



**SPR** SOCIAL POLICY RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATES

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**THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT  
AFTER FIVE YEARS:  
RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE  
IMPLEMENTATION OF WIA**

**A Report Prepared as Part of the  
*National Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA***

**June 2004**

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with contributions by  
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<u>State</u>	<u>Local Areas</u>
1. Arizona	a) City of Phoenix b) Balance of Maricopa County c) Santa Cruz County d) Yuma County
2. California	a) San Diego
3. Colorado	a) Adams County b) Arapahoe-Douglas
4. Connecticut	a) the Workplace
5. Florida	a) Dade and Monroe b) Polk County
6. Georgia	a) NE Georgia

<b>State</b>	<b>Local Areas</b>
	b) SW Georgia
	c) NW Georgia
7. Illinois	a) Chicago Mayor's Office
	b) DuPage County
8. Kentucky	a) Cumberlands
	b) Eastern Kentucky CEP
9. Maine	a) Coastal Counties
10. Michigan	a) Capitol Area
11. Minnesota	a) Rural MN CEP
12. Montana	a) Balance of Montana
13. New York	a) Erie County (Buffalo)
	b) Suffolk County
14. Oregon	a) The Medford Area Job Council
	b) Portland Worksystems
15. Pennsylvania	a) Northern Tier
	b) Three Rivers
16. Texas	a) Dallas Worksource
	b) East Texas
	c) Lower Rio Grande
17. Utah	Single LWIA State
18. Vermont	Single LWIA State
19. Virginia	a) Area 1-Southwest VA (Russell)
	b) Area 13-Bay Consortium
	c) Area 16-Hampton Roads (Norfolk)
20. Washington	a) Pacific Mountain
21. Wisconsin	a) North Central
	b) Northwest Wisconsin CEP

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## I. SUMMARY AND OVERVIEW

In the summer of 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) and its subcontractor, TATC Consulting, a contract for the national *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act* (WIA). The evaluation consisted of multiple data collection and analysis components, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods. These included:

- Multi-day site visits to 21 states and 38 local workforce investment areas, conducted in three distinct waves, beginning in the fall of 1999 and concluding in January 2004.
- A national tracking system of WIA implementation progress, covering all states and territories receiving WIA formula funding, that charted progress towards establishing the key infrastructure that WIA mandates.
- An analysis of data from the client-level reporting systems of WIA (the WIASRD) and JTPA (the SPIR) to describe changes in client characteristics and services associated with the transition from JTPA to WIA.

Findings from the first wave of site visits, to six early implementing states and nine local areas within them, were described in two reports: *State Implementation Profiles for Six Early Implementing States Under WIA* (September 2000) and *A Report on Early State and Local Progress Towards WIA Implementation* (February 2001). Results from the national tracking system were reported in a series of seven reports, including six volumes of the *Workforce System Information and Evaluation (WSIE) Reports* (March 2000 through November 2000) and *A Report on the WIA Implementation Readiness Guide* (March 2001). More recently, we conducted targeted site visits focused on local areas' strategies for engaging businesses in strategic planning and serving businesses as a customer of the workforce development system; findings from this effort are described in *Business as Partner and Customer under WIA: A Study of Innovative Practices* (submitted in June 2004). Each of these reports was submitted to DOL under separate cover.

Additional findings were detailed in a series of 13 short Briefing Papers, which we submitted to DOL on a flow basis from April 2002 to June 2004. These Briefing Papers, which are compiled in this Report, are each on narrowly focused topics, including (among others) WIA governance structures, partnership development, the One-Stop infrastructure, adult and dislocated worker services, youth services,

performance accountability, management information systems, and One-Stop services to special populations, including migrant farmworkers, the homeless, and limited-English speakers. A synopsis of these Briefing Papers is included later in this chapter, and the Briefing Papers themselves follow. Meanwhile, a fuller description of all project activities, data collection methods, and reports and products is included in this Report's appendix.

Drawing on these Briefing Papers and the evaluation's other reports, we next discuss key achievements with respect to establishing a workforce system consistent with WIA and highlight remaining implementation challenges. We first begin by establishing an overall context for the evaluation.

## **BACKGROUND**

WIA's key objective, articulated in the preamble to the law itself, is to "consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States." The impetus for this change grew out of concern that the then-existing public workforce system was made up of an array of separately funded employment and training programs—by some counts over 150 separate programs—that typically operated without effective coordination or collaboration. The resulting system, it was claimed, resulted in redundancies and inefficiencies and confronted customers with a confusing maze of programs through which they found it difficult to navigate.<sup>1</sup>

WIA was designed to lend coherence to this disorder and make the public workforce system customer-focused and demand-driven. It aimed to do so by promoting seven key underlying principles.

1. *Streamlining services through integration.* To redress service fragmentation, WIA mandates the establishment of a One-Stop service delivery system, by which key partners involved in providing workforce development assistance are to come together to plan and coordinate their services. To the extent that doing so is consistent with their authorizing legislation, each partner is to contribute to the costs and maintenance of the One-Stop system in a way that is reflective of the partner's usage and benefits.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, a series of reports issued by the General Accounting Office, such as "Multiple Employment Training Programs: Overlapping Programs Indicate a Need for Closer Examination of Structure" (1994).

2. *Providing universal access to services.* As a means to “improve the quality of the workforce ... and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation” (WIA Section 106), the Act gives every adult access to basic services made available through the One-Stop system. Such universal access represents a sharp departure from the eligibility criteria imposed under the former Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA).<sup>2</sup>
3. *Empowering individuals through a customer-focused approach to services.* The development of the One-Stop system is seen as a major method of facilitating customer access to services, in that customers should be able to utilize a broad array of services through convenient physical access points or remotely via the Internet. Moreover, customers can take charge of their own career planning and career development by accessing of their own accord whatever core services—labor market information, job search assistance, and career planning tools—they feel they need. Finally, those who need training services to upgrade their occupational skills can do so through the use of Individual Training Accounts, which are voucher-like vehicles designed to promote customers’ choice in selecting training programs and providers.
4. *Promoting state and local flexibility.* Under the premise that states and local areas know best what service designs and delivery strategies are optimal for their communities, DOL deliberately devolves decision-making authority. Thus, local officials have wide latitude in determining the emphasis they give to various services (e.g., training vs. core services) and which customers they wish to target.
5. *Promoting system accountability.* WIA enhances the focus on accountability and continuous improvement. One aspect of this is holding states and local areas accountable for the performance of their workforce investment systems through 17 core performance and additional customer satisfaction measures that track customers’ outcomes following service receipt and their satisfaction with services. Additionally, training providers must meet performance criteria in order to be deemed “eligible” to serve ITA holders; these criteria relate to the program completion rates and employment outcomes of previous cohorts of trainees.
6. *Engaging the private sector.* As a means of building a world-class public workforce system and keeping America competitive in a global economy, WIA endeavors to meet the needs of businesses as well as job seekers. WIA attempts to engage the business community in both strategic planning, through its representation on workforce boards, and as a customer of the workforce system.

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<sup>2</sup> Virtually all participants in JTPA’s adult program needed to be economically disadvantaged, and (after the JTPA Amendments of 1992) at least 65% needed to be hard to serve, by virtue of having at least one barrier to employment from a list of seven that were specified in the legislation. However, job matching services funded under Wagner-Peyser were available without regard to income or other eligibility criteria.

7. *Improving Youth Programs.* Recognizing that previous formula-funded youth workforce programs have failed to realize their promise, WIA calls for a substantial redirection of effort. Among these, the legislation promotes comprehensive youth service strategies, driven by a youth-development framework, in place of the short-term interventions—such as summer youth employment as a stand-alone activity—that were typical under JTPA. Additionally, WIA mandates the establishment of Youth Councils, as an adjunct of the local workforce Board, to coordinate youth activities and provide a broad vision of purpose.

## **PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES**

With these key principles as a backdrop, and with WIA reauthorization on the horizon, we draw on findings from the evaluation to reflect on chief accomplishments to date and challenges to implementation that pending new authorizing legislation might address.

### **Streamlining Services through Integration**

The need for reform to lend some coherence to the welter of separately funded and operated federal programs providing employment and training assistance was obvious. In an effort to do so, WIA requires that 17 federal programs, with total funding of about \$15 billion annually, become mandatory One-Stop partners that are to help support the One-Stop system, make their core services available through it, and participate on local workforce investment boards.

Despite numerous challenges that have been encountered along the way (and sometimes outright resistance), partnership formation represents a highly successful and, in the long-term, potentially critically important accomplishment engendered by WIA. Through our site visits, we discovered that local areas are using various methods of coordinating services, such as through co-locating staff and services, cross-referring customers, developing electronic linkages such as through joint management information systems, developing common intake systems or other front-end services (e.g., shared reception and orientation), cross-training staff, and carrying out team-building exercises.

Although none of these is sufficient by itself to give rise to fully seamless services, unquestionably meaningful change has occurred in a way that has had far-reaching consequences for client services. Nearly everywhere, partners express a new-found understanding of each others' programs and a commitment to work together collaboratively. Showing the full potential of service integration, a few local areas have



gone much further, by forming multi-agency teams and melding programs and providers into a highly integrated system for delivering client services.

One huge difficulty that emerged at the outset, though, is determining each partner's fair contribution to support the One-Stop infrastructure, and inducing them to make financial (as opposed to merely in-kind) contributions. Partners identified a variety of reasons for their inability or unwillingness to contribute, including their own funding limitations and what they perceive as federal restrictions on how they may use their funds. The bottom line, though, is that local areas have sometimes struggled to find funds to support the One-Stop infrastructure in the way they would like. More generally, they cited a continuing difficulty in working with partners in providing self-services and staffing the Resource Rooms.

Among other challenges to partnership-formation that we have identified are:

- *Different visions of what integration means.* Integration can imply little more than co-location or cross-referrals, on the one hand, to the full integration of service delivery, on the other. Partners do not always share a common vision of what is desirable or intended.
- *Unique program goals and customers' needs.* Related to the above, partners worry that the uniqueness of their program goals will become diluted in a One-Stop context and that their ability to meet their customers' needs may suffer as a consequence.
- *Unique corporate cultures.* Staff from the various partner agencies—including employees of state and local governments and non-profit organizations—have unique organizational cultures that make working together very challenging, a situation that can be further aggravated by agencies' different pay scales and union rules.
- *Practical and logistical difficulties.* Co-location, typically an important first step in effective partnership, is often difficult to arrange for purely logistical reasons, such as existing leases that are difficult to break and the absence of suitable alternative space that can comfortably accommodate the multiple partners.
- *Constraints of existing management information systems.* In a multi-program environment, an MIS that supports common intake and eligibility requirements, provides unified case management, and produces the reports that each program needs for program management is a powerful impetus for change and can even be viewed as essential for the effective integration of services. States have pursued a variety of strategies for realizing this vision—participating in a consortium, purchasing software from commercial vendors,

or upgrading existing systems—but most such systems have been subject to repeated delays and/or have fallen short of their promise.

- *Separate performance and reporting requirements.* As it currently stands, each partner is subject to separate federal performance and reporting requirements. Not only does this fact cause confusion and duplication that may, by itself, constitute a hindrance to coordination, but it may also cause partners to strive for achievement on disparate measures that may be in conflict. Moreover, currently no federal performance measures reward “systemwide” performance, further reducing incentives to integration.

Proposed WIA legislation holds the promise of addressing some of these issues. For example, current proposals would allow Governors to withhold a portion of the federal funds of One-Stop partners and allocate them to local areas to support One-Stop system development. Additionally, the proposed legislation stipulates that one of the criteria to be used in deciding whether to certify One-Stop centers should be the degree of partner integration. These steps seem likely to establish at least minimal thresholds of expectations regarding the coordination of services and secure baseline funding for supporting the One-Stop infrastructure.

In a much more dramatic move, one current proposal would consolidate ES and WIA adult and dislocated worker funding, which could substantially improve the integration of core services and resolve some difficult funding and staffing issues. Furthermore, DOL’s Performance and Results Office, under overall prodding from OMB, is working to establish common performance measures across programs.

But whatever steps are taken at the federal level, the effective integration of partner services is a long road that will necessarily be traveled in incremental steps at the local level as partners work out effective ways of collaborating with each other and gain confidence that their efforts to do so will not undermine their ability to meet the needs of their target populations. As has been apparent to date, strong state leadership and a collaborative and inclusive approach to decision-making at the local level are essential to move this process further along.

### **Promoting Universal Access in a One-Stop System**

In a dynamic, fast-moving economy, all workers arguably need access to an array of workforce services throughout their work lives, if periodically they need to hone their work skills or seek new employment. Given this, perhaps in no way was the need for reform more urgent than to streamline the delivery of workforce services through

the establishment of a One-Stop system, so that customers would have easy access to an array of high-quality workforce services.

We found that states and local areas have made great progress in responding to this need. Not only does every local area have at least one comprehensive center, many have pursued additional strategies designed to promote universal access including: establishing satellite centers to provide broader geographic access, providing remote access to One-Stop self-services, offering extended hours of operation during evenings and on weekends, and facilitating access to individuals with disabilities or others who may be otherwise challenged in their ability to access services.

As evidence of these efforts, as of the end of 2003, the nation included a network of almost 2,000 One-Stop centers, and an extensive network of satellite centers (see [www.servicelocator.org](http://www.servicelocator.org)). Based on other data we have collected, more than 40% of local areas have six or more separate physical access points, and several have very extensive networks, such as Utah (with 36 comprehensive centers) and the Chicago Mayor's Office (with 35 sites, of which 4 are comprehensive centers and 31 are satellites).

These two areas demonstrate two very different considerations behind the logic of how many access points to establish and where to locate them. One very obvious consideration relates to the geographic expanse of the service area. Thus, Utah, a single-LWIA state, needs to provide physical access points throughout the state. Accordingly, it has established an average of a little more than one comprehensive center per county.

Chicago demonstrates that aggressive outreach to target populations represents another set of considerations. This local area is very concerned about establishing access to services for special populations and target groups. Accordingly, in addition to establishing 4 comprehensive centers throughout the city, it established 31 satellites, or affiliates, located throughout Chicago's neighborhoods. These affiliates represent a variety of service models, including neighborhood community-based organizations (CBOs), agencies targeting specific language or cultural groups, and others established to link WIA services to programs specializing in addressing specific barriers or social service needs.

Beyond the extensive network of physical access points through comprehensive centers or satellites, states and local areas have also emphasized remote access to

services through the Internet. Thus, substantial percentages of local areas (80% or more) report that basic informational services—such as LMI, information on training providers, job listings, and the like—are available remotely.

These remarkable accomplishments in establishing the One-Stop infrastructure notwithstanding, some limitations have been apparent. To begin with, special challenges have emerged in operationalizing the One-Stop vision in some contexts, such as in rural areas, which often encompass vast geographic scales, low population densities, and tight program budgets that make it difficult to establish and staff physical access points that are convenient for very many customers. These challenges can be overcome, but only through adaptations of the typical One-Stop model, such as by establishing fewer comprehensive centers in favor of numerous smaller satellites, emphasizing distance learning and remote access, and utilizing mobile access points (such as through trailers that can be moved periodically from community to community).<sup>3</sup>

Other implementation challenges to promoting universal access that we have often encountered include:

- *Narrow reputation and limited visibility.* As part of the One-Stop vision, the public workforce system is to be among the first resources that customers think of when they are interested in help with career planning or information about available jobs. However, in many communities One-Stop centers have an image as “the place where poor people go,” a hold-over from an earlier era that may have been fostered by JTPA’s restricted eligibility criteria. Aggressive efforts by many One-Stop centers to widely market themselves, present a professional appearance, and provide high-quality services have been only partly successful in overcoming this image. Local areas report that national efforts to promote a brand-name, and burnish the image of the One-Stop system in the minds of the public, would be helpful.
- *Funding limitations.* Many local areas report that it is difficult to find the resources to fully support the One-Stop infrastructure. Funding is a particular challenge in light of the limited financial contributions often made by WIA Title I’s mandatory partners (as was discussed above) and the lack of set-aside funding.

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<sup>3</sup> See K. Dunham, “Rural One-Stops: Issues in WIA Implementation” (2003), prepared for U.S. DOL by Social Policy Research Associates under a separate contract.

- *Tension between emphasizing training services vs. services at lower tiers.* Given resource constraints, local areas struggle with establishing an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of a wide and diverse customer base with low-cost services, while still making training services available to those who need them to gain marketable skills. Local areas vary greatly in how this balance is struck.
- *Tension between serving high-priority groups vs. promoting wide access to the universal customer.* While establishing universal accessibility to One-Stop services, WIA also provides that public assistance recipients and low income individuals should receive priority for intensive and training services in the adult program whenever funds in a local area are limited. In actuality, low-income customers remain a focal point for WIA adult training dollars, though there has been something of a drop-off from JTPA (see the Briefing Paper later in this report that uses client-level data to compare JTPA and WIA service levels). However, these averages mask substantial variability across local areas in service emphases.
- *The need for workforce systems to be responsive to customers with diverse service needs.* Universal access in a One-Stop environment implies that tools and resources and staff capacities must be adept in serving a wide range of customers with greatly varying needs, including well-educated workers looking for a career change, new labor market entrants, and special populations with specific needs. Meeting these diverse service needs is a daunting challenge for workforce systems and for workforce professionals.
- *Serving those with limited computer literacy.* Providing universal access given limited budgets to provide staff-intensive services means that local areas must rely heavily on self-services. However, many customers have limited computer literacy that limits the extent to which they can access resources and information tools on their own.
- *Serving those with limited English literacy.* With upwards of 750,000 immigrants entering the country annually, immigrants are expected to constitute a large and increasing share of the nation's working-age population in the decades ahead. Yet many lack English-language proficiency, which severely hampers their ability to be competitive in the labor market or access workforce development services. Some local areas are ill-equipped to serve this population, although many others have made extraordinary efforts to do so (see the Briefing Paper on this topic later in this report).
- *Linking the One-Stop network.* One of the key challenges in establishing locally-chartered access points is whether and how they will work together as part on an integrated system. States vary in the criteria they impose in designating an access point as a "comprehensive" One-Stop center, and some states devolve this authority completely to local areas. Only a few states thus far have developed consistent chartering criteria and foster a brand-name

image that provides marketing leverage and conveys to customers a consistent level of service and quality. The challenge of extending such branding on a national scale remains largely untouched.

- *Limited ability to track customer usage and outcomes.* Self-services, including those accessed remotely, constitute the only practical way for the One-Stop system to ensure universal access in the face of severe budget constraints. However, local areas currently have a limited ability to track customer usage of, or outcomes from, self-services, including who uses self services, with what objectives in mind, and to what effect. This informational vacuum makes it difficult to know how to tailor these services to better meet customers' needs or even to establish whether the enormous investments being made in self-services are worth the cost.

Several facets of proposed reauthorizing legislation are intended to address some of these concerns, including provisions:

- Authorizing Governors to withhold federal funds from partners' programs to fund the One-Stop infrastructure, as was mentioned above.
- Requiring State Boards to establish criteria and procedures for certifying One-Stop centers.
- Authorizing local areas to provide additional support and guidance to customers facing special barriers to employment.

This final point is consistent with, and would serve to reinforce, additional federal initiatives that are already underway. For example, to promote compliance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Executive Order 13166 formally commits the federal government to improve the accessibility of government services to limited-English speakers. Similarly, prompted by President George W. Bush's pledge to end homelessness, DOL is participating in an inter-departmental workgroup at the federal level to explore how workforce services delivered in a One-Stop context can help the President's vision to be realized. Finally, DOL has been working aggressively to assist states and locals in promoting the customer-friendly electronic access to tools and information resources for customers with varying needs and aptitudes. However, the tension in WIA—between an emphasis on low-cost services for all versus staff-intensive and expensive services geared towards a targeted clientele—remains inherent.

### **Empowering Individuals through Choice**

Based on our site visits, it appears clear that the mandate to promote customer choice is being taken very seriously in One-Stop centers and is in evidence nearly everywhere. Choice begins with customers' first introduction to One-Stop system

services. For example, those who enter a One-Stop center are typically met by a “greeter” who quickly elicits from them the reason for their visit and outlines the range of services that customers might want to access. Often this introduction is followed by a One-Stop orientation further describing the array of available services.

Opportunities for choice are evident as well in the broad range of resource and tools that are available to self-service users, including those enabling customers to conduct self-assessments, view job listings, gain tips in searching for jobs, engage in career planning, view labor market projections and trends, and research training providers.

But the philosophy of customer choice is perhaps clearest in the process by which eligible customers select training providers. Consistent with the legislation, Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), a voucher-like system that enables customers to select training programs that seem right for them, are the predominant mode for delivering training services and have been enthusiastically embraced by One-Stop administrators and staff. Just as importantly, the way in which ITAs have been implemented shows that customer choice with respect to training selection is taken very seriously. Thus, we observed clear evidence that case managers adopt a coaching approach to helping customers make training choices, prodding them to conduct appropriate research and think through their training selection but without being overly directive.<sup>4</sup>

However, while embracing customer choice, local areas have been grappling with how to accommodate its requirements to other service priorities. For example, to husband scarce training dollars, local areas have established caps on ITA awards that vary from a low of about \$1,500 per ITA-holder in some local areas to \$10,000 or more in others. Little is currently known about how these varying cap amounts affect customer choice or how the workforce system’s return on investment is impacted.

Another consideration related to delivering training services is under what circumstances alternatives to ITAs should be used. Although the legislation envisions the ITA as being the predominant training vehicle because of its protection of customer choice, local areas have recognized that alternatives to ITAs, which are allowable under

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the Briefing Paper on adult and dislocated worker services in this report, see also the results of the ITA/ETP Demonstration (R. D’Amico and J. Salzman, *An Evaluation of the Individual Training Account/Eligible Training Provider Demonstration: Final Report*, December 2002). This report was prepared for DOL by SPR under a subcontract from Mathematica Policy Research.

WIA, have their rightful place. For example, a small number of local areas are heavily investing in customized training, because it meets the needs of local businesses directly and provides trainees with an income to support themselves through training and a nearly guaranteed job afterwards. Similarly, others have noted the important role that contract training plays in meeting the needs of their hard-to-serve customers, for whom an ITA might be less effective. The challenge local areas face, then, is deciding under what circumstances these alternatives to ITAs should be used and how to use them in a way that still provides wide latitude for customer choice.

Finally, as another challenge to empowering customers, the Consumer Report System and performance and reporting requirements associated with the eligible training provider list have not worked as well as might have been hoped (for reasons that are discussed below). Thus, ITA holders often find themselves needing to make training choices without good or complete information about vendor quality, a concern that is magnified given the prevalence of “reverse referrals” from vendors. By the same token, local areas worry about the implications of poorly informed customer choice for their performance-accountability requirements.

### **Promoting State and Local Flexibility**

After conducting site visits to nearly 40 local workforce areas in 21 different states over the past five years, our field researchers come away struck by the enormous diversity in WIA service designs and delivery structures across the country. Thus, within the broad constraints of the legislation, local areas vary markedly in their governance and administrative structures, the way local boards operate, the procedures for designating One-Stop operators and the responsibilities with which the operator is charged, the way partners work together to staff various services, how adult and dislocated worker customers move through the service levels, how priority for target groups is established, whether or not training is emphasized, caps placed on ITA amounts, and so forth. To this extent, then, the goals of WIA to devolve authority seem clearly in evidence.

We also found that states and local areas are becoming more comfortable with this local flexibility. During our early rounds of site visits, shortly after WIA was first enacted, we sensed that state and local administrators would have liked more guidance from the level above them on how to interpret the legislation and how to shape their One-Stop systems. However, their search for greater direction largely seemed to stem from their uncertainty as to how to proceed and a fear that the systems they devised



would be found to be out of compliance for one reason or another. Over time, though, both states and local areas have come to realize that much of the flexibility and discretion offered by WIA—under DOL’s conscious execution—are real, and they have come to appreciate their ability to shape their systems to meet their local needs and priorities.

At the same time, local decision-makers could benefit from greater insights generated from empirical research on what works and could learn from findings gleaned from innovative examples. DOL has been moving to fill this information vacuum. For example, the Department has supported a peer information exchange of “promising practices” ([www.promising-practices.org](http://www.promising-practices.org)). To provide evidence on a firmer footing, Mathematica Policy Research, with SPR as a subcontractor, was recently funded by DOL to conduct an evaluation of alternative approaches to providing guidance to ITA holders to help them make training choices. These are the sorts of studies that can be of enormous help to program planners and case managers by providing them with some firm basis for deciding on the appropriate way of working with clients of different types. Additional research along these lines would doubtless be of help to workforce practitioners.

### **Promoting Performance Accountability**

In an effort to develop a world-class workforce development system, WIA places substantial emphasis on performance accountability and continuous improvement. Based on our data collection, we come away convinced that a focus on performance and accountability now permeates the workforce system. Thus, local areas endeavor to ensure that the services they provide are customer-focused and performance driven, and they recognize their obligation to continually monitor their outcomes with an eye to improving the services they provide.

WIA engenders these results largely through its performance-measurement system, including performance requirements for states and local areas and those for training providers. Overall, this system has achieved its objectives of focusing on performance for results. Moreover, the specific performance measures are recognized as being meaningful and conceptually appropriate. However, some specific operational aspects have not worked as well as planned.

First, the performance accountability system built into the eligible training provider (ETP) list has encountered substantial implementation challenges. The ETP

list represents a compilation of training providers that have been deemed by the state and local area to be “eligible” for purposes of providing training services to ITA holders. To establish continuing eligibility, training providers will generally need to meet performance thresholds established by the states on the outcomes attained by their previous cohorts of trainees. Note that providers submit an application for eligibility, and meet performance criteria, separately for every program for which they are seeking certification.

The vision embedded in WIA is that the ETP list will ensure system accountability, promote high performance, and serve as a valuable source of information that ITA holders (and others) can use to select programs of study. However, among the practical problems that have been encountered:<sup>5</sup>

- *High standards can limit choice.* High standards for ETP eligibility may serve to promote system accountability but also can severely limit customer choice to the extent that many vendors who apply for eligibility fail to achieve their performance requirements.
- *Vendors may decide not to seek eligibility.* More generally, many vendors—especially community colleges, an important source for low-cost, high-quality training—have openly expressed their dislike of the ETP application process and have announced their intention to refrain from applying for eligibility. To the extent they do so, consequences for customer choice could be devastating.
- *Data are sometimes of questionable reliability.* Data measurement issues are sometimes difficult to sort out and could lead to reported performance results for vendors that have limited reliability. For example, thorny definitional issues are not always completely resolved at the state level, leaving vendors some discretion in deciding (for example) what counts as a program, an enrollee, or a completer. Additionally, although most states rely extensively on Unemployment Insurance wage matching to measure employment outcomes for ETP purposes, some performance data—and in some states, virtually all data—are self-reported by vendors, with only weak verification requirements. Finally, regardless of how carefully performance data are measured, their utility for helping consumers make prudent training choices is

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<sup>5</sup> For a fuller discussion of these issues, see R. D’Amico and J. Salzman, *An Evaluation of the Individual Training Account/Eligible Training Provider Demonstration: Final Report*, which was prepared for DOL by Social Policy Research Associates under subcontract to Mathematica Policy Research.

not always clear, due to difference across vendors in local labor markets and participant pools.<sup>6</sup>

In recognition of these concerns, proposed legislation substantially revamps ETP requirements, by giving Governors broad discretion to establish eligibility guidelines for providers. However, the challenge comes in making ETP requirements less onerous without eviscerating vendors' performance accountability requirements or diluting the meaning of performance results such that customers lack a firm basis for making performance-driven training choices.

Another area relating to performance accountability that has met with implementation challenges has been the use of the 17 core elements of state and local-area performance mandated in the legislation and the way they have been operationalized. These measures generally relate to the postprogram employment outcomes attained by WIA program participants. States negotiate performance goals on each of these measures with the federal government, and the states in turns negotiate with their local areas. Those that fail to meet their performance goals can be subject to sanctions (e.g., the withholding of funds) under some circumstances.

The performance measures are generally viewed as reasonable at a conceptual level, and help direct the attention of workforce professionals on the critical employment and earnings goals that the legislation views as being most important. At the same time, respondents we spoke with voiced some concerns of a practical nature:

- *The measures are numerous and complex.* The 17 measures are viewed as too numerous, confusing and complex.
- *Definitions are vague and reliability is uncertain.* The definitions of some measures are seen as vague and are inconsistently measured across local areas. For example, the credentialing rate is defined with greatly varying degrees of rigor across the country. Similarly, the trigger for WIA registration (which causes a customer to be included in performance measurement calculations) varies from one local area to the next as well. For these reasons, comparisons of performance across local areas are seen as being less meaningful than might be desired.
- *The performance system promotes creaming or can otherwise undermine service quality.* The WIA performance-measurement system is seen as

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<sup>6</sup> The legislation makes mention that performance thresholds established for vendors should take into account extenuating factors of this sort, but, in actuality, this rarely occurs.

producing inducements for creaming (i.e., serving participants who are seen as more likely to achieve high outcomes on measured performance, rather than those who are viewed as needing services the most). More generally, local areas admit to expending effort “managing” the performance measurement system to make the numbers come out right, which to some degree undermines the importance of remaining customer focused.

- *Limited use for program management.* Because of the long time delays inherent in using Unemployment Insurance wage records to measure postprogram performance outcomes, a local area’s most current evidence of performance will typically be measured for cohorts of customers that were served a long while ago. To this extent, the core measures are of limited use as tools that local areas can use in managing their programs to promote continuous improvement.
- *Conflicting measures across programs hinder partnership development.* WIA core measures do not necessarily align well with performance measures for which partners are accountable, which acts as an impediment to collaboration and the coordination of services.

DOL’s Performance and Results Office (PRO) is working hard to address these concerns. For example, they are intending to phase in “common” performance measures across all ETA programs. These efforts should substantially simplify the performance accountability system and remove a major impediment to coordination among program partners.

### **Engaging the Private Sector**

Although the publicly funded workforce system has long recognized that businesses were an important partner in carrying out its labor exchange functions, recent developments have given business engagement a more central function. First, there has been increasing recognition that, to restore their credibility in the public’s eye, workforce programs need to be conducted in a more business-like fashion, with greater emphasis on efficiency and results. Second, major changes in labor markets created practical opportunities for strengthening the relationship between business and the public workforce development system. Most important, the gradual shift towards a fast-paced global economy, with consequent implications for labor turnover and skill shortages, made the links between economic development and workforce development very obvious.

The passage of WIA both reflected the increasing importance of business relationships with the workforce system and accelerated the trend. The Act maintained JTPA’s business majority on local workforce development policy boards, thus

upholding the recognition that business had an essential role to play in guiding and overseeing the operation of the workforce development system. Under DOL's direction, the legislation was also used as an opportunity to engage business both for strategic thinking about the direction of the workforce system and as a key user of workforce services.

Local workforce areas are embracing business engagement in principle, but in practice they are lagging in their ability to engage businesses seriously in strategic planning or serve them as customers with high-quality services. One challenge relates to involving businesses on local WIBs. Because business WIB members serve as volunteers and are typically very busy running their own companies, many local areas have difficulty getting business members to participate in a meaningful way.

The development of business services also typically involves a number of challenges. One challenge is building and maintaining a reputation among businesses for providing quality, value-added services. Another challenge is coordinating the business services provided by separate One-Stop partners, particularly WIA providers and the Employment Service. If services provided by these programs are not coordinated, businesses may receive duplicate calls, and poor quality services provided by one program will affect the reputation of the others. The need to develop and provide high quality services with limited staff and funding is another major challenge. Finally, although WIA emphasizes the importance of being business-focused, the legislation provides no special funding for developing business services; thus, local areas feel that funds for developing business services are limited.

The innovative local areas we highlight in a separate report we prepared as part of this evaluation (see *Business as Partner and Customer under WIA: A Study of Innovative Practices*) show that these challenges can be overcome with strong local leadership, commitment, and concerted effort. Seemingly successful strategies we identified with respect to engaging business in planning and serving business as a customer are:

- Engaging Business in Workforce Planning
  - Ensuring effective use of business WIB members' time, such as by holding short but effective Board meetings and choosing a few priority items for Board members to tackle.
  - Using mutual appointments to boards of partner organizations to improve trust and help define a common vision among potential partners.

- Developing sectoral initiatives where the needs of economic development and workforce development intersect very clearly.
- Engaging Business as a Customer
  - Developing an understanding of individual businesses’ needs and providing customized services to meet those needs, rather than relying on a predetermined menu of services.
  - Focusing on building and maintaining credibility among businesses, such as through successful “gateway” services that demonstrate the workforce system’s ability to deliver on what it promises.
  - Using single point-of-contact account representatives to provide business services, which allows staff to develop in-depth knowledge of their customers and increases accountability.
  - Focusing on developing strong, long-lasting relationships with businesses.
  - Targeting key groups of businesses for services, in recognition of the fact that resources for providing business services are limited.
  - Making sure that labor exchange services are effective. Unless these services are performed successfully, businesses will not return for additional services.
  - Ensuring good coordination between different entities providing business services to ensure consistently high levels of quality.
  - Making sure that business services and job seeker programs are integrated.
  - Ensuring that staff have a “whatever it takes” attitude. Responsive, creative staff who are willing to go the extra mile for employers are critical to effective business services.

Despite the successes that many local areas have realized by adopting these principles, our respondents suggested additional system-wide changes that would further foster strong business engagement. These include:

- Creating performance measures directly tied to the provision of business services.
- Providing funding especially earmarked for business services, either through the creation of a separate funding stream or a competitive pool of seed money to support the development of innovative business services or business involvement practices.
- Providing assistance with marketing and developing services, possibly including the creation of a national “brand” for One-Stop services that would be recognizable around the country.

- Providing additional guidance and clarification regarding what business services should look like and how they should be delivered.

### **Improving Youth Programs**

The evaluation team paid relatively little attention to youth programs and the issues associated with their implementation and operation. However, during the initial rounds of site visits, field researchers elicited basic information about the progress that local areas were making in moving towards WIA's new eligibility guidelines and the legislation's provisions for comprehensive year-round services for youth drawing on ten required program elements.

At the time of our earliest site visits, we found that states and local areas were lagging badly behind in their implementation of youth programming, partly because of the time delays inherent in needing to appoint a Youth Council and competitively select service providers. However, substantial progress had been made eighteen months later. Thus, every local area we studied during program year 2001 had all ten required program elements in place and few seemed to be having difficulty expending 30% of their youth funds on out-of-school youth.

However, the transition to a WIA service design was difficult. Particularly challenging was the need to move away from a large-scale stand-alone summer youth program and replace it with comprehensive youth services. Associated with this were the following issues:

- *Dealing with the absence of a summer youth program.* Respondents noted that community influentials were strongly concerned about the demise of stand-alone youth programming. Local areas also needed to deal with the barrage of media coverage about the termination of the program, especially given that there was little mention made of the new program of comprehensive year-round services under WIA.
- *Streamlining the eligibility determination process.* Many local areas found that WIA's eligibility requirements, particularly the absence of presumptive eligibility for recipients of free and reduced school lunches, posed a substantial administrative burden.
- *Creating a comprehensive whole out of the ten required program elements.* Local areas made significant progress in developing all ten service elements. However, turning them into a comprehensive youth-development service strategy proved challenging. Particularly difficult was developing strong instances of program elements that were not well developed under JTPA, such as mentoring, leadership development, and long-term follow-up services.

- *Attracting new service providers.* Some local areas struggled with finding and recruiting a sufficient number of high-quality service providers that could adequately cover the ten required service elements.
- *Accepting the trade-off between quality and volume.* Local sites were accustomed to serving large numbers of youth in the JTPA summer-youth program. The move to a comprehensive youth services model meant accepting the reality that far fewer youth could be served than previously.
- *Establishing linkages with the One-Stop System.* Much youth programming was completely divorced from the One-Stop system. Yet some youth, particularly older youth, could benefit from exposure to a system that could provide life-long job search and career advancement opportunities.

## CONCLUSIONS

When WIA was enacted, it was typically described as a major overhaul of the nation's publicly-funded workforce development system. Key objectives included streamlining services, developing easy access to an array of workforce services for the universal customer, and devolving authority to states and local areas under the condition that they would be held accountable for results.

As we have pointed out in this chapter and the Briefing Papers to follow, some implementation challenges have emerged as states and local areas have worked to operationalize this vision, and additional work remains to be accomplished. This can scarcely be a surprise given the magnitude of the changes that WIA called for. Thus, building strong partnerships in a way that makes the effective coordination or integration of services possible is years in the making. Similarly, establishing high-quality information tools for customers and performance management systems for program operators that are aligned with the One-Stop vision take extraordinary investments of resources that build incrementally from best-practice examples and technological and other developments. Clearly, full realization of these goals will inevitably take time to achieve. Many of the proposed changes associated with WIA reauthorization should help pave the way.

Nonetheless, based on a review of the implementation experience over a five-year period using multiple data sources, we have found that extraordinary progress has been made to date. Among the most remarkable changes is the emergence of a One-Stop infrastructure offering the universal customer not only an extensive, nationwide network of physical access points but also remote access to a wide array of workforce-related resources and tools. What makes this infrastructure so impressive from the



standpoint of promoting customer access is that it represents a single point of entry to a diverse set of separately-funded employment and training services, including those provided by Wagner-Peyser programs, WIA services, and Adult Education and Literacy programs, among others. To have made this structure possible, partners have needed to work together in ways that would have been largely unheard of even a decade ago.

Additional key tenets underlying the legislation—for example, customer choice, state and local flexibility, and streamlining services—seem well in evidence. Thus, workforce professionals can take justifiable pride in their accomplishments to date, while girding themselves for the additional work that lies ahead.

## **OVERVIEW OF THE BRIEFING PAPERS**

The broad findings and implications for WIA implementation that have been discussed above have been drawn from the series of reports and papers prepared as part of the national *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act*. Many of these were written as short, focused Briefing Papers, each on a selected topic of interest. These Briefing Papers have been assembled in the chapters to follow. They were prepared as stand-alone documents and are meant to be read as such.

In reading the papers, note that they were prepared to inform DOL about the ongoing evolution of WIA implementation and were therefore submitted to DOL on a flow basis from mid-2002 to mid-2004. They thus represent a snapshot of the workforce system at the time of the data collection (the date the paper was prepared is noted in parentheses). Because WIA was enacted in 1998, and was expected to be implemented by the summer of 2000, some of these papers thus reflect observations gleaned from data collection that occurred several years ago, or only a year or two after WIA's full implementation was to occur. Doubtless additional systemwide progress has been made since then, and some of the practices we describe as occurring in specific States or local areas might no longer apply. However, the implementation challenges and range of variation that we describe with respect to program practices doubtless remain valid.

Below we provide a brief introduction to each paper. With the exception of the first, the papers are listed in approximate chronological order.

1. *A Comparison of JTPA and WIA Clients and Services* (March 2003). This paper uses the WIA and JTPA client-level reporting systems to chart changes from PY 98

(JTPA) to PY 2001 (WIA) in the characteristics of customers who were served in the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs, and the services they received. For the adult program, the results show that WIA was associated with modest changes in client characteristics (e.g., towards less of an exclusive focus on those who are low income) and somewhat shorter spells of participation on average; these changes are as one would expect given WIA's broader service emphasis. In the youth program, WIA was much more likely to be serving youth who are still attending school than was the case in JTPA's Title II-C program, and the duration of WIA youth services was much more variable than was the case under JTPA, with many very short spells (which occur primarily during the summer months) but also many very long spells. Changes in clients and services in the dislocated worker program were very modest.

2. *Partnership Building under WIA* (April 2002). This paper points to the substantial progress that was made in building strong partnerships among WIA's mandated partners. Tangible benefits that have resulted included faster action on referrals and improved communication among partners that improved the efficiency and responsiveness of services. Challenges included partners' existing leases and the difficulty in finding appropriate new space to accommodate co-location, perceived statutory constraints or conflicting program goals, and the fact that each partner has its own performance and reporting requirements.
3. *MIS and Oversight* (April 2002). Strong management information systems, in evidence in some states, can substantially enhance service delivery and greatly facilitate the ability of One-Stop partners to work together. However, this paper reports that, despite some bright spots, problems with existing state management information systems were widespread and were a subject of frequent complaints by local-area staff, while efforts to develop new, comprehensive systems met with long delays and high costs.
4. *Performance Accountability and Capacity Building* (April 2002). This paper reviews the case-study sites' experience under WIA's performance system. It explores the process by which performance targets were negotiated, ranging from "equitable and good," according to some areas' reports, to "arbitrary" according to others. The measures themselves were described by respondents as being generally sensible, useful, and in line with program goals, and the performance system as a whole seemed to be successful in promoting accountability and continuous improvement. However, problems or concerns were also voiced, such as vague definitions (e.g., the point of WIA registration, the credentialing rate), challenges the performance measurement system posed for partnership-development and meeting the needs of the hardest-to-serve, and—given the time delays inherent in the reliance on Unemployment Insurance wage matching—the limited utility of the measures as a program management tool. The paper also notes the efforts that states and local areas were making to promote continuous improvement through capacity building.

5. *Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers* (April 2002). This paper reports that local areas are substantially responsive to customers' individual needs and that customer choice was widely in evidence. Start-up problems and initial confusion regarding WIA's focus limited the use of training in WIA's first year; however, local areas retained a strong interest in supporting training and gave it renewed emphasis subsequently. ITAs were widely embraced, though some areas recognized that customized training and contract training have an appropriate place. Intensive services appears to be the service level that was the most ill-defined; the richness of service offerings provided at this tier varied markedly from one local area to the next. Local areas varied as well in their policies regarding when customers should be registered in WIA and how they defined the various service levels.
6. *Implementation Challenges in WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Services* (December 2002). Building on the above findings, this paper notes the challenges that local areas faced in balancing some of WIA's key tenets. Thus, customer choice must be balanced with the need to ensure performance accountability and promote efficiency; resources devoted to developing self-services tools must be balanced with the need to adequately fund training services for those who are not employable with existing skills; and serving the universal customer must be balanced with the need to identify and serve priority target groups. Evidence suggests that local areas balanced these sometimes conflicting considerations in different ways. Thus, local areas varied in the emphasis they gave to training services, the caps they imposed on ITA amounts, and the types of customers they enrolled for services. Additional implementation challenges included developing an integrated MIS, funding and staffing One-Stop centers, tracking self-service usage, and developing the ETP list and Consumer Report System.
7. *WIA Youth Services* (May 2002). This paper reports that local areas made substantial progress in reshaping youth services in conformance with WIA. Thus, most areas offered all ten required service elements, though developing strong services in areas not traditionally provided under JTPA was difficult. Among the implementation challenges the paper notes were documenting youth eligibility under the WIA guidelines, attracting new service providers, creating comprehensive service regimens drawing on the ten required elements, and developing strong linkages between youth services and the One-Stop system.
8. *School-to-Work and its Linkages with WIA* (May 2002). This paper was prepared with funds contributed by the former National School-to-Work Office and examines the influence that school-to-work (STW) principles, practices, and service-delivery structures had on emerging WIA youth services, and vice versa. In general, there was substantial overlap between STW and workforce board (or Youth Council) planning bodies. Evidence of linkages with respect to service design and delivery were less plentiful, though there were some isolated instances of co-funded or coordinated services.

9. *WIA Governance* (May 2002). This paper looks at the composition and operation of state and local workforce boards and state-local relationships. Among its findings, the paper points to mixed success in successfully engaging business in strategic planning and notes that the large size of some boards made them unwieldy. In general, state and local five-year plans were not viewed as valuable documents to guide program planning.
10. *The One-Stop Infrastructure: Vision and Implementation* (May 2003). This paper examines the One-Stop infrastructure that has been established, including how many and where comprehensive centers and other access points were located, who was designated as the One-Stop operator, and how core services were funded and staffed. The paper points to the challenges in fully integrating program services given separate funding streams, but notes ample evidence of coordination and collaboration, the substantial reach of physical access points, and the broad array of core services available in a user-friendly fashion.
11. *Serving the Homeless through the One-Stop System: A Case Study* (June 2004). One challenge frequently mentioned is meeting the needs of special customer groups in the context of a workforce system that also promotes universal access and performance accountability. This paper, and the two that follow, examine innovative strategies that some local areas were using to target hard-to-serve groups. This paper examines innovative efforts that three local areas were making in providing workforce services for the homeless. It points to effective strategies relating to outreach and recruitment, service design and delivery, and partnership development.
12. *Serving Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers through the One-Stop System: A Case Study* (June 2004). Also exploring innovative strategies for serving special target groups, this paper examines innovative efforts that three local areas were making in serving migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the One-Stop context.
13. *Serving Limited-English Speakers through the One-Stop System: A Case Study* (June 2004). Recognizing that those who have limited-English proficiency are an important and growing service population, this paper examines innovative efforts that four local areas were making in serving this population.

In addition to these Briefing Papers, the evaluation team prepared additional reports that are available separately. These are:

- *State Implementation Profiles for Six Early Implementing States Under WIA* (September 2000). This report provides brief profiles of the six early implementation states that the research team visited as part of the evaluation's first round of site visits.
- *A Report on Early State and Local Progress Towards WIA Implementation* (February 2001). This report, in eight chapters, represents a cross-site

synthesis of the major findings gleaned from the first round of site visits to nine local workforce areas in six early-implementing states.

- The *Workforce System Information and Evaluation (WSIE) Reports: Volumes I to VI* (March 2000 through November 2000). These reports represent a tabulation of WIA implementation progress at six discrete points in time, using a checklist developed jointly by SPR and representatives from DOL's National and Regional Offices.
- *A Report on the WIA Implementation Readiness Guide* (March 2001). As the *WSIE Reports* described above, this report documents nationwide implementation progress using the WIA Implementation Readiness Guide developed by DOL.
- *Business as Partner and Customer under WIA: A Study of Innovative Practices* (June 2004). This report was prepared after site visits to nine local workforce areas that were nominated by DOL Regional Offices and others as having innovative strategies for engaging the business community. These practices—with respect to engaging businesses on workforce Boards, developing partnerships between businesses and workforce systems, and serving businesses as a customer—are highlighted in this report.

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## II. A COMPARISON OF JTPA AND WIA CLIENTS AND SERVICES

This briefing paper is one of a series developed as part of the *National Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates. As part of the evaluation, team members have engaged in various data collection and analysis activities, including site visits to 14 states and 23 local workforce investment areas conducted over an 18-month period, and the analysis of data from a national tracking system of states' progress towards WIA implementation. From these activities, we have produced a series of reports, including a series of Briefing Papers on various aspects of WIA implementation and operations (a complete list of papers and reports prepared as part of the evaluation is included in the Appendix).

In this briefing paper, we continue the examination of the WIA implementation experience by comparing data from the JTPA and WIA client-level reporting systems to profile changes in who is being served, and with what services, in the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. A summary of our major findings is included in the paper's concluding section.

### BACKGROUND

WIA represents an important restructuring of the nation's approach to delivering federally-funded workforce services, and was designed with several key tenets in mind:

- *Streamlining services through integration.* WIA requires the establishment of a One-Stop delivery system, to streamline services, promote greater system efficiency, and make access to an array of services easier for customers.
- *Empowering individuals.* WIA aims to allow customers meaningful choices about when and how they receive services. It seeks to achieve this goal by providing for self-access services and by transforming the delivery of training services to adults and dislocated workers through the use of Individual Training Accounts, or ITAs.
- *Universal access.* Through the One-Stop system, every adult will have access to employment-related services, including Wagner-Peyser services and core WIA services. These core services will be supplemented with intensive and training services, which can be provided to adults and dislocated workers who cannot obtain suitable employment or achieve self-sufficiency otherwise.

- *Improved youth programs.* To improve youth services, WIA calls for the establishment of a Youth Council, which is to be responsible for developing plans for, and coordinating, youth activities. WIA also calls on states and local areas to enhance the effectiveness of youth services by requiring comprehensive service strategies undergirded by a youth development framework.
- *State and local flexibility.* WIA is intended to substantially enhance state and local flexibility in designing and operating workforce development programs.

With these general principles as a backdrop, WIA has reshaped the rules regarding program eligibility and substantially recast service design and delivery strategies, compared to the rules that applied under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). These major differences are summarized in Exhibit 1 (for the adult program), Exhibit 2 (for the dislocated worker program), and Exhibit 3 (for the youth program).

Turning to Exhibit 1 first, we see changes in eligibility and targeting rules that could lead to potentially profound changes in who actually receives program services. JTPA's Title II-A (adult) program incorporated rules that largely restricted program eligibility to adults who were economically disadvantaged, and further required that 65% of them should be in hard-to-serve target categories. In so doing, it aimed to ensure that job training dollars would be focused on those who were deemed to be most in need of program services. By contrast, WIA opens program services—at least core services—to all adults, and thereby furthers the goal of promoting a seamless integration of services between those provided with Wagner-Peyser and WIA funds. Recognizing, though, that program services need to be carefully husbanded, WIA stipulates that priority for adult intensive and training services should be given to those who are low income, and, further, that only those with a demonstrable need for services at a higher tier should be able to access them. WIA thus embodies a balance between promoting universal access while, at the same time, not forsaking the needs of JTPA's traditional clientele. How far the pendulum swings towards one end of this continuum rather than the other remains an empirical question, but, in comparison to JTPA, certainly one can expect to see at least some shifting away from those who are low income or with substantial barriers to employment.

In keeping with their respective eligibility rules, WIA and JTPA differ profoundly as well in the way that program services are structured. With a focus on serving those who are economically disadvantaged with substantial barriers to employment, JTPA emphasized that program services should entail substantial skill building activities that



stand the chance of redressing employment deficiencies. Accordingly, this program emphasized direct training services and, further, required that basic skills training or occupational skills training should be provided where an objective assessment suggested that those services were appropriate and needed. In this sense, JTPA Title II-A was presumptively a training program, and job search assistance was discouraged as a stand-alone activity. WIA, by contrast, with its effort to make services available to the universal customer, starts customers off with light-touch core services available to everyone. Job search and placement assistance are acceptable services as a first recourse, and only those who are deemed unable to meet their employment objectives through core services should be given access to higher-cost intensive and training services.

Differences are much more modest overall in the dislocated worker program. For example, eligibility rules for this program are quite similar in both JTPA's Title III and WIA. However, in an important difference, WIA classifies displaced homemakers as eligible, while JTPA does so only if they are so defined by the state. By contrast, JTPA defines eligibility as including the long-term unemployed with limited opportunities for reemployment, while WIA does not. The array of services in the two programs is also largely similar. Thus, unlike in the JTPA adult program, the JTPA dislocated worker program authorized local areas to provide basic readjustment services, and, to this degree, parallels to WIA core services seem clear.

Finally, differences between the JTPA and WIA youth programs are modest in terms of who is targeted for services, but are quite different with respect to the services that are emphasized. In both JTPA and WIA, eligibility for program services is largely restricted to those who are low income, and WIA and the JTPA Title II-C (year-round) programs also make clear that youth with barriers to success should be targeted for services. However, there is some difference in how these provisions are operationalized. Thus, demonstrating low income status was somewhat easier in JTPA, in that participation in a free-meals program under the National School Lunch Act was taken as evidence of low-income status, while no such allowance is permitted in WIA. Additionally, in WIA *all* enrolled youth must have at least one from a list of barriers that make them hard to serve, while JTPA Title II-C adopts the looser requirement that 65% of enrollees have such a barrier (moreover, JTPA's Title II-B summer program, which accounted for almost 90% of the total youth JTPA appropriation in PY 98, had

**Exhibit 1: Adult Program  
Side-by-Side WIA and JTPA Comparison Regarding Eligibility and Services**

	<b>WIA</b>	<b>JTPA (Title II-A)</b>
Eligibility and Targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All adults (ages 18 and over) are eligible for core services.</li> <li>• Intensive and, then, training services are available to those who have had at least one service at a lower tier and are deemed unable to meet their employment goals without services at the higher tier.</li> <li>• Priority for intensive and training services must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals, in local areas where funds are limited.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility generally restricted to economically disadvantaged adults (ages 22 or older)</li> <li>• 65% must be in specified “hard-to-serve” categories (e.g., basic skills deficient, dropouts, welfare recipients, offenders, homeless, those with disabilities)</li> <li>• 10% need not be economically disadvantaged, but they must still be in a “hard-to-serve” category or be a displaced homemaker, veteran, or alcoholic or addict</li> </ul>
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers must receive at least one core services before receiving intensive services, and at least one intensive service before receiving training services.</li> <li>• Core services consist of, among other things:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outreach, intake, and orientation to services</li> <li>○ Job search and placement assistance, including career counseling where appropriate</li> <li>○ Providing labor market information (e.g. job vacancy listings, occs and skills in demand, etc.)</li> <li>○ Providing performance &amp; cost info on training providers</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Intensive services consist of, among other things:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Comprehensive and specialized assessments, to identify employment goals and barriers</li> <li>○ Developing the individual employment plan</li> <li>○ Group &amp; individual counseling and career planning</li> <li>○ Short-term prevocational services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Training services consist of, among other things:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Occupational skills training</li> <li>○ On-the-job training</li> <li>○ Skill upgrading and retraining</li> <li>○ Entrepreneurial training</li> <li>○ Job readiness training</li> <li>○ Adult education and literacy services provided in combination with other training services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Training services should be provided through Individual Training Accounts, except for on-the job training and customized training, training programs of demonstrated effectiveness for those with multiple barriers, or if there are too few eligible training providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services shall include an objective assessment of skill levels and service needs</li> <li>• Basic skills training, occupational skills training, and supportive services should be provided, either directly or through referral, where the assessment indicates they are appropriate.</li> <li>• Authorized direct training services include, among others:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Basic skills training and GED training</li> <li>○ On-the-job training and customized training</li> <li>○ Assessment, counseling and case management</li> <li>○ Work experience</li> <li>○ Skill upgrading and retraining</li> <li>○ Bilingual training</li> <li>○ Entrepreneurial training</li> <li>○ Vocational exploration</li> <li>○ Training to develop appropriate work habits</li> <li>○ Preapprenticeship programs</li> <li>○ On-site industry-specific training</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Authorized training-related and supportive services include, among others:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Job search assistance and outreach</li> <li>○ Supportive services and needs-based payments</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Work experience, job search assistance, job search skills training, and job club activities are to be accompanied by basic and/or occupational skills training, unless the latter services are not appropriate and the former are not available through the Employment Service</li> <li>• Services to older individuals (ages 55 and older) can be separately provided as part of Section 204(d)</li> </ul>

**Exhibit 2: Dislocated Worker Program  
Side-by-Side WIA and JTPA Comparison Regarding Eligibility and Services**

	<b>WIA</b>	<b>JTPA (Title III)</b>
Eligibility and Targeting	<p>A dislocated workers is defined to include an individual who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has been terminated or laid off (or received notice), has demonstrated a strong attachment to the workforce, and is unlikely to return to their previous industry or occupation</li> <li>• has been terminated or laid off (or received notice) as a result of any actual or impending permanent closure of a plant or facility or due to a substantial layoff</li> <li>• was self-employed (including as a farmer or rancher) but is now unemployed as a result of general economic conditions or because of a natural disaster</li> <li>• is a displaced homemaker</li> </ul>	<p>Eligibility provisions are very similar to those established in WIA, except that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unlike in WIA, displaced homemakers are not recognized as “eligible dislocated workers” (though they can be served if the State so authorizes)</li> <li>• JTPA adds a category of eligible dislocated workers not found in WIA, consisting of individuals who are long-term unemployed with limited opportunities for employment or reemployment in the same or similar occupations, including older individuals who may face employment difficulty by reason of their age</li> </ul>
Services	<p>Services to be provided to dislocated workers are the same as are authorized in the WIA adult program, except that statewide rapid response activities are also authorized.</p>	<p>Services may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rapid response assistance, including emergency assistance and information about program services on-site</li> <li>• Basic readjustment services, including providing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Outreach and intake activities</li> <li>○ Early readjustment assistance</li> <li>○ Job or career counseling and assessment</li> <li>○ Orientation</li> <li>○ Labor market information</li> <li>○ Job clubs, job search, and job development assistance</li> <li>○ Prelayoff assistance</li> <li>○ Relocation assistance</li> <li>○ Supportive services</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Retraining services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Classroom training</li> <li>○ Occupational skills training</li> <li>○ On-the-job training</li> <li>○ Basic and remedial education</li> <li>○ Literacy and English for non-English speakers</li> <li>○ Entrepreneurial training</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Needs-related payments</li> </ul>

**Exhibit 3: Youth Program  
Side-by-Side WIA and JTPA Comparison Regarding Eligibility and Services**

	<u>WIA</u>	<u>JTPA (Title II-B &amp; C)</u>
Eligibility and Targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must be ages 14-21, low income, and meet at least one of six specified barriers to success, including:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deficient in basic literacy skills</li> <li>○ A school dropout</li> <li>○ Homeless, a runaway, or a foster child</li> <li>○ Pregnant or a parent</li> <li>○ An offender</li> <li>○ An individual who otherwise requires additional assistance</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5% may be non-low income if they have one from a specified list of barriers to success (quite similar, but not identical to, the list of barriers presented above)</li> <li>• At least 30% of funds in each local area must be spent on out-of-school youth</li> </ul>	<p>Funding is provided in two separate titles, II-B (the summer program) and II-C (the year-round program).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eligibility for the II-B program is restricted to those who are ages 14-21 and are economically disadvantaged</li> <li>• Eligibility for the II-C program is defined to include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Those ages 16-21 (under some circumstances those ages 14-21) and are economically disadvantaged (though 10% may be non-low income, so long as they have another barrier)</li> <li>○ 65% or more must have one from a list of specified barriers, including being basic skills deficient, pregnant or parenting, school dropouts, with a disability, homeless or run-away, offenders, or another barrier approved by the Governor</li> <li>○ At least 50% of participants in each local area must be out-of-school youth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Services	<p>Each of the following ten services are authorized and must be available in the local area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tutoring, study skills training, and dropout prevention</li> <li>• Alternative secondary school services</li> <li>• Summer employment linked to academic and occupational learning</li> <li>• Paid and unpaid work experiences, including job shadowing</li> <li>• Occupational skills training</li> <li>• Leadership development opportunities, including community service</li> <li>• Supportive services</li> <li>• Adult mentorship</li> <li>• Comprehensive guidance and counseling</li> <li>• Follow-up services, which must be provided to all youth participants in some form for a minimum of 12 months</li> </ul>	<p>Funding is provided in two separate titles, II-B (the summer program) and II-C (the year-round program).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funds for Title II-B may be used for basic and remedial education, institutional and on-the-job training, work experience, employment counseling, occupational training, preparation for work, job search assistance and other appropriate activities</li> <li>• Funds for Title II-C               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Must include basic skills training, occupational skills training, and preemployment and work maturity skills training, either directly or through referral, where the assessment indicates they are appropriate.</li> <li>○ May include direct training services, such as basic skills training or GED preparation, on-the-job training or customized training, assessment and counseling, work experience, skill upgrading, bilingual training, vocational exploration, training to develop appropriate work habits, tutoring and study skills training, alternative high school services, mentoring, instruction leading to high school completion, limited internships in the private sector, and school-to-work transition services, among others</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

no such provision whatever). Thus, WIA's provisions to target those with barriers seem somewhat tighter. Similarly, both programs have provisions for targeting out-of-school youth, though they do so in a way that might make out-of-school youth more prevalent in JTPA's Title II-C than in WIA—WIA requires that at least 30% of youth funds in each local area be spent on out-of-school youth, while JTPA Title II-C required that 50% of enrollees in each area be out-of-school youth. Finally, in one additional difference, JTPA's Title II-C restricts enrollment to those ages 16-21 unless the local area extends eligibility to those as young as 14; by contrast, WIA extends eligibility to 14-21 year olds as a matter of course (so long as the youth also meet the low income and other guidelines). Thus, though the differences are small, there might be a modest shift in WIA towards serving younger youth and those with more definable barriers to employment, and possibly away from serving out-of-school youth.

Although there might thus be modest differences in the characteristics of youth participants, differences in the services that youth receive are likely to be pronounced. On the one hand, the lists of allowable activities in WIA and JTPA are quite similar, in that both programs authorize basic skills training and occupational skills training, work experience, mentorships, and guidance and counseling, among other things. However, given that the bulk of youth funds in JTPA were expended to provide youth with summer jobs (as part of the JTPA Title II-B program), and that summer jobs are not intended to be a stand-alone program element in WIA, differences in the services that youth actually receive should be substantial.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from these differences in eligibility rules and allowable services, another notable difference between JTPA and WIA across the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs is in the way performance measures are applied, and this difference too might give rise to changes in who is enrolled and the services they receive. Both JTPA and WIA have outcome-based performance measures as a way of promoting continuous improvement, and the measures themselves are broadly similar. However, JTPA made widespread use of a modeling approach to setting required performance levels for local areas that assigned lower levels to areas serving a harder-to-serve clientele. In this way, it aimed to reduce incentives for "creaming;" i.e., the proclivity of local areas to enroll easier to serve individuals with the expectation that their performance outcomes would be more favorable. By contrast, WIA sets performance levels on

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<sup>1</sup> Even in Title II-B, a full range of youth activities were allowable. Moreover, DOL encouraged services beyond summer jobs alone, such as by emphasizing the provision of basic educational skills and academic enrichment as a major component of summer jobs (see, for example, *Training and Employment Guidance Letter 4-97*). However, a study conducted by SPR for DOL suggests that summer jobs, with at best very modest academic enrichment components, continued to predominate (see *An Evaluation of the Educational Component of the Summer Youth Employment and Training Program*, 1998).

the basis of negotiations between the DOL regional offices, states, and local areas. Although the negotiated levels are expected to take into account customer characteristics, there are no explicit mechanisms for doing so, leading some to claim that creaming may be more widespread than previously.<sup>2</sup>

## **OBJECTIVES, METHODOLOGY, AND LIMITATIONS**

The above discussion points to some substantial differences between JTPA and WIA in who is targeted for services and what services are authorized or emphasized. The objective of this Briefing Paper is to document the extent to which these differences have in fact led to concrete changes in the characteristics of program enrollees and the services they are provided.

We do so by accessing and comparing data from the JTPA and WIA client-level reporting systems. Both the JTPA and WIA data systems are exiter based, in that each year's data file includes records on all those who exited the program during that year, regardless of when they enrolled. For JTPA, this reporting system is the Standardized Program Information Report (SPIR), the required vehicle through which states and service delivery areas were to report the characteristics, services, and outcomes of their program exiters. The SPIR for PY 98 was chosen for the analyses in this paper, because this represents the last full program year in which JTPA was operating nationwide. Results from the PY 98 SPIR are then contrasted with data drawn from WIA's mandatory client-level reporting system, the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD), which replaced the SPIR. PY 2001 WIASRD data have been chosen for this study, because PY 2001 represents the most recent year for which national WIASRD data are currently available.<sup>3</sup>

In presenting and interpreting the results that follow, we must note several caveats and cautions. First, as noted, both the SPIR and WIASRD are exiter-based systems, in that they include records for those who exited during the program year, regardless of when they enrolled. This poses a special problem in using the PY 2001 WIASRD, because of the presence of JTPA

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<sup>2</sup> See our earlier Briefing Paper for more on this topic, *Performance Accountability and Capacity Building* (April 2002).

<sup>3</sup> WIA was enacted in 1998 and was to be phased in nationwide with the start of PY 2000. However, PY 99 was designated as a transition year, in that some states had the option of beginning WIA operations at the start of, or sometime during, this program year. Thus, PY 99 data would provide a clear picture of neither JTPA nor WIA operations. Similarly, WIA was just being phased in during PY 2000, and data for this year thus would not represent WIA as a fully functioning and mature system. Moreover, a substantial number of PY 2000 exiters were JTPA carry-overs (i.e., individuals who exited during PY 2000, but who were enrolled prior to the start of WIA implementation, and, hence, when JTPA rules were still in effect). Thus, we choose PY 98 (for JTPA) and PY 01 (for WIA) for comparison purposes.

carry-overs, defined to be those included in the PY 2001 WIASRD who enrolled prior to the start of WIA. Thus, in using the PY 2001 WIASRD, we must make a distinction between WIA registrants (i.e., defined to be PY 2001 exiters who registered after the start of WIA implementation—generally, July 1, 2000—and, hence, who were enrolled and served under WIA guidelines) and JTPA carry-overs (i.e., those who exited in PY 2001 but who enrolled, and thus likely had their service plan developed, while JTPA was still in operation—i.e., in most states, those who enrolled before July 1, 2000) .<sup>4</sup> As a consequence, those we classify as WIA registrants will include a slightly lower proportion of very long-term participants than might be the case if the full complement of exiters were being considered.<sup>5</sup>

Among additional cautions, we note that both the SPIR and WIASRD record information only for those who are considered JTPA/WIA registrants. This limitation is especially important in interpreting data for WIA, because this program explicitly allows adult and dislocated-worker funds to be used to serve those who access WIA self-services or informational services (i.e., services requiring minimal staff involvement), which do not require WIA registration. Thus, potentially a substantial number of persons served with WIA funds would not be recorded as registrants and hence would not appear in the tabulations to follow.

Related to this, the guidelines regarding what constitutes self-services vs. services requiring WIA registration (i.e., staff-assisted core services, intensive services, or training services) vary markedly from one local area to the next, as we discussed in an earlier Briefing Paper.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as we pointed out, some local areas deliberately defer the point of WIA registration as long as possible, to limit who becomes a registrant, and, hence, who is subject to WIA's performance measurement system. Moreover, in some local areas most staff-assisted core services, and

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<sup>4</sup> For purposes of these tabulations, those in the PY 01 WIASRD who enrolled prior to July 1, 2000 are considered to be JTPA carry-overs, except those who enrolled in Utah, Vermont, Kentucky, Texas, Indiana, and Florida, the so-called WIA early implementing states. As early implementers, these states began operating under WIA guidelines prior to July 1, 2000. In keeping with information posted on the ETA website during the fall of 1999, dates of WIA implementation are taken to be July 1, 1999 for Vermont; October 1, 1999 for Florida, Utah, and Kentucky; January 1, 2000 for Texas; and April 1, 2000 for Indiana. Thus, those enrolled before these dates in these states are taken to be carry-overs, while the date of July 1, 2000 was used in all other states.

<sup>5</sup> As we will shortly show, JTPA carry-overs represent approximately 10% of all PY 2001 exiters, with the exact figure somewhat higher in the dislocated worker program and lower in the adult program. Thus, the extent of any bias should not be large.

<sup>6</sup> See our earlier Briefing Paper, *Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers* (April 2002), and findings we reported as part of a different study, *The Evaluation of the Individual Training Account and Eligible Training Provider Demonstration: Final Report* (December 2002).

sometimes even many intensive services, are funded by Wagner-Peyser, further limiting who is classified as a WIA registrant for purposes of being recorded in the WIASRD.

This latter point draws attention to the larger consideration that, as One-Stop system building has advanced considerably, looking at the characteristics of WIA registrants alone becomes increasingly misleading, in that ignores the fact that many individuals who seek services from the One-Stop system could be enrolled and served by one of the partner programs. For example, responsibility for providing basic skills training, which was emphasized as part of the JTPA adult program, might—in a One-Stop system—be carried out predominantly by Adult Education programs, one of the required One-Stop partners. Thus, a comparison of SPIR and WIASRD data might show that basic skills training is much less common than it once was, but this finding may merely reflect the fact that such trainees are less likely to be served in WIA than JTPA, and not that the training itself is any less likely to occur. The more general point is that to fully evaluate services being provided in a One-Stop *system* one is best served by looking at the system as a whole rather than any one partner in isolation.

A substantial additional limitation in making comparisons across JTPA and WIA youth programs is that JTPA's SPIR system does not include information on those who were enrolled in the Title II-B (summer) program, which accounted for nearly 90% of JTPA youth expenditures. Thus, we are able to provide a comparison between WIA youth and JTPA Title II-C youth only.

Finally, the figures we report could to some degree lead to the mistaken impression that change has occurred, simply as an artifact of measurement. For example, although we recode data items to be as comparable as possible in the SPIR and WIASRD systems, the specific definitions of similar items in each system differ to some degree. For example, both the SPIR and the WIASRD provide an indication of whether youth participants are basic skills deficient; both systems take test scores at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level (scores of 8.9 or below) as evidence of a skill deficiency, but the WIASRD additionally allows a youth to be given this designation if, in the judgement of the local area, the individual is unable to compute, read, or write “at a level necessary to function on a job, in the individual's family or in society.” Similarly, mis-reporting doubtless occurs in each data system to an unknown, and perhaps not constant, degree. For example, the incidence of concurrent participation, when it occurs, might be more likely to be recorded in the WIASRD than it would in the SPIR, because of WIA's great emphasis on One-Stop partnerships. Where such nuances occur, we try to point them out as factors that might lead to an overstatement (or understatement) of the degree of actual change.



## A COMPARISON OF DATA FOR THE ADULT PROGRAM

We these cautions in mind, we start off our comparisons with Table 1, which presents tabulations of the characteristics of program exiters for the WIA and JTPA adult programs (including, in JTPA, those served under Section 204d, the older worker program).<sup>7</sup> This table, and others to follow, shows results from the PY 98 SPIR in the first column. The remaining columns are all based on data from the PY 01 WIASRD. These show, first, PY 01 data for the JTPA carry-overs. The final four columns present results for WIA registrants (i.e., those in the PY 01 WIASRD who registered after WIA took effect), first, for the total of all WIA registrants, and, next, separately for those who received only staff-assisted core services, intensive services but no training, and training services.<sup>8</sup> The figures for JTPA carry-overs are presented for reference, but are typically not interpreted in the text to follow. Thus, our comparisons are typically of the PY 98 JTPA SPIR results with data for PY 01 WIA registrants.

Looking at the top row of the table, the PY 2001 WIASRD (including JTPA carry-overs) shows a slight increase from JTPA in the number of persons who exited, which could represent a shift towards providing somewhat less expensive services, in keeping with WIA's expanded use of core and intensive services.<sup>9</sup>

As the table shows, there appears to be a decided tilt towards serving a higher proportion of males (44% male in WIA vs. 32% in JTPA), making the gender balance more nearly equal in WIA than it was in JTPA (but still tilted in favor of serving more females). An age shift is also in evidence. Largely, this shift can be accounted for by the fact that WIA defines eligibility for the adult program as including those ages 18 and over while JTPA established the floor at 22 years of age. Thus, WIA shows services to a younger cohort than JTPA does (12% are ages 18-21 in WIA vs. none in JTPA). At the other end of the age spectrum, there has been a fall-off under WIA in the proportion of exiters who are older (ages 55 and over), possibly reflecting the fact

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<sup>7</sup> Of the approximately 163,000 such participants in Title II-A, about 7.1% were served under Section 204d. All tabulations from the SPIR are restricted to those who received more than only an objective assessment.

<sup>8</sup> This distinction is operationalized according to whether dates the individual received intensive or training services are listed. The tables presenting results for youth do not break out WIA registrants by those who received core, intensive, or training services, because these concepts are not applicable in the youth program.

<sup>9</sup> Allotments to States for JTPA Title II-A and for WIA adult programs have remained approximately constant, in nominal dollars, at about \$950 million (in PY 2001) to \$955 million (in PY 98). The slight decline in actual allotments is heightened once one accounts for an inflationary adjustment that makes the \$950 million figure closer to \$881 million in PY 98 real dollars. These figures should in any case not be used to calculate per participant expenditures, because the dollar figures represent allotments rather than actual expenditures (and, thus, do not account for unspent dollars carried in from the previous program year or carried over to the next year).

that JTPA placed a special emphasis on serving older workers as part of Section 204d, while WIA does not (6% are age 55 or over in WIA vs. 9% in JTPA).

Comparisons across racial and ethnic categories are hampered to some degree, because WIA allows participants to be recorded in multiple race and ethnic categories, while JTPA did not. In an effort to increase comparability, we eliminated multiple mentions in WIA as best we could.<sup>10</sup> After doing so, we find that service to African-Americans has declined somewhat, as persons of this racial group constituted about 35% of exiters in PY 98 but just about 30% in PY 2001. Meanwhile, Hispanics are served in slightly higher proportions than they once were.

Comparisons across educational categories are hampered because the participant's highest grade completed is a required WIASRD item only for those who obtain intensive or training services (and not for those who receive only staff-assisted core services).<sup>11</sup> A comparison of the JTPA figures with those for WIA participants who received intensive or training services reveals fairly small differences. However, WIA exiters are very slightly less likely to be high school dropouts. Similarly, those who receive WIA intensive services are more likely to have some post-secondary education, reflecting the workforce system's success in providing access to a broader customer base.

As we discussed earlier in this paper, the JTPA adult program requires that nearly all participants be economically disadvantaged and that at least 65% of them have at least one of a number of characteristics that would cause them to be classified as hard-to-serve; WIA, by contrast, relaxes these stipulations considerably to allow service to the universal customer. Thus, it comes as no surprise to see a fall-off in the proportion of exiters with any of these characteristics. Again, comparisons are hampered because many of the relevant characteristics are not required reporting items in the WIASRD for those who received only staff-assisted core services, but evidence of change seems clear.

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<sup>10</sup> JTPA classifies participants in a racial category only if they are non-Hispanic. Thus, to increase comparability, we gave Hispanic ethnicity precedence over membership in a racial category for WIA participants who denoted both. Similarly, a substantial number of Hispanic individuals in WIA are missing a racial designation, and we coded them as not being a member of any racial group, to conform to JTPA coding guidelines. WIA could still classify an individual as belonging to more than one racial category, and we made no effort to eliminate these multiple mentions. In fact, though, the sum across the racial and ethnic categories for WIA in Table 1 is just 100.7%, suggesting that few multiple mentions remain once ethnicity is given primacy over race.

<sup>11</sup> For this item, and several others in the WIASRD (e.g., income status, welfare reciprocity, limited English proficiency, status as a single parent, UI claimant status), reporting is not required for those who received only staff-assisted core services. Accordingly, we withhold reporting statistics for the WIASRD "Total" column.

For example, nearly all JTPA exiters (96%) are low income, while just about three-quarters of WIA exiters who received intensive or training services are in this income category.<sup>12</sup> Although this represents a substantial drop-off, the fact that it is as high as it is, despite not being an eligibility criterion, speaks clearly to the priority that the workforce system is still giving to this group. Elsewhere, cash welfare recipients constitute a much lower proportion of exiters than was once the case (31% in JTPA vs. fewer than 20% among WIA customers receiving intensive or training services). This decline may be due to a combination of the general fall-off in welfare reciprocity in the nation as a whole over these years, the use of TANF or Welfare-to-Work funds to serve welfare recipients, and changes in WIA's targeting provisions as compared with JTPA. With respect to other barriers, WIA exiters are much less likely to be single parents (44% are single parents in JTPA vs. fewer than 30% in WIA), but they are about as likely as those who exited under JTPA to be individuals with a disability or to be limited English speakers.<sup>13</sup> Overall, then, there has been some drop-off in service to the sorts of hard-to-serve groups that were explicitly targeted by JTPA, on at least some measures.

Finally, we can use this table to examine how the characteristics of PY 2001 WIA exiters vary depending on whether they received only staff-assisted core services, intensive services but not training, or training services. Overall, one might expect that those receiving higher levels of service would demonstrate characteristics that make them more in need of services, but this does not appear to be the case, presumably reflecting local areas' suppositions about who can best benefit from training. Thus, those receiving training services are in fact less likely than are those who received intensive services to be high school dropouts, low income, cash welfare recipients, limited English speakers, single parents, or to have a disability, and they are much more likely to have been employed at registration. Among other findings, African-American WIA exiters are more likely to have received only services at a lower tier.

Table 2 continues this comparison by examining differences in services that were provided. In contrast to the tabulations reported in Table 1, those in Table 2 are hampered to a greater

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<sup>12</sup> The relevant SPIR item denotes whether the individual is economically disadvantaged, but the definition of this item is substantively identical to the WIASRD item for whether a participant is low income.

<sup>13</sup> SPIR and WIASRD definitions of these items are slightly different, which could account for some of the variation in incidence rates. The SPIR defines single parents as a category of family status for those who have "sole custodial support" for one or more dependent children; the WIARD, by contrast, speaks of those having "primary responsibility" for children under age 18. With respect to limited English speakers, in JTPA this term would refer to those whose native language is not English with an inability to communicate in English, resulting in a barrier to employment; the WIA definition seems somewhat broader, including those with a limited ability to speak, read, write or understand English and whose native language is not English or who live in a family or community where English is not dominant.

degree by a lack of comparability between JTPA and WIA in how services are defined and classified and what aspects of services are required reporting items. Nonetheless, we show in Table 2 a selected number of items for which comparisons are most sensible. First, among WIA registrants and exiters, about 22% exited after receiving only staff-assisted core services, 36% after intensive services, and 42% after training services.<sup>14</sup> No comparable figures are available in the PY 98 SPIR. Nonetheless, JTPA's heavier emphasis on training can be deduced in that the incidence of basic skills instruction, on-the-job training (OJT), and other occupational training were all substantially higher in JTPA than they are in WIA. Thus, the incidence of basic skills instruction went from 18% to 2% (though potentially much more basic skills instruction is now being carried out by Adult Education), OJT from 9% to 5%, and other occupational training from 67% to 33%.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the average length of participation was longer in JTPA than in WIA, with very short spells of participation (participation of less than 3 months) substantially more common now than previously (26% in JTPA vs. 34% in WIA).<sup>16</sup> All this is in keeping with WIA's allowance that a wider range of services should be made available to program participants than was common in the JTPA adult program. Supportive services are also much less common in WIA, with the rates of needs-based payments and other supportive services being cut by nearly 50%.

By contrast, concurrent participation is much more common in WIA, especially instances of co-enrollment in non-WIA programs.<sup>17</sup> Thus, about 14% of JTPA adult participants were co-enrolled, primarily in other JTPA programs. In WIA, on the other hand, about 23% are co-enrolled, mostly in non-WIA programs (and, primarily, in Wagner-Peyser, which accounts for

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<sup>14</sup> These figures would be slightly more tilted towards training services if JTPA carry-overs were included in the tabulations.

<sup>15</sup> SPIR and WIASRD definitions of "other occupational training" are not strictly comparable. For the SPIR, this category was coded to represent the incidence of either occupational skills training or work experience. In the WIASRD, this category represents occupational skills training, skill upgrading and retraining, entrepreneurial training, job readiness training, and customized training.

<sup>16</sup> In both programs, length of participation is calculated as time elapsed from date of registration to date of exit. Differences in the average length of participation between JTPA and WIA can partly be due to differences in events that trigger registration or exit in the two programs. The computation of average length of participation in WIA is biased downward somewhat, because of the exclusion of JTPA carry-overs, who by definition have had very long spells of participation. If the percentage of WIA exiters who had a spell of participation of less than three months were re-calculated after including JTPA carry-overs, the figure would be approximately 31% rather than the 34% shown.

<sup>17</sup> In calculating rates of concurrent participation from the WIASRD, we excluded instances where the individual was coded as having participated in the Food Stamps Employment and Training Program. The rather high incidence of participation in this program that is recorded in the WIASRD (about 4% of all adult WIA registrants) leads us to suspect that participation in Food Stamps was being mistakenly captured here.

about one-half of the total). We caution, though, that these differences could be partly an artifact if WIA data management systems are more likely to record an instance of concurrent participation if it occurs than JTPA data systems were.<sup>18</sup>

Finally, as one would expect, spells of participation in WIA are longer, and the incidence of supportive services and concurrent participation are greater, as one moves across the three service tiers, from staff-assisted core, to intensive services, and to training.

#### **A COMPARISON OF DATA FOR THE DISLOCATED WORKER PROGRAM**

We anticipated that differences between JTPA and WIA would be less pronounced among dislocated workers, and indeed that appears to be the case. As Table 3 shows, the age distribution has changed only very little, as have the breakdowns by highest grade completed, the incidence of a disability, and other barriers to employment, such as limited English proficiency, or being a displaced homemaker. Among the few differences, service to single parents and those who were employed at registration seems to have very slightly declined, as has service to African-Americans. Additionally, WIA includes slightly more males than females (52% male vs. 48% female in WIA), while the proportions were almost exactly reversed in JTPA.

As in the WIA adult program, the characteristics of dislocated workers across WIA's three service tiers vary modestly, but high school dropouts and those with limited English are slightly less likely to receive training than just intensive services.

As Table 4 shows, WIA dislocated workers who received only staff-assisted core services make up 15% of the total, while those who received intensive services and training services constitute 39% and 45%, respectively. The comparable figures for WIA adults were fairly similar, at 22%, 36%, and 42%. As with adults, dislocated workers in WIA are less likely than those in JTPA to have received basic skills instruction (11% vs. 3%), OJT (4.4% vs. 3.9%), and other occupational training (53% vs. 39%). Other differences, while still apparent, seem less substantial among dislocated workers than they were among adults. Thus, very short spells of participation and very long spells occur at about the same rate in both WIA and JTPA (very long spells appear according to the table to be somewhat less common in WIA than they were in JTPA,

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<sup>18</sup> On the one hand, states' data management systems have recently been striving for greater integration across partner programs, so that information about instances of concurrent participation will be readily at hand; thus, the WIASRD might be more likely to capture the incidence of concurrent participation when it occurs than the SPIR did. On the other hand, the incidence of concurrent participation was a required data field in the SPIR, while it is an optional field in the WIASRD; for this reason, the extent of concurrent participation might have been more likely to be captured by the SPIR rather than the WIASRD.

but this is largely an artifact of our having removed JTPA carry-overs from the PY 01 figures).<sup>19</sup> Elsewhere, the use of supportive services has declined appreciably (34% in JTPA vs. 21% in WIA), but still less so than in the adult program. Meanwhile, concurrent participation is more common in WIA, especially participation in non-WIA programs; again, enrollment in Wagner-Peysers accounts for the bulk of this.

### **A COMPARISON OF DATA FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM**

Subject to the constraint that PY 98 JTPA data reflect the experiences of youth in the Title II-C program only, Tables 5 and 6 compare JTPA and WIA youth participant characteristics and services, respectively. Some findings that we report in these tables are very much in keeping with what we might anticipate given our discussion earlier in this chapter regarding differences between JTPA and WIA eligibility and services. For example, those ages 14 or 15 are substantially less likely to be served in JTPA Title II-C than in WIA (8% in JTPA vs. 33% in WIA), in keeping with the fact that WIA extends eligibility to this age group as a matter of course, while JTPA Title II-C served those ages 14 or 15 only if the local area extended eligibility to them.

Reflecting the difference in the age range, WIA is much more likely to be serving youth still attending school than was JTPA's Title II-C (71% in WIA vs. 42% in JTPA). This difference likely occurs partly because in-school youth were predominantly served in the JTPA Title II-B (summer) program rather than in Title II-C, and because Title II-C explicitly required that 50% of participants be out-of-school youth.<sup>20</sup>

Related to this, many more WIA youth have a highest grade completed of less than high school, in comparison to JTPA Title II-C youth (87% vs. 71%). However, these primarily represent in-school youth in WIA, rather than dropouts. In fact, the table shows that JTPA was much more likely to serve school dropouts than is WIA (31% in JTPA vs. 18% in WIA). The incidence of other barriers to employment was also generally higher in JTPA Title II-C than in WIA. Thus, JTPA youth in PY 98 were much more likely to be pregnant or parenting (23% vs. 10%) and somewhat more likely to be basic skills deficient (70% vs. 63%), to have a substantial disability (12% vs. 6%), or to be an offender (13% vs. 9%) or a single parent (20% vs. 8%).

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<sup>19</sup> Including JTPA carry-overs, results from the PY 01 WIASRD show that 20% of exiters had a spell of less than three months, while 30% had a spell of longer than a year. As shown in the table, comparable figures for JTPA are 25% and 26%, respectively.

<sup>20</sup> The definition of being in-school vs. out-of-school is not quite the same in JTPA and WIA, nor is it synonymous in either program with whether or not the youth is still attending school. Thus, for comparability, we use the designation for whether or not the youth is still attending school, rather than in-school/out-of-school status.

The consistent fall-off in the incidence of these characteristics is somewhat surprising, given that both JTPA and WIA emphasize services to those with identified barriers. On the other hand, WIA youth are much more likely to have another non-specified barriers (51% in WIA vs. 32% in JTPA Title II-C) and to be limited-English speakers (14% vs. 4%).

Elsewhere, the table show that there has been a slight shift towards more gender balance (60% female in JTPA Title II-C vs. 53% in WIA). Service to white non-Hispanics has fallen off dramatically in WIA (38% vs. 28%), in favor of WIA's higher levels of service to Hispanics (24% in JTPA vs. 35% in WIA).

Table 6, which shows services received, is hampered by the lack of comparability in the way a number of the service activities are defined in the two programs. Nonetheless, using our best approximations, we see that educational services were received by about 46% of JTPA Title II-C terminees, as opposed to the slightly higher 54% in WIA, while rates of receiving employment services are about the same (57% in JTPA Title II-C vs. 56% in WIA).<sup>21</sup>

Elsewhere in the table, the use of supportive services has fallen from JTPA to WIA (40% vs. 24%). Lengths of participation in JTPA Title II-C were heavily clustered in the categories representing 3 to 9 months (accounting for about 55% of all exiters), while the distribution in WIA seems more dispersed, with more short spells of less than three months (26% in WIA vs. 19% in JTPA), but also more very long spells (25% vs. 18%; the latter difference would be even more pronounced if JTPA carry-overs were included in the WIA totals). We examined when these short spells of WIA participation tend to occur and found that they predominantly represent participation during the summer months. Specifically, of WIA youth who participated less than three months, about 60% registered during the months of either May or June, as compared to about 32% of youth with spells of participation longer than three months. Moreover, 70% of youth with short spells are listed as having participated in summer youth employment opportunities, as compared to just 40% of youth with longer spells. Thus, short spells of

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<sup>21</sup> In the SPIR, educational achievement services is defined as the SPIR variable denoting whether basic skills training was received; in the WIASRD, the most closely comparable item specifically mentions that tutoring, study skills training, dropout prevention strategies, and alternative secondary school should be included. In the SPIR, employment services is defined to include occupational skills training, OJT, and work experience, entry employment, or private internships; the comparable WIASRD item mentions preparation for and success in employment that can include paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing, and occupational skills training. None of the other service categories between the SPIR and WIASRD is close enough in definition that they can be directly compared.

participation are predominantly represented by youth engaged in summer youth opportunities, though they typically engage in other activities as well.<sup>22</sup>

Finally, rates of concurrent participation were higher in JTPA than they are in WIA (19% in JTPA Title II-C vs. 9% in WIA). Concurrent participation represents mostly other JTPA/WIA participation in JTPA Title II-C, but mostly non-JTPA/WIA participation (Wagner-Peyser and other non-WIA programs) among WIA exiters.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We began this paper with a brief discussion of legislative differences in eligibility criteria and service strategies between JTPA and WIA. Some of these differences include:

- In the adult program,
  - Dramatic changes in eligibility guidelines that represent a movement away from restricted eligibility criteria. In JTPA, eligibility was focused on the economically disadvantaged with characteristics that make them hard-to-serve, while WIA provides access to the universal customer (but with a priority for intensive and training services given to low-income individuals).
  - Dramatic changes in service strategies. JTPA’s adult program heavily emphasized training services and discouraged job search assistance as a stand-alone activity, while WIA adopts service tiers that aim to match services to what customers need to realize their employment objectives.
- In the dislocated worker program, there were fairly minor changes in both eligibility rules and service strategies.
- In the youth program, at least if one compares JTPA Title II-C (the year-round program) with WIA,
  - Modest changes in eligibility guidelines. WIA defines eligibility to include those ages 14-21, in contrast to JTPA’s primary focus on those ages 16-21. Both programs target services intently on those with specified barriers to success, but everyone who is served must have such a barrier in WIA, while only 65% must have one in JTPA. Both programs restrict eligibility (with minor exceptions) to those who are low income. JTPA’s Title II-C required that 50% of enrollees be out-of-school youth, while WIA requires that 30% of youth funds be spend on out-of-school youth.

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<sup>22</sup> Of WIA youth with spells of participation of shorter than three months who participated in summer youth employment opportunities, 33% also participated in educational achievement services, 38% participated in employment services, 16% participated in additional support, 20% participated in leadership development, and 62% participated in follow-up services. Thus, these short spells of participation appear to represent something more than summer employment alone, in keeping with DOL’s *Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 3-99*.



- Limited changes in *allowable* services. Both programs allow a broad range of youth services. However, WIA emphasizes the provision of comprehensive services to youth.

We additionally noted that changes between JTPA and WIA in the way performance levels are established for local areas have led some to claim that creaming is more widespread in WIA, although this is a charge that, fairly or not, has been leveled to some extent at both programs. To the extent their claims are true, additional differences between the two programs in who is served and with what services should also be expected.

We accessed data from both programs' client-level reporting systems to see what changes these legislative and policy differences have caused in the types of customers that are enrolled and the services that are provided. Both data systems include records for all persons who exited the program during a given program year. We used data for PY 98 for JTPA, from the Standardized Program Information Report (SPIR), and for PY 2001 for WIA, from the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD); for the latter data set, we tabulated JTPA carry-overs separately (i.e., those who exited during PY 2001, but who were first enrolled before WIA took effect).

The changes in participant characteristics and services that we observed can be summarized as follows:

### ***In the Adult Program***

1. Two-thirds of customers in JTPA's adult program were female, while WIA's registrants are more nearly gender balanced (68% female in JTPA vs. 56% female in WIA).
2. WIA allows enrollment in the adult program to those ages 18 and over, while JTPA restricted eligibility to those at least age 22. Thus, WIA shows service to those ages 18-21 (12% of registrants in WIA), while JTPA does not.
3. Nearly all JTPA exiters are low income, while about 70% of WIA registrants who received intensive or training services are low income (this figure is not available for WIA registrants who received only staff-assisted core services). Similarly, cash welfare recipients constitute a much lower proportion of registrants in WIA than JTPA.
4. Among WIA participants, those who receive training services are slightly more likely than those receiving only intensive services to have attained a high school degree or post-secondary education (82% among those who received WIA training services, but 78% among those who received WIA intensive services). Those receiving WIA training services are also slightly less likely to be cash welfare recipients, low income individuals, or single parents, when compared with those who receive WIA intensive services but no training.
5. With respect to services received, about 23% of WIA adult exiters received only staff-assisted core services, 36% received intensive services but no training, and 42% received training services (these figures are slightly tilted towards less intensive services because WIA

registrants who were JTPA carry-overs are excluded from the computations, and carry-overs will tend to be very long-term participants). Thus, local areas are using all three service tiers as points of exit from WIA, although intensive and training services, as opposed to staff-assisted core services, clearly predominate.

6. Reflecting WIA's broader service emphasis, JTPA exiters were more likely than WIA exiters to have received basic skills instruction (18% in JTPA vs. 2% in WIA). On-the-job training was also more common in JTPA than WIA (9% vs. 5%), as was other occupational training (67% vs. 33%). However, the coding categories are not strictly comparable between the JTPA and WIA data systems, making these comparisons somewhat imprecise.
7. Also reflecting WIA's broader service emphasis, WIA exiters are somewhat more likely to have very short spells of participation (defined as time elapsed from date of registration to date of exit).
8. The incidence of supportive services is substantially lower in WIA than it was in JTPA (25% in WIA vs. 47% in JTPA).
9. WIA registrants are much more likely to be shown as being concurrent participants than was the case under JTPA (23% in WIA vs. 14% in JTPA), primarily because of the high rates of participation among WIA registrants in Wagner-Peyser (at 13%). However, these figures could to some degree reflect the greater ability of WIA's data management information systems to capture and record instances of co-enrollment when they occur than were JTPA's systems.

### ***In the Dislocated Worker Program***

10. Differences in participant characteristics among dislocated workers in JTPA and WIA are very minor. Thus, WIA serves very much the same mix of dislocated worker customers—with respect to age, education, and other characteristics—as was the case in JTPA.
11. WIA shows a lower incidence of basic skills instruction (3% vs. 11%) and other occupational training (39% vs. 53%).
12. With respect to the three service tiers, 15% of WIA exiters received only staff-assisted core services, 39% received intensive services but no training, and 45% received training. These figures are somewhat biased away from training because they exclude WIA exiters who were JTPA carry-overs, most of whom received training.

### ***In the Youth Program***

JTPA served youth through two separate funding streams, the Title II-B (summer) program and the Title II-C (year-round) program, while WIA has only a single comprehensive youth services program. The SPIR captures information about the Title II-C program only. In comparing the WIA comprehensive youth program to JTPA Title II-C, we find that:

13. WIA serves a much higher proportion of youth ages 14 to 15 (8% in JTPA vs. 33% in WIA), in keeping with WIA's broader eligibility criteria.
14. WIA is much more likely to be serving youth who are still attending school than was JTPA's Title II-C program (71% in WIA vs. 42% in JTPA). This change likely reflects the fact that,

in JTPA, in-school youth were served heavily in the Title II-B (summer) program (the SPIR does not capture information about Title II-B participants). Moreover, JTPA Title II-C required that 50% of participants be out-of-school youth (although WIA has a similar requirement that at least 30% of funds be used for serving out-of-school youth).

15. Given that WIA serves many more younger youth and in-school youth, unsurprisingly, a much higher proportion of this program's exiters had attained less than a high school education at enrollment (87% in WIA vs. 71% in JTPA). On the other hand, JTPA served a higher proportion of dropouts than does WIA (31% in JTPA vs. 18% in WIA).
16. JTPA and WIA both served high proportions of youth who were identified as having other barriers, in keeping with both programs' targeting provisions. However, the specific barriers that were represented in the participant populations changed somewhat. For example, in addition to serving more high school dropouts, JTPA recorded a somewhat higher incidence of youth with basic skills deficiencies (70% in JTPA vs. 63% in WIA), and youth who were pregnant or parenting (23% vs. 10%). On the other hand, WIA served more youth with limited English proficiency (14% in WIA vs. 4% in JTPA) and with other barriers identified by the local area (51% vs. 32%). However, slight differences in the definitions of key terms make these comparisons mere approximations of the true extent of change.
17. WIA is slightly more gender balanced than was JTPA Title II-C (53% female in WIA vs. 60% in JTPA Title II-C). White non-Hispanics are less likely to be served in WIA (28% white non-Hispanic in WIA vs. 38% in JTPA), in favor of greater service to Hispanics (35% vs. 24%).
18. A comparison of services received is severely hampered by the fact that the SPIR and WIASRD record youth services very differently. Nonetheless, using our best approximations, it appears that educational achievement services are somewhat more common in WIA (54% vs. 46%), while employment services are provided at about the same rate (about 56% in each program).
19. A small proportion of WIA youth participate only during the summer months, though they typically receive summer youth employment as well as other services.
20. Rates of providing youth with supportive services seem much lower in WIA (24% in WIA vs. 40% in JTPA).
21. Overall rates of concurrent participation are substantially higher in JTPA (19% in JTPA vs. 9% in WIA). Among concurrent participation that occurs, in JTPA it primarily represented youth enrolled in other JTPA programs, while in WIA it mostly represents participation in non-WIA programs.

We caution that subtle differences in the definitions of similar items and the accuracy with which information is recorded in the SPIR and WIASRD make all these figures mere approximations of the true extent of change. Moreover, the WIASRD excludes those served with WIA funds who received only self-services or informational services, and neither program captures much about the ways in which customers of the public workforce systems might be served by partner programs, whether or not they are also JTPA/WIA registrants. This latter point

underscores the fact that the SPIR and WIASRD capture only a slice of services that are being provided by the workforce *system* as a whole.

Despite these limitations, these figures tell us something important about the ways in which WIA funds are being used, including who the funds are used to serve and with what services, and they suggest how this differs from what occurred in JTPA. Reflecting on the changes as a whole, it appears that legislative intent has largely been realized. Thus, in the adult program, a broader spectrum of customers is being served, in keeping with WIA's provisions for serving the universal customer. At the same time, WIA clearly retains a strong focus on JTPA's traditional clientele consisting of the economically disadvantaged, as these still comprise a substantial majority of WIA adult participants. Also in keeping with the legislation, our results suggest that all three WIA service tiers are being used as points from which customers may exit; thus, the workforce system is apparently carefully identifying which levels of service are appropriate for, and needed by, which types of customers.

Similarly, in keeping with its status as a comprehensive youth services program, WIA serves a broader spectrum of youth, including many more young youth (ages 14-15) and in-school youth than did JTPA's Title II-C. However, reflecting their targeting provisions, both programs serve predominantly low-income youth with substantial barriers to success.

**Table 1: Adult Program  
Comparison of the Characteristics of Exiters**

	PY 2001 WIASRD Data					
	JTPA SPIR PY 98	JTPA Carry Overs	WIA Adult Registrants			
			Total	Core Only	Intensive- No Trng	Training
N of cases	163,223	11,898	160,529	36,344	57,648	66,537
Gender						
Female	67.7	75.3	55.8	54.1	55.9	56.6
Male	32.3	24.7	44.2	45.9	44.1	43.5
Age						
18 to 21	---	5.9	11.7	13.4	9.5	12.5
22 to 29	37.7	37.7	26.8	25.2	24.1	30.0
30 to 44	43.2	41.8	39.5	38.9	40.4	38.9
45 to 54	9.7	10.0	16.0	16.3	18.6	13.5
55 or more	9.3	4.5	6.1	6.1	7.3	5.1
Race/Ethnic						
American Indian	1.6	1.7	1.9	2.7	1.7	1.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.9	1.8	3.9	2.5	4.7	3.9
Black (not Hispanic)	34.5	30.6	30.0	31.3	31.9	27.7
Hispanic	17.1	14.6	21.2	16.8	25.0	20.4
White (not Hispanic)	43.9	51.3	43.7	47.5	37.4	47.1
Highest Grade Completed						
Less than high school	22.4	15.4	na	na	22.2	18.4
High school graduate	56.1	57.7	na	na	51.3	60.0
Post high school	21.6	27.0	na	na	26.6	21.6
Low Income						
Yes	96.0	85.2	na	na	73.2	70.0
No	4.0	14.8	na	na	26.8	30.0
Cash Welfare Recipient	30.7	22.3	na	na	19.9	14.3
TANF/AFDC	25.7	18.0	na	na	9.7	10.2
GA, SSI, RCA	5.8	4.7	na	na	9.9	4.2
Disability						
Yes	10.4	9.7	7.6	6.4	9.9	6.3
No	89.6	90.3	92.4	93.6	90.1	93.7
Other Characteristics						
Limited English	6.5	4.8	na	na	7.3	6.0
Single parent	43.7	43.7	na	na	29.0	26.0
Veteran	6.5	5.1	7.6	5.9	8.7	7.7
Labor Force						
Employed	18.2	27.6	18.3	13.8	12.4	25.9
Not employed	81.8	72.4	81.7	86.2	87.6	74.1
UI Status						
Claimant	8.8	11.7	na	na	17.6	14.7
Exhaustee	3.3	2.9	na	na	4.2	4.4
Neither	87.9	85.5	na	na	78.2	80.8

Note: All figures are given as percentages, except N of cases. SPIR data represent figures for adults (Title II-A) and older workers (Section 204d) who received more than only an objective assessment. Data from the PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures. A '—' represents a percentage near zero.

**Table 2: Adult Program  
Comparison of the Services Received by Exiters**

	PY 2001 WIASRD Data					
	JTPA SPIR PY 98	JTPA Carry Overs	WIA Adult Registrants			
			Total	Core Only	Intensive- No Trng	Training
N of cases	163,223	11,898	160,529	36,344	57,648	66,537
Highest Tier of Service						
Core only	na	5.2	22.6	100	---	---
Intensive (no Trng)	na	12.0	35.9	---	100	---
Training	na	82.8	41.5	---	---	100
Service Received						
Basic skills instruction	18.1	7.3	2.1	---	0.1	5.1
On-the-job training	9.4	3.2	5.1	---	---	12.8
Other occ trng	66.6	74.7	32.9	---	---	82.1
Other training	12.7	na	na	na	na	na
Months of Participation						
Up to 3 months	26.4	---	34.1	52.9	38.5	20.1
3 to 6 months	26.6	---	24.1	21.2	24.0	25.7
6 to 9 months	16.6	---	16.3	11.7	15.4	19.7
9 months to 1 year	10.0	---	10.6	6.3	10.2	13.5
More than 1 year	20.4	100	14.8	7.9	12.0	21.1
Supportive Services, Any	46.5	36.8	25.3	15.9	21.8	33.5
Needs-payments	11.5	7.2	2.9	0.1	3.0	4.4
Other supp. services	42.1	33.0	23.7	15.9	19.7	31.5
Concurrent Participation,						
Any	14.4	28.9	22.8	14.7	22.7	27.2
Other JTPA/WIA	10.3	6.2	2.8	1.7	2.6	3.5
Non-JTPA/WIA	5.7	24.1	20.8	13.3	20.9	24.8

Note: All figures are given as percentages, except N of cases. SPIR data represent figures for adults (Title II-A) and older workers (Section 204d) who received more than only an objective assessment. Data from the PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures. A ‘—’ represents a percentage near zero.

**Table 3: Dislocated Worker Program  
Comparison of the Characteristics of Exiters**

	PY 2001 WIASRD Data					
	JTPA SPIR PY 98	JTPA Carry Overs	WIA Dislocated Worker Registrants			
			Total	Core Only	Intensive- No Trng	Training
N of cases	240,896	20,792	109,169	16,667	42,966	49,536
Gender						
Female	53.9	60.4	47.9	48.1	50.7	45.3
Male	46.1	39.6	52.1	51.9	49.3	54.7
Age						
18 to 21	3.5	2.5	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.1
22 to 29	15.7	14.7	13.5	13.0	12.4	14.6
30 to 44	45.1	46.5	43.5	42.8	41.9	45.1
45 to 54	25.4	26.5	29.1	29.2	30.4	28.0
55 or more	10.3	9.8	11.8	12.7	13.3	10.1
Race/Ethnic						
American Indian	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.3	1.0	1.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	3.6	4.2	4.7	4.1	5.1	4.4
Black (not Hispanic)	18.2	18.3	14.1	13.8	13.6	14.7
Hispanic	15.5	13.9	16.9	13.0	20.7	15.0
White (not Hispanic)	61.7	62.5	63.7	68.4	60.1	65.1
Highest Grade Completed						
Less than high school	12.3	11.5	na	na	14.2	11.3
High school graduate	50.9	52.2	na	na	47.6	54.3
Post high school	36.8	36.6	na	na	38.3	34.4
Disability						
Yes	4.6	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.3	3.7
No	95.4	95.7	96.0	95.9	95.7	96.3
Other Characteristics						
Limited English	6.1	4.8	na	na	7.6	4.8
Single parent	15.4	14.6	na	na	11.2	10.9
Veteran	11.2	10.1	10.3	10.5	9.4	11.1
Displaced homemaker	1.3	1.6	1.5	1.0	1.7	1.4
Labor Force						
Employed	13.3	22.0	8.2	8.0	7.7	8.8
Not employed	86.7	78.0	91.8	92.0	92.3	91.2
UI Status						
Claimant	65.8	53.5	na	na	71.2	68.3
Exhaustee	6.3	7.2	na	na	4.5	5.5
Neither	27.9	39.3	na	na	24.3	26.3

Note: All figures are given as percentages, except N of cases. SPIR data represent figures for the dislocated worker (Title III) program. Data from the PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures.

**Table 4: Dislocated Worker Program  
Comparison of the Services Received by Exiters**

	JTPA SPIR PY 98	PY 2001 WIASRD Data				
		JTPA Carry Overs	WIA Adult Registrants			
			Total	Core Only	Intensive- No Trng	Training
N of cases	240,896	20,792	109,169	16,667	42,966	49,536
Highest Tier of Service						
Core only	na	5.4	15.3	100	---	---
Intensive (no Trng)	na	13.7	39.4	---	100	---
Training	na	80.9	45.4	---	---	100
Service Received						
Basic skills instruction	10.9	5.4	2.6	---	0.4	5.3
On-the-job training	4.4	1.4	3.9	---	---	8.7
Other occ trng	53.4	71.7	39.1	---	---	86.0
Months of Participation						
Up to 3 months	24.9	---	24.3	40.2	28.9	14.9
3 to 6 months	24.6	---	26.5	26.7	26.7	26.2
6 to 9 months	15.2	---	19.3	16.1	18.2	21.3
9 months to 1 year	9.6	---	12.8	8.5	11.7	15.2
More than 1 year	25.7	100	17.2	8.5	14.5	22.4
Supportive Services, Any	34.1	26.8	20.9	11.9	15.3	28.8
Needs-payments	4.5	4.7	1.0	---	0.8	1.6
Other supp. services	32.0	24.3	20.4	11.9	14.8	28.2
Concurrent Participation,						
Any	16.3	26.0	26.0	17.6	25.8	29.1
Other JTPA/WIA	12.9	2.5	2.2	0.9	2.3	2.6
Non-JTPA/WIA	4.0	24.1	24.6	17.1	24.2	27.5

Note: All figures are given as percentages, except N of cases. SPIR data represent figures for the dislocated worker (Title III) program. Data from the PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures.



**Table 5: Youth Program  
Comparison of the Characteristics of Exiters**

	<b>JTPA Title II-C SPIR PY 98</b>	<b>JTPA Carry-Overs</b>	<b>WIA Registrants</b>
N of cases	72,050	11,042	115,260
Gender			
Female	59.5	54.6	52.7
Male	40.5	45.4	47.4
Age			
14 to 15	8.4	33.9	32.5
16 to 17	33.5	38.5	36.7
18 or more	58.1	27.6	30.8
Race/Ethnic			
American Indian	2.1	2.5	2.1
Asian/Pacific Islander	2.9	2.4	2.7
Black (not Hispanic)	33.2	31.9	33.4
Hispanic	23.6	23.6	34.8
White (not Hispanic)	38.2	40.0	27.7
Highest Grade Completed			
Less than high school	70.8	82.5	86.6
High school graduate	26.0	14.6	12.2
Post high school	3.2	2.9	1.2
Student Status			
Attending school	42.1	77.2	71.0
Not in school	57.9	22.8	29.0
Low Income			
Yes	95.4	91.4	94.6
No	4.6	8.7	5.4
Cash Welfare Recipient	22.7	17.9	19.4
TANF/AFDC	19.0	12.3	12.6
GA, SSI, RCA	4.3	6.4	7.5
Disability			
Yes	15.4	21.2	14.8
No	84.6	78.8	85.2
Other Specified Barriers			
Basic skills deficient	69.6	55.3	63.4
Pregnant/parenting	22.8	9.6	10.2
School dropout	31.4	9.8	17.8
Disability (substantial)	11.9	11.4	6.2
Homeless or runaway	1.5	1.6	2.3
Offender (inc misd)	12.9	6.8	8.7
SDA/Other Barrier	31.5	24.9	51.2

**Table 5 (continued)**

	<u>JTPA Title II-C SPIR PY 98</u>	<u>JTPA Carry-Overs</u>	<u>WIA Registrants</u>
Other Characteristics			
Limited English	4.0	8.5	14.2
Single parent	19.5	7.5	8.1
Veteran	0.0	0.4	0.5
Labor Force			
Employed	13.3	9.6	5.7
Not employed	86.7	90.4	94.3
UI Status			
Claimant	1.1	10.0	14.8
Exhaustee	1.0	0.7	3.6
Neither	97.9	89.3	81.5

Note: All figures are given as percentages, except N of cases. SPIR data represent figures for youth in the year-round (Title II-C) program who received more than only an objective assessment. Data from the PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures.

**Table 6: Youth Program  
Comparison of the Services Received by Exiters**

	<u>JTPA Title II-C SPIR PY 98</u>	<u>JTPA Carry-Overs</u>	<u>WIA Registrants</u>
N of cases	72,050	11,042	115,260
Services Received			
Educational achievement services	45.6	55.9	53.7
Employment services	57.3	53.8	55.9
Summer youth employment opportunity	na	61.8	48.3
Additional support	na	24.3	24.4
Leadership development	na	18.3	22.3
Follow-up services	na	36.9	36.4
Other employment skills trng	34.2	na	na
Supportive Services, Any	40.3	29.5	24.0
Needs-payments	8.7	8.5	4.4
Other than needs-payments	37.2	25.2	21.3
Months of Participation			
Up to 3 months	18.7	---	25.8
3 to 6 months	29.2	---	20.6
6 to 9 months	22.5	---	13.5
9 months to 1 year	11.9	---	14.9
More than 1 year	17.7	100	25.2
Concurrent Participation, Any	18.6	13.2	8.9
Other JTPA/WIA	15.3	2.9	1.9
Non-JTPA/WIA	5.1	10.6	7.3

Note: All figures are given as percentages, except N of cases. SPIR data represent figures for youth in the year-round (Title II-C) program who received more than only an objective assessment. Data from the PY 2001 WIASRD are preliminary figures.

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### III. PARTNERSHIP BUILDING UNDER WIA

This briefing paper is part of a series developed as part of the *Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates and Technical Assistance and Training Corporation. The evaluation consists thus far of two rounds of site visits: the first round of site visits was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight state and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. An overview of the evaluation is included as an appendix to this report.

Partnership building, the theme for this briefing paper, is central to the implementation of WIA and the development of One-Stop systems, because strong partnerships represent one of the primary methods envisioned by the Act to develop a “seamless system of service delivery that will enhance access to programs’ services and improve employment outcomes for individuals receiving assistance.”<sup>1</sup> To reach this goal, the Act requires 17 federal programs to participate in One-Stop systems, including to:

- Make core services available to participants through the One-Stop system.
- Use a portion of their funds, in a way consistent with their authorizing legislation, to create and maintain the One-Stop delivery system and provide core services.
- Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local Board regarding the One-Stop system.
- Participate in the operation of the One-Stop system “consistent with the terms of the MOU and requirements of authorizing laws.”
- Provide representation on the Local Board.<sup>2</sup>

Although nearly all States and local areas that we visited in this study are in compliance with these requirements, the extent to which these mandatory partners and other optional partners are working together to create a “seamless system of service delivery” varies widely.

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

<sup>2</sup> Final Rules, Section 662.230.

This briefing paper will discuss the extent of partnership among the States and local case-study sites in both rounds of data collection and the methods these partnerships used to create seamless systems of service delivery with the aim of improving services for customers. We discuss the formal elements of partnerships, such as the development of MOUs and cost-sharing agreements, and some of the practical ways that partnerships develop and take hold. Finally, the paper summarizes the benefits and challenges associated with partnership development.

### **IDENTIFYING REQUIRED PARTNERS**

As noted, WIA identifies 17 Federal programs as required One-Stop partners.<sup>3</sup> In addition, States had the authority to designate additional mandatory partners.<sup>4</sup> Only five of the 14 case study States we visited across both rounds of site visits chose to do so; these were Florida, Illinois, Oregon, Pennsylvania, and Texas. All five chose to mandate their State's TANF program as a required partner, and four of the five also mandated participation by Food Stamp Employment and Training programs. The rationale for their involvement was that these partners serve similar customers and have similar goals involving employment. Illinois also mandated transportation agencies and the Bureau of Apprenticeship Training, while Pennsylvania also mandated economic development partners and organized labor.

### **MOUS AND COST SHARING**

One of WIA's requirements is that all One-Stop partners enter into an MOU with their local Board. At a minimum, these MOUs should include "a description of services, how the cost of the identified services and operating costs of the system will

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<sup>3</sup> Required partners include: WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs, Job Corps, Native American Programs, Veteran's workforce programs, Wagner-Peyser Act programs, Adult Education and Literacy activities authorized under WIA Title II, Programs authorized under Parts A and B of the Rehabilitation Act (Vocational Rehabilitation programs), Welfare-to-Work programs, Senior Community Service Employment activities under Title V of the Older American Act of 1965, Postsecondary Vocational Education activities under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act, Trade Adjustment Assistance and NAFTA Transitional Adjustment, local veteran's employment representatives and disabled veteran's outreach, Community Services Block Grant employment and training programs, Housing and Urban Development employment and training activities, State unemployment compensation programs. Ibid. 662.200.

<sup>4</sup> Optional partners could include TANF programs, Food Stamp Employment and Training programs, National and Community Service Act programs, and "other appropriate Federal, State or local programs, including programs related to transportation and housing and programs in the private sector." Ibid. 662.210.

be funded, and methods for referrals.”<sup>5</sup> In addition, each partner is required to contribute “a fair share” towards supporting the One-Stop system and providing core services as long as doing so is “not inconsistent with the Federal law authorizing the partner’s program...”.<sup>6</sup> However, in actuality, both MOUs and cost sharing varied greatly among case-study sites.

### **State MOUs**

Although MOUs were not required at the State level, several case-study States developed MOUs between State-level workforce development partners. These agreements were designed to smooth out barriers to collaboration at the State level and set a positive example for local areas.

Of the eight round-two States, Oregon, New York, Arizona and Montana all developed MOUs or interagency agreements between multiple State agencies. These agreements typically were between State workforce development agencies (which often included both ES and WIA Title IB programs), State education departments, State economic development or commerce departments, and sometimes the State department that administered the TANF program. In two other States, officials said that no State-level MOUs were signed because most of the key partners were already located under one State agency. Only one State reported major difficulties in developing an MOU at the State level and was able to negotiate only a single MOU between two agencies.

### **State and Federal Guidance on MOUs and Cost-Sharing**

Most States provided local areas with very little guidance and technical assistance on developing MOUs and negotiating cost-sharing agreements. Typically, they just restated the Federal requirements. There were exceptions, however. One State, Oregon, mandated very specific language to meet the requirements of the State’s Attorney General, and two others, Texas and Minnesota, developed MOU templates for local areas to follow. Minnesota also required local areas to develop a detailed service matrix that specified all administrative and service activities taking place at the One-Stop centers. One other State went further, providing extensive guidance and technical assistance to local areas by developing an MOU resource guide and sending teams to all

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid. 662.230 (c).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 662.230 (b).

local areas to help with the MOU negotiation. Unfortunately, neither of the two local areas we visited in that State found these teams very useful.

With respect to cost allocation, again a majority of States passed on minimal guidance. Among the exceptions, Minnesota provided the most comprehensive guidance to local areas, developing a framework that requires one agency to be the lead for billing and invoice purposes and recommends the use of one or more of four specific cost-sharing methods: (1) direct charges when costs can be billed to one program; (2) allocation based on the percentage of space being used by each partner; (3) allocation based on the percentage of staff FTEs each partner has on-site; and (4) estimated use based on studies of actual usage. Minnesota also requires that all One-Stop center costs must be accounted for through one of these methods, and that cost-sharing agreements must be reviewed annually by the State. Georgia was also in the process of trying to create a “resource-sharing methodology” for use by local areas that would require resource contributions to One-Stop centers proportionate to the benefits received by each partners’ customers.

Other guidance that locals received was DOL’s cost-allocation paper. Although locals thought it made good sense in principle, most felt that it was generally not very useful in assisting them with the difficult process of actually negotiating cost-sharing agreements.

### **General Form and Content of MOUs**

As noted above, the WIA legislation requires each mandatory One-Stop partner to enter into an MOU with the local board. One local area had yet to finalize its MOUs, because it had not yet negotiated specific agreements about staff co-location or cost allocation. The others areas had MOUs in place, and they included relatively specific information on the number and duties of co-located staff and coordinated services, but often little or no information about cost-sharing.

These MOUs could be umbrella agreements including all partners, or local Boards could negotiate individual agreements with each partner. In the case-study sites, the majority of local areas opted for negotiating umbrella MOUs, although some went on to develop individual cost-sharing agreements.

### **Cost-sharing Agreements**

The WIA legislation requires that One-Stop partners “contribute a fair share of the operating costs of the One-Stop delivery system proportionate to the use of the



system by individuals attributable to the partner's program."<sup>7</sup> WIA regulations further describe a number of methods that can be used to allocate costs, including "direct charges, cost pooling, indirect cost rates, and activity-based cost allocation plans."<sup>8</sup>

The legislation, however, does not specify whether this support should be in-kind or through financial contributions. Because it is typically much easier for partners to contribute in-kind resources, such as staff time and equipment, rather than funding, many local areas have negotiated cost-sharing agreements that are primarily based on these in-kind resources. Of the round-two local areas, about half had negotiated cost-allocation agreements that were entirely or almost entirely based on in-kind contributions. Most of these cost allocation agreements consisted of partners' contributing staff time, equipment, or printed materials.

Other round-two local areas developed cost-sharing agreements that involved a mixture of financial and in-kind contributions. The methods used by these local areas to allocate costs among the partners varied. The most common method for allocating costs, used by three local areas, was based on the *amount of space* occupied by each partner at the One-Stop center, which was usually determined by the number of co-located staff. In another area, Portland Worksystems, one One-Stop center allocated costs to partners based directly on the *amount of time* staff were co-located. Chicago and Suffolk County were the only two local sites that specifically attempted to determine at least a portion of partners' "fair share" based on the *use of the One-Stop system* by their customers.<sup>9</sup> Suffolk County allocated costs based on both the *amount of space utilized by partners and by the percentage of each partners' customers served* by the system. Chicago has a more complicated scheme, in that five partners agreed to contribute \$37,650 each, with additional expenses needed to support the Resource Rooms apportioned such that *half of all costs are shared equally and half are paid in proportion to customer usage*.

One of the most comprehensive systems for sharing One-Stop center costs was developed over ten years ago by partners in the Medford Job Council local area. In

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 662.270.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Although, as noted above, Georgia is attempting to create a method to do so for its local areas to use.

that local area, partners pay a full or part-time<sup>10</sup> annual One-Stop membership fee, which is determined annually by partners. Although this amount was not huge, (the full time membership fee was \$12,500 in 2001), because all partners contribute it is sufficient to cover the One-Stop center’s newsletter, website, rent, utilities, internet connection, maintenance and janitorial fees, basic telephone, books & periodicals, postage, copier & marketing materials. Partners who need special space or access pay more and those who are only on-site for short periods pay a lesser “desk fee.”

Regardless of the method used to apportion costs, in only four local areas did more than two or three partners make major cash contributions to the One-Stop system, largely because other partners were not willing or able to do so. Moreover, two local areas had yet to develop cost-sharing agreements largely because they had not yet developed agreements with partners regarding co-location of staff.

### **Difficulties in Developing MOUs and Cost-Sharing Agreements**

The process of developing MOUs and cost-sharing agreements among round-two sites was generally very difficult with only a few exceptions, and only two local areas said that they thought MOUs and cost-sharing agreements had been beneficial to One-Stop partnerships. By contrast, officials in two States alleged that the process had actually harmed partnerships. Officials in one of those States said that forcing local partnerships to formalize cost-sharing agreements led to unnecessary conflict once all the partners could see how much others were contributing. Another local area described the process of developing MOUs as “painful” and said that it had created “hard feelings” between local partners. Another noted that one of the first times that partners had gotten together was because they needed to negotiate cost sharing and, hence, before relationships—and trust—had been established and the benefits of strong partnerships had been explored. Other local areas said that the MOUs themselves were not useful to partnerships, because they were either too vague, overly focused on compliance, or simply detracted from the process of trying to bring partners closer together.

This was quite different from the experience of a majority of round-one case-study sites who said the process of developing MOUs had gone smoothly. This difference may be at least partly due to the fact that at the time of the site visits, few of

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<sup>10</sup> Full or part-time membership is based on the number of co-located staff at the center.

these round-one local areas had developed cost-sharing agreements, which are typically far more difficult to develop than MOUs.

Local areas offered several explanations for why they found the development of MOUs and cost-sharing agreements so difficult and unhelpful. While some of these problems were due to overall challenges to partnering, which are discussed later in this paper, two challenges specifically related to MOUs and cost sharing were States' stringent requirements and partners' lack of flexible funding.

Despite the fact that most States provided little guidance for developing MOUs, a few had very stringent requirements for approving them. For example, in two States the process of getting MOUs and cost-sharing agreements approved by the State was particularly onerous, because State Attorneys General either required very specific legal language to be inserted or refused to approve State agencies' commitments to cost-sharing that the locals had negotiated. This resulted in MOUs having to be revised several times before they were approved and caused significant extra work for local area staff, which they felt detracted from other more important service delivery tasks.

In another State, MOUs and cost-sharing agreements had to go through numerous iterations before they were approved because the State wanted to set extremely stringent requirements for cost-sharing that needed to include cash contributions. As a result of these requirements, one of two local case-study sites in the State still had not had its MOU approved by the State by the time of our site visit and had given up on trying to do so because trying to get partners to contribute additional resources was causing unnecessary tensions in the partnership. The other local area we visited in the same State also refused to try and replace in-kind contributions with cash contributions, because staff felt the process would harm partnerships and was unrealistic.

The other major challenge specific to cost sharing was caused by partners' lack of flexible funding to contribute to One-Stop partnerships. For example, veterans' programs and VR partners both claimed that their authorizing legislation prohibited them from using their funding to support non-eligible customers, which made it difficult for them to support One-Stop centers that provide benefits to universal customers. Similarly, in one round-one local area, adult education partners noted that only a limited amount of their funding could go to support administrative costs, such as overhead for One-Stop centers, which limited the amount they could contribute overall.

Other, more practical considerations came into play. For example, some partners felt that they could not provide funding to pay for One-Stop centers because they could not get out of their current leases for building space and could not afford to support rent on two buildings at one time.

## **OVERALL EXTENT OF PARTNER INVOLVEMENT**

MOUs and the negotiations that accompanied their development set the stage for partnership formation in a formal way, but the various agencies still needed to begin the process of working together to create a One-Stop system. Overall, as a result of WIA, and particularly due to the creation of State and local Workforce Investment Boards, many One-Stop partners said that they now felt like they were a part of a workforce development *system*. However, we found that different partners generally seemed to be affected in different ways and to different degrees. Not surprisingly, WIA implementation has resulted in somewhat greater involvement by workforce development agencies, with lesser involvement by others. These general patterns are discussed below.

### **Employment Service and Other SESA Partners**

State Employment Security agencies (SESA)—which typically administer Wagner-Peyser labor exchange (Employment Service), Unemployment Insurance (UI), Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance programs, and Veterans Employment and Training Services—are generally the most significant partners, with WIA Title IB, in the One-Stop system. Their heavy involvement stems from the fact that the Employment Service (ES) shares the mandate with WIA Title IB to serve the broadest array of workforce development customers.

Despite this partially shared mandate, the amount of SESA integration into WIA implementation and One-Stop systems varied greatly. For example, about as many of the WIA State and local staff that we visited in the second round complained about the lack of collaboration with SESA as said they have a good relationship with SESA. Sometimes, even when workforce development officials at the State level talked about how integrated SESA was with WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the One-Stop system, local areas still complained about SESA's lack of interest in partnering.

SESA staff are almost always regular participants in WIA State and local Workforce Investment Boards. However, the clearest measurement of involvement of

SESA agencies noted by local case-study sites was the extent of SESA, particularly ES, staff co-location at One-Stop centers. Usually, the more SESA program staff co-located at One-Stop centers, the more likely SESA was to support the One-Stop system with financial and in-kind resources. ES staff were more likely to be co-located at One-Stop centers in greater numbers when the One-Stop system was primarily controlled by the SESA, as was the case in 8 of the 14 States we visited in both rounds of data collection and an even larger proportion of local areas.

Most SESA staff who are co-located at One-Stop centers provide services through Wagner-Peyser programs. Largely because most States have shifted to remote UI filing via phone or the Internet, there usually is much less UI program involvement. Thus, although WIA registration requires customers to be given access to UI programs at comprehensive One-Stop centers, this generally involved providing customers with basic instructions on how to file via the phone or Internet, except in Virginia and Illinois (which require customers to file in person) and to a lesser extent Oregon and Minnesota.<sup>11</sup>

Overall, WIA has not had a major effect on the way services were provided by SESA. The major effect of WIA on SESA was the increase in the number of SESA staff who were co-located at One-Stop centers and the increased number of SESA or ES offices that were either comprehensive or affiliate One-Stop centers themselves. This has resulted in many SESA employees taking on new duties and learning more about other workforce development programs. According to one ES manager, this has caused her agency to focus on better educating ES workers about other workforce development services so they can do a better job of referring customers to the services they need. Only in Georgia did ES officials note that the passage of WIA had prompted the agency to shift the way it provided employment services, such as by providing different levels of service to customers based on their needs.

Veterans' workforce programs were less affected. Veteran's program staff typically spent some time at most comprehensive One-Stop centers, including those operated by non-SESA entities. But they were usually on-site for very limited periods and they almost never provided services to customers who were not specifically eligible

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<sup>11</sup> Oregon allows initial applications to be filed in person or through the mail, and Minnesota requires UI applicants to file remotely but requires that they attend an orientation at a One-Stop center before they can receive benefits.

for veterans' workforce programs. They also rarely provided funding or resources to support One-Stop systems beyond in-kind staff time used for serving veterans. Even getting these commitments from veterans' programs was often described as a challenge.

However, in a step in a more positive direction, an agreement between the Oregon SESA and the Oregon Governor's Office outlined a number of steps to better integrate veterans' workforce programs with the State's One-Stop system, including by having veterans' program staff ensure that One-Stop staff were knowledgeable about programs available to veterans and their eligibility rules.

### **Adult Education and Literacy**

Adult education and literacy providers who receive WIA Title II funding are also mandated One-Stop partners according to WIA, but had varying levels of involvement in practice. In several States and local areas—including in Suffolk and Erie Counties in NY, the Medford and Portland areas in Oregon, and the Chicago Mayor's Office and DuPage County in Illinois—adult education and literacy programs had very strong relationships with One-Stop systems and also often contributed in-kind or financial resources to support the One-Stop system. However, in States whose One-Stop systems tended to be dominated by workforce agencies that included most other mandatory partners, adult education and literacy tended to be less well integrated. In addition, although adult education and literacy providers were often key partners in One-Stop systems and were typically represented on State and local Boards, they typically co-located few staff.

Several adult education providers reported that WIA had affected them in a positive way by helping them to become better integrated into the evolving workforce development system. For example, in Suffolk County, adult education providers noted that WIA had helped them to move from being workforce development "vendors" to becoming true "partners." In the Medford Job Council local area, one of the primary providers of adult education and literacy services also said that its participation on both the local Board and in the One-Stop system had helped it to stop being an "isolationist" and work better with both workforce development agency partners and employers. In DuPage, an adult education provider commented that having staff co-located at One-Stop centers had helped them to take more of a case management approach with their customers.

### **Welfare-to-Work and TANF**

Although Welfare-to-Work (WtW) programs are mandatory One-Stop partners under WIA, TANF programs are not (except in certain States). As a result, while WtW programs were often well integrated into One-Stop systems, the relationship with TANF programs was less close and depended on the local area, even in States where TANF was a required One-Stop partner. Several case-study sites where TANF and WtW connections were the strongest were in States and local areas where welfare agencies had long collaborated or contracted with workforce development agencies for the provision of employment-related services to TANF customers. In these areas, numerous TANF staff were typically co-located, TANF managers were more likely to participate in local and State Boards, and the TANF program contributed financially to One-Stop centers.

### **Vocational Rehabilitation**

Although Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs are also mandatory One-Stop partners under WIA, they were rarely well integrated into local One-Stop partnerships. For example, in only three of the 23 local areas that we visited could VR be considered a strong partner. By contrast, in other case-study sites VR was often described by local Board staff as a less willing partner, and VR staff were typically only co-located at One-Stop centers for very limited amounts of time. In addition, as with veterans' program staff, VR staff were unable to serve any customers except those who were specifically eligible for VR services.

More broadly, several VR staff in round-two sites had concerns about participation in One-Stop systems. One VR staff person mentioned a concern that One-Stop centers were less accessible to the disabled than VR offices were. This individual also raised concerns about the confidentiality of customer data and the need to educate One-Stop staff about VR eligibility. Another VR staff person questioned whether One-Stop staff would be able to serve VR customers as well as VR staff could, particularly in the area of assessment. These concerns were similar to those expressed by VR staff in some of the local areas we visited in round-one, who were worried that co-location at One-Stop centers would result in less attention being paid to customers with disabilities. Yet, VR staff were still optimistic that these concerns could be solved and VR programs would eventually become better integrated into One-Stop systems.

## **Other Partners**

Respondents also mentioned a number of other required partners as playing a role in One-Stop systems. These partners typically had staff co-located at One-Stop centers only a few hours per week and were less likely than other partners to be members of local or State Boards or contribute to One-Stop centers.

Among these, Job Corps was mentioned as a partner in several round-two sites. In those sites, Job Corps typically had a representative on the local Youth Council and had outreach and admissions staff co-located at One-Stop centers for a few hours a week. Programs providing Title V Older Workers services were also occasionally members of local Boards and sometimes had staff co-located at One-Stop centers or even had customers working there. For example, in the Balance of Maricopa County local area, Older Worker program customers provided clerical support to One-Stop centers, such as by answering phones, monitoring the resource room, working in the reception area, or performing other clerical duties.

Only three case-study sites said that Indian and Native American programs were members of their Boards and had staff co-located at One-Stop centers for a few hours a week. Programs supported by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development were also only occasionally reported as being involved with One-Stop systems and few of them had staff even occasionally co-located at the One-Stop center.

## **CREATING A SEAMLESS SYSTEM OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

To promote the development of a broader workforce development and human service system that included the programs discussed in the previous section, DOL outlined a broad range of possibilities that would satisfy WIA requirements. These ranged from “simple co-location with coordinated delivery” to “full integration” that would involve coordinating and administering all partner programs under a single management structure and accounting system.<sup>12</sup>

The discussion of involvement by the various mandatory and suggested partners illustrates the fact that States and local areas had different notions of what a One-Stop system should look like and varied in the extent to which they were willing or able to

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<sup>12</sup> Resource Sharing for Workforce Investment Act One-Stop Centers: Methodologies for Paying of Funding Each Partner Program’s Fair Share of Allocable One-Stop Costs; Notice. Federal Register, June 27, 2000.



create a “seamless system.” Many sites focused on developing One-Stop systems where all partners would have staff co-located on-site, because they felt that doing so was efficient for both customers and the agencies themselves. For example, staff at one site asserted that co-location was critical because, even with extensive cross-training, no one staff person could learn enough about partner programs to make things truly seamless. Another local area talked about the importance and benefit of being able to walk customers over to a staff person from a partner agency, rather than having to do a paper or phone referral that may sit on someone’s desk for weeks.

Other case-study sites focused on other ways of improving their State or local area’s workforce development system. For example, some sites were attempting to make the system seamless through developing better electronic linkages and referral systems. Although they felt that co-location was important, they noted that there were circumstances that might make it very difficult or even impossible to do so, such as the constraint of existing leases and the need to find new space that was large enough and configured appropriately. Faced with these circumstances, these sites found that it was not so important for agencies to be located in the same building so long as services were well integrated and customers could access them efficiently.

Most case study sites were interested in trying to develop both physical One-Stops with most partners co-located on-site *and* more integrated workforce development systems. Several sites specifically mentioned that although they had succeeded in having many partners co-located, they were striving for much more. For example, the Illinois WIA plan indicates that the State wants “to establish a system with seamless integration of services that moves beyond co-location.” And in one local area, one agency with staff co-located at a One-Stop said that, although co-location was important, they would like to see a common management information system (MIS) to help partners become better integrated. Other sites talked about the need to develop a common intake system and eliminate paper referrals.

With these varying visions in mind, case-study sites utilized a variety of different service delivery and other methods to bring about the development of a seamless system of service delivery among partners through the One-Stop system. These methods usually centered on physical One-Stop centers, including shared reception, intake and orientation, and multi-agency teams, but sometimes extended beyond the centers themselves. Although each of these methods could be used separately, generally, the more of them that are used together the more seamless the system was likely to be.

### **Coordinating Services Dependent on Staff Proximity**

As the discussion above suggests, most of the case study sites saw co-location of partner staff at One-Stop centers as central to developing strong partnerships and integrated services. In keeping with this, all round-two sites had staff from at least two required partner programs (usually one was the provider of WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker programs) co-located on-site at their comprehensive One-Stop centers. Nonetheless, fewer sites—including those in Suffolk and Erie Counties in New York, DuPage in Illinois, and the Medford and Portland local areas in Oregon, among others—had succeeded in co-locating staff from most or all One-Stop partners. Moreover, four local areas had only limited co-location from few partners, with co-located staff typically on-site for minimal periods of time and interacting little. Part of the reason why co-location was not more common were the practical difficulties involved, as we will discuss later in this paper.

Where it did occur, co-location was generally viewed as very beneficial, because it helped partners get to know each other better and made client referrals easier. However, it also made possible the sharing or coordination of certain functions or duties that occur at the One-Stop center, such as intake and orientation and service delivery.

**Shared Intake, Orientation, and Reception.** Even where States and local areas had been successful in developing relationships with partners that led to extensive co-location, many did not think co-location was enough to guarantee seamless services. In fact, unless other methods were used with co-location, service delivery may have been only marginally improved. For example, in two local areas we visited, partners were located in the same building, but maintained separate offices with no shared reception area, and the partners interacted little. The result has been only marginal improvement in convenience for customers. In a few other local areas, although partners shared office space, there was little coordination among them and each partner still carried out services separately, in one case even to the point of having separate resource rooms.

In an effort to move beyond simple co-location, nearly all local areas implemented shared intake, orientation, and a common reception area in One-Stop centers. The most common of these methods was the use of a shared receptionist or greeter. While only occasionally is the staffing of this position shared among co-located partner staff, the greeter is almost always cross-trained on all partners' services available at the One-Stop so that she or he can help customers find what they need.

Some local areas and States were also jointly providing staff to work in Resource Rooms. These staff typically also play a role in directing customers to appropriate partner services.

Common intake forms and processes were also used by several case study sites and sometimes required partners to develop a confidentiality form to share participant data. Use of a joint orientation was also somewhat common, and sometimes involved co-located staff presenting information about their own programs.

**Multi-agency Teams.** Multi-agency teams represent another method used to integrate services at One-Stop centers by a few local areas. These teams were both formal and informal. Among the informal arrangements, in two local areas partners had created informal teams centered around serving common customers, and, in other local areas, co-located staff were informally sharing assessment information for common customers.

By contrast, other areas established formal teams made up of staff from an agency that administers multiple workforce development programs, and the teams were charged with providing services for these multiple programs in an integrated fashion. For example, Rural Minnesota established 11 teams of eight caseworkers and a manager who work in the local area's various One-Stop centers and are responsible for assessment, intake and providing services for all programs administered by the Concentrated Employment Program, including WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, WtW, and TANF, among others. Similarly, in Utah, One-Stop staff from the Department of Workforce Services with expertise in various areas, such as training, TANF requirements, placement and eligibility, are assigned to integrated services teams. All team members work with customers in all areas and rely on their teammates to assist them with providing services in areas where they have less expertise.

The Northern Tier of Pennsylvania has also fully embraced the concept of multi-agency teams that included staff from partner agencies. Supervisors assign One-Stop center staff to the following functional units: a Primary Services Unit that focuses on conducting WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Program intake and eligibility, assessments, and basic career counseling; a Job Seeker Unit that focuses on job readiness training and supportive services; an Employer Services Unit that conducts marketing to employers and provides most employer services; and a Career Resources Unit that assists customers in the Resource Room and with accessing the system. The

only co-located staff who are not involved with these teams are VR and veterans' program staff, who could only work with customers eligible for their programs. The Three Rivers local area in Pennsylvania was also planning to develop similar teams at the time we visited it in PY 2000.

### **Coordinating Services Not Dependent on Staff Proximity**

Local areas developed other methods of coordinating service delivery or in partnering that were not dependent on being physically co-located in One-Stop centers. These included joint referral systems, staff cross-training, and electronic linkages.

**Referral Systems.** A key aspect of ensuring that the workforce development system is seamless involves the implementation of smooth and effective referrals, to ensure that customers, and information about them, get to the right place. Effective referral systems are particularly critical where partner staff are not co-located at One-Stop centers and staff making a referral cannot just walk a customer over to a partner agency staff-person's desk.

We found evidence of referral systems originating at both the State and local levels. For example, the Georgia Employment Service, which has a contract to provide employment services for TANF recipients, developed an electronic intake and referral system with the TANF program. In Oregon, the State developed the concept of "value-added referrals," which means providing each customer with an annotated listing of partner services and assisting them with making an appointment with the appropriate partner program.

In addition, many other local areas said they had or were developing referral systems. Moreover, about half of all local areas we visited in round two said that there was extensive co-enrollment between various One-Stop partners, although none said they kept exact records

**Training and Cross-training.** Another important aspect of making the system seamless, and a critical part of making good referrals, is the cross-training of staff, a basic step in ensuring that customers can go to any partner in the One-Stop system and be assured of being accurately referred or directed to whichever services they need. Because cross-training is so fundamental to One-Stop systems, cross-training or other training between partners was mentioned in all but one of the 23 local areas we visited.

We observed various instances of this, which can be summarized as follows:

- Information-sharing about one another's programs. To facilitate the referral process and generally keep partners up-to-date, some local areas provide partners with the regular opportunity to give updates on their programs. For example, at the comprehensive One-Stop Center in the Medford Job Council local area, co-located partners have the opportunity to provide both oral and written updates on their programs at the center's weekly staff meeting. For this reason, the local area has found that cross-information training is more effective among co-located staff who have the opportunity to make and receive these regular updates. In Portland Worksystems, one One-Stop partnership has dealt with the issue of keeping information up-to-date by creating a website for staff, which can be updated at any time with detailed information on each partner's programs. According to one partner, they did this because, despite extensive cross-training, some staff had trouble being able to retain enough information about all of the partners' programs to provide accurate referrals.
- Team-building to improve the general capacity of staff, usually co-located, to work together.
- Cross-training in which staff are able to provide specific services for another program. For example, in the Balance of Maricopa County and Yuma County, State ES staff have provided training to Adult and Dislocated Worker program staff at One-Stop centers on how to use the online ES system and Unemployment Insurance (UI) program procedures, to enable those staff to assist customers with accessing these two ES functions when no ES staff are available.

**Electronic Linkage.** Developing electronic linkages between partners was another important means of making the workforce development system more seamless. These electronic linkages can include shared management information systems (MIS), shared case management, shared intake and referral systems, and Internet linkages (see the companion paper on *MIS and Oversight* for information about efforts to create shared MIS capabilities).

There are a number of ways electronic linkages can lead to more seamless services. For example, a shared MIS would lead to more integrated systems by allowing partners to examine program results throughout the workforce development system. This could help policymakers make strategic decisions about where to focus resources. Shared reporting systems could also save staff time because some basic data would only have to be entered once. Similarly, shared case management systems allow partners to work together more closely on shared customers by allowing staff to see what other services customers have received and read case notes and thereby prevent

the duplication of services. Joint intake and referral save staff time entering basic customer information and make it easier for staff who are not co-located to share this information and make sure customer referrals do not get lost between agencies. Unfortunately, because most of these systems are either in development or very new, it is not yet clear how much they have assisted partnerships or resulted in improved services to customers.

As the companion briefing paper on *MIS and Oversight* suggests, developing joint MIS capabilities was often carried out as a State function. Thus, four round-two States and three round-one States are developing a joint One-Stop operating system. For example, among the round-two states, Georgia, Minnesota, Montana, and New York have developed or are developing shared MIS for reporting for all or most DOL-funded programs. However, thus far only Minnesota will cover non-DOL Federal programs, such as TANF, Food Stamps, and subsidized childcare. Oregon is also in the process of creating a shared workforce development system that will include reporting for numerous State, Federal, and even local programs, including TANF, WIA Title IB, ES and Title II Adult Education providers. Finally, one local area, Portland Worksystems, has developed a shared reporting and customer information system for its local area and is now in the process of bringing in local partners, beginning with the Portland Housing Authority.

Five round-two States and four round-one States are also developing shared case management systems among One-Stop partners. However, in five of these States, this case management function will only be available within the State's consolidated workforce development agency that typically includes ES, WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, and other DOL funded programs. Rural Minnesota has also developed its own local case management system, which it shares with State ES agency staff who work in the local area. All seven States that are developing One-Stop Operating Systems are also creating shared intake systems.

A few other local areas are using shared websites to further link partners. For example, in Southwest Georgia, the local Board's website shows the schedule for all partner staff at the Albany One-Stop center, which allows both customers and staff to determine exactly when they can meet with those staff members. A Portland Worksystems One-Stop partnership has also developed a website with information on each partner's program. Finally, the Medford Job Council requires all One-Stop

centers and affiliate sites in its local area to have Internet access in order to allow staff and customers to link directly to partners' websites.

### **Coordination Through Governance**

Governance bodies also have become an effective vehicle for partnership building, including State and local WIBs (and their subcommittees), state administrative teams, and governance bodies established especially at One-Stop centers.

**Overall Workforce System Governance.** An important means of developing a seamless workforce development system is to create governance and organizational structures that provide a forum for partners to meet and discuss issues related to partnership and service integration. The creation of State and local Workforce Development Boards has generally been successful in creating such forums.

More important than the Boards themselves are the Boards' subcommittees, where much actual planning and decision-making take place. Subcommittees focused on system integration or One-Stop system-building have been especially important from the standpoint of strengthening partnerships. Most State and local case-study sites have one or more such committees. These committees have been found to be a better place for discussions between partners, because they are typically smaller and meet more often, and One-Stop partners who are not members of the full Board are sometimes able to participate.<sup>13</sup> These committees are also able to focus more specifically on partnership and One-Stop issues than the full Board would have time for. For example, in Chicago, the Service Delivery Integration committee is looking at integrating workforce development programs through referral and bridge programming and even at changing GED testing practices to better fit with the needs of customers in other programs.

**State Inter-Agency Teams.** At the State level, interagency administrative teams or bodies have also assisted partners in working better together. For example, several case-study States formed such teams, and charged them with developing an integrated workforce development system. As Table 1 shows, these teams include representatives from State ES agencies, WIA Title IB, VR, TANF, higher education, and secondary vocational and technical education. Oregon, Kentucky and Pennsylvania have teams

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<sup>13</sup> A drawback, though, is that, because of time constraints, employers are less likely to participate in committees, so their input is likely to be missed.

made up of both agency leaders who are charged with making policy decisions and teams made up of program managers who focus on implementation issues. Unfortunately, the existence of interagency teams alone does not guarantee smooth collaboration at the State level. However, when they meet regularly, these teams provide additional forums for coordination and communication, which make service integration more likely.

Some States have also strengthened partnerships between programs and increased the likelihood of a more seamless system of services through consolidation of State workforce development programs into a single workforce agency. Some consolidation is very common. For example, of the 14 States we visited in both round one and two, all but one located Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title IB administration in the same state agencies. In fact, two States used WIA implementation as an opportunity for moving the administration of WIA Title IB programs into the same agency that administers ES to increase collaboration between the two programs. Three other States, Florida, Utah, and Texas, have also integrated TANF programs into the State's consolidated workforce agency that administers most workforce development programs.

However, just locating programs under the same department or agency is not always an effective way to increase service integration unless other steps are taken to ensure increased coordination. One key strategy used by several States to make agency consolidation more likely to lead to closer collaboration between programs was to accompany consolidation with service delivery reforms. For example, in several States where agency consolidation has increased program integration, organizational consolidation was accompanied by a re-organization at the service delivery level, including the formation of consolidated local offices. In these States, the co-location of staff from these programs at One-Stop centers and the development of cost-allocation agreements to support One-Stop centers was much smoother, since the programs had already begun the process of service integration prior to WIA implementation.

However, in States where agency consolidation was primarily a bureaucratic shuffle and programs maintained primarily separate systems of service delivery and administration, consolidation made little difference in improving program integration or partnership. In addition, because VR is administered as part of a consolidated workforce development agency in only three States, and adult education programs are never located in those agencies, coordination with these two key partners was not typically improved.



**Table 1. State Interagency Workforce Development Teams**

States	Composition of State Interagency Teams
Arizona	Arizona Interagency WIA Planning & Implementation includes Department of Economic Security, Department of Commerce (staff to the WIB), and the Department of Education
Illinois	Governor’s Interagency Team includes Department of Employment Security, Department of Human Services, Office of Rehabilitation Services, Illinois Community College Board and the Illinois Board of Education
Kentucky	WIA Implementation Team includes Office of Training and Reemployment, Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Department for the Blind, Welfare to Work, Adult Education, Vocational and Technical Education, Secretary for Workforce Development, a representative from the Governor’s office, and the State’s Chief Information Officer. Operational Steering Committee includes program-level representatives of these same agencies.
Montana	State Management Team includes the Department of Labor and Industry, Department of Public Health and Human Services, Department of Commerce, Office of Public Instruction and the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education.**
Oregon	Governor’s Workforce Policy Cabinet includes Oregon Employment Department, Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Department, Department of Human Services and Department of Education. Program Implementation Team includes program managers from each of these agencies.
Pennsylvania	Workforce Development Core Team includes the deputy secretary and policy director for the Departments of Aging, Community & Economic Development, Education, Labor & Industry, Public Welfare, and a representative from the Governor’s Office. Operational Core Team includes bureau directors and program managers from the same agencies, chairs of planning groups and representatives from key state and local stakeholders. Technology Leadership Team also includes representatives from these same agencies and the Office of Administration’s Information Technology Chief.

\*\* Note: This Team had not yet met as of the time of our data collection.

**One-Stop Center Governance Bodies.** Another method used by most local areas to maintain strong partnerships and integrate services was to form One-Stop system or center governance bodies or structures. These governance bodies typically served as a forum for partners to meet regularly and discuss how to work better together at One-Stop centers and to discuss specific issues regarding management of centers. These bodies were typically in addition to local Board committees that provide overall oversight duties to the One-Stop system.

Some local areas had multi-level One-Stop center governance. In Chicago, for example, there were three levels: an Executive Team made up of agency heads with responsibility for making policy decisions for the One-Stop system, a City-Wide Implementation Team in charge of on-going monitoring of the One-Stop system by partners, and a Center Level Operations Team which focuses on day-to-day operations at individual centers and is made up of co-located staff or their immediate supervisors. While higher-level teams tended to meet only monthly or quarterly, the center-level teams were likely to meet more often, because of the need for more regular communication between co-located staff. Indeed, this opportunity for regular communication was described as critical for more seamless services, because it allows partners to regularly communicate about changes to their programs.

#### **FACTORS ASSISTING PARTNERSHIPS**

Several factors strengthened partnerships between workforce development programs and resulted in more integrated service delivery systems, including state policy direction and a prior history of collaboration.

##### **State Guidance and Policy Direction**

One important determinant of how effectively partners work together was State or local guidance and policies that encouraged or mandated increased coordination. Although most States said that they encouraged coordination, only a few took concrete steps to force recalcitrant State agencies to become more involved or were willing to put major resources behind coordination. One example of a State that compelled regional managers of State agencies to collaborate was Pennsylvania. In this state, regional managers were given the ability to negotiate specific service delivery roles in each local partnership. However, if the State felt that a regional manager was not being fully supportive, agency leaders in the central office would step in to mandate a higher level of partnership.

Other States have preferred to use incentives to encourage collaboration rather than mandates. For example, the State ES agency in Oregon provided local ES offices with a small pool of flexible funding for local managers to use in developing One-Stop partnerships. Arizona also set aside 70% of its incentive funds to be awarded to local areas based on the quality of their partnerships and collaboration. Some States have also adjusted ES service boundaries to match LWIA boundaries to ensure that it would be easier for the two programs to work together.

### **Prior History of Workforce Development**

States and local areas with a history of successful workforce development partnerships also had an easier time developing and maintaining the strong partnerships that lead to integrated services. This relationship demonstrates that it is much easier to build on already existing successful partnerships than to begin from scratch. In many case-study sites, these partnerships stemmed from the development of One-Stop partnerships beginning in the mid to late 1990s. However, in some cases they predated the receipt of One-Stop Implementation Grant funding—in fact some States and local areas had begun developing integrated workforce services centers as early as the late 80s and early 90s. By contrast, States and local areas that did not begin developing One-Stop systems until the late 1990s typically had a much more difficult time trying to bring all partners together. Unfortunately, just as a successful history of partnerships helped to develop successful partnerships, a history of problems between partners made partnership formation difficult. Both 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 other for a long time

### **A Collaborative Approach to Decision-Making**

One important aspect of successful partnerships stemmed from the use of inclusive decision making processes that were not dominated by any one agency. Thus, States and local areas that involved all partners from the outset in a collaborative way (such as in planning for WIA) often had an easier time developing strong partnerships. This was true, for example, in Illinois, Kentucky and Pennsylvania, where the use of collaborative WIA planning helped to create a shared framework that made it easier for State agencies to work together successfully. This could be contrasted with the experience in one State, where a single agency briefly held both oversight and administrative powers over local areas, resulting in major conflict between this agency

and local Board staff that has seriously hindered WIA implementation at both the State and local levels.

## **SUMMARY OF BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES**

An examination of the experiences in the States and local areas we studied highlights a number of important benefits and challenges associated with partnership building.

### **Benefits**

The most important goal of partnership development and the creation of integrated workforce systems is to improve services to customers. Many of the service delivery methods discussed above may be too new for staff or customers to see benefits. Thus far, most tangible benefits to customers have stemmed from the co-location of staff at One-Stop centers. These benefits can be summarized below.

1. *Faster Action on Referrals.* One benefit mentioned by staff in several local areas was that co-location has significantly improved referrals between partners. For example, in Chicago, a One-Stop partner described how the ability to walk customers over to partner agency staff has greatly improved services because the customer begins receiving services from the partner immediately rather than having to wait days or weeks while a referral form sits on someone's desk. In Southwest Virginia, a One-Stop staff person also noted that having partners on-site, particularly adult education partners, has made customers more likely to actually follow through and attend GED or other classes that are critical to achieving their employment goals.
2. *Easier for Customers with Transportation Barriers.* Another benefit mentioned by some local areas was that having more partners co-located in a central area has made it easier for customers with transportation barriers to receive all the services they need. In DuPage, staff found that this was particularly true for TANF customers.
3. *Clear Focus on Employment.* TANF program staff in another local area commented that providing work-related services to TANF customers at One-Stop centers was particularly effective because there were more resources available for job search and the entire environment was more focused on employment.
4. *Improved Communication between Partners.* Increased formal and informal communication between partners was another benefit of partnering mentioned by local areas. This communication includes cross-training sessions, formal One-Stop governance meetings, or even informal conversations around the water cooler. This regular communication helps co-located staff stay updated on partner programs and learn from each other, resulting in better services to

customers. In one Vermont One-Stop center, this kind of “cross-pollination” between staff from the State’s Vocational Rehabilitation Office and the Vermont Department of Employment and Training led the latter to better understand the importance of job retention. In Yuma County, having State ES staff co-located at the One-Stop center led to an overall improvement in the provision of core services to customers due to their expertise in resume updating and job search. In the Medford Job Council local area, staff praised the ability of co-located employees to be able to “put a face on a name” and develop trust in partner agency staff by working together. This in turn has helped them to function more efficiently because they are not afraid to use each other’s skills and services to serve customers more effectively. Finally, in Chicago, one partner described a One-Stop meeting that directly led to increased benefits for customers due to improved communication between workforce agencies. During this meeting, one agency providing services to the elderly said that, although they encouraged their customers to get a GED, the customers had a lot of trouble paying for GED classes. At that point, another partner spoke up and said that his agency provided free GED training to seniors and described how partners’ clients could take advantage of these services.

### **Challenges**

Despite these benefits, the development of partnerships and integrated services was very challenging to most sites. While some of these challenges related specifically to the co-location of staff at One-Stop centers, others related to partnering in general. Although the challenges discussed below are based primarily on round-two sites, many similar challenges arose in our earlier round of data collection.

1. *Limitations of Co-Locating on Client Services.* There were a number of challenges specifically related to partners working together at physical One-Stop centers. Several local areas and one State said that they do not think that co-located One-Stops make sense in rural areas. They pointed out that, in many rural areas, residents have to travel long distances to a comprehensive One-Stop, when a partner’s agency office might be much closer. Southwest Georgia, a very rural area, was establishing a number of mini-One-Stop centers in partner office locations scattered throughout the local workforce area as a supplement to a single large, One-Stop center in the area’s largest city. Others used itinerancy to address the absence of transportation. WIA staff in Northeast Georgia, another largely rural area, travel to public facilities throughout the service area. In addition, that local board has several recreational vehicles fully outfitted with computers and Internet access and WIA staff to provide at least some One-Stop services.
2. *Finding Suitable Buildings.* Another major challenge to co-locating staff at One-Stop centers was the difficulty in finding suitable buildings with low rents. For example, three local areas reported that not all partners could be co-located in some

of their present One-Stop centers because of a lack of space. One of those local areas said that although it had located a building of the right size, the cost of refurbishing it was too high so they have stayed in their present small building. Another challenge is finding suitable buildings with sufficient parking and access to convenient public transportation. Ensuring that buildings were accessible to customers with disabilities was another concern, especially to VR. One-Stop centers must also be in locations acceptable to their neighbors. This was a problem mentioned in one urban area where the perception that One-Stop centers serve primarily low-income customers caused neighborhood groups to oppose plans to locate a center there. Finally, the process of finding suitable buildings to house One-Stop centers was made even more difficult in one round-one State where State law does not allow ES offices to be located in private buildings.

3. *Leases.* There were also many problems with co-location related to leases. For example, some partners are unable to co-locate staff and contribute to support for One-Stop centers because they were stuck in long-term leases elsewhere. In one round-one State, there were also problems with requirements that each co-locating partner needed to negotiate a separate lease, which resulted in some landlords refusing to lease buildings to One-Stop partnerships. Another problem mentioned in one local area was the requirement that some public agencies are prevented by State law from entering into leases longer than 60 days, which is much shorter than most landlords would prefer.
4. *Partners' Limited Abilities to Participate in Partnerships.* Another barrier to partnering at One-Stop centers is that some partners are seriously limited in their ability or desire to participate in these partnerships. We saw four general objections. First, staff from VR and veterans' programs feel that they are unable to serve universal customers or provide general support to One-Stop centers due to restrictions on how they can use their resources. This makes it difficult for these staff to participate in multi-agency teams or share greeting, intake or orientation functions at One-Stop centers. Second, in some local areas agencies serving targeted customers, such as TANF and VR agencies, were reluctant to encourage their customers to use One-Stop centers, because they worried One-Stop staff were not as well trained in working with their customers as were their own staff. Third, some partners also worried about whether One-Stop systems could share customer and employer data but still maintain adequate confidentiality protections. Finally, the organization of workforce development services on a tiered basis, as required by WIA, was not really compatible with the way in which other agencies organized services. Thus, although the law requires that the mandatory partners deliver their core services through the One-Stop center, none of the partners organized its services in that way. Further, some agencies viewed workforce development as simply one small component of their much broader mission, and thus typically committed limited numbers of staff to the One-Stop centers.
5. *Short Time Frame.* One challenge to overall partnership development was the very short timeframe allowed for new partnerships to develop before being required by

WIA implementation to talk about very specific service coordination or resource commitments. For example, several officials in one State talked about how the need to focus on implementation of the basic provisions of WIA legislation prevented them from focusing enough on the overall development of One-Stop partnerships. Another local area said that this short timeframe made MOU development very difficult because sometimes partners were having to talk about sensitive issues like cost sharing and budgets during their first meetings together.

6. *History of Conflict.* A history of conflict between agencies was another barrier to partnership development. When State agencies don't get along well, this conflict often makes it more difficult for local staff from these agencies to work together in local partnerships. For example, in one State, the offices that administer WIA and ES programs do not have a good relationship, despite being in the same agency. As a result, ES has been slow to integrate its staff into the One-Stop system and has continued to maintain its own offices. Conflict at the local level can also make partnership-building problematic and was a barrier in some local areas.
7. *One-Stop Systems or Centers Dominated by One Partner.* A somewhat related problem occurred when certain State or local partners were perceived by other partners as dominating the One-Stop system or individual centers. This tended to make other agencies somewhat less likely to participate in the system. For example, one State workforce development agency created a system of integrated local offices prior to WIA on its own; both local areas we visited only reluctantly agreed to charter the State offices as One-Stop centers and there is still only limited co-location from other partners at those sites. In another State where most mandatory partners are administered under the State workforce development agency and nearly all One-Stops are administered by that agency, participation in the One-Stop system by partners not part of that agency (such as adult education and literacy providers) is limited. This was also an issue in some local areas where One-Stop centers were dominated by their operator.
8. *State-controlled One-Stop Partners and Local Boards.* A contradiction in the nexus of control between local Boards and many required One-Stop partners was also a challenge to partnership development. Although WIA is designed to devolve control over many workforce development policies to the local level through local Boards and One-Stop partnerships, most required One-Stop partners are administered by State agencies, with most control maintained at the State level. This creates a problem because local managers of these agencies, who typically participate on local Boards, often do not have the flexibility to create local partnerships without going through an extensive approval process. This approval process can create lengthy delays and frustrate other partners who see this as bureaucratic intransigence or unwillingness to partner. In one State, the State ES managers attributed this seeming lack of flexibility to the need for State agencies to provide a certain level of services state-wide in order to meet Federal and State requirements and standards. They said these agencies often have a very difficult time balancing state-wide requirements with the need for local flexibility.

9. *Each Partner has its own Funding, Requirements and Performance Goals.* The fact that each Federal program and funding stream has its own requirements and performance goals and receives funding separately has made it more difficult for programs to partner. For example, local Board staff in one local area said that partners have not bought into the development of an integrated workforce development system under the local Board because they do not see WIA as “their own.” In one State, some officials commented that local Board staff and WIA Title IB programs are the only ones who will be penalized for not meeting performance goals even though they are reliant on partnerships with other agencies to meet them. Another local area said that local Boards have all the responsibility for making local workforce development systems more integrated, but none of the power needed to make it happen. Several case study sites also questioned the Federal government’s commitment to developing an integrated workforce system and blamed this lack of commitment for many partnership challenges. For example, some case-study sites wondered why Wagner-Peyser and Perkins-funded programs needed to have performance goals different from WIA’s if all of the partners are supposed to be working together. Separate funding streams was also mentioned as a constraint. A number of case study sites felt that the WIA legislation should have included methods to overcome many of these barriers. For example, they suggested that the legislation should have required more of mandatory partners, such as set funding contributions to the One-Stop system, and held them specifically responsible for WIA outcomes.



## IV. MIS AND OVERSIGHT

This briefing paper is part of a series developed as part of the *Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates and Technical Assistance and Training Corporation. The evaluation consists thus far of two rounds of site visits: the first round of site visits was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight state and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. An overview of the evaluation is included as an appendix to this report. This briefing paper for the most part draws on findings from the second round of site visits, because these capture developments associated with WIA that were the most recent at the time this Briefing Paper was written in mid 2002 (note that states and local areas might have made substantial progress on MIS development since then; thus, these findings should be viewed as point-in-time snapshots of systems and system challenges).

In this briefing paper, we discuss two key issues in program administration: the use of information technology in the management and delivery of services and the related topic of oversight, one component of which—desk monitoring—uses the products of information systems. We focus principally on how States are implementing their information systems and oversight responsibilities, although we cover local response to the State actions. The paper begins with individual discussions of three general functions that information technology performs for workforce development, and then it moves on to examine how the States are building new, more comprehensive systems created for a One-Stop environment, the so-called One-Stop operating systems, that unify all the functions into a single system. The paper looks at the scope of these systems and the challenges in development. The paper then shifts to oversight, where we discuss, in turn, on-site monitoring and desk reviewing. This section includes a discussion of different oversight orientations—technical assistance and compliance—that States are using in carrying their oversight responsibilities.

### INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Information technology supports the Workforce Investment Act in three broad functional areas:

- **General management.** The general management function serves two principal purposes: 1) it is the basic means by which the leadership of a

local workforce investment area—its executives and the Local Workforce Investment Board—learns about characteristics of customers and the services they receive so that they can manage local workforce activity and costs; and 2) it is the tool to report to the State (and in turn to the Federal government) customer outcomes for performance accountability systems and expenditures so that States can manage sub-State allocations and the Federal level can manage State allotments.

- **Serving Customers.** Information is central to searching for jobs (among job-seeking customers) or finding employees (among employer customers), so information technology systems that increase the amount, quality, or accessibility of information are quite valuable to WIA customers. All States and local areas now use one or more information systems to provide direct services to customers, such as assessment, job matching, LMI, and recently, the eligible provider list. Customers can serve themselves through self-services or use those services indirectly when staff use computerized tools to provide these services for their customers.
- **Supporting Staff.** Information systems can support staff in two ways that may improve both efficiency and effectiveness. First, these systems can take over or assist with the important functions of intake and determining eligibility, both of which have substantial clerical content and key entry. Automating this task or having the customer perform the data entry increases staff efficiency and frees up frontline staff to provide customers with professional support on job searching, career planning, and other services. Second, information systems can increase both effectiveness and efficiency of frontline staff by providing immediate access to information about their customers—their demographic characteristics, results from assessment and service planning, services received, case notes, and outcomes—that they need in order to manage a customer’s case effectively. In addition, automating scheduling or providing templates or form letters facilitates more efficient service to customers.

In this section we examine how the States and local areas in the study have addressed these functional areas individually and the extent to which they have brought multiple functions together into a unified system, commonly known as a One-Stop operating system. In addition, we examine whether States and local areas, pursuant to One-Stop activities, have applied any or all of these functions across multiple program areas, both within DOL-funded programs and partner programs funded by other agencies. Throughout this section we emphasize State-level information systems. States are the focus for reporting, the irreducible function because it has a specific statutory mandate, and systems for serving customers with labor exchange and LMI are

State functions as well. However, we do gauge the local reaction to these systems. We conclude the section with a discussion comparing the use of information technology in the eight States we visited in PY 2001 to the six early implementing States we examined in PY 2000.

### **Operations in the Functional Areas**

**General Management.** The general management function has been evident in the management and oversight of employment and training programs for quite some time. For reporting, JTPA required that States have a management information system to facilitate reporting and other forms of oversight to support the law's emphasis on performance measurement and the State's responsibility to manage the Federal funds allotted. Pursuant to the law, States and SDAs organized the reporting function in a variety of ways. There were two general approaches to carry out the statutory requirements: (1) a Statewide system in which local staff entered data directly (this could be a terminal-based mainframe or a Windows-based, PC system) or (2) fully local systems that reported data through various electronic or paper means to the State. Both the State and local systems varied significantly in the extent of technical modernity.

The general trend under JTPA and into WIA implementation for reporting has been to use a State-level system for reporting purposes. Four of the second-round States we studied currently (as of 2002) require their local areas to use the State management information system, either a dedicated mainframe-terminal system, as in Virginia, or a software application that runs in Windows and communicates with the State computers over the Internet, as in Georgia. In three other States, local areas had their own systems and could report performance data through a variety of electronic linkages. One other State had terminated an old state mainframe system and was requiring local areas to report on paper temporarily until a new system was completed. However, the day-to-day management function appears to have been largely a local matter and many of the LWIAs steadily enhanced their capacity to manage their programs through internal development or acquisition of software and increasingly powerful PC hardware. Not a single local area in our study indicated that it relied on the State system for basic management information.

WIA maintained the general requirements for management information systems virtually intact from the JTPA requirement (the language in the two statutes is virtually identical). However, within WIA, both internal and external factors led to substantial changes in how the general management function would be carried out. Internal factors

include changes in the structure of services such that customers might receive services from multiple programs, especially Wagner-Peyser and WIA; the potential need to expand the customer database because local workforce investment areas were now serving the universal customer; and a major change in the performance accountability system. Thus, these internal changes in what data needed to be collected and what would be the sources for that data created an imperative at least to modify the JTPA management information system. The external factor was the integration of services in One-Stop centers such that some One-Stop operators might be managing multiple programs. With integration of services in the One-Stop system added to the internal changes, many states and DOL felt that an effective adaptation to the WIA environment and the intended increased level of One-Stop integration would require a much more ambitious change in the information system, that is a One-Stop operating system, which we discuss below.

The States responded to these new WIA requirements in a variety of ways that ran the gamut of cost and complexity. At a minimum, they could patch or upgrade the JTPA MIS. At least initially, three States—Arizona, Oregon, and Virginia—were making only enough changes so that the existing JTPA systems could continue to do basic reporting and provide minimal state-level management capability. Although they made the least amount of changes, each of these States was considering more comprehensive change in the future. Virginia, for example, was waiting for one of the State consortia building a One-Stop operating system to complete its work. Arizona was considering a proposal from two of its three largest local workforce investment areas to purchase a proprietary One-Stop operating system that these areas had already purchased for local use. Oregon was moving in a slightly different direction altogether. The State was beginning to develop an information system that would be tailored to serve the State's own performance management system. Oregon has been working for over a decade in developing State-based performance measures for both State- and Federally-funded programs in workforce development and outside that field to help the State attain its own unique goals. One other State, Illinois, took a middle road by substantially revising its system so that it could better handle the new reporting tasks and provide the State with periodic reports on registrations, services received, and customer characteristics to facilitate active State oversight. Finally, the other four States—Georgia, Minnesota, Montana, and New York—decided to invest in new, more comprehensive systems. We discuss these below in the section on One-Stop operating systems. In this context, though, New York temporarily did very minor patching of its

JTPA system in anticipation of an imminent completion of its One-Stop operating system. However, even though the new system was not yet completed at the time of our site visit, the State decided to terminate the old system in August 2001. This forced both State and local organizations to file all their respective reports on paper, at least temporarily.

A major limitation of comprehensive management information during the early years of WIA implementation is the absence of financial information in the older systems. It appears likely that financial tracking was not included in the programmatic management information system because accounting and payment systems were more closely integrated into the financial systems from local governments that are the WIA grant sub-recipients. However, the new One-Stop operating systems all had financial management modules, as we will discuss below.

**Serving Customers.** The customer-service function—providing access to labor exchange, assessment and other tools, labor-market information, and the other components of America’s Career Kit--has its roots in the development of self-service concepts from the One-Stop initiative in the 1990s. Supported by grants from DOL and extensive work by DOL staff, consortia of State workforce development agencies created a set of technical specifications to facilitate this function. There were two general goals. One was to enrich the quality of job searching by job seekers (and filling job orders by employers) by providing the tools for thorough job and applicant searches. The second was to provide an infrastructure for self-service, which makes it possible for the workforce development system to serve the universal customer. Universal service would not be possible (given generally flat or declining appropriation levels from Congress) without the dramatic increase in staff labor productivity that computerization and self-service offer. To reach these goals, all the States in our study developed modern, computerized systems to make these tools available to customers through self-service, both in resource rooms and remotely on the Internet. Overall, this function evolved out of previous work and appeared little changed as a result of WIA implementation.

**Supporting Staff Operations.** The third broad functional area in which information technology intersects with the workforce development system is the direct support for front-line staff operations. As we noted in the description of staff support in the introduction to this section of the paper, there is potential for gains in both efficiency and effectiveness when automation can be applied to intake, eligibility

determination, and access to case-management information. This function is essentially local in nature and local areas have been developing or purchasing systems to carry out this function dating back to JTPA. In addition, the new State-level One-Stop operating systems are developing this component for local use.

Among the local areas that had purchased or developed systems with staff-support capabilities were Rural Minnesota, Balance of Montana, Balance of Maricopa, and both Oregon sites (the Medford Job Council and Portland WorkSystems). Staff from several of these areas indicated they were so satisfied with the functionality of this component that these areas were reluctant to use the State One-Stop operating system once it came on line. On the other hand, both local sites in Georgia, SW Georgia and NE Georgia, were satisfied with the staff-support functions of the Georgia's statewide One-Stop operating system. In these local sites, this function had previously been conducted largely by paper.

### **Integrating Functions and Covering Multiple Programs**

Perhaps the most important development in workforce development information technology is the effort to bring all the functional areas together into a single One-Stop operating system. In addition to including the three functional areas in support of WIA Title I services, the One-Stop operating system efforts are also concerned with broadening coverage beyond the programs funded by WIA Title I to other DOL-funded workforce development programs and to programs funded by other State and Federal sources. The One-Stop vision for cross-program partnerships expected that successful One-Stop partnerships would create a need to integrate information systems across program lines. Consequently, along with its One-Stop planning and implementation grants, DOL sponsored consortia of State workforce development agencies that would develop the information technology to support the convergence of multiple programs in a One-Stop center. In a multi-program environment, an operating system that would support common intake and eligibility determination, unified case management, and the ability to provide the necessary reports for each program would be a powerful tool to facilitate more comprehensive services to customers, efficiency, and coordination across program lines.

Four of the eight States in our study—Georgia, Minnesota, Montana, and New York—have built or are building a One-Stop operating system. There is, however, considerable disparity in the strategies for creating them. New York is the lead State in the DOL-sponsored consortium to produce a national One-Stop operating system,

Minnesota had been a member of the consortium in the past but withdrew and is customizing its own system through purchase of a proprietary system from a commercial vendor, Montana is acquiring a system developed by Washington State, and Georgia developed its system internally. In addition, Virginia is planning eventually to buy into the One-Stop operating system produced by the Mid-Atlantic consortium, a regional group of States led by Pennsylvania.

All the States are integrating DOL-funded programs in their systems. Exhibit 1 reflects the coverage of DOL programs in the One-Stop operating system in the four States as of early 2002.

**Exhibit 1**  
**Cross-Program Coverage of DOL Programs in**  
**State One-Stop Operating Systems**

	<u>Georgia</u>	<u>Minnesota</u>	<u>Montana</u>	<u>New York</u>
Workforce Investment Act	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Employment Service	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Unemployment Insurance	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
Trade Programs	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Welfare-to-Work	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Veterans Employment and Training Service	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Senior Community Service	No	Yes	No	No

All of these systems included WIA and both employment security system programs (Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance). Most also included Welfare-to-Work, Trade programs, and the Veterans program. Only Minnesota included the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

There was substantially less integration of partner programs from other Federal or State funding sources. Among the exceptions, Minnesota had a specific commitment from non-DOL programs to participate. Its system will cover 23 Federal and State programs, including TANF, Food Stamps, and subsidized child care. In fact, Minnesota's decision to leave the DOL consortium was partially based on the consortium's initial design that supported only a limited number of DOL-funded

programs. The other systems had some capability to handle these programs, but partners had either rejected participation or had not yet committed.

Georgia's design anticipated the inclusion of a few other programs, but initial discussions with other State agencies did not bear any fruit. However, the Georgia system was expecting to cover intake for Vocational Rehabilitation, a step that was facilitated by the reorganization of that program into the Georgia's workforce development agency. The Adult Education and Literacy program also expressed interest in moving its data onto the One-Stop operating system, but State officials characterized the status of the move as "uncertain." Nevertheless, a Georgia MIS official suggested that there was increasing interest from other State agencies who were observing the successful implementation of the system for the DOL-funded programs. He stated that the other agencies looked favorably on the system's stability and cost effectiveness.

**Difficulties in Implementing One-Stop Operating Systems.** Developing a One-Stop operating system for multiple programs faces several formidable challenges. These challenges include technical complexity, differing levels of interest in the One-Stop system, and cost allocation. First, there is the inherent technical complexity of integrated systems. Each program may require, for example, different data, definitions, and reports. Further, these systems must be able to interface with a variety of different software and hardware technologies ranging from the very modern to very old mainframe-based systems, known as "legacy" systems. Delays often intensified because of the difficulty during the late 1990s in hiring and retaining qualified computer professionals to design the systems and write the software code during what was a boom period for information technology. The long duration for development of the various State and consortia projects is ample testament to these difficulties. Even States like Minnesota that are acquiring commercial systems have substantial difficulties in customizing the application to their requirements. Accordingly, a number of our local respondents, who are the intended users for these systems, were quite frustrated with the slow pace of progress.

Second, there are a number of potential obstacles deriving from the broader programmatic needs of participating programs that may limit their level of commitment to the One-Stop system in the first place. For example, welfare or vocational rehabilitation agencies in some of the sites we visited have only a limited portion of their staff and clients who need to use workforce development services at any given



time. Agencies also have different data needs and Federal rules governing system design. For example, welfare agencies have substantially different data needs, and thus only one of the four One-Stop operating systems in this group of states is incorporating its welfare program into its system. A further obstacle for some potential partners, such as child support enforcement, child welfare, and food stamps, is that Federal rules for these programs require States to submit an advanced planning document before developing information technology systems. Although some critics have argued that these advanced planning documents, which were introduced when the States were developing large, mainframe computing projects in the 1970s and 1980s, are no longer as well suited to the needs of States where the system are often small and change is incremental, these requirements still apply and may be obstacles to integrating their data systems into One-Stop operating systems.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, there is a problem of cost allocation between programs. Developing a cost-allocation plan for any One-Stop service is challenging, as we discuss in the paper on partnership that we have produced as part of this evaluation. However, allocating costs for a One-Stop operating system is especially difficult. Respondents noted several reasons for these difficulties:

- The cost of communication over the Internet is completely separate from any One-Stop operating system transactions and is difficult to measure for any particular use.
- It is difficult to value transactions with the One-Stop operating system. These transactions may vary substantially in the benefit—the primary criterion for cost allocation under the DOL methodology—they bring to the programs. For example, one case manager may connect to get personal background information on a general labor-market issue while another may connect for the same length of time listing a service received or making extensive case notes for a registrant.
- Marginal costs for transactions are very small compared to the costs of development and basic maintenance, thus increasing the difficulty of attributing benefit by any of the suggested cost-allocation methodologies.

Our respondents noted that the cost-allocation issues remain unresolved.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office, “Human Services Integration: Results of a GAO Co-Sponsored Conference on Modernizing Information Systems. Washington, D.C., 2002.

**Factors Affecting the Design and Scope of Information Systems.** Our State respondents in the study gave two types of reasons for building or considering a One-Stop operating system. The first was improving the quality of customer service and fostering One-Stop integration. The second type of reason was technological: namely that their existing information systems were inadequate to meet the needs in each of the functional areas and that the underlying technologies were sufficiently obsolete that they were unlikely to be effective even if they were modified to meet WIA requirements. Technological reasons for creating a new system were cited in nearly all the States. In six States, the existing systems were predominantly characterized by our respondents as obsolete. These systems, whether they were terminal and mainframe systems, such as the system in use in Georgia or local PCs reporting to State mainframes or minicomputers, lacked flexibility to meet successfully the requirements of the three functional areas described above. Thus, these States concluded that investment in a modern integrated system was worth the difficulty, cost, and risk.

Georgia MIS staff, for example, believed that its former dumb-terminal and mainframe architecture was so outmoded that any attempt to modernize the system would be a poor investment. Minnesota's old system had no Internet-based connection, so its local areas reported information by sending floppy disks through the regular mail. New York's system was considered so inadequate that State officials terminated its operation even before its One-Stop operating system became operational.

The only States that were not considering a One-Stop operating system were Illinois and Oregon. Illinois used a more modern, client-server architecture that could be adapted to meet the State's reporting and general management needs, while the other functions of customer service and staff support could be left to local option. Oregon State officials felt that a modified system could adequately carry out the reporting function and interface smoothly with more modern, comprehensive systems from the local areas we visited. In addition, Oregon's funds for information technology were already committed to development a new system to support a series of State goals, of which workforce development formed only one component.

**Local Responses to State Systems.** As was the case with a number of other WIA-implementation issues, the application of information technology to WIA operations was an arena for some conflict between State and local levels. There was substantial opposition to the State systems from local respondents in each of the eight States. Criticism ran the gamut from inadequacy of the data fields, inability to track

universal customers, slow operational speeds, clumsy user interfaces, and State technical staff who were not familiar with employment and training programs. The specific objections varied widely, but the common thread was that our local respondents believed that these State systems were not fully functional or as effective as they would like.

Not surprisingly, local respondents in the States that made minimal or intermediate upgrades to the JTPA system sharply criticized the State systems. These respondents felt that investments in revising JTPA-based mainframe applications to meet WIA requirements were fruitless. And they contrasted these obsolete State systems with investments that their own local areas had made in newer technologies to provide the general management and staff-support functions. In fact, three local areas suggested to their respective States that the States adopt their local systems for statewide use. Each of these local workforce investment areas had developed or purchased systems that could perform both general management and staff-support functions and felt that their local systems would certainly be more effective than the minimally modified state systems. Developing a newer, more comprehensive system offered little refuge from local critiques, as the emerging One-Stop operating systems were also spurned for the long delays in their development, poor performance to date, and frequent down-time.<sup>2</sup>

Although our local respondents generally criticized the general management function of State systems, there were a few local areas that were satisfied with these State systems for both reporting and general management. Staff in Russell, Virginia, for example, found that the old State system was acceptable. Staff in Northeast Georgia, who were using a new State One-Stop operating system, were also generally satisfied with the system.

In contrast to the criticism from local respondents about State information systems related to the general management and staff-support functions, the local respondents in our study were uniformly very positive about the benefits of the customer-serving function. The services provided by automated labor exchange and labor-market information and assessment systems were clearly net benefits to customers. The only significant critical comments on this function were about the content—several

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<sup>2</sup> We note that, given the rapid pace of technological developments, these States have doubtless made substantial progress since the time this report was written.

respondents indicated that they would like to see richer or timelier labor market information—rather than about the structure of the delivery system.

**Comparisons with the Early Implementation States.** Two concerns that we identified in the second round of this study include (1) the difficulty of creating One-Stop operating systems, and (2) the dissatisfaction of locals with State information systems. These echoed concerns that we heard during the site visits to the first round States. In our Interim Report issued in late 2000, we noted that four of the six early implementation States that we visited in the first round were at various stages of implementing a One-Stop operating system. Three of the four States were still in the development stage—Utah was developing its own system, while Kentucky and Pennsylvania were participating in separate consortia of States. Only Texas, which developed its own system in conjunction with its pre-WIA reorganization of its workforce development system, had already implemented its system at the time of the site visits. Thus, the fact that the second round States were no farther along than their counterparts were in the earlier round of site visits implicitly acknowledges the substantial challenges to complex system development that we noted in the preceding section. Further, it does not appear that the experiences of the early-implementing States provided much guidance for their later-arriving counterparts.<sup>3</sup>

## OVERSIGHT

WIA generally maintains JTPA's State-level oversight requirements. States are responsible for ensuring that the activities paid from WIA grants conform to regulatory requirements, including OMB's cost principles. The WIA regulations require State oversight systems to have the following components:

- Annual on-site monitoring of Local Boards, including a review of how the local workforce investment area is meeting the uniform administrative requirements (cost allocation, procurement, and financial procedures established by OMB circulars and other general requirements).

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<sup>3</sup> Data collection we have conducted in some of these early implementing states subsequent to this report's being written suggests that they have made substantial progress. For example, Kentucky's EKOS system finally became fully operational as of the end of 2003 and is meeting with widespread praise.

- Policies to ensure that local workforce investment areas meet the objectives of the law, including provision of service to One-Stop centers, eligible providers of adult training services, and youth service providers.
- Policies and procedures to ensure that Local Boards and contractors comply with WIA requirements.
- Policies and procedures to enable the Governor to ensure that
  - A local plan will meet deficiencies.
  - Non-discrimination provisions are met.

States carry out these oversight requirements through two general strategies: 1) on-site monitoring, which may include programmatic monitoring in addition to the explicit administrative monitoring requirement, and 2) desk monitoring of the data reported from the management information system.

### **On-Site Monitoring**

Nearly all of the States are meeting the regulatory requirement for an annual on-site monitoring visit and most indicated that they were conducting the same type of on-site monitoring that they used under JTPA. One State conducts its three-day visits using the same monitoring instruments that it used for JTPA, although staff added questions on tiered services and other new topics. Six States monitor both administrative and program activities. For example, Minnesota looks at each WIA funding stream for both program and administrative management. Its review of administrative components includes an examination of cash management, procurement, grievance, and equal employment opportunity procedures, while the review of program components examines tiered services and performance accountability. Illinois also monitors each local area on site at least once a year for both fiscal and program issues, but it changed its strategy to use a team approach and to focus on more specific issues. Each team visit specializes in a specific subject, such as WIA implementation, that pertains to both program and administrative activities. The State expects to reduce the frequency of program monitoring in the future by reducing the number of site visits but increasing the size of the monitoring team so that it can cover more topics during this longer visit.

The States varied in the extent to which they monitored the One-Stop system. Several included monitoring of the One-Stop system in their visits to local areas, while others did not look at their One-Stop sites during monitoring.

Two States sharply reduced the level of on-site monitoring. Virginia had not yet done any WIA monitoring because it needed to hire new monitoring staff. Those staff members were mostly in place at the time of the site visit, and the State expected to develop a monitoring schedule soon. Georgia, on the other hand, changed strategies altogether and was no longer conducting on-site, program monitoring. Staff indicated that even the mandatory administrative review was sharply reduced in extent from what it was under JTPA. State officials attributed reductions in monitoring to having a smaller State staff and the fact that WIA was supposed to increase local responsibility for all aspects of the program.

### **Desk Monitoring**

Several States indicated that they used desk monitoring—the review of data from the management information system and other sources—in the State offices as a complement to on-site monitoring. They could oversee program and administrative issues in between the monitoring visits. Illinois had the most comprehensive desk-monitoring program of the States we visited in the second round. On a weekly basis, State staff reviewed a summary of performance on all 17 indicators of performance for each local workforce investment area and the number of planned versus actual customers in each service tier. On a monthly basis, State staff reviewed program information for the characteristics of registrant, exiters, and customers in intensive services and fiscal reports for expenditure levels. Minnesota staff members monitored local program and financial affairs through reports sent in by the local areas. The State then sent out monthly and quarterly reports to all the local workforce investment areas so they could compare their performance to that of other local workforce investment areas.

Georgia, because of the lack of programmatic monitoring, had the greatest overall reliance on desk monitoring. Working from its One-Stop operating system, State officials could conduct a desk review without requiring any local reporting burden. The principal objective of the desk reviews, in keeping with the State's overall strategy of deference to local control, was to assure that the Local Boards were meeting at least 80 percent of their performance-accountability goals.

### **Oversight Modes: Compliance and Technical Assistance**

Although compliance is clearly stressed in the law and regulations, several States have varied their approaches to oversight. We observed two types of approaches, oriented to either compliance or technical assistance. In a compliance approach, State

officials emphasized strict compliance with the regulatory framework and looked for violations of regulatory requirements. They cited the deficiencies and required the local boards to remedy those violations independently. In a technical assistance approach, on the other hand, the oversight staff, when they identified a deficiency, worked collaboratively with local officials to develop a remedy that met the regulatory requirement and the operational needs of the local area.

Three of the States we visited in the second round indicated that they use a technical assistance approach. Georgia, for example, felt that with its smaller State-level staff and increased local responsibility under WIA, it had neither the means nor the need to conduct the same type of compliance-based monitoring that it used under JTPA. Under the new law, the State used an individual on the State staff who served as the single point of contact for one or more local areas. That person was responsible for convening other staff into a technical assistance team if any problem arose from an oversight activity. However, no such problems had yet arisen at the time of the site visit.

Only one State indicated that it was taking a strong compliance approach. This State's officials said that they did annual reviews of all local areas and would withhold funds if a local area were to violate a regulation and fail to take corrective action. However, no local area to date has failed to take corrective action, so the State has not yet issued any financial sanctions.

Other States indicated that they used a blend of technical assistance and compliance. For example, Illinois State respondents indicated that the two approaches were not mutually exclusive and that their approach to monitoring combines the two elements. In addition, the State has a Workforce Partners Policy Committee composed of local-area executive directors who reviewed monitoring instruments before these instruments were field-tested and put into use.

### **Local Response to Oversight**

Local respondents generally had mixed views of State oversight efforts. Some respondents complained that their State monitors were using a compliance approach and had a "gotcha" mentality. Others, however, found their respective State monitoring programs acceptable or even beneficial. For example, the Balance of Maricopa County generally found that the State's monitoring efforts complemented the local area's own continuous improvement initiative and noted that the State monitoring reports were

especially helpful to the Local Board in determining the programmatic changes that would be desirable under the new law.

#### **SUMMARY OF PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

We observed one common theme in the area of program administration. Many local respondents were critical of State efforts to develop and use information technology, and they were only slightly less critical of the way in which the States carry out their oversight responsibilities. Both of these issues are well-known sources of local criticism of States going back to JTPA. We also found a similar level of criticism in our first round of site visits regarding management information systems.<sup>4</sup>

In examining how this level of criticism relates to WIA implementation, one cannot avoid recognizing the potential for State-local conflict that inheres in both components of program administration. For example, management information systems that serve only the general management function are already complex systems that must bring together workforce development and technology disciplines and, in some cases, multiple agencies. These system development efforts that must meet a variety of objectives are likely to require compromises that may not satisfy any partner. In addition, the reporting function is a high-stakes issue that has real consequences for the local areas in terms of incentives and sanctions, so it is not surprising that local officials at all levels pay close attention to these systems. If some systems perform so poorly that they yield inaccurate results, as respondents in one local area alleged, sharp criticism should be expected from those who stand to lose. And, when States move to develop One-Stop operating system, technical complexity—the number of organizations involved and goals that must be served—increases dramatically. This, in turn, raises the number of potentially unsatisfying compromises. Further, the rapid evolution of computer technology in general, and the promise of new One-Stop operating systems in particular, may be raising expectations that are difficult to meet, especially given the long development period that such systems require.

Thus, it appears that the implementation of WIA had somewhat less effect on the manner and methods of program administration than 1) the general difficulty of applying emerging technology to serve the needs of the workforce development system, and 2) certain enduring flash points between state and local levels of the system.

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<sup>4</sup> We did not specifically inquire about oversight during the visits to the Round 1 States.



## **V. PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

This briefing paper is part of a series developed as part of the *Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted jointly by Social Policy Research Associates and Technical Assistance and Training Corporation. The evaluation consists thus far of two rounds of site visits: the first round was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight state and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. An overview of the evaluation is included as an appendix to this report. This paper for the most part draws on findings from the second round of site visits, because these capture the more recent developments associated with WIA.

In this briefing paper, we will discuss strategies associated with WIA that are intended to hold the workforce system accountable for providing good quality services and for building capacity within workforce organizations to promote quality performance. In our analysis of the first of these topics, we will focus on the performance measurement system identified in the WIA legislation, including the ways performance goals were established on the WIA core measures and whether States and local areas adopt additional measures. We will also discuss the ways performance goals for States and local areas were established, what data are used to measure their performance, and what policies provide incentives and sanctions. Finally, as State and local workforce agencies often engage in capacity building as a way of spurring good performance, we conclude this paper with a brief discussion of these efforts.

### **PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY**

As part of an effort to promote performance accountability, WIA establishes seventeen specific performance measures: four core measures apply to adults, four to dislocated workers, four to older youth participants, and three to younger youth. In addition, two measures of customer satisfaction apply across the three WIA funding streams. These measures are listed in Table 1.

In its guidance (TEGL 7-99), DOL noted that the accountability system should establish performance goals for these measures at the State and local levels, ensure comparability of results for purposes of awarding incentives and issuing sanctions, and

provide information for system-wide reporting and evaluation related to program improvement.

<b>Table 1: WIA Performance Measures by Funding Stream</b>	
<b>Category of Measure</b>	<b>Performance Measure</b>
Adult Core Measures	1. Entered Employment Rate 2. Employment Retention Rate 3. Earnings Change 4. Employment and Credential Rate
Dislocated Worker Core Measures	5. Entered Employment Rate 6. Employment Retention Rate 7. Earnings Replacement Rate 8. Employment and Credential Rate
Older Youth (age 19-21) Core Measures	9. Entered Employment Rate 10. Employment Retention Rate 11. Earnings Change 12. Credential Rate
Younger Youth (age 14-18) Core Measures	13. Skill Attainment Rate 14. Diploma or Equivalent Attainment Rate 15. Retention Rate
Customer Satisfaction	16. Participant Customer Satisfaction 17. Employer Customer Satisfaction

### **The Negotiation Process**

WIA requires that States negotiate performance goals on the seventeen measures with DOL and with their local areas. DOL clarified (TEGL 7-99) that goals for the first three program years were to be negotiated initially, and that States should use UI wage record information to calculate performance on the WIA measures for JTPA exiters to form baselines for negotiation. States reported using data for JTPA

participants going back one to four years to establish these baselines. Other data they used included State studies of Perkins-funded programs for establishing credential rates.

During the first round of site visits (in early 2000) we visited States that had implemented early, and they noted that the negotiation requirements were still being established and that the process was therefore to some degree unclear. These States reported varied negotiation experiences, with most reporting a smooth process, but others feeling that DOL was not very accommodating.

The States we examined during the second round of data collection, which form the basis for this briefing paper, also had mixed experiences negotiating with DOL. Although one State noted that it perceived the process as fair, most felt that there was very little real negotiation between themselves and DOL. A common perception was that DOL handed down the performance goals, or at most allowed only minor adjustments based on the State's proposals or arguments that its goals should be lowered due to prevailing economic conditions. A few States also noted that they felt that some of the goals arrived at were unrealistic, given the State's particular economic conditions and the lack of appropriate baseline data to support the new measures. Likewise, one State expressed disappointment that DOL appeared to assume that performance levels would increase from the baselines that had been calculated based on JTPA data, which this State felt was unwarranted given that WIA serves a different population than JTPA.

With respect to States' negotiations with local areas, the early implementing States that we studied during the first round of data collection generally used a top-down approach, and little negotiation ensued. In the subsequent sample, the States' experiences were more varied. One rural State had a single negotiation with all local areas to establish a common set of State and local benchmarks together. Two States simply proposed performance goals and offered the local areas the opportunity to discuss them or propose changes. Showing a different pattern, Illinois put forth considerable effort to prepare local areas to negotiate: in addition to providing four years of local JTPA performance data, the State created a "Guide for Local Negotiating Teams" that explained differences between JTPA and WIA, and included a worksheet that could be used to estimate performance on new measures. The State required local areas to provide proposed goals with a rationale for them, and show the worksheet calculations. This information served as a starting point for negotiation between the State and local areas.

In conducting our data collection, we also asked local areas about their perceptions of the negotiation process. Among the sites we visited in the first round of data collection, most local areas felt that there was little real negotiation with the State. In the sites we visited in the second round, five local areas we visited reported a generally positive negotiation process with adequate State flexibility. The Medford Job Council, for example, reported that the State was honest and flexible in its negotiations. However, consistent with the earlier findings, many local areas felt that their performance goals were either entirely or substantially dictated to them. For example, when negotiating with local areas, some States appear to have used JTPA-based data to hand down goals or set a “floor” for WIA performance. Another local area reported that, after a series of unsuccessful negotiations with the State, it finally simply asked the State to tell it what its goals should be. The State later came back and reset some of the goals with no room for discussion due to goals that the State had subsequently negotiated with DOL.

The above example highlights that a difficult decision that States had to make was when to negotiate with the local areas—before or after their negotiation with DOL. States that negotiated with local areas first but were then given higher than anticipated goals by DOL had to renegotiate with the locals. On the other hand, those that negotiated with DOL first found that they had less flexibility in negotiating with their locals.

As with the early implementing States, most States we visited in the second round of data collection negotiated with DOL first. On this basis, they determined the level of performance local areas needed to reach for the State to meet its agreed-upon State goals. Some States specifically noted that they built in some margin for error by negotiating slightly elevated performance levels with their local areas.

However, one State in our sample used the bottom-up approach, in which it negotiated with the local areas first, and used these results to negotiate performance levels with DOL. This State reported building in margin for error by trying to negotiate DOL’s proposed levels down, as opposed to negotiating local area levels up. As mentioned, at least one local area in this State noted that the State had to renegotiate with them after negotiating with DOL, and the latter negotiation involved little flexibility.

In terms of the performance goals that resulted for local areas in the eight States we visited in the second round, two States established statewide negotiated rates with the locals that were at or slightly above the goals the State had negotiated with DOL. The other six States negotiated different rates with their various local areas, based on the goals proposed by the locals and taking into account the areas' prior performance and economic characteristics. However, in almost all cases, both State and local areas viewed the negotiated goals as preliminary. The general feeling was that, because the process was new, States and local areas expected to be able to re-negotiate performance levels if they proved unrealistic, or if economic conditions changed drastically.

Table 2 provides the ranges in first-year negotiated performance goals for the States and local areas we sampled. Specifically, all eight states we visited in the second round are represented in the table, but, because not all local areas provided data on all measures, the final column represents data from between seven and eleven local areas depending on the measure.

The small sample size limits the extent to which these results can be used to generalize the findings. However, consistent with the WIA goal of providing local control, and with the intent that the negotiation process should allow for local factors to be taken into account, the table demonstrates considerable variability in the goals that were negotiated at both the State and local levels. As one would expect, the ranges for the local areas are broader than those of the States, given the within-state variability in the goals that were established.

Table 3 shows the average State performance goals for the three years that were negotiated, and the average increase between years. Note that this table includes data for only six of the eight States, because two of the States we visited did not provide us with their negotiated goals for all three years, and the data could not be obtained from other sources.

**Table 2: State and Local First-Year  
Negotiated Performance Level Ranges**

	<b>State-level Range</b>	<b>Local-level Range</b>
	<b>Low - High</b>	<b>Low - High</b>
<b><i>Adults</i></b>		
Entered Employment Rate	63 % - 73 %	62 % - 80 %
Employment Retention Rate	72 % - 83 %	65 % - 85 %
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$2,500 - \$4,207	\$2,000 - \$4,012
Employment and Credential Rate	30 % - 60 %	38.2 % - 60.7 %
<b><i>Dislocated Workers</i></b>		
Entered Employment Rate	72 % - 80 %	70.5 % - 82 %
Employment Retention Rate	70 % - 90 %	65.5 % - 93 %
Earnings Replacement Rate	80 % - 97 %	76.9 % - 105 %
Employment and Credential Rate	30 % - 60 %	36.5 % - 63.4 %
<b><i>Older Youth</i></b>		
Entered Employment Rate	54 % - 68 %	59 % - 80 %
Employment Retention Rate	60 % - 81 %	60 % - 85 %
Earning Change in Six Months	\$1,500 - \$3,304	\$1,500 - \$3,200
Credential Rate	30 % - 50 %	31.1 % - 60 %
<b><i>Younger Youth</i></b>		
Retention Rate	39 % - 59 %	50 % - 70 %
Skill Attainment Rate	60 % - 72 %	37.5 % - 60.1 %
Diploma/Equiv. Attainment Rate	31 % - 56 %	53.2 % - 1.7 %
<b><i>Customer Satisfaction</i></b>		
Participants	63 % - 72 %	50 % - 85 %
Employers	60 % - 70 %	50 % - 85 %

**Table 3: State Level  
Negotiated Performance Goals**

	<b>Year 1 Avg</b>	<b>Year 2 Avg</b>	<b>Year 3 Avg</b>	<b>Avg Change Yrs 1-2</b>	<b>Avg Change Yrs 2-3</b>
<b><i>Adults</i></b>					
Entered Employment Rate	68.8%	70.0%	71.4%	1.2	1.4
Employment Retention Rate	77.8%	78.8%	79.8%	1.0	1.0
Earnings Change in Six Months	\$3,060	\$3,160	\$3,233	\$100	\$73
Employment and Credential Rate	53.8%	55.8%	58.0%	2.0	2.2
<b><i>Dislocated Workers</i></b>					
Entered Employment Rate	76.5%	77.6%	78.6%	1.1	1.0
Employment Retention Rate	83.5%	85.0%	86.3%	1.5	1.3
Earnings Replacement Rate	87.7%	89.0%	90.4%	1.3	1.4
Employment and Credential Rate	55.8%	57.1%	59.7%	1.3	2.6
<b><i>Older Youth</i></b>					
Entered Employment Rate	64.1%	65.5%	66.8%	1.4	1.3
Employment Retention Rate	72.3%	73.4%	74.7%	1.1	1.3
Earning Change in Six Months	\$2,433	\$2,511	\$2,580	\$78	\$69
Credential Rate	46.8%	47.9%	50.7%	1.1	2.8
<b><i>Younger Youth</i></b>					
Retention Rate	55.0%	56.3%	57.6%	1.3	1.3
Skill Attainment Rate	67.0%	68.0%	69.6%	1.0	1.6
Diploma/Equiv. Attainment Rate	51.8%	53.6%	54.3%	1.8	0.7
<b><i>Customer Satisfaction</i></b>					
Participants	67.3%	68.6%	69.9%	1.3	1.3
Employers	67.3%	68.4%	69.5%	1.1	1.1

Again, the small sample size limits the extent to which these results can be generalized. Nonetheless, at least in these States it is notable that, in keeping with the WIA goal of promoting continuous improvement, in all cases the average goals increase across the three years. Also interesting is that the percentage point (or dollar) increase is sometimes greater between years one and two than it is between years two and three, but that for other measures, especially the various facets of credentialing, the reverse is true.

Table 4 provides similar information about the performance goals established for local areas; these tabulations are restricted to the seven local areas that provided us with their performance goals on all measures for all three years. As with the State goals, the

average local goals increase across the three years, consistent with continuous improvement expectations. Also as with the State-level figures, the expected increase for some measures is greater over the first two years than over the second two, with the reverse pattern true for other measures. However, the measures showing the greater increases among local areas are not necessarily the same ones that show the greater increase among States. This lack of correspondence could be attributed to the fact that only a small number of local areas within the six States included in Table 3 are covered in Table 4.

**Table 4: Local Level  
Negotiated Performance Goals**

	<b>Year 1 Avg</b>	<b>Year 2 Avg</b>	<b>Year 3 Avg</b>	<b>Avg Change Yrs 1-2</b>	<b>Avg Change Yrs 2-3</b>
<b><i>Adults</i></b>					
Entered Employment Rate	66.1%	67.2%	69.0%	1.1	1.8
Employment Retention Rate	74.1%	75.6%	77.1%	1.5	1.5
Earnings Change in 6 Months	\$2,845	\$2,909	\$2,988	\$64	\$79
Emp. & Credential Rate	52.1%	54.0%	55.7%	1.9	1.7
<b><i>Dislocated Workers</i></b>					
Entered Employment Rate	75.6%	77.2%	78.9%	1.6	1.7
Employment Retention Rate	79.6%	82.4%	85.5%	2.8	3.1
Earnings Replacement Rate	86.0%	87.5%	89.0%	1.5	1.5
Emp. & Credential Rate	54.3%	56.0%	58.2%	1.7	2.2
<b><i>Older Youth</i></b>					
Entered Employment Rate	64.6%	66.7%	67.9%	2.1	1.2
Employment Retention Rate	67.8%	71.1%	73.8%	3.3	2.7
Earning Change in 6 Months	\$2,048	\$2,286	\$2,361	\$238	\$75
Credential Rate	45.1%	48.0%	51.3%	2.9	3.3
<b><i>Younger Youth</i></b>					
Retention Rate	54.2%	55.9%	57.4%	1.7	1.5
Skill Attainment Rate	68.2%	69.9%	71.3%	1.7	1.4
Diploma/Equiv. Attainment	49.7%	52.7%	54.1%	3.0	1.4
<b><i>Customer Satisfaction</i></b>					
Participants	67.0%	68.1%	69.5%	1.1	1.4
Employers	64.4%	65.8%	67.0%	1.4	1.2



### **Issues Regarding the WIA Performance Measures**

DOL intended that the performance measures provide objective information for reporting and evaluation purposes. The general opinion of the States and local areas we sampled was that most measures, particularly those directly tied to employment and earnings, were fully appropriate and in line with their expectations about how their performance should be judged. For example, one local area noted that its local board members found the measures useful and were using them as a basis for promoting continuous improvement. Another area noted that it used the performance measures to set internal goals and provide staff with clear expectations regarding necessary levels of performance, and the School-to-Work representative from another commented that the youth measures were reasonable and feasible. Still another local area's community college representative noted that having these WIA performance measures has forced teachers in the community colleges to design their classes with an eye towards outcomes, and the measures have forced the community college to do a better job with placement. These positive sentiments suggest the general appropriateness of the performance measures, and to some degree their acceptance among diverse community representatives.

Notwithstanding these generally positive appraisals, our respondents noted quite a number of concerns or frustrations that they were experiencing with putting the measures into practice. Some of these were issues with the measures themselves, and others involved their implementation. These issues and concerns are discussed below.

***Credential Rates.*** Credential rates are included as performance measures for the adults, dislocated worker, and older youth programs. Their use represents an attempt to capture an outcome specifically associated with participation in training services, and to reflect attainment of a recognized, portable measure of skills. Without such a criterion, the performance measurement system might miss the fact that WIA participants gained important employment-related skills, or attained certifications that made them more marketable as a result of WIA services.

While deliberately allowing States and local areas considerable flexibility in how credentials would be defined in practice, DOL's TEGL 7-99 provided some operational guidelines by defining a credential as:

A nationally recognized degree or certificate or State/locally recognized credential. Credentials include, but are not limited to, a high school diploma, GED or other recognized equivalents, post-secondary degrees/certificates,

recognized skill standards, and licensure or industry-recognized certificates. States should include all State Education Agency recognized credentials. In addition, States should work with local Workforce Investment Boards to encourage certificates to recognize successful completion of the training services listed above that are designed to equip individuals to enter or re-enter employment, retain employment, or advance into better employment.

Perhaps because this was a new measure and States and local areas are still adjusting to it, credential rates were some of the least popular performance measures and were described by some as problematic or unimportant. An initial concern was that, because it was a new measure, there was no suitable baseline for establishing performance goals. This problem was compounded by disagreements about what exactly constitutes a credential. Guidance from DOL intentionally leaves considerable room for interpretation, but some States and local areas appeared frustrated with this ambiguity.

Moreover, respondents expressed concern about an apparent lack of equity that arose because credentials were defined very differently from one local area to the next. With respect to this issue, the flexibility inherent in this measure appears to have led to two extremes: adopting broad, lenient definitions of what constitutes a credential (e.g., something as simple as a certificate of completion), on the one hand, and adopting a very stringent definition that required an industry-recognized certification, on the other. Each approach has obvious strengths and weaknesses. Definitions of credential that are broader or more lenient make it easier for local areas to find programs that provide a credential while still promoting customer choice; however, the loose definitions dilute the meaning of the credential rate itself, possibly causing it to lack any real import as a measure of marketable and transferable skills. In fact, two local areas with looser definitions of credential expressed that sentiment.

At the other extreme, some States and local areas have created very clear, stringent definitions regarding what constitutes a credential, but so much so that many training programs on the eligible training provider list are found not to award credentials that meet the local definition. For example, in one State the local Workforce Investment Board has not yet settled on a definition, but some members are pushing for a definition that recognizes only nationally or industry recognized certificates. Although such stringent definitions can create clarity and set high standards for the credential rate criteria, they also will detract from the areas' measured performance. In some areas, they also influence decisions about what training

programs should be included on the eligible training provider list, potentially implicitly limiting customer choice. For example, one local area adopted a stringent definition of what constituted a credential, relying on programs that merited college or union recognition, because it believed that credentials needed to be assured of broad recognition to be meaningful. However, due to this stringent definition, this local area failed to meet its negotiated performance goal on this measure, representing the first time that this area had ever failed to meet one of its performance requirements. This area has subsequently been encouraged by the State to lower its criteria regarding what constitutes a credential and is considering doing so. Another State initially developed a policy that only training programs that offered a credential should be included on the eligible training provider list, and consequently found that it needed to classify many short- or medium-term training programs as an intensive service to meet customers' needs.

In addition to the difficulties resulting from trying to define what a credential is, adoption of this measure also raised practical concerns for some local areas regarding how to capture the necessary data about participants' performance. For example, one local area failed to meet its negotiated goals on the credential measure and believed that part of the reason was that it could not capture information about the credentials that some of its participants might have attained. Another issue mentioned was that credential rate goals were difficult to meet because employers were enticing participants to begin work before they had attained their certifications. Another problem was capturing skill attainments associated with on-the-job training, which in many instances cannot be construed as leading to a certificate even in areas adopting a looser definition.

Overall, it appears that a learning process is still underway. States and local areas are experimenting with the tradeoffs associated with adopting broader or tighter definitions of credentials, and are learning how or when to put credentialing processes in place and collect the necessary data about customers' attainments.

***Youth Skill Attainment Rate.*** Another measure that caused some concern was the younger youth Skill Attainment Rate, representing a measure of the percentage of youths' skill goals—relating to basic skills, work readiness skills, or occupational skills—that were met during the year. This measure is similar to JTPA's YEC attainment measure, but instead of being an exit-based measure, as YEC was, it is an in-program measure. As such, the intention was to create an intermediate measure of youths' progress for those who require additional services (such as academic and soft-

skills development) prior to attaining a diploma or GED, or obtaining employment or post-secondary education.

As with the credential rate, DOL deliberately allows flexibility in what should constitute a goal, and this flexibility is causing some local areas some concern regarding how to define “skill attainment” and measure it. One local area noted that, because its program for younger youth focused mostly on the disabled, skill attainment focused on youths’ “staying in school, and maintaining their grades.” Another local area defined success as a measurable increase in part of a grade level as determined through testing. As with credential rates, lenient definitions make the meaningfulness of this measure questionable, and variability in definitions across States and local areas make comparisons difficult.

In addition to definitional concerns, there were also practical concerns about the ability to influence and measure youth skill attainment. Also as with the credential rate, some of these concerns appear to be products of local policy and perhaps of inexperience in how to apply this measure to the WIA context.

- One concern expressed by a local area was that DOL’s guidance stipulates that skill goals established for youth should take no longer than one year to attain, but that the goals it wants to establish for youth will sometimes take longer than that.
- At the other extreme, other local areas noted that even an intensive eight to ten week course (e.g., such as during a summer program) will often not be long enough for youth to show measurable skill increases.
- One urban area noted that many of the in-school youth it served had difficulty maintaining progress in school, making this measure more difficult for it to meet than for other local areas in the State.
- Another practical consideration was that the quarters used for WIA measurement do not align with the grading periods of the school year, which makes collecting skill attainment as measured through satisfactory school performance a problem.

Some of these concerns, however, appear to relate to how the local area has decided to operationalize the goals and measure attainment more than with the measure itself. As with the credential rate, local areas are thus undergoing a learning process to adjust their definitions and measurement strategies.

***Customer Satisfaction.*** Customer satisfaction measures are assessed for participants and employers as part of WIA’s performance accountability system.

According to TEGL 6-00, three specific items from the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI) are required to be asked of participants and employers via telephone survey, and each item is rated on a 10-point scale. A statewide random sample of 500 is required for all WIA-funded programs, unless the state served fewer than 1,000 eligible respondents, in which case it must attempt to reach all of them. A minimum 50% response rate is required.

The early implementing States we studied for the Interim Report all saw the value of customer service measures, and because of this several had been gathering data pertinent to this measure prior to WIA. States and areas we visited during the second round of data collection also appreciated the merit of this measure, though some practical difficulties were still being worked out.

One practical issue with which States had to grapple was how to collect the information about customers' satisfaction and how to do so in a way that would allow the measurement of customer satisfaction for local areas, as well as for the State as a whole. We saw various sampling and data collection methodologies in evidence. Of the eight States we visited during the second round, five contracted out their customer service data collection to a university or institute. One State, Montana, reported phoning 100% of both job seekers and employers; it received an 80% response rate and shared results with the local areas. Illinois contracted Northern Illinois University to randomly sample from each local area; the State then shares the satisfaction results with the locals. By contrast, two States reported sampling the required 500 job seekers and 500 employers statewide, limiting their ability to produce accurate local-area estimates. Some local areas specifically mentioned that the States' data collection plan was statewide and could not be used to generate local-area estimates.

Some local areas were consequently taking it upon themselves to measure the satisfaction of their customers, because they attach so much importance to doing so. Thus, five local areas we visited are gathering their own customer service data, and others are considering doing so (it is unclear whether these were strictly local area efforts, or whether they were a part of the larger State effort). One such local effort to collect customer satisfaction data was being undertaken by Portland Worksystems, which reported gathering data on satisfaction from 15% of its core customers, and 100% of registered adults, dislocated workers, and youth who exit; each One-Stop center in this area also collects customer satisfaction data when the customer completes an activity.

With respect to the survey instruments, it appears that some States viewed the required ACSI questions as merely a starting point (this is permissible according to DOL guidance, as long as the required questions are included first). Thus, one State mentioned adding additional questions to the ACSI. Other States indicated that they were developing their own survey instrument, and one State had not yet finished developing the survey instrument it was creating with help from a contractor.

### **Other Issues Relating to Performance**

Beyond the specific measures themselves, several other issues relating to performance arose.

**Registration.** Under WIA, performance data are only required to be collected for registered participants. DOL provided guidance in TEGL 7-99 that indicated that tracking and monitoring should begin when services involving significant staff attention were first provided, and identified that two factors that should be considered in determining when registration was appropriate: 1) the level of staff involvement with the customer; and 2) the purpose of service. Services that involve significant staff time and that are intended to impart job seeking and/or occupational skills to the customer require registration.

States generally passed this federal guidance to their local areas and added little to it. However, the way these policies were implemented at the local level varied considerably. For example, two local areas in one State noted that, in practice, almost all non-training activities are funded through non-WIA funds. Therefore, only participants receiving training services typically require WIA registration, which generally occurs in intensive services at the point the prospective trainees begin to develop their training plan. Local areas in other States indicated that intensive services are the accepted point of registration. Along these lines, one local area felt that it was “unrealistic” to register participants who only receive staff-assisted core service and track their performance.

In some local areas, registration practices are consistent with State policy of registering at the point of staff-assisted core service, but what is considered “staff-assisted” differs from one area to another. In one local area, people can go through a three-day workshop on employment skills before being registered, whereas in other local areas participation in even shorter workshops would trigger registration. Elsewhere, another local area classifies any interaction with clients that involve more

than about fifteen minutes of staff time as a staff-assisted service that requires registration. (See the companion Briefing Paper, *Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers*, for a fuller discussion of differences across local areas in the point of registration)

Some of the variability in registration points across local areas appears to be more a matter of how a service is categorized than real programmatic differences. For example, one local area may classify a resume workshop as staff-assisted core service and register participants at that point. Meanwhile, another local area might classify the equivalent workshop as an intensive service and register participants then. Such differences do not matter for performance measurement, since persons receiving equivalent service are counted towards performance in both cases.

However, even discounting such differences in categorization, it is clear that local areas vary widely in what types of services will trigger WIA registration, complicating the interpretation of performance measures from one local area to the next.

***Complexity of the Measures.*** A common critique of the measures was their complexity. Along these lines, half of the States we visited and many local areas noted that the measures were complex and confusing. For example, one State called the measures “not understandable” by most staff. Two issues that were particularly frustrating to some States were that time frames and cohorts for measurement varied from measure to measure, and that the measures were complex to calculate due to exclusions in who was being counted in the base of the various measures (these issues were also highlighted in the General Accounting Office’s February 2002 report on performance measure improvements, GAO-02-275).

The timing issue relates to the fact that different performance measures require data to be collected for different quarters prior to the customers’ registration and after their exit (e.g., data need to be collected for one quarter after exit for the entered employment rate, for the second and third quarters both prior to registration and after exit for the earnings change rate, and so on). Accordingly, respondents noted a difficulty in keeping track of for what periods data needed to be captured, for which participants, and for which of the measures. This difficulty was particularly pronounced for local areas that use many contractors, who each must also be schooled in the complex data collection needs, and for data collection that is not easily

automated, such as for the credentialing rates and when supplemental data are used for measuring employment outcomes.

Once data are collected, the calculation of the measures is also very involved. For example, in calculating various of the adult performance measures, one includes in the base, variously, those employed at registration, those employed at registration or in the first quarter after exit, and those who were enrolled in training.

Given these complexities, performance measurement was a commonly mentioned area for capacity building efforts.

*Unintended Consequences.* Some States and local areas expressed concern over possible unintended consequences of the performance measures that involved learning how to optimally “play” the new system to maximize performance. Along these lines, some local areas mentioned that they were assessing the optimal time during a quarter to “exit” a participant from the program to maximize measured performance. For example, one local area has learned to only officially exit customers at the end of a quarter to minimize the time between exit and measurement.

Another, more pervasive concern we heard about was that the measures introduced possible disincentives to serve certain types of clients. One State was concerned that its high performance goals would encourage local areas not to serve the neediest job seekers (presumably the ones with the biggest barriers to employment), but to hand them off to other partner programs. This circumstance, it feared, would create an “obstacle to collaboration” if it occurred frequently enough. Another State noted that it felt there was a disincentive to serve dislocated workers coming from high paying jobs, as their high pre-program earning rates might be difficult to replace. This concern seemed especially to weigh on respondents’ minds for site visits that occurred subsequent to the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, which damaged key industries in the State with high paying jobs. Similarly, one local area was concerned about the lack of incentive to serve those currently employed, since (because they have a job at intake) staff cannot be credited for getting these participants a job at exit. Another State worried that retention measures created a disincentive to serve those seeking temporary employment.

One interesting aspect of some of these concerns is that they are to some degree in seeming contradiction with one another. For example, some respondents expressed concern about disincentives to serve the neediest, while others were concerned that



previously high-wage dislocated workers would not be served. This fact highlights the WIA program's multiple goals and target populations. Similarly, although the measures seemingly create disincentives to serve some potential customers, other measures provide incentives to serve them. For example, it might be harder to place the very hardest to serve in employment, but those who are placed might realize a dramatic earnings increase. Thus, the performance measures need to be viewed as a package that provides a balanced set of measurement criteria.

*Lack of Partners Adopting Similar Measures.* As TEGL 7-99 notes, a major emphasis of WIA was improving coordination between the workforce investment system and adult education, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation and education programs. One way to encourage such collaboration is by having the various partner programs adopt common or similar performance measures to ensure that the various programs and agencies are working towards the same goals. In keeping with this goal, Wagner-Peyser performance measures were recently changed in order to better align with WIA performance measures. Similarly, TEGL 7-99 also notes that some WIA measures may be used by other related programs; for example, NAFTA/TAA will use the WIA dislocated worker measures. At least one State saw these as very positive steps that should encourage stronger partnerships.

Nevertheless, some of our respondents expressed frustration that the aligning of performance measures across partner programs did not go further. Moreover, some specifically pointed to the lack of system-wide measures as being a serious deficiency to the current criteria for gauging performance accountability. Current efforts being spearheaded by DOL to more closely align measures across programs may address some of these concerns.

### **Additional Measures**

WIA required data collection and reporting for seventeen performance measures, but gave States and local areas the flexibility of adopting additional measures if they chose. Of the early implementing States we sampled for the interim report, only one State decided to collect additional measures. This State, Florida, established a uniform measurement system to be applied to all agencies and programs involved in the State's workforce development strategy, even before WIA was enacted. The State developed three tiers of outcome measures:

- One tier involved measures applied across all workforce programs and initiatives to gauge system-wide performance, such as placement or retention.
- The second tier involved outcomes applicable to the State's strategy to provide successful entry into the workforce, and align education and training with occupations. In addition, this tier involved a set of standards for One-Stop centers, youth employment activities, and the State's Work and Gain Economic Self-Sufficiency (WAGES) program.
- The third tier involved specific operational output measures used by each program.

Florida has continued to use this tiered system even with the adoption of WIA.

In the second round of data collection, we learned that two other States had adopted additional performance measures, as part of their efforts to promote system-wide performance and foster cross-agency cooperation and coordination in serving customers.

One of these States, Oregon, began implementing a State-level, system-wide workforce development accountability system under the jurisdiction of the State Workforce Investment Board in 1989. The State is currently collecting data on five indicators, and will phase in the rest over time. The indicators are:

- Employment placement
- Employment retention
- Wage gain
- Placement in post-secondary education or training
- Demonstrated competency in workforce readiness skills
- Increase in basic skills competency
- Completion of educational degree or certification
- Completion of occupational skills training
- Employer investment in workforce development
- Customer satisfaction
- Welfare caseload reduction
- Recidivism
- Return on investment

These indicators were not included in the State's WIA plan as supplemental measures, but represent a separate effort. However, efforts are underway to align them with the required WIA measures.

In Minnesota, the other State we studied that was adopting additional measures, the State Workforce Council is working with local Workforce Investment Boards to develop measures in seven broad outcome areas to capture system-wide performance. These outcome areas include:

- Competencies of the workforce
- Economic vitality
- Earnings
- Productivity
- Reduced poverty
- Customer satisfaction
- Return on investment

These measures had not been finalized by the time of data collection, but are scheduled to be phased in by July of 2002.

Elsewhere, we learned of a few local areas' efforts along these lines. For example, the Workforce Investment Board in one area adopted a measure of return on investment, which is calculated by adding the increases in pay, added tax contributions, and reductions in welfare benefits for the participants served and comparing this figure to the costs of providing service. According to this measure, the WIB estimates that for every dollar spent by the adult and dislocated worker programs, \$7.93 was returned to the taxpayers.

Overall, then, most States and local areas have focused on the core WIA performance measures at this stage of WIA implementation, but a few additional efforts are underway. Those adopting additional measures have done so to capture either system-wide performance across partners or One-Stop centers, or to calculate benefits of the system such as return on investment, decreases in welfare caseload, or recidivism.

### **Use of Unemployment Insurance Wage Records**

WIA requires that UI wage records be used to track and report on the performance of adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs. This requirement was

imposed to provide a high degree of validity and comparability in performance measurement, and was recognized by our respondents as satisfying these objectives. However, those we interviewed noted two key problems with the use of UI wage record data.

The first key problem we heard about related to the considerable delays in obtaining UI wage records. These delays can be as long as six months to over a year for some measures. These delays were recognized and anticipated by DOL, and its reporting guidelines reflect this reality. However, many of the States and local areas we sampled specifically mentioned that this time delay represents a problem for them in using performance data to manage their program. For example, one local area that uses a network of contractors to provide services noted that the performance data often come back too late to be useful for renegotiating contracts based on performance. Other local areas generally noted that, due to the delays, they cannot use UI data to manage their programs' performance, but must use other data for that purpose. For example, one State noted that it produces its own monthly, quarterly, and ad hoc reports on performance to help local areas with performance management and compare their performance with that of other local areas. The limitations of using UI data for program management have been recognized by DOL, and it consequently encourages States and local areas to adopt other measurement strategies and indicators for that purpose.

A second key problem noted by our respondents is that not all relevant participants who obtain employment are covered by the UI wage record system, including the self-employed, independent contractors, military personnel, Federal workers, or postal workers. This problem too has long been recognized by DOL, and, as such, it permits the use of supplemental data to document participants' employment outcomes in some circumstances. Nonetheless, this limitation of the UI system continues to be frustrating for some of the respondents we spoke with. One local area representative even expressed concerns that an incentive exists not to serve people who want jobs in uncovered areas, or that staff might discourage participants away from seeking employment in non-covered occupations.

Another factor that relates to limits on UI coverage is that State databases contain information only about persons employed in that State. Thus, participants living in one State who find employment in a different nearby State will not show up in the UI wage record system for the State providing WIA services. DOL recognized this limitation as

well, and has been supporting development of the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS), designed to allow States to obtain UI wage record information on WIA participants employed in other States. The wider adoption of WRIS may eventually alleviate the problem, but currently relatively few States are participating and questions remain regarding how States will finance their participation once DOL seed money is scaled back.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, although the UI wage record system is useful for validating performance on placement, retention, and earnings, the time delays and lack of coverage or accessibility of records of some participants limits the utility of the system and the reports generated from it.

### **Incentives and Sanctions**

WIA provides for incentives and sanctions to be issued based on performance relative to negotiated goals. States that exceed their performance levels (and those under the Department of Education's Vocational Education and Adult Education and Literacy programs) are eligible for financial incentive grants; conversely, States that do not meet their performance levels under WIA are subject to sanctions. Meanwhile, each State is empowered to formulate incentive and sanction policies for its local areas to determine how the State would pass on incentives or sanctions to the local areas that exceed, or fail to meet, their negotiated performance goals. This section addresses the State incentive and sanction policies.

Three States we visited had not yet finalized their incentive policies. For those that had them in place, the policies varied considerably from State to State. For example:

- Arizona will provide incentive money based 30% on performance and 70% based on the quality of partnerships and collaboration. The performance requirements were not yet in place, but the partnership portion of the formula requires locals to submit a report describing their partnerships in terms of purpose and mission, organization and management, and workforce system development.
- Another State distributes incentives by funding stream; to receive an incentive award, the area's average performance on the program's

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<sup>1</sup> Since this report was written, DOL has agreed to financially support WRIS indefinitely, greatly easing States' concerns. Moreover, State participation in WRIS is now widespread.

measures must exceed 100% of the goal levels and its performance on each measure must reach at least 80% of the goal. For areas that qualify, the incentive money is given based on the amount spent on the funding stream relative to the total spent by all areas.

- Still another State provides incentives in two ways. First, it uses non-monetary recognition for success in reaching Baldrige continuous improvement criteria. Second, it distributes monetary awards, one for local coordination and one for regional coordination. For each, the local area must meet the State's definition of exemplary performance, which means meeting all of the seventeen performance goals and exceeding these six—adult employment and credential rate, dislocated worker employment and credential rate, youth diploma or equivalent, youth entered employment rate, and the two customer satisfaction measures.
- Finally, one State does not give incentives per se, but uses the incentive funds to distribute competitive grants. This State feels that doing so not only rewards high performers but also provides incentives for others who propose innovative ideas for improvement.

Sanction policies were much less established at the time of our site visits. At that time, four States had no articulated policy for sanctions. One State indicated that the only sanction in place now is technical assistance. Another State essentially used the Federal guidance and indicated that TA and an improvement plan are required for failing the first year, and after that corrective action may be required. Finally, one State indicated that sanctions are not based on performance, but on administrative or financial mismanagement.

Local areas did not seem particularly worried about sanctions. There are probably several reasons why sanctions received little attention, including historically strong performance in the areas we visited, the lack of State sanction policies yet in place, the expectation that the negotiated goals could be renegotiated if problems occurred, and the primary reliance on technical assistance as a sanction in the first year consistent with the law.

### **Continuous Improvement**

Continuous improvement is fundamental to the performance accountability system under WIA. Indeed, the legislation notes that the purpose of the performance accountability system is to establish a means to assess the effectiveness of States and local areas in achieving continuous improvement of workforce investment activities.

This section describes the continuous improvement activities as described by the State and local areas we sampled.

One of the ways in which continuous improvement is promoted is through the increase over time in negotiated performance levels for States and local areas, which we described earlier in this paper. These increases represent one way to encourage the striving for continuous improvement. At the same time, one caution mentioned by some States and local areas was that continuous improvement should not mean constantly “ratcheting up” performance levels. Concern was also expressed that improvement will not always be directly reflected in performance on the core measures, and that performance can eventually reach natural ceilings.

On that basis, some States and areas were developing other means of promoting continuous improvement, although few of these were fully developed as yet. Among the more advanced examples, however, Illinois created a “Promising Practices” website to capture best practices, a One-Stop center benchmarking project, a One-Stop center chartering system to assure excellence, and the Illinois Community Colleges Quality Improvement System with on-going reviews of programs to ensure excellence.

Elsewhere, one of the most comprehensive, systematic State efforts was taking place in Virginia, which has adopted a Malcolm Baldrige program. This program has seven dimensions, relating to leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resources, process management, and business results. Each dimension has six to nine criteria for performance that areas strive to meet.

As at the State level, continuous improvement efforts at the local level were mostly still developing. In fact, a number of areas had no formal continuous improvement process. However, seven local areas were either considering using the Malcolm Baldrige framework or had already adopted it. For example, the Balance of Maricopa County has been using the Baldrige criteria since 1998. This area trains staff in the quality criteria, conducts staff self-assessment, identifies and prioritizes facets of its operation that need improvement, and creates action items. In addition, it supplements these efforts with a systemwide assessment of quality and responsiveness to customer needs, and an employer services team that uses data to set improvement goals.

Beyond Baldrige, local areas have come up with other improvement processes. For example, Yuma County links its efforts to capacity building, which it bases on these seven tenets:

- Every employee is a valued asset, and can make contributions
- Defect inspection should be replaced by defect prevention
- Process decisions should be based on objective, statistical analysis
- Quality of product or service should come before other considerations
- Comparative benchmarks should be used to identify excellence
- Employees have an obligation to continuously improve their work processes
- Employees must be extensively trained

Some staff in this area also attended an Advanced Public Executive Program, and, as a result of this training, overhauled the evaluation system to ensure that evaluation criteria match actual work performed and to allow for feedback from staff that can further improve the system.

Among other efforts:

- Suffolk County has established a continuous improvement workgroup with one representative from each department or unit. The workgroup meets monthly and examines one issue at each meeting—the issue is discussed, data are examined, suggestions for improvement are made, and improvement plans are developed. The area reports having good results with this process.
- Portland Worksystems examines improvement on two levels. At the broad level, it assesses the labor market and economic developments to ensure that the workforce system's efforts adapt to changes. At the more micro level, the area engages in constant monitoring and TA to contractors.
- The Balance of Montana area has created a continuous improvement plan that gives system-wide direction to community service providers and includes best practices from seven States. It also has developed a business guide for local community management teams to help them develop business and continuous improvement plans based on Baldrige principles.
- Other local areas are using swipe-card information to improve One-Stop center services, using prestigious State award programs, or have service teams set performance goals.



## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Having a strong performance accountability system and encouraging continuous improvement are two ways that WIA promotes excellence in performance. An additional way to promote excellence is by encouraging efforts at capacity building. Capacity building activities are those that promote improved knowledge, skills, abilities, or capacities by the system staff to improve system effectiveness.

WIA allows States to allocate funds for providing capacity building and technical assistance to local areas, One-Stop operators, One-Stop partners, and eligible providers, including by developing and training staff and developing exemplary program activities. Similarly, DOL can provide funds or grants for supporting efforts aimed at capacity building at the State and local levels, such as technical assistance in program planning, assessment, evaluation, and monitoring. This section examines the State and local capacity building efforts described by our sample.

### **State Efforts**

States' capacity building efforts have primarily taken the form of training and technical assistance. Most specifically mentioned providing training or workshops to the local area staff, and six States mentioned providing technical assistance. Technical assistance has taken the form of on-site sessions or sometimes guidebooks on specific topics. For example, Montana noted that it provided onsite TA sessions at 14 locations on MIS and performance issues. Illinois has created TA guidebooks on topics such as credentialing and daycare for One-Stop centers.

Training is being provided on a broad range of topics. Some of the most commonly mentioned by States were MIS or specific computer systems, performance accountability, financial management, and partnership building. Some States are offering an even wider variety of training courses. For example, during 2001-02 Arizona is offering "Seminars in Excellence" on 15 different topics. Likewise, Illinois conducts a training needs assessment and prioritizes topics. The State provided a three page list of training seminars offered since 1999 that covers the spectrum of WIA implementation topics, such as WIA itself, quality, resource rooms, partnerships, administration, local Workforce Investment Boards, planning, responding to complex customer barriers, nondiscrimination, continuous improvement, customer flow, grant writing, and many more. They are also creating an Employment Specialist Course with the community college system. Other States, such as New York, noted that they take

full advantage of the training DOL provides, particularly for capacity building for their State staff.

In addition to technical assistance and training, another capacity building effort commonly mentioned was to bring together workgroups or hold regular meetings to address important topics. For instance, Arizona reported having a “Workforce Development Summit” every two years. Minnesota mentioned that it holds a “practitioner’s group” with representatives from each local area. The group meets quarterly on hot issues, and the State conducts briefings. The State also held a group for resource room staff. Other State-level capacity building efforts include developing sector specialists to work on high wage, high demand jobs, or providing funds to local areas for their own capacity building.

### **Local Efforts**

Local capacity building efforts targeted all levels of WIA personnel, including One-Stop center staff, local Workforce Board members and staff, and contractors or service providers.

Training is the most common capacity building method described by local areas. Almost all of the local areas mentioned providing some level of training, and most indicated that they take advantage of the State training programs as one method of building capacity. Several local areas determined training needs through a needs assessment process, such as a training needs survey. Other areas have staff members create an individual development plan, and a few mentioned providing individual learning accounts, funds for individual training needs, or tuition reimbursement. Rural Minnesota has even created a network of peer trainers to train on issues relating to quality. Some of the most common staff training topics across the local areas we visited included WIA itself, performance measures, customer service, stress management, fee for service, case management, client flow, ITAs, computer skills, and serving or providing access to disabled customers. Some areas also offer advanced training opportunities. For example, Yuma County sponsors a “Workforce Development Executive” certification program at the State university, and provides training through the university’s Advanced Public Executive program on topics such as leadership, supervisory skills, or process evaluation and change.

Partner programs were involved in capacity building through cross training or “all staff” training efforts for One-Stop center staff in several local areas. This cross

training typically covered partner services, client flow, coordination, or common functions like job registration and labor exchange.

Contractor training generally involved topics relevant to WIA service provision such as eligibility and performance measurement. One local area, Portland Worksystems, has set up contractor meetings that serve as a forum for sharing best practices as well as training. Chicago has agency liaisons to work with contractors and conducts training at monthly meetings.

Other capacity building efforts described by the local areas we visited included attending or co-sponsoring conferences, creating TA manuals, taking part in State taskforces, holding regular meetings at which staff or providers can discuss problems or issues, and conducting retreats for Workforce Investment Board members.

## **SUMMARY**

Based on the data we collected for this study, it appears that the WIA performance measures are generally recognized as being meaningful and appropriate. They represent a framework for assessing and comparing performance for each funding stream across States and local areas, using data that provide valid, comparable information for most measures. In general, the measures were seen as useful and important for creating accountability and encouraging continuous improvement. The performance measures also appear to have successfully embodied the WIA principle of State and local control and flexibility. This was demonstrated by the variability we found in negotiated performance goals, the way the measures were operationalized, and the way data were being collected and used.

Some general concerns were express about some of the measures, which to some degree represent tradeoffs involved in applying various levels of rigor and specificity, while allowing for local flexibility. These issues include:

1. Balancing the need for a meaningful negotiation process with the reality that States and local areas should be held to the highest levels of performance.
2. Lack of consistency in how credentials are measured and difficulties that areas are experiencing in capturing the necessary data.
3. Confusions about how to match goals established for youth as part of the youth skill attainment rate to youths' natural learning progression.

4. Using appropriate sampling and data collection strategies that would allow for the reliable measurement of customer satisfaction at both the State and local levels.
5. Lack of consistency across local areas in what services trigger WIA registration, which can make it difficult to compare measured performance from one local area to the next or over time.
6. Concerns that some of the performance measures are confusing and difficult to track, as they involve complex definitions and entail varying measurement periods before and after program registration for different customers.
7. Potential unintended consequences of the various measures, including disincentives to serve some populations
8. Lack of consistency in performance measures across partner programs, which can inhibit collaboration and coordination.
9. A concern that the WIA measures do not adequately capture broad dimensions of systemwide performance.
10. Limitations in the use of UI wage records for measuring employment outcomes, including those caused by time lags in when data become available, lack of coverage of certain sectors of employment, and lack of coverage for those employed in another State.

Overall, then, it appears that performance accountability as mandated by WIA is conceptually on target, but that States and local areas are still adapting to the new requirements, recognizing and dealing with the systems' limitations, understanding the new measures and their implications, and recognizing the various tradeoffs involved in the decisions they make. As the system develops, one would expect many of the problems discussed here to be resolved. As this learning and system development takes place, staff will become more comfortable with the WIA measures and how they operate, and the performance accountability system will realize its promise of promoting high, comparable, and valid standards of performance.

Moreover, we observed a range of innovative State and local efforts that have been established to further promote system accountability, including, among other things, through efforts at conducting additional data collection to serve program management functions, developing measures of systemwide or cross-program performance, and adopting novel incentive policies that promote continuous improvement and foster the formation of strong partnerships.

Also as a way of improving system performance, we saw States and local areas engage in serious and concerted efforts to promote capacity building, such as by

developing training tools, conducting workshops on a range of topics, and providing numerous other opportunities for staff to improve their skills or gain new ones.

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## **VI. SERVICES FOR ADULTS AND DISLOCATED WORKERS**

This briefing paper is part of a series developed as part of the *Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates and Technical Assistance and Training Corporation. The evaluation consists thus far of two rounds of site visits: the first round of site visits was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight state and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. An overview of the evaluation is included as an appendix to this report. This briefing paper for the most part draws on findings from the second round of site visits, because these capture developments associated with WIA that are the more recent.

In this briefing paper, we discuss services for adults and dislocated workers that would normally require WIA registration, including staff-assisted core service, intensive services, and training services (a companion briefing paper discusses services for the universal customer that do not require registration). We first discuss some overall design issues, including the emphasis that sites place on training (as opposed to other levels of service) and the interplay between state and local roles. We next discuss how clients flow through the service levels, including who is given priority for services (in the adult program) and when WIA registration occurs. We then discuss issues related to the content of services, with an emphasis on ways that local areas differ from each other. We conclude with some general observations and identify some special challenges with which sites seem to be grappling.

### **OVERALL DESIGN ISSUES**

As part of an effort to devolve authority to States and local areas, WIA establishes only the broad outlines of how customers should move through the various service levels and what procedures should be established to guide access to training. States, in turn, may devolve this authority largely to local areas, or they may, at their discretion, establish more prescriptive policies that they expect to be followed throughout the State. In this section we discuss the interplay of State and local roles and the general issue of the balance given to training versus service at the other levels.

## State and Local Roles

Our site visits in both rounds of data collection almost uniformly reflect that States took a “hands-off” approach with respect to the service design for adult and dislocated worker services. Many did so explicitly as part of a sincere commitment to regional autonomy and local control. Local flexibility is of course an underpinning of the WIA legislation, and, to this degree, the States’ vision for WIA implementation as it relates to local control was well in line with the principles that WIA embodies. Others noted that, at least at this early stage of the operation of WIA, they needed to see how the system unfolded before considering whether more restrictive State guidelines should be issued.

Thus, regarding adult and dislocated worker services, most of the guidance that States issued to local areas at this point simply took the form of reiterating or clarifying the key stipulations pertaining to service delivery drawn from the WIA legislation or regulations. For example, they might describe the factors that must be considered in having adults move through service tiers (e.g., giving priority for public assistance recipients or low-income individuals, making a determination that a customer needed and could benefit from services at the next higher service level, etc.), without specifying how these criteria should be operationalized. Thus:

- None of the States we visited in either the first or second round specified for the local areas the length of time that a customer needed to remain at one service level before advancing to the next,
- Only one State stipulated the proportion of the local area’s WIA budget that should be devoted to training. Florida, a State we visited in the first round of data collection, was the exception, as it required that 50% of funds be used for training.
- States gave minimal guidance beyond paraphrasing the legislation as to how the service levels should be defined. Oregon is an exception in that it initially developed a fairly specific framework for defining service levels, especially the distinction between intensive and training services.
- Beyond reiterating the tenets of the legislation, few States gave more than vague guidance on when customers should be registered under WIA. At most, States issued statements based on DOL’s guidance, such as:
  - Illinois, which noted that local areas should adopt a point of registration that takes into account (a) the level of staff involvement, and (b) whether the service was primarily intending to impart job-seeking skills or something more, and



- Oregon, which noted that registration was required “when a core service is delivered in an individualized way.”
- None established time or dollar limits on the amount of ITAs that could be issued.
- Almost none established guidelines for when alternatives to ITAs (e.g., contract training or customized training) could be used for delivering training, or even how commonly they should be used. Among the exceptions:
  - Oregon clarified that contract training for hard-to-serve populations would be appropriate for individuals with substantial disabilities or substance abuse or mental health problems, victims of domestic violence, or “individuals in other categories approved by the local board.”
  - Virginia noted its expectation that alternatives to ITA should be used infrequently.

Different local areas reacted in different ways to the autonomy they were being given. On the one hand, some emphasized that they zealously guarded local prerogatives and thus greatly appreciated the freedom they were being given to establish their own service policies and practices. On the other hand, many local areas struggled with how to interpret and implement various WIA provisions and some were thus eager for more direction from their State counterparts.

### **Emphasis on Training**

WIA can be construed as a dramatic shift in thinking about the role of training in serving program participants. JTPA, which WIA supersedes, was intended to be almost strictly a training program (an important exception being that rapid response activities for dislocated workers were allowed), while WIA establishes separate levels of service—core services and intensive services—apart from training. In the absence of clear State guidance (except in Florida), local areas were left to their own thinking as to how much to emphasize training as opposed to service at the other levels. As well, they have in some cases faced practical or other difficulties that have made it difficult to devote as many resources to training services as they might have liked.

Based on actual or projected budget figures we were able to gather from 12 of the 14 local areas we visited in the second round, we can characterize them on the basis of the percentage of their WIA adult and dislocated funds that they have devoted to training. As shown in Table 1, below, there seems to be a pronounced split between the local areas we studied, with some devoting fairly little of their WIA budget for adult

and dislocated worker services to training and others devoting nearly all of it to training.

<b>Pct Devoted to Training</b>	<b>No. of Local Areas</b>
Very little (about 10%)	4 local areas
Little (15% to 25%)	1 local area
About half (40% to 65%)	5 local areas
Almost all (90% to 100%)	2 local areas

Reasons for the variation across sites can be attributed to a number of factors, both practical and conceptual. Among the conceptual reasons, a very few of the local areas we visited in the second round of site visits implicitly adopted a “work-first” approach to WIA. These areas thus emphasize job placement services and will consider training only as a last resort. Interestingly, several additional States and local areas initially adopted this approach, but have since come to take a much more balanced view. For example, officials in two States told us that they at first interpreted guidance on WIA as encouraging a work-first approach, but, based on clarifications that have been issued in very clear language more recently, now realize that WIA allows them much more flexibility and in fact requires them first and foremost to be focused on clients’ needs.

With these few exceptions, then, the view that WIA implies “work-first” was little in evidence. The most common perspective was that services under WIA should represent a balance of training and other services. This approach was expressed well by one of our respondents in the Balance of Maricopa County, who remarked that there was no longer the presumption that training is right for everyone, as there was under JTPA, but that it was still necessary to ensure that customers could easily access training if they needed it. This view was widely shared among the sites we visited.

Nonetheless, sites grappled with practical difficulties that made access to training more difficult than they might have liked or than they intended. Some of these difficulties are listed below.

1. *Confusions and other problems related to start-up.* For example, two sites mentioned that they weren’t at first sure how to use ITAs and for what types

of services they were appropriate. Five others made reference to a variety of other difficulties, such as establishing the eligible training provider list, which also caused few ITAs to be issued at first.

2. *Caution in using funding or overall inadequacy of funding.* Some sites complained that their total amount of funding wasn't nearly enough to support One-Stop system building and to fund intensive and training services too. Others feared that this would be so at the outset, but have since realized under-expenditures for PY 2000, which is causing them to re-think their service mix.
3. *Responding to customers' needs in a booming economy.* Until fairly recently, economic conditions have been quite strong nationwide. Under this circumstance, jobs were plentiful, job seekers wanted to find employment quickly, and employers were clamoring for workers to fill their hiring needs. Accordingly, local areas found that, regardless of what their predisposition might have been, they could best meet customers' needs (both job seekers and employers) by emphasizing short-term interventions that would lead to employment quickly.
4. *Taking a broad view of intensive services.* Many local areas offer a range of short computer skills workshops as part of pre-vocational intensive services. These courses are viewed as imparting general skills that can benefit workers in a broad range of occupational positions, rather than instances of specific occupational preparation. For example, Suffolk County, NY offers dozens of very short (no more than 2 weeks) computer classes that it makes available as part of intensive services. Taking an even broader view of intensive services, Oregon issued guidance to its locals that classified courses of less than 600 hours duration as intensive services, on the grounds that ITAs should be reserved for only longer-term training that could lead to a credential or a degree (it has since been corrected on this interpretation by DOL).

Overall, then, a variety of factors have caused expenditures for training to be quite low thus far. However, a close look at these reasons suggests that resources devoted to training should grow in the months ahead. Thus, some local areas that started out with a "work-first" emphasis have since shifted to a more balanced view, the confusions that plagued some local areas during PY 2000 have by now been largely resolved, areas now have a better sense of how much in WIA funds they can devote to training and thus do not need to be as cautious as they were at first, and the changing economic climate suggests that customers' demand for training services will be much stronger than it once was. With respect to the latter, we heard in a few local areas that the demand for services in general, and training in particular, had surged since the

tragedy of 9/11.<sup>1</sup> For all these reasons, training levels might be much different in PY 2001 than they were in PY 2000.

The above discussion speaks to reasons why training was previously under-emphasized. Yet we found two local areas that devoted almost all of their WIA adult and dislocated worker budgets to training. These two areas, both located in Georgia, heavily emphasized training services under WIA, just as they had done under JTPA. They did so partly because they felt that training was what their customers needed the most. Two additional considerations made this approach practical. First, they were able to devote so many resources to training services because the One-Stop systems in these two areas relied almost exclusively on Wagner-Peyser to provide core and intensive services. Thus, at NE Georgia, ES staff provide core services and refer individuals who are identified as needing training to the WIA case managers, who almost immediately begin helping the customers to develop a training plan (this arrangement has caused ES in Georgia to think more carefully about how it handles individual customers and to develop a more variegated menu of core and intensive services involving varying levels of staff assistance). The second practical consideration is that the State of Georgia provides residents with scholarships and grants for education and training from State Lottery funds, thus substantially reducing the costs associated with WIA training. In these two local areas, much of the WIA funds actually are used to provide supportive services to trainees.

## **CUSTOMER FLOW**

In thinking of the three levels of WIA services as constituting a clear hierarchy, local areas must establish policies regarding how clients should move through the service levels and, as we have already seen, were left to do so without much State guidance.

### **The Point of Registration**

The first point in the flow-through process (beyond providing the universal customer with self-help or information services) is ostensibly deciding when enough staff assistance has been involved so that a customer should become a WIA registrant. Because the decision about when to register customers in WIA has an important

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<sup>1</sup> In one local area, the demand for services has increased so dramatically in the last few months of calendar year 2001 that the wait to see a case manager could be as long as a month.

influence on measured program performance, local areas thought very carefully about when participants should be registered. Some adopted a fairly strict interpretation and registered customers quite soon in the process of delivering them services. For example, the two local areas we visited in Oregon attempted to adhere to state guidance by using a rough rule of thumb that registration should occur when a customer receives “more than about 15 minutes of individualized attention” or “whenever a counselor provides individual attention.” At the other extreme, some delayed the point of registration as long as they could, typically when the customer began intensive services or, in two local areas, when they were about to undertake training. They were able to do so either because they relied on other sources of funds, such as Wagner-Peyser, to support services at the lower tiers (as in the two local areas we visited in Georgia and in Vermont, a State we visited during the first round), or because they defined self-services very broadly, to include group workshops and some individual counseling. With respect to the latter, some areas classified services such that by definition there was no such thing as staff-assisted core services, or it was encountered only rarely.

### **How Customers Move Through Service Levels**

All customers must start out in core services and will advance up the service hierarchy only if they need the next higher level of service to attain a job that promises self-sufficiency. Overwhelmingly, the local sites we visited during both rounds of data collection were very client-focused in determining who was in need of further services and emphasized that decisions were made on a case-by-case basis. There were a few exceptions. In one local area, customers could move to intensive services only if they had an identifiable barrier or if they remained in job search for at least 30 days. In still another area, with perhaps the strictest sequence for moving to intensive services that we encountered, customers must have completed a six-week job search in core services and document that they applied for at least three jobs per week (although this requirement could be waived at the discretion of the counselor).<sup>2</sup>

These exceptions aside, local areas emphasized to us their flexible approach and noted that they treated all customers individually according to their needs. Nonetheless, some basic steps were almost always required, such as (depending on the local area’s policy) registering in ES, attending a One-Stop orientation, undertaking an

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<sup>2</sup> We visited this site during the first round of data collection, so it is also possible that this requirement is no longer in place.

assessment of occupational skills and interests, or attending a workshop on job search skills. In general, though, staff endeavored to quickly identify those who were demonstrably in need of more intensive services, so that customers could move from core to intensive services, and even on to training, in quite a short period of time—a matter of days in some cases.

Moving along this quickly depended greatly on the case managers' ability to identify a low-skill customer for whom job search alone was likely to be futile. They used various mechanisms to do so. Some sites held regular One-Stop orientation sessions during which the full range of One-Stop services was described; customers who were interested in something beyond self services could arrange to make an appointment with a case manager during which an initial assessment was undertaken and training options could be explored. In other areas, an initial screening was conducted of all customers and was used to quickly identify those who were likely to need something beyond self-services. Finally, staff monitored Resource Room usage fairly closely to keep a sharp eye for those who seemed to be struggling.

Another factor that influenced how quickly customers could move through the service levels was their own motivation for doing so and their initial preferences. Thus, it appeared that customers who knew they wanted and needed training, expressed this preference early in the intake process, and were prompt in completing any necessary paperwork (e.g., demonstrating evidence that they had researched labor market information, if this was a requirement of the local area) could move from one service level to the next very rapidly.

As a way of demonstrating what the client-flow might look like in practice, we present a common service sequence that a customer might encounter in Portland Worksystems:

1. Customers who seem to need more than self-services are encouraged to attend a One-Stop orientation workshop, which describes the services available at the center and through the various partners.
2. Those interested in finding out more about services will meet briefly (up to 15 minutes) with a WIA staff member, who helps customers decide whether they should undertake staff-assisted services. Most of these meetings result in the customers' being registered for WIA services.
3. Following registration, customers meet with a Career Specialist who helps them determine appropriate next steps. This might entail having the customer remain in staff-assisted core services, and continuing to

use the Resource Room with more individualized assistance and perhaps attending a self-assessment workshop.

4. Customers that seem to need something more than this will be assigned to meet with a case manager who, over one or more meetings, helps the customer develop an IEP as part of intensive services.
5. As part of the process of developing the IEP, most customers participate in a week-long career exploration workshop, which is classified as an intensive service. This workshop involves more intensive personal and skill assessment and presents opportunities to explore career options.
6. Based on the IEP and the outcome of the assessment workshop, some customers will remain in intensive services, attend other workshops as needed (e.g., on job search skills, basic computer skills, etc.), and continue the job search process until they find a job. Others will be determined to need training to attain a job that offers the prospect of self-sufficiency.
7. Those for whom training seems appropriate will be required to research occupations in demand, carry out informational interviews, research eligible training providers, and develop a budget demonstrating that they can support themselves while in training.

Respondents in Portland noted that departures from the above sequence are common, based on customers' obvious needs and preferences. Moreover, the amount of time individual customers spend in one level of service varies greatly, with some moving through very quickly while others spend months at each level.

### **Priority and Eligibility for Services**

A key feature of adult services under WIA is that there is no means test (as there was under JTPA), thus allowing program services to be accessible to the universal customer. WIA nonetheless is clear in asserting that, whenever funds for employment and training services are limited, priority for intensive and training services in the adult program should be given to those who are public assistance recipients or are low income.

Local areas that we studied operationalized this priority guideline in different ways. Only three areas established a specific quota to ensure that sufficient slots were reserved for low-income individuals; Yuma County set this figure at 65%, the Chicago Mayor's Office set it at 85%, and East Texas set it at 70%. Some areas, such as one of the areas we visited in Virginia and another in Utah, broadened the priority criteria by including on the priority list those with specified barriers to employment, such as lacking a GED or high school diploma, having a disability, being a profiled UI

claimant, having a substantial language barrier, or being a non-custodial parent. On the other hand, in four local areas we visited in the second round of data collection we were assured that funds were not then scarce, so that WIA's priority restriction did not need to be invoked

Related to their priority criteria, local areas also needed to operationalize how they would define self-sufficiency, since employed individuals cannot be served with intensive or training services unless they need further services "...to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency." Based on information that we collected from the WIA evaluation, as well as through the *Evaluation of the Implementation of the ITA/ETP Demonstration*, another study we are conducting, we have assembled the information listed in Table 2, describing how self-sufficiency is being operationalized. As this table shows, the definition of self-sufficiency used by local areas ranges from the poverty level or 70% of the lower-living standard income level (LLSIL) on the one hand, to 200% of the LLSIL on the other, with various variants for dislocated workers relating to their pre-dislocation earnings.

Practically speaking, though, and regardless of how areas established priority criteria or defined self-sufficiency, virtually all the areas we studied served predominantly low-income individuals as part of their intensive and training services in the adult program. This came about because the local areas served communities that were predominately low-income, or, in one case, because they had a reputation as "being a place where poor people go."

#### **THE CONTENT OF CORE AND INTENSIVE SERVICES**

The legislation provides lists of services that should be included under each of the three service levels, including:

- As core services, outreach and intake, initial assessment, job search and placement assistance, and provision of labor market information and job vacancy listings;
- As intensive services, comprehensive and specialized assessments, diagnostic testing, in-depth interviewing and evaluation, development of the individual employment plan, group counseling, individual counseling, case management, and short-term prevocational services.
- As training services, occupational skills training, on-the-job training, customized training, entrepreneurial training, and job readiness training.



**Table 2: Definition of Self-Sufficiency in Selected LWIAs**

State	Local Area	Definition
MD	Baltimore	200% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL). This applies for adults and dislocated workers.
GA	Atlanta Regional Commission	The poverty level or 70% of the LLSIL, whichever is lower. For dislocated workers, lacking self-sufficiency can be demonstrated if the person is at a wage or skill level significantly lower than job of dislocation.
IN	Indianapolis	100% of poverty level
MI	Detroit	100% of poverty level
MO	Western MO	100% of the Lower Living Standard
NE	Greater Lincoln	170% of the poverty level; for dislocated workers, earnings that are 80% of the layoff wage
OH	Ottawa County	Individuals are not self-sufficient if they receive food stamps, housing assistance, medical benefits or cash assistance, or income is below 200% of poverty level. For dislocated workers, threshold is 82% of layoff wage.
PA	Three Rivers	For welfare recipients: no longer in need of government aid, or total family income is no longer below the poverty level. For dislocated workers: have returned to employment at 93% of former wage Is considering raising threshold to \$8-\$10 for adults, and 105% of layoff wage or \$10 (whichever higher) for dislocated workers
PA	Philadelphia	Uses a matrix that shows projected budgeted amounts for housing, child care, food, and other expenses, for families of different sizes. Self-sufficient hourly wages for: -- a single adult are \$7.10 - an adult and infant are: \$12.39 - an adult and preschooler are: \$16.61 - an adult and school-age teen are: \$11.23 - two adults and preschooler are: \$9.22 per adult
TX	Dallas	Full-time employment at \$7.50/hr. For dislocated workers, defined as 75% of prior wages or satisfaction with wages and benefits of new employer.
TX	East Texas	Annual earnings of \$13,539; for dislocated workers, 85% of pre-layoff wage.
TX	Texamo	100% of LLSIL

Most of these basic services were provided by all of the local areas we visited, but there was variation in the breadth of offerings made available and how the boundaries between the service levels were defined. Among these key differences, which we explore in this section, were the extent to which group workshops were offered and how intensive services were conceptualized and defined.

### **Group Workshops**

Almost every local area we visited during the second round of site visits offered a mix of group workshops covering a range of topics that, depending on the workshop and the local site, could last a half-day or up to two weeks (and occasionally a bit longer). Topics covered included:

- Orientation sessions to the One-Stop Center.
- Pre-employment and work maturity skills, including job search training. We were told about workshops covering topics that included interviewing skills, resume preparation, listening skills, problem-solving skills, sociability, phone etiquette, interpersonal skills, communication skills, and setting goals.
- Life skills. These included workshops geared towards building self-esteem and imparting skills in money management, assertiveness, attitude and stress management, budgeting, surviving and coping, time management, and public speaking.
- Group assessments. These include workshops designed to help customers assess their skills and occupational interests. For example, at the Medford Job Council this workshop consisted of a two-week session involving numerous assessments, including CAPS, COPS, COPES, and others.
- Job Clubs. Nearly every local area reported the use of Job Clubs.
- Computer skills. This category was very broad, encompassing dozens of separate courses on topics that included computer fundamentals, introduction to the PC, Windows, Internet usage, and training in basic software applications.
- GED and ESL classes.

Suffolk County (NY) had the greatest range of group workshops that we observed, including some covering virtually all the major categories listed above. These include several dozen half-day to full-day focus group sessions available at the One-Stop Center and focused on job search skills and career exploration, with titles that include:

- Interviewing for Success
- Interview Practice
- Moving up with your Employer
- Obtaining a Job and Keeping It
- Job Strategies for People Over 40
- Marketing Your Skills
- Budgeting Finances
- How to Use the Internet as a Job Search Tool
- Staying Motivated During your Job Search
- How to Start your Job Search
- Key Steps in the Job Search
- Networking into a Job
- How to Create a Winning Resume
- Career Decisions
- Salary Negotiations
- Effective Letter Writing
- Telephone Techniques
- Surviving and Coping
- Using Employment Agencies and Search Firms
- Handling the Stress of the Job Search
- Relocation: Is it Right for You
- Job Retention

This local area also offers dozens of separate computer workshops, lasting anywhere from a half-day to two weeks. Topics include a basic introduction to computers, various Microsoft applications, more specialized software packages, and basic Web design.

The extensive menu of group workshops offered by Suffolk County is classified as intensive services. However, other areas, with a narrower range of offerings, classify workshops differently. Almost everywhere, Job Clubs are classified as a core service, and GED/ESL classes are offered as an intensive service. But even this general pattern had its exceptions, and there was little commonality in how computer workshops and job search classes were classified. For example, in two local areas, workshops on job search skills, career exploration, basic computer skills, and basic literacy skills are classified as self-service, because both areas are eager to defer the trigger for WIA registration as long as possible. In three other areas, job search and computer literacy workshops are classified as staff-assisted core services. In several areas, such as in Suffolk County, most workshops are classified as an intensive service, and specifically as a pre-vocational service. In still others, different workshops are classified differently; for example, at the Medford Job Council, job search workshops are classified as self-service, but group assessments are considered to be an intensive service.

## **The Vision and Content of Intensive Services**

At the time we wrote our Interim Report, we noted that local areas were struggling with how intensive services should be conceived and, specifically, whether this service level represented a way-station for people on their way to training or encompassed a rich service offering in its own right. To some degree, local areas are still grappling with this issue. At one extreme, such as in the two local areas we visited in Georgia, almost all those who register in WIA as part of intensive services eventually go on to training. In these areas, ES funds and staffs almost all of what would be considered core and intensive services. As part of their responsibilities, the ES staffers provide job search services and, in the course of doing so, identify and refer those who need training to the WIA case manager. The intensive services provided by WIA thus consist of administering brief assessments, completing the individual employment plan, and otherwise helping the customer develop a training plan. As a consequence, very few individuals exit WIA without having received training services, and intensive services can very much be considered a prelude to training.

Other areas have much richer service offerings as part of intensive services and fully expect that many customers will receive intensive services and nothing further. Suffolk County, with its extensive array of computer workshops (as was described above), is perhaps the clearest example of this. Generally, this local area orients its computer workshops to the customers who may have marketable skills but “just need a brush up” before they are fully ready to seek employment. Thus, those who take one or a few of the computer workshops are assumed not to need training services and it is expected that they will typically exit WIA at the intensive-service level. Training services, by contrast, are viewed as appropriate for those undertaking skill-building for specific occupations.

As another example, the State of Oregon was promoting a vision of intensive services that was very expansive, at least initially. This State found that, especially during the boom economic times of a year ago, few of its customers were interested in long-term training, but instead wanted short courses that would give them basic marketable skills quickly. The State, with a strong customer focus, wanted to accommodate their needs but, at the same time, was worried that its performance on the WIA Employment and Credentialing Rate might be negatively impacted because many

of the shorter courses that customers wanted did not lead to a credential.<sup>3</sup> Its solution was to classify these courses as an intensive service. Thus, according to its plan, Professional Development and Individual Employment courses were defined as intensive services, with the former consisting of all programs of instruction of less than 210 hours and the latter consisting of programs of instruction lasting between 210 and 600 hours. Under pressure from DOL, Oregon now classifies these courses as a training service. Nonetheless, it (as well as many other local areas) still classifies an array of basic and intermediate computer classes as an intensive service, on the grounds that these courses provide general skills useful in a broad array of occupations, rather than providing training for a specific job.

With these extremes as the end points, local areas are thus arrayed along a continuum whereby intensive services consists of little more than assessment and counseling oriented towards those intending to undertake training, to a well-developed service level in its own right. An important difference between these extremes seems to relate to how short-term pre-vocational services is defined—one of the legislation’s allowable activities under intensive services—and, specifically, to the array of group workshops, primarily on computer skills, that are offered as a part of it.

## **DESIGNING AND DELIVERING TRAINING SERVICES**

In this section, we consider several aspects relating to the design and delivery of training services, including the extent to which alternatives to ITAs are used, time or dollar limits on the use of ITAs, ways in which demand occupations are determined, and the ways that customers are assisted in choosing a training program.

### **ITA versus Non-ITA Training**

Consistent with its strong emphasis on customer choice, WIA promotes the idea that training should be primarily supported through the use of individual training accounts (ITAs) that customers can use to procure training services from eligible training providers. However, local areas can use alternatives to ITAs, in the form of issuing contracts for training services, in certain specified circumstances. These include their efforts to fund:

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<sup>3</sup> The base for the Adult Employment and Credentialing Rate includes only participants who were enrolled in training.

- On-the-job training (OJT) or customized training provided by an employer,
- Training programs by community-based organizations or other private organizations that are of demonstrated effectiveness in serving “special participant populations that face multiple barriers to employment,” or
- Other providers, if it is deemed that there are too few providers in the area to fulfill the intent of ITAs.

Most of the local sites we visited made little use of these alternatives to the ITA—indeed, of the 14 local areas we visited in the second round of data collection, 10 noted that they relied on ITAs exclusively, or almost so.

However, the remaining four local areas point out the important use that non-ITA training has under some circumstances. For example, one local area, Yuma County, Arizona, does not use ITAs at all. Respondents that we spoke with in Yuma pointed out that the service area was very rural and held few eligible training providers. Under this circumstance, the Board decided that there was an insufficient number of eligible providers to constitute the sort of competitive training market that WIA contemplated. Accordingly, all of the WIA training for adults and dislocated workers carried out in Yuma takes the form of OJTs and other contract training.

Customized training is also relied on heavily in several other local areas we studied, including Erie County, which estimates that about 60% of its training takes this form, and Philadelphia and Detroit, which approach this figure.<sup>4</sup> These areas mentioned that they were interested in closely aligning their workforce development and economic development initiatives. They see customized training as an important means for carrying this out, as it directly supports the labor needs of the areas’ employers and ensures that the training is tailored to the jobs they have available. Other advantages of customized training that they cited are: (1) that jobs are virtually guaranteed at the training’s conclusion, (2) that customized training is often cheaper on a per unit basis than ITAs are, because the employers defray a portion of the training costs, and (3) that it meets customers’ needs for immediate income, because in some cases participants are hired by the employer, and draw a salary, while they are being trained.

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<sup>4</sup> We visited Philadelphia and Detroit not as part of the WIA Evaluation, but in association with the *Evaluation of the ITA/ETP Demonstration*, which we are also carrying out for DOL (under a subcontract with Mathematica Policy Research).

Finally, we encountered several local areas that, although they rely on ITAs predominantly, use contract training to some degree, because they find it to be the best training strategy for serving customers with special needs. For example, Medford Job Council arranges contract training for some customers with disabilities. Similarly, Philadelphia arranges contract training for serving several special populations, including the homeless and those with hearing impairments; each of these training courses is jointly funded with other city agencies.

### **Time and Dollar Limits on ITAs**

In keeping with provisions in the WIA regulations (Section 663.420), States and Local Boards are entitled to set dollar or time limits on the training they will support through an ITA. As we discussed earlier in this paper, no States that we visited invoked this authority; instead, they completely devolved such policy-making to their local areas. However, nearly all the local areas we visited do set such limits, as Table 3 shows.<sup>5</sup> As the table also shows, time limits are generally 1 or 2 years, but dollar limits per trainee vary widely, even within the same State. For example, in New York, Erie County has established a dollar cap of \$2,500 per ITA, while Suffolk County set its cap at \$10,000.

Reasons for this variation relate to characteristics of the local marketplace for training and the area's philosophical emphasis. For example, Suffolk establishes its relatively high dollar limit because of its commitment to provide customers with access to training of the very highest quality. At the other extreme, some areas, such as West Central, Missouri, have established quite a low cap, because they find that training in their area is relatively inexpensive (e.g., because it is dominated by community colleges) and because they have a commitment to stretch their training dollars by serving as many customers as possible.

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<sup>5</sup> Data in this table were gathered from site visits we conducted as part of either the WIA Evaluation or another evaluation that SPR is conducting for DOL, the *Evaluation of the ITA/ETP Demonstration* (we are conducting the latter study under subcontract to Mathematica Policy Research).

**Table 3**  
**Local Limits on Amount or Duration of ITA**

<b>State</b>	<b>Local Area (Grantee)</b>	<b>Dollar Cap</b>	<b>Time Limit</b>
AZ	Balance of Maricopa	\$3,500	None
CT	Southwest Connecticut	\$3,000	1 year
CA	SELACO	\$5,500*	None
GA	Atlanta Regional Commission	\$8,000	2 years
	NE Georgia	\$5,000	2 years
	SW Georgia	\$7,000	2 years
IL	Chicago Mayor's Office	\$5,000	None
	DuPage County	\$5,500	1 year*
IN	Indianapolis PIC	\$2,500	2 years
	Tecumseh Area	None	2 years
MD	Baltimore OED	\$7,000	1 year
MI	Macomb/St. Clair	\$5,000	None
MN	Rural MN CEP	None	2 years
MO	West Central/Sedalia	\$1,700	2 years
MT	Balance of MT	None	None
NC	Capital Area/Raleigh	\$5,600	2 years
NE	Greater Lincoln	\$5,000*	2 years*
	Greater Omaha	\$4,000	2 years
NY	Erie County	\$2,500	None
	Suffolk County	\$10,000	None
OH	Cincinnati	\$5,000	None
OR	Medford Job Council	\$4,500*	1 year*
	Portland Worksystems	\$1,200**	None
PA	Northern Tier	\$4,000	2 years
	Philadelphia	\$6,000	2 years*
	Three Rivers	\$8,000	2 years
TX	Golden Crescent	None	2 years
	Heart of Texas	\$5,000	2 years
VA	Hampton Roads	\$6,000	2 years

Note: Some of these local areas were visited more than two years ago and might have changed their limits in the interim.

\*These limits can be waived with approval

\*\*The Local Board allows each One-Stop operator to set its own limits. These caps were those imposed by one of the centers that we visited in this area, and can be waived.



### **Defining Demand Occupations**

Another way in which customer choice can be constrained is through limits on the occupations for which training will be supported. WIA explicitly allows this authority and, in fact, makes clear that training should only be funded for those “who select programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area involved or in another area in which the (customer is) willing to relocate” (WIA Title I.B.134). Local areas meet this requirement in different ways. Some rely on a list of demand occupations developed by the State or use the States’ occupational growth projections. For example, one State compiled a list for each of its local areas of occupations that were expected to have a 20% growth rate from 1996-2000. Another State was much more inclusive, and established lists of all occupations expected to have at least 25 new openings per year. Still another defined demand occupations as those with annual growth rates of at least 1.5%.

Where such State lists were used, some local areas adhered to them rigidly, by not funding training for occupations that were not on the list. By contrast, others allowed some flexibility so that exceptions could be made if a customer could demonstrate a reasonable prospect of attaining employment in the field for which approval for training was being sought.

Finally, another group of local areas did not rely on State lists of demand occupations at all. Typically, case managers in these areas relied on their own knowledge of the local economy and required customers to do their own research (such as by searching through newspaper want ads) to present evidence that jobs were available.

### **Helping Customers Make Training Choices**

Aside from these permissible limits on the types, duration, or costs of training that would be supported, local areas are expected to provide access to training in a way that “maximizes customer choice” (WIA Title I.B.134). At the same time, case managers have a professional obligation to lend customers the benefit of their expertise by helping them to make appropriate training choices. Local areas too have an interest in ensuring that customers choose wisely, because customer choices that result in poor outcomes will negatively affect the local areas’ performance.

Overwhelmingly we found that local areas balance these potentially conflicting objectives by promoting a model of informed customer choice. According to this

approach, One-Stop centers ensure that those authorized to undertake training receive ample information and assistance, so that they themselves are led to make prudent choices. Operationally, it meant that customers would normally be required to undertake an assessment of their skills and abilities, possibly attend a workshop on career exploration, and engage in research (e.g., about the labor market or eligible training providers) before an ITA would be issued. Case managers, meanwhile, played the role of facilitators. As one of our respondents in Rural Minnesota CEP put it, “case managers guide, but customers decide.”

This general approach of promoting informed choice seemed to be embraced virtually everywhere we visited, although the specific mechanisms that local areas adopted differed somewhat. For example, customers who want to undertake training in SW Georgia are required to participate in a 12-hour assessment workshop as part of intensive services, and those who express some uncertainty about their career choice are encouraged to undertake a brief job shadow before making a final decision. In a number of local areas—including the Balance of Maricopa County and the Chicago Mayor’s Office, among others—customers are expected to visit two or three separate training providers to gain a feel for which one might be most suitable. In the Balance of Maricopa County they must as well prepare a Statement of Justification for their training plan before it will be approved, as a way of ensuring that they have thought through the key elements of their decision. Other areas, such as Portland Worksystems and Baltimore Office of Economic Development, expect customers to carry out informational interviews (e.g., with employers, former trainees, and training providers) and prepare a budget to demonstrate that they can support themselves through training. Based on these processes, it was felt that customers were coming to identify appropriate training choices on their own. Very encouragingly, then, it appears that almost everywhere customer choice is being taken very seriously.

There were nonetheless some potentially important constraints on choices that we observed during the course of our site visits:

- *Limited numbers of training providers in the area.* In Yuma County, the Local Board decided that there was such a paucity of eligible training providers in the area that it made no sense to rely on ITAs as a way of delivering training services to customers; accordingly, this area used contract training exclusively. This extreme example aside, many of the other local areas we visited for this study could be characterized as sparsely populated rural areas that had a dearth of training choices.

Although they still supported ITAs, practically speaking customers' training choices were narrower than might have been desired.

- *Potential contraction of the ETP list under subsequent eligibility.* Although few of the States we visited had yet to make the transition to subsequent eligibility for their eligible training providers, respondents that we talked with in several local areas were fearful that the State's eligible training provider list would contract dramatically once subsequent eligibility began. For example, Illinois, which was just making the transition to subsequent eligibility when our site visit took place, was witnessing a drop in its number of eligible providers from 800, under initial eligibility, to about 300. Similarly, Texas, a State we visited during the first round of data collection, was also anticipating a sharp drop in the number of its eligible providers, especially among community colleges.<sup>6</sup>
- *Dollar caps on ITAs.* Local areas confront the difficult decision of wanting to promote long-term quality training, while rationing training funds so that they can serve as many customers as possible. Depending on their local circumstances (e.g., the average costs of training in the area, and the demand for training services), they balance these objectives by setting different dollar caps on the amount of an ITA that they will fund. Although all these decisions must be viewed as reasonable given the various local contexts and priorities, practically speaking low caps in some areas will limit access to certain types of training.
- *The prevalence of reverse referrals.* In at least a couple of the local areas we visited, training vendors are marketing heavily to those who are potentially eligible for WIA (one local area estimated that as many as 75% of the training customers it served came to the One-Stop center because of a reverse referral by a training vendor). Although local areas have procedures in place to ensure that customers are making informed choices (as we discussed above), one wonders if in at least some cases customers are unduly swayed by vendors' appeals.

### **Coordinating the ITA with Pell Grants**

In an effort to promote seamless services and eliminate duplication, WIA requires that training funds committed under WIA be coordinated with funds available from other sources, and that, in fact, WIA training dollars should be used only for those who

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<sup>6</sup> ETP issues were addressed in detail as part of SPR's *Evaluation of the Individual Training Account/Eligible Training Provider Demonstration: Final Report*, prepared for DOL under subcontract to Mathematica Policy Research.

“require assistance beyond the assistance made available under other grant assistance programs, including Federal Pell Grants” (WIA Title I.B.134).

The majority of local sites we visited interpreted this provision to mean that Pell funds should be used to cover tuition when it is available, so that WIA dollars would be used for tuition or other training expenses beyond the amount of the Pell grant or for those who are not Pell eligible. Operationally, because the ITA amount could be determined and committed much more quickly than decisions about Pell grants are normally made, training vendors typically are expected to reimburse the local area for the amount of the Pell if and when a Pell grant is awarded.

We encountered a few local areas whose policies were exceptions to this, however. In these areas, the ITA would be used for tuition and related expenses, and customers could keep their Pell grants for living expenses.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

The review of adult and dislocated worker services that we undertook as part of this evaluation uncovered a number of general patterns that can be summarized below:

1. States are devolving almost all authority for setting policies regarding adult and dislocated worker services to their local areas. This pattern is fully in keeping with WIA’s emphasis on local control. Local areas are generally embracing this local autonomy, but it has made the transition to WIA a bit more time-consuming and difficult in some cases, as areas need to gradually come to see for themselves what policies will work best for their area.
2. This local-area flexibility is reflected in the systems that are developing. Thus, although there are obvious broad similarities, local areas are making unique decisions regarding key features of adult and dislocated worker services, such as in developing service offerings as part of intensive services, using non-ITA training, setting dollar limits on ITAs, and so on.
3. Local areas generally retain a strong interest in supporting training under WIA, while recognizing that there needs to be an appropriate balance between meeting the needs of the universal customer and providing training services for those who need it. A very few local areas are exceptions, however, and are promoting a strong “work first” emphasis.
4. Notwithstanding the general interest in supporting training, expenditures for training services have been very modest or even quite low in some areas thus far, due to a number of factors, including: (a) the areas’ initial confusions regarding for whom ITAs were appropriate and how they should be used, or other start-up problems, (b) their caution in using WIA funds for training until they could see how much it would cost to support the One-Stop infrastructure,

- (c) an erstwhile booming economy that reduced the demand for training, and  
(d) a somewhat expansive view of what intensive services could encompass.
5. Decisions regarding when WIA registration should occur (e.g., what services should trigger registration) vary widely across the local areas we visited.
  6. Local areas are quite attuned to quickly identifying customers who need something beyond self-services. Thus, those who show an obvious need for intensive or training services can be moved from one service level to the next without much delay. Consistent with this, few local areas impose requirements that customers remain in prolonged job search before being determined eligible for intensive or training services.
  7. One important way in which the menu of services varies across local areas is in the array of group workshops that are offered. In some areas, these number into the dozens and cover a range of topics, including pre-employment and work maturity skills, life skills, group assessments and career exploration, and basic or intermediate computer skills. These workshops last anywhere from a half-day to about two weeks, and are viewed as providing general skills appropriate across an array of occupational areas. They help enrich service offerings available to those who do not need specific occupational skills training.
  8. In the large majority of local areas that we visited, ITAs are relied on exclusively or predominantly as the way in which training services are delivered. However, some areas point out the important use that alternatives to ITAs have in some circumstances, such as in serving customers with special needs. Customized training is also identified as an attractive alternative to ITAs in some areas, because it supports their efforts to tightly link workforce development with economic development.
  9. Almost all local areas establish time limits or dollar limits on the ITAs that they will issue. Time limits typically are either one or two years, but dollar limits vary widely across areas, even within the same State. Thus, in some areas, dollar limits were as low as \$1,700; in other areas they were as high as \$10,000.
  10. Customer choice, informed by good information, is clearly apparent in the way that sites are working with customers to help them select training programs and vendors. At the same time, this choice is structured within a framework that requires that customers undertake an assessment of their skills and abilities and conduct labor market or other research. To this degree, customers are making choices only after it has been assured that they are being exposed to a range of good information.
  11. Nonetheless, there were some potentially important constraints on choice in some areas, such as those caused by: (a) limits on the number of providers that are available in some areas, (b) a potential contraction of the eligible

training provider list under subsequent eligibility, (c) low dollar caps on ITAs, and (d) the prevalence of reverse referrals.

Based on our data collection, we have also identified some challenges regarding adult and dislocated worker services that the workforce system might need to address as it moves forward. These include:

1. An upsurge in the demand for services since the fall of 2001. Some areas have seen greatly increased customer loads since the tragedy of 9/11. In one case, this has caused a lengthy waiting time for customers to schedule appointments with case managers. Thus, some local areas may need to reconsider the way they determine the priority with which different customers should be served, re-orient their funding to enable them to hire additional staff, or otherwise find ways of serving customers more efficiently.
2. Developing additional ways of tracking customer usage or establishing more uniform guidelines as to when customers should be registered in WIA. The dramatic differences across areas in the events that trigger WIA registration will seriously impair the ability of the WIASRD data management system to adequately reflect the extent of services that are being provided overall or to compare one local area with another. Perhaps other or additional tracking systems should be explored so that the full use of One-Stop services can be captured.
3. Meeting customers' diverse needs. WIA explicitly poses the challenge of serving both the universal customer and low-income individuals who may lack even rudimentary work skills. These two groups clearly need different mixes of services, placing tremendous demands on service designs. Such diversity also taxes the abilities of staff providing services, who must possess a broad range of occupational counseling skills and knowledge to be effective with all they serve. This challenge will become even more acute, given the upsurge in the demand for services that some areas have realized in recent months.
4. Struggles with how to conceptualize intensive services. Some local areas have implemented a rich array of service offerings as part of intensive services and fully expect that customers will exit from WIA at the intensive-service level. Other areas, however, have a much more limited view of intensive services, and treat it as providing individualized job search assistance to some customers and preparing others for training. Local areas could perhaps benefit from additional DOL guidance on how intensive services can or should be conceived.
5. Balancing the needs of employers and job seekers. WIA promotes the ITA as a strong mechanism for ensuring customer choice. At the same time, customized training has clearly proven valuable in some areas in meeting employers' specific needs for skilled workers. Local areas will need to develop strategies for adequately balancing these twin objectives.

6. Ensuring that customers with special needs are being adequately served through training services. WIA explicitly allows contract training to be used for programs of proven effectiveness in meeting the needs of special populations (e.g., those with disabilities, the homeless, farmworkers, etc.). Yet we saw little evidence of this during our site visits. Local areas must be certain that the needs of special targeted populations are not being lost in the rush to embrace ITAs as a preferred training vehicle.

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## **VII. IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES IN WIA TITLE I ADULT AND DISLOCATED WORKER SERVICES**

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) represents a potentially important reshaping of the federal government's approach to publicly funded workforce development services. First applied nationwide in program year 2000 (PY 2000), the Act's key provisions were to some extent initially greeted with confusion and uncertainty by workforce practitioners charged with implementing them. Moreover, PY 2000 represented a period of rapid economic growth and extremely tight labor markets that limited the demand for services among what would normally have been the program's traditional clientele. Both these facts combined to make WIA's first full year of implementation rather tentative. Subsequently, WIA has moved to a greater level of maturation, as the workforce development system has gained greater confidence and comfort with implementing WIA and changes to the economic climate have increased the demand for services.

In this paper, we profile this trajectory with regard to the adult and dislocated worker programs. We begin by delineating the legislation's key provisions regarding services for adults and dislocated workers and contrast them with previous approaches. We next identify some key challenges that states and local areas have encountered during WIA's first few years of implementation. We conclude by drawing attention to the inherent tension between some of WIA's key provisions and suggest some next steps through which these tensions might be resolved.

### **KEY PROVISIONS REGARDING SERVICES IN WIA**

WIA replaced and repealed the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and amended the Wagner-Peyser Act in response to a variety of concerns about how the existing public workforce development system was designed and operated. Among these concerns, it was noted that a multitude of employment and training programs—by some counts over 150 separate programs, including those operating under JTPA, Vocational Rehabilitation, Vocational Education, the Trade Adjustment Assistance Act, and the Wagner-Peyser Act, among just a few—operated often without effective coordination or collaboration. The resulting system, it was claimed, resulted in redundancies and inefficiencies and confronted customers with a confusing maze of

programs through which they found it difficult to navigate (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994a, 1994b, 1994c, 2000).

Second, JTPA services were limited to those who met narrowly circumscribed eligibility criteria. Virtually all participants in JTPA's adult program needed to be economically disadvantaged, and (after the JTPA Amendments of 1992) at least 65% needed to be hard to serve, by virtue of having at least one barrier to employment from a list of seven that were specified in the legislation. These stipulations arguably served to target services on those who needed them the most. However, as the public workforce development system moved towards a One-Stop service delivery over the several years before JTPA's repeal, these eligibility restrictions caused awkward problems regarding funding and staffing support and hampered the ability of JTPA-supported programs to operate effectively with its partners (Kogan, et al., 1997). Moreover, in a dynamic, fast-moving economy, all workers arguably need access to an array of workforce services throughout their work lives.

Third, JTPA was presumptively a training program. Although the requirements were somewhat looser in the dislocated worker program, virtually all persons enrolled in the adult program were expected to receive comprehensive services that could include basic skills training and occupational skills training, among other things. Moreover, at least 50% of funds for the adult program needed to be spent on direct training services, and job search assistance or pre-employment skill building as stand-alone activities were discouraged.<sup>1</sup> Given the hard-to-serve clientele that JTPA was targeting, these restrictions seemed sensible. At the same time, they arguably handcuffed practitioners and, if results from recent welfare-to-work evaluations are an indication, might have promoted training services when less costly interventions might have been more effective in leading to employment quickly (e.g., Freedman, et al., 2000).<sup>2</sup>

Fourth, because of JTPA's heavy use of contract training, participants' choices among courses of study and available training providers were often limited to a preselected vendor or set of vendors with whom the local workforce area had worked

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<sup>1</sup> Basic readjustment services, including job search services, as stand-alone activities were encouraged in the JTPA dislocated worker program, but not in the adult program.

<sup>2</sup> However, the longer-term efficacy of these less costly strategies is less clear (Friedlander and Burtless, 1995; Grubb, 1996).

out prior agreements. In the worst cases, participants were sometimes assigned to a course of study by a case manager primarily because a training slot in a program for which the local area had developed a contract needed to be filled. For these reasons, JTPA was sometimes criticized for not being sufficiently customer focused (Levitan and Gallo, 1988; U.S. DOL, 1991).

Finally, JTPA was sometimes decried as being inattentive to the needs of the business community. According to these arguments, the role that publicly-funded workforce development programs should play in promoting the nation's economic competitiveness and ensuring a supply of skilled workers for emerging industry needs was too little appreciated.

WIA was enacted to address these concerns, after much anticipation and delay caused by a protracted policy debate within Congress. Building on reforms that some states and the federal government had already begun (D'Amico et al., 2001; Grubb et al., 1999), it does so by attempting to improve system integration and service coordination, providing universal access, rationing services to promote efficiency, promoting customer choice and system accountability, and bringing business to the focal point as a key customer of the workforce system.

Among the ways it attempts to accomplish these purposes is by mandating the establishment of a One-Stop service delivery structure, by which key partners involved in providing workforce development assistance are to come together to plan and coordinate their services. To the extent that doing so is consistent with their authorizing legislation, each partner is to contribute to the costs and maintenance of the One-Stop system in a way that reflects the way that their own customers benefit.

To promote universal access, WIA abandons JTPA's rigid criteria regarding eligibility for services by allowing all adults to access WIA services without regard to income status. To this degree, the public workforce system must become equipped to meet a diverse array of needs, and in so doing can play a critical role in promoting the efficient matching of workers with job openings and enhancing workers' careers and work skills. At the same time, recognizing the need to husband scarce resources, WIA also promotes system efficiency by establishing a hierarchy of three service tiers—core services, intensive services, and training services—with limited access to the more

expensive higher tiers of service.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in keeping with the notion that these three service tiers constitute a hierarchy, only those who have been determined to be unable to achieve their employment objectives at a lower level of service can advance to the next higher level. Moreover, priority in the adult program for intensive and training services is to be given to public assistance and other low-income individuals, whenever funds are deemed to be scarce. Thus, the intent of these provisions taken together is to provide access to basic core services to all adults and dislocated workers, while limiting the more costly services to those whose need is demonstrable and most pressing.

Customer choice and empowerment are also key watchwords under WIA. In the first instance, this objective is achieved by allowing the universal customer free and open access to a vast array of informational tools and resources that they can use on a self-help basis. As well, customers undertaking training are to be provided with opportunities to choose the training program and provider that they feel best meet their needs. In this regard, although WIA still allows contract training under some circumstances, it aims to empower customers by instead relying heavily on Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), which can be likened to vouchers that customers are generally free to use to procure training services of their choice, subject to certain limitations. Among these limitations, local workforce agencies can place caps on the duration of training that customers can undertake and the costs that will be approved. Second, the training generally must provide skills for jobs that are deemed to be in demand in the local economy (or in another location to which the customer intends to relocate). Finally, the training program selected by the customer must have been certified by the state and local area as meeting acceptable standards of quality. The latter restriction will typically mean that the vendor has provided basic information about the training program and that previous cohorts of the program's trainees have met state standards for successful training outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> Broadly speaking, at the lowest level of the hierarchy, core services consist of basic informational services, self-services, or light-touch staff-assisted services primarily designed to assist individuals in conducting job search or researching training or other services on their own. Intensive services, the next level of the hierarchy, consist of activities involving somewhat greater staff involvement, but the focus is still on providing short-term assistance—such as pre-vocational services or assessment and counseling—designed to help customers access available job opportunities given their existing occupational skills. Finally, training services, including on-the-job training and classroom occupational skills training, consist of generally longer-term skill-building activities designed to provide participants with occupationally-specific skills or credentials.

By virtue of these provisions, WIA offers the basis for a substantial systemwide transformation. The extent to which it in fact achieves its objectives of greater system integration, customer empowerment, and efficiency, however, will depend on the ways its key stipulations are implemented in each of the nation's over 600 local workforce investment areas. Moreover, whether it does so without undermining a decades-long federal commitment to improving the employment prospects of those who are economically disadvantaged by investing substantially in their occupational skills development remains an important question.

In the remainder of this paper we provide a glimpse of the early WIA experience, drawing attention to some of the key challenges that local areas have faced as they implement WIA's key provisions. These have included challenges in developing the infrastructure that WIA requires and in providing services that balance the needs of diverse participants.

In addressing these issues, we draw on recently available data for PY 2001 from WIA's client-level reporting system (the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data, or WIASRD), which records client characteristics, services, and outcomes for those who exited WIA during that program year. We also draw on information we have available from multi-day site visits that we conducted to nearly fifty separate local workforce areas from PY 1999 through PY 2001 as part of a number of separate evaluations that we have conducted on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor.<sup>4</sup> Because not all of these local areas were selected randomly, they cannot be construed necessarily as representative of the workforce system as a whole. Nonetheless, they provide substantial coverage across the nation by including both largely rural and urban sites in all regions of the country and 23 separate states and, as such, provide important evidence about the range of variation across the WIA workforce development system in its early years.

#### **ESTABLISHING THE ONE-STOP INFRASTRUCTURE**

Central to WIA is the notion that workforce services should be accessible to customers through a One-Stop delivery system, including at least one comprehensive center in each local area. Building on the very promising experiences of states and

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<sup>4</sup> In addition to the *Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, site visits were also conducted by SPR as part of the *Evaluation of the ITA/ETP Demonstration*, being carried out for DOL under subcontract to Mathematica Policy Research.

local areas that received One-Stop implementation grants issued by DOL in the last half of the 1990s,<sup>5</sup> One-Stop system-building represents an effort to create a seamless workforce delivery structure that is intended to both eliminate the administrative inefficiency that was said to plague JTPA and provide a customer-focused approach to providing workforce services.

Key challenges that have arisen in building this system include funding and staffing One-Stop centers, developing performance management tools and MIS capabilities, and making available an array of resources and information tools including the eligible training provider list.

### **Funding and Staffing One-Stop Centers**

To promote seamless services, WIA requires that agencies providing services through over a dozen separately funded federal programs should become partners in the One-Stop system, by, among other things, making their core services available to participants through the One-Stop system and using a portion of their funds (in a way not inconsistent with their authorizing legislation) to create and maintain the One-Stop delivery system (Code of Federal Regulations §662.230).<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Memoranda of Understanding are to be forged between the partners and the local workforce board that identify each partner's obligations in support of the One-Stop system.

As we have reported in other reports prepared as part of this evaluation, One-Stop systems clearly can be very effective in simplifying customers' access to services, and there are many extremely strong examples across the nation of partnerships that have achieved a high level of service coordination or integration. Notwithstanding these accomplishments, funding and staffing issues for One-Stop systems have been among the most difficult for partners to resolve. In keeping with this, many of the case study sites we visited described the MOU process—and particularly its cost-sharing provisions—as painfully difficult. Partners note how difficult it is to develop equitable cost-allocation methodologies that reflect the complexity of One-Stop systems. Moreover, in some local areas some partners, such as Vocational Rehabilitation and veterans' programs, point out that their authorizing legislation prohibits them from

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<sup>5</sup> See this project's Interim Report, *A Report on Early State and Local Progress Towards WIA Implementation*.

<sup>6</sup> Consistent with OMB cost principles, partners are to make financial contributions that are proportionate to the use of the system by their customers

using their funding to support non-eligible customers, which would make it difficult or impossible for them to staff joint One-Stop functions, such as reception or intake.

More broadly, many of WIA's mandated partners express concern that participating in the One-Stop system will drain resources from the targeted populations that they were mandated to serve. They note that they already have well-developed service networks that they feel work quite well for serving their targeted participant pools; relocating in One-Stop centers, they feel, might require a retrenchment from these existing service hubs with a concomitant degradation of services to their customers. Moreover, partners in some contexts, such as those in rural areas, question whether establishing a physical One-Stop location even makes sense, given a service population that is widely dispersed.

Apart from these concerns grounded in principle, practical constraints also have come into play. These include existing leases that bind partners to separate office space for at least some period of time, and the difficulty and expense of finding and remodeling new space to accommodate multiple partners in a One-Stop setting. Staff from the various partner agencies—including employees of state and local governments and non-profit organizations—also have unique organizational cultures that make working together very challenging, a situation that can be further aggravated by agencies' different pay scales and union rules.

None of these problems is necessarily unsolvable. Indeed, local areas around the country have demonstrated flexibility and creativity in overcoming these challenges, and extremely strong partnerships have been developed in some instances as a consequence. Thus, we could point to examples of comprehensive cost-allocation strategies, effective cross-training of staff, arrangements for sharing responsibility for joint One-Stop functions, and so on. Nonetheless, each of these problems has caused obstacles that in different contexts have substantially impeded effective One-Stop system-building.

### **Developing Appropriate Tools for Performance Management**

The move towards a One-Stop structure that involves multiple partners and aims to serve the universal customer gives rise to associated challenges for performance management. Three of these will be highlighted here: the need for an integrated MIS, the value of tracking services used by the self-service customer, and the desirability of

a performance measurement system that reflects and promotes the integrated nature of service delivery.

**Developing an Integrated MIS.** To realize the promise of coordinated service delivery among partners, WIA implicitly places substantial demands on management information system (MIS) capabilities that have often been very difficult to meet. In this regard, a well-functioning MIS that supports the One-Stop structure should reflect that fact that customers might receive services from multiple program partners, either simultaneously or in sequence. This fact in turn has implications for the sorts of functionality the MIS should encompass, as coordinated services are likely to be much easier to achieve with an MIS that supports intake, eligibility determination, and case management for multiple programs. Moreover, local-area and state administrative functions can best be served through an operating system that facilitates the tracking of performance and reporting requirements necessary for the effective program management of each of the partners' separate programs.

Although the vision seems clear and substantial resources have been devoted to the task of creating integrated operating systems that serve these multiple needs, in actuality achievements thus far have often been far short of the promise. One formidable challenge stems from the sheer technical complexity of the systems that must be developed. Thus, for example, each partner may rely on different data, definitions, or reports to support their program's requirements. Further, these software systems must be able to interface with a variety of different other software and hardware technologies, ranging from the very modern to very old "legacy" systems. Finally, in keeping with the discussion above, issues over the allocation of the costs for developing these systems have often been highly contentious, as program agencies find it difficult to agree on how the electronic transmission of information should be valued by various program partners. As a consequence of these problems, a number of states have encountered substantial delays and disappointments in bringing their systems on line, leading to substantial frustration on the part of front-line staff who are becoming quite skeptical that their information needs will ever be wholly met.

**Tracking Self-Service Usage.** Related to the problem of developing adequate MIS capabilities is tracking the usage and outcomes of customers who access self-services. Under WIA, self-services become an important hallmark of the public workforce development system and a key mechanism by which the needs of the universal customer can be met cost effectively. Indeed, given limited public funding



available to support staff-intensive workforce development systems, self-services become a critical means by which WIA's vision of universal access can be realized. In light of this, substantial amounts of resources have been expended in developing the infrastructure to support self-services, such as by establishing physical facilities in which "Resource Rooms" can be housed, developing an array of tools and resources to meet diverse needs, ensuring that these tools and resources are user-friendly and can be accessed from remote locations and through the Internet, and promoting access and use for customers with special needs.

Clearly, improving self-service systems is enhanced to the extent that local areas have good information on who accesses self-services (and who does not) and with what effect. As a consequence, some local areas have developed sophisticated mechanisms for tracking self-service usage—at least on-site usage--such as through swipe-card systems. However, these systems are quite rare, as a consequence of their cost and complexity and concerns about intruding on customers' privacy rights. Thus, currently little is known about how frequently customers use self-services and for what purposes, whether they are satisfied with the tools at their disposal, and whether use of these services improves their employment outcomes. This information vacuum is a substantial impediment to further system development.

**Aligning Performance Measurement.** Finally, incentives to develop a well-integrated One-Stop system have been hampered because of a performance accountability system that still reflects silo funding. Overall, states and local areas believe that WIA's core performance and customer satisfaction measurement system focuses attention on meaningful and appropriate outcomes and provides a reasonable basis for promoting continuous system improvement. That said, a number of important concerns and complaints have been lodged against it—e.g., the long time lag between service delivery and the measurement of outcomes that makes its use as a performance management tool very limited, questions about the lack of consistency with which some outcomes (such as the credentialing rate) are being measured, and efforts to exceed performance goals that might give rise to creaming. But more important for the concerns being addressed in this paper, some elements of WIA performance measurement impair—or at least in no way promote—effective One-Stop system-building. These limitations include, first, the fact that the WIA core performance measures and their operational definitions are not perfectly aligned with those being adopted by partner programs and, second, that they do not capture anything about

systemwide measures of performance. DOL, in cooperation with other federal agencies, has been undertaking efforts to address these concerns, by aligning performance requirements across programs more closely and developing systemwide measures of performance. These efforts hold substantial promise in promoting further system integration and efficiency.

### **Developing the ETP List and Consumer Report System**

One-Stop system-building requires that local areas make available to the universal customer an array of resources and information tools that can be used for career planning and related purposes. These include developing and providing access to job listings and electronic job matching, software designed to help customers prepare resumes, comprehensive career information delivery systems, labor market information, and self-assessment software packages, among others. The development of these tools and facilities was substantially promoted through DOL's One-Stop implementation grants, which were awarded to states and local areas in JTPA's waning years, and they are now routinely available throughout the nation's One-Stop system.

However, the eligible training provider (ETP) list and associated Consumer Report System (CRS) are elements of the One-Stop infrastructure that were newly required with WIA and have proven to be much more difficult to develop. The ETP list represents a compilation of training providers that have been deemed by the state and local area to be "eligible" for purposes of providing training services to WIA customers. To establish eligibility for ETP purposes—at least under the requirements for subsequent eligibility—training providers will generally need to demonstrate satisfactory performance in their service to previous cohorts of trainees, including those that were WIA funded as well as all others. These performance criteria relate to training completion rates, employment rates measured both just after the conclusion of training and six months later, certification rates, and post-training earnings. These performance data, as well as other information about the providers' training programs (e.g., course schedules, tuition costs, etc.), are to be assembled in a Consumer Report System.

The vision embedded in WIA is that the CRS and ETP list will ensure system accountability, promote high performance, and serve as a valuable information tool for both ITA holders as well as for the universal customer accessing core services. However, a number of conceptual and practical issues have bedeviled efforts to develop these resources.

To begin with, developing data systems for measuring vendors' performance has proven to be enormously complex and difficult. Most states are measuring at least employment-related performance outcomes for vendors by conducting matches with Unemployment Insurance wage files. This strategy certainly makes good sense, both from the standpoint of easing the vendors' burden for data collection and ensuring good quality data for populating the Consumer Report System. Nonetheless, this approach has logistical and other difficulties associated with it that have hampered efforts to some degree. Along these lines, some states point to the problems they have encountered in developing data sharing agreements and protocols for data transfers between state agencies. Confidentiality concerns also come into play, as when training vendors express reluctance to supply students' social security numbers for data matching purposes.

Beyond these logistical difficulties, concerns relating to data reliability surface as well. For example some states, rather than relying on UI matching, are asking vendors to self-report their performance data. Not only does this approach impose a huge data collection burden on vendors, it gives rise to important questions about resulting data reliability (notwithstanding that these states have typically issued guidelines regarding data collection and reporting to vendors).<sup>7</sup> Related to this, key concepts—such as what constitutes a program of training and who should count as a trainee, a completer, or employed—need to be hashed and have been resolved with varying degrees of clarity that in some states will compromise the within-state comparability of performance data for vendors and will greatly undermine across-state comparisons. Similarly, small cell sizes also plague data reliability, as some training programs for which performance data are being reported have had only handfuls of students for which outcomes are being measured.

Additionally, given the different labor market conditions within which different training vendors operate, and their unique student populations (e.g., with respect to

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<sup>7</sup> Of course, although it undoubtedly represents the best of the available alternatives, UI matching has well-known limitations from the standpoint of data reliability as well. These include incomplete coverage across all sectors of employment and the difficulty of arranging for data matching to capture the employment of those who receive training in one state but might work in another. DOL has recently announced that it plans to continue to fund the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS), an important effort to develop a data clearinghouse for sharing UI wage information between states. This move might substantially mitigate some of the data limitations of the UI system for purposes of measuring vendors' performance.

ability levels, motivations, etc.), some vendors caution that the effort to assemble data that can be used by customers to compare one vendor's performance against another may not be at all practical. For example, many community colleges complain that, due to their open-admissions policies, their performance is being unfairly characterized in comparison to proprietary vendors with more selective admissions policies.

Finally, apart from issues of data integrity, many training vendors that are presumed to be of high quality and that were used extensively under JTPA may not seek eligibility under the ETP system, or, if eligible, may not remain financially viable. For example, many public postsecondary institutions, such as community colleges, have expressed unwillingness to undertake the difficulty and expenditure of time and resources necessary to apply for ETP subsequent eligibility, when they expect that only a trickle of ITA customers will result. Elsewhere, many community-based organizations that have filled an important niche in training hard-to-serve customers in JTPA are thinly capitalized and are finding it difficult to secure a sufficiently stable customer flow of ITA holders to maintain financial viability. Because of these factors, some states expect a substantial attrition of training vendors from their ETP lists once subsequent eligibility begins, which could ironically work to undermine customer choice, rather than promote it, as was the intent.<sup>8</sup>

Thus, the tension that WIA establishes between customer choice and system accountability is an uneasy one whose resolution can apparently sometimes lead to unexpected and perhaps unwelcome consequences.

### **BALANCING DIVERSE SERVICE NEEDS**

As we have suggested, WIA can be construed as a dramatic shift in thinking about the proper role for workforce development programs. To begin with, JTPA was intended to be predominantly a training program (at least in the adult program), while WIA establishes a sequence of service levels that will culminate in training only if core and intensive services are found not to meet the customer's employment needs. Secondly, JTPA imposed the requirement that (for the most part) only those who were economically disadvantaged could be served in the adult program and stipulated that most customers should additionally be identified as hard-to-serve; WIA, by contrast,

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<sup>8</sup> See SPR's *Evaluation of the Individual Training Account and Eligible Training Provider Demonstration: Final Report* for more detail on these issues. This report was prepared for DOL under subcontract to Mathematica Policy Research.

provides access to the universal customer but does require that priority for intensive and training services be given to low-income individuals when funds are limited. Third, WIA emphasizes customer choice and customer empowerment. And finally, this legislation as well aims to bring the business sector to the fore as local areas make strategic decisions about service planning.

In light of these changes, states and local areas face a number of difficult decisions about how they will balance WIA's sometimes competing objectives. Four such issues will be highlighted here: the degree to which local areas will emphasize training services as opposed to the lower service levels, how they will serve the universal customer while providing priority for those who are low-income, how they allow room for customer choice while ensuring high levels of program accountability, and how the needs of business and job seeker customers are balanced.

### **Emphasis on Training and Other Service Tiers**

In enacting WIA, Congress recognized the competing needs to serve both the universal customer with lighter-touch services and harder-to-serve customers with more staff-intensive services. Thus, on the one hand, given constraints of available funding, service strategies need to rely on less costly interventions to accompany WIA's broader scope for eligibility. At the same time, the legislation recognizes as well that customers with very poor labor market prospects are likely to need intensive interventions in order to achieve self-sufficiency. Implicitly, then, there is a tension between serving the universal customer with low cost services, without forsaking customers who need training services.

Table 1 provides a preliminary answer to how this tension is being resolved. Using WIASRD data for PY 2001, it tabulates the percentage of WIA registrants in the adult and dislocated worker programs who exited after using only core services, intensive services but no training, or training services. One complication in using these data is that a small number of PY 2001 exiters are those who are JTPA carry-overs—that is, generally those who enrolled prior to PY 2000, and hence under JTPA's requirements.<sup>9</sup> In recognition of this, PY 2001 exiters who are JTPA carry-overs are tabulated separately from those who are WIA registrants.

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<sup>9</sup> Some states—the so-called early implementers—began implementing WIA prior to July 1, 2000. In recognition of this, those classified as JTPA carry-overs are those who enrolled prior to the date the state formally began WIA implementation, whether that date is July 1<sup>st</sup> or earlier.

	<b>Adult Program</b>		<b>Dislocated Worker Program</b>	
	<b>JTPA Carry- Overs</b>	<b>WIA Registrants</b>	<b>JTPA Carry- Overs</b>	<b>WIA Registrants</b>
Number of exiters	11,898	160,529	20,792	109,169
Percent of exiters who received:				
Core services only	5.2%	22.6%	5.4%	15.3%
Intensive services, no training	12.0	35.9	13.7	39.4
Training services	82.8	41.5	80.9	45.4

Note: Figures represent the percentage of customers that exited WIA after receiving only core services, intensive services but no training, and training services. Data are based on the PY 2001 WIASRD data.

As the table shows, local areas are making use of all three service levels as tiers from which customers might exit. Thus, among WIA registrants in the adult and dislocated worker programs, about 40%-45% exited after receiving training, but another one-third exited out of intensive services and the remainder from core services. For PY 2001, then, program operators were clearly making full use of the three levels of service activity that WIA allows.

Table 2 shows, though, that local areas vary greatly in the extent to which they relied on one service level rather than another. This table uses PY 2001 WIASRD data to show the percentage of local workforce areas that heavily emphasize core services, intensive services, or training services. For purposes of this tabulation, we define a local area as having an emphasis on a service level if more than 50% of its registrants participate at this level (and no higher level) before they exit.<sup>10</sup>

This table shows that training services receive the highest emphasis, in that about 55% of local areas exited more than half of their registrants after they received training services. Thus, in keeping with the discussion above, training continues to receive substantial emphasis. At the same time, about 20% of local areas are classified as having an emphasis on intensive services, and another 10% emphasize staff-assisted core services. Somewhat surprisingly, relatively few local areas are classified as having a mixed emphasis; that is, few areas emphasize no single service activity. It

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<sup>10</sup> JTPA carry overs have been excluded from these tabulations.

seems, then, that local areas seem to have very focused service designs, with some emphasizing core services, some intensive services, and others training services.

	<u>Adult Program</u>	<u>Dislocated Worker Program</u>
High emphasis on core services	11.5%	9.4%
High emphasis on intensive services	18.0	21.5
High emphasis on training services	56.8	54.7
Mixed emphasis	13.7	14.4

Note: Figures represent the percentage of local areas. “High emphasis” is defined as having more than 50% of WIA exiters, exclusive of JTPA carry-overs, exit at the service level indicated. Data are from the PY 2001 WIASRD.

This variability is quite consistent with observations we gleaned from multi-day site visits we conducted to 48 separate local areas from PY 1999 to PY 2001. As reported to us by local WIB directors and One-Stop administrators, these areas too varied greatly in the extent they were emphasizing the different tiers of services. Partly these differences reflected deep-seated disagreements about how WIA should be interpreted, but very practical considerations came into play as well (see the Briefing Paper on *Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers* for a discussion of these).

### **Establishing Customer Access to WIA Services**

While eligibility in the dislocated worker program is largely the same in WIA as it was under JTPA, a key feature of WIA adult services is that there is no means test (as there was under JTPA), thus allowing program services to be accessible to the universal customer. WIA nonetheless clearly asserts that, whenever funds are limited, priority for intensive and training services in the adult program should be given to those who are public assistance recipients or are low income. How local areas balance the obligation to provide universal access while ensuring adequate service levels to the public workforce system’s traditional customers represents an important policy concern.

Table 3 provides evidence to suggest how these objectives are being balanced. It does so by comparing the characteristics of PY 2001 WIA adult exiters—including those who received core services only, intensive services but no training, and training

services—with JTPA adult exiters from PY 98, the last full year in which JTPA was operating.<sup>11</sup> Given the constraints of available data, most of the WIA data elements shown in the table reflect the characteristics of WIA exiters who received intensive or training services, because they are not required reportable data items for WIA registrants who receive only staff-assisted core services. As before, PY 2001 WIA exiters are subdivided into JTPA carryovers and WIA registrants.

The table shows some substantial differences in the characteristics of program exiters that are consistent with what one might expect. Thus, given JTPA’s eligibility rules, virtually all PY 98 JTPA adult exiters were classified as low income. This percentage dropped among PY 2001 JTPA carry-overs, and dropped still further among WIA registrants, to about three-quarters of the total. Similarly, there has been a pronounced drop in service to cash welfare recipients, with about one-third of exiters classified as such in PY 98, a rate that is a good bit larger than it is among WIA exiters in PY 2001.<sup>12</sup> Overall, then, the data suggest local areas’ ability and willingness to serve a wider customer base than they once did. At the same time, their priority for serving those who are low-income still seems clearly in evidence.

Other characteristics of participants that could be construed as barriers to employment are also examined in Table 3 for their trend over time as well. However, changes on these indicators are quite modest. Thus, high school dropouts are being served at about the same rate as previously, as are those who are limited-English speakers. The one notable exception is that single parents seem to be served at a somewhat lower rate than previously.

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<sup>11</sup> WIA did not officially begin until PY 2000. During PY 99, however, some states, the early implementers, began operating under WIA regulations during some part or all of the program year. Thus, PY 98 represents the last program year during which JTPA was operating everywhere. Data for PY 98 JTPA exiters are calculated from JTPA’s client-level data system, the Standardized Program Information Report (SPIR), and include data for Title II-A (the adult program) and Section 204d (the older worker program); these two groups are jointly referred to as adults for purposes of this discussion.

<sup>12</sup> Potentially, some part of the drop-off in both these measures represents an effect of declining poverty and welfare roles nationwide during this period (the poverty rate was 12.7% in 1998 and 11.3% in 2000, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2002; similarly, there was a substantial decline in the rates of TANF reciprocity during this same period).



**Table 3**  
**A Comparison of Recent JTPA and WIA Adult Exiters**

	JTPA SPIR PY 98	JTPA Carry Overs	PY 2001 WIASRD Data			
			WIA Adult Registrants			
			Total	Core Only	Intensive- No Trng	Training
Low Income						
Yes	96.0	85.2	na	na	73.2	70.0
No	4.0	14.8	na	na	26.8	30.0
Cash Welfare Recipient						
TANF/AFDC	25.7	18.0	na	na	9.7	10.2
GA, SSI, RCA	5.8	4.7	na	na	9.9	4.2
Highest Grade Completed						
Not a high school grad	22.4	15.4	na	na	22.2	18.4
High school graduate	56.1	57.7	na	na	51.3	60.0
Post high school	21.6	27.0	na	na	26.6	21.6
Additional Barriers						
Disability	10.4	9.7	7.6	6.4	9.9	6.3
Limited English	6.5	4.8	na	na	7.3	6.0
Single parent	43.7	43.7	na	na	29.0	26.0

Note: All figures are given as percentages. PY 98 SPIR data represent figures for adults (Title II-A) and older workers (Section 204d) who received more than only an objective assessment. Percentages are based on those with non-missing data on the item in question.

WIASRD does not require the reporting of many of the characteristics of participants who receive only staff-assisted core services. Thus, many of the figures for this column, and the total column, are not available (na).

Table 3 is also useful for suggesting which sorts of WIA registrants receive intensive services but not training and which receive training. Thus, high school graduates are relatively more likely to receive training than either dropouts or post-high school attendees, possible because they are deemed to be viewed as both in need of and able to benefit from training services, or because of the lack of suitable training opportunities for those without a high school diploma.

### **Limits on Training Choices**

Notwithstanding their obvious efforts to promote customer choice, nearly all local areas implicitly limit choice in a variety of ways by exercising their legitimate authority to determine access to services. For example, they establish guidelines regulating the flow of customers into intensive and training services, as WIA allows. Similarly, they set limits on the dollar amount or duration of training that will be funded and establish

procedures for certifying training programs as eligible to be considered by an ITA holder. The decisions that local areas make reflect a balance between the need to promote customer choice and sometimes competing objectives, such as system efficiency and accountability.

For example, in keeping with provisions in the WIA regulations (Section 663.420), states and local boards are entitled to set dollar or time limits on the training they will support through an ITA. Of the 19 states for which we have data, each devolved this authority completely to their local areas. In turn, nearly all the 57 local areas we researched do set either dollar or time limits, or both.

These limits were very variable, though, often even within the same state. Thus, as Table 4 shows, dollar limits ranged from under \$2,000 per ITA holder in a small number of local areas, to a high of \$7,500 or more in others, with a modal value of \$5,000. Similarly, 8 local areas set a time limit of one year, 36 set a limit of up to two years, and the remaining 13 set no limit (at least not a formal one). However, some areas that set dollar or time limits noted that these limits could be waived under special circumstances.

	<b>No. of LWIAs</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Less than \$2,000	2	3.5%
\$2,000 to \$3,500	8	14.0
\$3,501 to \$5,000	19	33.3
\$5,001 to \$7,500	12	21.1
Greater than \$7,500 (or no limit)	16	28.1

Note: Figures represent the number (percentage) of LWIAs that established their dollar ITA caps at various levels, of 57 local areas (in 19 separate states) for which this information was collected.

In setting their dollar caps, representatives from local workforce boards made note of conflicting considerations. On the one hand, they recognized that lower caps would serve to ensure that a greater number of customers could be served overall,

given the area's overall funding constraints. Similarly, they wanted to maintain some financial discipline, both for customers who otherwise have no incentive to economize in their choices and for vendors that might price their programs at whatever cap the local board set. At the same time, board members recognized that setting dollar caps too low would serve to exclude from consideration many longer-term and higher-quality training opportunities, especially those offered by private vendors, and would thereby sharply curtail customer choice. Clearly, local areas balance these considerations in very different ways, presumably after taking into account the needs of their customers and the mix of training providers in their area.

Similarly, as we have discussed in an earlier section of this paper, states and local areas set performance requirements that training vendors must meet in order to attain subsequent eligibility on the eligible training provider list. To the extent that states set high performance standards, some training vendors will fail to achieve eligibility, and customer choice could be curtailed. At the same time, higher certification requirements will promote greater system accountability and (arguably) improved program performance, which have also clearly been identified as important objectives under WIA.

The states we studied were very interested in developing a very inclusive list of eligible programs during WIA's first year or two (during the so-called "initial eligibility" period).<sup>13</sup> Accordingly, they actively marketed the ETP list to vendors and established requirements for initial eligibility that were quite easy for vendors to meet (D'Amico and Salzman, 2002). Thereafter, however, subsequent eligibility was to take hold, which, the WIA legislation suggests [WIA Section 122(c)], should involve the application of performance requirements calculated for seven measures that are based on how well the training program's previous cohorts of students performed, either while in training (i.e., program completion rates) or in the labor market thereafter

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<sup>13</sup> According to WIA, initial eligibility lasts for 12-18 months, though a 6-month extension can be granted. During this period, degree-granting post-secondary institutions and apprenticeship programs are granted automatic eligibility, so long as they apply; other providers may need to meet performance levels established by the state, at the state's discretion. During subsequent eligibility, by contrast, no provider is considered automatically eligible and, in general, all would be expected to meet levels of performance established by the state on some or all of seven measures that relate to how well prior cohorts of trainees succeeded (including some measures that apply just to prior WIA-funded trainees and others that apply to all trainees).

(e.g., employment, retention, and wage measures). Of these seven measures, three apply generally and four apply among prior students who received WIA funding.

As we have already discussed, the application of these performance measures involves thorny definitional issues (e.g., how to define key terms, such as “completion” and “enrollee”), difficulties in data measurement (e.g., who should gather the necessary data and by what means), and complaints from many vendors who are wary about potentially burdensome reporting requirements, among many other concerns and issues. Doubtless for these reasons, of the thirteen states whose subsequent eligibility requirements we examined in detail, two requested a waiver from DOL to defer subsequent eligibility for at least a few more years (i.e., until 2004 or 2005), and two others were intending to establish requirements for subsequent eligibility but had not yet done so when we visited them around the beginning of calendar year 2002.

The remaining seven states had reached decisions about what their performance requirements for vendors’ programs would be during subsequent eligibility, but only after protracted discussion and debate. The performance levels they established for subsequent eligibility show substantial disparity, however, both with respect to approaches taken and performance levels established. Thus, two states set standards on just a few of the seven performance measures; three states set performance levels on all or most of them, but expect vendors to meet the standards on just some of them (e.g., four of the seven); and two states established standards on all seven measures and expected vendors to meet them all. Not only did the general approach vary across states, but the absolute levels of performance that vendors were expected to meet for their programs on each of the measures varied widely across states as well. For example, some states required vendors’ programs to record a program completion rate as low of 25% and others required a 70% rate, and the required all-student employment rates ranged from 40% to 74%.<sup>14</sup>

Rationales for the decisions that states made with respect to their approaches reflected some similar themes, even if they did often lead to very different decisions. Among the most common considerations was the states’ effort to strike a balance by establishing performance criteria that are rigorous enough to ensure high quality, while

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<sup>14</sup> These policies are described more fully in SPR’s draft Final Report, *An Evaluation of the Individual Training Account and Eligible Training Provider Demonstration* (D’Amico and Salzman, 2002).

not establishing them so high that customer choice will be impaired by having many vendors excluded from eligibility. Clearly, though, states are striking this balance in different places, with potentially profound implications for customer choice.

## CONCLUSIONS

Since WIA was enacted in 1998 the workforce development system has been in the midst of a profoundly important transformation. From an emphasis on providing training services geared towards a narrowly targeted customer pool, as in JTPA, WIA promotes universal access within a hierarchy of service levels that aims to ration more costly interventions to those whose service needs are clearest. System accountability, efficiency, customer choice, and market-based approaches are key tenets underlying the new emerging system.

As with a transformation of this magnitude, implementation challenges are inevitably to be expected. Thus, establishing the One-Stop infrastructure, building strong partnerships, and establishing performance management and information tools aligned with the One-Stop vision are achievements that will take time to reach full maturation. The accomplishments of some vanguard states and areas, though, convince us that indeed the WIA vision is within reach, given appropriate system incentives and attention to capacity building.

Additionally, though, much of the discussion in this paper also leads to the conclusion that some of WIA's key underlying principles are to some degree in an uneasy balance. Thus, promoting accountability and high system performance (such as by establishing high standards for subsequent eligibility for training providers) comes at the expense of limiting customer choice. Providing universal access to a range of workforce services (such as by generously funding an array of core and intensive services through a well-developed One-Stop infrastructure) serves to limit funds that would otherwise be available to serve WIA's high priority low-income customer. Promoting efficiency by husbanding resources (such as by adopting a work-first approach in a sequence of service tiers or establishing sharp limits on ITA costs or durations) can serve to undermine efforts to remain customer focused.

What is clear is that local areas are making unique decisions about how best to balance these competing objectives. Thus, the result so far is a matrix of service design and delivery systems that looks vastly different throughout the nation. To this extent,

WIA's effort to devolve control for policy decisions to the local level has clearly been realized.

No doubt additional important changes and system transformations lie ahead. WIA's first few years have been fraught with some confusions and start-up problems that are understandable in light of the legislation's intended quick pace of implementation and the magnitude of the changes that are underway. These years have as well been a learning experience whose important lessons are only now coming to light. The next few years will thus be important for judging whether WIA's success in establishing a first-class workforce development system—access to an array of career tools for the universal customer's, coupled with concerted efforts to meet the needs of those who need extensive training services to attain self-sufficiency—can be realized.

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## VIII. WIA YOUTH SERVICES

This briefing paper is one of a series developed as part of the *Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates and TATC Consulting. Thus far, the data collection has consisted of two rounds of site visits: the first round was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight state and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. An overview of the evaluation is included as an appendix to this report. This briefing paper for the most part draws on findings from the second round of site visits, because these capture developments associated with WIA that are the more recent.

In this briefing paper, we discuss how States and local areas have been implementing youth services under WIA. After a brief background, we review four key areas of youth services implementation. The first of these is the level of guidance that States have provided to local areas. We then take a look at challenges local areas have experienced in ensuring youths' access to services, and next review their efforts at developing a comprehensive service design. Finally we review how service providers were selected under the new system and how that selection has impacted the quality and type of services available to youth.

### **BACKGROUND**

WIA fundamentally restructured the delivery of youth services. It consolidated the summer and year-around programs into a single formula-based funding stream and thereby ended a thirty-six year tradition of stand-alone summer youth programs that had been a key feature of its predecessors, CETA and JTPA. Although combining the funding streams allowed local areas more flexibility in their allocation of resources, the change also came with a new set of requirements and performance measures. Among these new requirements, WIA called for enhanced youth services by requiring local areas to offer a more comprehensive array of services that followed youth development principles and included long-term follow-up to all participants. Local areas were also required to fully integrate summer employment opportunities with year-round services and were encouraged to expand and enhance youth connections to the One-Stop System. Furthermore, in an effort to focus services where they are needed most, there was also increased emphasis on serving hard-to-serve and at-risk youth.

As we noted after the first round of site visits, such a large system transformation posed major challenges for States and local areas. This was the case partly because the reorganization was to happen at a time when States and local areas were simultaneously reorganizing local governance of the workforce development system, by setting up Workforce Investment Boards and Youth Councils. Several sites indicated that the youth service redesign was slowed, because these organizational features needed to be established before youth services could be developed.

### **STATE GUIDANCE ON YOUTH SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION**

In common with the development of adult and dislocated worker services under WIA, States issued only limited guidance on the implementation of youth services. To provide State-level guidance on the implementation of youth services, two of the States included in our sample of eight set up youth committees under the State Workforce Investment Boards, and one decided to establish a statewide Youth Council. The other five States did not have statewide planning bodies devoted to youth issues.

Only three States issued criteria for selecting youth service providers. These minimum criteria ranged from requiring specific program components to establishing performance accountability standards. In addition, some States required partnerships with other youth-serving organizations and encouraged the leveraging of non-WIA funds. For example, in Arizona, local areas were required to base their selection of youth services providers on the following criteria (among others):

- Ability to measure and attain performance levels as measured by WIA core youth indicators.
- Appropriate levels of customer satisfaction.
- Process for conducting skills and needs assessments and performance goals and objectives for each youth participant.
- Coordination with local secondary and post-secondary institutions.
- Prior experience in working with disadvantaged youth and special populations.

In addition, three States prepared youth-related resources, such as tool kits, manuals and resource guides to help their local areas. New York, for example, developed a Youth Council tool kit that compiled regulatory requirements for the establishment of Youth Councils and recommendations regarding their scope of work. Minnesota developed a network of youth practitioners to foster exchange of best

practices and peer training. The network is an informal group consisting of State representatives and youth service representatives from each local area. They meet regularly to discuss implementation issues.

These exceptions aside, States mostly played the role of simply transmitting federal guidance to local areas. Some respondents indicated that their States were reluctant to issue State-level guidance and wanted to leave strategic decisions to local areas. Another State reported that the State WIB had not met in over a year leaving all youth-related policy guidance to a State School-to Work team.

### **ACCESS TO SERVICES**

WIA included several requirements that affected access to youth services. In addition to tighter eligibility guidelines and an emphasis on serving out-of-school (OSY) youth, local areas were also expected to link some of their youth services to the One-Stop career center system.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

Under WIA, income eligibility guidelines for youth participants were tightened in three ways. WIA reduced the window for youth who qualify without being from low-income families from 10% to 5%. Second, the law eliminated the presumptive WIA eligibility for recipients of free and reduced school-lunches. And third, all participants needed to have at least one of six federally specified barriers to employment<sup>1</sup> to qualify.

A majority of States and local areas reported that tighter income eligibility guidelines increased their administrative burdens and shifted resources away from the provision of services. Respondents in several States were very frustrated that eligibility for free or reduced school lunches could no longer be used to document WIA eligibility. This method had been used widely in some areas because it was simple to administer and placed few reporting burdens on applicants. By removing this option, according to some respondents, applicants had more difficulties furnishing all the necessary eligibility documentation. As an incentive, the Youth Council in one area established cash payments ranging from \$20 - \$100 to help motivate youth to provide the necessary eligibility documents. Still, partly because of the greater paperwork

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<sup>1</sup> The barriers include the following: basic skills deficient; school dropout; homeless, runaway, or foster child; pregnant or parenting; offender; or in need of additional assistance to complete education or secure employment.

requirements, this area and others experienced delays in meeting their enrollment goals, and most made full use of the 5% window to qualify youth who did not meet income requirements.

However, there were exceptions. Some of the local areas we studied, typically those in poorer or urban areas, reported having little difficulty filling their program slots and needed to make little use of the 5% window.

### **Emphasis on Serving Out-of-school Youth**

During the first round of site visits, local areas reported that they anticipated having some difficulties in recruiting out-of-school youth (OSY) to meet the requirement that they spend at least 30% of youth funding on OSY. Although recruiting OSY was indeed difficult, most local areas we visited in the second round had little difficulty meeting the spending requirement. Indeed, some local areas reported that they spent in excess of 50% of their funds on OSY, while local areas in only two States, Montana and Virginia, reported difficulties in meeting the requirement.<sup>2</sup> In Oregon, State and local officials were particularly positive about the shift in focus under WIA. State respondents noted that, although local areas were initially nervous about meeting the funding requirement, they saw it as a prod to change their recruitment procedures and focus more on those youth who needed help most. One local area characterized it as the most positive effect of WIA youth implementation.

Two primary factors contributed to the local areas' success in meeting the OSY requirement. First, several local areas indicated that serving OSY was significantly more expensive than serving in-school youth. They noted that OSY tended to have multiple risk factors and more barriers to employment. Consequently, their needs for education, training, counseling, and supportive services were generally found to be greater. This circumstance resulted in higher costs per OSY participant and thus in higher relative spending on OSY than some areas had anticipated.

A second factor explaining areas' ability to meet the OSY funding requirement was that many of them had significantly modified their recruitment strategies to find and attract OSY. States and local areas reported several helpful strategies:

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<sup>2</sup> In Virginia these difficulties can be explained at least partly by the State OSY definition, which makes it unlikely for anyone under 18 to be considered an OSY. According to this definition, a student under 18 who is not attending school is not considered an out-of-school youth unless he/she is emancipated or has been expelled from school.

- *States provided guidance and technical assistance.* For example, Minnesota offered technical assistance to local areas through their Practitioners Network. In addition, it prepared an out-of-school youth resource list that included relevant articles and guides and a brief description of strategies in use by Job Corps to attract OSY.
- *Close collaboration with education providers.* Several local areas are working closely with school districts and are using the schools' dropout lists to contact youth for OSY program participation. Some have hired dedicated staff to maintain close contact with school districts. In one site, Suffolk County, NY, staff developed a training manual for high school counselors and teachers to help them understand the services available under WIA.
- *Recruiting OSY where they congregate.* Several local areas succeeded in recruiting youth at popular youth hangouts such as malls and fast food restaurants.
- *Contracting with providers who specialize in serving OSY.* Some local areas are contracting with service providers who have experience in working with OSY and offer youth a package of services that is tailored to their needs. Such services commonly are centered on a GED or High School diploma program and include vocational training in subjects such as automotive skills, cosmetology, childcare, nursing, graphic arts, and computer skills.

These successes notwithstanding, areas noted how much more difficult it was to recruit out-of-school than in-school youth. This difficulty was especially notable in one area that reported poor linkages with the local school system. A particular problem too was enrolling OSY before they were enrolled in an alternative educational program (when the youth would no longer meet the definition of being out of school).<sup>3</sup>

### **Integration with the One-Stop System**

Linking youth services to the One-Stop career center system is encouraged by DOL because doing so has several advantages: (a) local areas may be able to leverage services funded from other sources by accessing some of the required youth service elements through the One-Stop system; (b) One-Stop centers are potential sources of referrals, especially of older youth and out-of-school youth; and (c) centers offer an opportunity to refer non-eligible youth to related services that are universally accessible

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<sup>3</sup> SPR prepared a separate report on strategies for recruiting and serving out-of-school youth, as part of a separate project carried out for DOL. See *Services Provided to Out-of-School Youth under WIA: Challenges and Effective Strategies* (2002)

as One-Stop core services (such as the basic labor exchange, assistance and resources to facilitate job searches assistance and career exploration, use of career resource centers, and referral to youth providers who are not subject to WIA eligibility guidelines).

Thus far, youth connections to the One-Stop system remain largely untapped. Of the local areas we visited, only two sites in New York State had strong linkages in place. In Suffolk County, a Youth Career Center is located in the same building as the One-Stop center. The youth center offers a series of workshops focusing on LMI, interviewing techniques, job retention, and work habits, geared towards youth and emerging workers rather than seasoned job seekers. The youth center also has two dozen computer terminals with Internet access where youth can conduct job search or engage in computer-guided career exploration and assessments. In Erie County, another area with strong One-Stop linkages, the year-round in-school program is primarily offered through the two comprehensive One-Stop Centers. For example, in Buffalo, the second floor of the One-Stop Center is devoted entirely to youth services. This configuration has allowed staff to create a friendly and casual environment that appeals to youth.

Although their connections were not as strong, other local areas had linkages between their youth programs and the One-Stop system that served the following objectives:

- *A few sites offered preliminary assessment, referral and job search workshop through One-Stop centers.* In several sites, youth who first access services through One-Stop centers received a preliminary assessment there and, based on the outcome, were then referred to the appropriate youth service provider. In at least one site, youth also participate in a job search workshop if they access services there first.
- *Some sites co-located youth staff at One-Stop centers.* In an effort to strengthen linkages, some sites decided to co-locate youth services staff at the One-Stop center. For example, in two local sites in Georgia youth coordinators are stationed at the local One-Stop centers, and older youth are served primarily through the One-Stop centers.
- *One site is using a charter high school on the One-Stop center campus.* In Yuma the local area has set up a charter high school to serve as an alternative education option for out-of-school youth.

In contrast to these examples, most local areas had only limited linkages between their youth services and the One-Stop system. This was the case even in several local areas that used the same providers to serve youth and adults. Youth service providers

noted that One-Stop centers generally did not have a youth-friendly atmosphere, and, as a result, they were less likely to send youth there for services. One reason cited by some is the fact that One-Stop centers in many communities were developed with adults and dislocated workers in mind. Moreover, given the history of separate adult and youth programming, there is little history of strong linkages and each program already has a separate service infrastructure in place (e.g., separate physical locations).

At the very least, though, representatives of most local areas indicated that they would like to familiarize youth with the One-Stop system. The most common strategies under consideration were to (1) to take youth on a tour of a local center, (2) allow them to use the resource centers and computer terminals for online job searches, and (3) offer them job search workshops at the One-Stop centers.

### **SERVICE DESIGN**

States and local areas faced formidable challenges in transitioning their youth service designs to meet the more comprehensive requirements called for under WIA. The most publicly visible change was the end of large-scale stand-alone summer youth programs. Under WIA, summer employment is one of ten mandatory program elements with the same performance measures and long-term follow-up requirements as all the others. All ten program elements must be made available to youth participants in the local area. The program elements follow recognized youth development principles and are designed to (1) improve the educational achievement of youth, (2) prepare them for employment success, (3) offer a variety of supports including supportive services, mentoring, and comprehensive counseling, and (4) offer leadership development opportunities. In addition, all participants are to receive one year of follow-up services. This redesign is designed to “fuse youth development activities with traditional workforce development.”<sup>4</sup>

Based on our first round of data collection, it seemed that local areas were generally experiencing a slow start-up of youth services. The second round of site visits, however, suggests that most local areas had put in place most of the provisions WIA called for. Most had significantly reduced their summer youth program, but a few sites had found alternate funding to keep it going at a similar level as under JTPA.

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<sup>4</sup> U.S. DOL “Implementing the Workforce Investment Act of 1998,” A White Paper, November 12, 1998.

Most local areas also had been able to overcome start-up difficulties and had found ways to provide the ten required service elements.

In this section we will discuss how States and local areas (1) responded to the shift from a stand-alone summer youth program to year-round services, (2) implemented the ten required service elements, and (3) applied youth development principles to their overall service designs.

### **From Stand-Alone Summer Program to Year-Round Services**

Losing the summer youth program that had been a mainstay of youth programming posed a major challenge for most sites. Enrollments during the summer dropped in most areas by 50% - 90% compared to previous years. This circumstance created a public relations challenge for local areas and made the change unpopular with local elected officials who were keenly aware of the popularity of the summer program. States and local areas used a variety of strategies to soften the impact of the shift in funding and to keep youth “off the streets.”

One State and several local areas secured additional funding to keep the summer youth program going, using corporate, city and State funding. For example, some local areas asked employers to pay the wages of the youth they were employing. Another area used TANF funds to supplement funding for summer employment opportunities. In urban areas—where the political pressure to keep a summer jobs program was greatest—cities and counties contributed from the general fund to keep the summer program going. In Chicago, for example, the Mayors Office of Workforce Development created the Summer Youth Initiative for 3,500 youth that is now funded by the private sector. Similarly, Portland contributed resources from the general fund so that non-WIA youth could receive the same services as WIA-funded youth.

Local areas also were challenged to make programmatic changes. The shift was especially difficult for local areas that had not had much of a year-round program under JTPA. There, program design had to start nearly from scratch. Some States indicated that their local areas had difficulties accomplishing such major youth program redesign given their funding levels. To help local areas, two States allocated 15% funds to encourage local areas to pilot and document effective models of innovative summer youth programs that were well integrated into effective year-round programming.

The reduction in summer youth funds notwithstanding, several sites expressed satisfaction and even enthusiasm for the youth service approach under WIA. They



pointed to the research that supported the importance of more comprehensive services for youth and appreciated that they had increased flexibility.

### **Implementation of the Ten Required Service Elements**

WIA requires that local boards make all ten program elements available to all youth participants in the local area (although individual youth participants need not participate in all ten). Providers have the discretion to determine which services a youth will receive based on the objective assessment and the ISS. Furthermore, not all ten elements have to be funded with WIA funds if they are already available in an area and funded by other means, but in this case the local area is responsible for ensuring that there is a close connection to the non-WIA funded services.

We reported after the first round of site visits that many local areas were not able to provide the full range of youth services. Since then, local areas made significant progress in implementing youth services, which is suggested by the fact that almost all local areas included in the sample were able to offer all ten service elements. At the same time, some local areas indicated that some of the required elements were not yet fully developed, so much so that one local area retained its stand-alone summer youth program because it was significantly delayed in starting up its WIA youth activities.

We provide a brief description of the implementation of each element below.

*Tutoring, Study Skills, and Dropout Prevention:* In most local areas these services are provided by local high schools, adult schools and other institutions that have traditionally offered them, such as Boys and Girls Clubs and teen centers. One site designed its in-school program to serve as the dropout prevention program.

*Alternative Secondary School Offerings:* In many local areas access to alternative secondary schools was provided through agreements with local school districts or community colleges. In one site, the youth service provider operates a charter school on site adjacent to a local One-Stop center. At another site, the Youth Council decided to fund participants to enroll in an intensive year-round private alternative education program that prepares youth through a project-based curriculum.

*Summer Employment Opportunities:* As mentioned previously, summer employment opportunities must be directly linked to academic and occupational learning and can no longer be stand-alone programs. Given the magnitude of the required redesign, we found that design and development of this program element is

still very much in flux in most States. Local areas seem to have used three approaches to meet the WIA requirements:

- Many local areas maintain a fairly traditional summer youth program, albeit on a smaller scale and with a new emphasis on the attainment of specific occupational, work maturity, and citizenship skills and a link between academic and occupational learning. Some of these programs emphasize work experience through competency-based instruction provided at the work site. In some cases, youth receive high school credit for work experience based on work-based project portfolio assessments. This approach has the advantage that relatively little redesign is necessary, but carries the risk that the summer programs are still not well integrated into year-round activities.
- A smaller number of local areas substantially revamped their summer program by extending services to youth year-around. This approach allows local areas to provide similar (and in some cases more intensive) services to youth in the summer as during the year, and clearly links summer and year-round activities.
- Several local areas decided to supplement their WIA summer program by securing non-WIA funding to compensate for the loss of a large-scale summer youth program. Officials in urban areas were especially concerned about the potential reductions in summer enrollments and found ways to keep youth engaged.

*Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences:* The purpose of work experience (which includes internships and job shadowing) is to provide youth with opportunities for career exploration and skill development. At most sites work experience occurs in conjunction with other services to increase the basic educational and occupational skills of the participant. For example, internships are sometimes combined with classroom instruction relating to a particular position, occupation, industry, or the basic skills and abilities to successfully compete in the local labor market. Placement in internships or other work experience projects is typically based on participant interest and the work skills needing development that were identified during the objective assessment process. The following serve as examples:

- The Portland area has developed strong connections with employers through its *Employer Participation Model*. Using this approach, selected large employers create work-based learning positions for WIA youth by paying a portion of their wages and by providing assistance with supervision and other issues.

- In Du Page County, Illinois, the local area has developed paid and unpaid work experiences in information technology occupations, such as web-design and computer maintenance.

*Occupational Skill Training:* All but one local area offered occupational skill training. Local areas provided these services in different ways. Many restricted training to a certain list of occupations and selected providers, such as adult schools and community and technical colleges. In some cases training is reserved for older youth only. One area restricted training to that offered by providers on the Eligible Training Provider list.

*Leadership Development Opportunities:* This program element includes community service and peer-centered activities that encourage responsibility and other positive social behaviors. Local areas developed and funded a wide range of programs under this general description:

- In Chicago, leadership opportunities include workshops on employer relations, communication, and employment skills;
- Southwest Virginia emphasizes team building during a summer camp;
- Hampton Roads, Virginia designed a program where older youth serve as peer mentors to younger participants and teach them anger management and mediation.

Some leadership programs were operated as stand-alone programs. In many others, leadership development elements were just one component of a series of services.

*Supportive Services:* The type and scope of supportive services do not seem to have changed significantly as a result of WIA implementation. During the objective assessment process individuals are typically assessed for financial and non-financial support service needs. Supportive services cover such costs as childcare, transportation, work clothing and equipment, utility bills, emergency housing, food, and medical expenses.

*Adult Mentoring:* Interestingly, youth who participated in a focus group at one local area ranked mentoring as the WIA element they valued the most. Despite this strong youth support, however, several local areas reported difficulties developing and integrating mentoring into their overall youth strategy. Partly the difficulty was due to the fact that, as a new requirement under WIA, mentoring is a service with which some local areas have limited experience. One local area also indicated that it has difficulties

recruiting volunteer mentors due to onerous State requirements regarding adult contact with youth under eighteen that have discouraged people who might otherwise have been willing to become volunteer mentors.<sup>5</sup>

Because of these challenges, the extent and composition of mentoring services varied widely across areas. Taking a minimalist approach, some local areas consider interactions between youth and their regular staff or worksite supervisors to be sufficient mentoring for youth participants. On the other hand, others require experienced mentors to enter into a committed formalized agreement to interact with a youth on a scheduled basis. As part of their interaction, mentors and mentees discuss such topics as educational opportunities, occupational opportunities, and barrier resolution.

*Follow-up Services:* Under WIA this program element includes regular contact for at least 12 months, including some of the following services: leadership development and supportive services, assistance in securing better paying jobs, career development and further education, work-related peer-support groups, and adult mentoring.

Local areas indicated that this more comprehensive follow-up model required by WIA has been difficult to develop. A particular challenge that respondents mentioned was how to stay in touch with youth during the follow-up period. Surprisingly, some staff found e-mail to be the best way to reach many youth for follow-up, because many youth have free portable e-mail accounts. One local area plans to contact youth during the follow-up period by telephone and to encourage them to come to the service provider and meet with their counselor. Another area offers an incentive if participants contact their counselor 90 days after they obtain employment to let them know if they are still employed and if they need any other services.

*Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling:* Under WIA, drug and alcohol abuse counseling and other counseling appropriate to the needs of youth must be available. Most providers are able to offer guidance and counseling related to specific program activities. However, local areas have difficulty finding providers that can offer specialized mental health counseling. In some communities there is only one provider

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<sup>5</sup> In Arizona these requirements include fingerprinting, reporting any past crimes, and providing letters of recommendations from three community members.

with the required capabilities, and obtaining an appointment for a program participant is difficult.

### **SELECTING YOUTH SERVICE PROVIDERS**

The intent of WIA is to include a wide variety of youth service providers that are competitively selected using a market-based system. Up-front services such as intake, objective assessment, individual service strategy development, information and referral, and summer employment opportunities are exempt from such a procurement process, and instead may be provided directly by the grant recipient. DOL emphasized that procurements need to avoid even the appearance of a conflict of interest,<sup>6</sup> which thereby required local areas to create a firewall between those who prepared and issued solicitations and those who bid on them.

Among the procurement challenges reported by local areas were: (1) firewall issues in the procurement process, (2) uncertainty about how best to structure requests for proposals (RFPs) to ensure that all of the ten required elements were covered, (3) poor response rates to RFPs, and (4) difficulties identifying new program providers of certain program elements, such as tutoring, mentoring, and leadership development.

Establishing a firewall that meets WIA requirements presented a challenge especially for those local areas with only a limited number of youth experts who could serve on the Youth Council. In those areas, many Youth Council members were also youth providers in the local community. This situation poses a dilemma between two competing interests under WIA that guide the procurement process. The first interest is to gather a wide range of youth experts to serve on the Youth Council and ensure that the Council plays a significant role in selecting youth service providers. The second is to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest in the procurement of services. To avoid such conflicts of interest, a number of Youth Council members at some local areas had to recuse themselves from procurement decisions. In one area, so many council members had a conflict of interest on a given vote that only three council members were left to cast a vote.

A second major procurement challenge was uncertainty about how best to structure RFPs to ensure that all of the ten required elements were covered. Two

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<sup>6</sup> Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 9-00, January 2001.

distinct strategies were in evidence. Some local areas required all providers to offer all ten program elements. Among the reasons for adopting this approach, some respondents mentioned that it would otherwise be too difficult to coordinate services or be sure that youth could obtain a complete service package to meet their needs. By contrast, other areas funded separate providers to deliver one or more of the ten elements, reasoning that in this way providers could be contracted to deliver just those services that drew on their special areas of expertise.

A related issue regarding the way RFPs should be structured was identifying whether some services were already being provided through non-WIA funding and hence did not need to be supported through WIA dollars.<sup>7</sup> In keeping with this, some local areas were planning on undertaking a community resource mapping with regard to youth services, but, in the interim, felt obliged to provide all program elements as part of WIA services.

A third difficulty mentioned by several sites was an inability to find enough respondents to RFPs to be able to provide all required service elements. For example, two local areas only received a single response to their RFPs, and another received no responses at all. This poor showing was due partly to the fact that some potential providers were unfamiliar with WIA requirements, but also because, especially in rural areas, there was a lack of qualified youth providers to begin with. Additionally, certain procurement requirements also seemed to affect RFP response rates; areas that required each provider to offer all ten elements had a particular difficulty.

A fourth procurement challenge was that many local areas had difficulties finding new youth service providers. The most common providers were school districts, county-run youth programs (former JTPA youth service providers), community-based organizations and community colleges. Many local areas noted that they had not been able to expand their pool of providers, and some even reported losing providers as a result of new WIA requirements. Furthermore, they noted that it was especially difficult to find providers for certain program elements such as tutoring, mentoring, leadership development, and comprehensive counseling.

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<sup>7</sup> Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 18-00, April 2001. This TEGL makes clear that local areas need not provide all ten elements with WIA funds if certain of them are already otherwise accessible to eligible youth in the area. Instead, Youth Councils should identify which of the ten program elements are already available in the local area, and use WIA funds to fill remaining gaps.

There were some notable exceptions. For example, Portland Worksystems took advantage of the flexibility allowable under WIA and added a wide range of neighborhood-based youth providers to cover the ten program elements. Others established strong linkages with School-to-Work partnerships and expanded the range of youth services that way.

## CONCLUSIONS

Our review of youth services found that States and local areas have made substantial progress in implementing WIA youth programs and that virtually all elements that WIA requires are in place. However, we also found that some local areas were still struggling with some transition issues, including recruiting participants, developing service designs, and procuring services from providers. Below is a summary of some key findings:

1. States allowed local areas maximum flexibility in their implementation decisions. We found that most of the major policy decisions were being made at the local level. Only a couple of States decided to issue statewide guidance on youth-related issues. Instead, most States simply transmitted federal guidance documents to their local areas.
2. As anticipated, WIA did force local areas to change some of their recruitment strategies to meet the new eligibility guidelines and the requirement that they spend at least 30% of their funds on out-of-school youth.
3. Some local areas complained that they spent too much time documenting eligibility and that the required documentation was too onerous on youth. As a result, local areas reported that many potentially eligible youth do not follow through and thus do not qualify for the program. It is still too early to determine conclusively what impact this might have on the characteristics of WIA youth overall.
4. Most local areas did not have difficulties meeting the requirement that they spend at least 30 % of their funds on OSY. We found that local areas did better than expected in this area because many of them substantially modified recruitment strategies to attract OSY. Many youth programs also reported higher per-participant-costs for OSY, which boosted overall OSY spending.
5. With only a few exceptions, we did not find that linkages between youth providers and the One-Stop system have evolved very much since WIA implementation. Most local areas reported that their One-Stop centers were not very youth-friendly and were primarily geared to serve adults and dislocated workers. However, most States and local areas also indicated that they are planning to expand such linkages in the future. Moreover, a few local areas already had very strong One-Stop connections.

6. As anticipated, local areas faced the most significant challenges in moving from a service design dominated by a large-scale stand-alone summer program to a more comprehensive year-round program. Especially some urban areas experienced significant pressures to keep a traditional summer youth program in place and secured alternate public and private funding to do so.
7. Most local areas were successful in offering all ten required service elements to youth participants, but some areas had difficulties in securing services that had not traditionally been provided under JTPA, such as mentoring, leadership development, and comprehensive counseling.
8. Some local areas also reported that they had difficulties in finding new service providers and often had an insufficient number of respondents to RFPs they had issued. Especially sites with little experience in procuring services using an RFP process said that this slowed down their program start-up substantially.

These findings point to some key challenges regarding youth services faced by the workforce system. They include:

1. *Streamlining eligibility determination.* In order to meet the WIA requirement of good customer service, local areas need to find ways to help youth and their parents navigate eligibility requirements so that such requirements are not overly cumbersome and do not pose undue barriers to participation. Many local areas may be able to benefit from further federal guidance on this issue.
2. *Enhancing linkages between the One-Stop system and WIA youth programs.* WIA calls for such linkages because especially older youth could benefit from attachment to a service that can provide life-long job search and career advancement services. Local areas could benefit from additional guidance and best practice examples on how to make One-Stop centers more youth friendly and how to link One-Stop centers with WIA youth programs.
3. *Creating a comprehensive whole of ten required program elements.* Local areas made significant progress in developing all ten service elements. However, turning them into a comprehensive youth-development service strategy proved challenging. Through a combination of further dissemination of effective programming practices (such as PEPNet) and the funding of pilot and demonstration programs, DOL might be able to accelerate capacity building in this area.
4. *Attracting new service providers.* Given the limited success that local areas have had in finding new service providers, this area may also benefit from further federal guidance. Local areas could benefit from an exchange of best practices and capacity building. Especially rural areas with few local



providers need examples of how to recruit them or how to “grow” them if they do not currently exist in the local area.

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## **IX. SCHOOL-TO-WORK AND ITS LINKAGES WITH WIA**

As part of the evaluation of the implementation of WIA, we were asked by the National School-to-Work (STW) office to examine the extent to which STW programs and principles were being linked to WIA. In the first two rounds of site visiting, we asked WIA representatives about the involvement and influence of STW representatives and programs and also conducted separate interviews with STW representatives asking them to gauge their level of involvement in WIA. Possible linkages that we explored included involvement in WIA planning or policy development, oversight through sitting on State or Local Boards or Youth Councils, sharing lessons learned from STW implementation, and involvement in service delivery by either coordinating with WIA-funded programs or serving as the youth service provider. This briefing paper summarizes these linkages between STW programs and WIA implementation in the 14 States and 21 local areas we visited during the first two rounds of data collection. In this paper, we follow the same format as the earlier STW Chapter presented in our Interim Report for this evaluation. The format is the same because we view the second round of site visits to be largely an addition to the first – the issues to be explored and discussed remained the same and thus this paper largely updates and supplements the earlier synthesis. In this paper we begin by providing a brief overview of STW, including its goals, structure, and legislative relationship to WIA. Following this section, we describe the STW systems and programs in the States and local areas in our sample, and provide an overview of their relationship to WIA implementation.

### **OVERVIEW OF STW**

The 1994 School-To-Work (STW) Opportunities Act was designed to help all young people make the transition from school to careers and lifelong learning by promoting the integration of work-based and school-based learning and academic and vocational curricula, and creating formalized links between high schools and post-secondary educational institutions. The intent of the legislation was not to create a variety of new programs, but rather to build on the experience of existing models and efforts, such as TechPrep, Career Academies, and Youth Apprenticeships. To do so, the initiative provided funds to create systems that enable youth to receive education that is more closely linked with real-world opportunities and that provides better preparation both for future educational endeavors and for future careers.

STW Federal funds were distributed to States through five-year grants awarded in response to State proposals. States used this money to fund local STW partnerships ranging from multiple counties or districts with dozens of schools to single school districts. There is a sunset period after the five-year funding for each State, and no more Federal funds were intended to be spent on STW activities beyond this period. The award of the Federal grants began in 1994, implying that many States' funding had already passed the sunset point by the time of our site visits and, thus, had either to find new avenues to fund their programs or allow them to end with the funding. The explicit sunset provision demonstrates that the initiative was not intended to create new add-on programs but instead was intended to consolidate efforts already underway and systemically infuse schools with new principles better linking academic learning and workplace skills and experience.

Although not a required partner under WIA, STW systems can potentially offer assistance in WIA efforts because of their experience in developing partnerships – and providing access to already-existing partnerships - and collaboration efforts, as well as their knowledge of system-building, service coordination, and services available to youth. However, specific language in section 129 of the WIA regulations asserts that “None of the (WIA) funds...may be used to provide funding under the School-to-Work Opportunities Act...or to carry out...activities that were funded under the STW Opportunities Act unless (they) serve only those participants eligible to participate in the programs under (WIA).” As will be seen below, although early on some States and/or local areas interpreted this language to imply that the two programs are incompatible, our subsequent site visits have not found that this remains a substantial impediment.

## **OVERVIEW OF STW PROGRAMS AND PLANS FOR SUSTAINABILITY**

For this study we examined in each of the case-study States and local areas the STW systems, including their history, context, and focus, as well as the extent to which STW officials were involved in the planning or governance of or service provision under WIA. As may be expected, the STW programs and the involvement in WIA of STW officials and/or programs varied dramatically across the States and local areas. In this section, we provide an overview of STW efforts to date across the fourteen States and 21 local areas, and describe the degree to which STW officials or systems have been involved in the planning, governance and service delivery under WIA. The results are divided into three primary sections. First, we provide an overview of the

STW programs themselves, including whether their Federal funding has ceased, and a summary of the degree to which there are or were plans to sustain the efforts after Federal funding ended. Next, we describe the specific linkages in each of the sites between STW and WIA planning and service delivery. Finally, we provide a few brief observations across the States and local areas we visited in the two rounds of data collection.

Most of the States we visited had well-established STW programs that had been operating for several years. Nearly all of the States in our sample had received STW funding by 1997 and thus STW had been in operation for at least 3 or 4 years by the time of our visit. One important aspect of this relative maturity of the programs is that it implies most were nearing the end of their 5-year Federal grant allocations and, thus, had to face the decision to either eliminate STW efforts or sustain them in some way. Indeed, many of the States visited in the second round had already seen their funding cease, and thus were either operating using funds from alternative sources or had largely disbanded their STW programs.

In those sites in which interest in sustaining STW was high, there were a variety of reasons cited. One intriguing finding was that in a few sites that we visited in the second round of site visits, the State legislature had adopted goals for their overall educational system that incorporated some STW principles, or emphases that can easily be construed as fitting within STW. Although it is not clear that these legislative efforts were in response to the STW funds received by the State, the relationship is quite clear. In those areas in which overall educational goals were put in place that were consistent with or mirrored STW principles, there was a much greater likelihood that these principles were sustained after the cessation of Federal STW funds. For example, in Oregon, as of December 2001, all high school students are required to achieve nearly all aspects of the Certificate of Advanced Mastery before they can graduate. Among the components that students must demonstrate are:

- “Developing an education plan and building an education profile,”
- “Applying and extending academic and career-related knowledge and skills in new and complex situations,” and

- “Demonstrating career-related learning experiences as outlined in their educational plan by connecting classroom learning with real life experiences in the workplace, community, or school.”<sup>1</sup>

Although sites with such legislation were clearly in the minority, that they exist at all bodes well for ensuring that STW principles are sustained in the future.

Similarly, another common theme that emerged during our first round of site visits, but also was consistent with findings from the second round, was that in those areas in which STW efforts were linked seamlessly into the overall educational context, rather than added onto already-existing educational activities as a separate and discrete program, there was greater interest in sustaining STW. This fits generally with STW from the Federal perspective in that STW was intended as a systemic reform rather than simply an added program attached to an otherwise unchanged curriculum. Typically, this integration was found in sites in which STW was being implemented with or at approximately the same time as other forms of educational reform. In some cases these other reform efforts involved overhauling the entire educational system while in others they involved adding or replacing old standards or graduation requirements, as noted above. In either case, the fact that they were associated with greater willingness to sustain STW is somewhat surprising given that often reform efforts (i.e., rigorous accountability or performance reforms) are thought to undermine STW. However, it seems clear from our site visits that in many of these sites a larger context of educational reform may have expanded the site’s willingness to consider new methods of education, and allowed the area to see the potential for STW to play a significant role in educational reform. Often, respondents in these sites noted that STW was so linked with other educational and community agencies and programs that it would be very difficult to try to remove STW. In those areas in which STW was simply an add-on program rather than an integrated approach, a more typical result was that several employees were laid off as STW funds dried up.

Further, in a few sites, STW was established in a larger agency that gave it enough authority to link educational and labor policies and programs. This stability and substantial authority may allow STW systems to more easily impact educational efforts in the area. For example, Kentucky’s STW system was originally placed within a cabinet that includes both educational agencies as well as labor agencies, and was

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon State Board of Education, Board Meeting Notes, Dec. 6 2001

relatively directly under the authority of the Governor. Thus, STW officials both had access to relevant partner agencies and they also had the authority of these agencies as well as the Governor in their efforts. In contrast, though, still other States established STW in a multi-agency department, but this caused confusion over who was to take the primary leadership role and led to STW being less effective because no one agency was responsible for its implementation. In one State, respondents noted the fact that STW was placed in the Workforce Development Division, which involves a collaboration of several different agencies, led the State's education officials to view STW as a workforce initiative rather than an educational reform effort.

In most sites, STW has remained in a single location, but this has been in, for example, the Department of Education, rather than in an inter-agency consortium. Although this arrangement provides some stability, it may be more difficult from within this agency to make necessary linkages to businesses or other outside agencies, including those in the community, that help to increase the effectiveness of STW, and make the impetus for sustaining STW efforts stronger. For example, in one State in which STW is located within the Department of Education, respondents noted that there was a misperception by outside agencies that it was strictly an educational program, rather than an inter-agency one. Further, there was little direct contact between STW and outside agencies, particularly WIA and other workforce development programs. It seems plausible that the relative isolation of the STW agency helped in part to create this situation.

Thus, States varied in both the location in which STW was housed, as well as what the effect of this decision was. Most States that located STW within an inter-agency cabinet or division were somewhat more positive about the impact STW had on their educational system, as compared to those States in which STW was placed squarely in the Education Department. But in at least one case this decision led education officials to keep from embracing the program as important to their overall efforts. Thus, housing STW in an inter-agency cabinet with access to representatives from both the education and workforce development fields may increase the likelihood of STW being seen as a success, but it does not guarantee this result.

Finally, STW efforts in at least three States suffered dramatically from political pressure or fighting that either held up implementation efforts or caused them to be implemented in ways that differ substantially from what might be viewed as typical STW. These political pressures varied, from lack of support from key leaders, such as

the Governor, to fighting between political candidates using STW as one issue over which the candidates fought. Additionally, pressure from constituents led political leaders to implement STW in much more narrow ways, targeting specific students rather than embracing the perspective that all students can benefit from better connections between academics and the workplace. These pressures typically centered on a feeling that STW infringed upon local control by placing too many demands on schools without providing ample resources to accomplish its objectives. Regardless, as may seem obvious, in those areas in which STW was the victim of political fighting or the target of political opposition, implementation efforts proceeded far more slowly and incompletely than in other States.

### **Views Toward STW**

Not unlike the actual structure of the agencies, the views toward STW expressed among officials in the sites we visited varied dramatically. A few officials expressed nearly total satisfaction with and optimism about STW and its efforts, while a substantial portion of others were more tepid in their appraisal of STW. This general variance was noted during round one of our visits, and the sites in round two also varied widely along this dimension. However, more of the sites in round two of our visits were pessimistic about STW's impact and about the likelihood that any STW efforts would be sustained. Perhaps because several of these States had already seen their Federal funds end, they expressed less optimism that STW would continue. Often, they noted that a few components might remain in place, but generally their view was that STW had been tried and now it was up to local areas to find ways to sustain it if they wanted to.

Continuing a trend seen in round one of the site visits, local areas were generally more positive about STW than were States. Although local area variation is one likely reason for this, another is that it is local areas that actually deliver STW and can therefore see its impact more directly. Thus, local areas may be in a better position to understand just how STW differs from previous approaches, and how students respond to the opportunities presented by STW. The fact that local areas were somewhat more positive about STW than were States, then, is a welcome result for STW advocates.

Several local areas were quite positive in their assessments of the effects of and possibilities for STW, though most such areas were among those in our first round of site visits. Many of these areas had established well-developed STW systems, either through the impetus of businesses in the area or through strong local planning



concerning STW. Additionally, many of the areas expressing more positive views toward STW were rural locales that had a relative paucity of businesses in the area. Perhaps because of this, there was great cooperation among the schools and the business community in an effort to ensure that youth exiting schools would be well prepared for the jobs that would be available to them.

A substantial number of other areas seem less satisfied with the impact of STW and less optimistic about its future. In many cases there were no more Federal funds for the program and, as a result, the program had been discontinued. Often in these sites, some of the principles of STW had been maintained (e.g., internships for students, career-related information available at the schools, etc.) but rarely in these sites was there a consistent effort toward maintaining the central tenets of STW in a coherent and systematic manner. One State in round one of our site visits refused comment on whether or not STW would continue in any significant form after the cessation of STW grant funds. Officials in this State expressed some disappointment with what they perceived to be the Federally driven nature of STW, arguing that to be successful, STW must be a “locally-grown” program. Other areas agreed with this proposition, but lamented that even in situations in which it was locally driven, it still often was unsustainable after Federal funds disappeared.

Continuing the trend noted in round one of our visits, urban sites generally seemed less favorable toward STW than did rural ones. In one of the larger urban areas we visited, although one individual suggested there were several STW efforts underway, and that the mayor had strongly endorsed linkages between STW and WIA, most respondents could not identify what, if anything STW had accomplished or even tried. The funds seemed to get lost in the larger educational system and there were few identifiable programs or activities related to STW. Although these respondents were not extremely close to STW, it is somewhat instructive to note that we could not get an appointment with anyone who did have intimate knowledge of STW in this local area, despite repeated efforts. Officials in another urban area described the STW program as having been “unsuccessful,” resulting in a good deal of talking, meeting, and planning, but little actual change. Echoing a common theme, respondents in this area felt that STW never even got off the ground. In still another urban area, officials were having trouble even spending the money they were allocated, in part because of the relative lack of activities being sponsored or implemented by STW. Overall, then, there are few examples of positive attitudes toward STW among larger, urban local areas. This

is not to suggest that favorable opinions do not exist in such areas. Rather, among the relatively limited number of urban sites in our sample, the general feeling is that STW has not had much of an impact at all, much less a particularly favorable one.

### **Efforts Toward Sustainability**

As mentioned above, in many cases there seemed to be little effort to sustain the program, based on unfavorable impressions of STW or its impacts. But in those sites in which views were more positive, several strategies have been attempted or put in place to ensure the sustainability of either STW programs or principles. Through both rounds of site visits, these strategies fell into one of three categories: folding STW into the larger educational system; securing additional outside funding; or supporting STW services through contributions or fees paid by participating schools or businesses.

The first of these approaches involves incorporating the principles and system of STW into the larger educational system and budget. This is done not to terminate the activities paid for by STW but, rather, to ensure that even after STW funds end many of the core principles will continue within the educational system. For example, in Oregon, the State has mandated that all students must demonstrate several key skills and abilities, many of which relate to connecting school to careers, in order to graduate. Several respondents at the State and local levels insist that this will best sustain the efforts and principles of STW, because they have been made an integral component of the educational system. As a second example, the public school Board in Miami/Dade County agreed to incorporate the costs for the existing STW staff once the STW grant ended. In this area, officials anticipated little if any change in overall STW activities or goals upon cessation of STW funding. Additionally, in Rutland, VT, one of the major programs emerging from STW, the Capstone Initiative, which is an ambitious STW effort, has been fully integrated into the local school system and no longer relies upon STW grant money for operation. Here, too, then, efforts begun as a result of STW funds have been adopted by the larger school Board or into the school budget and thus are ensured of remaining even after STW funds disappear.

A second strategy for sustainability involves securing other sources of funding, outside of the Federal STW grant. This generally has been accomplished by obtaining grant money from other sources that are either STW-related or youth-focused, and applying some of these funds to further STW activities. For example, in the Cumberland area of Kentucky, some funds from a Youth Opportunities (YO) Demonstration Grant have been used to promote STW activities. These YO funds

apply over several years and, thus, STW activities can be promoted to some degree over that period despite the fact that STW grant money will no longer be available. Kentucky's STW officials, generally, have encouraged their local partnerships to identify alternative sources of funding in an effort to sustain the STW activities that already have been implemented, but for which STW-specific funding will soon cease. Further, in Lewiston, Montana, STW officials secured funds for their Job Coach position from the school district's special education monies. Although these funds are from the general educational budget, this differs in approach from the first category above because there is no attempt to integrate STW with the larger educational budget but, rather, they have allocated a separate stream of funds for this position.

A final strategy involves securing funds from the actual recipients of STW services. One approach, observed primarily among the sites visited during the first wave of data collection, was utilized by a few areas that have established plans to sustain their STW systems by promoting contributions by individual schools to support the local system. For example, the Northern Tier area of Pennsylvania requires participating schools to "buy into" the STW system by paying \$1 per student and \$1,000 per apprenticeship utilized by its students up to a maximum payment of \$10,000 per year. There is no limit on the number of apprenticeship opportunities a school can have within a year, but no school is required to pay more than \$10,000 per year. Similarly, in Texas, many local areas collect \$4 per student to a maximum of \$12,000 per school as a way for participating schools to support the local STW system. This method ensures that funds are secure for STW activities, even beyond those injected from a national STW grant. Thus, collecting financial support from participating schools is one way that STW programs in the areas we studied can be sustained.

An alternative approach to secure funding from recipients, seen primarily in our second round of visits, is to draw resources from the businesses participating in STW activities. For example, businesses in the Southwest Georgia local area support the Choices program, which enables business people to speak to school classes to inform students about their business and the types of workers and skills that are required to obtain employment in it. Participating businesses pay the licensing fee for this program, and will continue to do so after Federal STW funding ceases. Additionally, the Chamber of Commerce in this local area subsidizes the cost of job shadowing, enabling students to shadow an employee in their area (each year on Groundhog Day). Similarly, the STW representatives in Suffolk County, NY developed a strong

relationship with the Long Island Association, a sort of super-Chamber of Commerce for the Long Island area. The Association has devoted some funds to STW, and also has helped to solicit funds from participating businesses.

Several of the areas we visited, however, were less focused on STW sustainability, and suggested there simply was not much interest in sustaining STW efforts. In some cases, respondents lamented that although STW had made a big splash early, or had established lofty expectations, little had changed as a result of the program, and this disappointment led to less enthusiastic support for STW generally. In a few instances, no one could truly identify what STW had done at all, and the most prevalent reaction in such cases was one of ambivalence about sustaining efforts. In one case, both State and local officials described how they expected additional funding to be added to the initial five-year grant, and thus had done little to create sustainability. Only after the funds had disappeared did they comprehend that no more money would be available, and thus they are attempting to piece together funds from a variety of sources to sustain their STW activities. Thus far, though, they have been unable to secure the necessary funds.

Other sites have bowed to the tremendous pressure of very hostile anti-STW campaigns organized by advocate groups who believe STW is an inappropriate approach for educating youth. In some of these sites, it seems clear that area officials have grown weary of defending the program and thus have made little effort to identify avenues for sustaining the efforts that have been made to date. In other sites, as noted above, fighting between political rivals or lack of support among key elected officials has contributed to an ambivalent attitude toward the program and prevented much in the way of sustainability.

In few cases have there been any changes made to STW programs in direct response to WIA. For many of the sites, WIA simply came too late to instigate any changes in STW, as funds had already ended, or were so near ending that it made no sense to alter the program. Indeed, at least three States in our sample had used their entire Federal STW funds prior to implementing WIA. Thus, there was no opportunity for overlap between the two programs. Even among those sites in which there was overlap, several indicated that there was little need to alter STW, although STW could provide some useful resources and information to WIA planners and policymakers. Thus, while they are not acting to revise STW, they are attempting to apply the lessons

learned from STW efforts toward planning under WIA. Some of these efforts are described in the following section.

### **LINKAGES BETWEEN STW AND WIA PLANNING**

As was true after our first round of site visits, STW has been linked with WIA in a variety of ways, including by having key STW officials serve in the WIA planning process or on planning Boards both at the State and local levels, and through the coordination of services or activities between STW efforts and those geared toward youth under WIA. Of course, the degree to which these linkages have been established varies by site, and in a few sites there is little or no overlap at all. A description of some of these efforts, including both those sites that have established linkages with WIA and those that have not, is provided below.

#### **Planning**

In several sites, there was a great deal of overlap between STW representatives and WIA planning bodies. Often, STW representatives sat on the State planning teams and, in some cases, have a seat on the State Board. Additionally, STW often has a representative on Local Boards and on the Youth Councils who offers input into the planning and operations of local services. Thus, there are opportunities in these sites for the lessons learned by STW to be incorporated into WIA planning. Specifically, respondents cited STW's knowledge of youth service delivery as critical to successful planning under WIA, and this represents a prime opportunity for STW to help guide the planning and implementation based on their own experience. Additionally, STW often has already established partnerships among agencies and community organizations that serve youth, and these partnerships can be leveraged by WIA to provide a readily available source of information or services. As might be expected, there was a wide range of overlap across the various sites in our sample.

At one end of the spectrum, there were a number of sites in which there was substantial overlap between STW officials and WIA planners. Nearly all of these sites were in the first round of our site visits and, thus, have already been summarized in the earlier Interim Report. We include their summaries here to provide a comprehensive overview of the range of linkages we identified in our two rounds of visits.

First, in Polk County, Florida, there is considerable overlap between the STW partnership and the local WIA Youth Council. According to both STW and WIA

officials, the leaders of the STW partnership have quite successfully directed the Council toward implementing many STW goals and principles.

Similarly, in Cumberlands, Kentucky, there has been substantial overlap between STW officials and planners both on the local Board and the Youth Council. This emphasis on STW within the planning bodies under WIA may have influenced the Board to identify the STW partnership as the youth service provider under WIA. Follow-up with this site suggests that the lessons learned from STW's efforts to build partnerships and create broad-based cooperative teams of agencies has provided them with a blueprint for developing youth services under WIA. One respondent noted that they saved at least half the time they would have had to spend developing partnerships or identifying agencies with useful resources because they could just rely on the already developed STW system.

In Rutland, Vermont, the STW partnership and the local planning Board are actually the same agency. Because Vermont is a single-area State, there are no local workforce investment Boards. But the State has nonetheless identified agencies to serve as local planning bodies for WIA, and in the Rutland area the Rutland Region Education Alliance (RREA) was tabbed for this duty. Despite the fact that they serve as a local planning body for WIA, however, they receive no WIA funds. This body also is responsible for overseeing and coordinating STW in the region, and it is STW funds that support the various efforts of this alliance. Clearly, there is ample opportunity here for the principles of STW to be incorporated into or at least influential in planning for WIA.

In the Miami local area, prior to the passage of WIA the Jobs and Education Partnership Board already was in charge of the STW systems in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. Upon passage of WIA, the Youth Council was established as an expansion of the STW committee simply by adding to the pre-existing committee additional representatives from a slightly broader range of organizations whose services impact youth in the region. Thus, the core of the Miami Youth Council is the STW partnership that was in place before WIA was even passed. The influence of STW therefore is likely to be felt through planning for WIA. Indeed, in its request for proposals to select a youth services provider for the area, the Council asked for explanations of how the principle of work-based learning and the integration of work experience with education would be accomplished.

Each of these sites was visited in round one of our data collection. The eight States and 12 local areas visited as part of round two did not display such broad overlap, often according to respondents because the STW grant money had expired before WIA was being put in place. Nonetheless, in most sites, there was at least some overlap between STW and WIA.

For example, in Arizona, the agency and the specific individual responsible for evaluating the State's STW programs was also responsible for drafting the five-year State Plan for WIA. Although numerous respondents indicated that this created substantial overlap in terms of the philosophical approach to youth services under WIA, the individual most responsible passed away shortly after drafting the State Plan. There were other sources of overlap in Arizona, as well. Specifically, the former Director of the Office of Workforce Development Policy also served as the STW Director. This individual was one of the team who developed much of the initial policy under WIA, thereby ensuring that there was some overlap between the two programs. Further, in both local sites in Arizona, there was some overlap between STW Project Directors and those serving on the Youth Council.

Similarly, in Oregon, a number of STW representatives participated in initial WIA planning committees at both the State and, to a lesser extent, the local levels. Further, one individual from the office overseeing STW co-chaired the youth planning committee and also co-chaired the State Youth Council in its first year of operation. Despite these overlapping representatives, though, respondents still asserted that the influence was minimal, largely because the two are viewed as serving fundamentally different populations.

In most other areas, at least one member of STW sits either on the State or Local Boards or on the Youth Council, or both. In Southwest Georgia, for example, the STW Coordinator for the area is on the Youth Council, and several of the STW partner agencies also had representation on the Youth Council. The commissioners of the three agencies collaborating on STW in Minnesota are all members of the WIB, with one of them serving as the staff person who oversees youth services. STW had similar representation at nearly all the remaining sites in our sample as well. Common among these sites, though, was that although a STW representative served on the Board or Youth Council, they did so without necessarily wearing their "STW hat." In other words, they served as someone with local knowledge, but were not specifically asked to inject lessons learned from STW, or to promote the principles of STW. As a result,

they may have had some influence, but the extent to which STW was promoted as a result of their participation is less clear.

Finally, in one site there were active attempts (described as firewalls) to separate STW from WIA. This was done to eliminate any connection, or even perceived connection to Federal oversight from the STW program. The concern of these State officials was that some would feel that vocational learning was being promoted, and they worried about the perception that it was being promoted “by entering the back door.” As a result, there are no STW officials involved in WIA, either on the Boards or the Youth Councils, and any linkages between the programs are strongly discouraged.

### **Service Design and Delivery**

As noted above, there is generally at least some overlap in membership between STW and WIA. Although the extent of this overlap varies substantially across the sites, nearly every site had at least one individual who served both as a STW representative and was involved in planning for WIA. Somewhat in contrast to membership overlap, there are relatively fewer formal linkages between the programs in service provision. Typically, even where STW was seen as a strong system that could potentially inform WIA planners and policymakers, the two systems were seen as separate and serving different clientele. A typical response was that the two systems do many similar things, but STW is for all in-school youth while WIA is focused on harder-to-serve and out-of-school youth. Thus, services are rarely linked between the two, because the view is that different youth are eligible in each program.

Where services were linked in some way, this coordination occurred at the local level since this is where services are delivered. Generally, service coordination took one of several forms, including examples where:

- STW and WIA each contributed support for specific programs thereby enabling greater numbers of youth to be served and ensuring cooperation between the two programs.
- STW funds were used to pay for centers or activities promoted under WIA.
- WIA funds are used to pay students enrolled in STW for their work-based learning opportunities.
- The STW partnership was awarded the contract and funded to actually provide youth services under WIA.



- The STW partnership and WIA agencies cross-refer individuals between the two programs, with each program picking up an individual at varying points in their service history;
- One-Stop centers refer to the local STW partnership those youth who could benefit from STW opportunities.

Each of these will be discussed briefly below.

First, in at least two cases, STW and WIA each contributed support for specific programs thereby enabling greater numbers of youth to be served. For example, in Southwest Georgia, STW and WIA have collaborated to jointly fund a program called Tech Start, which is a two-tiered program offering variations for both in-school and out-of-school youth. The WIA funds actually are drawn from Statewide reserve funds, rather than the local area's budget. For out-of-school youth, adult education funds are provided to help students obtain their GED, and WIA funds are used to provide occupational training. These two sets of training are provided simultaneously such that the occupational training is triggered to progress at the same pace as the GED training, thereby ensuring academic skills built in the GED training are applied via the occupational training. For in-school youth, by contrast, STW funds are used to provide students who are deficient in basic skills with the opportunity to go to the area Technical College in the late afternoon (a down time for the college staff) and gain exposure to the faculty and the computers and technology at the college. The college faculty then works with these students in small groups to address their reading and math deficiencies. For both sets of youth, career portfolios are developed to help them look for employment (full-time employment for the OSY and part-time for the ISY).

Another example of such joint cooperation occurred in Pine-to-Prairie, Minnesota. Using Cooperative Centers established nearly 20 years ago to provide coordinated and consolidated vocational programs among neighboring school districts, STW and WIA efforts are coordinated to provide services to the maximum number of youth eligible for each program. The local STW representative stated that "activities get mixed, and funds are leveraged" in an effort to provide the best possible services. As one example, the school districts sponsor a summer enrichment program for school students who are not attaining their graduation standard. According to one respondent, about 90% of these students are eligible for WIA youth services. Thus, funds from WIA are used to provide work-based learning opportunities, while STW funds are used to promote academic skills linked to these opportunities.

A second way in which services are coordinated involves using the funds of one program to support efforts of the other program. For instance, in Suffolk County, New York, STW funds were used to help build the Youth Service center at the One-Stop center. At this Service center, which was described as a “cornerstone” of youth services in Suffolk County, students and out-of-school youth can access the services offered under WIA, and look for opportunities for work-based learning and other STW activities. A second example of this type of coordination took place in Yuma, Arizona. In this area, the local STW system had traditionally sponsored a conference on non-traditional careers, in which approximately 20 local organizations offered workshops to students and out-of-school youth to encourage them to look beyond traditional male and female job roles. Since STW funds have ceased, the local WIB has taken over sponsorship of this program.

Yet another example of service linkage occurred in Rural Montana. In this case, STW and WIA combine to co-enroll Special Education students. These students receive work-based learning opportunities at local businesses, for which they are paid using WIA funds. Additionally, the students receive specialized one-on-one job support and training from a Job Coach, funded through STW. Indeed, the linkages run even deeper, as a third partner, Vocational Rehabilitation, provides some additional employment and training support for these youth.

In addition to these examples drawn from our second round of site visits, we also observed a few prominent examples of service coordination during our first round of data collection.

For example, in two of the local sites we visited, the STW partnership was awarded the contract to provide youth services under WIA. Thus the partnership can link services under WIA with those under STW, to the extent this benefits the youth being served. In both cases, we visited the sites prior to the time when many WIA youth services were being delivered so it is difficult to determine exactly whether such coordination exists. We conducted some follow-up discussions with one of these sites during our second round of data collection. At this site, although the services provided under WIA did draw heavily from STW principles and programs, there was no explicit linkage of services between the two programs.

In one of these sites, Polk County, Florida, the local STW partnership, in conjunction with the local Board of Education, formed the Polk County Young Leaders

Consortium, which was awarded the WIA youth services contract in the area. The STW partnership developed an extensive set of goals and objectives for their program, many of which were to be incorporated into the WIA youth services contract as well. Because STW is intended for all youth, while WIA youth money is focused on disadvantaged youth, the two programs are not entirely interwoven. But the resources and partnerships that are so vital to STW can be leveraged as local workforce development planning bodies modify their services to serve disadvantaged youth under WIA.

The STW partnership in the Cumberland region of Kentucky also was designated as the youth services provider under WIA.<sup>2</sup> Here, too, there was great optimism about the potential for coordination between the two programs, as well as some concern about just how to modify STW activities to accommodate WIA's mandate that the focus in youth services must be on disadvantaged youth. Much of the partnership's effort at the time of our visit had been on planning, as no WIA services for youth had actually been delivered at the time of our site visit. But there were plans to provide year-round activities for approximately 50-60 youth who will also receive work experience during the summer.

Another site, the local area of Rutland, Vermont, provides an example of a program that integrates and coordinates services between STW and WIA for both adult and youth services. This dropout recovery program is managed by a team of individuals representing both the STW agency as well as One-Stop centers in the area. This team works to identify students who are at risk of dropping out or who have already dropped out of traditional schools. Participants receive case management and are either enrolled in a customized program attempting to help them obtain their GED while also working, or encouraged to attend one of the alternative high schools in the area. The case management stretches across programmatic boundaries, and enables individuals to have access to services under STW or WIA, including those services that are available through the One-Stop center. As individuals' needs change, they can be referred to other programs or services that better match their interests.

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<sup>2</sup> This partnership actually covers only 12 of the 13 counties in the WIA local area, but because it represents the vast majority of the area and for simplicity we refer to it as the STW partnership for the area.

A final example of service coordination or integration may well emerge in the Northern Tier area of Pennsylvania. Although our visit pre-dated actual service provision under WIA in this area, and thus the description is based on what the area planned to do, rather than specifically what was occurring, there were several plans in place that would link STW with WIA services. For example, although there were no plans to have a STW representative located at the One-Stop center, youth who are looking for services from the One-Stop center will be referred to their local STW Coordinator to identify available services or resources. According to STW officials, they planned to ensure that all STW resources or services were available to any youth that enters the One-Stop center. Additionally, there were plans to install computers in the schools to enable youth to have electronic access to the One-Stop centers. This would allow students to use the self-service function much as any adult actually at the center would use it. While funds remain separate between STW and WIA, then, there clearly were plans at this site to ensure that youth receiving services under one program had access to the services of the other.

Outside of these several examples, however, there was not much evidence of service coordination between STW and WIA. In most areas, the overlap between the two programs existed only at the planning level. Indeed, a far more common response was that although the two programs were similar in their approaches, they served mutually exclusive populations, with STW targeting all in-school youth and WIA focusing on out-of-school youth who are harder to serve. For many sites, this seemed to conclude the conversation, because they could not see how the two programs might be able to link to provide more comprehensive services. In these cases, respondents usually referred to the programs as complementary, but separate. Thus, we encountered little active resistance to the idea of linking STW and WIA but, rather, it seemed that few saw how the two could be fully coordinated to achieve the goals of each program and reach a broad range of youth.

#### **FACTORS INFLUENCING LINKAGES**

In the STW Chapter of our Interim Report, we noted that areas in which the optimism for collaboration between STW and WIA was high shared three primary characteristics, including that the areas:

- Had strong STW systems in place prior to the implementation of WIA, including having established resources and linkages within the

community, being viewed favorably by the community, and being well known in the community.

- Were primarily rural, which implies there are fewer available employers with whom to link, and that there is greater recognizability of the STW officials in the area.
- Had below average educational achievement and were undergoing a period of educational reforms which often included STW as a key component.

These findings were gleaned from the sites visited in the first wave of our data collection. Results from our second wave of site visits largely confirmed these basic points. For the most part, those areas in which STW and WIA were linked more fully than having STW representatives serving on Boards or Youth Councils were rural areas with few employers that faced the daunting challenge of providing opportunities for youth in areas in which there were not ample employment openings. Further, a critical factor in whether STW and WIA are linked clearly is the strength of the STW system prior to WIA implementation, and the vigor with which STW officials promote their programs. In no case have we seen a fledgling STW program that suddenly realized that WIA represented a prime opportunity to kick-start their program. Rather, those sites in which there are strong linkages between the two programs are characterized by having energetic STW officials who are well recognized in their communities, programs that have track records of successful placements with employers, and a tradition of strong linkages with business and other community partners. In those areas in which STW never got off the ground, or struggled to achieve a place at the table of key stakeholders, WIA has largely shrugged off any contributions the program might offer, looking instead to alternative sources for quality youth services. Perhaps this is not surprising, but it does suggest that WIA provides little opportunity to revive struggling STW programs, but may well be able to capitalize on the strengths of successful STW efforts.

One aspect of our earlier conclusions did not hold up as well through the second round of data collection. Specifically, several of the sites in round two that had in place effective linkages between STW and WIA do not seem to have a history of poor educational achievement. Nor was STW implemented alongside other major efforts to reform the educational system, or seen as the primary reform necessary to improve academic performance. This tentative conclusion from our earlier paper is thus largely refuted.

The areas did share a common characteristic, though, in that nearly all respondents remarked that educators and community members had begun to realize that students exiting from high schools were largely unprepared for the types of jobs available to them. STW efforts in each of these sites were focused heavily on the notion that the principles embodied by STW would help students to recognize the link between what they learn in school and what they need to know to obtain high-quality employment. Perhaps, then, areas that were grappling with this issue as STW emerged were better situated to embrace STW as a large-scale effort aimed at improving the linkage between school and work.

One critical factor in our findings that was clearly different between rounds one and two of data collection was the fact that by the time we visited many of the sites in round two, Federal STW funds had ceased, and STW programs were on their own for funding. In a few cases, this meant that there was no one available to speak with us about the STW program and we thus had to piece together information available from the several sources we did interview. In such instances, it seemed clear that there was little linkage between STW and WIA, simply because there was no STW to speak of.

## **SUMMARY**

Although some local areas we visited had seen their Federal STW funds cease, and many others were nearing this point, several sites have been able to sustain their STW efforts by identifying alternative sources of funds, including obtaining outside grants or business contributions, developing school buy-in programs, and, in a few cases, by linking with WIA. The most common form of sustainability, though, occurred in areas in which STW will survive largely intact by folding the necessary resources into the basic education budget. Often in these cases, some employees are laid off or reassigned, but many of the basic principles remain, and thus can be continued indefinitely as part of the regular schooling. Typically, areas in which this has occurred do not have significant linkages between WIA and STW, though, perhaps because there is no longer any clearly identifiable STW with which to partner. At the very least, however, these sites ensure that the core tenets of STW, including establishing a link between school and careers, will remain in place.

In contrast, a substantial number of sites simply are not continuing much of STW once they reach the sunset of Federal funds. These sites never seemed to embrace STW in the first place, or were so large that any efforts made at implementation seemed too insignificant to truly effect change in the area. Indeed, respondents in many

of the more urban sites in our sample spoke of the potential utility of STW, but when pressed for the specific activities that STW sponsored, or the goals of the STW system, there was little they could identify. It is easy to see why STW may fail in areas that never embraced it, or even had a desire to implement it. Why it should struggle so mightily in urban areas is less clear, as employers are presumably plentiful, potential partners are often well-established, and the needs so great. Yet few of the urban sites in our sample can be described as highly favorable toward STW, and none showed strong linkages with WIA.

Despite these patterns, we often observed substantial overlap between STW and WIA in planning and policy formulation. Most often, this took the form of a STW representative serving on the State or local Boards, or the Youth Council. In some cases, the STW official chaired these Boards or Councils. In a few sites, in fact, the overlap was quite substantial. For example, in Rutland, Vermont, the STW partnership and the local planning Board were the same agency. In Arizona and Kentucky, a STW representative played the central or at least a key role in drafting the five-year WIA State Plan. Similarly, in Oregon, the STW representative co-chaired the Youth Council during the first year of operation. And in Cumberland, Kentucky, the overlap was quite apparent, and may have contributed to the STW partnership's being selected as the WIA Youth service provider for the area. Across nearly every site, then, there was at least some STW representation on WIA planning committees. Though the reported impact of these representatives varied significantly, it is clear that STW was given a place at the table of key stakeholders in WIA planning.

Although there were far more linkages in the areas of planning and policymaking bodies than in service provision, we did observe a few prominent examples of service coordination between STW and WIA in our second round of site visits. In at least two cases, STW and WIA co-funded services, and tailored those services to the populations that are their target group. Such examples offer evidence that the two programs can be linked, and that doing so may enhance the ability of each by enabling them to reach greater numbers of clients and providing services shaped to meet the individual needs of their clientele. But such efforts clearly were the exception and not the norm.

In other cases, we observed that WIA funds could be used to support programs that had been supported by STW, or that STW funds could contribute resources that are utilized extensively under WIA. These examples, too, reflect strong coordination

designed to meet the needs of a variety of clients, while leveraging resources as efficiently as possible.

In addition, we observed in our first round of site visits a few areas that at least had planned to coordinate services between STW and WIA. For example, in two local areas in round one the STW partnership had been awarded the contract to provide youth services under WIA. Thus, the same agency responsible for STW also was given responsibility for providing youth services under WIA.

Still another site had developed plans to enable students in schools to access electronically the information at the One-Stop centers in the State. Thus, youth participating in STW at one of the local schools could identify what other services they might receive from WIA-sponsored programs, among others. Further, representatives at the One-Stop centers planned to refer youth back to their school STW program.

And another local area had established a Drop-Out Recovery program, managed by a team of individuals representing both the STW agency as well as One-Stop centers in the area. Participants receive case management crossing programmatic boundaries, which enables them to have access to services under STW or WIA, including those services that are available through the One-Stop center. As individuals' needs change, they can be referred to other programs or services that better match their interests.

The remaining sites generally have less extensive coordinating efforts. Often, respondents in these areas described the programs as complementary, but fundamentally separate programs serving different populations. This view may have led them away from establishing or exploring potential linkages. In other cases, officials cited the language in the WIA regulations preventing WIA funds from being used to further STW efforts. While this language clearly scared many officials away from even considering a link between the two programs, this response was given nearly exclusively in the first round of data collection. Perhaps, then, areas received some technical assistance, or gained clarification in other ways as no respondent in our second round of site visits was under this impression.

Overall, then, the results from these sites remain mixed. Although nearly every site displayed some overlap between STW and WIA in terms of membership and input into local WIA decision-making and service planning, it was not always clear that STW had a prominent role, nor that WIA planners were exceedingly interested in learning any lessons from STW. It is also difficult to discern whether the fact that a STW



representative was involved necessarily means that STW principles were incorporated into the implementation of WIA. What we can say, however, is that for nearly every site, STW was seen as a potential contributor, and was offered an opportunity to participate in WIA planning, either on the State and/or Local Boards or on the Youth Councils and, in many cases, both.

Finally, even though there was somewhat less evidence of coordination between STW and WIA in providing services or serving clients, the several examples in which this was happening do suggest that in those areas in which STW had developed a strong and recognizable program, WIA has been able to capitalize on the knowledge, resources, and experience of these systems. The extent to which this capitalization leads to significant impacts on youth in these local areas remains to be seen, but at the very least these linkages serve to ensure that some aspects of STW and the principles it embodies will continue as WIA is implemented fully.

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## **X. WIA GOVERNANCE**

This briefing paper is one of a series developed as part of the *National Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates and TATC Consulting. Thus far, the data collection has consisted of two rounds of site visits: the first round was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight states and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. An overview of the evaluation is included as an appendix to this report. This briefing paper for the most part draws on findings from the second round of site visits, because these capture developments associated with WIA that are the more recent. The states we visited in this second round are: Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Oregon, and Virginia.

In this briefing paper, we will examine the composition and role of Workforce Investment Boards and discuss the involvement of elected officials and the effects they have on governance structures. We will first focus on State-level issues, then move to local-level issues, and conclude with a review of the relationship between States and local areas.

### **STATE GOVERNANCE**

In this section, we consider the composition of State Boards and their roles, as well as the extent of involvement of state elected officials.

#### **Composition of the State Workforce Investment Boards**

The cornerstone of the State governance structure, as envisioned by the Act, is the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB). The SWIBs are business-led Boards tasked with setting the overall direction and strategy for workforce investment programs within each State. Specific responsibilities of the SWIBs include: developing the State's five-year strategic plan and setting performance goals for the State's WIA Title I programs, continuously improving the statewide system, designating the local workforce investment areas, determining funding allocations to those areas, reviewing the local areas' strategic plans, and providing advice to the Governor on workforce investment issues. All of the SWIBs in this study have performed those duties and most have moved on to consider the larger overall strategy of workforce investment and its place in the economy.

The membership of the State Workforce Investment Board as prescribed in the Act is to consist of the Governor or Governor's designee, two members of each chamber of the state legislature, and other persons appointed by the Governor who represent business leaders, locally elected officials, labor organizations, state agency heads, and individual with experience in youth issues. The majority of SWIB members and the Chair of the SWIB are to be from the business community. The Act also permits States to grandfather in existing Boards so long as they are substantially similar to the SWIB as prescribed by the Act.

Of the eight states we studied in the second round, six chose to form new Boards as part of the initial implementation, while two grandfathered in their existing Boards. They were all successful, though, in attracting high-level businesspersons to serve on the Boards. A review of the Boards' membership shows a preponderance of CEOs and Senior Executives serving as the business representatives. In fact, the SWIBs in three States include several senior executives from Dow Jones and Fortune 500 companies, whose headquarters are located in the States. The other States were not as successful at attracting executives from high name recognition companies, but included CEOs from companies whose industries are important to the States' economies.

This finding is consistent with results we reported from the first round of site visits, which we described in the evaluation's Interim Report.<sup>1</sup> The six States from the first round each had a strong history of private sector involvement in the planning and governance of workforce investment programs and had little trouble seating high quality business representatives on their SWIBs.

Of the eight States in the current study, only one had an SWIB with business representatives not in the majority. It was a grandfathered Board that had only six of thirty-two members from the business community. These members were said to be very active, though, and successful in advocating the business perspective.

While all the States were successful in initially attracting strong business representatives to the Board, several of the States encountered difficulty keeping many of them actively engaged. Two reasons were most often mentioned for this. First, the size of the SWIBs grew to substantial and, in some cases, unwieldy numbers. Two of the States had Board membership consisting of approximately seventy persons. At this

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<sup>1</sup> *A Report on Early State and Local Progress Towards WIA Implementation*, February 2001.

size, some individuals do not feel that their contribution makes a difference and the States had trouble maintaining a quorum at Board meetings. The other States held membership levels to the mid-thirties but still felt that there were too many people to run effective planning meetings.

As a result of these large Board sizes, much of the work that the SWIBs undertook was accomplished through a sub-committee structure. While using subcommittees is a common way for Boards of all kinds to delegate work, in this case the result was often that the private-sector members were less involved in the crafting of policies and decisions because they were unable to dedicate the additional time that serving on subcommittees required. Some of the States have gone to lengths to alleviate this problem, such as by holding teleconference meetings and requiring issues to be examined twice by the SWIB as a whole prior to voting on them.

The other reason why some of the SWIBs have had trouble maintaining business involvement is that the Boards have too often focused on the minutia of implementing the WIA program rather than focusing on strategic issues. Because of the amount of work required at the State level to set up the systems required by WIA, the SWIBs too often got mired in the details of the programs, and public-sector members used acronyms and jargon that were unfamiliar to the private-sector members. Since many of the private-sector members were new to the Board and the workforce investment system in general, they sometimes found the SWIB meetings were hard to follow, and some members soon lost interest and disengaged.

Not all the States experienced these problems though. Two of the states maintained business involvement by delegating much of the detail work of implementation to the staff of the WIB and the agency responsible for WIA at the State level, while allowing the Board to focus on strategic thinking and other issues of their choosing. Another State, one that grandfathered in its existing Board, stated that the key to keeping employers engaged was strong leadership, strategic thinking, and a small Board.

Finally, even those States that had difficulty engaging employer members felt that the SWIBs were finally moving away from the details of system implementation, now that most elements of WIA were operational, and thus could spend more time focusing on strategic issues and “big picture” thinking. They hoped that this would reenergize the Board and, in particular, the business representatives.

Several issues relating to membership that were thought to be potential areas of concern turned out not to affect the functioning of the SWIBs. First, all the States indicated that there was minimal disruption caused by turnover of members of the Board. There were changes in Board membership, but these resulted either through a slow rate of attrition or through the resignation of members who had disengaged and were minimally involved in the Board anyway. Only one State voiced any major concern that Board operations were suffering due to turnover and that was attributed to the turnover of public-sector officials, not business members. By contrast, there were several examples of how new members brought fresh ideas and new leadership to the SWIBs.

Secondly, there was very little tension between public-sector and private-sector members of the SWIBs over the levels of performance expected from the workforce system. Two states mentioned that there had been some brief disagreement over one or two of the performance measures, but these were resolved quickly and easily.

### **Role of State Workforce Investment Boards**

One of the first roles that the new State Workforce Investment Boards undertook was the development of the State's five-year strategic plan, as required by the Act. This plan was envisioned by the Act as being the primary framework for guiding strategic planning for workforce investment activities. The reality, however, was often considerably different.

No State that participated in this study uses the five-year strategic plan as the guiding document for workforce investment activities. One State used it to start some strategic planning, but other issues intervened and the State governance structure collapsed, leaving the plan in limbo. Two other States were already in the process of developing strategic plans for workforce investment at the time the WIA legislation was enacted. They completed these plans and rely on them as the main vision for their workforce systems. The WIA five-year plan was prepared later, but more as a function of requirement rather than as another opportunity to plan for the future.

In the other five of the eight States, officials saw the required strategic plan as having little or no value to the workforce system. They viewed it as primarily a compliance document that had to be submitted in order for WIA operations to begin and have rarely revisited it in the months following its submission. It was seen as too long and too prescriptive and offered little opportunity to include true strategic thinking.

Four of these States have since developed, or are in the process of developing, a true strategic plan to guide the direction of the system.

With respect to strategic planning more broadly, the States varied in the role the SWIBs played and where they focused their attention. Some examples highlight this diversity. For example, the Arizona SWIB has focused attention on two main concerns, system integration and employer involvement. The Board members felt that workforce investment programs were too fragmented, even after consolidation under WIA, and have been exploring ways to better integrate programs to leverage resources. They have found their attempt to be frustrating, though, because the SWIB does not in fact have statutory control over any programs other than WIA. In a recently completed study, they found that the SWIB had control over only 5% of the \$230 million coming into the State through WIA and the partner programs. Its increased attention to employer involvement, another area of its focus, occurred through the appointment of a new SWIB Chair, whose main objective was to engage businesses, and from a feeling by many SWIB members that the private sector was inadequately involved under the JTPA system and must be included more actively under WIA to make it successful.

In Illinois, the SWIB has set out to implement the recently completed Strategic Priorities, Objectives, and Strategies. The Board realigned its committee structure to match the priorities established in the strategic plan and has sent staff to the local areas to explain what the State's vision is and the steps needed to implement that vision. The focus on strategic planning has been credited to the strong leadership provided by the Governor.

The Minnesota SWIB has chosen to focus on two strategic goals, system building and system excellence. The SWIB hosts an annual conference to bring local WIBs, elected officials, and local agency managers together to disseminate the State's priorities and share experiences on a range of topics. It is also training many of the local WIBs on the Baldrige principals. Concurrently, the State Legislature is devising statewide performance measures across the partner programs to encourage greater integration and improved performance.

In New York, the SWIB has utilized the 15% set-aside funds to issue a series of competitive grants to the local areas to develop new and innovative programs. As part of this effort, the SWIB recently issued two Requests for Proposals focusing on youth services. The first offers State businesses funds to establish or expand programs with

local educational institutions or local WIBs that expose youth to current or anticipated demand occupations or provide experiences that will lead to gainful employment. The other grant is for local areas that establish or expand innovative summer youth programs supported by multiple funding streams as an integrated component of effective year-round youth programming.

The Oregon SWIB is in the process of establishing system-wide indicators to measure the success of workforce investment programs beyond WIA. The Board is also organizing an economic development summit that will bring together business leaders, economic development organizations, and workforce investment officials to coordinate efforts more effectively.

In Virginia, part of the SWIB's mission is to act on the strategies and goals designed by a Governor's Advisory Committee to integrate economic development with workforce investment. Now that the initial WIA implementation effort has been completed, the Board is focusing on ways to make those strategies and goals a reality.

Despite the above examples of strategic thinking and system integration, in reality the SWIBs have limited authority over partner programs when it comes to implementing policies. Not one State WIB in this study had authority over any partner programs outside of WIA. Indeed, the only example of an SWIB being given statutory control over any partner program was from the first round of site visits in the State of Florida. There, the Boards overseeing the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and WIA programs were merged into a single Board with authority over both.

There were frequent expressions of frustration by many of the State officials we interviewed for this study over this lack of control. They questioned how the SWIBs could strategically plan workforce investment activities with no authority to impose their findings and such limited budgetary control. They felt that the SWIBs were given all the responsibility for overseeing workforce activities but none of the authority.

Another area in which some Boards took action was to create State Youth Councils, or equivalent oversight bodies. In our study, three States had committees that focused on youth issues. Minnesota's is known as the Emerging Workforce Committee, and its focus is on encouraging youth to pursue education, training, and job opportunities in Minnesota. Illinois formed a Youth Council at the State level to guide youth programs statewide; the Council was very helpful in assisting local areas to



develop their own Youth Councils, with each member of the State Council responsible for one of the local areas.

New York provides an example of an active and engaged Youth Council at the State level. Formed as the Emerging Worker sub-committee of the SWIB, the body issued several RFPs encouraging the development of innovative programs to serve the State's youth, as was described earlier in this paper. Staff in New York described it as the most active of the sub-committees to the SWIB.

### **Involvement of State Elected Officials**

The Workforce Investment Act mandates the inclusion of elected officials on the State Workforce Investment Board, including two members of each chamber of the State Legislature and at least two local elected officials. In the States participating in this study, there was little mention of the role that these elected officials played on the SWIB. In fact, partly due to term limits present in many of the States, the turnover of these members was greater than the rate for the Board as a whole. Respondents in several States offered reasons why they viewed the elected officials as disengaged, and most had to do with the fact that workforce investment is typically not a high-priority area for politicians, particularly legislators. They also noted that the party affiliation of the elected officials was often different from that of the Governor and that politics often played a part in how active these representatives were. In no case, though, did any State respondent indicate that the officials tried to undermine or in anyway obstruct the work of the SWIBs.

While the State Legislators and local officials play a role on the SWIB, the Governor acts as the chief elected official. Governors appoint all SWIB members to the Board and can shape the policies and direction of the SWIB through their leadership. In each of the States in this study, the involvement or lack of involvement of the Governor has had a direct impact on the Board and its functions and priorities.

In Arizona, the Governor was not an active participant on the SWIB or in the workforce investment system in general, but the decisions she made at the outset of WIA implementation affected how the Board functions. In designating staff to the SWIB, she chose persons from the Department of Commerce to lead the staffing effort. She also directed the Departments of Economic Security and Education to allocate staff and resources to the Board. These actions had the dual effect of ensuring a business focus to the Board and encouraging cooperation among the primary partners, each of

which had officials both on the Board and staffing the Board. Another influential decision she made was in deciding whom to appoint as the most recent Chair of the SWIB. Her appointee's vision is clearly one of business integration, and it coincides with her earlier decision to draw the Board's staff from the Department of Commerce.

The Governor of Minnesota created a Workforce Development Cabinet, whose members consist of all the Commissioners from the major State departments that have a role in education and workforce investment. The Cabinet developed a series of strategies and tactics to achieve the Governor's goals of increasing individual income and keeping Minnesota's businesses competitive. These strategies and tactics frame the work of the SWIB. Because the heads of all the WIA partner programs were a part of this overall planning process, the programs have bought into the strategy and are strong partners in the system.

In New York, the Governor had been less directly involved in the leadership of the SWIB, but, several years prior to the passage of WIA, he directed the State Departments of Labor and Education to develop a plan to build consensus and support for an integrated workforce investment system. The final strategic plan was issued only months prior to the passage of WIA and still forms the basic strategy for the workforce investment system and its partners in the State.

In Virginia, the Governor made some significant changes to the administrative structure that influenced the priorities under WIA. The administration of the JTPA program was carried out by the Department of Health and Human Resources. After WIA was passed, he moved its administration to the Department of Commerce and Trade. He viewed the old system as ineffective and thought that, by moving WIA's administration to the Commerce Department, WIA would be viewed less as a social program and more as an integral part of economic development. At the same time, he formed the SWIB and tasked it both with oversight of the WIA program and with implementing a strategy (designed by another body) to integrate workforce investment and economic development.

In Illinois, the Governor has shown a strong commitment to workforce investment activities. He created a position of Deputy Governor for Education and Workforce, whose incumbent is to oversee the activities of WIA and its partner programs and serve as the co-chair of the SWIB. This action helped to attract some strong business representatives to the Board by showing the commitment of the Governor, and sent a

message that the Governor was interested and watching what the Board was doing. He also created an inter-agency team consisting of persons from the departments administering WIA and its partner programs. This team helped with the design of WIA implementation, but also continues to meet and has been instrumental in the development of the strategic plan for all workforce investment activities in the State. Officials and Board member reported that these moves ensured that the SWIB could maintain a strategic focus, leading to the creation of a strong and meaningful strategic plan.

The Governor of Oregon has made workforce investment one of his priorities. He created an Office of Education and Workforce Security within the Governor's Office to oversee and direct workforce investment activities. When WIA passed, he designated personnel from that office to serve as staff to the SWIB and appointed the office's director to the SWIB. He also created a Workforce Policy Cabinet that includes the high-level managers from key workforce investment-related agencies.

The workforce investment systems in Oregon and Illinois seem the most susceptible to change due to a change in the Governorship. They are the only two States where officials from the Governor's office take a prime role in leading and staffing the SWIB. Both States have gubernatorial elections this autumn, and neither of the Governors is on the ballot, so these States may offer some insight into how a change in the political power structure affects the workings of the SWIB under these circumstances.

The one State in this study that has already seen a change in Governorship during WIA is Montana, but it is difficult to project its experience onto any other State. As previously described, there was intense conflict about the SWIB and its staff resulting in the dissolution of the Board and the suspension of State governance activities for more than a year.

The remaining State in this study, Georgia, is in the unique position of having an elected Commissioner of Labor, one of only two in the country. He is responsible for the Georgia Department of Labor and provides very active leadership for the SWIB. The Governor is also on the SWIB, but tends to be less involved with workforce investment activities. One drawback to this situation is that the prestige and the visibility of the Board are diminished by the marginal role afforded the Governor.

## **LOCAL GOVERNANCE**

### **Composition of Local Workforce Investment Boards**

Just as the State Workforce Investment Boards are envisioned by the Act to guide statewide workforce investment activities, the local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB) are charged with directing activities at the local level. Their duties, as specified by the Act, are more tailored to local area concerns and include the following: developing the five-year strategic plan for the local area, selecting One-Stop operator(s) to manage and coordinate services at individual One-Stop centers, determining the budget for WIA Title I programs, overseeing WIA programs, negotiating WIA performance measures, coordinating linkages with local economic development and employer organizations, and promoting employer involvement in all areas of the local system.

The Act is very prescriptive concerning the membership requirements of the Local Workforce Investment Boards. The required LWIB members include multiple representatives from the following areas: businesses that offer employment opportunities in the local area; educational institutions, including local school boards, post-secondary education, and adult education and literacy; labor organizations; community-based organizations; and economic development organizations. There also must be at least one representative from each of the required One-Stop partners. As with the SWIBs, the Local Boards must have a majority of businesspersons and the Chair must also be from the business community. WIA also provided an option to grandfather in existing Boards that were substantially similar to the Local Boards described in the Act, but only one of the fourteen local areas in this study chose that option.

The LWIBs that we studied averaged between thirty-five and forty members, with the largest Board found in Erie County, NY, with fifty-nine members, and the smallest in Rural Minnesota, with a grandfathered Board of nineteen members. The differences in LWIB sizes were not attributable to any common characteristic and seemed to be a function of local priorities and circumstances.

The ability of these local areas to recruit high-level and/or locally important business community members and keep them engaged in LWIB operations varied significantly across the study. The majority of the local areas were able to initially recruit business executives to be on the LWIBs. The best example of this was in Tidewater, VA, where the Chief Local Elected Officials (CLEOs) selected 22 business

representatives from over 150 nominations. Tidewater officials attributed their success to the unique importance that the LWIB possesses in the local area through the Board's control of a significant amount of funding beyond the WIA program. The other areas offered a variety of reasons for their success, including the active involvement of the CLEO(s), the sense of civic duty felt by area employers, and the desire of employers to help their bottom-line.

The common theme among areas that struggled with recruitment of employers to serve on the LWIBs was the negative perception in the local areas of the former Private Industry Council. Employers were reluctant to serve on another government Board where it was perceived that they had little or no power. Even some of the areas that were ultimately successful in recruiting strong businesspersons stated that they had to overcome initial concerns about the role that employers would play on this new Board.

Even though most of the local areas were successful in recruiting strong business representatives, only half of the local areas that we studied were successful in both retaining employer representatives and keeping them engaged in the functions of the LWIB. Some of this success was credited to retaining Board focus on larger strategic issues even while WIA implementation was occurring. Others stated that they had carefully recruited business members who were willing to be engaged even in implementation issues.

One area that is particularly successful in maintaining business involvement is DuPage County, Illinois. DuPage recognized very early that there were potential challenges to keeping employers involved and took action to mitigate these hazards. Because the early stages of implementation required heavy attention to detail, the LWIB and its staff quickly delegated these issues to appropriate sub-committees and allotted only minimal agenda time during LWIB meetings for review of the details. Instead, the LWIB gained a sense of accomplishment and empowerment by focusing on strategic issues that it felt it could control, such as the performance of the WIA system. The Board is now taking steps to create system-wide measures in areas such as customer satisfaction and employer involvement. Notably, the DuPage WIB is one of the only Boards where there is tension between the private-sector and public-sector members over the setting of performance measures, and where the average attendance of private-sector members (90%) far exceeds the average attendance of public-sector members (65%).

While half of the local areas have been successful in maintaining private sector engagement, the other half have struggled. In complaints similar to those expressed at the State level, respondents in some local areas stated that the size of the Board contributed to frustrations felt by individual Board members, and that the role of the LWIBs during the early stages of WIA implementation was unsuited for high-level business executives. A common complaint was that employers were expecting to provide strategic guidance for the workforce investment system, but instead found themselves expected to make determinations on One-Stop operations. They also became frustrated with the LWIBs when it was learned that they had no real authority over the vast majority of programs that they were asked to oversee.

To overcome some of these problems, one area introduced several innovative solutions that helped to reengage employers. In The Medford Job Council Area in the State of Oregon, business members were attending LWIB meetings less frequently and participating sparingly when they did attend. The local area took the initiative and created a Business Members-Only Group. The Group meets for breakfast on a bi-monthly basis to discuss issues of common interest and develop ideas for specific initiatives that meet their needs. Several ideas that they proposed have been undertaken by the LWIB, showing them that they can affect issues that interest them. The local area also invested in videoconferencing equipment to make it easier for the business members to participate when they were unable to travel to the meetings. These steps have reinvigorated the business members and improved the overall functioning of the Board.

### **Role of the Local Workforce Investment Boards**

The role of the Local Workforce Investment Boards under WIA, as previously specified, is to provide direction and oversight for the local areas' workforce investment activities. One way they might do so was by crafting the five-year local plan for workforce investment activities to be submitted to the State, one of their initial responsibilities as required by WIA. Some details of these local plans were prescribed by the Act, and, in most cases, States chose not to make additions to those requirements. Broadly speaking, the plans contained an assessment of the local labor market and a description of all facets of the planned local One-Stop system.

Though the Act assigned responsibility for the development of the local plan to the LWIB, in nearly all cases staff from the local organization charged with administering WIA actually wrote the plan. Only one local area, The Medford Area

Job Council of Oregon, specifically stated that the Local Board was involved in the development of the plan, and it did so through the Board's sub-committee structure, with disproportionate responsibility taken on by the public-sector members.

The reasons why the Local Boards did not more fully participate in plan development varied across the areas and included the fact that the Local Boards had not yet been constituted at the time the plan was due, that the Boards that were in place did not have enough knowledge of the WIA system to produce the required content of the local plan, and that the process of developing the plan was very time-consuming and could only be undertaken by persons whose full-time job was to implement the Workforce Investment Act. In the areas where the Local Board had yet to be constituted, the Chief Local Elected Official approved the plan and the LWIB later ratified this decision upon its establishment. In all cases, the Local Board approved the local plan, and in no instance was there an indication that any Board took major exception to any of the plans' provisions.

The impact of local plans at the time of their creation was quite different across the fourteen local areas in this study. Seven of the local areas found the process of developing the local plan to be very helpful. Respondents in these areas stated that developing the plan allowed them to take stock of where the workforce investment system stood in their area and forced them to prepare for the transition to WIA. Some of the areas also used the plan as a tool to educate new members of the LWIB.

However, only two of the local areas used the required WIA planning process as an opportunity to do real strategic planning. One of the areas, the Medford Area Job Council in Oregon, was required by the State to submit a Unified Plan, not just a WIA Title I Plan. This requirement helped them to break down some of the program silos that existed under the Job Training Partnership Act, move more towards integrated services, and develop overarching goals and strategies, which staff viewed as extremely useful. This area also happened to be the only one in our study where the LWIB was active in the development of the plan.

While seven of the local areas found the planning process useful, four of the other areas were ambivalent about it. They created plans as required by the Act, but did not seem to view them as important planning tools. The plans were just another requirement under the new system.

The final three areas held very strong negative feelings about the local plan requirements and the planning process in general. Respondents in these areas stated that the local plan was nothing but a bureaucratic compliance document that added no value to the local system. It was written because the State required it and was completely ignored once submitted to the SWIB. In fact, two of the areas found it to be of such little worth that they declined to provide us with copies because the plan in no way described the reality of the local system. Paradoxically, those same two areas are also generally considered by us to be among the strongest examples of local governance that we studied.

The usefulness of the local plans past the initial stages of WIA implementation also varied greatly across the local areas. In addition to those three areas that disliked the plan from the start, five others stated that the plan held little value now that they were eighteen months into the WIA program. There were no consistent reasons for why the plans were not used and updated, but several of the areas did undertake comprehensive strategic planning unrelated to the official WIA local plan (see below).

On the other hand, two of the local areas stated that the local plan still guides the workforce system, but they have not updated the plan since its creation. One of those areas, DuPage County, Illinois, expressed concern about the plan because it was written during very different economic times. Respondents stated that they had tried to follow the plan, but some of the strategies and goals developed in it were reflective of the economy at that time and are no longer feasible or desirable in the current economy. Indeed, their focus and priorities have changed since then, and they are now forced to serve more dislocated workers and participate in more rapid response activities than they had planned. This area was one of only two in which the change in economic conditions was specifically cited as affecting the plans, strategies, or goals of the LWIB.

The remaining four areas are the only ones of the fourteen we studied that have updated their official WIA local plans in any way since its original completion. Two of these local areas, the Medford Area Job Council in Oregon and Suffolk County, NY, are the same two that utilized the planning process to develop comprehensive strategic plans for the local area. They revisit and update the plan when conditions warrant. The other two areas are required to submit updates to the State on a yearly basis. In one of these, Southwestern Virginia, local officials use this occasion to make significant changes. The area's original plan was formulated to conform to what was perceived



were State expectations and that would allow the area to meet minimum compliance standards; in other words, the plan contained little of strategic value. Because the State requires its locals to update their plans on a yearly basis, local officials used the first update period to clarify and expand on its original local plan. In anticipation of the next required update, they are developing a truer strategic plan that commits the local area to goals and objectives for the system. The business members of the LWIB have been particularly active in this planning process and see it as an opportunity to create a “business plan” for the local system.

As we discovered for State Boards, several of the LWIBs have undertaken strategic planning for their local workforce investment system outside of the official WIA planning process. Four sites in particular are worth discussing in this regard.

The Chicago LWIB undertook an extensive strategic planning process that greatly affected the structure and functions of the Board. To organize itself in a way to meet its own strategic goals, the LWIB dissolved its WIA Title I committee, which was seen as having served its purpose of initially implementing the workforce system such that its functions could now be subsumed by other committees. The Board created two new committees, an Information and Communication Committee, to better market the system and its services, and an Oversight sub-committee of the Executive Committee, to improve the administration and operation of the Board as a whole. The Board then established three overarching priorities that reached far beyond just WIA programs and would guide the work of the Board and its committees. The actions in support of the Board’s priorities are discussed in greater detail later in this section.

In Montana, there are only two local areas in the State and they have aligned their operations and Boards such that they function essentially as a single entity. In a structure similar to what we found in the single workforce investment area States that we visited during the first round of site visits (Vermont and Utah), the State is divided into twenty-three sub-state regions with Community Management Teams (CMT) that guide the operations of the One-Stop Centers in those regions. The CMTs are not official LWIBs, and in fact are required to report to the LWIBs, but they give a degree of local control to the individual One-Stops. This delegation of authority is much appreciated, because the two LWIBs each cover such a vast area. The joint Board developed a continuous improvement plan that is based on the best practices that staff found in visits to several other States. From this plan, a Business Plan Guide was

developed to assist the CMTs in their development of a Business Plan to align the local One-Stops with the priorities of the LWIB.

In Portland, Oregon, the LWIB and the local administrative entity, a quasi-public non-profit organization, engage in a biennial planning process. They conduct interviews with area stakeholders (job seekers, employers, and local agencies) and analyze demographic and economic conditions and trends to determine the area's needs. They then develop a plan to align their services to meet those needs. They also identify other potential sources of revenue and actively pursue them to increase their resources.

In the Tidewater area of Virginia, the administrative entity for the WIA program is a non-profit organization called Opportunity, Inc. This entity has been tremendously successful at securing grant funds for a variety of workforce investment activities—so successful, in fact, that the WIA allocation to the local area comprises only 20% of the overall budget of the organization. As a result of its success, OI is an extremely important player in the local community. During the development of a region-wide, five-year strategic plan, the LWIB and Opportunity, Inc. held a retreat for all the local leaders of business, education, government, and the military (there is a large military presence in this area) to gain their input and buy-in. They also conducted a series of town hall meetings to inform the public of the plan and gain their feedback. The final plan established a series of goals for themselves and a broader community agenda for workforce investment. The agenda designates roles for the citizens, secondary schools, post-secondary schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, and the area government. This plan represents a truly integrated strategic vision for workforce investment and economic development in the entire Tidewater area. It also carries the weight of the area's Chief Elected Officials and top business executives behind it, such that its goals and strategies were adopted by all of the strategic partners. It is by far the most comprehensive strategic plan that we studied in any State in either the first or second round of site visits.

As part of their efforts to carry out strategic planning, many of the Boards were interested in better coordinating and integrating services across the partner programs. However, none of them was given policy-making authority over any of the required WIA partners that were not already under the administrative entity's control. This was an often-cited point of frustration for many of the Local Board members and, in particular, the employer members.

A few Boards also undertook additional innovative actions designed to carry out their strategic thinking, and these are worth noting. Of all the local Boards, the Chicago Workforce Board was undertaking the widest variety of initiatives beyond the LWIB's duties as specified by the Act. For example, the LWIB created a task force to work with the Mayor's Council of Technology Advisors and agreed to serve as the policy arm and private sector recruiter for the Chicago Federation of Labor's Manufacturing Workforce Development Project. The Board also teamed with other LWIBs from the surrounding area to focus on workforce and economic development issues as they related to the health care, manufacturing, and technology industries. They recently hosted a regional One-Stop Strategic Planning Conference for all interested stakeholders from the Greater Chicago area, and have planned a conference focusing on youth issues for this autumn. These and other initiative undertaken by the Chicago LWIB are all in concert with the three major priorities established in their strategic plan: (1) the reinvention of the One-Stop Career Centers to meet a new strategic vision, (2) the focus on skills as the key to Chicago's economic vitality and the stability of the families, and the creation of a skills-development agenda for Chicago, and (3) the connection of at-risk youth to the labor market.

In Erie County, NY, the LWIB has made the integration of workforce investment with economic development its major priority. In addition to the increased membership of economic development representatives on the LWIB (there are five), the Board has earmarked 60% of its training dollars for customized training programs. The WIB and its staff actively seek out companies that need assistance in upgrading their workers' skills or in training potential hires. The Board also regularly petitions the State for funds to help avert plant closings and layoffs. These efforts are all part of the Western New York strategy of stemming the loss of manufacturing jobs that have so depressed the area's economy over the last two decades.

### **Local Youth Councils**

As part of the Local Board structure, the Workforce Investment Act requires the establishment of an entity that focuses specifically on youth issues, the Youth Council. Each local area's Youth Council is charged with developing the youth portion of the local plan, coordinating youth services under WIA, and selecting and overseeing youth service providers. Its membership is to be drawn from individuals within the community who possess expertise in youth services, and can include persons who are not members of the larger Local Workforce Investment Board.

All but one of the local areas participating in this study had fully functioning Youth Councils that were conducting the functions delegated to it by the Act. They all operated with a fair degree of autonomy, but were required to report to the LWIB on a regular basis and have their major decisions reviewed and ratified by the Local Board.

Although the Youth Councils were performing their duties for the WIA program, in most cases there was little evidence that they had assumed a larger role in coordinating youth services beyond the scope of WIA. A number of the local areas attempted to develop a region-wide youth services strategy through the mapping of area-wide youth services and strategic planning sessions, but they have not as yet been very successful in implementing a comprehensive youth service strategy.

However, several areas are exceptions and have had some success in this area. For example, the three urban areas that were part of this study, Buffalo (in Erie County), Portland, and Chicago, were all successful in obtaining additional funding to continue a summer youth employment program that had been a feature of the JTPA youth program that was eliminated under WIA. In Erie County, the local administrative entity for WIA was also the administrative entity for the TANF program. This overlap enabled the area to leverage TANF funds to offer summer employment opportunities to a wider range of youth without the required year-round services. In Portland and Chicago, the local government had appropriated additional county/city funds to ensure that the summer program continued. In all three cases, the Chief Local Elected Official was very involved in the decision to continue some form of summer youth employment.

Two of these areas, Buffalo and Portland, were also recipients of Youth Opportunity grants. In both cases, the Youth Council had oversight authority for the grants and worked to coordinate those resources. However, since the YO grants came with very narrow specifications of who could be served, based on the census tracts of the youths' residences, the YO grants had a relatively small effect on youth services for the local area as a whole.

Several of the areas were also successful in establishing linkages to the school-to-work program or its successor. The strongest example of this was in Suffolk County, NY, where the school-to-work program had established a strong working relationship with the workforce investment community. This relationship laid the foundation for the strong partnerships between the school system and the WIA Youth program that the

area currently enjoys. It also served as a model for some of the youth programs, such as Juvenile Justice, to utilize the services offered through the WIA program. While the Youth Council does not have operational control over any of these programs, there is considerable cross-membership on the various oversight Boards and a shared sense that partnering between programs benefits all. (For further discussion on WIA youth services and the coordination with other youth service programs, see the Youth Services and STW Linkages Briefing Papers, which were issued previously).

### **Involvement of the Chief Local Elected Official**

The role of the Chief Local Elected Official (CLEO) as defined by the Act is to appoint the members of the Local Workforce Investment Board, approve the local areas' WIA local plan, and assume fiduciary responsibility for the funds awarded to the local area under WIA. Beyond that, the CLEO's involvement is voluntary and of his/her own making.

The CLEOs for the fourteen local areas of this study vary significantly because of the political jurisdictions that are encompassed by the local areas. In five of the local areas, the political boundaries matched the local area boundary, and the county executive or mayor of the city was the obvious Chief Elected Official. In the other nine local areas, there were multiple political jurisdictions that required either a CLEO Board, consisting of the respective political leaders, or a designation by the set of LEOs of one or more representatives who would speak for the group.

How the CLEO was selected or how many CLEOs there were seems to have little effect on the role that CLEOs played in the workforce investment system. That role was either very active or nearly non-existent, with examples of both single CLEOs in single political areas and multiple CLEOs from multiple county areas found on both sides of the spectrum. In eight of the areas, the CLEO(s) showed a strong commitment to the LWIB and the workforce system as a whole. They regularly participated in LWIB meetings, were strong advocates for workforce investment, and guided the direction of the system. In contrast, respondents in the other six local areas stated that the CLEOs were uninvolved and played almost no role in guidance or oversight.

Unlike the State governance structure, where we could easily identify the effects that the Governor's involvement had on the State Board, it is difficult to generalize how the Chief Local Elected Officials' involvement affected the local systems. The strongest cases of strategic planning coincide with highest levels of CLEO involvement

and may in fact be causal in those areas. However, there are examples of strong strategic planning without CLEO involvement and vice-versa. The same pattern (or lack of one) holds true for whether businesses were strong players on the LWIB—there are examples of strong and weak business composition and involvement regardless of the role of the CLEO(s).

This finding is consistent with that from the first round of site visits as well, where we also found varying degrees of involvement by local elected officials with little consistent impact on the LWIB or the workforce system in general.

### **THE STATE-LOCAL RELATIONSHIP**

The State can interact with its local areas in two primary ways: (a) having the State Board communicate with the Local Boards through a variety of different means, and (b) having the agencies that staff the Board and administer WIA and partner programs at the State level interact with their corresponding colleagues at the local level. The following section reviews the first type of relationship in depth, but discusses the second type only where applicable to the governance of the system. (For more details on the relationship between the agencies that administer the WIA and partner programs at the State and local level, see the Partnership Building Briefing Paper, in this series.)

In general, the communication between the State and Local Boards was found to be rather weak in most of the States that we visited. Partly this might be because, in general, State WIBs devolved substantial authority to their local areas. In any event, most of the local areas in the States we visited had very little to say about the State Board, and there was little evidence that the SWIB affected the priorities of the LWIB.

Only two State Boards had established a vehicle through which they could actively and regularly receive feedback from the Local Boards. This vehicle was a sub-committee to the SWIB that specifically dealt with LWIB issues and whose membership included LWIB Chairs from each of the local areas. In Illinois, for example, there are several examples of the SWIB taking a proactive role in providing information to and receiving feedback from the local areas:

- 1) After the State completed its comprehensive strategic planning process (described earlier in this paper), it sent representatives to each of the local areas in the State to explain the strategies and goals of the SWIB, answer questions about the State's plan, and assist the local areas in devising a strategy to align their goals with the SWIB's,

- 2) Though not required, the SWIB created a State Youth Council to focus on and provide leadership for youth issues. Each of the State Youth Council members was assigned a local area to shepherd through the process of establishing local Youth Councils and designing youth services.

In New York, the SWIB did not originally have an LWIB committee, but made a subsequent determination that it was important to have clear and open lines of communication to the local areas. The SWIB also decided that a good way to encourage the local areas to adopt programs that aligned with their goals was to offer financial inducements for them to do so. Thus, the Youth Council to the SWIB recently issued grants to local areas for innovative approaches to youth services, and the other committees of the SWIB plan to follow suit with grant offerings that encourage and mirror the State's priorities.

In both of these States, though, the local areas' opinion of the State was dictated more by its interaction with the State administrative agency rather than by the steps taken by the State Board. There was, in fact, little notice of the actions that the SWIB had taken to increase the involvement of the local areas in state decision-making.

Though the communication between the State Board and Local Boards was generally weak, the communication between the state agencies and their local counterparts was regular and often confrontational. An examination of the planning process demonstrates this. All the States issued some form of planning guidance to the local areas to assist them in the creation of their local plans. The large majority of the local areas we studied, though, found the planning guidance to be some combination of confusing, repetitious, and unhelpful. In fact, only three of the local areas viewed the actions taken by the State concerning local planning as helpful, and in one case this reaction was attributed primarily to the fact that the State largely took a hands-off role. Respondents in the remaining local areas stated that the State's actions amounted to little more than reissuing the guidance developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and did little to specifically assist them. Moreover, local areas complained about States' delays in the issuance of both the planning guidance and the other directives pertaining to WIA program issues.

Beyond planning guidance, there were few other examples of structured communication between the State and local areas concerning system governance. One State, Oregon, established Statewide Action Teams, consisting of officials from the State and local levels that would gather to share information about problems and

solutions concerning the programs. If it was determined that action by the SWIB could improve a certain situation, then the SWIB staff that served on those teams would bring it to the attention of the Board. Otherwise, though, it acted more as a roundtable forum than an official body.

The issue that caused the most strain on the State-Local relationship related to MOU/Cost Allocation. In several local areas, we learned that local respondents were very frustrated by what were perceived to be unreasonable dictates by the States as to how MOUs should be structured and costs shared. (See the Partnership Building Briefing Paper for more details on this.)

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The review of WIA governance structures that we undertook as part of the second round of data collection associated with this evaluation leads us to a number of general summary statements pertaining to State-level and local-level governance issues:

### *State-Level Governance*

1. State Workforce Investment Boards in general have had no trouble attracting high-level business representation. However, some States have had difficulty keeping business members engaged, because some State Boards were of unwieldy sizes (which some members felt diluted the value of their contributions) and because the Boards' initial meetings often focused on WIA implementation issues that business members found dull.
2. In general, State WIA plans were not viewed by respondents as valuable documents to guide strategic planning. However, most State Boards nonetheless have turned to considering strategic issues once initial decisions regarding WIA implementation had been approved. Among the strategic issues that the Boards we studied had been pursuing were: improving system integration, heightening employer involvement, developing system-wide measures of performance, and aligning workforce development with economic development.
3. Elected officials have generally not been very engaged in State Board activities on an ongoing basis. Nonetheless, Governors in many States have had a notable influence, through their appointments to the Board, designating staff to the Board, and decisions about the WIA administrative structure.

### *Local-Level Governance*

4. Local Workforce Investment Boards ranged in size from one having 19 members (a Board that had been grandfathered), to others that had up to 59 members. Concerns about Board sizes that were unwieldy were raised by local-level officials, as they were by State-level officials.



5. In recruiting high-level business representatives to serve on the Boards, local areas needed to overcome a negative perception of many potential business appointees of the former Private Industry Councils.
6. Even though most local areas were nonetheless successful in recruiting strong business representatives, only about half of the ones we studied were successful in retaining employer representation and keeping business members engaged. Areas that had the most success in this regard ensured that their Boards focused on strategic issues rather than details of WIA implementation. Doing so, however, meant that implementation issues were often addressed by committees of the Board, which tended to have scant business representation.
7. Business and public-sector Board members alike expressed frustration that they were charged with workforce system building, but in fact had little authority over WIA partner programs' operations or budgets.
8. In most local areas, the areas' WIA five-year plans seemed to have little value as strategic planning documents. In these cases, plans were characterized as compliance documents, and were not being updated on an ongoing basis as the local Boards' priorities changed. In several of the areas, in fact, the development of the plan was itself seen as having had little value. A few areas are exceptions in this regard, however. In these areas, local plans were viewed as having strategic value and were updated regularly. Sometimes these updates occurred because doing so periodically was mandated by the State.
9. Whether or not the official WIA plan was viewed as having strategic value, several of the local Boards (of the fourteen that we studied) could be said to have engaged in real strategic planning, including through regional planning with adjacent local Boards. One area, in particular, stands out in this regard. This area held a retreat for local leaders of business, education, and government, and established a series of goals and an agenda with designated roles for citizens, secondary schools, post-secondary schools, businesses, non-profit organizations, and local government.
10. Local Youth Councils were fully functioning in all but one of the fourteen areas we studied. In general, they are performing their functions as mandated by the WIA legislation, but are not engaged in wider youth planning.
11. In general, communication between State and Local Boards was perceived as being weak. Partly this might be because State WIBs devolved substantial authority to their local areas. In any event, in most of the local areas we visited there was little evidence that the SWIB affected the priorities of the LWIBs to any appreciable degree.

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## **XI. THE ONE-STOP INFRASTRUCTURE: VISION AND IMPLEMENTATION**

This briefing paper is one of a series developed as part of the *National Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA*, being conducted by Social Policy Research Associates. Thus far, the data collection has consisted of two rounds of site visits: the first round was conducted to six states and nine local workforce areas in the spring of 2000, and the second round was conducted to an additional eight states and fourteen local areas in the summer and fall of 2001. This briefing paper for the most part draws on findings from the second round of site visits, because these capture developments associated with WIA implementation that occurred more recently. The states visited in the second round were: Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Minnesota, Montana, New York, Oregon, and Virginia.

In this briefing paper, we examine the progress that has been made to date by local areas to support the comprehensive workforce investment system that WIA envisions. A previous briefing paper has addressed the process of building state and local One-Stop partnerships and developing memoranda of understanding that specify partner responsibilities and contributions to shared One-Stop systems. In this issue paper, we examine the resulting framework that has emerged for the delivery of One-Stop services to individuals and business customers, and identify challenges that have been encountered in developing seamless services.

First, we review the vision and goals that have driven the design and development of One-Stop services at the state and local levels. Second, we describe the resulting service delivery networks—consisting of comprehensive One-Stop centers, satellite centers, affiliated sites, and remote access opportunities—that have been woven together to make One-Stop services accessible to customers throughout local workforce investment areas. Third, we analyze the varied approaches that have been developed by local One-Stop systems to respond to the needs of “the universal customer” through the design and delivery of core services by One-Stop operators and other system partners. Fourth, we discuss how One-Stop systems have arranged for customers to access the more intensive services offered by a wide range of workforce development partners. Fifth, we describe the ways that local One-Stop systems have designed and implemented a shared system of services for employer customers. Finally, we

summarize the accomplishments achieved and challenges still facing local workforce investment areas in developing their One-Stop infrastructure.

### **VISION AND GOALS GUIDING THE ONE-STOP INFRASTRUCTURE**

In preparing its WIA state or local five-year plan, each of the case-study states and local areas specified the goals it wanted to further through the development of a comprehensive workforce development system. The goals set by each case-study site are generally consistent with, and supportive of, the seven federal principles embodied in the Workforce Investment Act (i.e., streamlined services, customer choice, universal access, increased accountability, strengthened role for local workforce investment boards, state and local flexibility, and improved youth programming). However, the particular priorities set by each case study site are influenced by locally identified needs, local economic conditions, and levels of customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the workforce development resources and services available to jobseekers and businesses immediately prior to the implementation of WIA.

The case study sites identified the following goals for the creation of their comprehensive workforce development systems. The goals are listed roughly in order of the frequency with which they were identified in state and local plans:

- Linking workforce development and economic development strategies.
- Coordinating the workforce development needs of businesses and jobseekers.
- Delivering employment and training services to a large customer base using self-service automated tools and an electronic infrastructure.
- Improving system visibility to, utilization by, and reputation among both employers and the universal customer.
- Building a coordinated system that does a better job of:
  - Communicating employers' skills development needs to education and training providers who can meet those needs.
  - Maintaining open communication among system partners.
  - Developing regional approaches to addressing workforce development and economic development goals.
- Providing balanced attention to the needs of the universal customer and identifiable customer segments such as new labor market entrants, incumbent workers, and other targeted groups (e.g., welfare recipients,

at-risk youth, individuals with basic skills deficiencies, and individuals with disabilities).

### **Linking Workforce Development and Economic Development**

Most of the state and local WIBs emphasized that their WIA systems must recognize the necessary connection between regional economic vitality and growth and improved employment and earnings opportunities for workers. Planners in these local areas stated that to promote regional economic growth effectively, local workforce investment areas must maintain an accurate and up-to-date understanding of the needs and interests of local businesses and think strategically about how to “add value” to the labor market, e.g., by ensuring that workers offer the skills currently needed by local employers as well as the skills that will help drive future economic growth. To further this goal, the local workforce investment areas we studied are planning some of the following activities:

- Surveying local employers about their workforce needs and goals.
- Collaborating with employers to develop new customized training programs that will help jobseekers enter the labor market.
- Developing improved labor market information organized around occupational sectors targeted for job and economic growth (e.g., information technology, senior living, health technology, tourism).
- Developing workers’ skills relevant to the needs of particular industries (e.g. manufacturing).
- Placing an increased focus on training opportunities for incumbent workers, including skills relevant to both job retention and career advancement.
- Organizing a summit on economic development and business issues.

### **Coordinating the Workforce Development Needs of Businesses and Jobseekers**

This goal was phrased differently by different local areas, depending on the perceived balance or imbalance in the previous system’s focus on the needs of employers versus jobseekers. Most often, local areas expressed this goal as a desire to increase customer satisfaction for both sets of system customers—employers as well as individual jobseekers or workers. Perhaps to address a past imbalance between attending to the needs of local businesses versus individual workers, one local site set a goal of helping customers access jobs with benefits that pay enough to offer workers financial security. Another local area set a goal of helping employers “in developing

high performance workplaces.” In one local area in which the state Wagner-Peyser agency currently operates the only existing comprehensive One-Stop center, the director of the WIA Title IB agency indicated that she is working to redress the local area’s current employer focus by developing additional One-Stop centers that are more responsive to the needs of jobseeker customers.

### **Using Automated Tools to Reach a Large Customer Base**

One of the goals of One-Stop systems embraced by most states and local areas is to realize the potential of using technology-based tools and an electronic infrastructure to reach large numbers of system users. Both jobseekers and employers can be encouraged to obtain information about labor markets, education and training providers, and available jobs by coming to One-Stop centers and affiliated sites to access automated information systems or by using Internet-linked computers from home or work to access the same databases online. The One-Stop implementation grants awarded to states by the U.S. Department of Labor prior to the passage of the WIA legislation provided the opportunity for many states to develop a wide range of technology-based products that are often packaged for easy customer use with an integrated menu and crosswalks between different applications. To further this goal, several state and local workforce investment boards are planning one or more of the following activities:

- Continuing to recruit affiliated sites that can offer jobseekers, workers, and students access to One-Stop automated tools at locations throughout the community.
- Continuing to promote the use of virtual One-Stops, by using technology to improve system connections and increased access.

However, one very large rural area, in which individuals do not have transportation to One-Stop centers but like face-to-face contact, has selected a different strategy to make services accessible—having One-Stop staff drive to small towns to provide services on a prearranged roving schedule.

### **Improving System Visibility and Reputation**

This was mentioned as a goal by several of the case study local areas. One local area said that in order to reach local goals, they needed to convince more employers offering high-wage jobs to use the public labor exchange system. Several local areas indicated that they would not be able to reach the universal customer until the One-Stop

center changed its reputation from the program serving low-income people to the program serving the general workforce.

### **Building Coordinated Systems**

The local areas we visited during the second round of this study recognized that full integration of WIA partners and services was not likely to be accomplished in the short-run. As examples of achievable short-term goals, local areas called for improved information sharing, multiple access points to partner services (“no wrong door”), increased community awareness of the system and its partners, achievement of as full co-location of partners as possible given the limits of available facilities, and use of consensus planning among partners to make partners work more efficiently and effectively within the One-Stop partnership.

Among the areas selected for study, several set three- and five-year goals that called for the development of a unified menu of services and the emergence of the One-Stop system as being a centralized “bridge between jobseekers and employment opportunities” and the emergence of comprehensive One-Stop centers as the “broker of all employment services.” The calls for improved coordination among workforce development partners within these local plans were real but modest, and built around incremental changes in the way of doing business within One-Stop centers rather than radical reorganization of service delivery roles and responsibilities across agency lines.<sup>1</sup>

### **Providing Balanced Attention to the Needs of the Universal Customer and Customers Requiring Intensive Services**

This local goal has caused among the greatest challenges in practice, in terms of the ability of local partnerships to weave together the resources and culture of labor-exchange programs with the resources and culture of education and training programs. Traditionally, labor-exchange programs have set goals of high volumes of service, high rates of market penetration, the delivery of “light touch” services with rapid customer turnover, and an expectation that individuals will change jobs over time, as a result of

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<sup>1</sup> Where different agency identities do not pose administrative barriers, agencies that are responsible for multiple funding streams have sometimes made substantial progress in integrating program operations. For example, in Minnesota’s 19-county Workforce Service Delivery Area 2, the Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Program (CEP)—which is the local partner responsible for administering 34 different state and federal programs, including WIA Title IB services and the federal Welfare-to-Work program—uses integrated service delivery teams to serve One-Stop customers eligible for any of the programs it administers.

layoffs and individual job mobility. In contrast, education and training programs have traditionally recruited, screened, and enrolled a much smaller number of customers into more intensive services over longer periods of time, with the expectation that services will be case managed and tracked, and that job placement outcomes will be carefully nurtured and supported with ongoing follow-up services. Weaving these two different cultures of service design and delivery into a coherent approach to serving customers under One-Stop systems is causing among the greatest growing pains to emerging workforce development systems under WIA. To further these goals, several local partners specified the following strategies:

- Using a combination of Wagner-Peyser and WIA resources to ensure that customers are registered into the system(s)—ES and/or WIA—that make the most sense in terms of service needs, resource accountability, and required tracking of customer outcomes.
- Using a wide range of different partners as “feeder programs” to draw customers with a wide range of special needs (e.g., welfare recipients, individuals with disabilities, individuals with basic skills deficiencies, at-risk youth) into the One-Stop workforce development system, which offers customers access to services with varied content and of varying intensity, depending on customer needs and interests.

#### **ORGANIZING LOCAL ONE-STOP CENTERS AND SYSTEMS**

The local One-Stop systems developed in response to the WIA legislation vary widely in their structure and organization. Among their different organizational features are the following variables:

- Whether One-Stop centers are certified by the state, in response to state established criteria, or solely at the discretion of the local workforce investment board.
- How many comprehensive centers have been established in different local areas and whether the state or local area has devised a system for designating satellite or affiliated sites.
- How One-Stop operators have been designated and what types of entities have been designated as One-Stop operators.
- How the roles of One-Stop operators have been defined, and how One-Stop operators relate to other on-site agency partners.
- If there are multiple One-Stop centers or affiliate sites, whether individual sites are organized into an organized network or system.



Below we describe some of the key variations among the case study sites on these organizational variables and discuss how these organizational differences influence the delivery of One-Stop services.

### **Role Played by the State in Certifying One-Stop Centers**

Across the eight states we visited during the second round site visits, state-level One-Stop leaders played very different roles in the process of certifying local One-Stop centers. States that had already begun to certify One-Stop centers prior to the passage of the Workforce Investment Act had the option of “grandfathering in” preexisting centers and their existing operators, although, in most respects, existing centers were expected to meet the requirements of the Act (with the exception of the procedure to be used to select the One-Stop operator).

Three of the eight case study states—Oregon, Minnesota, and Arizona—took advantage of the above option to certify some or all of the One-Stop centers that had been established prior to WIA. Minnesota certified all 53 existing Minnesota Workforce Centers as comprehensive One-Stop centers. Oregon certified at least one comprehensive One-Stop in each of the state’s six local workforce investment areas, but allowed local WIBs to certify additional centers if they so decided. Arizona certified eight pre-existing One-Stop centers and stated its intention to continue to certify all One-Stop centers in the state as part of its review of local plans.

In Montana, where state-local conflicts nearly paralyzed the early WIA implementation process, respondents expressed a difference of opinion about what entity should certify One-Stop centers. The State Department of Labor and Industry, which is responsible for administering both the Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title IB programs at the state level, wants to certify all Job Service offices as One-Stop centers, while the two local WIBs are battling for the right to certify One-Stop centers locally.

In the remaining four study states, the state Workforce Investment Boards have deferred to local WIBs on the certification of One-Stop centers and selection of One-Stop operators. Two states left the certification of comprehensive One-Stop centers completely up to the discretion of local workforce investment boards. The state Workforce Investment Boards in the two remaining states have established various

criteria and guidelines for local WIBs to follow in certifying One-Stop centers and chartering One-Stop operators.<sup>2</sup>

The varying types and levels of state involvement in the certification of One-Stop centers reflect different views about the appropriate state role in building and overseeing networks of One-Stop centers. At one end of the spectrum, several states have been heavily invested in building a state “brand” of One-Stop center, in which a standardized approach to customer service was reinforced by a shared name (e.g. Minnesota Workforce Center), a shared logo, and a shared look and feel of One-Stop facilities and resource rooms throughout the state. At the other end of the spectrum were states that did not attempt to influence the emerging local One-Stop systems beyond ensuring that federal requirements (e.g., for the creation of at least one comprehensive center in each local workforce investment area) were met. In several states that had begun by playing a major role in certifying early One-Stop centers prior to WIA, the states were ready to stand aside and let local workforce investment boards take over the certification and administration of local centers.

#### **Comprehensive One-Stop Centers vs. Satellite and Affiliated Sites**

Six of the 14 local workforce investment areas studied had implemented only a single comprehensive One-Stop center at the time of the Round 2 site visits. The remaining local areas had from two to nine comprehensive centers in place. Because the local areas varied widely in geographic size and population density, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the adequacy of the existing center infrastructure. However, in two local areas a single full-service center appeared to be inadequate to provide access to all residents: one of these local areas consists of 46 counties; another includes 12 counties. Several local areas were in the process of expanding the number of comprehensive One-Stop centers to provide fuller geographic coverage. For example, Southwest Georgia Local Workforce Investment Area, with 14 counties, started with a single comprehensive center in 2000, certified five additional centers in 2001, and hopes eventually to have a center operating in each of its fourteen counties.

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<sup>2</sup> For example, Illinois encourages local areas to use a consortium structure in designating local One-Stop Operators. However, in designating operating consortia, an agency can count as only one partner, even if it controls more than one of the required funding streams.

There is no uniform terminology used to describe satellite or affiliate One-Stop centers. Some local areas have designated all local offices operated by partner agencies as affiliate sites, because these sites provide access to face-to-face services for at least one partner program as well as information about how to access additional services. Other local areas reserve the label satellite One-Stop for a facility in which several mandated One-Stop partners are co-located.

At least five local sites have set up a formal certification process for affiliate or satellite sites. In order to qualify as a One-Stop affiliate in these local areas, local centers must offer electronic access to self-service tools and coordinated referrals to other One-Stop partners' services. In some local communities, a wide range of community offices have secured certification as affiliate centers, including libraries, schools, community colleges, and partner-agency offices. Two of the most elaborate networks of community affiliates are located in Chicago, where the local workforce investment board has designated 33 adult and dislocated worker affiliates and 52 youth service affiliates. Similarly, in the local workforce area containing Medford (Oregon), 11 affiliate agencies have agreed to have job postings available, provide resource rooms, offer some core services by ES or WIA staff, have at least one person trained to greet and refer customers, and participate in One-Stop network meetings.

### **One-Stop Operators**

As shown in Exhibit 1, eight of the 14 local workforce investment boards studied in Round 2 selected organizational consortia to operate local One-Stop centers. Three local areas designated the public or non-profit agency responsible for the delivery of WIA Title IB services as the One-Stop Operator of one or more comprehensive centers in the local area.<sup>3</sup> Two local areas designated the state agency responsible for the delivery of Wagner-Peyser services as the local operator of one or more comprehensive centers. The remaining local WIB issued a competitive RFP and awarded contracts to several different types of entities—including four community colleges and three non-profit community-based organizations—to operate a network of seven comprehensive One-Stop centers.

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<sup>3</sup> Two of these agencies requested and received waivers from the Governor to enable them to provide direct services under WIA.

Local WIBs found it attractive to designate local consortia to operate One-Stop centers for several reasons. First, where local partnerships had come together prior to WIA to operate One-Stop centers, WIA allowed these operating partnerships to continue without interruption. Second, agencies designated as One-Stop operators were more likely to make in-kind contributions of facilities and equipment to support the operation of One-Stop centers than partners not so designated. Finally, the Title IB adult services administrative agency, as one member of a multi-agency One-Stop operating consortium, often was able to continue to staff the delivery of WIA adult services within One-Stop centers without highlighting its dual role of overseeing One-Stop systems and providing WIA services.<sup>4</sup>

The responsibilities of One-Stop operators usually include coordinating the delivery of services by One-Stop partner agencies, managing and maintaining the One-Stop facility (to which the One-Stop operator agency often held the lease), and providing some part of core and/or intensive services.

The consortium designated as the One-Stop operator by the Chicago WIB was an exception to this pattern. Although the ten mandated One-Stop partners in Chicago were designated as the consortium responsible for the operation of the city's five comprehensive One-Stop centers, a separate contractor was hired with WIA funds to provide core and intensive services in each of these centers. We provide more detailed information on the roles played by One-Stop operators and other partners in the delivery of core and intensive services in another section of this briefing paper.

### **Managing One-Stop Centers and Networks**

The comprehensive One-Stop centers we visited as part of Round 2 are still at an early stage of co-location and coordination of partner services. As a result, One-Stop partners have not needed to develop very elaborate management or governance mechanisms to guide day-to-day operation of the One-Stop centers. The most common organizational arrangement is for a single agency to hold the lease on the One-Stop facility and "host" small numbers of on-site staff from other partners, with or without collecting a rental payment. Usually, the host agency is the designated One-Stop operator or a member of the operator consortium. Because the comprehensive One-

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<sup>4</sup> The agency designated by local elected officials to administer Title IB adult services was a member of the One-Stop operating consortium in all eight consortium sites and played a role in providing WIA services in six of the eight sites.

Stop centers we visited had not developed very complex ways of sharing facility costs, they usually let the host agency handle all facility management decisions.

Many local areas went through the formality of designating a single individual to be the director or manager of a shared One-Stop center. In these sites, the manager's salary was typically paid as an in-kind contribution from one of the partners, even though the manager was responsible for coordinating day-to-day operations for all on-site partners. Because the One-Stop staff from different agencies did not work in cross-agency functional teams, issues about the supervision of staff from one agency by a manager from another agency had not yet arisen. Most often, respondents said that although programs were co-located within One-Stop centers, each program continued to operate autonomously.

Several sites had arranged to involve participants from all on-site partners in weekly or bi-weekly staff meetings held at the One-Stop center. The purpose of such meetings was to share information about individual partners' programs and to discuss any center-wide issues relating to center operations and services. Interagency operations teams had also been formed in two centers to oversee shared center operations, identify operational issues, and make shared decisions about day-to-day center operations.

An interagency management body responsible for overseeing the entire local network of One-Stop centers has been formed in three local workforce investment areas. Although in one instance the One-Stop Network Board (in the Medford area in Oregon) is officially a subcommittee of the local WIB, each of these three network management bodies operate as a day-to-day managing board of the interagency One-Stop partnership, with participation from One-Stop operators, local officials, One-Stop partners, and other public and community agencies concerned about building an effective local One-Stop system.

#### **APPROACHES TO SERVING THE UNIVERSAL CUSTOMER**

In this section of the briefing paper, we describe how different One-Stop partnerships have organized the design and delivery of core services, how partners track the delivery of core services, and what strategies have been developed to promote access to core services by individuals with disabilities, geographically remote customers, and individuals for whom English is not their primary language. (It is not our purpose in this briefing paper to describe the types of core services provided in

One-Stop centers. Information on the content of different tiers of customer services and how customers move through these tiers is found in the briefing paper entitled “*Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers*”.)

### **Framework for the Delivery of Core Services**

Access to core services under the Workforce Investment Act is to be provided through the coordinated resources of all mandatory One-Stop partners as well as by One-Stop operators funded under WIA Title IB. In the local areas we visited in Round 2, customers could usually access core services via several distinct entry paths, including the following:

- Receipt of staff assistance with labor exchange services, such as applying for UI benefits, registering in an automated job matching system, or receiving a job referral. These services may be available from Wagner-Peyser staff in a One-Stop center or stand-alone Job Service office, or from One-Stop center staff cross-trained in the use of labor exchange services.
- On-site visits to Resource Rooms within One-Stop centers, which specialize in self-service tools and multi-media resources and offer “light touch” staff support from designated Resource Room guides and specialists.
- Remote access to automated core services available through user stations in a variety of One-Stop affiliated sites or via the Internet from a customer’s home or work computer.
- Attendance at an orientation session and/or receipt of an initial needs assessment from cross-trained staff within One-Stop centers or from staff associated with individual One-Stop partner programs.
- Participation in one or more services from a menu of assisted core services provided by WIA Title IB staff or other One-Stop partners and available to the general public.

The One-Stop centers we visited vary substantially in how much effort is being made to consolidate or coordinate the different entry points to core services. At one end of the spectrum, several comprehensive One-Stop centers have designed an integrated “front-end” for all customer services, consisting of a shared greeter who is familiar with the entire range of services offered by all on-site partners and who assists all visitors to the center in determining what services they need and how to get to where they want to go. In one variant of integrated front-end services, highly trained greeters at the reception desk or resource specialists assigned to the Resource Room conduct initial discussions with all visitors to help identify individuals for whom intensive services may be needed. For example, in the Balance of Mariposa County (AZ), all

visitors to the Mesa One-Stop center meet briefly with a core career guidance specialist who provides a tour, conducts an intake evaluation, and makes an initial determination of services needed.

In another variant of integrated front-end services, all visitors are invited to use the Resource Room and offered basic assistance in using the various automated tools and written materials available in the Resource Room as a core service available to all customers. In this service design, customers are provided with a detailed orientation to the One-Stop center and an overview of all partner services only if they inquire about the availability of additional staff assistance. In the Capital Career Center (in Beaverton, Oregon), for example, customers who are interested in moving from the self-service tier of core services to the assisted tier of core services are encouraged to attend a One-Stop orientation and meet with a career specialist to help them decide whether to register with WIA to receive staff-assisted core services (which typically consists of a group assessment workshop and more individualized assistance in the Resource Room).

In the majority of the comprehensive One-Stop centers we visited, however, integrated front-end services end shortly after the customer receives the initial greeting from the shared receptionist, leaving staff from individual partner programs to address customers' service needs. Thus, the delivery of services to One-Stop customers is most often the result of coordinated efforts among different partners operating as independent programs, rather than the result of an integrated service design and delivery system.

### **Responsibility for the Delivery of Core Services**

In eleven of the fourteen local case study sites we visited in Round 2, a single program partner had primary responsibility for the delivery of core services to One-Stop customers.<sup>5</sup> In all but one instance, this agency was either the designated One-Stop operator or a member of the One-Stop operating consortium. In the Chicago local workforce investment area, the WIB hired separate contractors to provide core

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<sup>5</sup> As part of the development of MOUs among on-site partners, One-Stop partners in many of the comprehensive One-Stop centers have agreed to contribute limited amounts of staff hours as an in-kind contribution to support the operation of the Resource Rooms. Participating agency staff include Wagner-Peyser staff, Older Worker Program participants, and other members of One-Stop operating consortia.

and intensive services in each of five comprehensive One-Stop centers using WIA funds, but did not designate these contractors as One-Stop operators. Instead, a consortium of ten mandated One-Stop partners share the operation of each of the One-Stop centers using a center-level management operating team.

In contrast, One-Stop centers in three local case-study sites in Round 2 shared responsibility for the delivery of core services among several members of the One-Stop operator consortium. The design of core services in these three sites ranges along a continuum from loose coordination among core service partners to more highly structured coordination. In the mostly loosely coordinated site, three agencies that have a local history of not getting along each operate their own Resource Room and offer their own staffed services in separate offices in the same building.

In a local One-Stop center that is beginning to build a more coordinated approach, Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title IB staff are both available to serve walk-in customers. Although these two agencies do not have a history of working together, they have found that serving customers together in the One-Stop center has led to closer collaboration between the two agencies. As part of these experiences in helping out in the Resource Room, the Wagner-Peyser staff member assigned to work in the One-Stop center has begun to help customers update their resumes and carry out their individual job search efforts.

The comprehensive One-Stop center in DuPage County (IL) offers a model of the collaborative design and delivery of an integrated menu of core services by a four-agency One-Stop operating consortium that includes the Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title IB agencies, a community college, and a nonprofit community-based service provider. Although each of the participating agencies is responsible primarily for providing services under its own program and funding stream, the partners have come together to offer a consolidated menu of Core A and Core B services available to the general public. Core A services include the provision of assistance and supervision in the resource room as well as participation in a job club. Core B services include a series of short group workshops on general employment skills topics, such as attitude management, goal setting, communication, interview simulation, stress management, resume clinics, assertiveness, computer fundamentals, and internet searching. As a result of this collaborative approach, a wide range of core services are available to the general public.



## **Role of Wagner-Peyser Staff vs. WIA Title IB Staff in the Delivery of Core Services**

In this project's Interim Report, *Early State and Local Progress toward One-Stop Implementation*, we reported that Wagner-Peyser staff were dominant in the delivery of core services in the majority of the case study sites visited during the first study phase. The Interim Report, which summarized WIA implementation progress in six states that were "early implementers," found that the Wagner-Peyser program was the designated funder as well as the primary provider of core services in 4 of 9 sites. In several of these cases, the Wagner-Peyser agency agreed to take sole responsibility for the delivery of core services, even though it was not the designated One-Stop operator. In the remaining 5 early implementation sites, Wagner-Peyser staff participated as members of local One-Stop consortia in the funding and delivery of core services.

The second round of implementation site visits suggests that the role of Wagner-Peyser agency staff in the delivery of core services is less dominant than previously thought. Among the 14 local sites studied during the study's second phase, Wagner-Peyser staff are dominant in the delivery of core services in only 4 sites (29% of the total). In two of these sites, the Wagner-Peyser agency is the designated One-Stop operator. In the remaining two sites, it is a member of the local One-Stop operator consortium. In three sites with a dominant Wagner-Peyser role in the delivery of core services, the comprehensive One-Stop center is located at a former standalone Job Service facility and Wagner-Peyser funding is reported to be the sole funding source for core services for One-Stop customers. In the fourth site, each local partner provides its own core services with its own funds from its own separate office in a shared building; the Job Service partner has the most well-developed and most utilized resource room.<sup>6</sup>

In the remaining 10 sites (71% of the total), staff paid with WIA Title IB funds are the primary staff responsible for the delivery of core services in One-Stop centers. In seven of these sites, the state Wagner-Peyser agency is neither the designated One-Stop operator nor a member of the local One-Stop operator consortium. In three other sites, even though the state Wagner-Peyser agency is a member of the local One-Stop operator consortium, Wagner-Peyser staff play only a subordinate role in the delivery of core services.

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<sup>6</sup> Case study respondents in this local site opined that the One-Stop center we visited should not really be considered a One-Stop center, due to the lack of even minimum levels of coordination among its partners.

A review of the local service delivery arrangements suggests several reasons why Wagner-Peyser staff play only a limited role in the funding and delivery of core services within these local One-Stop systems. First, it is common for only a limited number of Wagner-Peyser staff to be “outstationed” at the One-Stop centers in these local areas. Most often, the state Wagner-Peyser agency still operates one or more stand-alone Job Service offices, sometimes located only a short distance from the One-Stop center. Thus, only one or a handful of Wagner-Peyser staff are available at the One-Stop center to help staff Resource Rooms or assist customers with job search or job placement issues.

Second, several of the case-study sites commented that the Wagner-Peyser program throughout their local area or state had embraced a self-service model of meeting jobseeker needs by making an automated job matching system available to onsite and remote users. In these areas, staff-assisted labor exchange services for jobseekers are no longer emphasized, even at full-service Job Service offices.

Third, in a number of sites where Wagner-Peyser staff are available within One-Stop centers to assist in the delivery of core services, they tend to specialize in the delivery of a discrete menu of labor-exchange services, including the following: working with employers to get job orders, providing local labor market information, helping with mass hiring requests from new or expanding businesses, responding to notices of large-scale layoffs, helping customers register for unemployment benefits, and helping jobseekers get registered in the state job matching system. Other One-Stop partners in these sites take most responsibility for staffing resource rooms, responding to job-seekers who want individualized assistance with job search, and providing group workshops as part of a menu of assisted core services.

### **Tracking the Delivery of Core Services**

WIA permits local One-Stop partners to serve customers without WIA registration if they receive only self-service core services or if they receive only services funded from non-WIA sources. Since even the use of automated tools in a One-Stop Resource Room usually involves some level of staff support, there is usually room for interpreting the line at which self-service core services end and staff-assisted core services begin.

The partner agency responsible for operating the on-site Resource Room and/or staffing the reception desk is usually responsible for maintaining some kind of tally,

log, or other measure of the extent to which walk-in customers use self-service core services. In the comprehensive One-Stop centers we visited, such logs are usually maintained manually, rather than as part of automated databases. A common procedure for maintaining these records is for the One-Stop greeter to ask all Resource Room visitors to sign in and report what services they want to use. A few One-Stop centers have implemented an elaborate automated tracking system that measures which software programs Resource Room users opened, or a “swipe card” system that automatically tallies which work stations or offices a One-Stop visitor approached. Tracking systems are used to generate weekly and monthly totals of the number of One-Stop visitors and to assess which services or tools are receiving the most customer use. Only two sites reported that they track the number of “hits” relevant websites receive from remote users.

Registration into the state Employment Service system offers another way to track customer usage, though this captures only a portion of the assisted core services available to One-Stop customers. Thus, several local One-Stop centers in which Wagner-Peyser is an on-site local partner have arranged to use ES registration as an alternate way to track customer flow into core services. For example, in the Southwest Georgia Local Workforce Investment Area, the greeter encourages as many customers as possible to register in the ES system; respondents estimated that about 75% of all One-Stop visitors are so registered. In Suffolk County’s (NY) One-Stop center, the Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title IB program staff have agreed to use ES registration for all One-Stop customers who receive staff-assisted services focused on job placement only. WIA registration is used for customers who are tracked into a fuller services plan.

Only five of the 14 local case-study sites included in Round 2 visits reported that they track customers who receive assisted core services using WIA registration. In the remaining sites, assisted core services are provided only using Wagner-Peyser funds (for which WIA registration is not required) and tracking is thus provided by registering such clients into the Wagner-Peyser system, rather than into WIA.

## **STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE ACCESS TO CORE SERVICES**

One-Stop partnerships appear to be aware of different actions they could be taking to make comprehensive One-Stop centers and affiliate sites accessible to a wide variety of customer groups and are responding to the needs of special customer groups when feasible. Below, we describe the efforts they are making: (1) to provide flexible hours

of operation, (2) to increase geographic access using affiliate sites, remote access, and roving service staff; (3) to provide assistive technology to support the use of One-Stop services by individuals with disabilities, and (4) to develop the capacity to serve non-English speaking customers.

### **Flexible Hours of Operation**

Although a number of comprehensive One-Stop centers said they had explored the feasibility of providing night and weekend hours of operation to ensure that working people and students could access center services, only five of the fourteen local sites we visited during Round 2 had regularly scheduled evening hours (with centers open at least one evening a week until 7:00 p.m. or 8:00 p.m.). Barriers to offering extended hours included opposition by one or more labor unions or state agencies responsible for affected staff, and a perceived low benefit in terms of increased customer usage compared to the high cost needed to implement extended hours. Saturday hours, in particular, had been attempted in one or two local areas, but had been abandoned due to low customer response.

The most responsive One-Stop centers in terms of flexible hours of operation include the comprehensive One-Stop centers in Suffolk County (NY) and Erie County (NY), both of which are open every weekday until 8:00 p.m. However even the centers that maintain regular business operating hours have sometimes made arrangements to offer services during extended hours to make them accessible to particular target groups. Examples include several centers that schedule evening classes targeted to TANF recipients and a center that sometimes opens on Saturdays to take UI claims from workers affected by large-scale layoffs.

### **Increasing Geographic Access**

As previously discussed, some local One-Stop partnerships have encouraged the development of a number of affiliate and satellite sites to make automated One-Stop services available throughout the local community. Additionally, many One-Stop networks encourage customers to access automated services from individual homes and businesses, via the Internet by providing user-friendly linked web pages with a variety of informational and job matching tools. However, other sites believe that face-to-face customer contact is important, at least initially, to orient customers to the services available within the One-Stop system.

Particularly notable are the following strategies designed to increase face-to-face access to One-Stop services:

- WIA Title IB staff from the comprehensive and satellite One-Stop centers in Lewiston and Round Up (MT) take one day each week to travel to remote locations in their six-county service area, where they serve customers by appointment and through walk-ins at a number of previously announced local community sites.
- Several One-Stop networks have created satellite locations at churches and local housing projects to reach out to residents who might not be able to come to services at comprehensive One-Stop centers.
- The local workforce investment board in Chicago has contracted with dozens of community-based organizations around the city to serve as affiliate agencies. Not only are these affiliates spread out geographically, but they also specialize in conducting outreach and serving a wide variety of cultural and language groups and special needs populations.

### **Serving Customers with Disabilities**

Every comprehensive One-Stop center visited during Round 2 has made sure that its physical facility is compliant with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, which describe accommodations that must be made to ensure that public facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities. The participation of the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency in the local One-Stop partnership has been beneficial in nearly every local site, leading to complete assessments and assistance in making needed adjustments to the physical facility.

Local Vocational Rehabilitation partners have also been instrumental in helping One-Stop centers select and purchase assistive technology to make Resource Room tools accessible to customers with visibility, hearing, and other sensory or motor impairments. Among the technology adaptations purchased by the local case-study sites are computer monitors with zoom text options, touch-screen computers, voice-activated computer software, and text telephones (TTY). One local One-Stop center reported that its Vocational Rehabilitation partner has contributed over \$25,000 worth of equipment to the Resource Room to make services available to hearing- and sight-impaired customers.

However, it will take more than physical and technology accommodations to enable comprehensive One-Stop centers to be effective in serving individuals with

disabilities. Staff at One-Stop centers seem to be at various points in terms of their readiness to address the needs of customers with disabilities. Two of the less-prepared centers indicated that they will continue to refer individuals with identified disabilities to the separate local Vocational Rehabilitation office for assessment and service planning. In contrast, two other centers are building an impressive on-site staff capacity to serve One-Stop customers with disabilities. For example, the Medford (OR) Education Resource Center has outfitted one of its classrooms as an assistive technology room that provides computer training and job search instruction for individuals with disabilities. This comprehensive One-Stop center has also provided a training session to staff from all partner agencies on serving customers with disabilities. In the DuPage County (IL) One-Stop center, one of the members of the operating consortium has received a grant that not only funded the purchase of assistive technology but covers the time of agency staff who assist individuals with disabilities in using the Resource Room.

### **Serving Non-English Speaking Customers**

Depending on the characteristics of One-Stop customers and the size of the non-English speaking population in the local workforce investment area, One-Stop centers have very different levels of demand for services to customers with limited English fluency. Strategies being used to respond to the needs of non-English speaking customers include the following:

- Two sites said that they maintain a list of local interpreters or are able to use the services of a local “translation phone line” to help staff communicate with non-English speaking customers.
- A One-Stop center located at a community college says it uses the services of bilingual college students to respond to the needs of non-English speaking adult education students.
- One site has translated its marketing brochure into Spanish. Another provides both English and Spanish language materials in the resource room.
- In the Portland, Oregon local area, One-Stop Operators are required to have bilingual staff appropriate to the needs of the local community. Because bilingual workers are in high demand and short supply in the local labor market, the local WIB is exploring the feasibility of training and hiring bilingual youth as interpreters in One-Stop centers.
- One local One-Stop partnership offers free space at the comprehensive One-Stop center to a nonprofit agency that serves Latino customers and has two

bilingual staff. In exchange, these staff assist in serving all One-Stop customers with limited English skills.

### **ONE-STOP INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE DELIVERY OF INTENSIVE AND TRAINING SERVICES**

As with the design and delivery of core services, most comprehensive One-Stop centers can be characterized as having the coordinated delivery of intensive services provided by independent programs, rather than as having an integrated menu of intensive services. It is not clear whether the current stage of “co-location plus coordination” is a final stage in the development of a One-Stop infrastructure or whether it is part of a transition toward closer service delivery relationships among program partners over time. As described at the end of this briefing section, program partners seem to be optimistic about the benefits of the current level of co-location and coordination within One-Stop systems.

#### **Coordinated Assessment and Entry into Intensive Services**

Among the 14 local case-study sites we visited in Round 2, only two local areas have developed a shared intake form that is used across multiple One-Stop partners to determine from which categorical programs a customer is likely to be eligible to receive services. In the Medford (OR) One-Stop center, if customers are interested in receiving intensive services, they fill out a one-page intake form and attend an orientation sessions which describes all partners’ services. The intake form uses 20 different questions to screen eligibility for different programs. Similarly, in the comprehensive One-Stop centers in the Portland (OR) local workforce investment area, the One-Stop Operator and other One-Stop partners share a reception, orientation, and initial intake process, although official program enrollment is completed by staff from each individual program.

At the remaining sites, where unified written intake forms have not been developed, One-Stop systems depend on the staff that interfaces with One-Stop visitors at reception desks and in resource rooms to conduct informal initial assessments and identify persons who could benefit from more intensive services. Staff in these positions have usually received formal training on the services available from, and eligibility rules for, each of the One-Stop partners’ programs. In addition, at most sites, orientation is a voluntary service that One-Stop visitors can sign up for, if they want more information about the intensive services available from different programs.

At several sites without coordinated intake processes, both Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title IB staff offer intensive services to individuals for whom self-service resources are not sufficient. In two of these sites where the state Employment Service is the One-Stop operator, One-Stop customers usually start out receiving services from Wagner-Peyser staff. Individuals requesting staff-assisted services (such as individualized help with job development/job placement) will be referred to an intensive services case manager within the Wagner-Peyser system. If a customer subsequently indicates interest in education or training, the Wagner-Peyser case manager will refer the individual to staff from the WIA program.

In the Suffolk County (NY) One-Stop center, staff from the Wagner-Peyser and WIA programs coordinate more closely with each other during the initial intake process to determine which individuals are likely to receive job placement services only, and which are likely to participate in training. One-Stop staff register individuals in the first group with Job Service for intensive services related to job search and job placement; they enroll individuals from the second group into WIA and offer them a menu of intensive services consisting of career-preparation workshops, focus groups, and training.

### **Coordinated Enrollment and Case Management**

Formal integration of caseloads and the creation of a consolidated case management system across multiple programs has taken place within some One-Stop centers, but generally it occurs only when the same agency is responsible for administering multiple programs. In these instances, consolidated case management systems generally pre-dated the implementation of WIA. For example, in the Suffolk County (NY) One-Stop center, the Suffolk County Department of Labor and the County Department of Social Services have succeeded in creating a truly seamless service system for the delivery of services under WIA Title I, TANF, and the federally-funded Welfare-to-Work program. Similarly, in rural Minnesota, the Concentrated Employment Program—which administers thirty-five different state and local programs including WIA Title IB—has completely consolidated the staffing for the programs it operates internally by creating integrated case management teams across all programs.

Where separate department and agency identities exist, agency boundaries have prevented the implementation of consolidated program services. However, a number of One-Stop partners have identified a variety of formal and informal opportunities to



coordinate their resources for customers who are likely to need services from more than one program, as described below.

- In several sites, the agencies responsible for Vocational Rehabilitation and TANF services are encouraging customers enrolled in their programs to use the Resource Rooms, job matching systems, and other core services available at the One-Stop center.
- In two different local areas (DuPage County, Illinois, and Northeast Georgia), the local TANF program is interested in developing a shared intake process that would immediately link individuals applying for public assistance to employment services provided by other One-Stop partners. In Northeast Georgia, this would be accomplished via the use of a teleconferencing connection between the two offices.
- Informal staff coordination and case conferencing are emerging as effective solutions in the Southwestern Georgia local area. In the comprehensive One-Stop center, individual staff often consult with each other about specific clients to develop coordinated services. In a satellite site, this process takes place during weekly staff meetings when case managers discuss how funds and services from partner programs can be coordinated to serve individual clients.
- In several local sites, resource sharing agreements have been developed between TANF, WIA, the Wagner-Peyser program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to coordinate services designed to meet the needs of shared clients.
  - In Northeast Georgia, the TANF agency pays the Vocational Rehabilitation agency to provide intensive assessment and sheltered work experience to certain long-term welfare recipients with psychological and other disabilities.
  - In Yuma (AZ), the WIB contracts with the TANF agency to provide a two-week long life-skills workshop at the One-Stop center as an intensive service for WIA enrollees.
  - In Suffolk County (NY), the county agency responsible for administering WIA Title IB and federal Welfare-to-Work funds and the agency responsible for the TANF program are jointly operating a One-Stop satellite center that is specifically targeted to the workforce development needs of TANF recipients and former TANF recipients.

### **Mutual Referral and Purchase of Service Agreements**

Even when programs are co-located and operating independently, the relationships between and among One-Stop partner programs under WIA are

characterized by increased information sharing about program services and features and gradually increasing staff familiarity with the resources available from other partner programs. Co-location also appears to dramatically increase the level of day-to-day communication and good-will between staff from different agencies. At a minimum, the increased awareness of and familiarity with each others' programs makes it possible for One-Stop partners to make improved mutual referrals of customers.

In a number of cases, increased familiarity with community resources has led to the development of close referral relationships between WIA Title IB program operators and a variety of entities providing adult basic education services and pre-vocational training. Sometimes these relationships are formalized using purchase-of-service agreements, whereby WIA enrollees are referred to on-site or off-site adult basic education or GED training paid for with WIA funds. Computer training classes offered by public and private vendors is another intensive service that is often provided to individual WIA enrollees as a pre-vocational service through a purchase-of-service agreement with a local community provider. In other instances, adult basic education and pre-vocational services are available to WIA enrollees through informal referral arrangements, at no cost to the WIA system.

As One-Stop partners become familiar with each others' programs, they can begin to identify service gaps and look for improved services that can better meet their clients' needs. Additionally, some of the One-Stop partners we met during on-site visits indicated that their services are now more consistent with the WIA program's emphasis on successful employment outcomes as a result of their increased contact with One-Stop staff. In one local site, for example, adult education and literacy providers said that they now viewed themselves as One-Stop partners, responsible for coordinating services with other partners, rather than just as vendors of their own service. In another site, community college staff said they are now paying more attention to providing case management and support services to their clients to ensure that participants have successful outcomes.

As they gain increased familiarity with the staff and services associated with other One-Stop programs by working together in the same facility or developing resource sharing arrangements, staff from multiple partner programs also report that they are getting along better with other programs, that there is less miscommunication and ill-will among and between agencies, and that co-location and improved coordination of

core and intensive services appear to be leading to improved outcomes for their individually enrolled clients.

### **INFRASTRUCTURE FOR THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS**

Although many of the case-study local areas identified linking their economic development and workforce development systems as a high priority goal, fewer sites had undertaken to transform the design and delivery of services to local employers as part of furthering that goal.<sup>7</sup>

Five of the 14 local workforce investment areas studied in Round 2 identify the Job Service as the sole provider of services to employers and have not yet redesigned the menu of employers services to meet new WIA objectives. The traditional employer services available in these five local areas include soliciting and completing job orders from local employers, recruiting and screening jobseekers prior to referral to employers, holding on-site job fairs for groups of local employers and job seekers, and providing on-site rooms for employers to use in interviewing, testing, or screening job applicants. Some of these sites still emphasize the delivery of staff-assisted services to employers; others are encouraging employers to take advantage of self-service options (such as posting job orders directly on the Internet).

Another five local workforce investment areas we visited during Round 2 have identified employer services as an area of One-Stop services that should be jointly undertaken by all One-Stop partners with WIB policy guidance, but have not yet taken specific steps to review and modify local employer service offerings. During this critical transition period, local One-Stop centers in these local areas are attempting to link workforce development and economic development strategies by offering customized training and/or on-the-job training services as well as incumbent worker training services to local businesses. However, in contrast to the four local areas described below that have more well-developed employer services, training services are being marketed piecemeal to individual businesses in these local areas, rather than as an organized sectoral strategy. Another weakness in marketing employer services in at least one of these local areas is that Job Service and WIA Title IB staff are marketing

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<sup>7</sup> See the evaluation's separate report, *Business as Partner and Customer under WIA: A Study of Innovative Practices*, for a fuller discussion of strategies for engaging business customers.

their services separately, rather than as part of a unified menu of One-Stop employer services.

The remaining four local workforce investment areas offer emerging models of how to transform employer services to address WIA goals and priorities.

- In Chicago, the WIB has determined that integrated employer service teams will work out of each One-Stop center to provide employers with a single unified point of contact. The WIB's Employer Demand Committee has identified five industry sectors that the workforce development system should get involved in to promote economic growth: healthcare, manufacturing, technology, transportation, and retail/hospitality. To help employers form partnerships with the local workforce development system, the WIB has prepared an employers' resource guide to the workforce development system.
- The One-Stop system in DuPage County (IL) markets its services to employers as an integrated One-Stop system. As a member of the One-Stop operator consortium, the community college offers employers access to training for incumbent workers through a separate Business Professional Institute.
- In the Portland (OR) local workforce investment area, services to employers are organized into two tiers: one carried out at the three-county regional level and one carried out by individual One-Stop centers. Regional initiatives are carried out by the WIB and WIA administrative entity by building partnerships with large employers and entire industry sectors. In addition to working directly with employers and employer associations, the WIB helps facilitate partnerships between employers and local education agencies. For example, the WIB is helping local community colleges partner with businesses that employ metalworkers to upgrade worker skills in the metals industry. At the center level, each One-Stop center has a business services consultant charged with responding to the needs of local businesses. Some local One-Stop centers are developing menus of new services to offer local employers, such as drug testing of job applicants on a fee-for-service basis.
- In the Medford (OR) local workforce investment area, the regional Business Response Team initially developed to respond to large-scale layoffs has taken on a new role of designing employer services to further regional goals. In addition to the traditional offerings of recruiting and screening job applicants, the Business Response Team has developed services to respond to employers needs for workplace readiness training, basic skills training for incumbent workers, child care referral assistance, and job retention skills training (including job coaching, training, and support services provided at the employer's worksite).

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In describing their goals for the development of comprehensive workforce development systems under WIA, state and local workforce investment boards acknowledged that there was much room for improvement over the previous patchwork system of separate programs. In fact, one of the underlying assumptions of the goals they described is that the separate identities and agendas of different funding streams and programs can be subordinated to a larger shared community agenda of meeting customer needs. As we have described, however, convincing individual program managers to subordinate their individual program identities to the development of a shared menu of services for customers needing core, intensive, and training services has been a challenging task in most local areas.

In building a One-Stop infrastructure for the coordinated delivery of core and intensive workforce development services consistent with this vision, local workforce investment areas have tended to exhibit the following patterns:

1. Local areas enunciated a wide variety of goals for the workforce systems they were creating, including better linking workforce development and economic development strategies, coordinating services for job seekers and employers, and improving system visibility.
2. Several states took the opportunity to “grandfather” One-Stop centers that had existed prior to WIA, and several additional states continue to play an active role in the approval of comprehensive centers. However, in general local workforce investment boards are now the key players in certifying new One-Stop centers and chartering One-Stop operators.
3. Six of the 14 local areas we studied had certified only a single comprehensive center; the remaining areas had from two to nine centers. Because the local areas vary so widely in geographic size and population density, it is difficult to draw conclusions about the adequacy of the existing infrastructure. However, some areas were very aggressive in establishing multiple access points, through satellites and affiliate sites, including ones for specially targeted populations (e.g., persons in public housing, those of certain ethnic groups, etc.).
4. Local workforce investment boards have designated a wide variety of local organizations to act as operators for comprehensive One-Stop centers. The most common organizational arrangement is for a consortium of One-Stop partners to act as the One-Stop operator; the selection of the operator through a competitive process was uncommon. Key roles for the One-Stop operator include managing the physical facility and providing core services. Where additional on-site partners participate in the delivery of core services, the One-Stop operator often coordinates the delivery of core services or facilitates an inter-agency management group.

5. The facilities initially selected to house comprehensive One-Stop centers were often previously used as a freestanding service site by one of the participating partners. Because of this history, a single agency often continues to hold the lease and “host” the One-Stop facility, with or without financial contributions from other participating partners. Facilities for the earliest One-Stop centers under WIA have not always been conducive to shared delivery of services by One-Stop partners. In several instances, new One-Stop facilities developed cooperatively after the first or second year of WIA implementation are more supportive of coordinated services, with larger reception and resource areas, and more open space for staff from multiple partners to share service delivery operations.
6. Automated self-service tools have been instrumental in making core services available to businesses and individuals throughout a broad geographic area. Most local workforce investment areas have developed relationships with a wide variety of institutional affiliates—including public housing agencies, libraries, welfare offices, Job Service offices, and non-profit community organizations—to offer a wide range of self-service and staff-assisted services to One-Stop customers. Less commonly, some sites have made other special efforts to promote access to core services, such as by offering extended hours of operation for their One-Stop centers (e.g., weekend or evening hours) and providing interpreters for non-English speakers.
7. In the majority of the comprehensive One-Stop centers we visited, integrated front-end services end shortly after the customer receives the initial greeting from the shared receptionist, leaving staff from individual partner programs to address customers’ core and intensive service needs. Thus, the delivery of core services to One-Stop customers is most often the result of coordinated efforts among different partners operating as independent programs, rather than the result of an integrated service design and delivery system. In the majority of local sites we visited, the WIA Title IB administrative agency or its contractor has primary responsibility for the delivery of core services to the general public.

It has been difficult to realize WIA goals for the creation of comprehensive and coordinated One-Stop delivery systems in the absence of unified federal and state systems for planning and overseeing different workforce development resource streams. Local respondents often noted that as long as individual programs continue to have their own reporting requirements and individual program performance goals, they will continue to view their individual program objectives as more important than any shared One-Stop goals. Unified State Plans, while promoting the appearance of coordinated funding streams, have not provided an effective framework for weaving together individual resource streams at the local level. Local workforce investment boards can encourage the development of coordinated systems, but usually lack the authority to control the expenditure of funds other than WIA Title IB funds.

Despite the challenges noted above, local workforce investment areas are developing a shared One-Stop infrastructure through steady changes to their previous ways of doing business, rather than by starting over with a clean slate to integrate program operations. As a result of these changes, a broad range of One-Stop partners now have staff working on-site at comprehensive and satellite One-Stop centers at least part-time. This has led to increased face-to-face communication among program partners, increased familiarity with partners' programs, and a greater sense of goodwill among partners whose previous relationships were sometimes tenuous or even unfriendly.

As a result of the co-location and coordination of a variety of workforce development agencies within One-Stop centers, the menu of core services available to the general customer has increased substantially in many sites, and the number of individuals using walk-in or remote-access services to obtain user-friendly information about labor markets, careers, education/training opportunities, and local employers has increased dramatically in some sites. Although not all local areas have transformed their menu of services to address the needs of the universal customer, a number of One-Stop partners have coordinated their individual program resources to offer a wider range of assisted core services to all One-Stop visitors, including brief individual job search counseling sessions and short-term workshops on a variety of job search and career information topics.

Most disappointing, to date, is the limited progress that has been made to develop a seamless system of services for employers that will help further some of the One-Stop systems' most challenging goals: (1) attracting a broad range of employers into the public labor exchange, including employers listing high skill, high wage, and professional jobs; (2) making One-Stop centers attractive to the job seekers and incumbent workers looking for the skills that will enable them to enter high-wage jobs and move up career ladders; and (3) weaving employers and educational institutions into effective partnerships that can support and stimulate regional economic.

### Exhibit 1: One-Stop Operators and Partners' Roles

Case Study Site/ # of One-Stop Centers	One-Stop Operator(s)	Role of WIA Staff/Funds in Delivering Core Services	Role of Wagner-Peyser Staff & Funds in Delivering Core Services	Role of Other On-Site Partners
Balance of Mariposa County, AZ (1 county, excluding city of Phoenix)  2 comprehensive centers at time of site visit, and several satellites	County Human Services Department (WIA administrative entity)	At most sites, core and intensive services are staffed almost exclusively by County Human Services (WIA) staff. This includes some labor exchange staff functions (WIA staff have been trained to use ES MIS).	One Job Service staff on-site full-time at One-Stop center. Most ES services are provided at separate ES offices. Within One-Stop, the emphasis is on self-service for labor exchange. ES office is one block away: referral to ES office for staffed labor exchange services.	Participation in delivery of core services by Older Workers participant, and one Job Services staff on-site full-time.
Yuma, AZ (1 county)  1 full-service career center	Yuma PIC (WIB) received waiver from state to operate the One-Stop center and offer core, intensive and training services.	Other than ES staff, WIB/WIA staff provide all core services on site.	ES has one staff representative on-site at One-Stop who assists with core and some intensive services. ES also maintains separate offices.	Nearly all staff at center are YPIC staff.
Northeast Georgia (12 counties)  1 center in Athens, Georgia; use RVs as mobile access points	Georgia Department of Labor (ES/UI/TAA)	WIA funds focused on training.	Core services provided entirely by Wagner-Peyser staff	Limited collocation by partners.
Southwest Georgia (14 counties)  1 center chartered in 2000; 5 additional ES offices chartered as One-Stop centers in October 2001. WIB hopes to eventually have one center in each county.	Georgia Department of Labor (ES/UI/TAA)	For now, WIA funds are focused on training. If additional centers are established, core services will be provided using WIA funds.	Core and intensive services provided entirely by Wagner Peyser staff. ES maintains several separate offices.	All centers have some collocation from partners.



<b>Case Study Site/ # of One-Stop Centers</b>	<b>One-Stop Operator(s)</b>	<b>Role of WIA Staff/Funds in Delivering Core Services</b>	<b>Role of Wagner-Peyser Staff &amp; Funds in Delivering Core Services</b>	<b>Role of Other On-Site Partners</b>
Chicago, IL (1 city) 5 comprehensive centers, with 33 satellites	Consortia of partners, led by “Operations Team” including representatives of all partners. However, centers are run by separate contractors	Core services are provided by center contractors, including resource room, greeter position.	ES is collocated but largely operates independently. ES isn’t supportive of cross-training ES and WIA staff.	Some collocation at all sites.
DuPage County, IL (1 county) 1 comprehensive One- Stop center; no satellites, but has affiliate sites	Consortium includes 4 agencies: ES, WIA, community college, and non-profit agency	WIA Employment Services Unit provides core services, but partners participate as well.	ES, as a member of the operating consortium, helps staff core services, including reception, resource room, workshops, job club, marketing and outreach. ES has now expanded its services and works together with other partners to improve job clubs, workshops, and improve service referrals	Fairly strong partnerships in evidence
Rural Minnesota CEP (19 counties) 9 comprehensive One- Stop centers, and no satellites	Statewide operator consortium includes WIA, ES, VR, State Services for the Blind.	All WIA core and intensive services are provided by WIA administrative entity, with part-time assistance of an ES staff member	ES provides 1 staff to help staff resource room. ES has pushed self-service model since development of automated job bank system. ES orientation presents all partners’ services and includes exposure to resource room. ES also provides a 4- hour job search seminar for UI profilees, which is also offered to universal customer	Partners are on-site
Balance of State, MT (46 counties) 1 One-Stop center designated, but not yet certified by local WIB; serves 6 county sub-area	3 program consortium includes Job Service, WIA Title I, Vocational Rehabilitation/WtW	Each co-located partner has its own resource room, but most customers are served by Job Service; WIA is identified as an agency serving low-income people. WIA offers a job club once a week (no coordination with Job Service).	Job Service has the most well-developed resource room, gets about 25 customers a day.	3 co-located partners— Wagner Peyser, WIA, and Vocational Rehabilitation—provide separate services in separate offices within a shared building.

Case Study Site/ # of One-Stop Centers	One-Stop Operator(s)	Role of WIA Staff/Funds in Delivering Core Services	Role of Wagner-Peyser Staff & Funds in Delivering Core Services	Role of Other On-Site Partners
Suffolk County, NY (1 county)  1 comprehensive One-Stop center and several satellites	Consortium includes Suffolk County Department of Labor (WIA and WtW) and County Department of Social Services (TANF)	WIA staff are the primary providers of core services in the comprehensive One-Stop, but other co-located partners help out: all on-site staff are willing to assist each other. Intensive services provided primarily by WIA staff and contractors.	Although ES is not a member of the operator consortium, it is perceived as strong and cooperative on-site partner; staff help out in resource room and delivery of staff-assisted job placement services (4-5 ES staff are on-site at comprehensive One-Stop center.)	Extensive collocation; very strong partnerships
Erie County, NY (1 county, including city of Buffalo)  2 comprehensive One-Stop centers (one in county, one in city); 2 satellites and some affiliate sites	WIA administrative entity—Buffalo/Erie County Workforce Development Consortium (WDC). One center is directed by city staff; one is directed by community college staff.	One-Stop operator (WIA administrative entity) is responsible for coordination of partners and services. In first comprehensive center, WIA staff provide most core and intensive services. In second comprehensive center, staff from community college (reimbursed with WIA funds) provide most core and intensive services.	ES has a staff member collocated at the Buffalo One-Stop center. ES runs four other ES centers within the county that are affiliated sites (primarily interact through referrals).  ES is not a member of operator consortium.	Strong partnerships that have greatly strengthened under WIA.
Portland Area, OR (3 counties)  7 full-service One-Stop centers, and 2 affiliate sites	Competitive RFP used to select One-Stop operators; these include community colleges (4 centers) and nonprofit organization (3 centers).	Generally, One-Stop operator provides all core services, though partners provide some services as well.	Collocation of ES staff varies widely across centers, from several on-site staff to off-site referrals only. ES staff assist with providing self-assisted core services.	Varies by center, but partners usu. share reception, orientation, and basic intake. In some centers, partners help provide resource room services
Medford Area, OR (2 counties)  1 comprehensive center and 1 more in development; numerous affiliate sites	One-Stop operating consortium includes ES, community college, TANF, Goodwill Industries, Southern Oregon University, WIA, and Vocational Rehabilitation.	At comprehensive One-Stop, WIA staff cover the resource room and provide staff-assisted core and intensive services.  WIA pays for full-time greeter, and other staff cover at lunch.	ES has 11 staff collocated at One-Stop centers and affiliates around region. Where ES staff are on-site, labor exchange functions include directing customers to ES job database and employment services, providing information and enrolling customer into UI and ES. Where ES is not on-site, other partners direct customers to automated web sites.	Very strong partnerships. On-site partners (welfare, community college, or ES) may make some staff-assisted services available to WIA core and intensive customers. All staff wear One-Stop name badges.

<b>Case Study Site/ # of One-Stop Centers</b>	<b>One-Stop Operator(s)</b>	<b>Role of WIA Staff/Funds in Delivering Core Services</b>	<b>Role of Wagner-Peyser Staff &amp; Funds in Delivering Core Services</b>	<b>Role of Other On-Site Partners</b>
<p>Southwestern Virginia (8 jurisdictions) 2 comprehensive centers and 3 satellites</p>	<p>Consortium consisting of state ES agency; community action agencies, housing and redevelopment authority, Title I adult agency, WtW agency</p>	<p>WIA focused on training.</p>	<p>ES staffs reception desk, assists customers with labor exchange and resource room.  Core services are relatively undeveloped.</p>	<p>History of strong informal relations among partners</p>
<p>Hampton Roads, VA (8 jurisdictions) 2 comprehensive One Stops, and 3 satellites</p>	<p>Consortium with WIA, Head Start/Community service, older Americans, community college</p>	<p>Core services include monthly workshops on Internet usage, interview strategies, entrepreneurship, email and stress management.  WIA provides all workshops and assessments (intensive services)</p>	<p>ES is not a member of operator consortium. ES services are almost completely self-service.  1 ES staff is on-site at main One-Stop center full time; takes a turn staffing resource room along with other on-site partners.</p>	<p>WIA staff predominates, but on-site partners take turns supplying a staff member to look after the resource room. Otherwise, on-site partners provide own programs' services.</p>

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## **XII. SERVING THE HOMELESS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY**

In the summer of 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) a contract for the national *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act* (WIA). As described in the appendix to this paper, the evaluation consists of multiple data collection components, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which can be divided into three distinct phases. As part of the first two phases, field staff conducted site visits to 14 states and 23 local areas to understand broad issues of WIA implementation and operations, such as the transition from JTPA to WIA, partnership building, governance, and service design and delivery. Also as part of these earlier phases, SPR tracked indicators of states' and local areas' progress towards implementing required WIA elements nationwide, as well as analyzed client-level data on program participants to understand the extent to which client characteristics and services changed as local areas transitioned from JTPA to WIA. As shown in the appendix, a total of 19 reports and papers were produced from these first two phases of the study.

The year 2003 marked the beginning of the third and final phase of the evaluation, yielding four additional papers. Rather than revisiting broad-level implementation issues, this phase focused on two narrowly defined topics: (1) the engagement of businesses as part of One-Stop strategic planning and as customers, and (2) One-Stop services to special populations. Each of these topics branched into a distinct but related sub-study under Phase III.

The special populations sub-study, of which this paper is a part, is specifically concerned with how three particular groups—limited-English-proficient individuals (LEPs), the homeless, and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs)—can be effectively served within the One-Stop context. With this question in mind, field staff conducted site visits in December 2003 and January 2004 to 18 additional local workforce investment areas. Three of these areas were included in our sample specifically because of their homeless-serving strategies. These are: Pima County, Arizona; Portland Worksystems, Oregon; and Coastal Counties, Maine. In addition to these three sites, this paper is informed to a much smaller degree by a site visit to the

Capital Area Michigan Works local area—a site we studied as part of the business engagement sub-study.<sup>1</sup>

The three primary sites listed above were selected as part of a difficult process to identify local areas that had extensive experience and innovative strategies in working with the homeless in the One-Stop context. As part of this process, we requested nominations from DOL and special interest organizations and used web research to identify a small pool of potential sites. Next, we conducted preliminary telephone interviews with each site to narrow this pool to the three local areas whose practices in serving the homeless we profile in this paper. Given the difficulty we experienced in finding potential local areas that met our selection criteria, and the small number we eventually visited, the sites we studied should be viewed as *case studies* of different models of serving the homeless in the One-Stop context.

## INTRODUCTION

Measuring the prevalence of homelessness presents a serious challenge, particularly because homelessness is often a temporary condition rather than a permanent status. In addition, attempts to measure homelessness are made more difficult by varying definitions of homelessness and imperfect methodologies that often result in undercounts, particularly of those who are intermittently rather than chronically homeless, and of those who are homeless but in less visible locations. That said, a study by the Urban Institute in 2000 estimated that approximately 3.5 million individuals are likely to experience homelessness in a given year.

The causes of homelessness are often just as difficult to pinpoint as its frequency, with both macro- and micro-level factors being cited by various organizations and individuals. For instance, trends in wages, public assistance and rental housing have all been pointed to as contributors to the nation's increase in homelessness over the past quarter-century. With respect to wages, some point to factors such as a decrease in the number of manufacturing jobs, an increase in non-standard work such as temporary and part-time employment, and an erosion in the value of the minimum wage.<sup>2</sup> Low-wage

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<sup>1</sup> Though the special populations and business engagement sub-studies each had their own respective set of site visits, site visitors on each team asked limited questions about the other sub-study while on site.

<sup>2</sup> Mishel, L., Bernstein, J., and Schmitt, J. *The State of Working America: 1998-1999*. 1999, Economic Policy Institute, Washington, DC.

workers have been particularly affected by these wage trends; the real value of the minimum wage in 1997 was 18.1% less than its value in 1979.<sup>3</sup> Stagnant or declining wage trends and less secure jobs have put housing out of reach for many workers, particularly low-wage workers, which has, in turn, led to an increase in the number of impoverished workers at homeless shelters.<sup>4</sup>

Some also cite the decreasing value and availability of public assistance as a contributor to the rise in homelessness. Between 1970 and 1994, the typical state's AFDC benefits for a family of three fell 47 percent, even with an adjustment for inflation.<sup>5</sup> In 2000, only about half of eligible families participated in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), compared with nearly eight in 10 families in 1996.<sup>6</sup>

There have been trends in the private housing market that some feel are significant to explaining the rise in homelessness. The gap between the number of low-income renters and the number of affordable housing units has exploded from near non-existent, to a shortfall of 4.4 million affordable units—the largest shortage ever recorded.<sup>7</sup> In addition, only about one-fourth of eligible families receive federal housing subsidies, highlighting the tremendous gap between demand and supply.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the destruction of Single Room Occupancy (SRO) housing, the effective end of involuntary commitment for the mentally ill, the deinstitutionalization of the mentally ill without sufficient housing, the crack epidemic, and the declining frequency

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> In every state, more than the minimum wage is required to afford a one- or two-bedroom apartment at Fair Market Rent. National Coalition for the Homeless. "Why are People Homeless?" September 2003. Available online at <http://www.nationalhomeless.org/causes.html>

<sup>5</sup> Greenberg, Mark and Jim Baumohl "Income Maintenance: Little Help Now, Less on the Way," in *Homelessness in America*, 1996, Oryx Press. Available from the National Coalition for the Homeless, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. "Falling TANF Caseload Amidst Rising Poverty Should Be a Cause for Concern." 2003. Available online at <http://www.cbpp.org/9-4-03tanf.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> Institute for Children and Poverty. A Shelter is Not a Home: Or is it? April 2001. Available online at [www.homesforthehomeless.com/](http://www.homesforthehomeless.com/) or from the Institute for Children and Poverty, New York, NY 10003.

<sup>8</sup> National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2004. [www.nlihc.org](http://www.nlihc.org)

of marriage among women with children have also all been assigned a role in the growth of homelessness.<sup>9</sup>

Just as there are myriad potential macro-level factors contributing to homelessness, there are also myriad potential individual-level factors preventing an end to homelessness, not the least of which is insufficient education, skills or work experience to secure a living-wage job.

A number of key lessons have emerged from programs specifically designed to assist homeless individuals find and maintain employment, including those from the Job Training for the Homeless Demonstration Program (JTHDP). Authorized by the Stewart B. McKinney Act and administered by DOL, JTHDP tested a range of employment, training and supportive service strategies specifically designed and implemented to assist the homeless in finding and retaining employment. For just over seven years, JTHDP grantees—which included CBOs as well as JTPA Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) across the nation—provided services to over 45,000 homeless individuals.

The experiences of the JTHDP grantees confirmed the key challenges faced by the homeless in finding employment—such as lack of education and competitive work skills, disabling conditions, and lack of supportive services—and highlighted key elements of successful employment programs—including access to case management; assessment and employability planning; job training services that include remedial education, vocational training and job search assistance; job development and placement; housing services; and supportive and follow-up services. Also underscored by grantees' experience was the critical need to establish strong partnerships between employment and training agencies and local homeless-serving organizations, stabilize homeless individuals in terms of housing and other emergency services prior to engaging them in employment and training services, and provide continuous assessment and case management services in order to then provide a set of services targeted to each homeless individual's unique combination of needs. Overall, given the range and *intensity* of services that the homeless need to move into gainful employment, JTHDP grantees found it necessary to engage in careful planning of the local service delivery system, and to establish strong client-coordination procedures among agencies.

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<sup>9</sup> Jencks, Christopher. *The Homeless*. 1994, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.



Although JTHDP funding was cut in FY1995, DOL has worked to help ensure that the critical lessons and practices gleaned from the JTHDP are used to build the capacity of national employment programs to serve the homeless. In addition, given the Bush Administration's New Freedom Initiative and its pledge to end chronic homelessness within ten years, and renewed focus on the Interagency Council on the Homeless (Council), increasing attention and resources have been given to help integrate homeless individuals into the workforce. A series of interagency funding collaborations—such as last summer's DOL-HUD Notice of Funding Opportunity on Ending Chronic Homelessness—signals an alignment with the type of partnerships and coordinated employment and housing services found critical under the JTHDP. DOL's role in particular with regard to national partnerships on homeless issues is to be augmented in the coming year with a more pronounced role on the Council.

Given the backdrop painted above, this paper on serving the homeless in the One-Stop context comes at an opportune time. Its overarching research question is, to what extent can the One-Stop system effectively serve the homeless population and through what specific and unique means and strategies. In addressing this question, we revisit many of the key issues and findings of the JTHDP evaluation, but in a post-JTPA environment. The remainder of this paper is divided into five key areas: (1) profiles of the three sites we visited; (2) key challenges and strategies with regard to outreach and enrollment of the homeless population in WIA; (3) key characteristics and modifications of the service delivery system needed for the homeless population to secure and retain employment; (4) analysis of the nature of local partnerships to serve the homeless; and (5) a distillation of key themes and practices to emerge from the study, as well as their implications for other local areas and for the future.

## **LOCAL PROFILES**

Here we provide an overview of the three homeless sites we visited in order to place this paper's findings in local context—e.g., in terms of varying demographics and homeless characteristics, key homeless-serving partners, and the extent of local planning with regard to the homeless population.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> As stated earlier, this paper is informed to a much smaller degree by a site visit to the Capital Area Michigan Works LWIA—a site we visited for the business engagement sub-study. This LWIA is comprised of urban, suburban and semi-rural counties, a largely White population, and an economy dominated by public sector employment. Because of its extremely minor role as a data source, we chose not to profile the site in addition to the three homeless sites.

## **Pima County LWIA**

Located in the southern half of Arizona, Pima County has a population of approximately 890,000—over half of which resides in the city of Tucson, where we focused our site visit. The second largest city in the state, Tucson has a population that is predominantly White (75%), though there is also a significant Latino population. The city has experienced an approximately 25% increase in its population over the last 14 years.

Tucson has witnessed a weakening of its manufacturing base, particularly with the departure of a number of key companies such as National Semiconductor and Bob Deere, which provided a ready supply of entry-level jobs. While agriculture was a traditional linchpin of the Tucson economy in the past, major industry clusters today include tourism, telecommunications, and bio-industry. The unemployment rate in Tucson hovers around five percent.

The Pima County LWIA has two full-service One-Stop centers located in the northern and southern halves of Tucson. We based our site visit at the Kino Service Center, in southern Tucson. The LWIA also has four satellite or specialized centers, including the Jackson Employment Center, which specializes in providing employment-related services to homeless individuals. In addition to receiving WIA funds, the Center has just won Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Project (HVRP) funds and is also a Continuum of Care (CoC) grantee. The Jackson Center has five Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Supportive Housing Programs (SHPs), which are considered traditional housing programs and thus require employment as a condition of residence. The Jackson Center has 14 permanent, full-time employees, most of whom are concerned with employment skills training or training coordination. There is one intake/eligibility staff person, three full-time case managers and one full-time MIS staff person. The Center serves approximately 450-500 individuals per year—40% of whom are youth,<sup>11</sup> 30% of whom are veterans, 20-30% of whom have been previously incarcerated and 60% of whom are females. An estimated 10% of the Center's clientele suffers from mental illness.

As with homeless counts in general, Tucson's estimates of its own homeless population vary significantly. A recent HUD grant application from Tucson/Pima

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<sup>11</sup> Youth at the Jackson Center are co-enrolled in YO.

County used a point-in-time count in February 2003 to provide a figure of 4,336 homeless—63% of whom were unsheltered and 13% of whom were chronically homeless—while a local respondent estimated that 2,500 individuals are homeless in Tucson at any given time. The former estimate may be significantly higher given that the point-in-time count took place in the winter, when local respondents indicated there is an increase of homeless in shelters due to a temporary increase in shelter space, and because more homeless are likely to migrate to Tucson in the winter months.

The largest transition in the local homeless population has been the shift from single men over 30 years of age, to women, families and youth. Families now account for approximately half of the local homeless population, which has had implications for how shelters provide services—e.g., stocking diapers as well as razors for men. Currently there is insufficient shelter space designed to accommodate family units. Veterans still comprise a significant proportion of the local homeless population. This may be due in part to the proximity of Davis Air Force Base in Tucson, as well as Fort Huachuca to the east. Veterans also tend to be drawn to the Tucson area by the climate, a large and growing Veterans Administration (VA) hospital, as well as by an extensive veterans community and service base. A good proportion of the homeless—veterans in particular—tend to congregate not on city streets, but rather in rural desert patches and washes where they can establish camps.

The Tucson Planning Council on the Homeless (TPCH, or the Council) is a voluntary collaboration of individuals and organizations committed to reducing homelessness, and is the lead local entity for developing and implementing the CoC plan. There are over 30 members of TPCH, including the local One-Stop system, city and county officials, the VA hospital, housing providers, police officers and members of the faith community. TPCH meets at least monthly and uses strategic planning as the basis for all its activities. Sub-committees on topics ranging from winter shelter to homeless youth are charged with implementing and reporting on goals and strategies throughout the year.

The local One-Stop system—the Jackson Center in particular—is a strong member of TPCH. A lead staff member from the Jackson Center currently serves as Chair of TPCH. The Jackson Center is the acknowledged local expert on the employment and training component of the homeless service delivery system; thus all other One-Stop centers and a wide range of homeless-serving organizations, such as shelters and mental health facilities, consistently refer their clients to the Jackson Center for employment

and training services. Overall, Tucson has a significant number of agencies and CBOs that provide various services to the homeless, and a strong philosophy of coordination rather than duplication. Consequently, individual agencies and organizations appear to have a clear sense of their specific role and/or specialization within the homeless service delivery system.

### **Portland Worksystems, Oregon**

Worksystems Inc. serves Multnomah, Washington, and Tillamook counties, which account for one-third of Oregon's total population. In addition, the region has experienced an increase in population of approximately 250,000 over the last decade. The city of Portland, located in Multnomah County, is where we concentrated our site visit. Portland has a population of approximately 540,000, which accounts for approximately 80% of the county's population. Over 75% of Portland's population is White.

The primary industries of Multnomah County are manufacturing, transportation, wholesale and retail trade, and tourism. However, over the past three years, the Portland area has lost over 55,000 jobs. One of the hardest hit industries has been manufacturing. Relatively strong industry clusters currently in the Portland area include information technology and bioscience. The unemployment rate in Portland is around seven percent; like Oregon, Portland has a higher unemployment rate than the nation as a whole.

As in Tucson, local respondents described the difficulty of coming up with a local homeless count. According to a point-in-time count in 2002, Portland had a homeless population of 2,526. However, local respondents' estimates ranged from 2,000-10,000. Key homeless subgroups in Portland include those who have a criminal background, are mentally ill, and are addicted to drugs. Local respondents indicated that they had witnessed an increase over the past ten years in homeless women and homeless individuals who are addicted specifically to heroin.

At the state level, the workforce development system is merged with the community college system—aptly named the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development. The Multnomah/Washington/Tillamook LWIA reflects this merger in that three of the area's six One-Stop centers are operated by community colleges. We based our site visit at the West Portland One-Stop center (WPOS)—a One-Stop specializing in serving the homeless and operated by Central City Concern (CCC),

a homeless services organization operating in Portland since 1980. The WIA administrative entity, fiscal agent and staff to the local workforce investment board (WIB) is Worksystems, Inc. (WSI).

The City of Portland’s Bureau of Housing and Community Development (BHCD) is the administrator of federal and local homeless funds, including McKinney funds. BHCD is also the lead agency on local planning efforts to end homelessness in ten years and houses a number of specific homeless working groups, such as those on discharge planning and chronic homelessness. While BHCD plays a primary role with regard to local planning efforts on homelessness, there is also a local homeless providers’ association comprised of eight members that meet monthly.

The role of WPOS in the local homeless service delivery system is a relatively large one, partly due to the identity of the One-Stop operator, CCC. That is, because CCC is an organization dedicated specifically to providing programs and services to the homeless, WPOS is a well-connected hub in the local service delivery system. CCC operated a number of housing programs with employment components before applying to serve as the operator of WPOS. A range of partners maintain a presence at WPOS—not only required, “traditional” One-Stop partners, but also partners such as shelters and other homeless-related CBOs—a blend of partners viewed as critical for bridging the gap between the homeless population and “mainstream” resources.

### **Coastal Counties LWIA<sup>12</sup>**

The Coastal Counties LWIA is comprised of six counties in Maine, including Cumberland County, where the city of Portland is located and where we based our site visit. The greater Portland area has a metro population of approximately 230,000, which comprises nearly 25% of the state’s total population. Portland is the largest city in the state with a population of approximately 65,000. Over 90% of the city’s population is White and predominantly middle class; however, Portland is also known as a significant refugee resettlement area, primarily for Somali and Sudanese populations. In addition, the local retiree population is growing, as well as the local Latino population—the latter in part due to migrant farmworkers who come to the area to harvest blueberries.

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<sup>12</sup> Though the Coastal Counties LWIA was one of our three homeless sites, in reality, it informed the LEP sub-study to a much greater degree.

Portland is a port city and the local economy relies heavily on tourism. As with many other states and local areas, manufacturing is on the decline, leading the local economy to become more service- and retail-oriented. Small businesses dominate the local economy, though two supermarkets represent the largest employers in the state. While the unemployment rate in Maine is between five and six percent, the unemployment rate for Cumberland County is lower at around three and a half percent.

The size of the local homeless population in Portland fluctuates according to season; the population decreases in winter when some homeless migrate to warmer climates and peaks in the summer. According to the City of Portland's Health and Human Services Department, there were approximately 318 homeless individuals in Portland in 2003—the majority of whom are comprised of adult White males, and approximately 12 percent of whom identify themselves as veterans. A 2001 CoC planning document estimated that there was a need for 839 emergency shelter, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing slots (with an existing inventory of 706). Local respondents indicated that the local Oxford Street Shelter serves between 180-250 individuals every night. Local *One-Stop* respondents provided only an estimate of the number of homeless they *serve*—about 75 per year, approximately 80 percent of whom are veterans. Veterans—typically from Vietnam—are a key subgroup of the overall homeless population in Portland. Local respondents have also observed a significant increase in the number of female homeless, which in 2003 were estimated to comprise approximately one-quarter of the homeless population.

Statewide, there are 23 One-Stop centers across four LWIAs. We based our site visit at the Portland Career Center, one of seven One-Stops in the Coastal Counties LWIA and the only One-Stop in the city of Portland. Key stakeholders involved in the local homeless service delivery system include the Dislocated Veteran Outreach Program at the Career Center, the Maine Veterans' Workforce Investment Program and the City of Portland Health and Human Services, which runs the largest emergency shelter in the state, Oxford Street Shelter.<sup>13</sup>

In general, the Portland Career Center works closely with other agencies in order to secure referrals and to refer homeless clients to emergency services prior to receiving employment and training services. This is facilitated by the fact that the

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<sup>13</sup> The Oxford Street Shelter served 1,646 unduplicated individuals in FY 2003—41% of whom had never used the shelter's services before.

Career Center is located on the same street as the Oxford Street Shelter and other key agencies. A number of these key homeless-serving partners participate on several planning committees, including the Emergency Shelter Assessment Committee, the CoC Committee, and the Homeless Veterans Workgroup.

## **OUTREACH & ENROLLMENT**

The One-Stop centers we visited relied heavily on their specialized nature, physical location, outreach workers and partner referrals to build and maintain awareness of their services among the homeless and to enroll homeless clients.

The Jackson Center and WPOS both identify themselves as *specialized* One-Stop centers. That is, the Jackson Center is a One-Stop specifically for those who are homeless, unemployed and job-willing, while WPOS—operated by a large umbrella homeless services organization—is technically open to any customer, but is widely known to specialize in homeless and/or previous offender clientele. As a result of their specialized natures, these two One-Stops enjoy a level of contact with and awareness among the homeless population that would not ordinarily be the case with more traditional One-Stop centers. The specialized nature of the One-Stops also facilitates homeless individuals in feeling comfortable visiting the Jackson Center or WPOS, as opposed to more traditional One-Stop centers where their status as a special population would be more pronounced.

All three centers are strategically located with regard to other homeless resources in their respective cities. For instance, the Jackson Center in Tucson is located near the Casa Maria Soup Kitchen. WPOS stands on a busy street corner, across the way from a major shelter and very close to a number of other critical homeless resources, such as a detoxification center and CCC transitional housing buildings. The Portland Career Center is located on the same block as both the city’s major emergency shelter and the General Assistance (GA) office.

Though all centers are located in high visibility sites, walk-ins or self-referrals were not cited as a significant source of homeless customers. For instance, lead staff at the Jackson Center stated that walk-ins account for only 10-15% of their clientele. Rather the centers depend greatly on outreach workers and partner referrals to recruit homeless customers. Outreach workers may be based at any number of agencies or organizations. For instance, WPOS relies on a single, full-time outreach worker funded by the city. This designated “bunk kicker” regularly visits all city shelters in order to

develop relationships with homeless individuals and encourage them to learn about and visit the One-Stop. This requires the outreach worker to act as friend, advocate and even potential enemy in order to successfully educate the homeless about One-Stop services and get them to even start thinking about employment as a possibility. This form of outreach was deemed highly successful for WPOS for the past five years; the level of trust and familiarity was apparent during the site visit, as we observed the outreach worker being personally greeted and engaged in conversation by homeless individuals on the street and at the shelters.

Similarly, the Portland Career Center relies on the Outreach Coordinator—a formerly homeless veteran—to regularly visit local shelters and encourage the use of One-Stop services. The Jackson Center in Tucson also relies on the direct outreach efforts of staff members at various other partner agencies and organizations, such as the VA hospital. Many of these agencies and organizations have found it useful to utilize outreach workers who are viewed as peers by the homeless—e.g., veterans, youth, etc. The Jackson Center relies on the expertise of these staff to conduct outreach at shelters and other locations, and then, in turn, to refer the homeless individuals they reach to the Jackson Center.

All the centers we visited rely significantly on the referrals of other agencies and organizations—including “traditional” One-Stop centers—for homeless clients. Shelters are often the primary referral agency. WPOS also counts the local prison as a primary referral agency. According to one local respondent, the prison communicates two directives to just-released prisoners: “go see your parole officer, and go to the West Portland One-Stop.” While it seems natural that One-Stop centers would rely on other homeless-serving agencies to provide clients, the Jackson Center strongly endorses the referral system for other reasons as well. Though the Jackson Center will not turn away any potential client (e.g., a walk-in), its official policy is that all clients must be referred from another community-based agency. Such a policy means that by the time homeless individuals walk into the Jackson Center, they have already presumably received (emergency) services from another agency and are better equipped to engage in employment and training services.

A strong referral system highlights the need for awareness among homeless service providers as well as the homeless themselves. The Jackson Center and the WPOS both enjoy a strong connection to and reputation among local homeless-serving agencies and CBOs, which in turn facilitates positive word-of-mouth among the local



homeless population who come to identify the centers as places that work extensively with the homeless.

Finally, because of the unique nature of the WPOS operator (as a homeless services agency), WPOS can also rely to some extent on free advertising at its various other program and service sites. For instance, CCC advertises WPOS services at the transitional housing units it also operates. In general, however, the centers we visited did not cite advertising in its traditional form as an outreach or recruitment strategy—presumably because such a strategy was not needed and/or because such a strategy would be ineffective given the transitional nature of the target population and their frequent disconnect from traditional media outlets.

The Jackson Center and WPOS serve as key but differing examples of whether and how homeless individuals that come into the One-Stop are actually enrolled in WIA services. At the Jackson Center, all participants are WIA registrants. The Jackson Center's only criteria for enrollment are that the individual: be homeless, want to work, and not be engaged in criminal behavior. There are no other screening-out criteria that come into play during the intake/eligibility determination process. In the case that the individual in question is actively abusing drugs, the Jackson Center will first refer him or her to local detoxification services. After reviewing an individual's basic demographic information and confirming eligibility, the next step is to form an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), which involves the assessment of individual interests and capabilities, engaging in Employability Skills Training (EST), and forming an Employment Development Plan. (The latter two elements are discussed further in the following service delivery section.) One major challenge with regard to the intake/eligibility determination process is that of varying homeless definitions. Jackson Center staff stated that because DOL and HUD have different definitions of homeless, some of the center's clients may meet the DOL definition, but not the HUD definition, and therefore may not qualify for housing.

Given that the identity of WPOS is not technically exclusively for homeless individuals, it is not surprising that the WIA enrollment decision is a more complicated one at WPOS. After completing initial paperwork, attending a group orientation to the One-Stop and meeting with an assessment specialist, homeless individuals will be enrolled in WIA only if they are considered suitable according to a number of guidelines such as whether the individual: has been clean and sober for at least 60 days; has no current criminal charges, outstanding warrants or pending court dates that might

result in long-term incarceration; is considered mentally stable; and is off the street. In general, staff uses the above guidelines, as well as dialogue amongst themselves, to gauge whether a homeless individual is currently employable and thus suitable for referral to WIA services.

Potential WIA customers at WPOS are sent to a WIA counselor. Counselors undertake a three-step process with their customers: assessment, eligibility and registration. One WPOS counselor noted that she schedules the assessment and eligibility steps in two separate appointments as a way to gauge the customer's commitment to participating in WIA services. Given that the process of obtaining customer identification (to prove eligibility) can be a lengthy one, this is an especially telling test of customer commitment. In addition, counselors may use their observation of customers' filling out paperwork as a covert assessment of literacy skills. Suitable and interested individuals may be enrolled in the Shoreline housing and employment program<sup>14</sup> and co-enrolled in WIA.

Portland Career Center spoke only to the question of whether to enroll homeless veterans, since the vast majority of homeless individuals who seek their services are veterans. The veterans WIA services, provided under the Maine Veterans' Workforce Investment Program, include career counseling, assessment, training and placement. All eligible individuals are registered. Eligible individuals must have been honorably discharged and meet at least one of the following criteria: have a service-connected disability, have earned a medal, served during the Vietnam War, been discharged within the last 48 months, and/or be homeless.

Performance measures do play a role in determining whether to register homeless individuals in WIA services.<sup>15</sup> One WPOS WIA staff member described the difficulty of this decision given these customers' vulnerable state, and their frequently more pressing need for housing and substance abuse services. As this staff member further described, "it's a balancing act to work with people who need services, and [knowing] what will help us meet our performance standards . . . we struggle with people who

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<sup>14</sup> The program makes use of 62 SRO housing units located above the One-Stop and is operated by CCC.

<sup>15</sup> In the Capital Area Michigan Works LWIA, no homeless customers are registered in WIA because of performance measure concerns, particularly the retention measure.

aren't ready for intensive services, but who also aren't really ready to navigate the core services system, or their life, on their own.”

At WPOS, in cases where referrals to services other than WIA are made, they are often made to co-located partners—such as housing or the Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) if they are veterans—or outside to CBOs for such services as mental health treatment. (An individual who cannot be transitioned off the street is often seen as a “red flag” of undiagnosed mental illness, and may be referred to CBOs for treatment.) Even when WIA registration is not an immediately feasible option, WIA staff at WPOS still plays a relatively significant role in terms of helping to connect homeless individuals to pre-employment services. One WPOS WIA counselor noted that this level of involvement from WIA staff prior to WIA registration is unusual compared to other One-Stops.

### **SERVICE DELIVERY**

The sites we visited rely on different models of service delivery. For instance, while the Jackson Center is viewed as the sole employment and training specialist within the homeless service delivery system, it relies heavily on a sophisticated local network of other homeless agencies and organizations to provide a full set of services to its clients, including housing and mental health counseling. Each member of the local network has a clearly identified and specialized portion of the spectrum of care for the homeless population. At WPOS, on the other hand, many of the various needed services are available through “in-house” CCC programs, which can be grouped into four broad categories: housing, chemical dependency and health services, workforce services and business enterprise.

While the model of service delivery may look quite different from one local area to the next, one cross-site commonality is that homeless individuals' various and serious needs mean that they often require a wide range of services in order to successfully secure and retain employment. These include stabilization services, job placement and training services, and a significant dose of case management and supportive services.

#### **Stabilization and Pre-Employment Services**

Pre-employment and/or emergency service provision is the first critical step in serving the homeless population and is part of a larger formulated client action plan or individual service strategy.

At the Jackson Center, each client is sheltered as the first step of program participation. Housing provides more than just shelter; it also provides an address, which can be critical for getting homeless clients the full range of services they need. Because the Jackson Center relies on their clients' being initially referred by other agencies, many clients' immediate housing needs have already been addressed prior to arriving at the Jackson Center. Nevertheless, the Jackson Center's intake staff person sends no fewer than three individual "walk-ins" per day to local shelters. The Jackson Center identifies additional emergency needs using case management practices. These additional needs may include substance abuse detoxification, mental health counseling, public transportation passes and grooming items.

At WPOS, stabilization needs are often addressed during the time between determining WIA eligibility and WIA registration. While housing is the most obvious need, WPOS also cited criminal charges, and various physical, mental, and learning disabilities that may require attention before employment is a feasible option for homeless clients.

Other non-emergency, pre-employment services can include basic educational remediation. For instance, staff at the Jackson Center estimate that approximately 60% of their clientele require remediation through Pima Community College. Individual clients typically test at an 8<sup>th</sup> or 9<sup>th</sup> grade education level.

Another critical pre-employment phase/service at the Jackson Center is the mandatory two-week Employability Skills Training (EST) program—an intensive component that teaches a form of self-directed job search. The curriculum—developed during the local area's participation in the JTHDP—teaches participants about the "hidden" job search process, based on the assumption that publicly announced job openings account for only about five percent of all job openings. The key question addressed during EST is how one should go about accessing these unannounced job openings. In addition to teaching participants how to research Tucson-area jobs and engage in peer networking, the EST curriculum also covers issues of self-esteem and personal upkeep. EST participants are expected to emulate the world of work by wearing professional attire to class. The two-week EST course also serves as an assessment tool, in that Jackson Center staff can determine which EST participants are ready to enter the Job Development phase, and which participants would benefit by first receiving additional services, such as remedial education services to improve their reading skills by at least one grade level.

## **Job Placement & Training Services**

Both the Jackson Center and WPOS prioritize job placement as opposed to training services for their homeless clients. This prioritization can be attributed to a number of reasons, including homeless clients' obvious need for immediate income, as well as the limited amount of training dollars available. WPOS cited additional reasons for why their homeless clients rarely utilize training dollars, including homeless clients' lack of interest, homeless clients' inability to believe in training as a viable option, and the need for WPOS staff to use immediate job placement as a way for homeless customers to even view the world of work as a feasible one. At WPOS, training is rare not just for homeless customers, but for all customers. The PY 02 summary report for WPOS shows that only 31 of 414 enrolled WIA adult customers completed training.

While the Jackson Center also prioritizes job placement, it does rely on Pima Community College as a training provider. The college offers strong short-term and certificate training programs, particularly those geared toward the medical field. The Jackson Center rarely utilizes private vocational schools, except for two truck driving schools and Pima Medical, which offers training in the pharmaceutical and veterinary fields.

Job placement for homeless customers is similar for the Jackson Center and WPOS in that it occurs in a wide variety of industries; however, the method of job placement differs considerably. WPOS appears to utilize a more hands-on approach in assisting homeless customers secure jobs. For instance, WIA staff use their intimate knowledge of the registered customer base to screen job listings and refer appropriate candidates. If a staff member sees a job listing that seems appropriate for a particular customer, they will write the customer's name on the white board in the lobby along with the message, "I have a job posting for you." This assisted approach reflects the local area's articulated philosophy of helping their homeless customers build an initial foundation of self-confidence and see that employment is indeed possible.

At the Jackson Center, homeless customers must rely more on themselves and entrepreneurship skills—i.e., researching potential unannounced jobs and making cold calls to potential employers. In the words of one local respondent, the Job Development phase consists of "a supervisor watching someone direct their own employment search in the phone room." Jackson Center staff's approach to job placement reflects their articulated insistence that there should be absolutely no difference between a homeless and non-homeless customer in terms of expected success in finding a job. Given that

assumption, the Jackson Center is different from other homeless serving agencies that often feel or operate as if homeless clients must be “given” a job.

In terms of the types of jobs actually secured by homeless clients, there appeared to be no particular pattern of note in the sites we visited. At WPOS, homeless customers find jobs in industrial warehouses, shipping and receiving, truck driving, welding, street-cleaning, telemarketing and janitorial services. Likewise, at the Jackson Center, homeless clients are placed in a wide variety of “living wage” jobs, nearly all of which are in the Tucson area. Those homeless clients with a higher education level typically require a longer period of time to find a job, in part because the Jackson Center strongly encourages them to wait for a job that matches their abilities. One Jackson Center staff shared the story of a college-educated homeless client who took a job as a security guard and expected a hearty round of congratulations from his case manager. Instead, the case manager expressed great disappointment, which helped to prompt this client to continue his job search and eventually find a professional position.

Despite the fact that homeless customers often have numerous barriers to employment, according to WPOS staff, once homeless clients are job ready, placement tends to follow relatively quickly. This differs from customers served at other local One-Stop centers, who, according to WPOS staff, are more likely to engage in long-term training and be considering a career change, with the result being that job placement often takes longer.

### **Case Management & Supportive Services**

The importance of case management and supportive services cannot be overemphasized. While employment may be the primary focus and end goal of WIA staff serving the homeless, there are, in the words of one local respondent, “a huge amount of underlying issues” that must be addressed not only upfront at the emergency/pre-employment stage, but also continuously throughout the job search and/or training process. Transportation, child care, housing, clothing, and mental health needs are all common components of a supportive service strategy for the homeless. The role of the case manager as an assessor and coordinator of these various services is “the glue that holds it all together.”

The case manager goes beyond ensuring that supportive services are provided; the case manager addresses countless ancillary and less visible needs. For example, one case manager at a Tucson CBO observed that, “housing is no good without case

management [because] there are more reasons for homelessness than not having a house.” This case manager described how even when homeless individuals are provided shelter, they will often still live as if homeless—for example, by not thinking to buy furniture, keeping the curtains closed, setting up a “camp” in the living room, or living in unsanitary conditions. The case manager may need to convey very basic information to their clients—for instance, how to clean a bathroom and why doing so is important. This type of case management can require daily interaction before eventually petering off. Case managers must not only provide time-intensive services, but also tailor their services very precisely, as there is “no typical client” when serving the homeless population.

Case managers at the Jackson Center and WPOS see their clients often—usually weekly or even daily. Case managers at the Jackson Center check in with their clients almost daily as they come in for EST or to use the phone room during the Job Development phase. Check-in time is used to ensure that clients’ various supportive service needs are being met by the local service delivery system. Likewise, case managers at WPOS meet weekly or bi-monthly with clients and work on a number of supportive service issues that may be affecting job seeking efforts and employment.

Homeless clients may receive case management and supportive services from a variety of sources in the local service delivery system. WPOS clients, for example, can access many services through CCC—the One-Stop operator and homeless organization. CCC’s services can be categorized into four areas: housing; chemical dependency and health; workforce; and business enterprise. For instance, CCC owns or manages 1,400 units of housing—some of which is “stand-alone” housing, and some of which is connected to particular supportive services, such as substance abuse treatment. CCC also operates the Hooper Detoxification Center, which intervenes in the process of chemical dependency by providing outreach, sobering and sub-acute medical detoxification services. Thus, because WPOS is part of a larger and homeless-specific parent organization, WPOS homeless clients are in essence directly connected to a larger “One-Stop” of supportive services.

The Jackson Center relies more on a partnership/network approach in providing its homeless clients with both case management and supportive services. Homeless clients may receive case management services from multiple local service providers—including, but not limited to the Jackson Center. Jackson Center clients’ basic supportive service needs will be met through the network as long as they are following

their ISS. Some of these services are provided in shelters and transitional housing facilities, while others are provided off site. The case managers from different agencies meet regularly as “an interdisciplinary team” to discuss their mutual clients and avoid duplication of services (e.g., two case managers providing bus tokens to the same client).

Supportive service provision does not end at job placement. An explicit component of the Jackson Center’s program is to continue to support the client’s transition to independent living once employment is obtained. This may entail “ad hoc” assistance—such as buying one client a bicycle once bus transportation was no longer a feasible means of getting to work—as well as more traditional follow-up support. Follow-up services, or after-care, involves Jackson staff not only periodically verifying each client’s employment and wages, but also identifying ongoing supportive service needs, or needs more directly tied to employment (such as the need to mediate a situation with the client’s employer). The Jackson Center views after-care services as a critical tool for keeping their clients employed and “on the right track.” Clients who lose their job are urged to return to the Jackson Center as quickly as possible, not just to regain employment, but perhaps to address more pressing issues (e.g., a client who needs a ride to detoxification services).

Supportive service needs—particularly housing and substance abuse counseling—are also a component of WPOS’ follow-up with clients once they are placed in a job. Newly employed clients are exited at the end of the quarter; staff follows up with the entire group 30 days thereafter in order to determine current employment, housing and supportive service needs. Clients also receive a letter notifying them of their date of exit as well as available follow-up services. Because keeping abreast of homeless clients’ changing contact information is a particular challenge, WPOS staff instituted a raffle whereby newly employed customers submit their current contact information for a chance to win a prize.

### **Major Service Delivery Challenges and Modifications**

Perhaps one of the most basic challenges at hand in serving the homeless population is the stigma often attached to this special population and the chasm that exists between the homeless and more “mainstream” resources, such as One-Stop centers. As one local One-Stop respondent observed, “people won’t go to get services at a place where the people staffing it and the other customers don’t look like them.” As a reflection of this, both WPOS and the Jackson Center are *specialized* One-Stop



centers. While WPOS is open to any customer, it is well known that it specializes in homeless and previous offender populations; furthermore, its very location on a corner full of “street life” makes it less likely that members of the “mainstream” population would choose to access One-Stop services at WPOS. Finally, even WPOS’s signage indicates the specialized nature of its services. WPOS is housed in a building boldly labeled Central City Concern. The West Portland One-Stop label is much smaller and was clearly added at a later date than the CCC seal.

While local staff at WPOS opined that they did not see how the homeless could be effectively served without their specialized set-up, they did discuss associated challenges—specifically, questioning their identity as either a One-Stop center or as a homeless organization providing employment and training services, and questioning the long-term effectiveness of isolating the homeless population within such a specialized center. While customers with unique barriers can doubtless benefit from programs designed specifically to address those barriers, such a structure might also convey a further sense of isolation from “mainstream” resources, including the labor force in which they are attempting to enter via the One-Stop system.

The Capital Area Michigan Works LWIA presents a kind of compromise. Here homeless individuals are never enrolled in WIA services. However, Advent House, a faith-based non-profit that operates the Good Work! Employment Program for the homeless, attempts to provide enough of its programming onsite at the One-Stop center so that its homeless customers become adjusted to “mainstream” facilities and can use certain resources, such as the resource room, clothes closet and computer labs. The hope is that customers will eventually be able to make use of mainstream One-Stop services on their own. In this way, the Good Work! Program is viewed as a “pre-pre-employment” program.

While the Jackson Center also grapples with the challenge of a homeless “stigma,” it does not face the same question of identity as WPOS, in that it is officially and specifically a One-Stop center for the homeless. However, its formal name also reflects a strategic decision with regard to its more mainstream goals. As one local respondent stated, it is not called the Jackson Center for the Homeless. It is the Jackson *Employment* Center. The word homeless was deliberately left out to avoid the associated stigma. Furthermore, including the word employment in the center’s name reflects its previously discussed conviction that homeless customers can be held to the same high expectations as more “traditional” One-Stop customers. At the same time,

in bridging the gap between the homeless and the mainstream, perhaps the most significant advantage possessed by both WPOS and the Jackson Center is the ability to function like a CBO with their specialized knowledge of and interactions with the homeless population, but the capacity to provide services with more “mainstream” WIA and HUD resources.

But while using specialized centers runs the risk of isolating the homeless from the mainstream, WIA staff question the feasibility of using mainstream structures to serve the homeless. For example, given the complex and interrelated elements of homelessness, ranging from mental illness to child care needs, it is not surprising that the first major quandary staff may face is whether homeless individuals should even be enrolled in WIA services. Homeless clients may require more intensive and ongoing services than WIA staff are prepared to offer; furthermore, given their multiple barriers to employment and peripatetic nature, they may pose a “risk” to WIA performance measures.

The One-Stop centers we visited are able to use different strategies for addressing the enrollment question. Its “officially” specialized One-Stop identity allows the Jackson Center to essentially bypass this decision altogether; there are no screening out criteria. However, even with its ability to accept effectively all homeless clients, the Jackson Center is still mindful of the need to stabilize homeless individuals prior to any employment and training services. Thus, unlike other One-Stop centers, the Jackson Center has made it policy to require that their clients be referred from another agency—i.e., an agency that would have “prepped” these individuals for employment and training services by first providing more immediate services such as housing and detoxification.

As an “unofficially” specialized One-Stop center, WPOS struggles a bit more with the WIA enrollment decision for homeless individuals, and relies on a set of guidelines and staff dialogue to gauge homeless clients’ suitability for WIA services. While their enrollment decision is not as automatic as that of the Jackson Center, WPOS differs from more traditional One-Stop centers in the level of WIA staff’s involvement in helping homeless individuals connect to pre-employment services, whether they be in-house or at local CBOs.

With regard to job training and placement, a couple of challenges that emerged from our sites were low expectations of homeless individuals and the difficulty in

finding jobs for some homeless individuals, particularly those with barriers such as criminal backgrounds. The sites we visited respond to these challenges in various ways. The Jackson Center's philosophy is that homeless individuals should be held to high expectations. As such, the Jackson Center relies on a relatively intensive EST program to address self-esteem issues and to provide homeless clients with the tools to find a job independently. The emphasis on unannounced job openings in particular underscores the need for homeless clients to create their own opportunities. The Jackson Center is concerned not just with their clients' finding jobs, but finding jobs that match their education and skill level; as such, the Center encourages clients to take not just any job, even if it means a drawn-out job search process.

WPOS capitalizes upon the business enterprise arm of CCC to address some of its homeless clients' employability challenges. CCC runs several small businesses, including a janitorial service, a building maintenance and repair service, used furniture rehabilitation and resale, two thrift stores, and a painting crew. CCC also has plans to expand into other areas, such as historical building preservation. CCC originally conceived of its small business enterprise as a way to safeguard itself against fluctuations in public and private funding. However, these small business enterprises are also designed to employ a workforce that has typically faced barriers to labor force entry based on homelessness, addiction, mental health issues, criminal background or other factors. Thus, not only is WPOS a One-Stop well-suited to the needs of customers facing special barriers to employment, but the center's operating organization is also an employer of these very same customers, and serves as a way for employees to develop credibility and references for future employment in the mainstream labor market. Furthermore, as employers, business enterprise staff can provide special understanding of and guidance on employees' soft skills issues, such as how to interact with supervisors and clients in a respectful way. Finally, WPOS has developed unique and popular courses, such as "Looking for work with a criminal background," that also reflect the center's attention to its customers' unique employability challenges.

The Portland Career Center also works to provide homeless clients with a measure of "beginner" work experience, given their employability challenges. Career Center staff coordinate with the Employment Trust, Inc. /Manage Work Services Initiative, which uses funds to create a work experience program. Employment Trust, Inc. provides a reference for the customer and a job coach that helps place and retain individuals in a work situation. The Career Center pays 50% of the individual's wages.

The primary employer for this initiative has been a large grocery store chain in New England.

Given homeless customers' often intensified need for soft skills training and other supportive services, these job placement strategies can succeed only if—in the words of one local respondent—“case management becomes a primary service rather than strictly job coaching.” In both Tucson and Portland (Oregon), this translates to the heightened importance of interpersonal contact and relationships. Successful recruitment in Portland (Oregon) depends heavily on the full-time “bunk kicker’s” visits to the local homeless shelters, where he has developed many personal relationships. Retention of homeless clients in EST in Tucson depends greatly on the relationship the instructor builds with his/her class members, and the personal motivation he or she provides. Success in new housing arrangements depends on sometimes daily visits with case managers. Retention in employment is aided by personal contact and follow-up by case managers, who can probe clients on the need for ongoing services and support.

As for a specific type of case management approach that appears to work best with homeless clientele, local respondents only commented on the need to wear many different hats—i.e., advocate, enemy, friend—and the need to define success differently with homeless individuals. As one case manager observed, “what really works is repetition”—making repeated interpersonal contacts to build trust and make small degrees of progress. As another respondent described, “a seed is planted but you might have to try, try again.” To avoid burnout from repeatedly providing such intensive service, case managers must learn to define success in smaller steps. For instance, one respondent said that a measure of success might be a homeless client’s remaining sober for four weeks instead of two. One interesting strategy specifically mentioned by a Tucson respondent was to include the children of homeless clients in case management sessions in order to expose them to productive living practices at a young age, and to hopefully break the cycle of homelessness.

Finally, another important service adaptation we noted was that many key homeless-serving staff at the One-Stop (and outside the One-Stop) had experience being homeless, or were particularly interested or trained in homelessness and serving vulnerable populations. For instance, the average staff person at the Jackson Center has 12 years of experience working with the homeless. The WPOS Center Director estimated that 70% of WPOS staff had experienced homelessness, incarceration, addiction disorder, or, at the very least, poverty, and/or were previous CCC clients.

These forms of staff experience were clearly valued at WPOS, in some cases more than employment and training service expertise.

### **LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS FOR SERVING THE HOMELESS**

Given the variation and intensiveness of required services for the homeless to secure gainful employment, partnerships are essential to an effective service delivery system. No one homeless service provider can “go it alone,” particularly with extremely limited funding at their disposal. In some sense, agencies have no choice but to collaborate, given the scarcity of public dollars and the incapacity of any one agency to meet all the different needs of a single homeless client.

The One-Stop centers we visited utilized different forms of partnership in order to effectively serve their homeless clientele. WPOS could be characterized as having a strong tradition of *intra*-organizational partnership, in that the One-Stop operator is such a multi-faceted homeless services provider, that, to some extent, CCC does not need to build external partnerships. (Indeed, one local respondent differentiated between the community-wide Continuum of Care, and the CCC’s in-house Continuum of Care.) In addition, WPOS uses co-location effectively as a tool for partnering with such partners as the Homeless Veterans’ Reintegration Project.

The Jackson Center, on the other hand, looks outward in its partnership efforts—including to the many homeless-serving CBOs in the Tucson area. Each local partner, including the Jackson Center, has a clearly identified, specialized piece of the homeless services pie—whether that be employment and training, housing, clothing or detoxification services. The strength of the local CoC is highly dependent on the effective partnerships and communication between different agencies. As one local respondent noted, one of the reasons why partnerships work so well in Tucson is because agencies *do* maintain their turf (i.e., specialized expertise) without *acting* turf-like. As another respondent summed up, local partnership is all about “specialization, referrals, and communication.”

Besides having specialized service niches, the sites we visited have a number of other strategies or factors that contribute to effective partnership, including: regular meetings between the staff of different partners to “coordinate not duplicate” homeless services; development of a Homeless Management Information System (HMIS); a client- rather than agency-focus; a cadre of homeless leaders and stakeholders who have been working together for a long period of time; co-location; use of grant opportunities

or special initiatives to establish or strengthen partnerships; and the establishment of a formalized council as a collaborative vehicle.

While WPOS facilitates effective homeless-serving partnerships by having numerous partners (including less traditional ones, such as a credit union that works with homeless clients) co-locate at the center, Tucson provided a richer discussion of partnership strategies and elements of success.<sup>16</sup> Foremost among these was the development of a highly democratic council, the TPCH. TPCH provides a clear and equitable structure for collaborative efforts in serving the homeless. While the Executive Committee is responsible for setting TPCH's agenda, actual decision-making power is dispersed throughout the membership—a change that greatly increased TPCH participation. Each member agency, no matter what its size or relative influence, gets only one vote; this includes the city and county members.

The primary incentive for TPCH membership is the chance to be a part of joint grant application processes and secure resources for individual agencies. Unlike other local areas where powerful agencies (e.g., city and county agencies) might take control of all local funds to dole out to other organizations, in Tucson, TPCH—not a particular agency or organization—is the lead on all grants. However, TPCH makes it clear that, in order to share in grant resources, members must serve on one of TPCH's committees and be an active part of TPCH throughout the year, not just at grant application time.

Besides resource incentives, members are motivated to participate in TPCH because of networking opportunities with agencies throughout the local area, as well as learning opportunities—e.g., to hear about trends that other agencies may be observing. For instance, a new police captain recently approached TPCH about membership because she wanted to learn about homeless agencies and issues. She in turn offered TPCH insight into what the police are seeing in terms of homeless trends on the street. In this way, TPCH is relatively unique in that it is a homeless-focused entity, but is not comprised only of homeless specialists. Its members include the police, AIDS organizations, behavioral health organizations as well as the faith community.

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<sup>16</sup> The Pima County local area has been formally recognized for its strong partnership model. In August 2000, the area received national recognition from HUD with a best practice award for creativity in the development and use of community linkages. The award was particularly focused on the local La Casita Transitional Housing Program for youth. Key program partners, including the Jackson Center, provide housing and educational opportunities for youth between 16 to 21 years old.

In short, TPCH effectively draws together various homeless-serving and other concerned organizations to develop and implement the local CoC. While this is the council’s primary function, TPCH also serves as a critical repository of “partnership culture”—a culture characterized by a basic but strong commitment to the homeless, a “non-profit mindset,” joint planning and shared resources, democratic decision making processes, and clearly defined objectives and plans for serving the homeless. With this partnership culture embodied in a structure larger than any one particular organization or individual, homeless-related collaboration is somewhat protected against the inevitable comings and goings of particular TPCH members.

Local respondents in Tucson indicated that one of the primary challenges in establishing a collaborative body such as TPCH is simply for members to engage in community planning without thinking about their own individual agency’s interests first. To address this challenge, Tucson found it helpful to conduct focus group sessions of ground-level intake and case management staff that knew very little about their agencies’ budgets, but knew a lot about direct interaction with the homeless population. These focus groups in turn informed the larger strategic planning process with direct, “real world” homeless experience, rather than with the political and financial interests of particular agencies at the forefront.

While one local respondent indicated that it “would take years” for another group to become as cohesive and cooperative as TPCH—in part, because key stakeholders have been working together for many years—the most immediate recommendation to other local areas was to simply have agencies *talk* with one another. Another key lesson is to ensure that people have the space to disagree with one another in the context of such a body as TPCH; toward this end, TPCH found it helpful to hire an outside consultant to run the meetings and establish this “safe space.”

In Tucson, coordination and inter-agency partnership is facilitated by a relatively strong sense of alignment between partner philosophies on serving the homeless. While the Jackson Center is sometimes criticized as being too “tough” on the homeless with its immediate world of work expectations, given the Center’s demonstrated success, more local partners are adopting the Center’s philosophy of “high expectations with high support” for their homeless customers. For instance, Travelers Aid does not just provide “three hots and a cot,” but also an incentive—clients must go to the Jackson Center in order to maintain their housing. Case managers from other local

organizations indicated that they like being able to send their clients to the Jackson Center for day-long, purposeful activities.

On the other end of the spectrum from the Jackson Center, shelters and youth-focused homeless agencies are sometimes criticized for being too “soft” on their clients, too directive or coddling. However, local respondents in Tucson agreed that, overall, differences of philosophy do not at all interfere with their partnership efforts and, furthermore, were probably necessary in that one philosophy or approach would not work for all sub-groups of the homeless (e.g., youth versus veteran homeless).

When on site, we asked local respondents to describe partnership efforts not just at the broader level of aligned philosophies and governing structures, but also at the more detailed level of communication and coordination methods and links. Overall, both Tucson and Portland (Oregon) make use of consistent email and phone contact, as well as interpersonal meetings between different partner staff in order to coordinate and not duplicate services to homeless clients. However, while Portland’s approach is to “talk to each other when we need to talk to each other,” Tucson’s approach is relatively more formal, in that the various case managers meet regularly to discuss their mutual clients “as an interdisciplinary team.” In Portland, Maine, representatives from varying agencies meet regularly via participation on several committees, including the CoC Committee and the Homeless Veterans Workgroup. During these meetings, current issues or challenges in serving the homeless are discussed, as well as possible solutions. These formal meetings, as well as informal communication between partners, help to effectively link and coordinate their services.

Local respondents in Portland (Oregon) indicated that the best inter-partner communication occurs when there is a project that various partners are interested in working together on. One example was a project designed to assist people with psychiatric disabilities enter the workforce. Several partners, including CCC, convened to write a proposal for implementing a particular service design. In this way, grant opportunities serve as catalysts for effective partnership. Similarly, in the Capital Area Michigan Works LWIA, the WIA administrative entity partnered with Advent House—a faith-based non-profit that runs the Good Work! Employment Program for the homeless—specifically to secure Food Stamp employment and training funding to support the Good Work! Program. (As a result of this partnership, the Good Work! program began utilizing space at the One-Stop; its customers can use the resource room, clothes closet and computer labs.)



In Tucson, inter-partner communication and coordination will be further strengthened and formalized via a forthcoming Homeless Management Information System (HMIS), which was due to go online in February 2004. Twenty-three agencies are scheduled for HMIS implementation throughout a two-year process. The HMIS will allow all agencies to share information on their homeless clients and to more easily refer them to other partners' services—for example, to reserve a bed in a shelter across town, or to plug into state services. The system will have a universal intake form with common areas highlighted, but with the flexibility to add agency-specific, customized data fields. Local respondents also expressed hope that the HMIS will help partners work together to identify the chronic “game players”—those who “work the system” and are interested only in handouts and subsidies, not in improving their socioeconomic situation.

Finally, though a relatively minor factor, in both Portland (Oregon) and Tucson, it was pointed out that the cities are small enough so that partners have often known each other in various capacities and/or on a personal level for many years. These long-standing and multi-faceted relationships have in turn facilitated specific partnership efforts on the homeless population.

#### **SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS OF KEY LESSONS**

In previous sections of this paper, we discussed key characteristics of models for serving the homeless in the One-Stop context. In many respects, these characteristics confirmed the JTHDP findings—for example, the need to provide continuous assessment and case management services, and the need to stabilize homeless clients prior to providing employment and training services. The broader concern of to what extent the One-Stop system can effectively serve the homeless population is more difficult for us to answer, given the very small sample of sites we visited. Nonetheless, our site visit data do allow us to crystallize what appear to be some key implications for transferability to other local areas.

The One-Stop system's ability to serve the homeless is perhaps most determined by the interrelated issues of identity and resources. Our site visits made clear the value of One-Stop centers that are identified, either officially or unofficially, as homeless-serving organizations. Such an identity allows homeless customers to feel comfortable seeking services in the first place, and allows for staff who not only have the expertise in interacting with homeless individuals, but also the intimate connections to other homeless-serving agencies and resources in the community. For example, when asked

specifically about the unique role of the Jackson Center as compared to more traditional One-Stop centers, respondents in Tucson emphasized that the Jackson Center was indispensable because staff at traditional One-Stops would not be equipped to work with the homeless, and would not be located at what was considered a “hub” of the homeless service delivery system.

With an identity as a homeless-serving organization, One-Stop centers may perceive their mission and weigh their performance concerns somewhat differently than a traditional One-Stop. The Jackson Center does not struggle with the decision of whether to enroll homeless customers in WIA because of performance measure concerns; its mission means that essentially all homeless customers are enrolled and served. While WPOS does struggle with the enrollment question a bit more, respondents also indicated that, because they are a homeless-serving organization, they feel an obligation not just to WIA performance measures, but also to more local factors and concerns—e.g., specifically serving the homeless with federal employment and training dollars, and reaching those performance goals negotiated specifically with WSI (WIA administrative entity).

Thus, without a mission that is at least in part specifically concerned with the homeless, and without the benefit of specialized “homeless staff,” the lessons of the One-Stops we visited would be difficult to transfer to many other local areas. Even in the case of a traditional One-Stop center with a WIA staff member who possessed expertise in homeless issues, that staff member would presumably need to be concerned with how homeless clients might affect local performance outcomes, and might have substantial limitations on capacity to serve homeless customers (e.g., in terms of dollars, connections to other local resources and amount of time available for continuous interpersonal contact).

In terms of actual service delivery, the key features that emerged from our site visits were a relative emphasis on job placement over job training, and intensive case management service provision. Job placement was prioritized for various reasons, including scarce training dollars and perceived lack of interest in training among homeless clientele. However, all sites sometimes use a “stepping stone” approach to job placement, in that they make available to their homeless clients a type of pre-work experience that acknowledges their unique employability challenges and builds a foundation of confidence. The pre-work experience takes the form of World of Work expectations during EST, employment in a homeless services organization’s business

enterprise arm, and a subsidized work experience program. The centers provide other resources specially targeted to homeless clients' employability challenges, such as a class on how to look for work with a criminal background, and a very intensive EST curriculum that addresses a range of issues that homeless clients in particular might be facing. Thus, while other local areas might very well be able to also emphasize job placement over job training for their homeless clientele, they would also need to provide the necessary and specifically targeted supports, whether they be a specially designed curriculum or a supply of job opportunities for those hardest to employ. Even the Jackson Center, with its philosophy of high expectations for homeless clients and emphasis on independent job search skills, realizes that it must provide targeted and intensive support in order for its homeless clients to be successful. "High expectations with high support," is how one staff member described the Jackson Center's approach.

Perhaps the most intensive type of service required for homeless clients is case management. The sites we visited emphasized the inability of more traditional One-Stops and WIA staff to provide the type of case management that many homeless clients require. Furthermore, in Tucson, Jackson Center staff discussed the need for case management services to be provided by a range of partners in the CoC, so long as they are coordinated. Replication of this model depends on strong inter-partner communication and client coordination procedures, which in turn depend on the specifics of the local landscape at hand.

Political factors are one critical component of the local landscape and its ability to replicate some of the key strategies discussed here. Concentrated efforts to serve the homeless were, to some degree in both Tucson and Portland (Oregon), motivated by key political figures. City Council members in Tucson served as a catalyst for the TPCH's formation. One particular leader in Portland, who was strongly dedicated to the homeless, fought to establish WPOS in its current homeless-friendly location. Establishing a homeless services agency (CCC) as the operator of WPOS was a similarly improbable accomplishment, in no small part due to the efforts and dedication of key political leaders.

The nature of the local political landscape also has implications for the ability to replicate effective partnership strategies for serving the homeless. In Tucson in particular, local respondents expressed uncertainty about the extent to which its collaboration-not-competition spirit could be reproduced, let alone the cohesiveness of the group represented by the TPCH. Implementing the extremely democratic operating

procedures of TPCH (one member, one vote) presented some challenges even in Tucson. A much larger city with additional heavyweight agencies and layers of turf or bureaucracy could involve even more complex challenges—not just specifically for establishing a TPCH-like body, but even for meeting consistently as “an interdisciplinary team.”

Finally, we would like to revisit the long-term desirability of the models presented here, in that they provide the immediate advantages of specially designed services, but may also convey a sense of isolation from more mainstream centers. This is not a question we are prepared to answer within the scope of this paper; however, it does bring us back to the Capital Area Michigan Works LWIA—a site that informed this paper to some small degree, but did hint at a compromise between a specialized One-Stop center and those that simply do not enroll homeless clients in WIA services. In this LWIA, homeless clients receive employment and training services from a specialized CBO, but are also brought to the One-Stop center to use some “mainstream” resources such as the resource room and clothes closet. Though these clients are not enrolled in WIA, the hope is that their exposure to the One-Stop center might serve as an initial step towards a later time, when the One-Stop might be more equipped to address their needs. Further study could help illuminate the extent to which such a strategy is an effective one.

### **XIII. SERVING MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY**

In the summer of 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) a contract for the national *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act* (WIA). As described in the appendix to this paper, the evaluation consists of multiple data collection components, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which can be divided into three distinct phases. As part of the first two phases, field staff conducted site visits to 14 states and 23 local areas to understand broad issues of WIA implementation and operations, such as the transition from JTPA to WIA, partnership building, governance, and service design and delivery. Also as part of these earlier phases, SPR tracked indicators of states' and local areas' progress towards implementing required WIA elements nationwide, as well as analyzed client-level data on program participants to understand the extent to which client characteristics and services changed as local areas transitioned from JTPA to WIA. As shown in the appendix, a total of 19 reports and papers were produced from these first two phases of the study.

The year 2003 marked the beginning of the third and final phase of the evaluation, yielding four additional papers. Rather than revisiting broad-level implementation issues, this phase focused on two narrowly defined topics: (1) the engagement of businesses as part of One-Stop strategic planning and as customers, and (2) One-Stop services to special populations. Each of these topics branched into a distinct but related sub-study under Phase III.

The special populations sub-study, of which this paper is a part, is specifically concerned with how three particular groups—limited-English-proficient individuals (LEPs), the homeless, and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs)—can be effectively served within the One-Stop context. With this question in mind, field staff conducted site visits in December 2003 and January 2004 to 18 additional local workforce investment areas. Three of these areas were included in our sample specifically because of their MSFW-serving strategies. These are: Adams County,

Colorado; the Eastern Shore, Virginia; and the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas.<sup>1</sup> This paper is also informed by our attendance in Sacramento, California at one of several recent DOL-funded national dialogues on developing collaboration between the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP) grantees and state and local workforce investment boards (WIBs).

The three primary sites listed above were selected as part of a difficult process to identify local areas that had extensive experience and innovative strategies in working with MSFWs in the One-Stop context. As part of this process, we requested nominations from DOL and special interest organizations and used web research to identify a small pool of potential sites. Next, we conducted preliminary telephone interviews with each site to narrow this pool to the three local areas whose practices in serving MSFWs we profile in this paper. Given the difficulty we experienced in finding potential local areas that met our selection criteria, and the small number we eventually visited, the sites we studied should be viewed as *case studies* of different models of serving MSFWs in the One-Stop context.

## INTRODUCTION

Migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs) are considered a special population because of their crop-based employment cycle—planting, harvesting, and processing products for international consumption—and because of the multitude of social issues that beset the group, the majority of which can be linked to their employment in farm labor. Agricultural labor tends to be low-paid, lower skilled, physically demanding, and often migratory. The breadth of issues farmworkers face include declining wages; inadequate housing, transportation, and childcare; and adult and child exposure to pesticides and dangerous working conditions exacerbated by a lack of medical benefits or access to health care. In response to these circumstances, federal employment and training resources directed toward this group emphasize enhancing quality of life, ensuring self-sufficiency, and gaining employment outside of agricultural labor.

Counting MSFWs in the United States is a well-acknowledged challenge. The GAO has published at least one report focused on improving the counting of MSFWs

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<sup>1</sup> Our findings are specific to the One-Stop we visited within the local area, rather than to the whole LWIA.

for the U.S. Census. However, in 1992, the Report of the Commission of Agricultural Workers estimated there were 2-3 million farmworkers in the U.S.

The National Agricultural Workers Survey (NAWS) does not attempt to count farmworkers; instead it explores MSFW demographics and conditions based on a selected sample. The NAWS of 1997-1998 (published in 2000) reported that 81% of all farmworkers are foreign-born, and that 77% are Mexican-born—statistics that were reflected in the three sites we visited. An even higher percentage of farmworkers speak Spanish. Farmworkers are undereducated, and 85% are estimated to have difficulty reading printed material in any language. The majority are younger than 35, and an even larger majority are men. The survey reported that 52% of farmworkers lack legal work authorization.

Farmworkers are categorized in two primary groups, seasonal and migrant. While definitions of these two groups vary across programs, we provide here the definitions according to the two primary federal programs providing employment and training resources, the NFJP and the Employment Service MSFW outreach. The definitions differ principally in the amount of time a worker must be employed primarily in farm labor in order to be considered a seasonal or migrant worker, and in the required percentage of the worker's wages that have come from farm labor during that time.

Under WIA Section 167, which governs the National Farmworker Jobs Program, a *seasonal farmworker* is an individual who for 12 consecutive months out of the 24 months prior to seeking assistance has been primarily employed in farm labor that is characterized by chronic unemployment or underemployment (or is a dependent of an individual fitting this definition). A *migrant farmworker* is a seasonal worker, with the additional condition that the individual is required to travel to a job site such that he or she is unable to return to a permanent residence within the same day (or is a dependent of said individual).

Under Wagner-Peyser, which governs the Employment Service and MSFW outreach workers, a seasonal farmworker is one who, during the preceding 12 months, worked at least 25 days in farmwork, earned at least half of his or her income from farmwork, and has been primarily employed in farmwork on a seasonal basis, without a

consistent year round salary. A migrant farmworker is a seasonal worker who is unable to return to his or her permanent residence from work that same day.<sup>2</sup>

Federal employment and training services for MSFWs have technically been available since at least the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, which established the Employment Service (ES). However, it was not until 1980 that the program's regulations were revised to include specific language about the delivery of services to the MSFW population. The intention of the revisions was to ensure that MSFWs receive employment services that are "qualitatively equivalent and quantitatively proportionate" to services provided to other job seekers.<sup>3</sup> These amendments delimit the structure and influence the content of MSFW services in the One-Stops we visited.

Several other pieces of federal legislation have impacted the type and availability of federal employment and training resources and protections for MSFWs. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 initiated the program now known as the National Farmworker Jobs Program (NFJP), re-authorized with regularity by JTPA and, most recently, under WIA Section 167. The NFJP provides job training and employment services specifically to MSFWs, both to help them obtain employment *outside* of agriculture as well as to upgrade their employment *within* agriculture. The program also provides emergency services to farmworkers in the migrant stream. NFJP is a required One-Stop partner in areas where an NFJP program is operated.

The Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (MSPA) of 1983 mandates MSFW protections related to transportation, housing, pay, and working conditions. Under this act, agricultural employers must provide to their workers written information about the conditions of their employment, including information about wages, hours, length of employment (e.g. number of weeks), workers compensation, and the availability of housing or transportation, as well as its cost to the employee.

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<sup>2</sup> 20 CFR 651.10.

<sup>3</sup> These revisions came about due to a 1974 court order issued by U.S. District Court Judge Charles Richey in response to *NAACP v. Brennan*, attesting that the farmworkers' constitutional rights were violated because of discriminatory practices of the federal Employment Service. The court ordered that MSFWs should receive the full range of federal employment services, benefits, and protections available to all workers, and it established federal regulations for the system of State Monitor Advocates and outreach workers now operated under the Wagner-Peyser Act's Employment Service.



This information must be provided to the farmworker in a language in which he or she is fluent or literate.

A current emphasis in federal employment and training services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers is (1) enhancing collaboration within DOL programs and among other federal entities and organizations that serve MSFWs, such as Migrant Education; and (2) increasing the number of MSFWs and agricultural employers served. The recent NFJP-workforce board dialogues, which explored strategies for increasing collaboration between the two entities in the service of MSFWs, are an example of this emphasis.

One salient issue with implications for current federal employment and training resources for MSFWs is that the NFJP is slated for termination, as the President's budget for FY 2005 requests no funding for this program. The NFJP has faced elimination before. The President's budget in previous years has zeroed out the program, yet Congress has thus far restored the program's funds. Regardless of the final outcome, the potential disappearance of the NFJP provides context for this paper, as other One-Stop partners must become equipped to assume primary responsibility for employment and training services to this population.

In this report we examine how WIA and the One-Stop system in three sites serve MSFWs and their families, and we explore how the trends and strategies that emerge might inform other states and local areas for the future of services to this population. The remainder of this paper is divided into five key areas: (1) profiles of the three sites we visited; (2) key challenges and strategies with regard to outreach and enrollment of the MSFW population into One-Stop services; (3) key characteristics and modifications of the service delivery system needed for the MSFW population to secure and retain employment; (4) analysis of the nature of local partnerships to serve MSFWs; (5) a distillation of key themes and practices to emerge from the study, as well as their implications for other local areas and for the future.

## **LOCAL PROFILES**

Here we provide an overview of the three primary MSFW sites in order to place this paper's findings in local context—e.g., in terms of varying demographics and MSFW characteristics, key MSFW-serving partners, and the extent of local planning with regard to the MSFW population.

## **The Lower Rio Grande Valley, Texas**

This LWIA sits on the southern tip of Texas and borders Mexico. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the Valley is the third poorest congressional district in the nation; 37% of the population lives below the poverty line. Nearly 90% of the population is Latino.

The Valley is a metropolitan area, and is one of the fastest growing regions in the state. While services and retail constitute the bulk of the region's urban area economy, in the surrounding rural communities, agriculture—including vegetables, sugarcane, citrus, nursery and livestock production—contributes significantly to the local area economy. Despite these key industries, unemployment in the region remains high. In January 2004, the unemployment rate for the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission metropolitan area (located inside the LWIA) was 14.6%.

The local area encompasses three counties and has eight full service One-Stops. We concentrated our visit at the Edinburg One-Stop, in Hidalgo County. The population of the county is approximately 600,000. According to staff we interviewed, the Valley has the largest concentration of migrant farmworkers in Texas. While an exact count is unavailable, the U.S. Census notes 4,289 workers in the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting, and Mining Industries in Hidalgo County; moreover, more than 40,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers are estimated to reside in the county.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the farmworkers themselves, 800 migrant youth are enrolled in the Edinburg/McAllen school districts within the county. Most of the farming jobs pay the federal minimum wage of \$5.15 per hour, rather than a piece rate, which is common in other areas.

The majority of MSFWs in the Valley are from Mexico and speak limited English, although most MSFW youth have adapted to speaking English at school. MSFWs tend to live below the poverty line, and many of them live in *Colonias*, shanty towns, many of which lack indoor plumbing and electricity. The *Colonias* have been problematic for the state, in that they are impoverished areas, often poorly constructed

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<sup>4</sup> The recognized challenges in obtaining accurate counts given the prevalence of illegal workers in the MSFW population, as well as the wariness even on the part of legal workers to report information to government entities, make it difficult to verify whether this number accurately reflects MSFWs in the region.

on vacant land, and abandoned at least annually as the migrants who inhabit them move on to other crop areas.

The WIA strategic plan created by the Lower Rio Grande Valley LWIA for 2000-2004, and updated yearly, has sections dedicated to services to MSFWs and agricultural employers. Performance has been an important issue in the area, both to the WIB and to the One-Stop administrators. Because of a recognition that MSFWs have not been attaining positive outcomes on WIA performance measures, such as the wage gain and retention measures, the Brighton One-Stop created specific policy in 2003 regarding the services that must be provided to MSFW customers within 30 days of their visit to the One-Stop or of their encounter with an outreach worker in the field.<sup>5</sup> They hope that this more explicit service provision policy will help improve MSFWs' poor performance outcomes. (We will further explore this policy in the Service Delivery section, later in this paper.)

### **The Eastern Shore, Virginia**

This LWIA, in which the Onley One-Stop center (the location of our visit) is located, is a rural area located on a 70-mile long peninsula between the Atlantic Ocean and Chesapeake Bay. The local area population of 50,000 fluctuates seasonally by approximately 5,000 residents due primarily to migrant workers. While non-Latino Whites and African-Americans predominate, the area hosts a small but growing year-round Latino population, about 20% of whom are seasonal farmworkers.

The largest industry is agriculture, particularly poultry and tomato production. However, as in many parts of the country, agriculture is a declining industry. Non-agricultural industries such as timber and pine products are on the rise. Currently, three employers dominate the agriculture industry and employ between 30-40% of MSFWs in the area. The remaining farmworkers are employed by nearly 30 smaller employers.

The Eastern Shore local area, though part of a three-area consortium, is itself comprised of two counties. The Onley One-Stop center is the only One-Stop in the local area. Onley is the one primary MSFW site of the three we visited where the NFJP grantee is not co-located at the One-Stop, but the grantee is nonetheless regarded

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<sup>5</sup> This "first day services" policy, as it is known, matches the equity measures established for the ES in response to the Judge Richey court order.

as a primary provider of intensive and training services for migrant and seasonal farmworkers looking to leave farm work for other occupations and industries or to upgrade their agricultural employment.

It is estimated that there were about 17,000 MSFWs in Virginia in PY 2001. However, estimates vary widely, and another organization put the number at 42,000. There are reportedly nearly 5,000 migrant and seasonal farmworkers at peak season in the Onley area, and the Onley One-Stop serves approximately 65% of them, or about 3,000, annually. The area's strategic plan for PY 2003 predicts serving 4,800 to 5,000 MSFWs, a larger number than in previous program years.

The local area has conducted several important activities that inform the development and provision of services for MSFWs. In the late 1990s, three partnering agencies—Virginia Employment Commission (VEC), the Eastern Shore Community College (ESCC), and the Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging/Community Action Agency (ESAAA/CAA)—met to discuss ways to better serve the migrant population. One important outcome of this meeting was a dedication to hiring bilingual staff, three of which currently work at the Onley One-Stop center. The annual One-Stop strategic plan also incorporates a specific MSFW component. As part of the development of this plan, in January of every year, the Onley One-Stop prepares to serve the influx of migrant workers by contacting the farmers and soliciting information about the number of workers the farmer expects to employ that year, and the crops they intend to grow.

Several other entities have bearing on One-Stop planning for services to the MSFW population. Meetings of the Eastern Shore Migrant Council are attended by One-Stop partners, along with numerous other community-based organizations that serve farmworkers. The Council meets quarterly and reports to the Governor's MSFW Board. The ES State Monitor Advocate attends these meetings as well as other meetings hosted by MSFW service providers or by government entities exploring MSFW issues (including the Department of Motor Vehicles, housing providers, and the Virginia Council of Churches). The Advocate in turn updates the outreach workers, or farmworker placement specialists as they are known in Virginia, two of whom work out of the Onley One-Stop.

### **Adams County, Colorado**

This LWIA runs northeast to southwest of the metro Denver area. Approximately 400,000 people live in the county, nearly 30% of whom are Latino.

The county harbors a mix of industries, including agriculture, light manufacturing, and educational institutions.

The One-Stop center in Brighton, where we focused our visit, houses the NFJP grantee as well as a Wagner-Peyser designated outreach worker. In fact, the Brighton office has *only* those two representatives, while the WIA adult and dislocated worker programs and other partner programs are represented at the four other One-Stops in the local area.

MSFW-serving staff in Adams County quote a conservatively estimated 20,000 to 25,000 MSFWs in the state. The Brighton One-Stop served 152 MSFWs in PY '02, and 268 thus far in PY '03. While the large majority of MSFWs are Latino and from Mexico, the Brighton staff did report a newer—though still small in comparison to the Latino population—influx of MSFWs representing disparate races, ethnicities, and countries of origin. These include Guatemalan Indians, Haitians, Asians (particularly Hmong), Russians, Kickapoo Indians, and South Africans.

A significant number of the migrant workers who come to Adams County live in housing provided by the farmers. These are most often dormitory style residences, in which multiple people share kitchen facilities and bathrooms. The MSFW outreach worker in Brighton has established relationships with many of the farmers and inspects housing facilities for migrants.

The One-Stop local area strategic planning process does not focus specifically on the MSFW population. The Adams County One-Stop system experiences high traffic and the percentage of MSFWs seeking services is small. However, the outreach worker, outreach worker supervisor, and NFJP grantee all routinely attend regional, state, and even national events, including the Migrant Coalition and MAFO (a Midwestern association of farmworker organizations) conferences, that inform their design and delivery of services to the MSFW population in the local area. The State Monitor Advocate holds annual training sessions that act as ad hoc planning sessions as well. The Northern Area and State Migrant Coalitions are operative entities for planning specific to farmworkers, although, in these settings, One-Stop administrators and staff are participants, not hosts.

## **OUTREACH AND ENROLLMENT**

In this section, we consider the two related activities of (1) outreach to MSFW community members to inform them of the existence of the One-Stop and the services

available to them through this venue, and (2) of intake or enrollment into WIA and other One-Stop partner programs. We consider MSFW community awareness of the One-Stop in the three sites we visited, and explore how such awareness is developed through a variety of outreach strategies. Finally, we examine the initial intake process, and what factors play a role in rendering the One-Stop a desirable setting for MSFWs to access employment, training, and supportive services.

Outreach and recruitment are critical activities in promoting community awareness of the One-Stop because MSFWs face challenges such as a lack of transportation, a distrust of government entities, and the reality of long work days that leave little time for travel to an office for services. For all these reasons, One-Stop staff find it important to conduct outreach to inform MSFWs of the existence of the One-Stop, and to draw them into those centers for services.

In the sites we visited, MSFWs are viewed as a unique population in that an outreach component is built into the services available to this group through a WIA mandated partner, the Employment Service. In fact, MSFW outreach workers are mandated to spend a majority of their time in the field during peak season for farmworkers, which is often an eight- to ten-month period. However, NFJP grantees also conduct substantial outreach efforts.

Due in large part to this outreach activity, in the three One-Stops we visited, the majority of migrant and seasonal farmworkers in the communities know about the One-Stop, according to staff. Yet this awareness does vary depending on the proportion of new migrant workers each year, the outreach workers' level of penetration into the farmworker community, and the effectiveness of the MSFW "grapevine."

Another significant factor affecting the population's awareness of the One-Stop is which partners are represented there, and the extent to which that representation and the needs of the farmworkers are coterminous. Each of the three sites we visited is a federally designated "significant field office"<sup>6</sup> for MSFWs, and is staffed by at least one outreach worker. In two of the three sites, the NFJP grantee is co-located at the One-Stop. Colorado's Brighton OS also houses a Head Start office utilized by migrant

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<sup>6</sup> Significant local offices are designated annually by ETA and include those local offices where MSFWs account for 10% or more of annual applicants. Local offices that are located in an area with a large number of MSFWs can be designated as significant even if MSFWs do not account for 10% of applications.

families, and a charter school at which numerous migrant children are enrolled. In Texas, co-located partners at the Edinburg OS include TANF, Food Stamps, and Unemployment Insurance (UI)—particularly important partners, as they are a primary draw for MSFW customers to access the One-Stop.<sup>7</sup> Staff report that MSFWs may not be aware of the many services available to them through the One-Stop until they have been introduced to the system by the specific partner they already knew about. If, for example, the NFJP grantee in Brighton, Colorado was not located in the One-Stop (and if the partners did not have a close working relationship), MSFWs being served by the NFJP grantee might never seek out the One-Stop for other services.

Successful outreach is often contingent on local outreach staff developing relationships with agricultural employers so that the worker is welcomed onto the farms for the purpose of conducting outreach and providing services. In Brighton, the outreach worker provides a host of valuable services for the farmers, such as housing inspections for on-site migrant housing and translation of posted materials regarding pesticides, which often result in the farmers' willingness to allow the outreach worker to work on site. (These services to agricultural employers are an important component of the overall package of services available to MSFWs and will be discussed in more detail in the Service Delivery section.)

Outreach workers may also identify places in the community where farmworkers congregate or spend time. In Edinburg, Texas, outreach workers conduct much of their work in the *Colonias*, the shanty-towns in which many farmworkers live. In the *Colonias* outreach workers are able to get to know farmworkers who may be looking for work, or family members who have needs that could be addressed via referrals. One strategy that facilitates this is the establishment of relationships with *promotoras*, women who are recognized as leaders by the residents of the Mexican community, who in turn provide the outreach workers an introduction to the community.

Other local recruitment or awareness-building strategies conducted by the One-Stops we visited include posting information on bulletin boards at the farm sites, visiting local churches to make announcements about One-Stop services, advertising on Spanish television and radio, and relying on mandated or community partner referrals.

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<sup>7</sup> In many states, however, agricultural jobs are not covered in the UI system, which poses additional burdens for MSFWs in that they are not eligible for UI benefits.

In Brighton, Colorado, two primary referring partners are the two community health clinics that provide mobile unit services at the farm sites.

Once farmworkers are contacted through outreach, the ability of the One-Stops to recruit them for services is related to how central the One-Stop is for the MSFW community in accessing the many services they typically need. For example, Onley, Virginia's One-Stop has developed a reputation as a popular venue for employment and supportive services for MSFWs—due to their historically consistent provision of employment services and referrals to the farmworker community.

A further example is evidenced by Brighton, Colorado, where the NFJP grantee is co-located. The One-Stop center in Brighton is a hub or gateway for MSFW employment services as well as for referrals to other organizations for pre-employment or emergency services. The Brighton office has been operating for more than 20 years, and the ES outreach worker and NFJP grantee have been co-located for nearly that long. Thus, the long-standing presence of the office, in addition to the MSFW community's sense of safety in accessing all manner of services and referrals there, contribute to the Brighton One-Stop's accessibility to the farmworker population.

While MSFWs in Colorado and Virginia come to the One-Stop primarily to access ES job matching services and referrals, MSFWs come into the One-Stop in Edinburg, Texas for a fundamentally different reason. According to staff there, the principle reason MSFWs seek out the One-Stop is that it also houses the TANF and UI programs. Unlike many states, Texas has not transitioned to a call center-based UI system. For both TANF and UI, customers must go to the One-Stop to access program benefits. A natural and frequent practice is for TANF and UI staff to introduce MSFW customers to the staff in the resource room, in order for MSFWs to access core services, and to be assessed for their need for intensive and training services as well. Staff at the Edinburg One-Stop noted with some distress that migrants who are collecting unemployment from other states no longer need to access an actual office to continue receiving benefits, resulting in diminishing MSFW traffic at the Edinburg center, and thus reduced opportunities for the One-Stop to offer services to these customers.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Texas is somewhat unusual here, in that in many states agricultural employment is not well covered in the UI system.



While we did not have the opportunity to speak directly with farmworkers, staff at the sites we studied emphasized the development of relationships in the farmworker community as a critical aspect of outreach, recruitment, and ultimately of service delivery. Brighton, Colorado's outreach worker was raised in a migrant family, and participated in farm labor for many years. She maintains relationships with migrant families and with farmers she has known from her own labor history. In Texas, a number of the Edinburg One-Stop staff, including several administrators and case managers, have ties to the migrant or Latino communities, including one who lives in the *Colonias*. These staff testified to the importance of their cultural links in facilitating services to farmworkers.

One One-Stop reported that they build trust (and, by extension, relationships) with MSFWs by clarifying that documentation of legal authorization to work in the U.S. is not gathered and verified with the intent to police farmworker legality or to cause adverse consequences for those who may not have it. (Because legal documentation is required in order to receive many One-Stop services, a factor affecting MSFWs' willingness to access these services is the perception in the farmworker community of how strict the One-Stop is when it comes to verifying documentation authenticity.) Once that trust is established, farmworkers are more inclined to seek out the One-Stop not only for employment services, but for referrals to a wide variety of other services.

The heavy emphasis on referrals to providers of pre-employment or supportive services is another unique aspect of the intake process for MSFWs, and will be discussed in more detail in the Service Delivery section. Even if MSFWs plan to leave farm labor, which tends to be a rare occurrence at the sites we visited, the individual or family has often just arrived in the community and has immediate needs, such as for food and shelter, which must be met in addition to employment, or in the interim before employment is secured.

There are several other key components of the intake process that One-Stop staff have modified to meet the specific needs of farmworker customers. For example, while self-services are often considered a first step for universal customers in the One-Stop, for MSFWs they are usually skipped entirely in favor of immediate staff-assisted core services provided in Spanish by bilingual staff. Monolingual farmworker customers would be unable to navigate self-services, such as a job search on the Internet, without the assistance of Spanish-speaking staff.

Regarding intake, another unique aspect of One-Stop services is the rarity with which MSFWs actually become registered in the WIA adult or dislocated worker programs. Core services are often seen as sufficient to move the MSFW customer into employment in farm work, and the NFJP grantee is available to provide the intensive and training services for MSFWs who are attempting to develop skills and find employment outside of farm labor. Further, the “related assistance” that can be provided by the NFJP grantee includes supportive services that, if they were to be provided by a WIA formula-funded program, would require registration. Additionally, crop-based employment cycles preclude many farmworkers from attaining positive outcomes on WIA employment, retention, and earnings change measures, deterring WIA program staff from enrolling farmworker customers who might hurt the area’s performance outcomes.

In summary, outreach and enrollment strategies that take into consideration language, culture, location, the MSFW community’s general distrust of government entities, and the fact that basic needs such as food, shelter, and transportation take precedence over, or at least are intricately related to, employment, are critical to a successful effort to bring farmworkers into the One-Stop system for employment and training services.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

In this section, we consider the delivery of the wide range of services provided to the MSFW population, including emergency assistance; pre-employment, training, and placement services; case management; and supportive services. We explore the extent to which services to employers play an important role in facilitating services to MSFWs. We examine the challenges associated with delivery of services to farmworkers, particularly the difficulty with which this population is able to transition from sporadic, poorly-paid farm labor into secure, long-term employment that promotes self-sufficiency, in agriculture or other industries. Lastly, we look at the key modifications that providers have made to services in order to effectively meet the unique needs of MSFW customers, and the extent to which those modifications may be transferable to other areas serving this population.

### **Pre-employment and Emergency Services**

MSFWs face challenges associated with the demands of their employment cycle, including frequent uprooting and low wages that result in individuals and families often living below the poverty line. As a result, emergency services, such as food and

shelter, are often a prerequisite to job placement. More standard pre-employment assistance such as the development of interviewing skills and resumes is important as well, yet its provision to MSFWs is often tailored to the needs of this population—through the use of bilingual staff, for example.

Initial intake into the One-Stop occurs when One-Stop staff identify the MSFW customer's need for pre-employment and emergency services. One-Stop staff conducting intake typically have an initial conversation with an MSFW customer about their employment needs and their need for pre-employment, supportive or emergency services. This initial intake process is provided either by an ES-funded outreach worker or by bilingual staff operating under the auspices of an integrated One-Stop system.

In Virginia, for example, Onley One-Stop staff provide farmworkers a list, in Spanish, of other partners and CBOs in the area that can provide services and resources such as food, emergency shelter, health services, transportation assistance, family counseling, Adult Basic Education, GED courses, and occupational training. Most MSFWs are then registered with ES and receive an immediate referral to a job. This intake process, during which these initial services are provided, is also known as “first day services” in two of the sites we visited.

For Spanish speakers, who represent the overwhelming majority of MSFW customers in these three sites, intake is always conducted by a bilingual staff person. The organizations to which these customers are referred represent varying degrees of bilingual capacity. Some programs that serve migrant farmworkers specifically, such as the NFJP grantee, consistently have a majority of bilingual staff. Other organizations that serve a broader cross-section of the population may have fewer bilingual staff.

A companion service to the initial job match provided to farmworker customers is the I-9 certificate of work authorization.<sup>9</sup> Two of our sites report the importance of this service both to the farmworker customer and to the employers who later receive it. In fact, one site identifies the I-9 certificate as a primary service MSFWs come to the

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<sup>9</sup> Employers must have on file an I-9 certificate of work authorization for every person they hire. This form is used in conjunction with proper documentation to verify the employee's identity and legal right to work in the United States.

One-Stop to receive. Employers are mandated to have on file I-9 certificates for all of their employees; thus they too benefit from the service.

The intake process may also involve an assessment of the farmworker customer's capacity to attain non-agricultural employment. If the farmworker expresses a desire to leave agricultural labor, One-Stop staff will conduct career counseling to explore other occupational possibilities. When a laborer wants to leave farmwork, the career counseling and assessment process inform the development of a plan intended to culminate in non-farm labor job placement. In the sites we studied, this assessment is always provided by either the NFJP grantee or the ES outreach worker.

Other primary pre-employment services are resume development and soft skills counseling for MSFWs seeking to find immediate employment in either agriculture, if it is the migrant season, or outside of agriculture, if it is not the migrant season and the worker is seeking to supplement his or her income until the season begins.<sup>10</sup> In the sites we visited, it is typically the outreach worker who provides this service.

Emergency services are most often provided by the NFJP grantee, other federal programs (not WIA Adult/Dislocated Worker program or ES), or by community- or faith-based organizations. The catalyst for MSFWs to receive these services is the intake process, during which staff make referrals for extra-employment needs. Emergency services are sometimes sought by farmworkers and their families when they are on their way from one state to another for migrant work. For example, a migrant family may be on their way from Texas to Virginia, and their car may need new tires or a new transmission if they are to arrive safely. It is usually the NFJP grantee that provides this type of service, and it is generally a one-time event.

Emergency services may also be required to assist a migrant worker or family to get established in a community when they have just arrived, but do not yet have income from farmwork. This type of emergency service includes food, Food Stamps, rent and utility assistance, repair or replacement of important household items, shoes and

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<sup>10</sup> Services are most often activated when migrants arrive in the local area looking for farmwork. Seasonal workers may be looking for work either during the growing and harvesting seasons, or they may be looking for non-agricultural employment during the off-season. Migrants who call the local area "home" may similarly be looking for temporary employment when farmwork is not available; of our three sites, Edinburg, Texas has the only significant representation of migrants who consider the area their permanent residence.

clothing, shelter, violence prevention and aid for migrants fleeing violent partners, and health care. Emergency services are critical to MSFWs' survival because they provide for basic needs that allow farmworkers to continue working and generating income.

### **Training and Placement Services**

Many MSFWs are (or are nearly) job-ready for a farm labor job when they come to the One-Stop. The assistance they need is often in identifying agricultural employers who are hiring. Thus, job matching is a key service, usually provided by ES or NFJP staff in the sites we studied. Outreach workers are uniquely equipped to provide job matching services in the field; they often travel with a laptop computer, and can connect electronically to the state's labor exchange system from a farm site or a farmworker *Colonia*. Job development is an additional activity that outreach workers can conduct either in the One-Stop or remotely.

More intensive services can be provided if a farmworker is not job-ready for either farm labor or for non-agricultural employment. Intensive services such as English language instruction are provided by the NFJP grantee or, in some cases, by a One-Stop partner, such as the community college. Which entity is chosen to provide the service is often dependent on the customer's language capacity. If customers are completely monolingual Spanish, they will more likely access intensive services through the NFJP grantee, which can always provide bilingual services, and provides an environment where the farmworker may be more comfortable.

At the three sites we visited, training is generally confined only to those migrant workers who seek to leave the agricultural industry—a small percentage of the total number of MSFWs who seek services through the One-Stops we visited. MSFW customers who want to enter training at these sites are referred to the NFJP grantee. Grantees reported that the primary sub-group of MSFWs who are the most likely to leave agriculture, or at least migrant labor, are migrant youth. Youth may be less attached to the migrant life, be encouraged by their families to achieve better opportunities, and are more likely to be fluent in English due to their time spent in the school system.

In Brighton, Colorado, the NFJP grantee arranges several work experience opportunities for migrant youth each summer. For example, in the summer of 2003, two youth worked in the One-Stop office, three worked on the janitorial crew in the One-Stop, and one worked in the Head Start program—also co-located at the One-Stop.

Youth are more likely to participate in work experience than in summer vocational training because work experience pays a wage, and migrant youth are often expected to contribute to the family finances in the same way that adults are.

Another group more likely to take advantage of training is seasonal workers, particularly older workers. In Virginia, the Onley One-Stop partner, Eastern Shore Area Agency on Aging, provides on-the-job training for older seasonal workers who are unable to continue physically demanding farm labor, yet still need employment. Seasonal workers in general may be more likely to opt for training because they do not typically move to another state when the current season is over, whereas even an aging migrant will continue to travel with the family, perhaps taking on child care responsibilities when fieldwork becomes too difficult. Seasonal workers may also have ties to the community that encourage integration into year-round employment, whereas migrants do not. Though most migrants have a state or country they consider their permanent home, even there residency is sporadic, thus impeding plans to enter into training.

Even when MSFWs participate in intensive and training services, it is almost always paid for by the NFJP grantee. Put differently, very few MSFWs are ever registered in the WIA adult program. Our interviews with program staff from all three sites suggest that WIA performance measures are a major concern that informs the practice of referring MSFWs needing intensive or training services away from the WIA adult program and towards the NFJP grantee programs. This happens regardless of whether or not the NFJP grantee is co-located at the One-Stop.

The entered employment, retention, and earnings change measures—measures MSFWs are more likely to be included in than the credential measure, given that so few attend training—are calculated at different points after the customer exits the WIA program, such as the first or third quarter after exit. Due to the nature of the farm labor employment cycle, and the fact that many farmworkers' employment is not reported to the UI system, MSFWs may not appear in the UI wage record as having wages in their first or third quarters after exit. If they are present in the wage record, they may not earn more after exit compared to before registration. In fact, they may earn less if there is no work during the period for which the measure is calculated. Thus, MSFWs are seen as a WIA performance liability and are steered away from WIA registration and toward other partners or providers who can provide equivalent services without negative performance consequences. Another factor that causes NFJP to be the

provider of choice is that the capacity of the WIA adult or dislocated worker program to serve eligible MSFWs may be inhibited by a lack of bilingual staff, or staff that have the appropriate training and experience to serve this population.

### **Case Management & Supportive Services**

One of the many reasons that farmworkers are considered a special population is the previously identified struggle between the clear benefits of leaving farm labor for better employment in other industries, and the recognition that farm labor is difficult to leave, for cultural and economic reasons. The sites we studied repeatedly emphasized this struggle, and admitted that only a small minority of MSFWs served through the One-Stop system are able to successfully transition to non-farm labor employment. As a result, case management, supportive services, and follow-up services are somewhat different for this population than they may be for the universal customer.

Case management is generally designed to assist customers to prepare, and to coordinate comprehensive employment plans. For any customer, an employment plan can incorporate not only workforce investment activities such as a job search or vocational training, but also supportive services needed to attain and retain employment. MSFW customers are, like other special populations, uniquely in need of a comprehensive array of employment and supportive services in order to enter and maintain employment. While case managers often provide coordination over time for universal customers who participate in core, intensive, and training services in pursuit of employment, case managers for MSFWs more often operate as an episodic point of access to services (provided on site or through referrals) that are intended to result in stable, self-sufficient employment, but that may not involve standard intensive and training services. In other words, while universal customers may receive case management regularly and consistently over a period of time during which they are participating in a service plan, MSFWs often access the services of a case manager only at distinct points in time in which they may find themselves in need of a referral to a specific service or resource.

Outreach workers and other One-Stop staff provide limited case management services at the three sites we visited. The NFJP grantee staff are more likely to provide long-term case management with customers who are attending training. When the grantee is co-located in the One-Stop, and an outreach worker or other ES staff are also present, the physical proximity of the co-located programs facilitates communication

about customers being served by both the grantee and ES, perhaps diminishing the need for formal case management on ES's part.

After referral to a specific job, the most common service provided to One-Stop customers is a referral for assistance that supports the obtaining and retention of employment, what is generally called supportive services.<sup>11</sup> For MSFWs, the line between the previously described emergency services and supportive services is not distinct. Many of the services that MSFWs may need prior to participating in any workforce investment activities (e.g., *emergency services* such as housing) they may continue to need in the form of *supportive services* (e.g., rental assistance) in order to obtain and retain employment. Regardless of whether these types of services are provided before or after employment begins, they often look the same, ranging from providing for basic needs such as food, clothing, and shelter, to transportation, health care, family counseling, child care, and access to education for children and youth. NFJP is currently uniquely suited to provide many of these supportive services, in accordance with the program's category of "related-assistance," which allows the provision of these services without requiring customers to be enrolled in intensive or training services. This is a very different model from the formula-funded WIA programs, in recognition of the unique characteristics of MSFWs.

As with emergency services, supportive services are provided by an array of community- and faith-based organizations, and by One-Stop partners, such as the NFJP grantee. For example, community clinics providing medical care on farm sites can treat respiratory conditions or foot problems that enable farmworkers to continue working. MSFWs who have received assistance to obtain housing upon their arrival in a community might also access rental or utility assistance from One-Stop partners (such as Community Action Agency) in order to maintain their housing. If transportation assistance was provided by the NFJP grantee in order to assist a migrant family in getting to another state, the family might also, upon arrival in the new state, seek assistance for car repair in order to have a reliable way to get to work.

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<sup>11</sup> According to WIA Title I, supportive services means services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments, that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in workforce investment activities. According to Wagner-Peyser, supportive services are considered services other than employment or training that are needed to enable individuals to obtain or retain employment, or to participate in employment and training programs.



## **Services to Employers**

The extent to which One-Stop staff work closely with agricultural employers has implications for the extent to which they are also able to provide critical services to farmworkers. Agricultural employers have an unequivocal impact on their employees due to the physically demanding nature of farmwork and the fact that many migrants obtain housing and transportation through their employer. By establishing a positive relationship with employers, One-Stop staff have a better chance to facilitate employment opportunities, improve working conditions, and successfully mediate employer-employee conflict. In addition, agricultural employers are a legitimate customer of the One-Stop, and as such, qualify for and can receive One-Stop services.

In our sites, the ES-funded outreach worker is the primary provider of services to agricultural employers. Outreach workers assist farmers in articulating the desired skill sets for their job openings and to write descriptions for job postings with the labor exchange. This service tends to keep outreach workers informed about when (and how many) jobs will be available—information they can then convey to farmworker job seekers. This capacity also enables outreach workers to perform a screening function and to refer capable laborers to the employer. If laborers referred by the One-Stop are successful employees, the farmer is further encouraged to maintain a close relationship with One-Stop staff for screening and referral of future job candidates.

As a further service to employers, outreach workers conduct a variety of inspection and certification services that employers are federally mandated to have performed, and which the One-Stop provides at no cost to the farmer. These include housing inspections of any migrant housing provided by the employer, and inspections of work sites for OSHA-mandated safety and sanitation requirements. In Brighton, Colorado, in addition to conducting inspections at the beginning of the season, the outreach worker also conducts an informal inspection at the end of the season to let the farmer know what repairs or adjustments will need to be made before the beginning of the following season in order to pass inspection. This gives farmers time post-season to bring their housing up to code.

Farmers are also required to post information at the work site about the use of pesticides and the health risks of working without proper protection. This information is required by the Migrant and Seasonal Worker Protection Act (MSPA) to be posted in a language the farmworkers can understand. Outreach workers often provide this Spanish translation service for the farmer.

Finally, outreach workers mediate conflict by processing complaints from farmworkers and, if appropriate, translating employees' concerns to their employer. Complaints can be related to a variety of issues, including wages, child labor, housing, pesticides, working conditions, or discrimination.

As an example of the relationships that develop between employers and outreach workers, one outreach worker described an incident in which a farmer requested assistance to contact a long-time migrant employee who had not yet arrived on site, and about whom the farmer was concerned. The worker went to the farmer's home to phone the employee in Mexico, as the farmer did not speak Spanish. As noted, this type of service is important both for the concrete assistance it provides to the employer, and for the way in which it builds the relationship with the employer. Through this relationship, agricultural employers may be more disposed to allow the outreach worker to conduct outreach on the farmer's land, and to post information about One-Stop services at the work site.

At the same time, we learned at the NFJP-workforce board dialogues that agricultural employers are often unaware of the One-Stop system. Dialogue participants noted that one strategy for increasing the level of awareness in the agricultural employer community is to invite employers to participate on local and state workforce investment boards. In the sites we studied, agricultural employers appear to be well-informed about the One-Stop. Thus, there appears to be a strong relationship between the presence in a One-Stop of an outreach worker, and a higher level of agricultural employer awareness of the One-Stop system. In any event, the sites we visited show that farmers and other agricultural employers can be reached by the One-Stop, and that MSFWs and employers can be better served as a result.

Lastly, One-Stop staff in Edinburg, Texas discussed the value they place on working with non-agricultural employers to allay fears about hiring former farmworkers, including the fear that the worker will quit his or her job once work becomes available on farms.

### **Primary Challenges and Adaptations to Service Delivery**

The WIA Section 167 regulations state that "the purpose of the NFJP, and the other services and activities established under WIA 167, is to strengthen the ability of eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families to achieve economic self-sufficiency." This goal can be achieved by providing farmworkers with training that

enables them to obtain upgraded employment within agriculture or to leave farmwork in favor of another industry.<sup>12</sup> On that basis, one of the reasons given for the disappearance of funding for the NFJP from the President’s 2003 budget was the concern that supportive and emergency services were taking precedence over training.<sup>13</sup> (Funding was reinstated, yet diminished for FY 2004, and the program is slated for elimination in FY 2005.) However, the goal of helping MSFWs transition into other occupations or industries poses a challenge.

The sites we visited consistently reported that for MSFWs, particularly migrant workers, leaving farmwork is challenging and rare. Workers often come from generations of farm laboring families, and staff spoke frequently of their customers’ adherence to “the migrant way of life.” For those customers who travel as a family, the family labors together, each contributing to an economic equilibrium, though often a poverty-stricken one. If one member leaves the system to enter training, the rest of the family may be put at risk given the loss of income that often accompanies entry into training.

Thus, the philosophy of federal employment and training services for farmworkers, which conceives of assistance as support for leaving farm labor, poses a dilemma: to provide services to MSFWs so that they are empowered to leave farmwork, or to recognize the infrequency with which farmworkers do leave farmwork and instead provide services that facilitate the farmworkers’ continued participation in migrant or seasonal farmwork, albeit with increased quality of work and life.

The programs we studied address this dilemma by attempting to meet farmworkers’ immediate needs for emergency, pre-employment, and placement

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<sup>12</sup> “The NFJP provides funding to organizations that assist migrant and seasonal farmworkers and their families attain greater economic stability *by assisting them to acquire new job skills in occupations offering better pay and a more stable employment outlook*, and by providing supportive services to them while they work in agricultural labor,” (emphasis added) as noted on DOLETA website, <http://www.doleta.gov/MSFW/html/facts.cfm>.

<sup>13</sup> “The [NFJP] program is enabling migratory farmwork through supportive services, but not helping enough farmworkers exit the tasking lifestyle, according to Mason Bishop, ETA special assistant to the assistant secretary,” *Employment and Training Reporter*, 4-15-02. Elsewhere, the Program Assessment Rating Tool notes, “Annually, most of the approximately 36,000 participants receive only low-cost supportive services. Despite the importance of these supportive services—which help many participants stabilize their budget while they are unemployed—providing them through the DOL program detracts from its primary purpose to help farmworkers find more stable, year-round employment,” OMB, 2004.

services while simultaneously exposing MSFW customers to the possibility of finding full-time work outside of farm labor. We gathered anecdotal evidence suggesting that regardless of how arduously One-Stop partner staff promote farmworker retraining for non-labor employment, the successes are few, and tailored to specific circumstances of farmworker customers. For example, one site described a migrant young adult who entered office skills training while the rest of her family worked in the fields. She stayed in the area to complete her training when her family moved on to work in another state. When she finished training, she went to be with her family, and was able to obtain clerical employment with the agricultural employer for whom her family labored. Training in this case was successful, yet the success is tempered by the customer's specific circumstances. When the young migrant's family moves on, there is no guarantee she will again find clerical employment in the same location in which the rest of her family labors.

As we learned in the NFJP-workforce board dialogues, innovative approaches to training *within* agriculture have also been developed. These intra-industry training programs are a natural bridge between farm labor to either more consistent employment throughout the year or to higher skilled work that pays better, is less physically demanding, and is not migratory. Some examples of these innovative training programs include cross-training programs to train laborers to work crops with opposing growing seasons (such as wine grapes and roses) in the Central Valley of California; agriculture workforce certificate programs focused on dairy farming in New York; and customized farmworker training in production and manufacturing in the wine industry in Sonoma County, California.

Regardless of the specific focus of the programs' efforts, though, a variety of special circumstances must be acknowledged in serving farmworkers. For example, MSFWs are often in need of English language instruction, income support, and occupational skills training that includes basic skills instruction. All sites referred to the challenge of illiteracy, rendering even translated material difficult for customers who cannot read in their own language. False documentation, used by some MSFWs to both maintain employment on a farm and collect Unemployment Insurance, was noted by some sites as an obstruction to a seamless provision of services, and to customer tracking.

Language and culture are two components of MSFW customer uniqueness, and they render modified services critical. The MSFW population in our three sites, and

generally nation-wide, is overwhelmingly limited-English proficient, and a majority are Mexican or Mexican-American. Thus, One-Stop staff who work with MSFWs must often be bilingual, especially in Spanish. For smaller linguistic minorities, One-Stops may find it more challenging to maintain bilingual staff. Many One-Stops and Employment Service departments have addressed this challenge by maintaining agency-wide directories cataloguing all bilingual staff that can be utilized as translators for customers who do not speak English.

Outreach workers, NFJP grantee staff, and any other One-Stop staff working specifically with MSFWs (such as intake staff) at the sites we visited are all bilingual and many are Latino. In at least two sites, multiple staff have strong connections to the migrant farmworker community, as they were raised in a migrant family or have extended families and friends who are or were migrant workers. These staff attribute the success they have had at developing trusting relationships with MSFWs to cultural competency and/or the personal experience of farm labor.

Rarely can all staff at a One-Stop be bicultural or have personal experience with farm labor. Thus, it becomes critical that staff at the One-Stops have adequate training in the special needs of the MSFW population, and in culturally competent practice. In Colorado, the Brighton One-Stop outreach worker, who was raised in a migrant family, and who has been providing services to farm workers for nearly 20 years, trains not only the Adams County One-Stop staff on an annual basis, but also acts as a personal trainer for new outreach workers across the state who travel to Brighton to learn from her and shadow her in the field.

In Onley, Virginia, the One-Stop staff who work with farmworkers attend Migrant Council meetings where they interact with other MSFW service providers, and maintain an awareness of MSFW community issues that assists them in their practice. One site facilitates the need for its staff to be exposed to a larger community of providers serving MSFWs by routinely sending them to regional or national meetings and conferences. The most popular event is the MAFO annual conference that focuses on the State Monitor Advocate and outreach worker roles, and provides an opportunity

for front-line service providers and state and federal policy makers to meet and share information.<sup>14</sup>

The NFJP-workforce dialogues explored the strategy of cross-training grantee and other One-Stop partner staff in the provision of services to all potential customers. In Edinburg, Texas, One-Stop staff have begun cross-training, initially in response to diminishing funds across programs. As a result, the center has found that cross-training specifically broadens the One-Stop's ability to respond to the needs of MSFW customers, and case managers and intake staff become cognizant of the conditions of the farmwork that may cause their new customers to have different needs than many of their other customers. For example, staff from the Edinburg One-Stop in Texas note that because migrants are often poor and are usually coming from or going to the farms when they come into the One-Stop, their clothes may be dirty and they may be wearing muddy boots. Migrants who live in the *Colonias* often burn coal for fuel and thus may be accompanied by the pungent smells of coal and farms. These characteristics set MSFWs apart from many of the other customers, and require staff attention to ensure that services are equitable. This might mean conversations or staff meetings in which administrators or supervisors highlight the importance of providing equitable services to MSFW customers. In Edinburg, One-Stop staff are sensitive to these factors, and work to provide a welcoming environment for MSFWs.

One other area in which farmworkers may differ significantly from other One-Stop customers is in their reticence to access services from entities affiliated with the government. For those MSFWs who are new to the One-Stop, staff in the three sites described the intentionality with which they explain to MSFWs the One-Stop system. Staff explain what the One-Stop is, why paperwork is required, and are also explicit about the fact that they are not affiliated with the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Another key service delivery adaptation is to bring service to the farmworker customer, rather than assuming the customer will visit the One-Stop. For example, outreach workers from the three sites travel with laptops to the farms, and use either

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<sup>14</sup> We have evidence from at least one site that outreach workers and other One-Stop staff would benefit from additional training. These staff noted that they had been developing their service strategy primarily through trial and error, and were interested in learning from experts in the field.

dial-up or wireless technology to access labor exchange job postings. NFJP representatives at the NFJP-workforce board dialogues also identified this strategy as one they are regularly employing. As wireless technology becomes more prevalent, this out-of-office connection to the services of the One-Stop will be expedited. Similarly, one participant of the NFJP-workforce board dialogues in Sacramento, Proteus Inc., shared its development of Mobile Employment Centers that have begun delivery of services to rural communities in the southern San Joaquin Valley that may lack accessible employment and training services. The Mobile Employment Centers are 36-foot vehicles equipped as mobile One-Stops, with computers, Internet access, and tables and chairs for individual self-service, staff assistance, or classroom instruction.<sup>15</sup> The mobile units are collaboratively staffed by NFJP, WIA, and ES.

Another related strategy for bringing One-Stop services to the customer that was shared at the NFJP-workforce board dialogues was the designation of NFJP grantee sites as satellite One-Stops. According to dialogue participants, grantee sites are often located in areas more rural than the One-Stops, thus the satellite office designation increases the opportunity for rurally situated MSFWs to receive One-Stop services. One-Stop staff in Edinburg, Texas noted that the Lower Rio Grande Valley LWIA had in fact opened several satellite offices in rural communities with a high percentage of MSFWs, so as to better serve this population.

A last example of services structured uniquely for MSFW One-Stop customers is the practice of serving the family as the customer. In many cases, migrants travel and labor in family units. As such, each member of the family is implicitly a customer of the One-Stop, not just the member who is job-seeking. Family members may require some of the same services and resources that an individual MSFW job-seeker requires—such as placement into employment, and basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and health care. They may also have additional needs that a single job-seeker is unlikely to have, such as for child care services, and enrollment in Head Start or K-12 education. In Edinburg, Texas, the majority of the migrant youth enrolled in the local school system are failing, suggesting that migrant youth are also in need of tutoring services, and that migrant parents may lack the language skills and time to assist their children with homework. Thus, programs such as the MSFW Youth

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<sup>15</sup> Proteus Inc. is both an NFJP grantee and a contractor providing WIA dislocated worker services.

program, and the High School Equivalency Program-College Assistance Migrant Program (HEP-CAMP) are important partners in the service of MSFW families.

In addition to emphasizing the importance of providing services to migrant families, One-Stop staff also highlighted the concept of the interdependence of the family, and how critical it is for staff to consider this when providing services. A decision for one member to enter training, for example, has profound implications for the rest of the family. In the example given previously, migrant youth often are willing to participate in work experience because they are still able to contribute to the family income while pursuing alternative career opportunities. By being aware of the dynamics of interdependence, One-Stop staff can anticipate families' concerns, and work with the family to choose appropriate services.

Overall, the local service delivery system in each of our sites is challenged by the breadth and depth of farmworker needs, and funds that are routinely too exiguous to serve every farmworker and family member. The sites uniformly suggested that there are never enough targeted resources necessary to assist all MSFWs in need, and to the degree that they are subsequently able to work year-round and live self-sufficiently.

#### **LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS**

The design of the One-Stop system not only values but mandates partnership in the service of job-seekers. Many of the *products* of partnership have been noted in our discussion of services to MSFWs and employers. Here, we review and further explore the factors that impact the formation, development, and maintenance of partnerships designed to serve MSFWs.

The sites we studied made clear that strong local partnerships are the foundation of a thorough service delivery system for MSFWs. Different partnership networks have developed across the sites, sometimes several within one local area. Some of these networks pre-date WIA, and have been incorporated into the One-Stop system with its advent. Others have historically operated independently of the One-Stop structure of mandated partners, yet One-Stop operators and partners have become participants. These other networks can inform One-Stop operations and services to MSFWs, as well as be informed by One-Stop partner participants.

One annual activity that encourages the maintenance of partnerships is the development of the local area strategic plan. Strategic plans usually contain projections of MSFW customers to be served by the One-Stop in the coming year. The salient



aspect of this planning activity for partnership is that local areas develop their plans by gathering data and projections from farmers in the area, and from One-Stop partners and community providers, thereby taking stock of the resources available to serve the MSFW community, as well as of the local job market for farm labor.

The three sites' referral processes for farmworkers who come into the One-Stop with needs other than or in addition to employment illustrate another aspect of community partnership. Each of the sites maintains and distributes to all new MSFW customers a list of community resources from which MSFWs might seek services. This list accompanies the orientation or intake process, and is usually provided in Spanish.

Another aspect of referral is of partners *to* the One-Stop system. Some community agencies that are more explicitly incorporated into the One-Stop's outreach plan, such as the mobile clinics in Brighton, Colorado, are actively involved in completing the "referral circle," referring customers they provide services to in the field back to the One-Stop.

In other places, such as in Onley, Virginia, the referral process is less formal, yet a number of community-based organizations regularly refer MSFWs to the One-Stop for employment and training resources that the CBO does not have the capacity to provide. For example, the Eastern Shore Coalition Against Domestic Violence regularly refers MSFWs to the One-Stop because many of them are in need of new job skills in order to leave farmwork (and an abusive partner) for employment in another industry. However, at least one site suggested that while the One-Stop regularly refers MSFW customers to community partners, these partners do not routinely refer their customers to the One-Stop for employment services.

Staff knowledge of the organizations to which they make referrals is one measure of the quality of community partnerships (and a factor that may impact the effectiveness of the referral process, and ultimately the services provided to MSFWs). One site discussed the haphazard quality of their referral process, noting that little is known about the eligibility requirements and quality of the organizations to which staff make referrals. In general, at the sites we visited, One-Stop staff members' knowledge of organizations serving MSFWs ranges from nominal to thorough. Similarly, MSFW-serving community-based organizations and public programs not represented on site at the One-Stops demonstrated varying levels of understanding of One-Stop services for MSFWs. At one site, community providers brought together for a SPR-conducted

interview noted that this opportunity helped them become more familiar with the services available through their colleagues' programs. This unanticipated benefit to the One-Stop and MSFW-serving community suggests the potential for a more formal structure of inter- and intra-agency information sharing, one with positive consequences for partnership.

As the example above suggests, communication is yet another element that informs the quality of partnership. Informal partner communication specific to MSFWs is the norm at all three sites we visited. While One-Stop partners tend to meet formally on a quarterly or monthly basis, meetings and communication specific to farmworkers occur on an ad hoc basis. Both in the One-Stop centers, and in the local community, staff of all partner organizations talk by phone or in person regularly, as specific issues with farmworker customers arise. For example, when families come to the One-Stop with a primary job-seeker, One-Stop staff often make phone calls to a variety of other MSFW-serving organizations to help orchestrate family services. Similarly, as One-Stop intake staff explore a farmworker's interest in leaving agricultural labor, staff will call or talk to NFJP grantee staff to plan for training and supportive services.

One-Stop partners reported that as peak migrant season approaches, communication to prepare for the surge in customers becomes more intentional—meetings are scheduled and informal conversations multiply. Partners, both at the One-Stop and throughout the community, share information about services, including how much of a resource is available (e.g. the approximate food pantry volume), how many “slots” are open for farmworkers to fill (e.g. in a Head Start program), the number of job openings in agricultural labor in the local area, and the available housing for migrant workers.

During the migrant season, extemporaneous meetings may also be held in the event of an unplanned issue or event that has direct implications for farmworkers, and which requires some action on the part of partners. For example, the Eastern Shore of Virginia learned one season of an approaching hurricane, and the One-Stop held an emergency meeting of partners to decide how to warn and assist MSFWs to prepare for it. Regardless of the level of formality or regularity, consistent and effective communication appears critical to the preservation of partnerships in the service of MSFWs.

In the One-Stop, the partner relationship among the MSFW outreach workers, intake staff, and the NFJP grantee appears particularly significant in the provision and coordination of services to farmworkers. MSFW customers often interact with these three partners in succession, thus the transfer of customers from one to the other is a critical step in providing effective, “seamless” services. Outreach workers are often the reason an MSFW customer comes into the One-Stop. Intake staff are generally the first to greet MSFW customers and provide them initial services. If customers are found to be in need of training to leave agricultural employment, or if they are in need of related assistance, they are passed on to the NFJP grantee, which provides training assistance and supportive services. Due to this shared responsibility and standard procedure for serving MSFWs, these staff develop methods of communication befitting their respective roles in serving the farmworkers. These methods include regular phone calls, emails, and in-person check-ins. In addition, in at least one site (Brighton, Colorado), these partners share an MIS, enabling them to view the services and activities that other staff have provided or to whom customers have been referred.

In two sites, the State Monitor Advocate plays an important partner role in the development, oversight, and coordination of services to MSFWs. The Monitor Advocate is a statewide position, yet because the outreach workers they supervise are often few in number, and because the MSFW population is often concentrated in several specific areas in the state, Monitor Advocates can cultivate a local expertise. In Virginia, the Monitor Advocate participates on the Governor’s Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker Board, as well as attends local meetings hosted by MSFW service providers and other entities grappling with MSFW issues. (The Department of Motor Vehicles recently invited the Monitor Advocate to a meeting about coping with undocumented individuals trying to obtain drivers’ licenses.) In Colorado, the Monitor Advocates’ annual training and routine visits to the local areas in which there are outreach workers assist the One-Stop to consider whether they are providing equitable services to MSFWs. In this sense, Monitor Advocates are a central component of the network of partners serving MSFWs.

The other significant formal partnership in the three sites is coalition organizations, both local and statewide, comprised of MSFW-serving organizations. In each of the three sites, representatives from the One-Stop are members of their local or statewide coalition or council. In Colorado, there is one state migrant coalition and several regional coalitions across the state. Virginia, too, maintains a migrant council.

The councils and coalitions tend to address “issues that no single organization could tackle on their own,” according to one outreach worker. For example, the Northern Area Migrant Coalition in Colorado (the region encompassing Adams County) targeted increasing the number of units of housing affordable for migrants, and with coalition support, member Catholic Charities built new affordable housing in Greeley, a town in neighboring Weld County. In the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas, a coalition exists that targets the health and well-being of the families in the Valley. While this coalition is not specific to farmworkers, because there are significant numbers of migrant families in the Valley, the coalition’s work targets them as a priority population. In addition, the coalition meetings are a venue for One-Stop staff to meet with *promotoras*, who help inform staff about the status and current issues of concern in the migrant community.

The many partners we spoke with suggested that their primary challenge to partnership is the frenetic pace of business engendered by the overwhelming needs of the MSFW community. The crop-driven employment cycle is such that approximately half the year represents build-up and break-down of farmworker activity, and the other half constitutes the height of the growing and harvesting season. Agencies supplying services to this population are affected by the annual arrival and disappearance of their customers. The times of the year during which partnerships are most auspicious are, logically, the busiest times. Referrals flourish, but the aspects of partnership that are germane to knowledge-sharing, policy-making, and advocacy are hampered by the customer rush.

In summary, our visits and observations of partnerships at the three sites yielded a number of key factors regarding their development and usefulness in facilitating services to MSFWs. In general, an array of One-Stop and community partners are essential to meet the employment and supportive service needs of MSFW customers and their families. Factors that can impact the quality of these partnerships include the development of One-Stop strategic plans that involve partners in estimating the volume of MSFWs to be served in the coming year, and committing to serving these customers, according to partner capacity and expertise. The quality of the referral process—both the referral of MSFWs from the One-Stop to community-based partners and vice versa—is impacted by the depth of knowledge all partners have about each other, and is yet another factor affecting the strength of local partnerships. Lastly, One-Stop participation in community, regional, or statewide coalitions dedicated to advocating for

or serving MSFWs can be a means for building relationships with community partners and educating the MSFW-serving community about One-Stop services.

### **SUMMARY OF KEY LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

Before providing a final summary of the key lessons gleaned from sites, we restate two important factors that have implications for the future of One-Stop services to MSFWs. First, although the primary goal of federal employment and training programs is to help farmworkers achieve self-sufficient employment through a transition into other industries, many farmworkers will not leave agricultural labor, due to an array of economic, cultural, and personal reasons. Second, the NFJP, which has provided training, and supportive and emergency services specifically to MSFWs, is slated for termination. In this event, One-Stops may be compelled to ask to what extent other resources, such as WIA core, intensive, training, and supportive services, can be used to assist those farmworkers who wish to leave farmwork, as well as those who seek an upgraded position within agriculture or need stabilization services just to maintain their current levels of farm labor employment.

In light of these factors and our site visits, a number of key lessons emerged with regard to One-Stop services for MSFWs.

- An expertise in serving and understanding the farmworker community and culture is an important factor in how well-used the One-Stop is by MSFWs. One factor that may aid the development of such expertise is to have staff with cultural connections to the MSFW community, as well as bilingual capacity.
- In the future, outreach workers may be left as the only dedicated staff for MSFWs. Yet the demand may be such that outreach workers cannot serve all farmworkers needing One-Stop services. Cross-training additional staff to serve MSFWs, and ensuring the hiring of bilingual staff may be a way for One-Stops to address this challenge.
- The need for bilingual services also has implications for the way in which core services are provided. Self-services are often inaccessible to monolingual MSFWs; thus bilingual staff are required to provide immediate staff-assisted core services. Even when One-Stop printed materials and computer services are available in Spanish, monolingual MSFWs may not have the basic literacy and/or computer literacy to take advantage of these services without staff assistance.
- The passage of specific policy regarding MSFWs can be an important strategy in helping states, local areas, or individual One-Stops prioritize services to MSFWs. For example, the One-Stop in Edinburg, Texas passed a policy

requiring the provision of “first day services” that must be provided to MSFW customers within 30 days of their initial contact with the One-Stop.

- In order to make One-Stop services accessible to MSFWs, rural satellite offices may be opened that are closer to MSFW communities than other One-Stops. The NFJP-workforce board dialogues identified the use of NFJP grantees as satellite or mobile One-Stops in rural areas.
- MSFW-specific coalitions and councils are an important venue in which the One-Stop can participate to stay informed about issues facing the MSFW community, learn about potential service strategies, and inform other partners and potential partners about One-Stop services.
- Families are as important a “customer” in the One-Stop system as are individual job-seekers. Individual members within the family may have different needs, yet the family unit is a critical unit for service providers to consider.
- The subset of the MSFW population about whom the three sites have the most hope of leaving farm labor is migrant youth. Thus, the MSFW youth program, the WIA youth program and programs such as HEP-CAMP may become particularly important service providers in the future.
- Supportive and emergency services, including housing, utility assistance, food, clothing, transportation, health care and health education, child care, and educational services including English language instruction, are critical to stabilizing MSFWs and their families, and allowing them to find employment, whether in agriculture or in another industry.
- In general, the availability of English language instruction is often inadequate. Classes are neither large enough in number nor offered in a wide enough variety of time slots to meet the demand. Supportive services such as child care and transportation are critical services to enable MSFWs to participate in English language instruction, yet they are rarely available in the sites we studied.
- Services to employers are critical for serving MSFWs.
  - Services to agricultural employers can ultimately benefit MSFW customers, if those services result in improved working conditions and render the employer willing to receive the outreach worker on site. One-Stops can also obtain information from agricultural employers, such as crops to be grown or job openings in the coming year, which assists in the on-going planning process.
  - Services to non-agricultural employers may include education about employing former farmworkers, allaying fears that the employee will quit when the crop season returns.

As we noted in our introduction, the sites we studied are case studies identified through a difficult search for One-Stops providing *any* targeted or unique services for MSFWs. Other One-Stops may lack the specific focus on serving MSFW customers, and the accompanying expertise developed by these three sites. Thus, for other One-Stops to take advantage of the lessons described above will require concerted effort, and a significant investment in time, technology, infrastructure, partnership, and staff, in order to effectively serve this special population.

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#### **XIV. SERVING LIMITED-ENGLISH SPEAKERS THROUGH THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM: A CASE STUDY**

In the summer of 1999, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) awarded Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) a contract for the national *Evaluation of the Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act* (WIA). As described in the appendix to this paper, the evaluation consists of multiple data collection components, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods, which can be divided into three distinct phases. As part of the first two phases, field staff conducted site visits to 14 states and 23 local areas to understand broad issues of WIA implementation and operations, such as the transition from JTPA to WIA, partnership building, governance, and service design and delivery. Also as part of these earlier phases, SPR tracked indicators of states' and local areas' progress towards implementing required WIA elements nationwide, as well as analyzed client-level data on program participants to understand the extent to which client characteristics and services changed as local areas transitioned from JTPA to WIA. As shown in the appendix, a total of 19 reports and papers were produced from these first two phases of the study.

The year 2003 marked the beginning of the third and final phase of the evaluation, yielding four additional papers. Rather than revisiting broad-level implementation issues, this phase focused on two narrowly defined topics: (1) the engagement of businesses as part of One-Stop strategic planning and as customers, and (2) One-Stop services to special populations. Each of these topics branched into a distinct but related sub-study under Phase III.

The special populations sub-study, of which this paper is a part, is specifically concerned with how three particular groups—limited-English-proficient individuals (LEPs), the homeless, and migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs)—can be effectively served within the One-Stop context. With this question in mind, field staff conducted site visits in December 2003 and January 2004 to 18 additional local workforce investment areas. The four workforce investment areas we visited specifically for their LEP-serving strategies were: Santa Cruz County, Arizona; Chicago, Illinois; Coastal Counties, Maine; and North Central Wisconsin.

The four primary sites listed above were selected as part of a difficult process to identify local areas that had extensive experience and innovative strategies in working with LEPs in the One-Stop career center context. As part of this process, we requested nominations from DOL and special interest organizations and used web research to identify a small pool of potential sites. Next, we conducted preliminary telephone interviews with each site to narrow this pool to the four local areas whose practices in serving LEPs we profile in this paper. Given the small number of local areas we studied as part of the research for this paper and the lack of any objective criteria for measuring their success in serving LEPs, the sites we studied should be viewed as *case studies* of different models of serving limited-English speakers in the One-Stop context.

## INTRODUCTION

As defined in WIA's client-level reporting system, "limited English language proficiency" describes persons who (1) have a limited ability to speak, read, write or understand English, and (2) whose primary language is a language other than English or who live in a household or community where English is not the dominant language.

The size of the LEP population in the United States is quite large and has grown dramatically over the last 10 years. In 1990, about 6.5 million adults spoke English "not well or at all." In 2000, the number of adults who fell into this category jumped to more than 10.5 million. Of these 10.5 million, the most commonly spoken language was Spanish (6.6 million adults), followed by Asian or Pacific Islander languages (1.4 million adults) and "Indo-European" languages (1.2 million adults).<sup>1</sup>

While, by definition, the LEP population faces the challenge of having limited English skills, this population also often faces additional barriers, such as wages that are lower than those of individuals proficient in English. For example, immigrants who are orally fluent in English have earnings that are 14% greater than the earnings of immigrants who are not orally fluent in English. Likewise, those immigrants who are fluent in oral and written English have earnings that are 24% greater than the earnings of immigrants who are not.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Revised Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons (Revised DOL Recipient LEP Guidance)* in the Federal Register on May 29, 2003 (68 F.R. 32290).

<sup>2</sup> Maloney, C. (August 18, 2003). *Clinton bill promotes English language services in One-Stops*. Employment & Training Reporter, p. 738.

Many federal policies and guidelines have been established in the last several years to help ensure that the LEP population is adequately and fairly served by federally-funded programs, such as programs in the One-Stop system. Many of these efforts were spurred by the release in 2000 of *Executive Order 13166: Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency*. This federal order stated that, as part of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, persons who are limited in English proficiency as a result of national origin may not be “excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”<sup>3</sup> In addition, this Order mandated that all federally-funded agencies examine the delivery of their services to the LEP population, and develop agency-specific Title VI guidance for ensuring that the LEP population has reasonable access to program services and activities.

In response to Executive Order 13166, DOL developed *Revised DOL Recipient LEP Guidance*, including recommended strategies for One-Stop centers, such as: (1) how to determine whether their LEP services are adequately provided, given the surrounding LEP population, (2) when to provide oral language interpreters and how to ensure that interpreters are competent and appropriate, and (3) how to determine which documents should be translated and how to ensure that the translations are accurate. In addition, this guidance contained five elements that One-Stops may address when developing their own LEP service-plan, such as policies for: (1) identifying customers that need language assistance, (2) interacting with LEP customers and ensuring that they are provided with appropriate interpretation and translation, (3) training staff about LEP policies and procedures, (4) effectively alerting LEP community members of the One-Stop services available in their primary language, and (5) evaluating and updating the LEP plan.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 provides: No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (Section 601 of Title VI, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 2000d.)

<sup>4</sup> The Department of Labor published *Revised Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients Regarding the Title VI Prohibition Against National Origin Discrimination Affecting Limited English Proficient Persons (Revised DOL Recipient LEP Guidance)* in the Federal Register on May 29, 2003 (68 F.R. 32290). On this same date, Employment and Training Administration Advisory System issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 26-02, which notified State Workforce Liaisons and State Workforce Agencies of this guidance.

To aid local One-Stop systems in developing and implementing LEP plans, DOL alerted state workforce liaisons and agencies of tools and information available on the website of the Interagency Working Group on LEP (<http://www.lep.gov>). This website provides links to tools and resources such as: (1) federal LEP guidance, including Executive Order 13166, (2) “*I Speak*” *Language Identification Flashcard* that LEP customers can use to indicate their spoken language, (3) organizations that can aid One-Stop centers in identifying appropriate translators and interpreters, (4) government websites and other resources in languages other than English, and (5) the *Language Assistance Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance*<sup>5</sup> that One-Stop centers can use to develop and assess a plan for LEP services.

As part of a longer-term strategy for supporting local One-Stop systems, the Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has also created the LEP Workgroup, made up of ETA regional and national office staff who are charged with identifying, collecting, and making available LEP tools and best practice information. In addition, DOL is developing other products that will support LEP services in the workforce investment system, including a Technical Assistance Guide on Services to Limited English Proficient Persons, an on-line Peer Expert Directory, and a special Tabulation of Census Data for local workforce areas. All of these products are going through ETA clearance and will soon be available on the Internet.

While not enough research has been conducted to identify “best practices,” there are a few trends for serving the LEP population in the workforce context that seem to hold particular promise. Current workforce-program design recommendations include: (1) teaching language and literacy skills as part of job skills training to help expedite the rate of job placement, (2) helping LEP persons design long-term career goals that include career ladders, (3) reducing redundancy across English courses and focusing the content on what is needed to perform in a job, (4) preparing persons with basic cultural skills expected by the American workplace, (5) providing occupational training in other languages when English is not required to perform a job, and (6) adapting training

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.lep.gov/selfassesstool.htm>

programs to better meet the needs of LEP persons, such as hiring bilingual staff and teaching using a “hands on” or “contextualized” approach.<sup>6</sup>

Given the increasing attention being paid to serving the LEP population, this paper on serving LEP customers in the One-Stop context comes at an opportune time. Its overarching research question is, to what extent can the One-Stop system effectively serve the LEP population and through what specific strategies. The remainder of this paper is divided into six key areas: (1) profiles of the four sites; (2) planning processes used to develop LEP service procedures; (3) challenges and strategies with regard to outreach and enrollment of the LEP population in One-Stop services; (4) key characteristics and modifications of the service delivery system recommended for the LEP population to secure and retain employment; (5) analysis of the nature of local partnerships to serve LEP customers; and (6) a distillation of key themes and practices to emerge from the study, as well as their implications for other local areas and for the future.

## **LOCAL PROFILES**

The One-Stop career centers that we visited as part of this study have rather distinct local contexts. That is, the geographic setting, demographics of the LEP population, service plans, and key industries are quite different from one community to the next. In addition, the local areas in the study also have distinct approaches to structuring the One-Stop system so that it meets the needs of customers with limited English proficiency. This section provides a summary of the four sites we visited in terms of the One-Stops’ local context and staffing structure.

### **Santa Cruz County, Arizona**

The Santa Cruz County local area has two One-Stop centers, both of which are located in Nogales, Arizona. The city, population 21,000, is located on the Mexican border, adjacent to its twin city of Nogales, Mexico. Nogales serves as a critical port of entry for Mexican produce, which fills 75% of America’s need during the winter. Agriculture, government, and the local Wal-Mart store are the city’s largest employers. The population is predominantly Latino, with non-Latino whites being the second largest sub-population. Spanish-speaking or bilingual persons are considered the

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<sup>6</sup> Wrigley, H.S., Richer, E., Martinson, K, Kubo, H., and Strawn, J. (2003). *The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Employment Prospects for Adults with Limited English Skills*. National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium and Center for Law and Social Policy.

“norm” in the community, with 70% to 80% of the population being LEP, according to local respondents. Given this unique situation, the LEP population in this area is not considered a “special population,” although the local area uses several strategies that might be used by other local areas serving the LEP population.

In the Santa Cruz County LWIA, we concentrated our site visit on one of the Nogales One-Stop career centers. Most of the One-Stop customers are referred by the state Employment Services office and the state Vocational Rehabilitation office, both of which are located off-site. Adult Basic Education (ABE), a key One-Stop partner for serving the LEP population, funds two organizations as service providers for the LEP population: Literacy Volunteers of America, which is co-located at one of the two One-Stop centers, and Nogales Unified School District. Both ABE programs are the main providers of English as a Second Language (ESL) and General Education Development (GED) credential for One-Stop customers. Respondents we spoke with estimated that about 80% of WIA registrants were LEP.

#### **North Central Wisconsin**

In the North Central Wisconsin LWIA, we focused our site visit on Marathon County Job Works. This comprehensive One-Stop center is located in Wausau, Wisconsin (population 40,000), a city that relies heavily on the manufacturing industry for jobs. Until 30 years ago, when the community became a refugee resettlement community, the population was almost entirely white. The refugee LEP population that has moved to the Wausau area is primarily Hmong, with a much smaller but significant representation of Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese refugees. Many refugees have lived in the area for a number of years and have children in the public school system. Unlike their parents, these youth often have full mastery of the English language and have adopted the local Wisconsin culture as part of their own. There are also a significant number of Latino LEP permanent residents, who are drawn to the area by manufacturing and farming job opportunities.

Marathon County Job Works is a part of the local system that uses a strong network of required and non-required partners to serve the local LEP population. The primary partner is the Workforce Attachment and Advancement Program,<sup>7</sup> a state-

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<sup>7</sup> Funding through the state grant for the Workforce Attachment and Advancement Program ended just after our site visit. It was expected that the activities associated with this program would continue, and be funded by TANF dollars.

funded program that is co-located at the One-Stop center and focuses on providing supportive and training services to LEP customers. Other services and support for LEP customers come from various partners, such as TANF and USDA Food Stamp Employment and Training, which fund the Resource Room staff and case managers. Another key partner is the Wausau Area Hmong Mutual Association—the local Refugee Resettlement program—which provides primarily Asian LEP persons with employment and training services, ESL courses, GED courses, and other supportive services. Other non-required partners include Children’s Service Society of Wisconsin (mental health provider), Neighbor’s Place (food pantry and adult education provider), Wausau School District (GED and ESL provider), North Central Technical College (GED and eligible training provider), Latinos Unidos (Latino resource group), and J and P Consultants (private translation and interpretation service provider). The LEP specialist we spoke with estimates that he works with about 50 Hmong customers per month, or about 500 per year; none of these become WIA registrants.

#### **Chicago Mayor’s Office, Illinois**

Chicago, Illinois (population 2.9 million) is divided into neighborhoods, which often reflect different cultures, such as Latino, Chinese, Russian, and Polish communities. After seeing a significant decline in manufacturing, the largest types of employers in the area are restaurants, elementary and secondary schools, and general medicine and surgical hospitals.

In structuring its One-Stop system, Chicago took advantage of the city’s strong system of community-based organizations (CBOs) throughout the different neighborhoods, and created a formal network called “WorkNet Chicago.” This network is comprised of over 100 CBOs in Chicago, many of which have direct and well-established connections with LEP sub-populations. The Chicago local workforce investment board (LWIB) provides WIA funding to 50-60 of these CBOs. These affiliate sites provide WIA core, intensive, and training services. Additionally, the Chicago local area has five comprehensive One-Stop centers geographically distributed throughout the city, including Pilsen One-Stop Career Center (Pilsen One-Stop), which was our center of focus. In program year 2001, Chicago exited about 800 WIA registrants, of whom about 7% were identified as LEP.

Partners that are particularly key to the delivery of LEP services at the Pilsen One-Stop are the Illinois Department of Employment Security and National Able Network, a non-profit agency that was contracted to provide WIA services, in part,

because of the staff's ability to speak multiple languages and understand different cultures in the local community. One other partner that is particularly key to service delivery for both comprehensive and affiliate sites is City Colleges of Chicago, which offers ESL in 57 locations throughout Chicago.

### **Coastal Counties, Maine**

Portland CareerCenter—one of seven centers in the Coastal Counties LWIA—is located in Portland, Maine (population 65,000). Portland is a port city and the local economy relies heavily on tourism. The residents are primarily white, although there is a large and diverse LEP refugee population that comes from numerous countries, including Somalia, Sudan, Congo, Zaire, Ethiopia, and Iraq. Many of these refugees were originally settled in this area, although there are significant numbers of “New Mainers” who originally settled in another part of the United States, but moved to Portland because of its reputation for being a pleasant city with plenty of available jobs during the tourist season. As a result of the growing retiree population, the cost of living is increasing, which makes it difficult for the refugee population to find affordable housing.

Portland CareerCenter serves the LEP population through many required and non-required partners, including WIA and Portland Adult Education (the local ABE provider). Since Portland has few community-based organizations, other LEP service providers usually include programs that are funded through the City of Portland's Health and Human Services/Social Services Division, such as the Refugee Collaborative and Family Shelter Program. Respondents we spoke with estimated that the workforce system serves about 500 LEP customers per year, but the number who become WIA registrants is much smaller.

### **PLANNING PROCESS**

DOL recommends that One-Stop career centers develop a set of LEP-service procedures to ensure that the population is adequately served. To aid One-Stops in developing a plan, DOL recommends that centers use *The Language Assistance Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance*.<sup>8</sup> This

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<sup>8</sup> Guidance to develop a plan, and specific mention of the *Language Assistance Self-Assessment and Planning Tool for Recipients of Federal Financial Assistance*, were issued by Employment and Training Administration Advisory System on May 29, 2003 in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 26-02.



tool involves two major activities: 1) conducting a self-assessment, such as determining the size of the LEP population in the community and assessing the resources available, and 2) developing a set of planned procedures, whether in written form or simply in the form of knowledge across all staff, including procedures for serving LEP customers and constructing a system for regularly monitoring and updating the service plan.

The One-Stop centers in this study carried out such planning but without a written plan. Their LEP-service procedures evolved over time through implementing different practices, reflecting on those practices, and making continuous, incremental changes. The frontline staff often had input into these evolving policies and had a common understanding of how to serve the LEP customers, including how to greet an LEP customer and find an interpreter in the event of a language barrier.

Centers were more likely to produce written plans when funding was provided specifically for this task or when funding requirements dictated a written plan. For example, even though Portland CareerCenter and Marathon County Job Works have been serving the LEP populations for many years without written plans, both had recently developed or were currently developing written plans as a result of funding opportunities. Portland CareerCenter received a \$200,000 grant from WIA incentive funding, which it was using to conduct a formal needs assessment of the LEP population and, based on the findings, develop a written plan. As another example, Marathon County Job Works received a grant for serving the Latino LEP sub-population. When applying for the grant, they were required to document the goals of Latino LEP activities, outline how the services would be coordinated and delivered, and develop a monitoring system for ensuring that the activities were completed.

As part of local planning processes, the One-Stop centers we visited also helped to develop cross-agency, community-wide plans for serving the LEP population. For example, the Chicago One-Stop system helped ensure that LEP services were well distributed over their large geographic region by developing a Community Workforce Employment Council comprised of five CBOs, five employers, and one community resident. This council went to numerous CBOs in the community to describe the local One-Stop services, learn about the LEP population, determine what services and resources were needed, and coordinate services among agencies. Marathon County Job Works used a different approach. Rather than touring the community to assess needs, the director became a member of the city's community-based strategic planning committee, called the Minority Affairs Office of Wausau 2000. Since 1992, this group

of service-providers and leaders has met bi-monthly to assess the changing needs of the LEP community and coordinate services.

## **OUTREACH AND ENROLLMENT**

In order to adequately serve the LEP population, it is essential that the local LEP population first be aware of the One-Stop center, as well as the specific services that it provides. To recruit and retain LEP customers, all One-Stop centers in this study implemented multiple measures to help ensure that LEP customers have a positive and productive experience from the moment they walk into the center. This section describes some of the challenges that the One-Stop centers faced in recruiting LEP customers and how the centers tailored their recruitment and enrollment strategies to overcome some of these challenges.

### **Outreach and Recruitment**

While challenges to recruiting LEP customers varied across the One-Stop centers in this study, the three most often cited were: 1) limited English-speaking skills make it difficult for LEP populations to learn about available services, 2) limited literacy skills, which are present in many of the LEP customers in this study, make it difficult for customers to read promotional materials that have been translated into their own language, and 3) some LEP populations may not trust government agencies and therefore may be initially wary of One-Stop centers.

Several approaches were used to help overcome these challenges to recruitment. For example, centers produced advertisements in languages other than English using multiple forms of media, such as flyers, brochures, radio advertisements, television advertisements, and written articles in the LEP communities' newspapers. One-Stops have also sponsored or participated in LEP-targeted events, such as job fairs and workshops, with information being presented in the primary language or with interpreters. In addition, many One-Stop centers have taken advantage of networks established by agencies that serve the LEP population, and rely on these agencies as a referral source.

Targeted efforts to build the LEP populations' trust of One-Stop centers were another important component of effective recruitment. Among the ways centers did this was to build relationships with community leaders, service providers, and community members. For example, lead administrators of Marathon County Job Works worked for several years to build trust with key Hmong leaders, including

administrators of other programs that served the Hmong community, such as the Refugee Resettlement program. As part of the trust-building effort, One-Stop administrators worked with Hmong leaders on different committees, established personal relationships with the Hmong leaders, showed a genuine interest in and respect for the Hmong culture, advertised in Hmong using various media, and adapted their services to meet the needs of the Hmong population—such as by providing bilingual and bicultural Hmong staff. Once trust was established with the Hmong community leaders, these leaders became the main source of LEP customer referrals. In addition, this One-Stop center also worked especially hard to satisfy the Hmong customers when they did come to the center, recognizing that word-of-mouth within the LEP community would be a powerful source of recruitment. For example, case managers worked to place Hmong customers in jobs very quickly, since immediate employment was often their goal.

Another strategy for building the LEP communities' trust in One-Stop centers was to help new grass-roots community groups become legally recognized. For example, Marathon County Job Works acquired funds from a state grant and worked with the Latino community members, faith-based organizations, and other service providers to develop Latinos Unidos, a 501c3 organization. Because Marathon County Job Works is directly involved in supporting this newly emerging program, key Latino leaders are familiar with and more frequently promote the One-Stop center to Latino community members.

Despite the multiple advertising and recruitment strategies used by the One-Stop centers in this study, two strategies, which reflect the tight-knit nature of many LEP populations, appear to be the most effective for recruiting LEP customers. The first is word of mouth, in which customers who accomplish their goals through the aid of One-Stop centers tell neighbors and friends about their success, as described above. The second strategy is referral by agencies that are strongly connected to the LEP population. For example, both Portland CareerCenter and Marathon County Job Works have established close working relationships with their local Refugee Resettlement programs, which now refer a large number of LEP customers. As another example, Chicago's LWIB intentionally placed One-Stop services in CBOs that already had a strong presence in different LEP communities, making these CBOs affiliate One-Stop sites. Once the CBOs became affiliate One-Stop sites, the LEP

community members that were already coming to these sites could also access the newly added One-Stop services.

### **Intake and Enrollment**

The One-Stop centers altered several components of their intake and enrollment processes in order to ensure that LEP customers' experiences were equal in quality to that of English speakers. These efforts included providing bilingual staff or interpreters for LEP customers and altering the method and content of intake and enrollment processes, as described in this section.

To ensure effective communication as soon as the customer walks into the One-Stop center, three of the four One-Stop centers intentionally place bilingual and bicultural "greeters" at the front desk of the Resource Room. This allows the One-Stop staff to immediately discuss the LEP customers' needs and refer them to appropriate One-Stop services. In addition, these staff know how to put the LEP customers at ease by interacting with them in a culturally appropriate manner. For example, if a man and woman enter the One-Stop center, the Resource Room greeters' may direct their conversation to the woman, man, or both, depending on cultural norms.

Other features of the Resource Room are also modified in order to make LEP customers feel welcome upon entrance into the One-Stop center. For example, all of the centers provide translated materials about the services available through the One-Stop and other service providers in the community. Marathon County Job Works also provides signs and artwork targeted toward the more common LEP groups.

All of the centers modify both the content and method of orientation to accommodate the LEP customers. For example, at Pilsen One-Stop in Chicago and Portland CareerCenter, a group orientation is held either in the customers' primary language or with an interpreter, depending on the number and composition of orientation participants. As part of orientation, the staff work closely with the LEP customers to identify their goals and gain a basic understanding of their English skills. This information is used to determine the best route of services for each LEP customer, especially since the Resource Room tools are predominantly in English.

Since basic English skills are required to use the Resource Room tools, in most cases, LEP customers skip the Resource Room services altogether and instead are provided with staff-assisted services by a bilingual case manager or a case manager paired with an interpreter.

## **SERVICE DELIVERY**

Once intake occurs, customers are offered an array of employment and related services, which the centers in this study often adapted to meet the needs of their local LEP populations. We examine the One-Stop career centers' delivery of emergency and basic need services to LEP customers, and pre-employment and job training services that are adapted to better meet the needs of LEP customers. We examine the centers' delivery of job matching and placement services. We discuss the importance of case management and employer services provided in support of the LEP customers. Lastly, we discuss the challenges that the centers commonly face in adapting their services.

### **Emergency and Basic-Need Services**

One-Stop centers routinely offer emergency and basic-need services to customers in need, regardless of whether they are LEP or English proficient customers. These basic-need services often include medical, housing, and transportation services. Such stabilizing services are provided so that customers can effectively use the employment and training services at the One-Stop.

There were no definitive patterns regarding the need for emergency and basic-need services based solely on the customers' LEP status; however, LEP customers in this study that were newer to the area were often in greater need of housing and related services. For example, the Portland CareerCenter refers many of its "New Mainers," who by definition are newly resettled, to two housing and basic-need programs within the City of Portland's Health and Human Services/Social Services Division. The first program, The Family Shelter program, provides housing and assistance with developing a work plan that will lead to permanent housing. The second program is the Refugee Collaborative, which links refugees with basic-need services, such as housing, medical services, food pantries, and small stipends for utility bills. In contrast, the Hmong population in Marathon County is a more established population, and thus results in fewer referrals to housing and emergency services.

The One-Stop centers commonly refer customers to off-site providers for basic-need services, although the Chicago One-Stop system used an interesting strategy that allowed some affiliate sites to provide certain basic-need services directly. That is, when the Chicago LWIB selected One-Stop affiliate sites, the board selected some CBOs that were already delivering basic-need services. The One-Stop employment services were added to the service package already offered at the CBOs.

### **Pre-employment Training**

All of the centers in this study tailored their pre-employment training programs to the local LEP populations, specifically to help LEP customers understand the expectations of American employers. For example, Portland CareerCenter designed a long-term program that teaches pre-employment skills, including how to obtain a job (such as finding, applying for, and interviewing for a job opening), as well as how to retain a job (such as by arriving to work at the same time every day). Marathon County Job Works uses a different delivery approach and provides stand-alone workshops, which do not require long-term commitments from participants. To reach a large LEP audience, the workshops are conducted in the Hmong language and are often held off-site at the local Refugee Resettlement program. The workshops are often theme-focused and have included topics such as, “how to keep a job,” “legal rights,” and “sexual harassment.”

Centers also found that many of their LEP customers were in need of the basic computer skills required in order to apply for a job. To meet this need, Pilsen One-Stop in Chicago developed a program specifically for LEP customers that focuses on computer skills, such as how to find a job opening on the computer, produce a résumé, and communicate via email.

The One-Stop centers commonly integrated English skills training into pre-employment training for LEP customers. For example, the Nogales One-Stop career center provides pre-employment training that focuses on computer skills. Even though the course was not designed exclusively for LEP customers, the instructor incorporates several strategies to accommodate the large number of LEP students. She encourages her LEP students to speak in English, which they are generally hesitant to do. The instructor also spends much of her classroom time focusing on self-esteem issues before beginning with the computer instruction. To boost their confidence, she works to connect with each customer on a personal level, cites examples of her own struggles with learning, and encourages customers to progress through the course at their own pace—which commonly takes four to six months.

### **Job Training Services**

Each of the centers have multiple formats of job training for LEP customers. These approaches include: 1) providing job training after establishing some measure of English proficiency, 2) providing job training using an integrated approach, whereby

customers learn English as part of the job training, and 3) providing job training in languages other than English.

The first approach that the centers use is to conduct *job training after LEP customers establish some degree of proficiency in English*. Both Portland CareerCenter and Nogales One-Stop centers often use this more traditional approach, which does not require modifying the job training program itself. That is, customers first attend English courses. Then, after some minimum level of English proficiency has been reached, the customer attends the unaltered job training.

There is some debate over the merit of this approach. Critics point out that the English requirement can unnecessarily prolong the job placement process and often results in an English curriculum that is repetitive and broader than necessary for LEP persons to function in the workplace.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, some of this concern can be assuaged by using an English curriculum that is more closely tailored to the workplace, such as with Portland CareerCenter, in which WIA and Portland Adult Education collaborated to design a program for the LEP refugee population that integrates English and pre-employment skills instruction.

The second job training approach that the One-Stop centers use for LEP customers is *integrated job training*, in which English skills required for the job are taught as part of the training. This approach has been used in Nogales One-Stop and Marathon County Job Works to deliver Certified Nursing Assistant training. Rather than using the traditional approach to job training, which requires that customers master the English language before enrolling in training, basic English skills required for the job are offered as part of the training itself. At both centers, the curriculum consists of two phases. The first phase focuses on developing study habits and English skills that would be used by a Certified Nursing Assistant in the workplace. The second phase is the nursing instruction itself. The nursing instruction is provided by eligible training providers, although the training providers in Marathon County Job Works and Nogales One-Stop use different training styles. At Nogales One-Stop, even though students learn the English skill set required for nursing, much of the instruction is still provided in Spanish. Upon reflection, staff commented that the instruction would be better if it

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<sup>9</sup> Wrigley, H.S., Richer, E., Martinson, K, Kubo, H., and Strawn, J. (2003). *The Language of Opportunity: Expanding Employment Prospects for Adults with Limited English Skills*. National Adult Education Professional Development Consortium and Center for Law and Social Policy.

were entirely in English. This approach is implemented in Marathon County Job Works, where the second phase is taught exclusively in English and the bilingual instructor from the first phase accompanies the students through the nursing instruction phase and assists with interpretation when needed.

The third job training approach that the centers use is to provide *job training in languages other than English*, specifically for jobs that require no or very limited English skills. Marathon County Job Works uses this strategy to train LEP customers for many jobs, such as manufacturing and other labor-intensive positions. The success of this approach requires a system of strong supports for both the LEP customer and the employer, either upfront, or on an on-going basis, or both.

For example, one local manufacturing employer wanted to hire a large number of employees and continue hiring over a considerable period of time. To accomplish this goal, the employer and One-Stop staff worked together to identify front-line employees that were bilingual in Hmong and English, and then supported their development of the complex skill set that was required for them to become line supervisors, such as leadership skills and GED credentials. Once these bilingual staff became supervisors, they were able to train and supervise subsequently hired LEP employees.

In another example used by this One-Stop center, bilingual staff provided support to both the LEP customers and employers before, during, and after the job training. Thus, before the training began the center staff worked with the employer to identify skills that were required to perform the jobs, and then found LEP customers with those requisite foundation skills. The center staff learned how to operate the equipment and either conducted the training in the LEP customers' language or arranged for a bilingual eligible training provider to do so. After the training, the center staff followed-up to ensure successful job placement, retention, and satisfaction on the part of both the LEP customer and employer. These subsequent activities often required that the center staff provide interpretation, mediation, and problem-solving services.

### **Job Matching and Placement Services**

The sites demonstrated two very different attitudes toward job matching and placement. Portland CareerCenter and Pilsen One-Stop in Chicago believe it is best to empower their LEP customers with the skills necessary to find and obtain a job independently of the staff, rather than provide extensive job matching and placement services.



In contrast, Nogales One-Stop and Marathon County Job Works rely on heavy staff intervention and frequently conduct job matching and placement services specifically for their LEP customers. For example, bilingual case managers at Marathon County Job Works familiarize themselves with various employers, skill requirements of open positions, and the skill sets of LEP customers in need of a job. Based on this information, the case manager works with the employers and customers to make the most appropriate job matches. Nogales One-Stop uses a similar approach, but makes use of a non-profit organization outside of the One-Stop center called More for Kids. The director of More for Kids spends much of his time building relationships with employers, alerting employers of job-seekers (many of whom come from the One-Stop center), and setting up interviews. According to Nogales One-Stop center staff, this strategy works well because the director of More for Kids is first and foremost a successful business owner who understands the business world and knows how to effectively interact with other business owners.

### **Case Management**

The One Stop centers in this study provide a greater amount of case management services to LEP customers than to English-proficient customers. Much of this is because the LEP customers do not have the English skills required to use the Resource Room tools without large amounts of direct assistance, which is commonly provided by the case manager.

LEP customers also commonly receive additional case management at these centers because they are more likely than English proficient customers to experience communication problems with employers after job placement, which can result in lower job retention rates without effective intervention. To assist LEP customers with such problems, Marathon County Job Works provides extensive follow-up services with LEP customers and keeps an “open door” policy even after the customer is exited from the One-Stop system.

The One-Stop centers also shifted their case management approach in response to their local LEP populations, and place greater emphasis on helping LEP customers establish long-term career goals. Staff explained that establishing career goals is commonly needed for LEP customers because they often come to the centers with the goal of starting work as soon as possible, and rarely have plans for acquiring higher wages in the future. The staff at Pilsen One-Stop in Chicago are particularly concerned about this issue, often encountering LEP customers who come to the One-Stop centers

and expect to be immediately matched with a job that they can start the next day. As a general rule, Pilsen One-Stop staff encourage these customers to develop long-term career goals and enroll in related training and develop a plan for economic stability.

Centers also shifted their case management approach for LEP customers so that additional efforts are made to enroll LEP customers in English and GED instruction and ensure that courses are completed. For example, in Marathon County Job Works, the case manager frequently “makes a deal,” in which the customer agrees to enroll in English and GED instruction in exchange for quick job placement. In another strategy, the Portland CareerCenter provides its English instruction onsite, so that case managers can easily observe and react to missed attendance.

Finally, case management for LEP customers can continue even well beyond the initial job placement and in some instances has been identified as critical to job retention. For example, Marathon County’s case managers periodically check with employers with whom LEP customers have been placed as well as the customers themselves to identify problems that the LEP customer might be having on the job site, such as a failure to understand or follow directions or difficulty in adjusting to the work site or the employer’s expectations. Once problems are identified, center staff provide interpretation or mediation services to resolve them.

### **Employer Services**

One-Stop centers in this study found that employers who do not have bilingual staff are sometimes initially hesitant to hire LEP customers because of the expected communication barrier. However, with encouragement and the promise of on-going support from the One-Stop centers this reluctance can be overcome. Marathon County Job Works is particularly attentive to serving employers, and believes that employer services are key to opening up job opportunities for LEP customers, as well as placing and retaining LEP customers in those jobs. This section takes a close look at this center’s multifaceted approach toward providing employer services on the behalf of LEP customers.

To increase the number of job openings and to open employers’ doors to hiring LEP customers, bilingual One-Stop case managers usually schedule meetings with employers, who are primarily manufacturers. During these meetings, the case managers learn about the various positions at the company and identifies positions that would be appropriate for persons who have no or very limited English skills. As part

of this, the case managers help the employers identify skills that are needed to perform the job, including the degree to which English skills are required. Often times, after going through this process, the employers realize that as long as the LEP workers understand the safety procedures, very little English is actually needed to carry out the requirements of these often labor-intensive positions.

The One-Stop staff also commonly serve employers by reviewing and updating the companies' policies so that they are conducive to hiring LEP customers of different cultures. For example, in the Marathon County area, policy accommodations are often made to allow for three-day funerals, which are a custom of the local Hmong population. In addition, the One-Stop center makes arrangements for the policies to be translated into other languages either by the bilingual One-Stop staff or by private consultants.

Arrangements are also commonly made for contextualized job training once the employer agrees to hire LEP customers. If the work procedures are simple enough, bilingual center staff learn how to operate the equipment and then conduct the training themselves in the LEP customers' language. When more complicated customized training is required, center staff identify eligible training providers and help obtain funding so that the training procedures can be delivered in languages other than English.

After LEP customers are hired, additional employer services are provided to help ensure that the employer is satisfied with the placement and performance of the LEP customers. As part of this, bilingual center staff help resolve communication problems between LEP customers and employers by providing interpretation, mediation, and problem-solving services when needed. Often times these services are provided after the One-Stop center is closed to ensure that second and third-shift supervisors and customers are supported.

### **Primary Challenges and Modifications to Service Delivery**

As the preceding discussion suggests, the sites we visited faced a number of challenges in designing services to their local LEP populations and introduced some noteworthy modifications in addressing them. First, these centers did not have One-Stop "best practice" models to follow when they developed their LEP services; indeed, such models are still quite rare. As a consequence, the centers designed their services by noting the needs of the local LEP population and developing their own philosophy

about how to best meet them. For example, the Pilsen One-Stop of Chicago operates under the general philosophy that LEP customers need more than a job—they need the basic skills required to independently navigate the American employment system. Based on this philosophy, the center has designed their services to promote self sufficiency through emphasizing the development of pre-employment skills and longer-term career goals. As another example, Marathon County Job Works’ services are based on the philosophy that personal relationships are critical to the success of their LEP customers. In that vein, the center provides many supports to LEP customers and their employers before, during and after job placement.

Second, the centers also commonly found that in order to increase the chance of LEP-customers’ success, the pre-employment and job training services required more than just simply being translated and delivered in different languages. Instead, the local LEP populations in this study benefited from the customization and extra emphasis that the centers provided in developing these customers’ work-specific English skills, long-term career goals, and knowledge about common expectations of American employers. Each of these skills required the introduction of new culturally-specific curricula.

Third, centers understood the importance of hiring and training front-line staff who could understand LEP-specific service procedures. For example, Resource Room staff were either bilingual and multi-cultural themselves or learned how to find an interpreter and quickly route LEP customers to appropriate services, even if this meant bypassing the English-based Resource Room. Such staff capacity was the result of explicit hiring decisions, reinforced in some cases through diversity training so that staff would be culturally competent to serve customers from diverse backgrounds.

As a consequence of these adaptations, all of the centers provided services to LEP customers that were functionally equivalent to those provided to English-speaking customers. However, the funding sources sometimes differed. For example, some sites had special grants, which they used to hire staff who could function as “LEP specialists.” Additionally, because ESL and GED instruction were commonly provided to LEP customers, funding through Adult Education services was often key. We found, in fact, that local areas had a preference for using funding sources other than WIA Title I dollars to serve LEP customers, because of their concern about the consequences to their WIA performance if they did otherwise.

## **LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS**

In order to provide a wide range of services to LEP customers, it is essential that One-Stop centers develop partnerships with and refer customers to LEP service providers. This section describes which service providers are especially important to serving the LEP population, how the partners benefit by coordinating efforts with each other, barriers that can hinder the development of strong partnerships around LEP services, and strategies used to strengthen LEP-service partnerships.

The One-Stop centers commonly developed partnerships with three types of service providers in order to adequately serve LEP customers: 1) Adult Basic Education, 2) interpreter and translation service providers, and 3) local Refugee Resettlement agencies. All of the centers in this study developed partnerships with Adult Basic Education, and commonly rely on this partner to provide adult literacy instruction, such as English instruction (which, by definition, is needed by all LEP customers) and GED instruction (which is commonly needed by the LEP customers at the visited centers). As was demonstrated during our visits, ABE is commonly provided through several types of organizations, including public school districts, community colleges, and non-profit organizations. In addition, more than one organization may provide ABE services in an area, as was the case in Nogales. The Nogales One-Stop referred their customers to two different ABE providers— Nogales Unified School District and Literacy Volunteers of America.

Even though the One-Stop centers had bilingual staff on site, several of the centers still found it important to develop partnerships with interpretation service providers. Interpreters are called upon when, for example, bilingual staff are not available or when customers speak languages unfamiliar to center staff. There are several sources of interpreters, including individual consultants, private interpretation and translation agencies, and language professors at local colleges and universities. Respondents explained that it is important to know off hand which interpreters speak which language, so that appropriate interpreters can be quickly provided. This hastened response helps prevent LEP customers from relying on bilingual relatives and friends for interpretation, which can breach confidentiality and result in poor interpretation.

Both Portland CareerCenter and Marathon County Job Works developed strong partnerships with the local Refugee Resettlement programs, which is funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. These One-Stop centers found the

programs to be vital resources for recruiting LEP customers, as well as providing ESL, pre-employment and job training, and other supportive services.

The LEP-service providers benefited by the partner development in that they could cumulatively provide a much broader range of services than any one provider could offer, including English instruction, GED instruction, job skills training, and basic-need services. These benefits were seen at Portland CareerCenter, which began forming local partnerships before WIA because resources for LEP customers were so limited in the community. In addition, by working together, local programs were strengthened by each other's expertise. Such was the case at Portland CareerCenter, in which Portland Adult Basic Education (ABE) and WIA used their specialized knowledge and collaboratively developed and now co-teach a program for LEP customers that develops their English and pre-employment skills.

One-Stop centers and providers also reduced the amount of effort and money spent on marketing to the LEP population by increasing the number of referrals within the network of partnering agencies. For example, Marathon County Job Works invested great effort in developing relationships on a personal and professional level with the staff of the local Refugee Resettlement program. Once trust was established and the Refugee Resettlement program regularly referred LEP customers to the One-Stop center, the One-Stop center found that they could rely on this free "advertising," and reduce the number of television, radio, and newspaper advertisements.

Despite the advantages, differing views about the importance and priority of LEP services can be a significant barrier to developing local partnerships. For example, one One-Stop center in this study found that some service providers in their area were not supportive of LEP-tailored services. This left the center in an awkward position of trying to push service providers toward more effectively serving the LEP population without damaging organizational partnerships.

Even if all partners are in agreement that LEP-tailored services should be provided, there may not be agreement about *how* best to tailor the services. Even among the centers in this study, we found that there were many methods used to deliver training, including requiring English mastery before providing job training, teaching job-specific English as part of job skill training, and providing job matching services in exchange for a verbal agreement that the LEP customers would enroll in English

instruction. Without sound research that identifies the most effective approaches for delivering workforce training for LEP customers, the debate remains open.

Nonetheless, the One-Stop centers found state and federal guidance helpful for strengthening partnerships and agreement around LEP issues. For example, staff at one One-Stop center found Executive Order 13166 and the state's interpretation of federal legislation effective for convincing some service providers that they should provide interpretation services for LEP customers, and that interpretation providers should be neutral parties who are fluent enough to describe the topic at hand. Another local area, which has been struggling with forming relationships with some providers, explained that the WIA legislation has helped sustain relationship-building efforts.

One underlying element that is also key to developing and maintaining strong local partnerships is frequent informal communication. The centers use multiple strategies to increase the frequency of informal communication about LEP services, including co-teaching, co-locating, and following up on referrals. For example, at Portland Career Center, WIA and Adult Basic Education have increased their frequency of communication through co-teaching a program for LEP customers. As another example, both Marathon County Job Works and Portland CareerCenter co-locate Refugee Resettlement staff members by hiring them part-time at the One-Stop center.

More formal approaches to communication are also used by the One-Stop centers to help ensure that partners are in full agreement of decisions, including decisions about how to best serve LEP customers. Many of the centers hold several meetings of different staff composition, including meetings with on-site agency partners, off-site agency partners, and different levels of staff within a One-Stop center (such as front-line staff, managers, and directors).

Chicago used a unique strategy for strengthening local partnerships around LEP services through their selection of One-Stop affiliate sites. The local WIB selected CBOs that were already well-integrated in different LEP communities, and "locked" these service providers into the One-Stop partnership by selecting them as One-Stop affiliate sites. For example, Spanish Coalition for Jobs, Inc. and Chinese American Service League were selected to serve as affiliate One-Stop sites because these CBOs were already well-connected with Latino and Chinese neighborhoods.

To strengthen local partnerships around LEP services, some bilingual One-Stop staff serve on several advisory boards, including advisory boards of their partner

agencies. Through this process, the One-Stop staff keep other service providers informed of their LEP services and learn of the LEP services provided by others. In addition, by advising and learning from partners' experiences, the One-Stop staff are able to help strengthen the LEP services that many of their customers receive.

#### **SUMMARY & IMPLICATIONS OF KEY LESSONS**

In previous sections of this paper, we discussed alternative strategies used by the case study sites that are key to serving LEP customers within the One-Stop context. Although we are limited by the small sample of sites we visited, we can identify strategies that were critical to the centers' success of serving LEP customers, as well as identify some key implications for transferability to other local areas.

The One-Stop centers were successful in their service delivery to LEP customers, in part, because they took into account the barriers, beyond limited English, that were commonly found in their local LEP populations. For example, Marathon County Job Works recognized that their Hmong and Latino populations were generally mistrustful of government agencies, and concluded that these populations may be hesitant to use their center. To overcome this barrier, the One-Stop centers used numerous strategies to build trust with the local LEP communities, including building personal relationships with key LEP community leaders and developing strong partnerships with service providers that were already well-established in the LEP communities. As another example, the centers often developed training programs to help LEP customers acquire the knowledge and skills expected by the American workplace, such as how to apply and interview for a job opening

Another factor that contributed to the One-Stop centers' success was that each center tailored multiple components of their service delivery package to their local LEP populations. During our site visits, we found numerous examples of modified recruitment strategies, intake and enrollment processes, basic skill and job trainings, and staff training procedures. These LEP-service delivery strategies have evolved and strengthened through the process of implementing different practices, reflecting on those practices over time, and making continuous, incremental changes.

All of the centers in this study used multiple strategies for hastening the placement of LEP customers in jobs, such as adapting trainings to LEP customers and working closely with employers. The One-Stop centers also modified job training programs to accommodate LEP customers, such as by providing the job training in



languages other than English, and using integrated training, in which the English skill set required by a particular job is taught as part of the job training. Two centers also found it helpful to establish connections with employers. For example, in Marathon County Job Works, a bilingual case manager works closely with employers to help identify positions that LEP customers can qualify for, develops a training system that communicates job and safety requirements, and ensures effective communication between employers and LEP employees after job placement.

In addition, all four centers emphasized helping LEP customers develop basic skills, including English skills, that would help increase their chance of independence. All centers heavily encouraged LEP customers to take ESL, and when needed, GED courses. All centers placed emphasis on helping LEP customers develop long-term career goals that would lead to economic stability. Pilsen One-Stop in Chicago and Portland CareerCenter developed programs specifically for the LEP populations that emphasized the development of long-term career goals and basic skills required to help achieve those goals. Marathon County Job Works used a different strategy: LEP customers were quickly placed in jobs, with the agreement that customers would attend English courses and develop and work toward longer-term career goals.

When examining the issue of transferability, it is important to acknowledge that many of the centers in this study were successful in tailoring some of their services because they obtained additional funds. For example, services for LEP customers at Marathon County Job Works greatly benefited from a state grant that was used to hire a full-time, bilingual case manager that specifically focuses on serving LEP customers.

Likewise, it is important to recognize that one-time funding for designing LEP services may not be enough to ensure continued implementation. For example, Nogales One-Stop received funds to design and implement an integrated training course for Certified Nursing Assistants, in which LEP students learned the English skill set required for the position. However, when start-up funds were depleted and no additional funds materialized, the integrated training ceased.

Nonetheless, the sites in this study do suggest that initiatives to serve the LEP population can be built and sustained by building on existing local community resources. Recent federal requirements and guidelines should give momentum to these efforts, including *Executive Order 13166* and *Revised DOL Recipient LEP Guidance*. Already, one of the One-Stop career centers in this study has found Executive Order

13166 helpful for convincing other federally-funded service providers in their area that interpretation and translation services should be made available to LEP customers. Continued federal emphasis regarding LEP customer service will increase the likelihood of adequate LEP service delivery elsewhere. At the same time, requirements without additional tools or guidance may result in inadequate or poorly thought-out program modifications. With this in mind, DOL may want to conduct further research with the intent of identifying more “best practice” tools and models for serving the LEP customers in the One-Stop career center context.