

*Implementation Study of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act  
(WIOA) Regarding Title I and Title III Core Programs*

## **WIOA Implementation Study: Technical Appendix**

*Based on findings from 14 states and 28 local areas in 2019*

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### Reports in this series

- Operationalizing Changes to the Title I Youth Program Under WIOA
- State and Local Efforts to Strengthen Workforce System Governance and Planning Under WIOA
- New Requirements for American Job Center Systems Regarding One-Stop Operators, Partnership Agreements, and Certification
- Change and Continuity in the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs Under WIOA
- Performance Accountability, Eligible Training Providers, Labor Market Information, and Evaluation Requirements
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## Introduction

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law in 2014, was designed to modernize the public workforce system to improve the quality and outcomes of workforce services. In order to understand how states and local areas responded to the new law, the U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Chief Evaluation Office contracted with Mathematica (with Social Policy Research Associates as a subcontractor) to conduct an implementation study. The study focused on the core workforce programs authorized under WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Services) and Title III (Employment Services) and examined integration with programs under Titles II (Adult Education and Family Literacy) and IV (Vocational Rehabilitation), and other partners.

The goals of the study were to (1) examine the variation in the approaches used to implement key WIOA provisions, (2) assess implementation progress, and (3) identify needs for further guidance or technical assistance. This technical appendix provides information on key aspects of the study design and data collection, such as the research questions, topic areas explored, the conceptual framework, data sources, and types of respondents.

### A. Research questions, domains of interest, and conceptual framework

The study was designed to address several broad research questions.

- What changes were made to implement new provisions under WIOA Titles I and III, and what changes are planned? How does implementation vary across states? What implementation challenges are states experiencing, and how are they being addressed?
- To what extent is WIOA's vision for an integrated workforce system being achieved through state- and local-level synergies between Titles I, II, III, and IV?
- What additional technical assistance, guidance, or policy changes would help states administer core programs and provide guidance and oversight at the local level?

Since WIOA introduced many large and small changes to the workforce system as it had existed under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), the study team undertook an effort to clarify the most important changes identified by stakeholders at the national and regional levels. Through interviews with those stakeholders, and consultation with a technical working group, study topics were narrowed to those listed in Exhibit A.1 below. The topics were organized into five domains that represent the goals of the legislation, and for each domain, the corresponding requirements and strategies to achieve the goals were identified. Ultimately, five reports, as well as a brief on early implementation, were produced under the study covering those domains and their related topic areas.

The conceptual framework developed for the study (Exhibit A.2) theorized that system and customer-level outcomes (box to the right) would be influenced by how stakeholders (circles along the left of figure) responded to the new WIOA provisions, in the context of a variety of

drivers (two boxes in center) that shape state and local-level planning and implementation of WIOA. In addition, contextual factors (bottom of figure) such as labor market conditions, a history of collaborating with partners, and the degree of workforce system decentralization would influence how WIOA's provisions were implemented and outcomes for jobseekers, employers, and the workforce system. The research questions, study priorities, and conceptual framework guided the data collection methods, analysis of the data, and suggestions for future guidance and support.

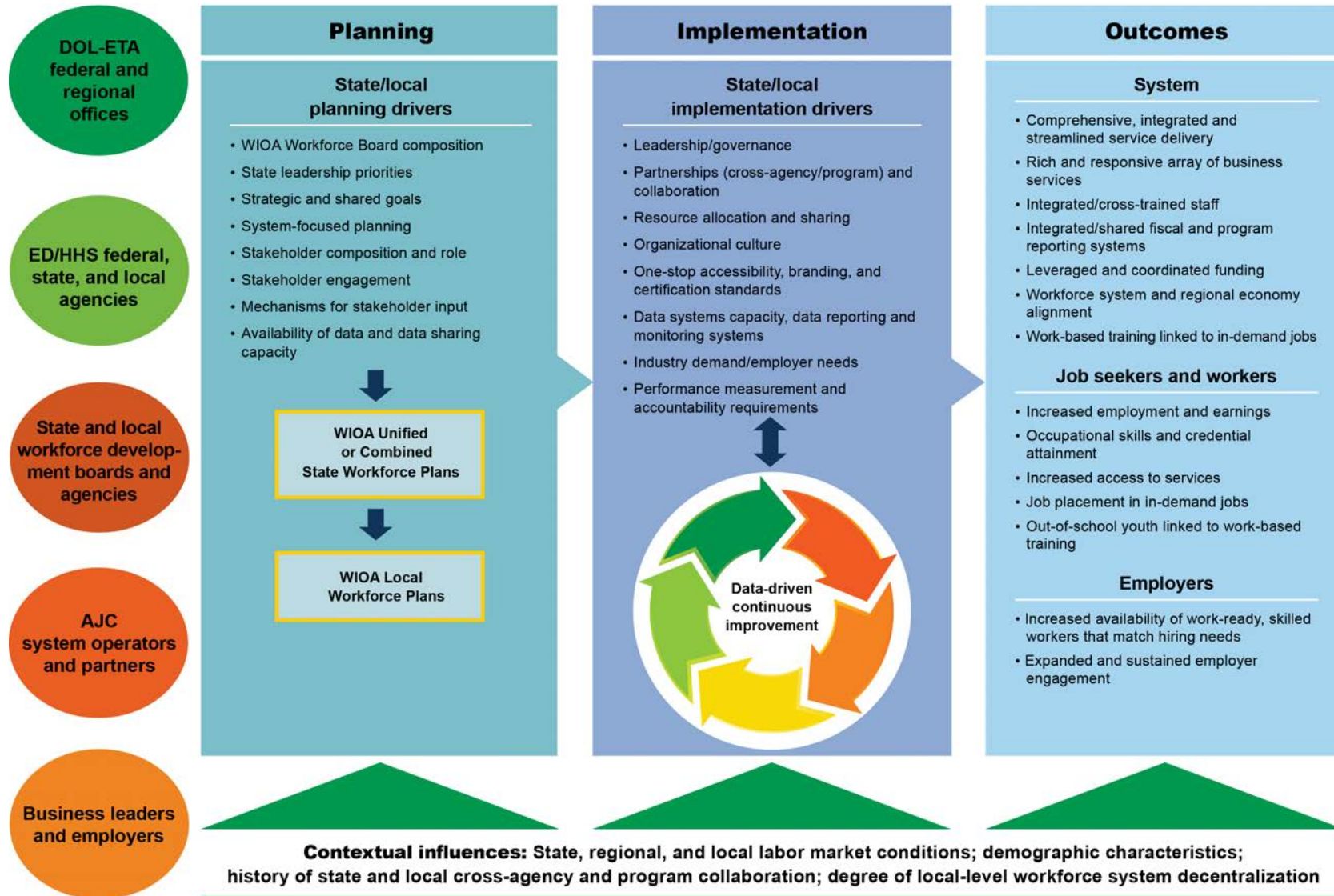
**Exhibit A.1. Topical framework for WIOA Implementation Study**

Domain	Topics
<p>1. More streamlined, coordinated, and strategic state and local governance and planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unified or combined state plans designed to promote more coordination between core partners (and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and other partners) and more strategic plans</li> <li>• Designation of regions that align with regional economic development efforts, and development of regional plans</li> <li>• Board engagement with local and regional employers in a variety of ways, including through sector partnerships and regional planning</li> <li>• Restructuring of state and local workforce board membership to make boards more streamlined, strategic, and innovative (for example, reaffirming business leadership, ensuring representation from registered apprenticeship and core partners, and making youth council optional)</li> <li>• Improved use of performance and evaluation data and evidence-based strategies for continuous improvement by state and local boards</li> </ul>
<p>2. Improved American Job Center (AJC) system operations and more integrated service delivery through greater partner coordination</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive procurement of AJC operators</li> <li>• Regular assessment and certification of AJCs for effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement</li> <li>• Strengthening of co-location requirements for Employment Services and capacity of AJCs to serve youth</li> <li>• Strengthening of partners’ memoranda of understanding and resource-sharing agreements</li> <li>• Promotion of integrated intake processes—both online and at centers—integrated staffing models and shared case management and reporting systems</li> <li>• Improved operations through innovations such as customer-centered design</li> </ul>
<p>3. Improved services to employers and adult job seekers and increased access for those with barriers to employment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of effective business service strategies to help employers meet their hiring and training needs</li> <li>• Eased restrictions on providing incumbent worker training for employer partners, including allowing that up to 20 percent of local formula funds be spent on this type of training</li> <li>• Increased maximum reimbursement rate for certain employers for on-the-job and customized training</li> <li>• Increased emphasis on work-based and job-driven training, including on-the-job training, customized training, registered apprenticeships, transitional jobs, and training that results in postsecondary credentials that include industry-recognized certifications</li> <li>• Development of sector-focused and career pathway initiatives, in which state and local boards develop training specifically designed for those areas</li> <li>• Greater flexibility and improved customer flow through shift from core and intensive services to career services, and elimination of required sequence of services</li> <li>• Greater focus on serving customers with barriers by adding individuals with few basic skills to the adult program’s list of priority populations and prioritizing high-need adult populations even when funding is not limited</li> <li>• Increased accessibility of AJCs to job seekers and workers with disabilities</li> <li>• Ability to allocate 100% of Adult or Dislocated Worker funds to the other stream</li> </ul>

Domain	Topics
<p>4. Improved services for youth and increased focus on older, out-of-school youth with barriers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased emphasis on serving older, out-of-school youth and youth with barriers by mandating that youth programs spend 75 percent of their funding on out-of-school youth—up from 30 percent—and expanding eligibility criteria, including increasing the program's age limit to 24 years</li> <li>• Increased focus of the youth program on work-based learning activities and requirement to spend 20 percent of funding on work experience activities</li> <li>• Addition of required program elements of entrepreneurial skills training, financial literacy training, and career guidance on in-demand occupations</li> </ul>
<p>5. Expanded and strengthened performance accountability and reporting systems</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New performance metrics for credential attainment, skills gains, and effectiveness of employer services, as well as retention and earnings measures for youth</li> <li>• Core partners reporting on common measures and ensuring interoperability of data systems</li> <li>• Additional reporting requirements for eligible training providers</li> <li>• Change in calculation of performance standards using statistical adjustment model</li> <li>• Shift to integrated reporting systems for Titles I and III programs with WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout</li> <li>• Regular, rigorous evaluation of core programs</li> <li>• Increased opportunity to use pay-for-performance contracts for service providers</li> </ul>



**Exhibit A.2. Conceptual framework for WIOA Implementation Study**



Note: This conceptual framework draws on implementation science to identify key planning and implementation drivers (Fixsen et al. 2015) and to recognize that implementation occurs over time, with no finite end.

## B. Data sources and analysis

Data for the study were collected via site visit interviews with state and local respondents. The visits were conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the study team collected data from four states on their early implementation progress. In the second stage, the study team collected data from another 14 states and collected administrative data on states' WIOA performance related to the Title I Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs.

Exhibit A.3 maps the stage 2 site visit locations by geographic area, and Exhibit A.4 lists all 18 states visited during both stages. Exhibit A.5 lists the types of state and local staff who were interviewed during each visit. The actual mix of respondents varied by state and local area.

**Early implementation data.** In the first stage, conducted in fall 2017, the study team interviewed administrators in seven states recommended by DOL regional offices as being relatively far along in their planning and implementation of WIOA. Based on guidance from DOL, the team followed a purposive selection process to facilitate learning about early implementation experiences. The team selected four of the states for on-site, in-depth interviews with state and local stakeholders. In each state, the team interviewed administrators at the state agencies responsible for administering Titles I through IV, and then visited two local areas in the state—or two AJCs in single-area states—to interview local administrators and frontline staff. Collecting data from these four states served two purposes: (1) it piloted and informed the fine-tuning of site visit data-collection instruments, and (2) it offered findings on early implementation progress with WIOA, which were documented in an issue brief. A technical working group (TWG) first met during this stage to provide input on the study design; the TWG provided input at subsequent time points during the study.

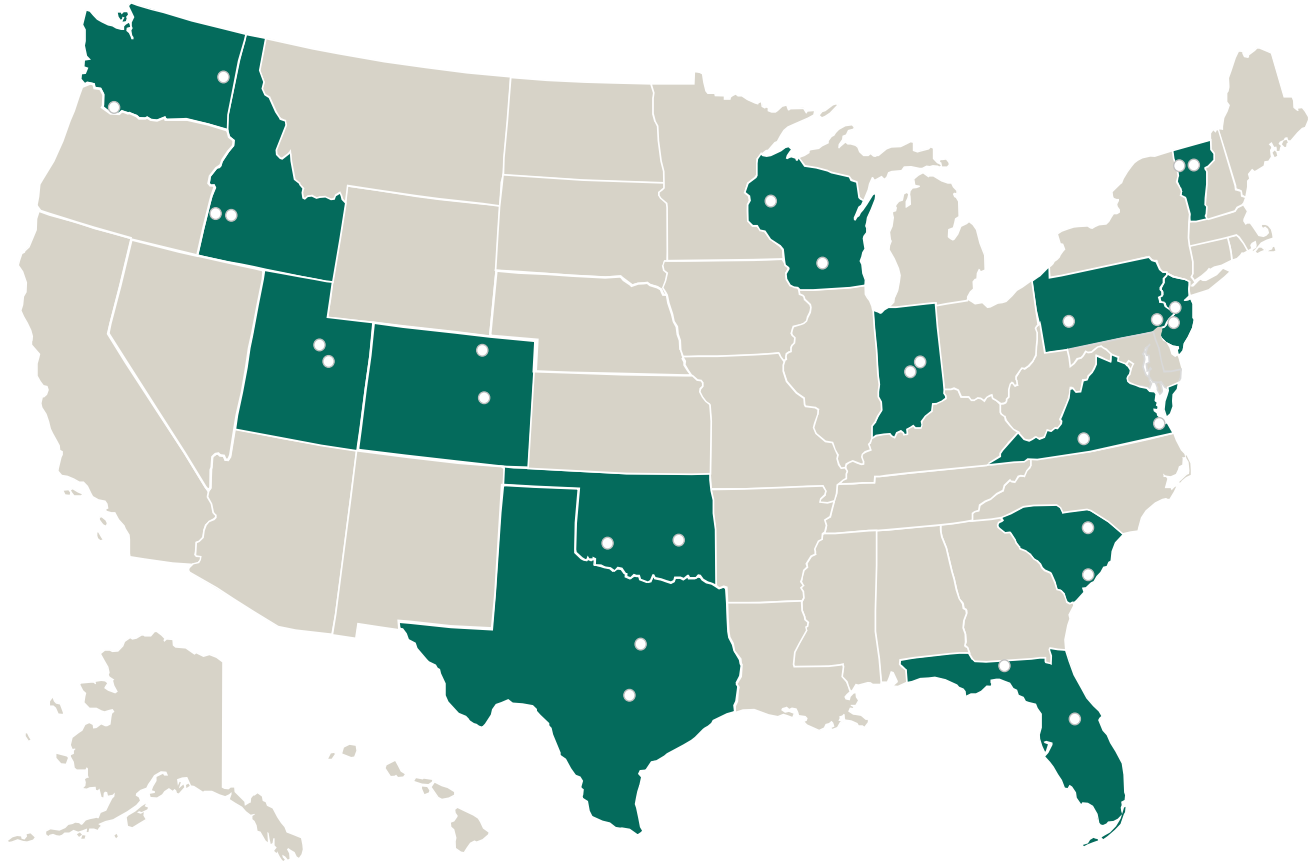
**Later implementation data.** In the second stage of data collection the study team selected and visited an additional 14 states and 28 local areas. These site visits were conducted in the winter and spring of 2019. The team used a stratified approach for selecting states for site visits. The team examined each state's DOL region, administrative structure, and local area structure. The study team selected states within each DOL region and ensured that the distribution of selected states based on administrative structure and local area structure remained in proportion to all states.

As in the early visits, in each state the team visited two local workforce areas and an AJC in each. In the 3 single-area states, the team visited two AJCs. The team used in-depth interview protocols that were refined after the early implementation visits. In addition, the study collected and analyzed public-use data sets that contain the administrative data states submitted to DOL, documenting WIOA participants' service receipt and outcomes for the Title I Youth Program.

In the analysis, the study team examined multiple factors related to planning and implementation, including key drivers reported by site visit respondents that influenced changes in the workforce system in each state. The team looked at successes and challenges reported by

state and local respondents, and what the respondents indicated might be important mechanisms for achieving WIOA’s vision in regard to high quality and accessible services and a more integrated system.

**Exhibit A.3. Site visit locations in 2019 (14 states and 28 local areas)**



Note: White dots are local areas visited for the study.

**Exhibit A.4. WIOA Implementation Study: Site visit states, regions, and local areas**

State/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	State workforce agency	Local workforce area	Local workforce board	American Job Center
1 New Jersey	✓						NJ Department of Labor and Workforce Development	Gloucester County	Gloucester County Workforce Development Board	Gloucester One-Stop Career Center
								Middlesex County	Middlesex County Workforce Development Board	New Brunswick One-Stop Career Center
2 Vermont		✓					Vermont Department of Labor	Single workforce area	Single workforce area	Burlington Career Resource Center
										Morrisville Career Resource Center
3 Pennsylvania		✓					Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry	Chester County	Chester County Workforce Development Board	PA CareerLink® Chester County
								Southern Alleghenies	Southern Alleghenies Workforce Development Board	PA CareerLink® Cambria County
4 Virginia			✓				Virginia Employment Commission	Hampton Roads	Hampton Roads Workforce Development Board	Virginia Career Works—Norfolk Center
								South Central	South Central Workforce Development Board	Virginia Career Works—South Boston
5 Florida			✓				Florida Department of Economic Opportunity	North Florida	CareerSource North Florida	Madison office
								Central Florida	CareerSource Central Florida	Orlando office
6 South Carolina				✓			South Carolina Department of Employment and Workforce	Pee Dee	Pee Dee Workforce Development Board	SC Works Pee Dee
								South Coast	Trident Workforce Development Board	SC Works Trident
7 Colorado				✓			Colorado Department of Labor & Employment	Weld County	Weld County Workforce Development Board	Employment Services of Weld County
								Pikes Peak	Pikes Peak Workforce Development Board	Pikes Peak Workforce Center
8 Oklahoma				✓			Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development	South Central	South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board	Lawton Workforce Center
								Southern	Southern Workforce Board	McAlester Workforce Center

State/Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	State workforce agency	Local workforce area	Local workforce board	American Job Center
9 Texas				✓			Texas Workforce Commission	Heart of Texas	Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas	McLennan County Workforce Solutions Center
								Capital Area	Workforce Solutions Capital Area	North Center
10 Utah					✓		Utah Department of Workforce Services	Single workforce area	Single workforce area	Price Center
										Provo Center
11 Indiana					✓		Indiana Department of Workforce Development	Central	Region 5 Workforce Development Board	WorkOne Greenfield
								Marion County	Employ Indy	WorkOne Indy
12 Wisconsin						✓	Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development	South Central	Workforce Development Board of South Central Wisconsin	Dane County Job Center (Madison)
								West Central	Workforce Development Board of West Central Wisconsin	Eau Claire County Job Center
13 Idaho						✓	Idaho Department of Labor	Single workforce area	Single workforce area	Boise
										Caldwell
14 Washington						✓	Washington State Employment Security Department	Vancouver	WorkSource Southwest Washington	WorkSource Vancouver
								Spokane	Spokane Workforce Council	WorkSource Spokane
15 Massachusetts (pilot)	✓						Department of Career Services	North Shore	MassHire-North Shore Workforce Board	MassHire North Shore Career Center—Salem
								Lowell	MassHire-Greater Lowell Workforce Board	MassHire Lowell Career Center
16 Mississippi (pilot)			✓				Department of Employment Security	Twin Districts	Twin Districts Local Workforce Development Board	Hattiesburg Job Center
								Southcentral Mississippi Works	Southcentral Mississippi Works Local Workforce Development Board	Madison Job Center
17 Ohio (pilot)					✓		Department of Jobs and Family Services	Area 20	South Central Ohio Workforce Partnership	OhioMeansJobs Fairfield County
								Area 11	Workforce Development Board of Central Ohio	OhioMeansJobs Columbus—Franklin County
18 California (pilot)						✓	Employment Development Department	San Joaquin County	San Joaquin County WorkNet	Stockton WorkNet Center
								Contra Costa County	Workforce Development Board of Contra Costa County	Concord American Job Center

**Exhibit A.5. WIOA Implementation Study: Types of site visit respondents at the state and local levels**

Types of state-level respondents	Types of local-level respondents
State workforce board chair	Local workforce board chair
State workforce board staff	Local workforce board staff
State workforce agency director	AJC manager
State WIOA policy staff	AJC operator
Title I adult and dislocated worker program and performance staff	Title I adult and dislocated worker program manager
Title I youth program staff	Title I adult and dislocated worker frontline staff
Title III Employment Services program staff	Title I youth provider or program manager
Unemployment Insurance administrator	Title III Employment Services program manager
Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act administrator	Title III Employment Services frontline staff
Community college, career technical education, or K–12 partner staff	Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program manager
Title IV vocational rehabilitation administrator (including services for the blind if separate)	Community college, career technical education, or K–12 partner manager
TANF staff	Title IV vocational rehabilitation program manager
	TANF area manager
	Other partner manager (YouthBuild, Senior Community Service Employment Program, National Farmworker Jobs Program, etc.), if applicable

## References

Fixsen, Dean, Karen Blasé, Sandra Naoom, and Michelle Duda. “Implementation Drivers: Assessing Best Practices.” National Implementation Science Network (NIRN), 2015. Available at <http://implementation.fpg.unc.edu/sites/implementation.fpg.unc.edu/files/NIRN-ImplementationDriversAssessingBestPractices.pdf>. Accessed August 31, 2016.



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