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**University of Colorado at Denver
and Health Sciences Center
Colorado WIN Partners**

**Disability Program Navigator Project
Prospects for Systems Change - 2005**

**2005 Four-State Study:
National Overview Report
December 2006**

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**Disability Program Navigator
Project Evaluation
2005 Four-State Study**

National Overview Report

Table of Contents

Executive Summary4

Disability Program Navigator Initiative Background7

DPN Implementation Maturity Model.....8

Navigator Impact on One-Stop Career Centers11

Impact on Systems12

Customer Perceptions.....13

Outcomes17

Intervening Changes.....18

Appendix: Study Methodology20

Table: Phases of DPN Implementation Maturity22

**Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative
Prospects for Systems Change
2005 Four-State Study**

**Executive Summary
National Overview Report
November 2006**

Between February and July 2005, evaluators interviewed 117 people in four states about their experiences of the implementation phase of the disability program navigator initiative. The respondents included navigators and supervisors, internal One-Stop staff and external staff from other community agencies, and customers with disabilities.

Navigator Impacts on One-Stops and Systems

33% of respondents credit the DPN initiative with making the One-Stop Centers more accessible.

Respondents describe One-Stop Centers as having undergone culture change with regard to serving job seekers with disabilities. They describe One-Stop staff with better tools and resources who are more competent and willing to work with people with disabilities.

45% of respondents speak of improved communication and collaboration within the workforce network, more appropriate referrals, and better knowledge and use of community agencies.

Customer Perceptions of the Navigator Initiative

Customers are well satisfied with the DPN and describe a wide range of support from the position. One of the most frequent recommendations that customers make about improving the DPN implementation pertains to increased marketing and outreach.

Respondents in all states note that more people with disabilities are seeking services through One-Stop Centers as result of the DPN initiative.

Respondents feel that people with disabilities are more aware of services and accommodations through the One-Stop Centers. Respondents also feel that One-Stop Centers are serving more people with multiple and more severe disabilities.

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Respondents describe One-Stop Centers as having undergone culture change with regard to serving job seekers with disabilities. They describe One-Stop staff with better tools and resources who are more competent and willing to work with people with disabilities.

Interview Participants Summarize the Effect of Navigators

The interviews inspire a theoretical construct of a DPN implementation model. Factors which emerge as pivotal for gauging the maturity of a DPN implementation are:

- The degree and distribution of *disability expertise related to employment*,
- The *accessibility* of the One-Stop Career Center,
- The level of *problem solving* in which the DPN is primarily engaged, and
- The *sphere of influence* through which the navigator is engaged to effect change.

DPN initiatives within and among states are at various phases of maturity along a continuum. The value of the disability program navigator to employment of people with disabilities increases as DPN initiatives mature. The model is described in this report. The following comments taken from the interviews describe the experience which led development of the model.

Prior to the navigator coming to the One-Stop, the counselor at the One-Stop knew about individuals with disabilities, but never how to address their needs. The navigator brings resources and information into the Center to educate staff on how we can address the needs of consumers with all different types of disabilities. (FLA)

Initially, the workforce center staff would run to the navigator for aid whenever they had a customer with disabilities. However; through the education efforts of the navigators, they now feel better equipped and more comfortable to work directly with the customer and only alert the navigator if they feel she needs to be involved. (CO)

Navigators have a handle on how the system works as a whole, and how all the components and resources function interactively. They know which agencies perform which roles, and which agencies or organizations to contact for solutions to different situations. As a result, consumers have one central person who can provide them with the best information for their individual situations and who can make sure they are moving in the right direction. The navigator makes sure no one falls through the cracks. (WI)

Having a navigator in a workforce center is like giving the public a fish. But having a navigator train an entire workforce center about disability issues is like teaching everybody how to fish. (CO)

.....
Navigators have a handle on how the system works as a whole, and how all the components and resources function interactively. They know which agencies perform which roles, and which agencies or organizations to contact for solutions to different situations. (WI)

Prior to this connection, we automatically referred customers with disabilities to VR. Center staff felt useless in our inability to serve these customers. We were sending customers out the door. The connection to the navigator in the workforce center offered an alternative to customers who might otherwise fall through the cracks. (CO)

Through the efforts of the navigator, One-Stop staff now has tools and resources to appropriately serve all customers. Customers with disabilities are now viewed by One-Stop staff as regular customers for services, to be served just like any other customer who comes into the One-Stop, in all programs and services, not just core services. The Centers no longer automatically refer customers with disabilities to VR. (FLA)

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Customers with disabilities are now viewed by One-Stop staff as regular customers for services, to be served just like any other customer who comes into the One-Stop, in all programs and services, not just core services. The Centers no longer automatically refer customers with disabilities to VR. (FLA)

The Center underwent a critical review of its whole process and the quality of its customer service. This was an indirect result of the attention that the DPN initiative brought to the accessibility of the Career Center's process and its service of people with disabilities. The Center developed a set of core services that are applied and delivered to all customers, representing a major cultural shift. Staff is more customer-centered as a result of eliminating program barriers in general. For example, procedures for all clients were streamlined in the process of trying to revise and recreate them to better accommodate people with disabilities. The customer service level for all customers of the Career Center improved. (MA)

One-Stop Centers are now more accessible, staff is knowledgeable and able to serve persons with disabilities, and those customers are coming to the Centers to receive services. Now the connections to the business community need to be increased to get this customer group placed into employment. (FLA)

Disability Program Navigator Initiative: Background

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) Initiative is a two-year demonstration project initiated in 2003. The DPN initiative seeks to increase self-sufficiency of persons with disabilities by providing seamless and comprehensive access to One-Stop Career Centers, facilitating programs and services, and establishing linkages to the employer community.

The DPN Project is jointly funded by the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (DOL), and by the Social Security Administration's Office of Program Development and Research (SSA). In 2003, the first year of demonstration pilot, the project staged 131 navigators in 17 states at a cost of \$6 million. In the second year, the agencies contributed \$12 million to train existing navigators and fund additional navigators and state programs. By June 2005, 227 DPN Navigators deployed across 17 states. The Law, Health Policy and Disability Center of the University of Iowa College of Law Training subcontracts with the U.S. Department of Labor to conduct technical assistance and evaluation.

The four states selected for qualitative study are Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. These states have 27% of all navigators across the country at the time of the site visits, but are not assumed to have a representative sample of navigators. The sites selected for the interviews exemplify diverse approaches to implementation from different regions of the country. Within each state, evaluators visited at least one rural and one urban site and a statewide DPN administrative office. Evaluators interviewed both internal and external network participants and customers to gain a 360-degree view of each program site.

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The site visits took place within the four states between February and July 2005. State-level reports describe the structure of each state's DPN project, the challenges and barriers they encountered, their accomplishments, and considerations for future inquiry. More information about study methodology is described in the Appendix at the end of this report.

National Overview Report

This national overview report summarizes learning from across the four states that participated in the DPN site visits and seeks to generalize learning about the impacts of the navigator program on One-Stop Career Centers, on the systems that interact with the One-Stops within the workforce network, and on the experience of the workforce customer with

disabilities. The report does not seek to compare one state's performance to another's. Such comparison is not meaningful since states began at different points in time, at different degrees of readiness, with different DPN resources, and not all states are represented in the sample. But evaluators have gleaned from early experience a framework that others may use to assess the maturity and effectiveness of other DPN initiatives.

DPN Implementation Maturity Model

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The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative was designed for maximum flexibility so that it could “plug and play” into the myriad state/local political and institutional constructs that comprise workforce networks across the country. Its adaptable nature is key to its usefulness.

From several respondents in each site visit, evaluators heard “It takes time...” for the disability program navigator model envisioned by federal funding agencies to mature. How much time depends both on the baseline from which the program is initiated, and also on the point which is recognized as full maturity of an effective implementation.

The Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative was designed for maximum flexibility so that it could “plug and play” into the myriad state/local political and institutional constructs that comprise workforce networks across the country. Its adaptable nature is key to its usefulness. Nonetheless, the sheer variability among states' environments can confuse the analyst's assessment of implementation.

A model which isolates the attributes of implementation along a continuum and describes more fully the implementation cycle can help the reader determine the maturity of any state's DPN initiative at a given time. It can help states plan the progression for growing their state program. It can help future evaluators assess the effectiveness of various implementation efforts. And it makes explicit the factors and criteria used in this evaluation to draw conclusions about what we saw.

In reviewing the data from the four site visits, four pivotal factors emerge to gauge the maturity of DPN implementation:

- The degree and distribution of *disability expertise related to employment*,
- The *accessibility* of the One-Stop Career Center,
- The level of *problem solving* in which the DPN is primarily engaged, and
- The *sphere of influence* through which the navigator is engaged to effect change.

In assessing the first factor, the evaluator looks at whether *disability expertise* exists, where it exists, and how expertise is refreshed and

distributed. Where is the locus of expertise relative to disability and employment of people with disability? Does it exist at all? Is most of this expertise held by the state level navigator? Is it concentrated in the person of the local navigator or workforce center disability specialist? Is it distributed across the workforce center staff so that a jobseeker with a disability does not have to be referred to the “disability silo” to get service? Is disability/employment expertise shared among the workforce center and its community partners? Is it packaged for easy transmission so that it can be/is disseminated to a core group of employers?

Another aspect of disability expertise is the mechanism whereby new learning or new developments related to disability employment can be shared among members of the workforce network. A fully distributed network model in which updated information on disability and employment is quickly and easily shared in a targeted way with all affected parties is considered a mature implementation relative to this factor.

Regardless of how great the information and relationships are relative to disability employment within the One-Stop Career Center, people with disabilities can only benefit to the degree they can access those resources. Therefore, **accessibility** is a key factor in determining the maturity of a DPN implementation. In considering this factor, evaluators ask: How accessible is the One-Stop Career Center in terms of physical entry and navigation, physical access to equipment and resources, and adaptive and assistive technology? To what degree do programmatic and attitudinal barriers hamper full access? Is access fully distributed throughout the center, or must the person with disabilities navigate a more narrowly isolated corridor that highlights his disability (i.e., designated accessible workstations) in order to access resources?

A fully mature DPN implementation on this factor is a workforce center that offers a fully accessible building, systems, processes, programs, information, technology, services and opportunities. It permits staff with disabilities to work among currently able-bodied staff to help job seekers. It allows people with disabilities to pursue job seeking and job preparation activities without being funneled into “disability queues”.

The third factor for assessing the maturity of a DPN initiative is the **level of problem-solving** in which a navigator is primarily engaged. In all settings, navigators are asked to help individuals with particularly difficult problems. This is desirable both from a perspective of responsive customer service and from a perspective of the navigator maintaining relevant and current knowledge of her customer base. But when individual case-level problem-solving predominates, the pace of systems change slows. The presence of segregated disability silos persists. And

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the quality of employment leads for which people with disabilities are prepared or referred declines.

This all puts off the goal of accommodating and integrating job seekers with disabilities in the workforce network. Therefore, it is useful to assess the level of problems with which the navigator is primarily engaged, and to determine whether these activities primarily support individuals, subgroups of disabled job seekers or the larger population of job seekers with disabilities.

A mature DPN implementation with regard to this factor addresses the bulk of problem-solving resources to systems-change that assures full service within the workforce network and full access to high quality employment opportunities to the broader population of people with disabilities.

The fourth factor we consider in assessing the maturity of DPN implementation is the navigator's *sphere of influence*. Many significant barriers to full and meaningful employment of people with disabilities exist outside the One-Stop Career Center. Barriers such as accessible or affordable transportation, housing, and medical care, lack of employment skills or employer attitudes about disability can stop a person from securing and keeping a job. Effective advocacy requires the navigator to collaborate with people in those tangential networks, to effect change on behalf of employment for people with disabilities. A mature DPN implementation has a navigator identifying these tangential obstacles to employment, and partnering with other agencies, the disability community, and the broader community to address them.

The value of a disability program navigator to the workforce system and to the goal of full and meaningful employment for persons with disabilities increases as the implementation moves to more mature phases across these four factors. There was conflicting opinion in the interviews about whether the DPN function needs to be permanent or might become superfluous over time. As implementation matures, the function of addressing the issues of employment for persons with disabilities is fully integrated into the workforce development network, encompassing the One-Stop Centers, community partners, persons with disabilities, and employers. DPN functions in this mature phase would evolve to keeping current on emerging technology and research, dispersing this information through the local networks, facilitating network collaboration, and responding to systems breakdowns as needed for ongoing maintenance. The DPN implementation maturity model is shown in the Table attached to this report.

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Navigator Impact on One-Stop Career Centers

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Largely because of these changes, respondents speak of centers that are more accommodating and better equipped, more fully integrating services and training that are accessible to everyone, providing seamless service to persons with disabilities and helping to realize the goal of universal access.

Accessibility: Thirty-three of 101 respondents (or 33%) credit the DPN initiative with making the One-Stop Centers more accessible. These comments speak of expedited removal of physical and programmatic barriers, increased access to information technology, and introduction of adaptive equipment and assistive technology and training. Increased accessibility was most often cited in Massachusetts, where it was noted by every site and subset (and by 16 of 30, or 53% of respondents). These comments were common in Colorado (11 of 24, or 46% of respondents), heard less frequently in Wisconsin (5 of 25, or 20% of respondents), but not much mentioned in Florida (1 of 22, or 5% of respondents). Largely because of these changes, respondents speak of centers that are more accommodating and better equipped, more fully integrating services and training that are accessible to everyone, providing seamless service to persons with disabilities and helping to realize the goal of universal access.

Culture Change: Respondents describe One-Stop Career Centers that are better able to serve people with disabilities. Culture change is described by 43% of Massachusetts respondents (13 of 30), 25% of Colorado respondents (6 of 24), 20% of Florida respondents (6 of 30), and 12% of the responses from Wisconsin (3 of 25). The specific changes they describe are:

- Improved coordination and collaboration, with business staff beginning to function as a team, and One-Stop staff who have more tools, resources and knowledge to work with different subgroups of people with disabilities;
- DPNs who model appropriate expectations and approaches toward working with people with disabilities, resulting in One-Stop staff who are more aware and competent and better able to serve disabled clients directly as result of education/training by DPN.
- Center staff who are beginning to work with people whose disabilities are more limiting and who need more support and accommodation.
- Centers that have more services to offer people with disabilities.

Location: Three of the four states in the survey posit that the DPN's location makes an important difference in the success of the initiative. The states tried locating navigators in One-Stop Centers,

co-locating them with Vocational Rehabilitation in One-Stop Centers, and out stationing them with Centers for Independent Living. In general, the navigator's home agency always feels an increased capability to work with the employment issues of people with disabilities. It is somewhat more difficult for remote or circuit-rider (part-time) navigators to influence the operations of a One-Stop Center, and these constructs may cause further confusion among external users. There is some suggestion that the optimal location of the DPN might shift as the implementation matures – for instance, some respondents argue that stationing the DPN remote from the workforce center and in an agency that was already dedicated to disability issues gave the initiative a jump-start and buy-in at the outset. But sites also describe the importance of locating the DPN in the One-Stop Center as the focus turns to changing One-Stop procedures, policies, and physical and programmatic access to the One-Stop Center.

The DPN brings all the various agency partners together for trainings and meetings. That has everyone sharing and learning about the others' roles, limitations and abilities.

Impact on Systems

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Respondents frame their comments in terms of improved quality of referrals, less turf-protecting behavior and better leveraging of resources, increased awareness and more appropriate referrals between One-Stops and other community agencies, and a greater connectivity in the workforce system, bridging gaps between agencies to coordinate services to clients.

One of the goals of the DPN initiative was to better enable the larger workforce network (including the One-Stop Center as well as other community agencies, programs and services that engage people with disabilities; employers; etc.) to help job seekers with disabilities secure and maintain full and meaningful employment. Evaluators looked at the impact of the DPN implementation on these larger systems.

Forty-six of 101 respondents (45%) speak to improved communication and collaboration within the workforce network. Respondents frame their comments in terms of improved quality of referrals, less turf-protecting behavior and better leveraging of resources, increased awareness and more appropriate referrals between One-Stops and other community agencies, and a greater connectivity in the workforce system, bridging gaps between agencies to coordinate services to clients.

In every state, the referral protocol prior to the DPN initiative was to refer every person with a disability to Vocational Rehabilitation. Each state touted one effect of the DPN as making the One-Stop Center better able to serve these customers on-site, increasing the knowledge and use of

community agencies and resources, and improving the appropriateness of referrals to VR.

The partnerships, both within the Workforce Center and with the community agencies, are as seamless and as natural as they come. In a rural area, all of the different entities understand limited funding and resources and realize the value of working together collaboratively. The relationship between the Workforce Center and Vocational Rehabilitation may be the most natural partnership witnessed during any of our site visits.

Customer Perceptions

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The customers came with employment histories in ballet dancing, retail management, computer work, truck driving, warehouse work, horse training, technical writing, grocery, business management, and agency collections. The jobs they found through the One-Stop Centers were in childcare, clerical fields, customer representatives, messenger/guard, home healthcare, riding instruction, health club marketing, and ski lift operations.

The characteristics of the customers interviewed during the four-state site visits are interesting to note, even though the respondents do not comprise a representative sample and not all customers provide full responses. Sixteen customers are interviewed in the four states; their numbers are concentrated in two. Nine of the responding customers have no previous experience of the One-Stop Center prior to the DPN. Only four of the customers are Ticket Holders, and four have used the services of the benefits counselor. Half of the customers (8 of 16) are not receiving public assistance benefits; seven (44%) are not and have not been SSDI beneficiaries.

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Of the eight customers who are working (50% of customers interviewed,) only two report working 40 or more hours per week. No one reports moving off of public assistance due to employment gained through the DPN or the One-Stop Center at the time of the interviews. Two customers report that their most recent employment has accompanying health benefits, and one has other benefits as well. The seven customers who report income each earn less than \$20,000/year. Three customers report using accommodations on their jobs.

Most respondents do not report discrimination in a workplace. Seven (44%) of responding clients report that they have experienced workplace discrimination related to their disabilities, and four (60% of those) have addressed the discrimination with a navigator. The accounts of discrimination include:

- Multiple reports of discrimination in school systems, including difficulty getting school districts to deliver accommodations even when specified in an IEP
- The issue of how, when, and how much information to disclose about one's disability came up repeatedly as a cause of concern. Customers report incidents of being released from work soon after disclosing a disability; not hired when prospective employers look at a disability and assume the customers cannot do the job; and employers limiting job opportunities/assignments due to disability rather than following up with accommodations.
- Employers discriminating against deafness
- An employer removing previous supports and sabotaging success with the job concurrent with company restructuring
- An employer telling an employee with a disability that she would have to seek assistance on her own for accommodations in testing for a key professional licensing exam. Since the customer didn't know how to follow-up, she repeatedly failed the exam and could not sustain employment.
- People with hidden disabilities report supervisors misperceiving the cause of behavior even when forewarned that a disability exists. For instance, one customer who periodically has anxiety attacks reports a supervisor screaming at him that he needed to "grow up".

The navigator takes the time to really address my needs and explain things in a way that is understandable. Through the Center, I am finding program support, direction, and guidance to help me get back into employment.

Since the navigators' role is primarily to work on systems change with One-Stop Center staff, many customers with disabilities may never encounter the DPN directly. But where they have, customers seem very

satisfied with the DPN. In describing the kinds of support the navigator provides, the customers cite:

- Help to access the services of the workforce center (7 responses, or 44%)
- Help with a variety of job preparation and readiness activities, including help to gather old school records of learning disabilities and arrange for updated records and accommodations, help to accommodate disabilities for professional licensure exams, workshops on resume building, linking to job coaches, and arranging informational interviews. (4 responses or 25%)
- Help to access and appropriately use the services of Vocational Rehabilitation (4 responses or 25%)
- Better information or referrals re: rights and benefits, including Ticket to Work, youth services, benefits specialists, public benefits, community services, civil rights protections (5 responses or 31%)
- Specific help to approach employers, including help to complete an online application, recommendations about employers appropriate to a customer's personal interests and experience, help to recognize personal strengths and frame recently acquired disability in a way that employers can see the customer in the job, referral to specific employers that have successfully hired people with the same disability, and specific coaching on in-place accommodations that makes the employment work (3 responses or 19%)
- Introduction to a current job (3 responses or 19%)
- Encouraging the acquisition of independent living skills and job skills through community partner agencies. (1 response or 6%)

One job seeker came to the One-Stop following an acute and disabling illness. He had visited the Center four times previously and worked with several different staff members, but each time the client left feeling that maybe he really wasn't capable of working anymore. He let extended periods of time pass between One-Stop visits and hadn't much incentive or energy to aggressively pursue job preparation or employment. The navigator changed all that. According to the customer, she brought a "can-do" attitude and motivation, and created a sense that the customer has a team working to support his efforts to find work. Now the customer reports that he is coming to the One-Stop regularly, making more aggressive use of the services at the Center and VR, and feeling more hopeful of finding employment again.

When asked to articulate changes to the DPN initiative or the One-Stop Center that would increase meaningful participation in the workforce system, customers offer the following suggestions:

- Locate centers and satellites in more accessible and more centralized public places such as malls, with heightened visibility and signage.
- Better marketing and outreach within the community that the DPN resource and One-Stop services even exist. Suggested targets for outreach include youth with disabilities, other public agencies (Medicaid, social services, SSA), school system, consumers at groups like the National Federation of Blind. In addition to targeted marketing, customers suggest that centers improve Internet search results on One-Stop system, provide more information on state websites about One-Stops, and offer strategically-placed, more complete and more accurate information so that people can learn who to contact and where to obtain basic information, including basic information about the work of the navigators.
- Institute a greeter position at crowded One-Stop Centers (like at Wal-Mart) to meet people as they come in the door and direct them appropriately
- DPNs should communicate directly with consumers to determine their needs in the Career Centers. Navigators should provide more guidance and support around disclosing disability, and offer tests to help customers identify the type of employment their interests and skills are best suited to do.

- Have staff available at One-Stop Centers to accommodate the needs of the Deaf.
- Across community programs, incorporate services, resources, and advocacy for customers who are deaf.
- Memorialize the connections made by the DPN and the information that the DPN has made to prevent its loss in the event that the DPN position is eliminated. The network and education provided by the DPN is invaluable.

Outcomes

Many of the improvements and changes resulting from the DPN initiative take awhile to affect outcomes. None of the initial outcomes reports are quantified, and future efforts to measure outcomes should examine hard data in addition to subjective interviews. Further, certain trends are most notable to people in certain positions (i.e., changes in the composition of One-Stop clientele may be most notable to internal respondents or administrators.) Respondents report the following outcomes starting to emerge from the implementation phase of the DPN project.

- Some respondents in every state note that more people with disabilities are seeking services through the One-Stop Career Centers. (15% of 101 respondents)
- The internal and external workforce network respondents express a strong belief that people with disabilities are more aware of services and accommodations available through the One-Stop Centers, are more comfortable and confident in the centers' ability to serve them, and feel freer to ask for what they need. (11% of 101 respondents)
- People with disabilities from various subgroups (i.e., youth in transition, mental health issues, hidden disabilities) and people with multiple and more severe disabilities are accessing the centers in greater numbers. (14% of 101 respondents)

Thirty-five of 101 respondents (35%) volunteer the above comments in response to open-ended questions about the impact of the navigator. In addition, specific states are seeing positive outcomes that are expected to further meaningful employment of persons with disabilities.

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- Florida reports that businesses are making better use of both navigators and One-Stop Centers, and a larger employer pool is willing to hire job seekers with disabilities as the employers become more comfortable and knowledgeable about hiring people with disabilities.
- In Massachusetts, employment of a navigator who can sign opened communication channels with the Deaf community and speeds service to persons who are deaf.
- In Wisconsin, the presence of more adaptive equipment and assistive technology makes employment possible. And employment of a navigator with disabilities is felt to provide a higher level of understanding and service to job seekers with disabilities, while modeling ability in a different guise to One-Stop workers.
- The contributions of Colorado's DPN initiative won the program a 2005 Employee Recognition Award from the state Department of Labor & Employment and a nomination for a Governor's State Top Achievement Recognition (STAR) Award.

Intervening Changes

In the nature of a dynamic and responsive implementation environment, many of the observations that percolated through the interviews have since been addressed. The national training contractors with the Law, Health Policy & Disability Center at the University of Iowa College of Law initiated changes and produced tools in the wake of the 2005 site visits that speak to many of the issues raised by the respondents. Training and technical assistance was offered in the form of national trainings, audio conferences, a workforce innovations conference, FAQs, working groups, etc. Topics included:

- improved connections with LWIBs, ways to counter One-Stop staff feeling 'monitored' by the DPN, improved linkages and role clarification between navigators and benefits planners, and relationships between One-Stops & Vocational Rehabilitation;
- case management, one-on-one time with customers with disabilities, and ways that One-Stops can effectively serve deaf people when there is shortage of interpreters;
- interagency collaboration; and
- stronger marketing, outreach, and linkages to employers.

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 The Center recognizes that future training and technical assistance will continue to be valuable.

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But on the whole, across every state and in many different ways, respondents expressed their perception that the Disability Program Navigator Initiative is a successful example of the Federal government providing funds, structure, the tools and training needed to make an important initiative work. As a One-Stop administrator notes: “It made things much easier on our end. In this region, the DPN Initiative has proven its point.”

It will be useful for follow-up evaluation to review the degree to which the technical assistance and training that has been delivered on these issues reduces the incidence of comment in these regards.

The Center recognizes that future training and technical assistance will continue to be valuable. Topics that surface from the site visits as promising targets for future training include:

- tips on effectively collaborating with agencies that serve people with developmental disabilities, youth in transition, mentally ill persons, and people with hidden disabilities;
- tips on effectively engaging Medicaid program partners;
- further illuminating the effective resource tools that local navigators have created such as desktop guides, multi-agency maps to community resources, and web pages focused on disability;
- follow-up on the degree to which products and information from the employer working group has been disseminated to local navigators.

More guidance is needed from the US Department of Labor on how much DPNs may work jointly with One-Stop staff to help customers with disabilities find jobs. This issue surfaced strongly during interviews in three of the four states we visited. Guidance that describes how much DPN assistance is too much in terms of working with One-Stop staff at a case level would be useful. For example, determining whether the DPN can do some of the actual job development, or should only be involved with helping from 'behind the scenes' on issues like disclosure, accommodations, transportation, etc.

There is widespread concern with WIA performance measures and testing that creates a disincentive for workers to draw on training services, workshops and learning labs for people with disabilities; similarly, with WIA success criteria (i.e., 40-hour work week) that are often unreasonable and unreachable for workers with significant disabilities. Both Colorado and Florida respondents felt that improved awareness and coordination of services among Federal & State agencies (i.e. SSA, VA, Medicaid, public assistance) could help the local navigators and One-Stop staff be more efficient in leveraging needed resources for job seekers with disabilities.

But on the whole, across every state and in many different ways, respondents expressed their perception that the Disability Program Navigator Initiative is a successful example of the Federal government providing funds, structure, the tools and training needed to make an important initiative work. As a One-Stop administrator notes: “It made things much easier on our end. In this region, the DPN Initiative has proven its point.”

Appendix: Study Methodology

The project evaluation plan includes four components: a 14-state evaluation (incorporating a telephone survey), a navigator quarterly report evaluation, a four-state study of effective DPN programs based on face-to-face interviews, and an evaluation of individual outcome data. This summary pertains to the four-state study portion of the overall DPN evaluation.

The Four-State Study seeks to identify best practices and short-term outcomes related to system change and to summarize them in state-level reports. The Four-State Study is designed to address three evaluation questions:

- What short-term system change outcomes associate with the presence of a navigator?
- What practices or activities show promise to improve the employment or economic sustainability for individuals with disabilities?
- How satisfied are persons with disabilities with a navigator intervention strategy?

The four states selected for study are Colorado, Florida, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. These states represent 27% of all navigators across the country at the time of the site visits, but are not assumed to have a representative sample of navigators. The sites selected for the interviews exemplify diverse approaches to implementation from different regions of the country. Within each state, evaluators visited at least one rural and one urban site and a statewide DPN administrative office. Evaluators interviewed both internal and external participants to gain a 360-degree view of each program site. The study design has a recognized positive bias in terms of site and respondent selection. The objective for evaluating the implementation phase is to identify promising practices and opportunities for future success.

Internal and external participants responded to a standard set of questions:

- In what ways have you interacted with the DPN in the past year?
- What changes in the workforce system do you attribute to the DPN?
- What changes do you hope that the DPN can accomplish in the next year in the workforce system?
- How satisfied are you with the DPN program?
- What changes would you like to see in the program?

Across the four states in the study, evaluators interviewed a total of 101 agency representatives: 42 internal respondents, 55 external respondents and 4 administrators.

A second aspect of the four-state study is face-to-face interviews with One-Stop customers. Evaluators spoke to a total of 16 customers across the four states in the study. Customers were asked questions about:

- Current employment, earnings, and employee benefits as well as past jobs;
- Their introduction to and pre-navigator experience of the One-Stop Career Center;
- The point at which they encountered the navigator;
- The services they received;
- What difference the navigator made to their One-Stop experience or employment;
- Their status on public assistance, SSI/SSDI, medical assistance or Ticket to Work;
- Whether they had experienced discrimination in response to their disabilities; and
- Suggestions for improving access and encouraging more effective and meaningful participation in the workforce system.

The site visits took place within the four states between February and July 2005. The responses within each state are subjected to qualitative data analysis. State reports describe the structure of each state's DPN project, the challenges and barriers they encountered, their accomplishments, findings and considerations for future inquiry. This national overview report looks across the four state reports to identify the factors that influence success of a DPN initiative, to assess the impacts of the pilot on the One-Stop Centers and the larger workforce system. These reports will inform a second round of data collection in the winter of 2006/07.

Table
PHASES OF DPN IMPLEMENTATION MATURITY

Phase	Expertise	Accessibility	Problem-Solving	Sphere of Influence
0	No expertise specific to employment issues of people with disabilities exists within the one-stop center.	One-stop center has physical, programmatic, and attitudinal barriers to access by people with disabilities	One-stop center has no institutional supports for dealing with people with disabilities, who are sent to directly to Vocational Rehabilitation.	One-stop center has few contacts with other community agencies or employers, none directed specifically toward the needs of people with disabilities. Staff may give a customer with disability a list of other resources but little follow-up.
I	One-stop center is developing a reservoir of expertise and information relevant to employment of people with disabilities in the person of a disability program navigator.	One-stop center audits its needs relative to full access by people with disabilities and the physical, programmatic, technology changes and training to address them.	DPN focuses on developing solutions for individuals with disabilities.	Navigator intermittently engages resources across the community around disability issues, but with few examples of collaboration around long-term systems change.
II	Navigator provides or facilitates orientation and training of one-stop center staff, periodically exposes them to resources. Training pertains to subjects like disability awareness, etiquette, dispelling myths.	One-stop center begins to address accessibility issues. Assistive technology and adaptive equipment is purchased and housed in the one-stop center. Center staff are trained in use of equipment.	Navigator is mentoring one-stop staff on working with case level disability and employment issues. One-stop staff are becoming familiar w/ types of disabilities, questions to ask to identify people with disabilities, resources for various types of disabilities and employment issues.	Navigator emphasizes outreach to community organizations and to advocacy and disability groups to secure and stabilize employment of people with disabilities. One-stop staff and Navigator work to make these groups aware of the workforce center and to help them see the One-Stop as a resource.
III	Navigator is working to broaden the disability expertise across the one-stop center by training, developing a library of information for use by the one-stop staff, developing fingertip resources (web sites, resource directories, resource maps, desk aids, etc.).	One-stop center is fully physically accessible with adequate signage. Programmatic and attitudinal barriers are being actively addressed. Staff are familiar with the assistive and adaptive technology/equipment. One-stop services are being marketed as being available specifically to customers with disabilities. Policies and procedures are in place to address access, screening, accommodations, etc.	DPN focuses on problem-solving for groups, not individuals. Navigator focuses on system-wide change. DPN activities focus on developing tools rather than case-level consultation. Addresses issues such as developing integrated case plans to braid funding streams or developing tools to address the needs of employers relative to hiring persons with disabilities.	Internal One-stop staff are familiar with community advocacy and disability and service groups, and have established a point of contact with them. Navigator emphasizes outreach to people with disabilities, employers, and community organizations that serve people with disabilities. Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary collaborations seek to secure and stabilize employment of people with disabilities.

Phase	Expertise	Accessibility	Problem-Solving	Sphere of Influence
IV	One-stop center has resources relevant to people with disabilities. These are institutionalized in processes, constantly updated, and accessible by staff across the agency through resource tool kits, screening guidelines, ongoing training, etc.	One-stop center is fully accessible. Physical, programmatic and attitudinal barriers have been removed. People with disabilities feel welcome at the one-stop center and confident that their needs will be served by the staff they encounter, not just the navigator. Seamless service delivery to people with disabilities as to other customers.	Navigator focuses on system-wide change. DPN activities focus on groups, not individuals, and on developing tools rather than case-level consultation. Addresses issues such as developing integrated case plans to braid funding streams, developing tools to address needs of employers. Center uses routine periodic mechanisms to survey satisfaction and needs of customers, staff and network partners. Survey results are shared with network participants and input to continuous process improvement.	Internal One-stop staff are familiar with community advocacy and disability and service groups, and have established a point of contact and working relationships with them. Navigator emphasizes outreach to people with disabilities, employers, and community organizations that serve people with disabilities. Multi-agency and multi-disciplinary collaborations seek to secure and stabilize employment of people with disabilities. DPN meets w. collaborative groups external to but including staff from the one-stop center (i.e., business leadership teams, disability advisory committees, regional transportation planning teams, etc.) that convene regularly and independently, actively leading the community to address the dynamic employment needs of people with disabilities.