4:30 pm on Tuesday through Friday. The hours in Douglas office are Monday through Wednesday and Friday from 8:00 am to 4:30 pm; Thursday from 8:00 am to 5:30 pm.

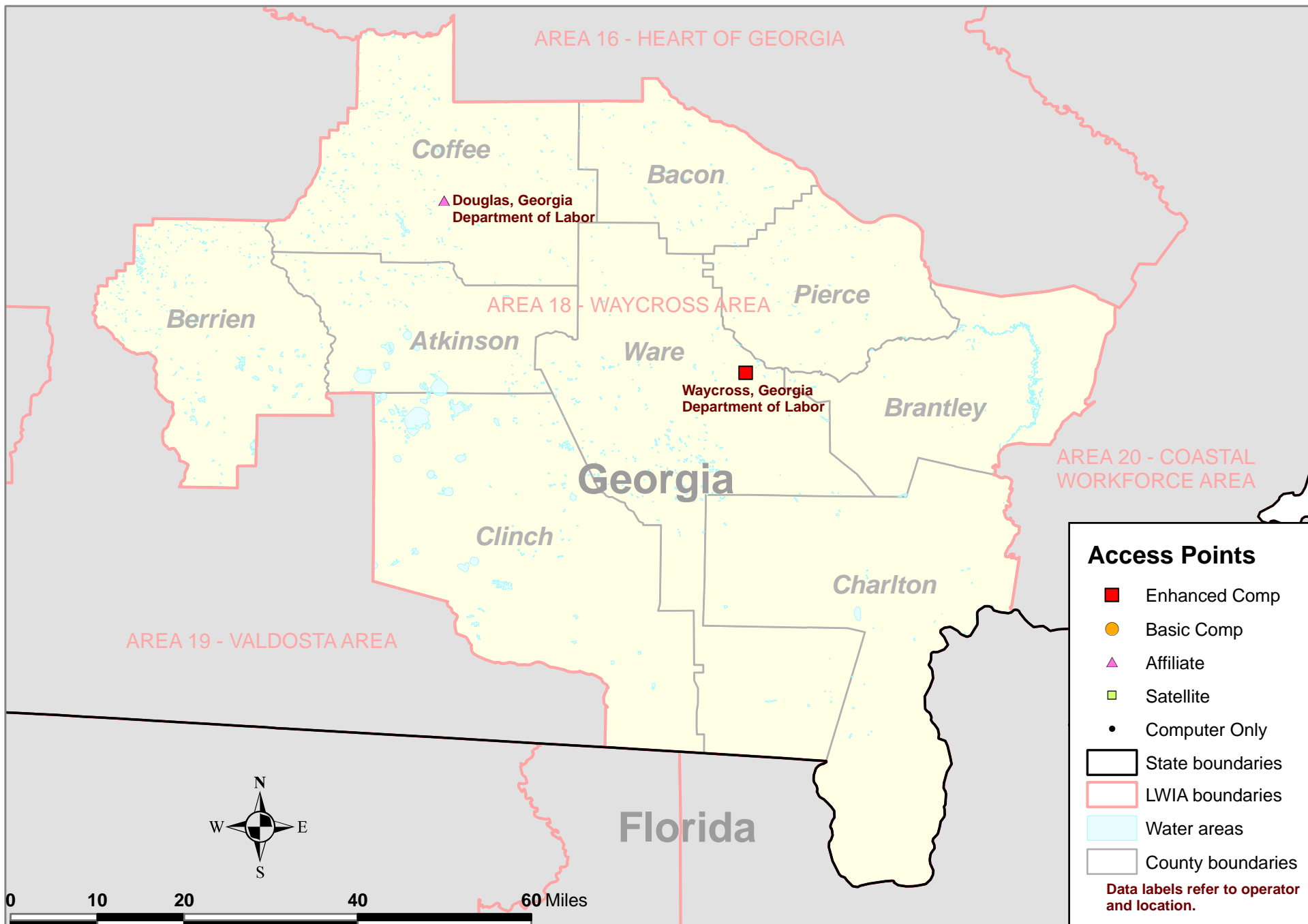
The local philosophy on locating access points is, "If they need us, they will come, and they do come." In other words, they believe that having a small number of access points providing most services is a better way to serve customers than having several smaller access points offering more limited services.

## **Training Services, Youth Services and Employer Services**

ITAs are the primary type of training service available in the local area. For example, in PY 2003, 220 Adult and Dislocated Worker program customers received ITAs, while only 62 received on-the-job training (OJT). The local area provided no customized or contract training in PY 2003. ITAs are issued by E.T.C. Schools, while the Georgia Department of Labor provides OJT. Nearly all training services are provided by local public technical schools, largely because of Georgia's state-run scholarship program HOPE, which covers most students' tuition at these schools.

WIA Youth services are provided by several youth providers who were selected through a competitive process. These providers are not located at One-Stop access points. These providers offer all of the 10 program elements required by WIA either directly or through partnerships with local school districts, community-based organizations or other partner agencies.

# Southeast Georgia Access Points



ES staff provide numerous employer services at both local access points. One common employer service is assisting employers with posting jobs on the state's on-line job matching system. At the Waycross enhanced comprehensive center, ES has an employer relations specialist whose primary function is to coordinate outreach to employers, job placement and employer-related training programs.

## **Description of On-line Services**

The local area does not have its own website. Instead, the local area refers customers to the Georgia Department of Labor website: <http://www.dol.state.ga.us/>. This website links to several job and résumé resources, such as America's Job Bank (AJB), Monster.Com, local newspapers and Georgia's own job-matching system. There are also links to information on UI filing, Tips for surviving a layoff, and an online job search handbook. The website seems very easy to use and navigate, and all of the information is presented clearly and in simple language.

## **Rural One-Stop Partnerships**

Major partners in the local One-Stop system include: the Georgia Department of Labor (ES), E.T.C. Schools (WIA ITA provider), Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), the Department of Children and Family Services (TANF), Telamon Corporation (National Farmworker Jobs Program or NFJP), and the Southeast Georgia Regional Development Corporation (WIA Administrator).

Although these partners primarily work independently, they maintain fairly healthy relationships with each other. These relationships are primarily maintained through informal communication between staff via the phone and e-mail. In addition, nearly all One-Stop partners are also members of the local TANF collaborative, which provides staff with another opportunity for communication. Because Rapid Response services are provided jointly by WIA and staff from the Georgia Department of Labor, provision of these services also ensures close coordination between partners.

The level of referrals between partners varied by program. For example, although referrals between ES and WIA and ES and the NFJP were reported to be low, referrals between local technical schools and the WIA program were reported to be high. Several respondents said that the referral tracking system is very weak once referrals take place.

There is little formal partnering with local faith-based organizations (FBOs) or community-based organizations (CBOs). However, many ES and WIA staff often make informal referrals to FBOs

or CBOs, particularly for support services. Many churches and other local FBOS are major local providers of support services. For example, the Ministerial Association, a group made up of representatives of many churches, offers low income residents assistance with food, gas bills, and utility bills. A few CBOs, such as Concerted Services, also serve as local WIA youth program providers are CBOs.

Although the local area does not keep formal track of co-enrollment between WIA and ES, it is likely high, at least in Waycross. Approximately half of all Trade Adjustment Assistance participants are co-enrolled in WIA's Dislocated Worker program (73 co-enrolled out of 153). The WIA administrator said that co-enrollment of TAA customers in WIA has improved coordination between the Georgia Department of Labor and the WIA Dislocated Worker program provider.

## **Financial Arrangements**

Partners contribute almost no resources to the One-Stop centers. The Georgia Department of Labor covers nearly the entire cost of the two One-Stop access points. WIA did pay for the installation of a new telephone system and some furniture in the Waycross center, but does not pay rent for its space in the center. One-Stop partners indicated that they are afraid that they will end up losing money if they pool resources.

## **Promising Practices**

Following are components that stand out as key features or promising practices of the local area:

- Community outreach--Southeast Georgia has several providers who are very successful in reaching groups of hard-to-reach local residents such as out-of-school youth and migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Staff from these provider conduct outreach by attending church functions, and spending time at local hang-outs such as Wal-mart, and barber shops.
- Employer services conducted by an employer relations specialist--employer services at the Waycross center are delivered in a very targeted, personalized way by an employer relations specialist. This has resulted in particularly strong relations between the center and employers.

## Exhibit B- 6

### Sources for Local Area Access Point Maps

**County boundary files:** 2000 County and County Equivalent Areas, Cartographic Boundary Files, U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, Cartographic Products Management Branch, 2001. [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/bdy\\_files.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/bdy_files.html)

**Block Group boundary files:** 2000 Census Block Groups, Cartographic Boundary Files, U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, Cartographic Products Management Branch, 2001. [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/bdy\\_files.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/bdy_files.html)

**Native American area boundaries for New Mexico:** 2000 American Indian Areas/Alaska Native Areas/Hawaiian Home Lands, Cartographic Boundary Files, U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, Cartographic Products Management Branch, 2001. [http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/bdy\\_files.html](http://www.census.gov/geo/www/cob/bdy_files.html)

**LWIA boundary files:** Created as described in the *Guide to the Reader* in Appendix C.

**Water Polygons:** Provided by ESRI based on 2000 TIGER/Line Files®, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. [http://www.esri.com/data/download/census2000\\_tigerline/index.html](http://www.esri.com/data/download/census2000_tigerline/index.html)

**Access point data:** Collected on site. Geocoded by street address with street shapefiles provided by ESRI based on 2000 TIGER/Line Files®, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. [http://www.esri.com/data/download/census2000\\_tigerline/index.html](http://www.esri.com/data/download/census2000_tigerline/index.html)

**Population data by block group:** American FactFinder, Census 2000 Summary File 1 and Census 2000 Summary File 3, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000. <http://factfinder.census.gov>

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## Appendix C. NATIONAL MAPS and TABLES

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### Guide to the Reader

The national maps and tables included in this appendix describe the numbers, types, distribution, and change in workforce development access points throughout the country for three periods of time over a span of 25 years: 1979, 1999, and 2004. The maps and tables also include data on the number of access points in non-metropolitan counties and how this has changed from 1979 to 2004. This *Guide to the Reader* describes how the maps and tables in this appendix and on the accompanying CD-ROM were created, provides information about the sources and limitations of the data, and offers a brief overview of the national maps and tables, including how to navigate the maps on the CD-ROM.

### Methodology and Data Sources:

This section describes the various data matching and cleaning methodologies utilized to create the maps and tables in this appendix and provides data source information.

1. Access point data for each year were extracted from different sources. The 1979 data were extracted from hard-copy lists that were dually entered by hand into electronic databases to screen for errors. The 1999 data were extracted from three separate Adobe PDF files using a custom-made script and were spot-checked for accuracy.<sup>1</sup> The 2004 data were extracted from an electronic database. Access point data sources for these years include:
  - a. “Directory of Local Employment Security Offices,” U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 1979.
  - b. “Local Office Directory,” America’s Workforce Technology Solutions, 1999.

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<sup>1</sup> The 1999 access point PDF files were first converted to rich text format, and then to plain-text for use in a custom program written in Perl script, a programming language. The script extracted the center name, zip code, and type into a tab-separated text file, which was then imported into Excel.

- c. America's Service Locator ([www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org)), a collection of electronic tools operated via federal-state partnerships, 2004.
2. The access points for each year were *geocoded* based on their ZIP codes. Geocoding is the process by which the mapping software adds a point to a map according to address information, in this case ZIP codes, and is the computerized equivalent of pushing pins into a wall map. The software places a point directly in the center of the ZIP code, so if two access points have the same ZIP code the points overlap. During the geocoding process, access point ZIP codes were matched to Census ZIP code data from the following source:
    - a. 2000 ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs), Cartographic Boundary Files, U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, Cartographic Products Management Branch; compiled by Proximity ([www.proximityone.com](http://www.proximityone.com)), 2001.
  3. During the first round of geocoding, access point ZIP codes that did not match up to Census ZIP code data were automatically assigned to neighboring ZIP codes. Those that still did not match the ZCTA boundary file were manually corrected and assigned ZIP codes from the same city or a neighboring ZIP code that were in the ZCTA boundary file.<sup>2</sup>
  4. Counties were classified as metropolitan or non-metropolitan using the Office of Management and Budget's definitions<sup>3</sup> and classification from 1983 and 2003, and U.S. Geological Society (USGS) county boundary files. Data sources include:

1979 maps and tables:

    - a. 1980 County Boundaries of the United States, U.S. Geological Society (USGS), National Atlas of the United States, <http://www-atlas.usgs.gov/atlasftp.html>.
    - b. Metropolitan Areas defined by U.S. Census Bureau, Office of Management and Budget, 6/27/83, <http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/metro-city/83mfips.txt>.

1999 and 2004 maps and tables:

    - c. 2000 County Boundaries of the United States, U.S. Geological Society (USGS), National Atlas of the United States, <http://www-atlas.usgs.gov/atlasftp.html>.

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<sup>2</sup> Many cities have multiple zip codes, some of which are not in the ZCTA boundary file.

<sup>3</sup> In 2003, the Office of Management and Budget used 2000 Census data to define groups of counties as metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs), classifying all counties as either metropolitan (part of an MSA) or non-metropolitan. MSAs are made up of central counties that have at least one urbanized area with a population of 50,000 or more, plus adjacent counties that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the core county based on a commuting threshold of 25 percent.

- d. Metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) defined by Office of Management and Budget, 6/6/2003, <http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/metro-city/03mfips.txt>.
5. The Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) boundaries were created by merging U.S. Census County and New England County Subdivisions shape files based on LWIA configuration information for program year 2003. Data sources include:
  - a. 2000 County and County Equivalent Areas, Cartographic Boundary Files, U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, Cartographic Products Management Branch, 2001.
  - b. 2000 County Subdivisions for Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, Cartographic Boundary Files, U.S. Census Bureau, Geography Division, Cartographic Products Management Branch, 2001.
  - c. Employment and Training Administration, "LWIA Content for Program Year 2003," U.S. Department of Labor, 2003; updated by WIASRD data, a survey of local areas conducted at the beginning of PY04, and site visit data from this study.
6. Once the data were assembled in the GIS software, we conducted a spatial join between the LWIA data and the access point data and a spatial join between the county data and the access point data. This produced two tables in Excel, one that assigned each access point to the appropriate LWIA and another that counted the number of access points in each county.
7. Finally, we summarized the number of access points in Excel using PivotTable reports, by LWIAs and by metropolitan/non-metropolitan counties within each state. The summarized tables were then formatted for use in this appendix. The data in the tables were spot-checked for accuracy.

## Data Limitations

There are several technical limitations to the national level analysis that are embedded in the maps and tables included in this appendix. These limitations should be kept in mind when reviewing any maps, tables, or analyses based on this data. First, due to limited resources, the mapping of LWIA boundaries was restricted to those that are county-based or New England town-based and did not include those in U.S. territories.<sup>4</sup> Thus, LWIAs that are based on cities, Native American reservations, towns, and townships are not included separately, but are folded into the counties in which they are located. For example, seven city-based LWIAs in Southern California (consisting of 30 cities) are all folded into the Los Angeles County LWIA. In addition, some LWIAs were completely omitted from the analysis, including those in Puerto

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<sup>4</sup> The only states where town-based LWIAs are used are Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island.

Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or other island territories. Note that the same LWIA boundaries, were utilized for all three time periods for comparison purposes even though LWIAs did not exist in 1979 and have changed since 1999.

A second set of data limitations is related to inconsistencies in the access point data, which ultimately makes the analysis less useful. One inconsistency is that the types of access points measured in each time period differ substantially. In 1979, access points types included in the data were Job Service, Unemployment Insurance (UI), and Work Incentive Program offices. By contrast, in our 1999 data, access points included Labor Exchange, UI, One-Stop, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), and other offices. By 2004, the data only show comprehensive and affiliate One-Stop offices. As a result of these differences, an analysis of changes in the number of access points may be due to the inclusion or exclusion of different types of access points in each of the three data sets, rather than real changes in the number of access points. For example, although our research has shown that many One-Stops are located in former JTPA offices (now WIA), JTPA offices were only included in the 1999 data, but Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)<sup>5</sup> offices were not in the 1979 data.

Another challenge to the usefulness of access point data is due to the methods by which source data were collected. First, data collected by America's Workforce Technology Solutions in 1999 do not appear to be all inclusive. Although all states had JTPA office at the time, many did not report any. Thus, access point data for those states includes only ES or UI office data, not JTPA office data. Second, there were also serious challenges with the method used to collect the 2004 data provided by America's Service Locator (ASL). A comparison of the ASL data to data obtained from site visits conducted for this and prior evaluations revealed important inconsistencies in the types and numbers of access points across states. These inconsistencies appear to stem mainly from confusion on the part of states over what types of access points to report to ASL. For example, some states reported all of their access points (including computer-only sites), while other states only reported their comprehensive centers. Some other inconsistencies stem from a lack of clarity over which access points should be classified as a "comprehensive" and "affiliate" access point. For example, an "affiliate" access point in one state may be classified as a "comprehensive" access point in another. Thus, the ASL data are extremely inconsistent from state-to-state, and this causes major problems for comparing across states and time periods. Consequently, data provided in the body of the report on the number of access points in 2004 for the five local areas visited for the study is more accurate than this national data.

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<sup>5</sup> CETA was the federal legislative precursor to JTPA.

## Overview of Maps

This appendix includes six different national maps that illustrate the types of access points for each year, as well as how the distribution of access points changed between 1979, 1999, and 2004. Please note that the number of access points on the maps are not entirely consistent with the number of access points in the tables because some access points share ZIP codes. When this is the case, the symbols for the access points overlap because they are plotted in the center of the ZIP code. Please refer to the appropriate table in this appendix for the exact number of access points in a given state or LWIA.

The following is a list of the maps included in this appendix:

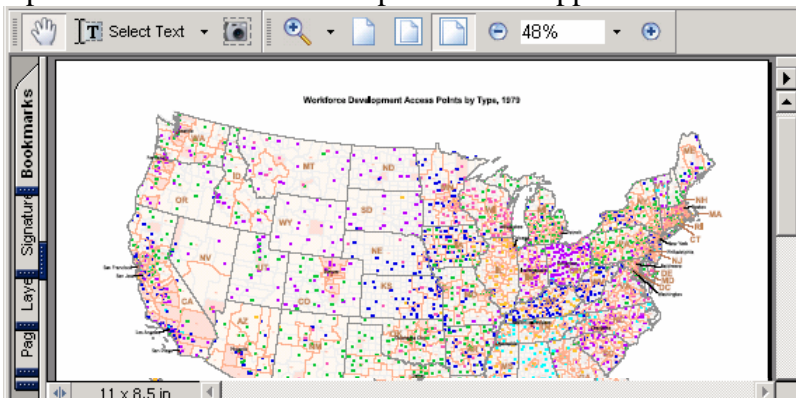
- Exhibit C-2: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 1979
- Exhibit C-3: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 1999
- Exhibit C-4: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 2004
- Exhibit C-5: Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1979 to 1999
- Exhibit C-6: Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1999 to 2004
- Exhibit C-7: Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1979 to 2004

### ***How to Navigate the Maps***

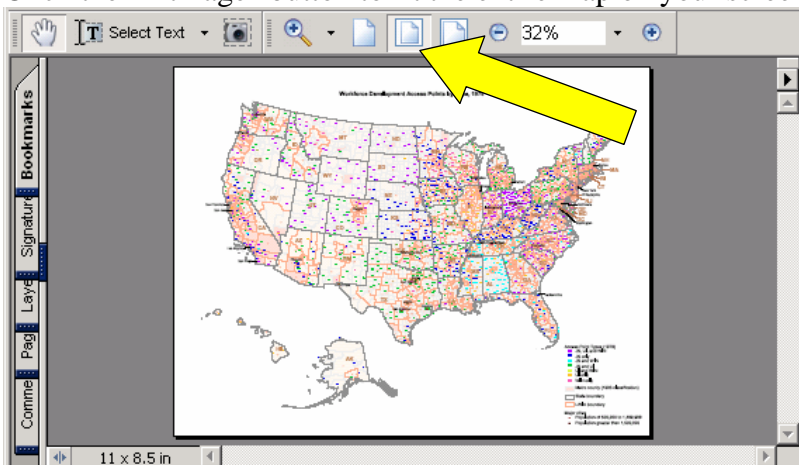
In addition to this appendix, this report also includes a CD-ROM with all the national maps. The reason for this CD-ROM is to provide users with the ability to zoom in on any part of the national maps. This allows users to view the distribution and change in access points at both the state and LWIA levels. Below are instructions on how to navigate the maps on the CD-ROM. Please note that you must have Adobe Reader installed on your computer to navigate the maps.

#### **Steps:**

1. We recommend that you print out the legends for each map using a color printer to aid you in navigating through the separate maps (see Exhibit C-1). This will allow you to see the legend even when you have zoomed in.
2. Open the desired national map from the “Appendix C” folder on the CD-ROM.

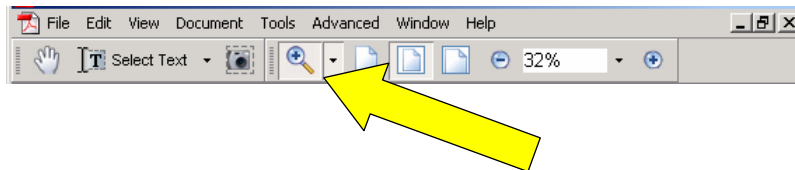


3. Click the “Fit Page” button to fit the entire map on your screen.

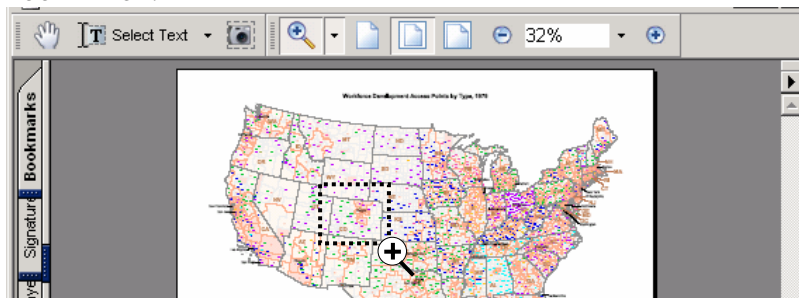


4. To zoom in on a particular state or local area:

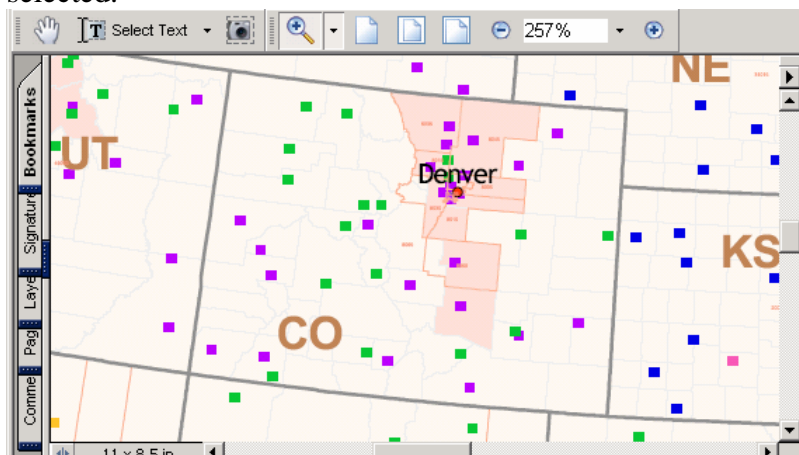
- a. Click the “Zoom in Tool.”



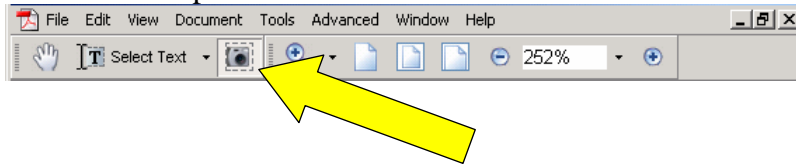
- b. Then click and drag the magnifying glass over the area you want to zoom in on.



- c. When you let go of the mouse, the image will zoom in on the area you selected.



- d. Repeat the zoom function as needed. Each time you click, the zoom function will further magnify that section of the map.
  - e. To return to the full page view, simply click on the “Fit Page” button (step 3 above).
5. To print a particular state or local area:
- a. Zoom in on the area you want to print by following steps 3.a through 3.d as needed.
  - b. Click the “Snapshot Tool.”



- c. Then click and drag the cross-hairs over the area you want to print.
- d. Wait a moment while Adobe Reader takes a snapshot of the area.
- e. Open Microsoft Word (or similar program) and past the snapshot into the document.
- f. Save and print the Word document as needed.

Note: It is important to zoom in as far as needed before taking a snapshot of the area and pasting it into a Word document. Enlarging the snapshot once it has been pasted into the Word document reduces the quality of the image.

## Overview of Tables

The tables included in this appendix are a textual representation of the data in the maps. Please use these tables to find out exactly how many access points are in a given state, as some symbols on the maps overlap for access points with the same ZIP codes.

The following is a list of the tables included in this appendix:

- Exhibit C-8: Total Number of Access Points by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004
- Exhibit C-9: Number of Access Points in Non-Metropolitan Counties by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004
- Exhibit C-10: Total Number of Access Points by Access Point Type in 1979, 1999, and 2004
- Exhibit C-11: Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 1979
- Exhibit C-12: Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 1999
- Exhibit C-13: Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 2004

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# **National Maps**






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## Exhibit C-1: Map Legends

We recommend that you print out these legends using a color printer to aid you in navigating through the electronic (PDF) versions of the maps.

**All maps have the following legend components in common:**

-  Metro county
-  State boundary
-  LWIA boundary
- Major Cities
  -  Population of 500,000 to 1,499,999
  -  Population greater than 1,500,000




### Legend for Exhibit C-2: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 1979

Access Point Types

-  JS, UI, and WIN
-  JS only
-  JS and WIN
-  JS and UI
-  UI and WIN
-  UI only
-  WIN only











### Legend for Exhibit C-5: Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1979 to 1999

Year Access Point Existed

-  1999
-  1979
-  1979 and 1999




### Legend for Exhibit C-3: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 1999

Access Point Types

-  JTPA and LE
-  JTPA and UI
-  JTPA only
-  JTPA, LE, and UI
-  LE and UI
-  LE only
-  LE, UI, and Other
-  OS only
-  UI only
-  Other



### Legend for Exhibit C-6: Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1999 to 2004

Year Access Point Existed

-  2004
-  1999
-  1999 and 2004




### Legend for Exhibit C-4: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 2004

Access Point Types

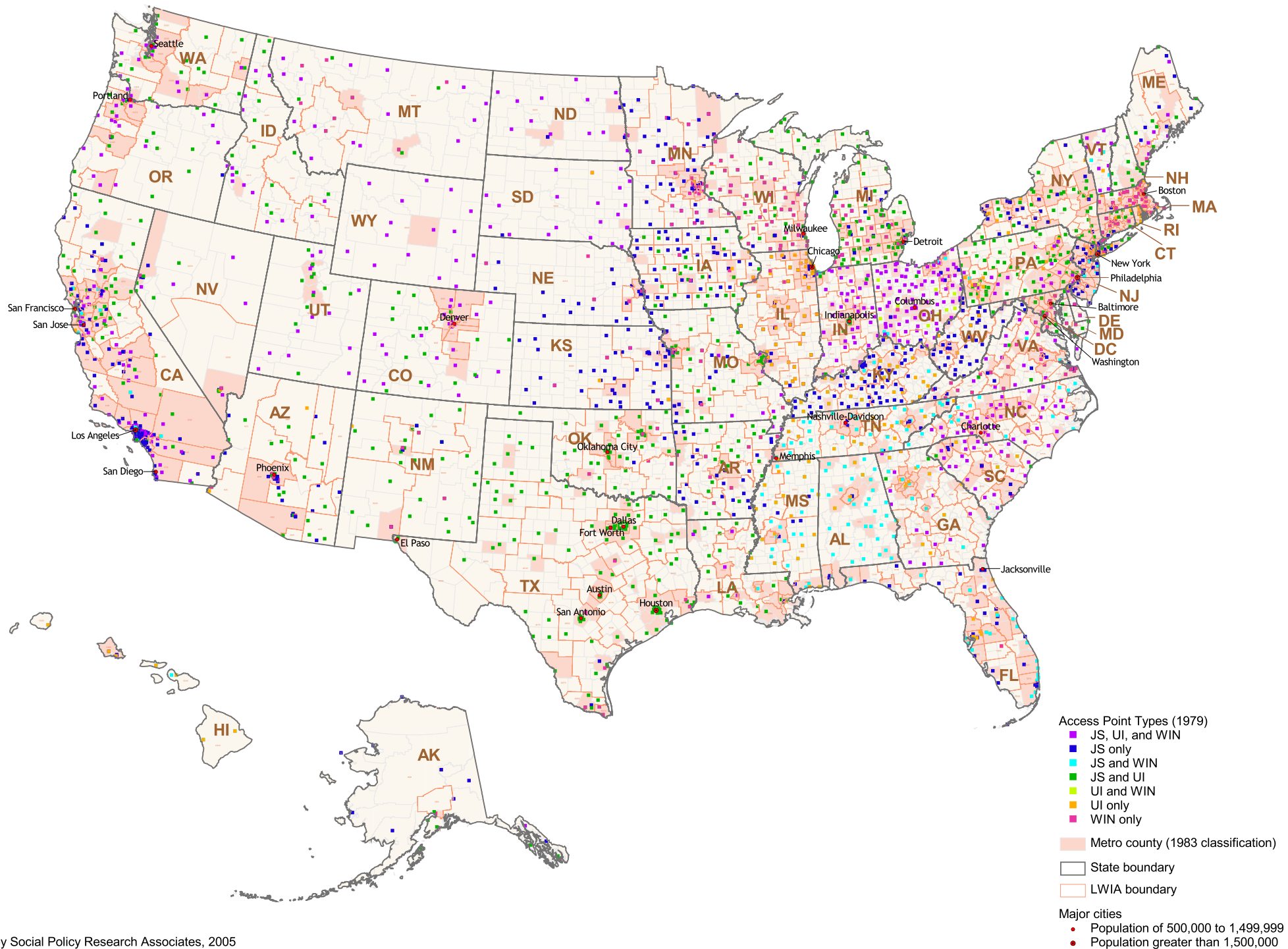
-  Affiliate
-  Comprehensive

### Legend for Exhibit C-7: Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1979 to 2004

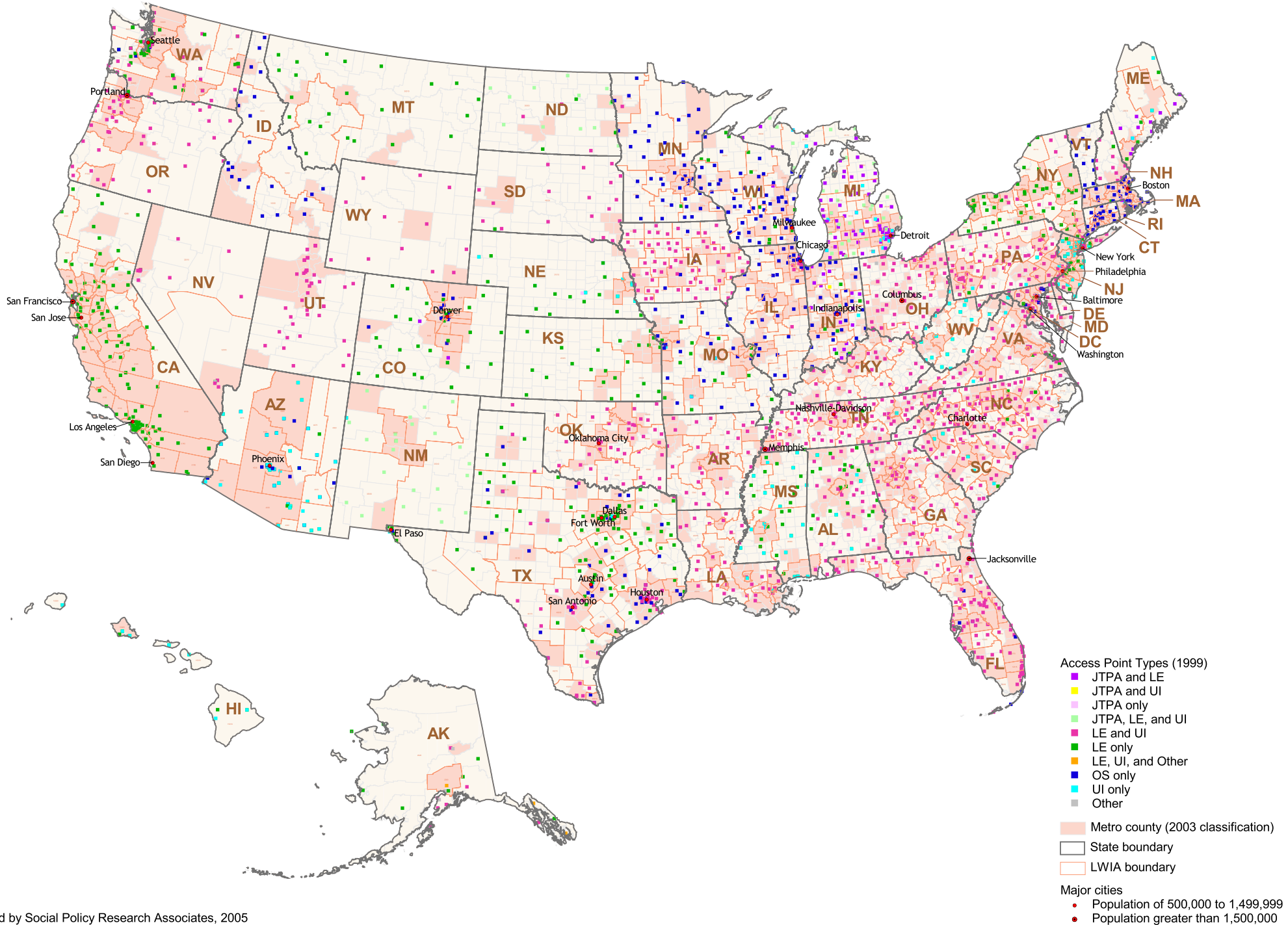
Year Access Point Existed

-  2004
-  1979
-  1979 and 2004

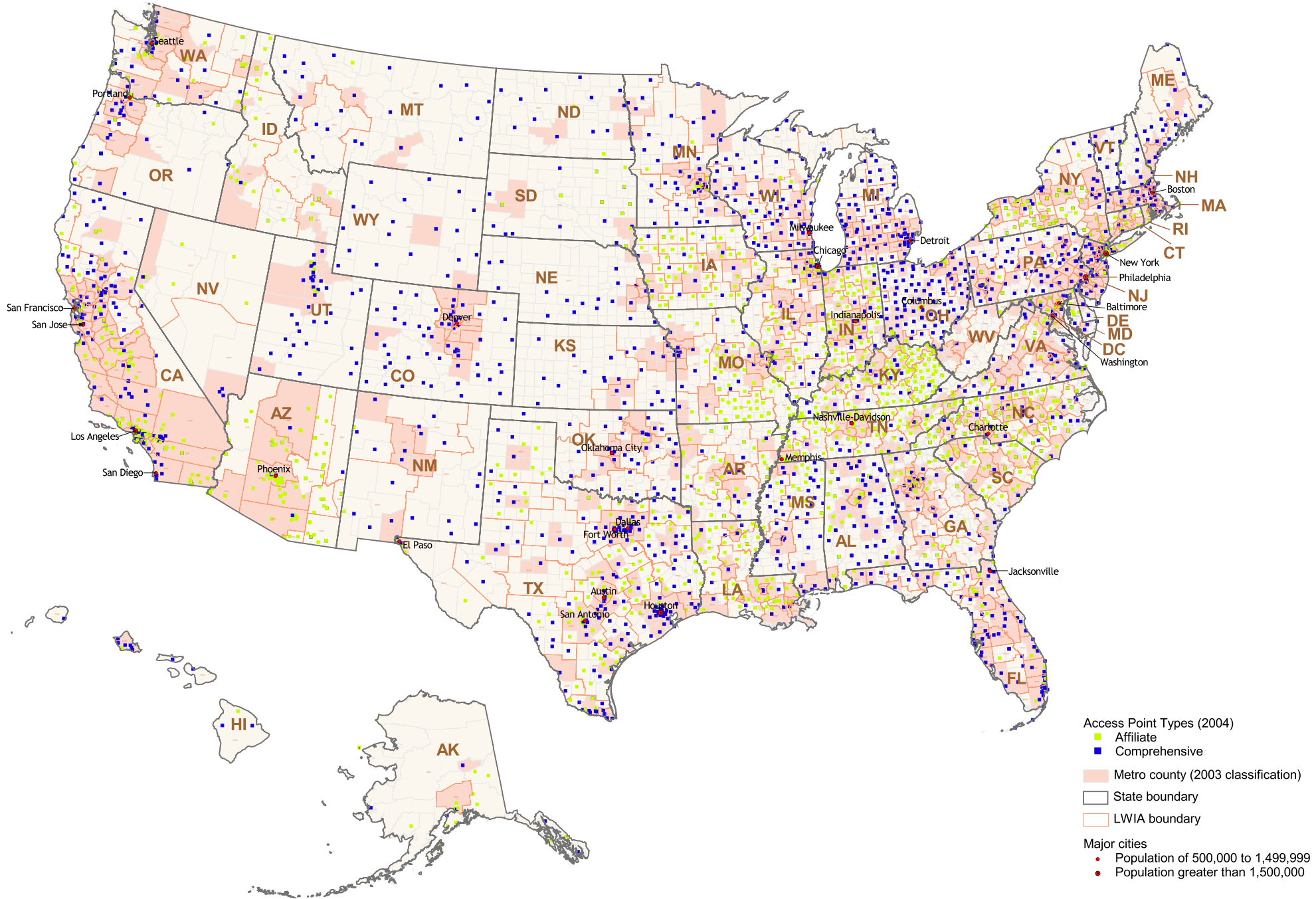
### Exhibit C-2: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 1979



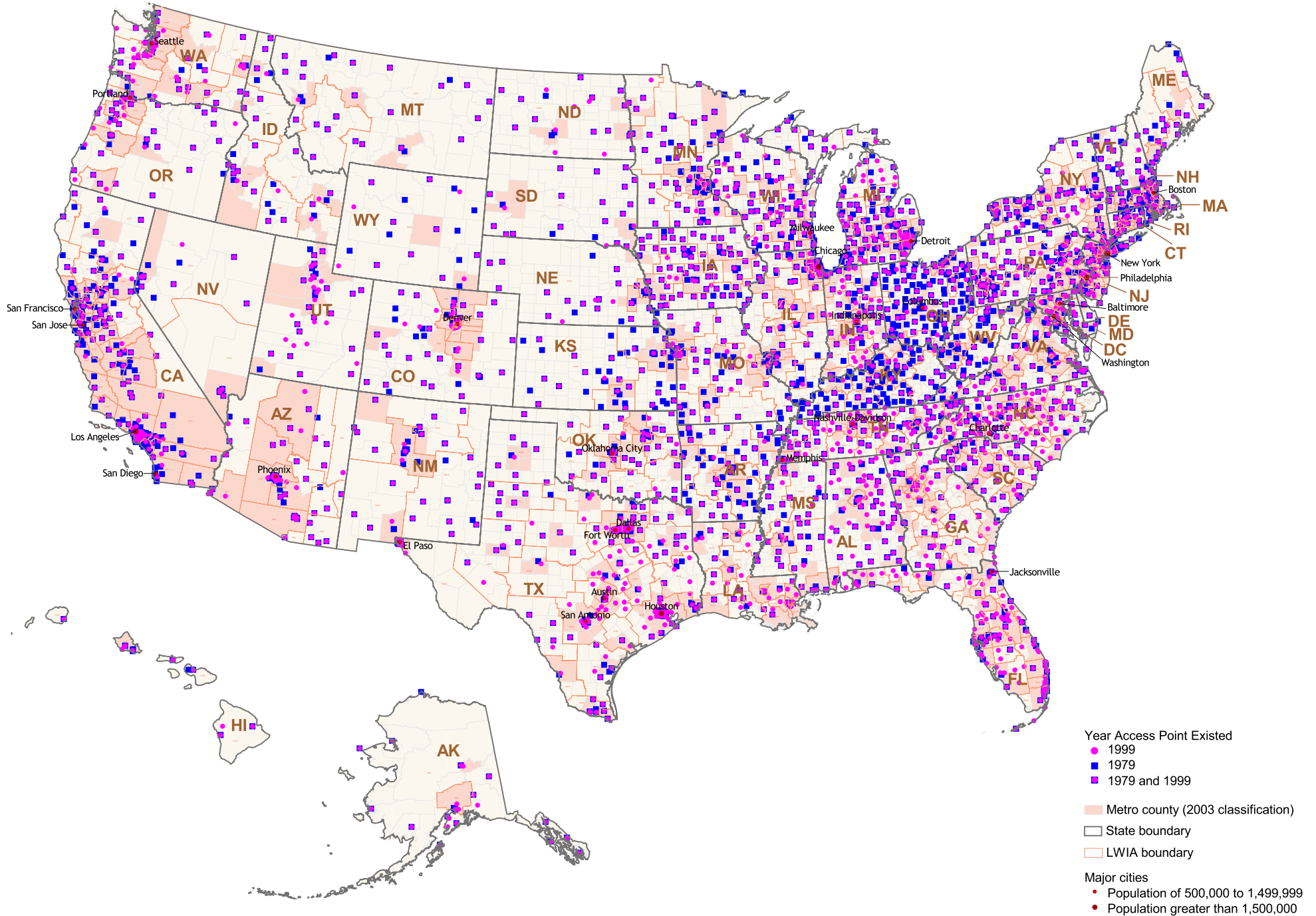
**Exhibit C-3:  
Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 1999**



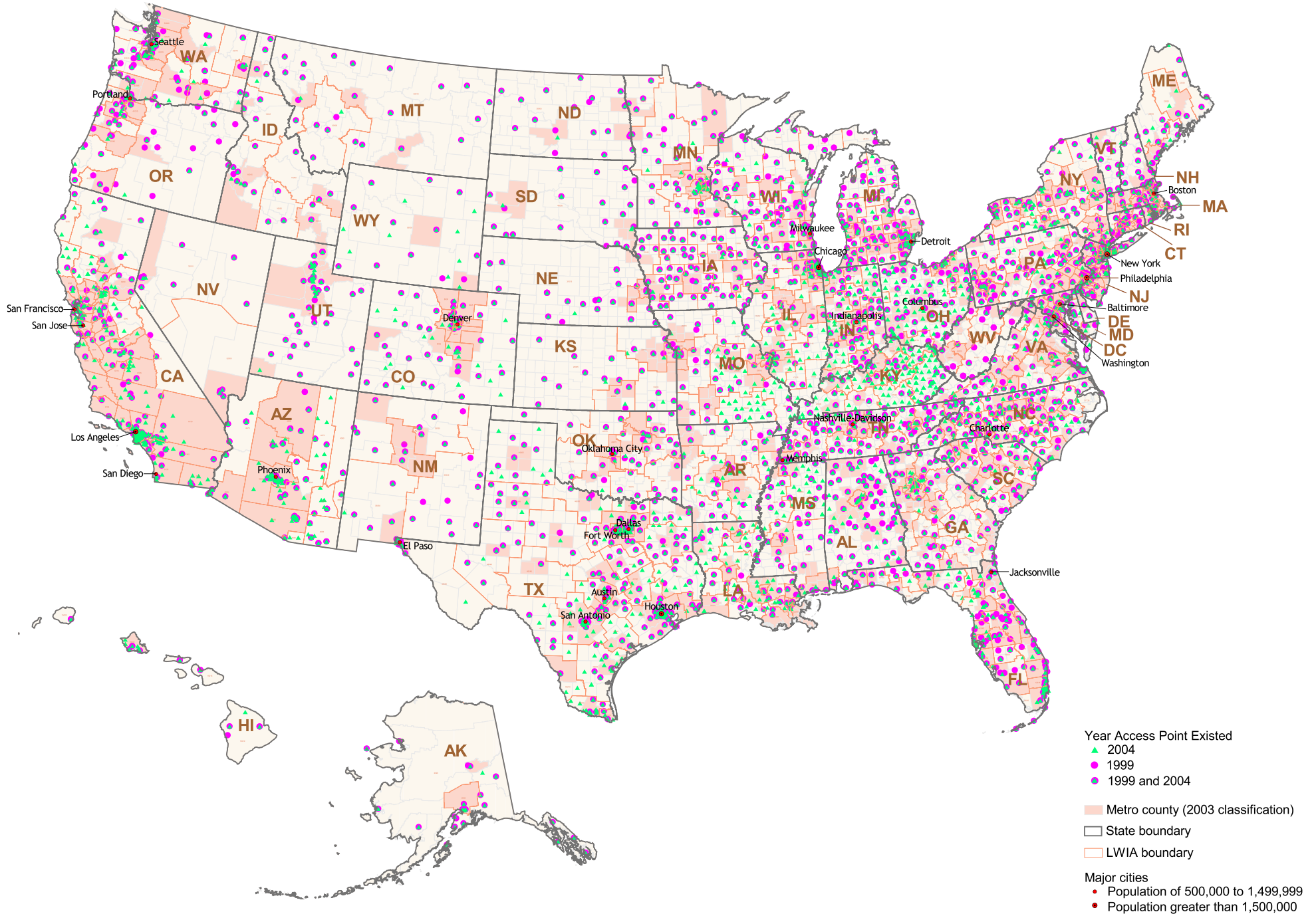
### Exhibit C-4: Workforce Development Access Points by Type, 2004



**Exhibit C-5:  
Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1979 to 1999**

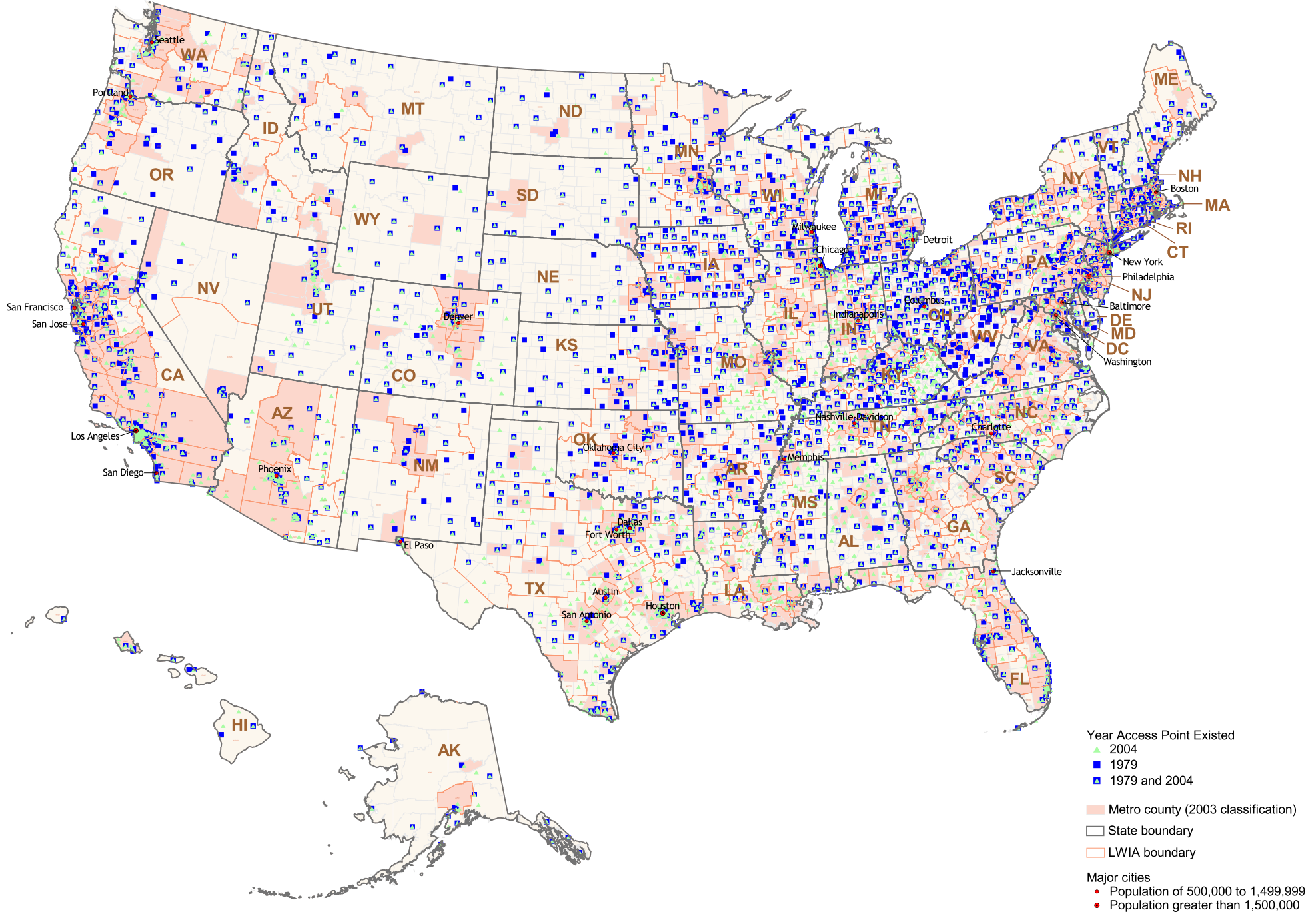


**Exhibit C-6:  
Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1999 to 2004**





**Exhibit C-7:  
Change in Workforce Development Access Points from 1979 to 2004**



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# **National Tables**

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**Exhibit C-8:  
Total Number of Access Points by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Change in Number of Access Points from 1979 to 2004</b>				
	<b>1979</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
<b>Nation</b>	3,454	2,505	3,542	88	2.5%
Alabama	61	69	100	39	63.9%
Alaska	20	22	22	2	10.0%
Arizona	54	94	151	97	179.6%
Arkansas	74	29	58	-16	-21.6%
California	295	111	322	27	9.2%
Colorado	43	46	66	23	53.5%
Connecticut	39	18	15	-24	-61.5%
Delaware	9	5	4	-5	-55.6%
District of Columbia	1	3	19	18	1800.0%
Florida	89	105	115	26	29.2%
Georgia	52	53	76	24	46.2%
Hawaii	20	17	14	-6	-30.0%
Idaho	27	23	30	3	11.1%
Illinois	123	50	97	-26	-21.1%
Indiana	59	54	103	44	74.6%
Iowa	98	70	72	-26	-26.5%
Kansas	67	23	28	-39	-58.2%
Kentucky	129	28	184	55	42.6%
Louisiana	31	40	85	54	174.2%
Maine	23	20	23	0	0.0%
Maryland	39	40	39	0	0.0%
Massachusetts	122	36	39	-83	-68.0%
Michigan	166	123	100	-66	-39.8%
Minnesota	124	45	72	-52	-41.9%

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Guide to the Reader” for this Appendix for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.

Exhibit C-8:  
Number of Access Points by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004

	Change in Number of Access Points from 1979 to 2004				
	1979	1999	2004	Number	Percent Change
Mississippi	57	58	64	7	12.3%
Missouri	93	45	95	2	2.2%
Montana	32	23	23	-9	-28.1%
Nebraska	38	35	20	-18	-47.4%
Nevada	23	15	10	-13	-56.5%
New Hampshire	11	13	13	2	18.2%
New Jersey	90	71	49	-41	-45.6%
New Mexico	43	28	20	-23	-53.5%
New York	184	84	173	-11	-6.0%
North Carolina	55	88	163	108	196.4%
North Dakota	18	20	16	-2	-11.1%
Ohio	137	56	110	-27	-19.7%
Oklahoma	52	40	40	-12	-23.1%
Oregon	52	46	45	-7	-13.5%
Pennsylvania	109	80	85	-24	-22.0%
Rhode Island	27	9	6	-21	-77.8%
South Carolina	48	42	65	17	35.4%
South Dakota	23	20	27	4	17.4%
Tennessee	90	87	100	10	11.1%
Texas	135	186	286	151	111.9%
Utah	26	47	42	16	61.5%
Vermont	16	11	12	-4	-25.0%
Virginia	82	47	71	-11	-13.4%
Washington	39	100	69	30	76.9%
West Virginia	69	41	7	-62	-89.9%
Wisconsin	124	77	78	-46	-37.1%
Wyoming	16	12	19	3	18.8%

**Exhibit C-9:  
Number of Access Points in Non-Metropolitan Counties by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004<sup>1</sup>**

	1979 <sup>2</sup>			1999				2004				Change in Number of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties from 1979 to 2004	
	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Number	Percent Change
<b>Nation</b>	3,454	1,472	42.6%	2,505	1,113	44.4%	17.3%	3,542	1,605	45.3%	17.3%	133	9.0%
Alabama	61	29	47.5%	69	38	55.1%	29.5%	100	55	55.0%	29.5%	26	89.7%
Alaska	20	17	85.0%	22	16	72.7%	35.8%	22	16	72.7%	35.8%	-1	-5.9%
Arizona	54	30	55.6%	94	41	43.6%	11.5%	151	75	49.7%	11.5%	45	150.0%
Arkansas	74	53	71.6%	29	19	65.5%	43.3%	58	41	70.7%	43.3%	-12	-22.6%
California	295	35	11.9%	111	15	13.5%	2.4%	322	32	9.9%	2.4%	-3	-8.6%
Colorado	43	28	65.1%	46	22	47.8%	14.5%	66	36	54.5%	14.5%	8	28.6%
Connecticut	39	n/a <sup>3</sup>	n/a	18	3	16.7%	8.6%	15	3	20.0%	8.6%	3	>100.0%

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Guide to the Reader” for this Appendix for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.

<sup>2</sup> Non-metropolitan population as a percent of total population is not readily available for 1979.

<sup>3</sup> States that have no non-metropolitan counties are identified with “n/a” in this table (e.g., the District of Columbia, New Jersey, and Rhode Island).

Exhibit C-9:  
Number of Access Points in Non-Metropolitan Counties by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004

	1979 <sup>2</sup>			1999				2004				Change in Number of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties from 1979 to 2004	
	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Number	Percent Change
Delaware	9	4	44.4%	5	1	20.0%	20.0%	4	1	25.0%	20.0%	-3	-75.0%
District of Columbia	1	n/a	n/a	3	n/a	n/a	0.0%	19	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a
Florida	89	14	15.7%	105	23	21.9%	6.3%	115	26	22.6%	6.3%	12	85.7%
Georgia	52	29	55.8%	53	24	45.3%	20.3%	76	29	38.2%	20.3%	0	0.0%
Hawaii	20	13	65.0%	17	12	70.6%	27.7%	14	7	50.0%	27.7%	-6	-46.2%
Idaho	27	26	96.3%	23	15	65.2%	37.6%	30	17	56.7%	37.6%	-9	-34.6%
Illinois	123	41	33.3%	50	13	26.0%	13.7%	97	38	39.2%	13.7%	-3	-7.3%
Indiana	59	24	40.7%	54	23	42.6%	22.9%	103	43	41.7%	22.9%	19	79.2%
Iowa	98	68	69.4%	70	54	77.1%	46.6%	72	56	77.8%	46.6%	-12	-17.6%
Kansas	67	44	65.7%	23	15	65.2%	38.8%	28	20	71.4%	38.8%	-24	-54.5%
Kentucky	129	87	67.4%	28	15	53.6%	43.8%	184	142	77.2%	43.8%	55	63.2%
Louisiana	31	13	41.9%	40	17	42.5%	25.2%	85	40	47.1%	25.2%	27	207.7%
Maine	23	15	65.2%	20	12	60.0%	42.2%	23	16	69.6%	42.2%	1	6.7%
Maryland	39	11	28.2%	40	7	17.5%	5.2%	39	8	20.5%	5.2%	-3	-27.3%



## Number of Access Points in Non-Metropolitan Counties by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004

	1979 <sup>2</sup>			1999				2004				Change in Number of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties from 1979 to 2004	
	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Number	Percent Change
Massachusetts	122	6	4.9%	36	0	0.0% <sup>4</sup>	0.4%	39	0	0.0% <sup>4</sup>	0.4%	-6	-100.0%
Michigan	166	74	44.6%	123	59	48.0%	18.5%	100	46	46.0%	18.5%	-28	-37.8%
Minnesota	124	53	42.7%	45	29	64.4%	28.2%	72	29	40.3%	28.2%	-24	-45.3%
Mississippi	57	45	78.9%	58	42	72.4%	58.0%	64	49	76.6%	58.0%	4	8.9%
Missouri	93	37	39.8%	45	25	55.6%	26.9%	95	67	70.5%	26.9%	30	81.1%
Montana	32	27	84.4%	23	20	87.0%	65.1%	23	20	87.0%	65.1%	-7	-25.9%
Nebraska	38	25	65.8%	35	28	80.0%	44.9%	20	18	90.0%	44.9%	-7	-28.0%
Nevada	23	7	30.4%	15	4	26.7%	11.4%	10	4	40.0%	11.4%	-3	-42.9%
New Hampshire	11	5	45.5%	13	8	61.5%	37.7%	13	8	61.5%	37.7%	3	60.0%
New Jersey	90	n/a	n/a	71	n/a	n/a	0.0%	49	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a
New Mexico	43	31	72.1%	28	21	75.0%	36.9%	20	14	70.0%	36.9%	-17	-54.8%
New York	184	31	16.8%	84	23	27.4%	8.2%	173	47	27.2%	8.2%	16	51.6%
North Carolina	55	34	61.8%	88	48	54.5%	31.9%	163	95	58.3%	31.9%	61	179.4%
North Dakota	18	11	61.1%	20	15	75.0%	55.8%	16	13	81.3%	55.8%	2	18.2%

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts had two non-metropolitan counties in 1999 and 2004, however, no access points were located in these counties.

Exhibit C-9:  
Number of Access Points in Non-Metropolitan Counties by State in 1979, 1999, and 2004

	1979 <sup>2</sup>			1999				2004				Change in Number of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties from 1979 to 2004	
	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Total No. of Access Points	No. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Pct. of Access Points in Non-Metro Counties	Non-Metro population as percent of total population	Number	Percent Change
Ohio	137	56	40.9%	56	23	41.1%	19.5%	110	49	44.5%	19.5%	-7	-12.5%
Oklahoma	52	28	53.8%	40	25	62.5%	37.5%	40	25	62.5%	37.5%	-3	-10.7%
Oregon	52	28	53.8%	46	26	56.5%	23.5%	45	23	51.1%	23.5%	-5	-17.9%
Pennsylvania	109	32	29.4%	80	31	38.8%	16.0%	85	38	44.7%	16.0%	6	18.8%
Rhode Island	27	n/a	n/a	9	n/a	n/a	0.0%	6	n/a	n/a	0.0%	n/a	n/a
South Carolina	48	25	52.1%	42	19	45.2%	25.2%	65	31	47.7%	25.2%	6	24.0%
South Dakota	23	21	91.3%	20	18	90.0%	58.6%	27	23	85.2%	58.6%	2	9.5%
Tennessee	90	50	55.6%	87	45	51.7%	27.5%	100	50	50.0%	27.5%	0	0.0%
Texas	135	42	31.1%	186	61	32.8%	13.9%	286	115	40.2%	13.9%	73	173.8%
Utah	26	18	69.2%	47	22	46.8%	11.8%	42	19	45.2%	11.8%	1	5.6%
Vermont	16	14	87.5%	11	10	90.9%	67.3%	12	10	83.3%	67.3%	-4	-28.6%
Virginia	82	33	40.2%	47	17	36.2%	15.1%	71	24	33.8%	15.1%	-9	-27.3%
Washington	39	16	41.0%	100	27	27.0%	12.6%	69	23	33.3%	12.6%	7	43.8%
West Virginia	69	52	75.4%	41	27	65.9%	45.6%	7	2	28.6%	45.6%	-50	-96.2%
Wisconsin	124	75	60.5%	77	45	58.4%	27.9%	78	45	57.7%	27.9%	-30	-40.0%
Wyoming	16	15	93.8%	12	10	83.3%	70.0%	19	17	89.5%	70.0%	2	13.3%

**Exhibit C-10:  
Total Number of Access Points by Access Point Type in 1979, 1999, and 2004<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Access Point Type<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Number of Access Points</b>
<b>1979</b>	JS	2,560
	UI	1,902
	WIN	1,176
<b>Total Access Points = 3,454<sup>3</sup></b>		
<hr/>		
<b>1999</b>	LE	1,927
	UI	1,320
	OS	379
	JTPA	187
	Other	12
<b>Total Access Points = 2,505<sup>2</sup></b>		
<hr/>		
<b>2004</b>	Comprehensive	1,936
	Affiliate	1,606
<b>Total Access Points = 3,542</b>		

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Guide to the Reader” for this Appendix for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.

<sup>2</sup> LE = Labor Exchange; JS = Job Service; JTPA = Job Training Partnership Act; OS = One Stop; UI = Unemployment Insurance; WIN = Work Incentive Program

<sup>3</sup> For 1979 and 1999, the total number of access points does not equal the sum of the number of access points for each access point type because many access points are classified as two or more access point types.

**Exhibit C-11:  
Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 1979<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Total Access Points</b>	<b>Access Point Type<sup>2</sup></b>		
		<b>JS</b>	<b>UI</b>	<b>WIN</b>
	3,454	2,560	1,902	1,176
Alabama	61	44	17	37
Alaska	20	17	9	2
Arizona	54	47	26	5
Arkansas	74	64	38	10
California	295	276	140	100
Colorado	43	43	42	25
Connecticut	39	21	22	14
Delaware	9	6	3	5
District of Columbia	1	1	1	1
Florida	89	48	40	24
Georgia	52	34	36	32
Hawaii	20	11	8	7
Idaho	27	27	27	13
Illinois	123	55	58	11
Indiana	59	57	55	44
Iowa	98	78	39	9
Kansas	67	53	6	8
Kentucky	129	99	29	25
Louisiana	31	28	26	7
Maine	23	22	15	7
Maryland	39	24	24	14
Massachusetts	122	42	40	41
Michigan	166	110	82	55
Minnesota	124	83	6	35
Mississippi	57	39	18	32

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Guide to the Reader” for this Appendix for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.

<sup>2</sup> JS = Job Service; UI = Unemployment Insurance; WIN = Work Incentive Program

Exhibit C-11:  
Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 1979

	Total Access Points	Access Point Type <sup>2</sup>		
		JS	UI	WIN
Missouri	93	80	55	24
Montana	32	24	24	23
Nebraska	38	26	7	5
Nevada	23	19	16	7
New Hampshire	11	11	11	0
New Jersey	90	50	40	13
New Mexico	43	38	33	4
New York	184	106	103	21
North Carolina	55	55	41	55
North Dakota	18	18	15	15
Ohio	137	111	107	120
Oklahoma	52	46	44	6
Oregon	52	47	42	27
Pennsylvania	109	93	100	30
Rhode Island	27	10	17	6
South Carolina	48	38	32	30
South Dakota	23	22	22	21
Tennessee	90	48	41	40
Texas	135	122	120	13
Utah	26	26	26	15
Vermont	16	13	13	13
Virginia	82	58	39	40
Washington	39	39	39	17
West Virginia	69	43	26	0
Wisconsin	124	72	66	52
Wyoming	16	16	16	16

**Exhibit C-12:  
Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 1999<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Total Access Points</b>	<b>Access Point Type<sup>2</sup></b>				
		<b>LE</b>	<b>UI</b>	<b>OS</b>	<b>JTPA</b>	<b>Other</b>
	2,505	1,927	1,320	379	187	12
Alabama	69	63	44	0	1	0
Alaska	22	19	11	0	0	6
Arizona	94	35	36	23	0	0
Arkansas	29	29	29	0	0	0
California	111	111	0	0	0	0
Colorado	46	35	0	11	3	0
Connecticut	18	0	0	18	0	0
Delaware	5	5	5	0	0	0
District of Columbia	3	2	2	1	0	0
Florida	105	99	99	6	0	0
Georgia	53	53	53	0	0	0
Hawaii	17	9	8	0	0	0
Idaho	23	0	0	23	0	0
Illinois	50	12	12	38	0	0
Indiana	54	24	4	27	20	0
Iowa	70	66	66	4	0	0
Kansas	23	23	0	0	0	0
Kentucky	28	28	28	0	0	0
Louisiana	40	38	37	0	0	0
Maine	20	17	3	0	11	0
Maryland	40	29	27	10	0	0
Massachusetts	36	8	3	28	0	0
Michigan	123	106	46	0	106	0
Minnesota	45	2	1	43	0	0
Mississippi	58	37	20	1	0	0

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Guide to the Reader” for this Appendix for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.

<sup>2</sup> LE = Labor Exchange; JTPA = Job Training Partnership Act; OS = One Stop; UI = Unemployment Insurance

Exhibit C-12:  
Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 1999

	Total Access Points	Access Point Type <sup>2</sup>				
		LE	UI	OS	JTPA	Other
Missouri	45	17	3	25	0	0
Montana	23	23	0	0	0	0
Nebraska	35	20	9	0	6	0
Nevada	15	14	12	0	0	1
New Hampshire	13	13	12	0	0	0
New Jersey	71	40	34	0	0	0
New Mexico	28	26	26	0	24	0
New York	84	80	26	0	0	0
North Carolina	88	88	85	0	0	0
North Dakota	20	20	16	0	13	0
Ohio	56	55	55	0	0	1
Oklahoma	40	40	40	0	0	0
Oregon	46	46	46	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	80	76	76	0	0	0
Rhode Island	9	3	2	4	2	0
South Carolina	42	37	37	0	0	0
South Dakota	20	20	19	0	0	0
Tennessee	87	84	81	0	0	2
Texas	186	138	50	44	0	0
Utah	47	47	47	0	0	0
Vermont	11	0	0	10	0	1
Virginia	47	45	42	0	0	0
Washington	100	97	35	3	0	0
West Virginia	41	19	21	0	0	1
Wisconsin	77	17	0	60	1	0
Wyoming	12	12	12	0	0	0

**Exhibit C-13:  
Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 2004<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Nation</b>	<b>Total Access Points</b>	<b>Access Point Type</b>	
		<b>Comprehensive</b>	<b>Affiliate</b>
	3,542	1,936	1,606
Alabama	100	77	23
Alaska	22	6	16
Arizona	151	20	131
Arkansas	58	22	36
California	322	158	164
Colorado	66	66	0
Connecticut	15	4	11
Delaware	4	4	0
District of Columbia	19	3	16
Florida	115	88	27
Georgia	76	45	31
Hawaii	14	12	2
Idaho	30	6	24
Illinois	97	45	52
Indiana	103	27	76
Iowa	72	16	56
Kansas	28	28	0
Kentucky	184	31	153
Louisiana	85	19	66
Maine	23	23	0
Maryland	39	34	5
Massachusetts	39	20	19
Michigan	100	100	0
Minnesota	72	50	22
Mississippi	64	49	15
Missouri	95	30	65

<sup>1</sup> Please see the “Guide to the Reader” for this Appendix for source information, an explanation of the methodology used to collect the data, and data limitations.



Exhibit C-13:  
Number of Access Points by State and Access Point Type in 2004

	Total Access Points	Access Point Type	
		Comprehensive	Affiliate
Montana	23	22	1
Nebraska	20	20	0
Nevada	10	4	6
New Hampshire	13	9	4
New Jersey	49	46	3
New Mexico	20	20	0
New York	173	67	106
North Carolina	163	69	94
North Dakota	16	14	2
Ohio	110	92	18
Oklahoma	40	40	0
Oregon	45	33	12
Pennsylvania	85	78	7
Rhode Island	6	2	4
South Carolina	65	16	49
South Dakota	27	17	10
Tennessee	100	17	83
Texas	286	163	123
Utah	42	36	6
Vermont	12	12	0
Virginia	71	46	25
Washington	69	34	35
West Virginia	7	7	0
Wisconsin	78	70	8
Wyoming	19	19	0

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## **APPENDIX D**

### **ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

#### **SUMMARY**

This annotated bibliography has been developed as a companion to the evaluation report, “Workforce Development in Rural Areas: Changes in Access, Service Delivery and Partnerships.” It includes summaries of articles, reports and evaluations related to workforce development in rural areas, and is divided into several sections related to this topic. Because many of the topics included in this bibliography are quite broad, the publications selected include only a sampling of the most recent and accessible publications in each topic area, the majority of which are available on the Internet.

The first section of the bibliography, rural America, contains a selection of recent articles and briefs providing background demographic and economic information on rural areas. For example, these reports show that rural residents have lower earnings, are more likely to be poor, have less education, are more likely to be laid off from their jobs. The reports also show that the population of rural America is changing, with Latinos now the fastest growing demographic group in rural areas.

Despite the economic growth of the 1990s, which resulted in rural poverty declining to its lowest level since the early 1960s, several reports indicate that the disparity between urban and rural poverty rates has continued and even grown in some cases. This growing disparity has been accompanied by an ongoing decline in manufacturing, agriculture and extraction industries and an increase in service and retail trade industries in many rural areas.

The reports also point out that there is also great variation in rural America in terms of poverty rates and wage levels, with some regions faring much worse than others. For example, rural areas in the South and West have the highest poverty rates. The rural south also has the largest number of counties with sizeable populations of low-wage workers and high, persistent poverty rates.

The second section of the bibliography includes a sampling of recent reports on service delivery in rural areas. Many of these reports were written to evaluate or assist in the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and welfare reform in rural areas.

One of the principal findings of these reports is that rural areas face a number of challenges in delivering workforce development services. These challenges include difficulties in effectively reaching widely scattered customers, a lack of available service providers and limited infrastructure in the areas of public transportation, child care, and technology. These challenges are made even more daunting by the very limited financial resources available to rural areas. Indeed, one report noted that some rural areas question whether establishing a physical One-Stop career center location even makes sense in rural areas, given a service population that is widely dispersed. However, another report found that it was easier to implement One-Stop Centers in rural areas and small cities and hypothesized that this was due to the greater ease of working with less complicated service delivery systems found in rural areas.

Following a number of reports focusing on overall service delivery issues in rural areas, this section of the bibliography is further divided into a number of sub-sections focusing on the following specific infrastructure issues: child care, transportation, housing, substance abuse treatment, Internet access, and distance learning.

The first sub-section, child care, includes several publications which describe the typical delivery of child care services in rural areas. For example, rural families are more likely to use informal care provided by relatives or neighbors rather than center-based or licensed care, due to the lack of accessible child care centers in numerous rural areas. In addition, many rural families prefer to leave their children with someone they know. While this kind of care has some benefits, including lower costs and greater flexibility, some studies suggest that informal child care is less stable and of lower quality than center-based care. Consequently, each of the reports also makes suggestions for improving the quality of informal child care in rural areas. Some of these suggestions include providing training, helping providers achieve licensure, increasing the availability of child care centers and rethinking child care regulation.

The next sub-section includes several reports that focus on transportation challenges and strategies in rural areas. Even though rural residents typically have to travel long distances to get to worksites or training locations, public transportation is often very limited in rural areas. For example, nearly 40 percent of rural residents have no access to public transportation and another 28 percent have only limited access. In addition, many rural residents, particularly those who are poor, do not own cars. To overcome these problems, several reports included in the section describe possible strategies for providing rural residents with access to transportation. These strategies

include car-ownership programs, the development of public transportation systems and using other agencies' vehicles, such as school buses and senior citizen vans.

Another common problem faced by many rural areas is housing. For this reason, the next sub-section of the report includes several articles and reports with information on rural housing conditions and barriers to homeownership. Rural housing is typically smaller, less costly, less crowded, and more likely to have physical problems than urban housing. Rural areas also have a larger percentage of mobile, manufactured, and seasonal homes. In many counties, affordable rental housing is also in short supply. In addition, despite the fact that rural residents are more likely to be homeowners, there are a number of barriers to increasing homeownership in rural areas. One of the major barriers is the limited availability of credit and higher interest rates for housing loans in rural areas. Some of the strategies suggested to address these barriers include the development of new affordable rental projects, more rental assistance for low income residents, and the continuation of programs to provide low interest housing loans.

Although many people perceive substance abuse as a primarily urban challenge, it has become a major issue in many rural areas as well. The next sub-section of the bibliography includes a sampling of articles and reports on the problem of substance abuse in rural areas as well as suggestions for how to deal with the problem. In many cases, substance abuse in rural areas is growing and nearing the same levels as in urban areas. However, rural areas are often less equipped to deal with the problem than cities. For example, many rural areas lack sufficient numbers of trained substance abuse treatment programs and counselors, and rural residents are often less likely to seek out formal services. For this reason, several of the reports recommend increasing access to services through collaboration among health care providers, treatment via videoconferencing, and public marketing campaigns.

The next sub-section of the bibliography includes publications with information on access to the Internet and computer technology in rural areas. Because of the increasing importance of remote access to services and information over the World Wide Web, individuals who lack Internet access are at a great disadvantage. Rural residents overall are less likely than urban residents to own personal computers or have access to the Internet at home. Although this disparity has lessened in recent years, several articles in this section argue that rural residents are still far less likely to be computer literate or have access to high speed broad-band technology. In addition, rural residents often have to pay more for basic dial-up service due to higher monthly

fees, less competition and a lack of local access numbers. To bridge this “digital divide,” the reports cite a number of innovative programs, including mobile Internet training facilities, rural-focused Internet service providers and State-wide programs aimed at providing access to broad-band technology. One report in this section took a different approach to investigating the “digital divide” and concluded that computer literacy skills only modestly improve earnings of low-wage workers within their current occupations in rural areas.

The last sub-section under the topic of service delivery in rural areas is focused on distance learning. Distance learning is one of the principle strategies for increasing training services in rural areas and has become even more common with the advent of the Internet. In addition to on-line courses, distance learning can also use television, videoconferencing, videos, CD-ROMs, and audio conferencing over the telephone. Some of the most recent innovations include the creation of virtual high schools and universities which allow students to earn degrees and credentials remotely. However, several of the reports also describe a number of challenges related to the development of successful distance learning programs. These include dealing with rapid technological change, assisting teachers with the transition to a new delivery mode, mentoring and monitoring students remotely, and ensuring educational quality.

The final section of the bibliography focuses on the roles and activities of rural community and technical colleges. In rural areas, these institutions are typically the primary provider of vocational training services and are a crucial piece of the rural workforce development system. Over the past fifty years, rural community colleges have shifted their focus from preparing students for transfer to four-year institutions to providing vocational skills training. In addition, more and more community colleges are also playing an active role in economic development efforts and working closer with business partners. Rural community colleges are also increasingly likely to collaborate with numerous community partners and take on efforts to solve serious local problems such as illiteracy. In addition to these changes, rural community colleges are also facing a number of challenges including increased competition via on-line courses over the Internet, low skill and literacy levels of applicants, and increasing student diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, age and career path.

Although some of these publications could be included under multiple categories, we have placed each report under the category we felt to be its strongest match. We have limited the cited studies and reports to those published no earlier than 1994. For

each entry, we provide the following when available: author(s), title of publication, publisher, year of publication, a summary of contents and/or findings and an Internet address for the source.

## RURAL AMERICA

*Articles and reports providing background information on rural areas, including demographics, wages, income, and poverty.*

Gibbs, Robert, L. Kusmin and J. Cromartie. *Low-Skill Jobs: A Shrinking Share of the Rural Economy*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Amber Waves, Vol. 2, No. 5, November 2004.

[http://www.ers.usda.gov/amberwaves/november04/pdf/feature\\_lowskill.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/amberwaves/november04/pdf/feature_lowskill.pdf)

This policy brief explores the effects of the changing rural economy. Like the rest of America, the rural economy is transitioning from one that is based on the production of goods to one that is based on the delivery of services. Although most low-skilled jobs in rural areas are service-based, the rural economy's share of low-skilled jobs decreased during the 1990s. The brief argues that the driving force behind this drop was a shift within industries to a reliance on higher skilled jobs. Thus, rural communities should consider economic development strategies that focus on upgrading the skill levels of jobs in their current mix of industries rather than switching industries.

George, Lance, et al. *Taking Stock: Rural People, Poverty, and Housing at the Turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Washington, DC: Housing Assistance Council, 2002.

<http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/hsganalysis/ts2000/index.htm>

This report describes the demographic characteristics of rural areas in the United States, such as the trends in persistent poverty, rural education levels, and population growth, focusing on change from 1990 to 2000. It also examines economic changes from 1990 to 2000, describing the declines in agriculture, forestry, manufacturing, and mining and the rise in service sector employment. The report then describes the housing characteristics in rural areas and pinpoints "high need rural areas" in the U.S.: the U.S.-Mexico border counties, Central Appalachia, farmworkers, the Lower Mississippi Delta, and Native Americans. These cases were explored in depth with regard to the demographics, economic characteristics, and availability of affordable housing.

Hamrick, Karen S. *Displaced Workers: Differences in Nonmetro and Metro Experience in the Mid-1990s*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 92, October 2001.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr92/>

This report examines displaced workers' experiences in metro and nonmetro areas during the mid-1990s. One key finding is that nonmetro workers had greater displacement rates than metro workers. Once displaced, nonmetro workers were also less likely to find a new job and were more likely to drop out of the labor force than metro displaced workers. In addition, although nonmetro workers who were able to find a new job did about as well as metro displaced workers in replacing their lost earnings, nonmetro median weekly earnings were considerably lower. Similarly,



nonmetro displaced workers were more likely to be in a low-income household compared to metro displaced workers.

Hamrick, Karen S. (ed.) *Rural America at a Glance*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 94-1, September 2002.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr94-1/Rdr94-1b.pdf>

This is the first in a series of reports that uses current social and economic data to highlight important population, labor market, income, and poverty trends in rural areas. For example, during most of the 1990s, the population of rural areas increased, although this growth slowed substantially late in the decade and was slower than urban population growth. Rural poverty rates during the same period were the lowest in decades, but were still higher than urban poverty rates. Rural areas also lagged behind urban areas in a number of other indicators, including household income, real per capita income, earnings per job and child poverty. Finally, although the effects of the recent economic downturn on rural communities have been mild compared to past recessions, unemployment in urban areas (4.7%) continues to be lower than in rural areas (4.9%).

Hamrick, Karen S. (ed.) *Rural America at a Glance*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 97-1, September 2003.

[http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr97-1/highres\\_rdr97-1.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr97-1/highres_rdr97-1.pdf)

This is the second in a series of reports that uses current social and economic data to highlight important population, labor market, income, and poverty trends in rural areas. In 2002, for example, the nonmetro unemployment rate (5.6%) reversed trends of recent years and fell below metro rates (5.8%). Average weekly earnings for nonmetro workers were about 80% of the metro average. However, nonmetro earnings increased 1.4% during 2001-2002, whereas metro earnings increased only 0.9%. Despite these gains, rural areas still lag behind urban areas on other economic and social indicators, including household income, child poverty, and food insecurity. Federal funding continues to be important to the economic well-being of rural areas.

Hamrick, Karen S. (ed.) *Rural America at a Glance, 2004*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Agriculture Information Bulletin, No. 793, September 2004.

[http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/AIB793/AIB793\\_hires.pdf](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/AIB793/AIB793_hires.pdf)

This is the third in a series of reports that uses current social and economic data to highlight important population, labor market, income, and poverty trends in rural areas. Due to low mortgage interest rates, nonmetro homeownership rates reached record highs (77% in July 2004), exceeding metro rates for a variety of household types. The 2003 nonmetro (5.8%) and metro (6.0%) unemployment rates were the highest since 1994. From 2002 to 2003, average weekly earnings fell 0.5% in nonmetro areas and 0.3% in metro areas, after adjusting for inflation. Rural areas have been disproportionately affected by the loss of textile and apparel jobs over the last few

years, especially in the Southeast. Nonmetro poverty rates from 2000 to 2003 were low by historical standards, but continued to be higher than metro rates. Finally, in 2002-2003, the annual nonmetro population growth rate increased for the first time in eight years.

Jolliffe, Dean. *Comparisons of Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan Poverty during the 1990s*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No.63, June 2003.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr96/rdr96.pdf>

This report examines differences in poverty between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas throughout the 1990s. By analyzing poverty measures other than the headcount index to describe the depth and severity of poverty in metro and nonmetro areas, the report shows that the difference in poverty in these areas is actually less drastic than traditionally described. The report also uses welfare ratios and labor-related characteristics to explain important metro-nonmetro differences in the well-being of the poor. The reports concludes with some policy recommendations, including a focus on youth skill-building strategies and income assistance for retired persons on fixed-incomes.

Kandel, William and J. Cromartie. *New Patterns of Hispanic Settlement in Rural America*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 99, May 2004.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr99/rdr99.pdf>

This report uses census data to examine recent Hispanic settlement patterns. Although the Hispanic population continues to be concentrated in metropolitan areas in the Southwest, half of all nonmetropolitan Hispanics lived outside the Southwest for the first time in 2000. Nonmetro counties that experienced a high growth in their Hispanic population often include a significant number of recent migrants who young and male. These migrants typically have low education levels, speak little English, and are undocumented. Although Hispanic population growth has helped revitalize many rural communities, these communities were not economically or culturally prepared for the large influx, which has resulted in social conflict. States and local communities can help Hispanics become socially and economically integrated by focusing on policies that educate them on the available services and U.S. laws.

*Low-Wage Counties Face Locational Disadvantages*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Conditions and Trends, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2000.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rcat/rcat112/rcat112c.pdf>

This report describes the socio-economic attributes of low-wage counties and discusses which types of human capital policies are most appropriate for them. Rural low-wage counties are defined as counties with the largest share of jobs in low-wage industries. They are typically less populated and more remote from urban centers and

have fewer job opportunities in industries that pay high wages. Only about a third of all low-wage counties are also persistent poverty counties, and most of these counties are in the south. Although overall education and labor force participation rates are lower in low-wage counties, this varies substantially by region, with adults in southern low-wage counties having the lowest levels of education. Because of these regional differences, human capital development is most critical in southern low-wage counties rather than in western and Midwest/Great Plains low wage-counties.

McLaughlin, Diane K. *Income Inequality in America: Nonmetro Income Levels Lower Than Metro, But Income Inequality Did Not Increase as Fast*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural America, Vol. 17, Issue No. 2, 2000.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ruralamerica/ra172/ra172c.pdf>

This article describes the continuing income gap between nonmetro (rural) households and metro households between 1979 and 1999, with rural households earning substantially less than either central city or suburban households. However, the article also reports that inequality among rural households increased much more slowly than among metro households with the result that rural income inequality is less than that of central cities or suburban areas. The article offers several explanations for increasing income inequality in both rural and urban areas. These include the decline in high-wage manufacturing employment in favor of service employment, increases in female-headed households and increased female labor force participation. The article asserts that inequality among rural households is growing more slowly because there are fewer female-headed households in rural areas and female labor force participation is lower than in urban areas.

Miller, Kathleen K. and B. A. Weber. *Persistent Poverty and Place: How do Persistent Poverty Dynamics and Demographics Vary Across the Rural-Urban Continuum?* Measuring Rural Diversity, Vol. 1, No. 1, Southern Rural Development Center, January 2004.

[http://srdc.msstate.edu/measuring/series/miller\\_weber.pdf](http://srdc.msstate.edu/measuring/series/miller_weber.pdf)

This issue brief examines how poverty and persistent poverty vary across metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas and where poverty is concentrated in the United States. The brief begins by explaining that high poverty counties are geographically concentrated, that persistent poverty counties are overwhelmingly and disproportionately rural, and the unique demographic characteristics these counties. Next, the brief examines location, rurality and demographics of counties that escaped persistent poverty status between 1990 and 2000. The brief concludes that persistent poverty is increasingly a rural problem.

Rowley, Thomas D. and David Freshwater. *Ready or Not? The Rural South and its Workforce*. Southern Rural Development Center, Spring 1999.

<http://www.rural.org/workshops/ready/laborforce.pdf>

This article outlines the specific workforce attributes and trends affecting the future of the rural south. The report first describes several key trends, including technology, growth of the service sector, organizational restructuring of businesses, globalization and demographic change. The report then discusses how poverty, poor education, and racial inequality are still issues faced by many workers in the rural south, making it difficult for them to be successful in the labor market. As a result, unemployment, the number of workers who make less than 125 percent of the individual poverty threshold, and the number of underemployed workers are all higher in the rural south than elsewhere in the nation, while wages are lower. Finally, the report makes several recommendations to increase prosperity in the south. These include a focus on increasing education and skill levels and policies to make it easier for workers to learn about job opportunities.

*Rural Income, Poverty, and Welfare.* Economic Research Service/USDA, 2000.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/IncomePovertyWelfare/>

This policy brief presents statistics on rural income, poverty and welfare for the late 1990s. In terms of income, the rural families continued to have lower incomes than urban families, although growth in median family income in rural areas outpaced urban growth. In addition, more rural residents are poor, although the rural poverty rate in 2000 dropped to the lowest level since the early 1960s. This improvement in the poverty rate was largely due to the overall economic expansion. However, rural poverty rates also vary by region and race and ethnicity, with the south and west and non-Hispanic Blacks having the highest poverty rates. Finally, the briefing describes how rural residents received slightly more government transfers on a per capita basis, although in the aggregate, nearly four times as much was spent on government transfers for urban residents than rural residents.

*Rural Labor and Education.* Economic Research Service/USDA, 2002.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/briefing/LaborAndEducation/>

This policy brief presents recent statistics on rural earnings, education and employment. Weekly rural earnings rose 9.8 percent from 1996 to 2000 for workers at all education levels, with the best educated workers experiencing even higher growth. However, in 1999, nearly one-fourth of rural wage and salary workers ages 25 and older earned low wages, more than in 1979 and in urban areas. These workers are more likely to be women and minorities and be employed in retail trade or service industries. The brief also presents data showing that rural adults have less education on average than urban adults, although educational attainment varies widely across counties and population subgroups. Finally, the brief notes that how rural employment grew by less than five percent from 1995 to 2001, compared to urban employment growth of 11 percent. However, in 2000 and 2001, after reaching its lowest level in decades in 1999, rural unemployment increased.

*Rural Low-Wage Employment Rises Among Men*. Vol. 11, No. 2. Economic Research Service/USDA, 2000.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rcat/rcat112/rcat112b.pdf>

This report provides statistics on rural low-wage employment. In 1999, over a quarter of all rural wage and salary workers over 25 earned wages that if earned full-time for a full year would not lift a family of four above the poverty line. Despite these low wages, many of these workers are the sole or main wage earner in the household. However, low-wage workers are not necessarily poor as many hold down more than one job or are in two-income families. Low-wage workers typically have lower education levels and are more likely to work in retail trade and service industries which require few pre-existing skills and little education. These workers are also more likely to be women and minorities, although the percentage of low-wage workers who are White men has grown since 1979. In terms of regions, while rural southerners are the most likely to earn low wages, low-wage employment has grown the fastest in the west.

Shils, Edward B. *The Shils Report: Measuring Economic and Sociological Impact of the Mega-Retail Discount Chain on Small Enterprises in Urban, Suburban, and Rural Communities*. Philadelphia: The Wharton Entrepreneurial Center, University of Pennsylvania, 1997.

<http://www.lawmall.com/rpa/rpashils.htm>

This study explores the impact of mega-retail discount chains on small enterprises and small towns in the United States. The author surveyed 6,000 small retailers and conducted site visits in California, Pennsylvania, Illinois, and New York. The study finds that small retailers struggle to compete with mega-retail discount chains and that downtowns and regional malls have become less viable as a result of the proliferation of the mega-retail discount chains. Finally, the study describes how retail jobs in mega-retail discount chains tend to have a lower multiplier effect on local economies compared to jobs in traditional retail establishments due to the lack of unionization, lower staffing levels, and lower wages.

Stone, Kenneth E. "Impact of the Wal-Mart Phenomenon on Rural Communities," Published in *Proceedings: Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies*. Chicago, IL: Farm Foundation, 1997.

[http://www.seta.iastate.edu/retail/publications/10\\_yr\\_study.pdf](http://www.seta.iastate.edu/retail/publications/10_yr_study.pdf)

This study reports on the changes to rural retail markets over time and explores the impact of the recent proliferation of mass merchandisers in rural communities. The study observed 34 towns in Iowa with Wal-Mart stores and 15 towns of comparable size with no Wal-Mart stores for over 10 years. The study found that larger towns with Wal-Mart stores fared better in terms of commerce than non-Wal-Mart towns of similar size. In addition, small towns of less than 5,000 people in Iowa lost almost half of their retail trade over the course of the study. The report describes how small towns

lose a significant portion of their tax base when mass merchandisers move in to nearby communities, since jobs are lost when local retailers close or trim their staff and this has a multiplier effect on the local economy. The report goes on to provide suggestions to small retailers for staying competitive.

*Understanding Rural America.* Economic Research Service/USDA. Agriculture Information Bulletin, No. 710, February 1995 (updated 1997).

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/resources/backgrnd/understd.htm>

This report describes the general rural conditions and trends affecting the residents of rural areas. Despite increases in living standards and education, rural earnings, education levels—particularly related to post-secondary education—and employment are still lower than in urban areas. More rural households are also poor. The report also describes how life in rural areas has changed over the last hundred years, with fewer and fewer residents and employment shifting from a focus on farming to manufacturing and then services. The report next focuses on the diversity of rural areas by describing six different county types, farming, manufacturing, service, retirement-destination, Federal lands counties and persistent poverty counties. Finally, the report suggests four principles aimed at increasing rural prosperity: 1) improve connections between rural and urban areas and rural communications infrastructure, 2) encourage and assist rural firms to target niche markets, 3) create “artificial scale economies” to counter the high costs of business and government due to small-scale, low-density settlement patterns, and 4) enhance the core skills of rural management and labor.

#### **SERVICE DELIVERY IN RURAL AREAS**

*Articles and reports on service delivery in rural areas.*

Barnow, Burt S. and Christopher T. King. *The Workforce Investment Act in Eight States.* Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration. Albany: the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, February 2005.

This report documents the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) through case studies of eight states and 14 local areas, including several rural areas. Some findings with particular relevance to WIA implementation in rural areas include: in several states, implementation of eligible training provider lists reduced the number of training providers available for use by WIA customers in both rural and urban areas; and numerous rural and urban local officials reported that current and anticipated funding for WIA and Wagner-Peyser are insufficient to meet needs. The report concludes with a list of challenges for the future, such as balancing flexibility with accountability and the tensions over serving the most in need or the universal customer.

Bender, April M. *Connecting the Dots in the Service Constellations of the Rural Universe*. Partnerships for Quality, Potsdam, N.Y. 2001.

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/conference/pdf/bender.pdf>

This report surveyed 42 rural counties in New York State to examine the barriers and facilitators of service integration in rural areas related to the implementation of WIA and welfare reform. The report finds that while service integration is used as an important way of compensating for the lack of infrastructure and other rural barriers, staff are the key to successful service integration and program implementation. However, despite their importance, many staff in rural areas are overworked, receive low salaries and lack the tools they need to successfully serve customers. In conclusion, the report recommends providing assistance to rural organizations to create or enhance an organizational culture that is responsive to customer needs, treats customers individually, cultivates a “can-do” attitude among staff, and provides customers with customized services.

Burwick, Andrew *et al.* *Implementing Welfare-to-Work Programs in Rural Places: Lessons Learned from the Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies Demonstration Evaluation*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services by Mathematica Policy Research Inc. April 2004.

[http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/rwtw/rwtw\\_title.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/rwtw/rwtw_title.html)

This report chronicles the implementation experiences of the three demonstration programs participating in the Rural Welfare-to-Work (RWtW) Strategies Demonstration Evaluation. One lesson learned is that to be most valuable to rural clients, welfare-to-work programs provide assistance on a range of personal and logistical issues in addition to improving employment prospects. Another is that program staff serve as valuable personal references for clients’ poor personal or family reputations. In addition, outreach must be aggressive to reach potential clients in rural areas. Finally, operating programs in rural areas requires independent staff members who are familiar with the resources available in their communities, as well as program leaders who can monitor and support their staff from a distance.

Dunham, Kate. *Rural One-Stops: Issues in WIA Implementation*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by Social Policy Research Associates. January 2003.

This report examines the barriers rural areas and small cities have faced in implementing WIA, as well as some of the promising strategies that have been developed to address them. The report draws upon data collected during multi-day site visits to 14 largely rural LWIAs (visits to ten of these LWIAs were previously conducted for SPR’s *Evaluation of WIA Implementation*). The report found that rural areas face a number of challenges in delivering workforce development services. Principal among these is effectively reaching widely scattered customers. Another major challenge is the lack of available service providers and infrastructure such as public transportation. These challenges are made even more daunting by the very

limited financial resources available to rural areas. Despite these challenges, the report found that rural areas have also developed a number of innovative strategies to overcome them. For example, to overcome the challenge of effectively reaching rural customers, many rural One-Stop systems have invested their scarce resources in developing networks of widely scattered satellite or itinerant One-Stop Centers rather than a few comprehensive centers. In addition, these One-Stop systems typically have few or no partner staff located at their One-Stop Centers, but, instead, rely on well-coordinated referral systems to ensure rural customers have access to all the services they need. Another innovative strategy is that due to limited budgets, rural One-Stop partners are more likely to provide in-kind rather than financial support for One-Stop Centers. Finally, rural Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs often are less reliant on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) due to a scarcity of training providers in rural LWIAs.

Dunham, Kate, J. Salzman, and V. Koller. *Business as Partner and Customer under WIA: A Study of Innovative Practices*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by Social Policy Research Associates with contributions by TATC Consulting. June 2004.

[http://www.doleta.gov/reports/searcheta/occ/papers/Business as Partner and Customer under WIA1.pdf](http://www.doleta.gov/reports/searcheta/occ/papers/Business_as_Partner_and_Customer_under_WIA1.pdf)

This report documents observations and findings from the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), including efforts to better engage employers in all aspects of workforce development. It outlines several local areas' efforts to more effectively meet the employment-related needs of both job seekers and businesses by making the business community the One-Stop system's primary customer. One finding of particular relevance to rural areas is that multi-county, largely rural areas are especially keen on ensuring that all counties have their own local business representation on the WIBs. Another is that rural local areas put a strong emphasis on on-line services for serving employers located throughout the LWIA. In addition, the report found that on-the-job training is an important option in rural areas where many businesses do not have the resources to train workers.

Friedman, Pamela. *Meeting the Challenge of Social Service Delivery in Rural Areas*. Issue Notes, Welfare Information Network, Vol. 7, No. 2, March 2003.

<http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/Publications/meetingthechallengeIN.htm>

This report explores the challenges facing social service agencies in delivering services to meet the special needs of rural area residents. It offers suggestions on how to design programs and policies to address those needs. For example, in light of 38% of rural counties reporting a decrease in federal revenue, the report suggests that targeting programs to meet specific rural needs could result in a more effective use of dwindling funds. Such needs include economic development, access to support services, and infrastructure support. The report suggests several options for States to better meet social service needs in rural areas including interagency collaboration within and among rural counties, modifying eligibility requirements for rural residents,



using alternate forms of service delivery (such as the web, the telephone, and home visits), and expanding One-Stop centers beyond their role to serve as points of community access. The report concludes with examples of innovative rural social service programs.

Green, Gary. *Workforce Development Networks in Rural Areas of the United States*. Southern Rural Development Center. Economic & Workforce Development, No. 1, September 2003.

<http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/srdcpolicy/green.pdf>

This report examines how workforce development networks aimed at providing training are organized. The report identifies four distinct organizational structures for these networks in rural areas and discusses the strengths and weaknesses of each. The first structure, the *sole-provider*, has one provider at its core. Strengths of this structure include providing training services on a holistic basis and greater potential to secure grants and other funding. However, the *sole-provider* structure is not responsive to employer needs and does not provide a broad set of linkages with community-based organizations (CBOs). The second structure, the *hub-spoke network*, usually has a CBO at the center that does not directly provide services. Although this structure has been very successful in building community capacity, it may be less successful in accessing funding sources. The third structure, the *employer-centered network*, has clusters of businesses at its core. Strengths of this structure include establishing employer collaboration and developing programs that respond to employer needs. To date, however, the *employer-centered network*, however, has not focused on the needs of low-skilled rural workers. The fourth and final structure, *sector-oriented network*, involves partnerships of industry employers, local economic development corporations, local educational institutions, and other local organizations. Although this structure has been successful in gaining support of employers in the region, a weakness is the scale required to implement them successfully.

McIntire, James and Amy Robins. *Fixing to Change: A Best Practices Assessment of One-Stop Job Centers Working with Welfare Recipients*. Fiscal Policy Center, University of Washington. March 1999.

<http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/fixing2change99/>

This report from the University of Washington examines five One Stop Career Centers to assess the effects of recent policy changes on the employment services to welfare recipients. One key finding of the report is that One-Stop Centers may be easier to implement in smaller cities and rural business centers. The study hypothesizes that this may be due to the relative ease in rural areas of identifying appropriate institutions and resources as compared to urban areas, which have more complex political and service delivery systems. Still, rural One-Stop centers experienced significant challenges related to finding sufficient transportation, child care, substance abuse treatment, and training services for their clients. The study also found that the

most important elements of a One-Stop Center included service integration, co-location of welfare and employment services, and individualized attention to clients.

Marks, Ellen L., Sarah Dewees, Tammy Ouellette, and Robin Koralek. *Rural Welfare-to-Work Strategies: Research Synthesis*. Macro International, Inc., June 10, 1999.

This report synthesizes much of the literature on the implementation of welfare-to-work strategies in rural areas. The report first describes many of the barriers faced by rural areas implementing welfare reform. These include geographic isolation and population dispersion; depressed local economies; spatial inequities in terms of transportation, child care, technology and infrastructure; lower educational attainment and limited job advancement; and a lack of administrative know-how to implement decentralized programs. The report next presents information on a variety of strategies for successful implementation of welfare-to-work programs. These include fostering economic and workforce development, working with community partners, overcoming a lack of available transportation and child care resources, working successfully with hard-to-serve populations, improving case management, coordinating services and changing the culture of welfare offices.

*The Workforce Investment Act After Five Years: Results from the National Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*. Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor by Social Policy Research Associates with contributions by TATC Consulting. June 2004.

[http://www.doleta.gov/reports/searcheta/occ/papers/SPR-WIA\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://www.doleta.gov/reports/searcheta/occ/papers/SPR-WIA_Final_Report.pdf)

This report presents observations and findings from the Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). It describes the workforce investment system's progress and challenges in streamlining services through increased integration, universal access, individual empowerment via personal choice, state and local flexibility, performance accountability, engagement of the private sector and improvement of youth programs. Findings of particular relevance to rural areas, include: the benefits of prior successful partnerships and the problems resulting from past conflicts seemed stronger in rural and suburban areas where most staff are likely to have known and worked with each for a long time; several local areas question whether establishing a physical One-Stop location even makes sense in rural areas, given a service population that is widely dispersed; rural customers have fewer training options than their urban counterparts; expertise in serving and understanding the migrant and seasonal farmworker community is an important factor in how much farmworkers use One-Stop centers; and rural satellite offices located close to where migrant and seasonal farmworkers live and work may need to be opened to serve these customers effectively.

*Welfare Reform: Rural TANF Programs Have Developed Many Strategies to Address Rural Challenges*. U.S. Government Accountability Office, Report to Congressional Requesters, GAO-04-921, September 2004.

<http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04921.pdf>

This report begins by presenting information on the size of the rural caseload, how that caseload is distributed, and how that caseload has changed over time. Next, the strengths and challenges of rural TANF programs are explored. This is followed by descriptions of a variety of strategies rural areas have developed to address the challenges they face. These strategies include the use of nontraditional methods of connecting clients with services, development of cooperative arrangements that leverage resources, and targeted approaches to overcome challenges faced by clients. In conclusion, the report observes that national caseload declines do not necessarily mean that welfare reform has been successful or diminish the fact that implementation of welfare reform in rural areas continues to be extremely challenging.

**(a) Child Care**

*Articles and reports on child care service delivery in rural areas.*

Beach, Betty A. *Perspectives on Rural Child Care*. ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (EDO-RC-96-9), January 1997.

<http://offchemmath.roshd.ir/ael01/eric/digests/edorc969.htm>

This article summarizes the literature on rural child care and describes how it differs from child care in urban areas. First, center-based child care is less common than family-based care in rural areas due to large distances, low population density, and high transportation costs. Rural parents also often prefer informal care from neighbors and relatives. Some studies also suggest that rural centers are of lower quality than urban centers and that family child care in rural areas may have significant strengths, such as community connectedness and support. The article also describes how challenges faced by rural child care practitioners differ from those faced by urban providers. For example, rural providers must deal with the affects of gossip, logistical concerns, limited resources for training and low fees due to limited family incomes caused by underemployment and seasonal employment. Finally, the report calls for policymakers to rethink regulation of child care in rural areas and develop new approaches specifically geared to rural areas.

*Child Care and Transportation Strategies for Rural Communities: Meeting the Challenge of Welfare Reform*. Welfare Reform Task Force, National Rural Development Partnership, Second edition, November 1998.

<http://www.doleta.gov/wtw/documents/child.pdf>

This report provides profiles and contact information for exemplary and innovative child care and transportation programs at the State and local levels. While most of these programs are in rural areas, a few urban programs are also profiled because their approaches could work in rural areas. The report also provides information about critical resources for child care and transportation.

Colker, Laura J. and Sarah Dewees. *Child Care for Welfare Participants in Rural Areas*. Rural Welfare Issue Brief, Macro International Inc. Calverton, MD, 2000.

This brief describes the barriers to accessing rural child care, the most common types of care used in rural areas, and several innovative rural child care models. The brief finds that a majority of rural welfare recipients use informal child care from friends, neighbors and relatives. While these types of care are cheaper and more flexible than licensed care, they are also less stable and lack quality control measures. The brief then proposes several possible improvements to informal child care in rural areas, including providing caregiver training, supporting caregivers in achieving licensure, and focusing on parent education. Finally, the brief describes several innovative rural child care models. These include: 1) providing child care in assistive living facilities, 2) providing child care in schools, and 3) assisting community and faith-based organizations to provide child care.

### **(b) Rural Transportation**

*Articles and reports on transportation in rural areas.*

Brown, Dennis M. *Public Transportation on the Move in Rural America*. Economic Research Service/USDA, Rural Information Center. 2003.

<http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/ricpubs/publictrans.pdf>

This report explores the usage of public transportation services in rural America. According to the report, nearly 40% of rural counties have no public transportation, and another 28% have only limited public transit service. Typically counties without rural transit tend to be the most isolated rural areas where local demand does not cover transit system costs. However, the development of rural transportation systems can help vitalize local economies and reduce social and economic inequalities by increasing the mobility of rural individuals. For example, the labor force can be expanded to include carless individuals, workers can have better access to training opportunities, and transit-dependent individuals (such as the elderly and disabled) can have better access to social services.

Deweese, Sarah. *The Drive to Work: Transportation Issues and Welfare Reform in Rural Areas*. Information Brief Number 5: A Special Series on Welfare Reform in the South. Southern Rural Development Center, November, 1998.

<http://www.ruraltransportation.org/library/transpdf.pdf>

This brief discusses the importance of transportation issues to the successful implementation of welfare reform in the south. The brief begins by describing the limited availability of public transportation in rural areas, particularly in the south, and the importance of reliable transportation to the ability of low-income people to find and maintain a job. The article next describes the challenges associated with the two most common approaches to dealing with the lack of rural transportation, public transportation and car-ownership programs. Finally, the article describes several successful transportation strategies and a number of model programs located in the south. These include making creative use of existing resources such as school buses or

senior citizen vans, developing public-private partnerships, coordinating programs and planning among multiple agencies, and integrating transportation services with skills enhancement classes. Model programs or agencies include the Covington Alabama Transit System, the Central Arkansas Development Council, Charity Cars in Florida, and Tennessee's First Wheels program.

Deweese, Sarah. *Transportation in Rural Communities: Strategies for Serving Welfare Participants and Low-Income Individuals*. Rural Welfare Issue Brief. Rural Policy Research Institute. April, 2000.

This brief discusses the transportation-related challenges faced by low-income rural residents in finding and maintaining employment and describes several successful strategies to address these challenges. First, the brief describes how low-income rural residents face several transportation-related challenges in moving from welfare to work. These challenges include the fact that many of these households do not own cars, few have access to public transportation, and most must travel long distances to their jobs and child care providers. The next section describes several successful strategies to overcome transportation challenges, including private vehicle ownership programs, public transportation programs, taxi services, using other agencies' vehicles, and assisting employers with providing transportation. The brief concludes by discussing how these efforts can be financed and coordinated.

Friedman, Pamela. *Transportation Needs in Rural Communities*. Rural Assistance Center. Issue Note, Vol. 2, No. 1, March 2004.

<http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/Publications/transportationneedsINRAC.htm>

This report explores the transportation needs of rural families and suggests ways to design programs and policies that address these needs. Most rural communities have only limited or no public transit service. Many rural individuals who are low-income do not know how to drive, do not have a driver's license, or can not afford a car. All this limits their ability to find and keep jobs, or access training and other support services. The report offers several suggestions for how states and localities can address these needs. For example, service providers can pool their resources to save money in vehicle insurance and maintenance costs. States can create commissions to oversee or coordinate transportation for all state agencies that provide services to "transportation-disadvantaged" individuals. Localities can provide low-interest car loans to individuals who would otherwise not be able to afford a car. TANF agencies can collaborate with other social service providers (such as Head Start and senior centers) to coordinate using vans during off-hours to drive workers to jobs or training. The report concludes with examples of rural transportation programs.

Goldberg, Heidi. *State and County Supported Car Ownership Programs Can Help Low-Income Families Secure and Keep Jobs*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2001.

<http://www.cbpp.org/11-8-01wel.htm>

This article discusses the importance of car-ownership for low-income families in securing and maintaining a job and reviews a number of existing car ownership programs. The article begins by citing a number of studies that found transportation was one of the most significant barriers for low-income people to finding and maintaining employment. This is due to a lack of public transportation in rural areas and a “spatial mismatch” between where poor people live and where most entry-level jobs are located. The article also cites several studies that found car ownership, particularly for minorities, can increase the likelihood of being employed and earning a higher wage. The article next describes several types of car ownership programs, including providing grants and loans to recipients for purchasing or repairing cars and using Individual Development Accounts. Finally, the article discusses a number of key issues to consider in developing such programs. These issues include the importance of providing reliable cars, recipient participation in paying for cars, program administration and staffing, and funding.

### **(c) Housing**

*Articles and reports on housing in rural areas.*

*Case Studies on Rural Housing and Welfare Reform.* Housing Assistance Council, 2001.

<http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/welfarereform/welfarehsg/toc.htm>

This report includes seven lengthy case studies describing housing issues faced by low-income residents in rural counties around the nation. The case studies were developed through site visits to each of these counties and interviews with local housing, social service and economic development agencies. The report finds that most of these counties need more owner-occupied housing rehabilitation services, new affordable rental projects, and more rental assistance to adequately serve the needs of low income residents.

Friedman, Pamela. *Current Issues in Rural Housing and Homelessness.* Rural Assistance Center. Issue Note, Vol. 1, No. 1, September 2003.

<http://www.financeprojectinfo.org/Publications/currentissuesinruralINRAC.htm>

This report offers suggestions on how to design programs and policies that address rural housing needs. Homes in rural areas have lower values are more likely to be substandard than homes in urban and suburban areas. Many low-income rural families live in manufactured or mobile housing where they often have to pay land rent fees in addition to mortgages. The report suggests that one way to address these and other issues is to encourage affordable housing in targeted areas by offering tax breaks to new home owners. Another way to encourage rural housing development is to establish housing trust funds through state legislation or local ordinance. The report also describes the myriad of funding sources that are available to support rural housing development. The report concludes with summaries of what selected states, regions,

and localities are doing to provide housing assistance to low-income families. Vermont, for example, has a program that helps low-income families with children avoid losing their homes due to eviction or foreclosure.

*Manufactured Housing in Rural America.* Rural Voices: The Magazine of the Housing Assistance Council, Vol. 8, No. 2, Summer 2003.

<http://216.92.48.246/manager/uploads/VoicesSummer2003.pdf>

This issue of *Rural Voices* shares housing policy experts' and local practitioners' findings and experiences related to manufactured housing. One article urges that rural housing advocates and policy analysts reconsider manufactured housing as an affordable housing strategy in light of cost advantages and improvements in quality. Another explores the problems of financing manufactured homes, including the lack of good faith estimates, third party appraisals, and escrows. Several articles are case studies of manufactured housing experiences in different rural areas. For example, the New Hampshire Community Loan Fund, in partnership with other agencies, helps tenants buy their mobile home park. Another nonprofit, the Coachella Valley Housing Coalition, renovated a dilapidated mobile home park in order to provide decent, affordable housing to farmworkers in California.

*Opening Doors to rural Homeownership: Outcomes from the National Rural Housing Coalition Rural Homeownership Symposium.* National Rural Housing Coalition, Washington D.C., October, 2000.

<http://www.nrhweb.org/rapozareport.pdf>

This report of a symposium held by the National Rural Housing Coalition describes a number of challenges to increasing homeownership in rural areas and several promising strategies for overcoming these problems. The report begins by describing challenges to rural homeownership. These include high poverty rates, poor quality housing, limited credit, and declining levels of federal assistance for rural housing. The report then lists several recommendations made by symposium participants for overcoming these challenges. These recommendations include revitalizing and improving the U.S. Department of Agriculture's direct housing loan program (RHS Section 502), maintaining the Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOME program, and promoting capacity-building for non-profit rural housing agencies.

*Unique Housing Challenges Face Rural America and its Low-Income Workers.* Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Conditions and Trends, Vol. 11, No. 2, 2000.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rcat/rcat112/rcat112l.pdf>

This article briefly describes the differences in housing conditions in urban and rural areas, the specific housing difficulties faced by rural wage-dependent households,

and the need for specific programs to deal with these challenges. The article begins by comparing rural and urban housing conditions. For example, rural homes are typically smaller, less costly, less crowded, and more likely to have moderate or severe physical problems than urban homes. The article next discusses the greater housing challenges faced by low income rural residents who are typically “wage-dependent” and are more likely to pay more than 30% of their income on housing, live in crowded conditions and live in houses with physical problems. Many of these difficulties are due to the greater likelihood that these rural residents are younger and live in mobile homes. The article concludes by arguing that specific programs, such as mobile home loans, are needed to assist these low-income, wage-dependent households.

*Why Housing Matters: HAC’S 2000 Report on the State of the Nation’s Rural Housing.* Housing Assistance Council, 2000.

<http://www.ruralhome.org/pubs/hsganalysis/SNRH/why/whyhousingmatters.pdf>

In this report from the Housing Assistance Council, rural housing conditions and trends over the past decade are discussed. For example, 22 percent of all occupied housing units in the U.S. are in rural areas, the majority of which are owner-occupied and many of which are mobile homes. Rural homeowners typically accumulate less equity in their homes than do urban residents, because rural homes are less valuable. Despite the fact that many rural residents are homeowners, significant barriers to homeownership continue to exist in rural areas, particularly for low-income households. One major barrier is due to higher interest rates in rural areas, which are partly attributable to the larger number of financed mobile homes.

#### **(d) Substance Abuse**

*Articles and reports on substance abuse and treatment in rural areas.*

Booth, Karen, Cheryl Bildner, and Robert Bozzo. *Substance Abuse and Welfare Recipients in the Rural Setting.* ORC Macro, Rural Welfare Issue Brief, 2001.

This brief describes the substance abuse problems faced by rural TANF clients and describes a number of innovative programs and resources available to combat this problem. The brief begins by presenting data showing that substance abuse in rural areas is as common as in cities and is a major problem for welfare recipients who are trying to find and keep jobs. However, rural areas also face unique challenges in dealing with substance abuse problems, including widely dispersed services, scarce resources and a lack of trained counselors. To deal with these specific rural challenges, some areas have developed innovative programs. For example, some areas have used interactive television and collaboration with health care providers as successful strategies. Finally, the brief lists a number of possible funding sources for providing substance abuse services, including Medicaid, TANF, Maintenance of Effort funds, and Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant funds.



Bushy, Angeline. *Mental Health and Substance Abuse: Challenges in Providing Services to Rural Clients*. Bringing Excellence To Substance Abuse Services in Rural And Frontier America, Technical Assistance Publication (TAP) Series 20, US Department of Health and Human Services Publication No. (SMA) 97-3134, 1997.

<http://www.treatment.org/taps/tap20/tap20bushy.html>

This article reviews the literature on rural health care and health-related preferences and beliefs, particularly related to mental health and substance abuse services. Rural preferences and beliefs include a strong belief in self-reliance and self-care and a lower likelihood of seeking formal services. In terms of services, the article also reports a shortage of mental health and substance abuse treatment providers in rural areas. The article concludes by describing strategies to enhance care for rural clients despite scarce resources. These strategies include coordinating services, providing meaningful discharge planning, using case management, anticipating potential adverse events, considering the client's situation, and educating the community.

Edwards, Ruth W. *Drug and Alcohol Use Among Youth in Rural Communities*. National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1994.

[http://www.nida.nih.gov/PDF/Monographs/Monograph168/053-078\\_Edwards.pdf](http://www.nida.nih.gov/PDF/Monographs/Monograph168/053-078_Edwards.pdf)

This article describes drug and alcohol use among youth in rural communities based on an analysis of data from the American Drug and Alcohol Survey. The article finds that youth in very small rural communities (counties with towns of no more than 2,500 residents) have a lower aggregate level of drug abuse than youth in larger rural communities. This is particularly true for marijuana use. However, there is almost no difference in 12<sup>th</sup> grade alcohol use among different sized communities. In addition, alcohol use in rural areas is reported to create more problems among rural youth, most likely because these youth have fewer alternative recreational activities and are more likely to have to travel lengthy distances by car to meet their friends. The article concludes by arguing that, because rates of substance abuse also vary substantially across same sized communities, there is a need for individual communities to assess their particular problems to appropriately target substance abuse treatment and prevention resources.

*No Place to Hide: Substance Abuse in Mid-Size Cities and Rural America*. The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University, 2000.

<http://www.casacolumbia.org/pdshopprov/files/No Place to Hide 1 28 00.pdf>

This is a comprehensive report on substance abuse in small cities and rural areas with recommendations for how to deal with the problem. The report is based on an extensive literature review and an analysis of data from the 1999 Monitoring the Future Survey and the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse. Basically, the report describes trends in the use of illicit drugs, alcohol and tobacco by both youth and adults in small cities and rural areas. The report also includes a specific section on the

growing use of methamphetamines in rural areas. The report also describes both the consequences of increased substance abuse in rural areas and the barriers to combating this problem. Finally, the report makes several recommendations to combat substance abuse in rural areas, including raising public awareness, making better use of existing services and law enforcement resources, and improving prevention and treatment. Each of these recommendations is illustrated by examples from innovative programs from around the country.

Wilkins, Andrea. *Substance Abuse and TANF*. National Conference of State Legislatures. Welfare Reform, State Policy Choices, April 2003.

<http://www.ncsl.org/statefed/welfare/substance.pdf>

This article reviews the literature on substance abuse among TANF recipients and suggests that rural areas can increase access to substance abuse treatment by developing self-help groups, making arrangements to utilize residential or outpatient facilities in another town or city, and placing substance abuse counselors in local TANF offices.

**(e) Internet Access**

*Articles and reports on access to the Internet and computer technology in rural areas.*

*Bridging the Rural Digital Divide*. Resources for Welfare Decisions, Welfare Information Network, Vol. 6, No. 15, October 2002.

<http://www.welfareinfo.org/ruraldigitaldivideRN.htm>

This report from the Welfare Information Network briefly describes the disparities in Internet access between urban and rural areas, particularly Native American areas, and the reasons for this disparity. The brief then provides a listing of publications and programs related to rural technology development and Internet access. The report concludes by profiling a number of State and local programs around the country aimed at bridging the rural digital divide. These include a program through the Iowa Farm Bureau and Lighthouse Communications to provide dial-up service to underserved rural areas, the North Kansas Community Network which has brought low-cost internet access to rural north central Kansas, the Rural Internet Access Authority in North Carolina, and the Tulalip Technology Leap in Washington State which has brought internet access and computers to the Tulalip Reservation.

Donnermeyer, Joseph F. and C. A. Hollified. *Digital Divide Evidence in Four Rural Towns*. Stanford University. IT & Society, Vol. 1, No. 4, Spring 2003.

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/siqss/itandsociety/v01i04/v01i04a07.pdf>

This report utilized survey research to examine the use of email and the Internet in four rural communities in Nebraska and Wisconsin. Although more survey respondents used the Internet (47%) than email (40%), respondents used email slightly more frequently than they used the Internet. Approximately two-thirds of the

respondents who were employed used email, the Internet, or both. Of these, most who used email or the Internet at work also used these technologies at home (and vice versa). Of the respondents who had not used email or the Internet, most had jobs that used neither technology. Finally, respondents who had not attended college were twice as likely to be non-email and Internet users as those who had at least two-year college degree. Although there was little variation across the four communities in email and Internet use, there is a divide in the four rural communities between the information technology “haves” (younger, more mobile, workers with college educations), and “have-nots” (older, more permanent workers with less education).

Kusmin, Lorin D. *Wage Premiums for On-the-Job Computer Use: A Metro and Nonmetro Analysis*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural Development Research Report, No. 95, December 2002.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/rdr95/rdr95.pdf>

This report addresses the question of whether on-the-job computer use is a significant factor in explaining differences between earnings in metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas. The report finds that rural, low-wage workers who receive computer training may have to move to metropolitan areas in order to reap the most benefits from such training.

*A Nation Online: How Americans are Expanding Their Use of the Internet*. U.S. Department of Commerce, 2002.

<http://www.ntia.doc.gov/ntiahome/dn/anationonline2.pdf>

This report describes how use of the Internet has increased throughout the U.S. in recent years, including in rural areas. For example, Internet usage in rural areas increased by 24 percent annually between 1998 and 2001 among people living in rural households, compared to 19 percent among central city urban households. However, Internet use among rural households (52.9%) is still less than among urban households (57.4%). Internet use is also lower for low income people, unemployed people, seniors, people with lower educational attainment, and members of ethnic or racial minority groups. While an overwhelming majority of Americans (80%) access the Internet via dial-up service, residential use of higher speed access is increasing rapidly. The report concludes by noting that use of the Internet at work has contributed to increased home use.

Tscheschlok, Christian. *Rising to Meet the Digital Challenge in Rural Communities: A Growing Divide?* Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. Rural Research Report, Volume 12, Issue 3, Spring 2001.

[http://www.iira.org/pubsnew/publications/IIRA\\_RRR\\_143.pdf](http://www.iira.org/pubsnew/publications/IIRA_RRR_143.pdf)

This report focuses on how to provide rural residents with effective access to the Internet to ensure their ability to take advantage of technology-related economic

opportunities. The report begins with a description of the importance of Internet access and then argues that rural communities continue to lag behind urban areas, particularly in terms of access to wireless and high-speed broadband technology and in overall “e-literacy.” The report then describes state and community-based initiatives in North Carolina, Georgia, North Dakota, Wyoming, Michigan, and Illinois aimed at increasing Internet access in rural areas. These include regional technology centers, virtual high schools, mobile Internet training facilities, and homegrown Internet service providers. Finally, the report concludes that successful efforts typically involve improving Internet access at public facilities such as libraries, require active involvement by local government agencies, are careful not to stifle local initiative, and require a regional orientation to development and public-private partnerships.

Schumacher, Sharon. *A study of Internet Use Patterns and Broadband Availability Among Rural Illinois Households and Small Businesses*. Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs. Rural Research Report, Vol. 14, No. 4, Spring 2003.

[http://www.iira.org/pubsnew/publications/IIRA\\_RRR\\_570.pdf](http://www.iira.org/pubsnew/publications/IIRA_RRR_570.pdf)

The report explores the use of Internet applications and technologies in rural Illinois. A little over half of the rural Illinois households polled reported having a computer. Of those, 83% were connected to the Internet where approximately one in ten had high-speed access. Nearly three-quarters of the rural small businesses polled reported having at least one computer. Of those, 73% were connected to the Internet where approximately one in four had high-speed access. Younger respondents were more likely to use the Internet for work, fun and games, and chat rooms, while older users were more likely to use the Internet to manage their personal finances. Many rural Illinois households choose to live with their slow Internet connections because the costs of high-speed connections are simply too high. The report concludes by summarizing several approaches aimed at increasing access to computer and Internet technologies to rural, low-income populations in Illinois, including a broadband grant program, a telecommunications network that provides high-speed access to various institutions (e.g., libraries, schools, and government agencies) throughout Illinois, and assessment tools to help communities determine their telecommunications needs.

Strover, Sharon. *Rural Internet Connectivity*. Rural Policy Research Institute. Presentation at the Telecommunications Research and Policy Conference, P99-13, September, 1999.

<http://www.rupri.org/publications/archive/reports/1999/P99-13/p99-13.pdf>

This report explores Internet connectivity and use in rural regions of Texas, Iowa, Louisiana, and West Virginia to better understand the disparity between urban and rural regions regarding Internet access and the operations of Internet service providers (ISPs) in rural areas. The report is based on telephone surveys, web-based investigation and examination of secondary data. The report finds that a lack of investment in rural telecommunications infrastructure has made it very difficult for many rural residents to have access to low-cost Internet connections. As a result, many local customers have

no access to high-speed broadband technology, pay high prices for dial-up service and often have to access dial-up numbers via toll calls. Much of this lack of infrastructure investment is due to the high costs involved and small numbers of customers. In addition, because rural telephone providers are exempted from unbundling their networks to would-be competitors, there is no competition in these areas that might spur providers to upgrade their systems.

**(f) Distance Learning**

*Articles and reports on distance learning in rural areas.*

Collins, Timothy and Sarah Dewees. *Distance Education: Taking Classes to the Students*. Southern Rural Development Center. *The Rural South: Preparing for the Challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, No. 17, February, 2001.

[http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/distance\\_education.pdf](http://srdc.msstate.edu/publications/distance_education.pdf)

This report discusses several issues related to distance education in the south, including challenges, quality, and educational impact. First, the report describes several recent innovations in distance education adopted by southern educational institutions and States. These include the adoption of wide area networks (WANs) by higher education institutions to serve primary and secondary schools, libraries, offices and homes; Statewide virtual high schools; the creation of a 16-State Southern Regional Electronic Campus by the Southern Regional Education Board; and virtual State universities and libraries. The brief then describes a number of challenges facing the use of distance education. These include dealing with rapid technological change, overcoming limited Internet access in rural areas, assisting teachers with transitioning to new delivery modes, mentoring and monitoring students from a distance, and assuring educational quality.

*How States are Implementing Distance Education for Adult Learners*. State Policy Update, National Institute for Literacy, February 14, 2000.

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/pdf/nifldistance.pdf>

This report discusses several policy issues related to distance learning, reviews the status of State implementation of distance programs, and profiles the efforts of California and Delaware in offering state-wide distance learning programs. The report first briefly defines distance education and discusses its most common forms and uses. The report then discusses a number of policy challenges related to developing the infrastructure necessary to support distance education. These include: ensuring adequate resource allocation, keeping up with needed technology, providing users with adequate access, successfully reformatting educational materials, ensuring adequate educational and technological support for learners, developing effective reporting and monitoring structures, dealing with a lack of high-quality U.S. models, and providing teacher professional development. The report concludes by profiling the efforts of

California and Delaware to develop state-wide distance education systems for adult learners.

Kaplan, April and Barry Van Lare. *Videoconferencing as a Tool for Welfare and Workforce Reform*. Welfare Information Network. Issue Note, Vol. 4, Issue 3, March, 2000.

<http://www.welfareinfo.org/kaplanmarch2.htm>

This report discusses the potential uses of communications and computer-based training for welfare reform programs. It begins by describing several types of technology-based conferencing and communication techniques, such as satellite broadcasting, videoconferencing, audio or teleconferencing, desktop or web conferencing, picture phones, on-line courses, CD-ROMs, and videotapes. It then discusses a number of issues related to using these techniques. These issues include the opportunities and costs of accessing necessary equipment and infrastructure, the production and facilitation capacities needed for using these techniques, and issues related to purchasing packaged training materials and other resources. Finally, the Issue Note concludes by providing examples of applications and technologies appropriate for technology-based conferencing and communication. These include professional development training sessions, meetings, and educational courses.

Yoakam, Michael. *Distance Learning: An Introduction*. Indiana University Center for Excellence in Education and AT&T Center for Excellence in Distance Education.

[http://old.ihets.org/consortium/ipse/fdhandbook/dist\\_lrn.html](http://old.ihets.org/consortium/ipse/fdhandbook/dist_lrn.html)

This introductory chapter provides a basic description of distance education uses and delivery modes and concludes with several recommendations for successful implementation. The chapter begins by describing some of the common uses for distance education. These include disseminating new product and policy information, conducting job skills training, and providing advanced professional education. In addition, more and more primary, secondary and post-secondary educational institutions are beginning to offer both course and degree programs via distance education. The chapter then describes a number of distance learning delivery methods via telephones, computers, and video. Telephone technology is often a component of distance learning via teleconferencing, callback devices, voicemail and faxes. Distance learning applications using computers include computer-based training via CD-ROM or over the Internet, e-mail, web-based conferencing, and groupware. One or two way video is also a very common component of distance education programs. The chapter concludes with several critical issues for designing a successful distance learning program. These include: effective planning, reliable equipment, effective instructional design, instructor training, management and administrative support, and learner support services.

## RURAL COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

*Articles and reports on rural community and technical colleges.*

*Expanding Economic and Educational Opportunity in Distressed Rural Areas: A Conceptual Framework for the Rural Community College Initiative.* MDC, Inc. Rural Community College Initiative, September 2001.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ruralamerica/ra162/ra162d.pdf>

This report describes the basic framework for the Rural Community College Initiative (RCCI) created by the Ford Foundation in 1994 as a partnership among community colleges, MDC, the American Association of Community Colleges and the foundation aimed at helping community colleges in distressed regions move their communities toward prosperity. The initiative focuses on economic development and access to education because of the importance of both in revitalizing distressed rural areas. RCCI also urges community colleges to develop essential institutional capacities and collaborate with the community. Because of the long-standing, entrenched nature of the problems that colleges focus on, the RCCI process is a three-phase, multi-year endeavor, requiring significant institutional commitment.

Green, Gary Paul, Anna Haines, and Valeria Galetto. *Community Colleges in Rural America: New Roles and New Challenges.*

<http://www.drs.wisc.edu/personnel/faculty/green/job/CommunityCollegesInRuralAmerica.pdf>

This report presents the results of a study of approximately 250 rural community colleges aimed at examining their role in providing job training, delivering business services and providing traditional educational services. The study suggests that most rural community colleges are balancing a broad range of activities, including basic education and training, business development services and customized training. More and more training and instruction is also taking place off-site, often at employer locations. In addition, the study found that rural community colleges collaborate with a wide variety of community organizations to make connections to businesses and workers.

Holub, Jonathan D. *The Role of the Rural Community College in Rural Community Development.* ERIC Clearinghouse on Community Colleges. ERIC Digest, No. EDO-JC-96-02, 1996.

<http://offchemmath.rosd.ir/acl01/eric/digests/edojc962.htm>

This digest discusses the ways in which rural community colleges are serving their communities by preparing local residents for technological, economic and social changes. It discusses community-based programming, efforts to combat illiteracy, and the use of technological learning systems by rural community colleges. The digest begins by examining community-based programming, which involves a community

college serving as a catalyst in creating collaboration among community actors to solve local problems. It next examines the strategies developed by an Appalachian Regional Steering Committee to help community colleges address rural illiteracy. These include, policy strategies, conducting public relations campaigns, lobbying, and forming partnerships with other agencies. Finally, the digest discusses technological learning systems aimed at overcoming distances, such as computer links, cable television and video technology.

Rosenfeld, Stuart A. *Rural Community Colleges: Creating Institutional Hybrids for the New Economy*. Economic Research Service/USDA. Rural America, Volume 16, Issue 2, Summer 2001.

<http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/ruralamerica/ra162/ra162b.pdf>

This article discusses the changing role of rural community colleges over the past fifty years, describing their many current roles and speculating on their future. The article begins by describing the changing role of rural community colleges which have shifted from an almost exclusive focus on preparation for transfer to four-year colleges, to focusing on meeting the needs of businesses and helping workers to upgrade their skills. In addition, community colleges serve an extremely diverse set of students, in terms of race, age and skill backgrounds. The article concludes by describing a number of challenges faced by community colleges, including globalization; rising aspirations and skill needs; low skill and literacy levels of applicants; increasing diversity in terms of race, ethnicity, age and career paths; declining recruitment and new competition; the need to foster entrepreneurship; and the importance of utilizing the Internet.