

CONTENTS
(continued)

APPENDICES: STATE AND LOCAL PROFILES

MASSACHUSETTS

Appendix L: State of Massachusetts L-1
Appendix M: Futureworks Career Center, Springfield,
Massachusetts M-

MINNESOTA

Appendix N: State of Minnesota..... N-1
Appendix O: Minnesota Workforce Center - Anoka County
Blaine, Minnesota O-1

OHIO

Appendix P: State of Ohio P-1
Appendix Q: Wood County Employment Resource Center..... Q-1

TEXAS

Appendix R: State of Texas R-1
Appendix S: Arlington Career Center S-1
Appendix T: Lake Jackson Career Center, Lake Jackson, Texas..... T-1

WISCONSIN

Appendix U: State of Wisconsin..... U-1
Appendix V: Waukesha County Workforce Development
Center, Pewaukee, Wisconsin V-1

APPENDIX M

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During September 1996

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

One-Stop Profile

CONTENTS

CONTENTS	1
DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT	1
DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE ONE-STOP DESIGN	4
Key Features of the State One-Stop Vision.....	4
Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals	7
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	11
State-Level Organization and Governance.....	11
State Framework for Local Governance	15
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION	18
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES.....	19
IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS	22
Capacity Building and Technical Assistance	22
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements.....	23
Management Information Systems (MIS).....	24
Marketing	25
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	27

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT

The state of Massachusetts began laying the groundwork for One Stop implementation in the late 1980s. Fueled by widespread recognition that public employment and training programs were not meeting adequately the needs of job seekers or employers, the state embarked upon a long-term and fundamental transformation of its services and statewide delivery systems. In 1988, Massachusetts became one of the first states in the country to establish a new state-level advisory council—the MassJobs Council (referred to in this profile as MJC or “the Council”)—to oversee its emerging workforce development system. The MassJobs Council built upon public-private partnerships established by its predecessor, the State Job Training Coordinating Council, in its efforts to involve a wide range of service providers, educators, union representatives, government officials, and private sectors employers in the task of “reinventing” the public employment and training system.¹ The MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office—MJC’s staff-level implementation arm—have been charged with responsibility for overseeing and managing the statewide One-Stop initiative.

The motto for the workforce development system advocated by the MassJobs Council is “centrally guided, locally driven.” Thus, under the new system, most of the important decisions about who will provide services and how they will be provided will be made by regional entities. At the same time the MassJobs Council was created, the state legislature established a framework for local governance of its restructured workforce development system by redefining the mandate of the state’s sixteen Private Industry Councils and renaming them Regional Employment Boards or REBs. By November 1995, when the state was awarded a One-Stop Implementation Grant from

¹ “Reinventing Government” has been a key theme in the state’s efforts to transform its employment and training system. This stems both from the popularity of the book by the same title, and the direct involvement of one of its authors, David Osborne, in the development and implementation of Massachusetts’ competitive model.

the U.S. Department of Labor,² Massachusetts perceived itself to be prepared for a massive reorganization of the state's employment and training delivery system.

Like a number of other One-Stop implementation states, Massachusetts is attempting to coordinate the design and delivery of all of the education, training, human resource, and career transition services available to Massachusetts' residents. What is unique to Massachusetts, however, is its commitment to establishing a new system shaped by competitive forces and driven by customer demand. Rooted in the belief that market forces are the best means of assuring quality, the "competitive model" adopted by Massachusetts is perceived by observers both inside and outside government as a radically new process for the design and delivery of publicly-funded services.

Massachusetts is the first One Stop implementation state to embrace a fully "competitive model" in its efforts to restructure employment and training services. The MassJobs Council's vision includes competition at three levels. First, Regional Employment Boards were required to compete for One-Stop funds by submitting proposals to implement One-Stop Career Center systems in their respective regions. The incentive structure was such that the REBs selected for early implementation would receive the bulk of federal implementation grant funds and would inform the implementation process in all other regions. First-year implementation grant funds were set aside for the development of One-Stop career centers in four regions.³

Second, public agencies, private firms, community-based organizations, and consortia were eligible to compete for selection as career center operators. Public agencies were not designated as "presumptive" service providers under the transformed career center system, nor were they given priority in the selection process. Instead selection criteria emphasized the development of innovative high-quality service designs and the delivery of seamless services responsive to employer and job seeker customer needs.

² This included \$10.5 million in Implementation Grant funds, and another \$1.1 million in an LMI Information Technology grant.

³ At the time of the evaluation site visit, the two REBs designated for early implementation had issued their RFPs and selected operators for four career centers. One of the four regions selected by the state in its first-round REB competition ultimately withdrew from the implementation process due to the eruption of a local political firestorm after it selected a non-governmental organization as a career center operator. Implementation of career centers has proceeded in the remaining three regions.

Third, the state required the selection of at least two distinct career center operators within each region. These operators would compete with each other (as well as with other private enterprises) for individual and business customers. It was believed that competition among center operators would lead to innovation, diversification, and specialization among centers which would increase customer choice and enhance service quality overall.

Massachusetts' plan for transforming workforce development systems is widely perceived as an experiment with the potential to inform other efforts at transforming the delivery of government services at both the state and federal levels. Among the questions raised by the Massachusetts approach are the following:⁴

- Can career centers serve everyone or do competitive forces and limited resources inevitably lead to limitations on service availability, particularly for “hard-to-serve” customers in need of intensive services?
- Are career center operators truly free to run their centers like businesses or will government requirements and “red tape” restrain entrepreneurial activity? Is it possible to simultaneously serve the public good and encourage an entrepreneurial approach?
- Does a demand-driven model improve service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer outcomes?
- Is this approach applicable in other states?

A number of key variables have influenced One-Stop implementation in the state of Massachusetts. These include (1) controversy stemming from the introduction of a competitive process to select the entities to deliver federal and state-level public sector employment and training programs including public Employment Services (ES) and Unemployment Insurance (UI); (2) the initiation of parallel state and federal reforms in related government programs, including school-to-work and welfare reform initiatives; and (3) recent and rapid growth in the state's economy. Each of these factors is discussed briefly below:

- *The use of a competitive process to choose service providers for public-sector education, employment and training, and welfare programs has caused tension between existing state-level agencies and entities*

⁴ These questions have been adapted from a document produced by the Center for Adult and Experiential Learning, one of the entities that has consulted with Massachusetts in the development of its One-Stop system.

formally or informally involved in the One-Stop initiative. Support for the Massachusetts “competitive model” varies considerably among partner agencies and departments. The fact that initiation of One-Stop career centers is associated with the dismantling of field offices of the Department of Employment and Training (which has been responsible for administering ES/UI services) has made it difficult for the MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office to establish good communication and coordination among key state-level stakeholders.

- *Parallel state and federal initiatives, including school-to-work and welfare reform, are increasingly perceived as linked to one another and to the One-Stop initiative.* Although such linkages have resulted in broad-based community support for workforce development, they have also subjected the One-Stop initiative to public scrutiny from a wide range of stakeholders inside and outside the professional employment and training community.
- *The recent rapid growth of the Massachusetts economy and the concomitant demand for effective vehicles for labor exchange have given momentum to the state’s One-Stop initiative.* The state has recently emerged from a deep recession; statewide unemployment rates have dropped to just over 5%. However, the economy has experienced fundamental structural changes: there are fewer manufacturing and construction jobs and more employment opportunities in the service sector. Individuals are changing jobs more frequently and employers are demanding new skill sets. These changes have increased interest among job-seekers and employers in new approaches to workforce development services of the kind offered by career centers under the state’s One-Stop initiative.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE ONE-STOP DESIGN

Key Features of the State One-Stop Vision

The state policymakers and consultants who were instrumental in developing the vision for Massachusetts’ new workforce development delivery system called for the development of a statewide network of federally-supported career centers, which will serve as the primary brokers of education and workforce development services for businesses and individuals. The system is being built around four main principles:

- *Universal Access.* The system will be designed to serve all customers, including employers, job-changers, and job-seekers.
- *Competition.* Career centers will be selected through a competitive bidding process.

- *Customer Choice.* Each center will offer a menu of core services available to employers and individuals, and additional enhanced services for which the centers will charge fees.
- *Integration of Services and Oversight.* Flexible federal program requirements will be adopted and state and local governance structures developed to support seamless high-quality services and high-performance practices in the career centers.⁵

These system principles were nearly identical to those outlined in the Reemployment Act of 1994. Although this legislation was never passed, it provided a framework that guided the development of One-Stop designs in a number of states, including Massachusetts. When the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced the availability of federal implementation grants to support the transformation of workforce development services in selected states, the four required federal themes included three—universality, customer choice, and integration—that were virtually identical to Massachusetts’ principles. The fourth theme—accountability—was perceived to be consistent with, but more general than, Massachusetts’ principle of competition.

Required Local Programs. In guiding the development of local Career Centers, the state required that a defined set of programs—rather than specific agency partners—be integrated into the service delivery system. Required programs to which career centers must offer access include:

- Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser);
- Veterans’ Employment Services;
- Dislocated Worker Services (JTPA Title III);
- Summer Youth Employment Services (JTPA Title IIB);
- Older Workers Services (Title V of the Older Americans’ Act);
- Unemployment Insurance;⁶
- JOBS and other training programs for welfare customers;

⁵ The planners of the Massachusetts One-Stop system were eager for the introduction of federal workforce development block grants to eliminate categorical program requirements, including restrictions on the use of program-based funds and requirements for program-based reporting. The failure of the U.S. Congress to pass block grant legislation has forced state-level planners to search for regulatory compromises to facilitate the delivery of seamless services through its One-Stop career centers.

⁶ Unemployment Insurance (UI) enrollment has since been converted to a phone-driven system.

- Adult Basic Education;
- Community-college based education and training;
- Vocational Education programs (Carl Perkins Act funds); and
- Massachusetts Rehabilitation Services.

Interdepartmental Service Agreements negotiated between the MassJobs Council and the Massachusetts Division of Employment and Training also committed career centers to providing Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker services, Trade Adjustment Assistance and Trade Readjustment Allowances to eligible dislocated workers. Conspicuously missing from the list of programs required for inclusion in the One-Stop system during the first implementation year were the JTPA Title IIA/C programs for economically disadvantaged youth and adults. Although in principle, state partners agreed that JTPA services to economically disadvantaged individuals should be part of the services available through One-Stop career centers, the two-year contract cycle in use for the provision of JTPA services precluded their immediate inclusion in an integrated resource stream to support One-Stop center operations.

Consistent with the state's One-Stop vision, Regional Employment Boards have been granted substantial discretion in establishing a competitive process to select center operators, approving the core and enhanced services they deem most appropriate for their local area (as long as the state's required services are included), setting performance expectations for center operators, and overseeing the delivery of services within their regions. The state requires REBs to open the competition for selecting center operators to for-profit, non-profit, or public agencies, or coalitions of any of the above. Once selected and chartered for the delivery of services, local operators are responsible for delivering the core and enhanced services described in their charters. The MassJobs Council/Career Center Office in no way implies that the required programs are to be administered in the same way as they had been previously. In fact, the state encourages REBs to select bidders that offer innovative services.

Required Services. The MassJobs Council mandates the provision of the following core services to job-seekers, job-changers, and employers in each career center:

- *Core Services for Individuals* must include at a minimum basic assessment, job search assistance, local labor market information, access to job listings, and information on education and training programs and unemployment insurance.

- *Core Services for Employers* must include screening and referral of job applicants, on-line access to a job bank, and referral to sources of funds for worker training.

The MassJobs Council also requires the existence of non-core or “enhanced” services in each career center, but does not specify the content of these services. The content, delivery systems, and fee-structures are all to be determined locally.

The state has provided no requirements for the development of the physical facilities for One-Stop career centers. Rather, Regional Employment Boards were charged with evaluating the degree to which proposed facilities met the needs of the operators and the local communities they were intended to serve.

Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals

Although the four federal themes are featured prominently in the state’s vision for One-Stop implementation, the MassJobs Council and Career Center Office’s commitment to supporting locally-driven systems and grassroots innovation means that the state has only limited control over how the themes are actually implemented. The state-level agencies defined the four federal themes, and then selected REBs and career centers based on their ability to realize these themes. The state’s understanding of these themes and the ways in which the MassJobs Council and Career Center Office support them locally is described below.

Universal Access

Career Centers in the state of Massachusetts must provide all individual and employer customers access to free core services, and they must offer fee-based enhanced services representing more intensive screening, matching, and placement activities. As described previously the state requires that core services include basic assessment, job search assistance, access to labor market information, review of local job listings, access to information about local education and training programs, and unemployment insurance enrollment. The state has encouraged REBs to add to or expand upon these state-level requirements in issuing their requests for proposals to solicit bids from center operators. Potential operators are also encouraged to approach their proposals creatively.

Customer Choice

The state of Massachusetts seeks to support customer choice in its career centers by ensuring that customers have (1) a choice of career centers from which to receive services; and (2) a choice of services within each center.

The state-level One-Stop design insures that at least two career centers will operate in every region. This design encourages innovation at the local level by providing incentives for the centers to compete against one another, as well as with existing private providers of existing services, in the development of new products or services and for increased market shares.⁷ Customers may access services at either or both career centers serving their region. The state and the Regional Employment Boards also encourage local career centers to differentiate themselves by developing different service approaches and establishing specialized market “niches.” It is assumed that the career centers serving the same area will thereby develop enhanced capacities and expertise in different areas of service. This, too, is intended to enhance customer choice.

The state has also supported customer choice by encouraging diversity in the development and provision of technology-based products for customer use. On the one hand, the Career Center Office encourages center operators to develop and market their own new products. On the other hand, the state has invested heavily in the development of a statewide electronic interactive Job Bank that can be accessed through the state’s World Wide Web site on the Internet. The electronic Job Bank must be accessible from all career centers. In addition, it can be accessed by customers from any remote site with Internet access via modem. When posting information about job openings on the state’s automated Job Bank, employer customers have the choice of posting “open” job descriptions which identify the employer to interested job applicants or “closed” job descriptions which require career center staff to review applicant qualifications before referring an applicant to that employer.

⁷ Although the staff of the state Career Center Office and even the REBs describe the state’s goal as encouraging competition between the operators of career centers serving the same area, the staff of “competing” centers in the local region visited as part of the evaluation emphasized that they have formed high-quality collaborative partnerships with each other. These staff have coined the word “Co-opitition” to describe the mix of cooperation and competition in these relationships.

Integrated Services

Key individuals and organizations involved in developing the One-Stop design in the state of Massachusetts felt that gradual integration of existing programs and services through the collaboration of existing provider agencies would not sufficiently transform the public employment and training system, and would risk losing customers to private sector service providers during the transition. “The only way to achieve *truly* integrated services,” one respondent noted, “is to construct them that way from the beginning.” Thus, the state of Massachusetts is building an entirely new system specifically designed to “consolidate all employment and training services into a seamless, well-coordinated, statewide network that is customer friendly and easy to use.” All career centers must adhere to this mandate, but the state permits considerable latitude in the development of local service designs. Massachusetts’ career center operators have organized their menus of services by function rather than by categorical program or funding stream.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

Performance measurement is a particularly charged area for One-Stop system development in Massachusetts. Because career centers will replace existing field offices of the Division of Employment and Training (responsible for ES/UI),⁸ Massachusetts is under tremendous pressure, both inside and outside of state government, to demonstrate that its new approach to workforce development is more successful than the former system. Under these circumstances, there is great interest in comparing the outcomes of the old system to outcomes of the new system. At the same time, the new workforce development system has different objectives than the old system. For example, centers are likely to be engaged in career education and school-to-work initiatives for youth still attending school. These efforts are likely to result in outcomes that are not comparable to outcomes generated from the previous system. Negotiating measures that are both useful to the new system and allow for comparisons to the performance of the old system poses a formidable challenge.

State and local staff have developed issue papers on how performance measures can be used to hold Regional Employment Boards, local career centers, and the state

⁸ The state has made a commitment to place all public employees dislocated as a result of this shift into new public-sector positions. These employees are also encouraged to apply for positions with the career centers that will serve their local areas after the ES/UI offices operated by the Division of Employment and Training are closed.

system as a whole accountable for achieving desired outcomes. The state is particularly interested in measuring the performance of its career centers in the four areas of (1) customer satisfaction, (2) customer outcomes, (3) market growth and penetration, and (4) gross product.

Customer Satisfaction. The state seeks to support career centers in achieving 90% customer satisfaction rates within 100 days of opening their doors. Career centers are encouraged to use a variety of tools to measure their performances in this area, including surveys, focus groups, and service quality information systems. Regional Employment Boards are responsible for ensuring that customer satisfaction data are collected. They are permitted some latitude in developing methods for collecting such data within the career centers.

Customer Outcomes. The state seeks to support the career centers in ensuring that traditional customers of public workforce development programs continue to have full access to all core services and that the centers serve a population that is representative of the service areas covered by the centers. The Regional Employment Boards are charged with enforcing high achievement in this area. Career centers are each expected to achieve a 90% positive outcome rate (consistent with individual or employer customer service plans) for customers using center services.

Market Growth and Penetration for Employer Services. The state seeks to support the career centers in achieving increased participation of local employers in the workforce development system. Employer customer satisfaction is intended to be measured, and a 90% repeat customer rate achieved state-wide. Career centers are also encouraged to recruit a range of types and sizes of private-sector employer customers. Again, REBs are charged with supporting the development of local employer markets for workforce development services.

Gross Product. The state seeks to support each of the career centers in serving an average of 5,500 individuals and 300 to 500 employer customers annually. Career centers are also expected to develop a job bank of 10,000 openings (measured cumulatively over the year) by the completion of their first fiscal year. The state's investment in electronic service delivery mechanisms is intended to support achievement of these outcomes.

State-level staff indicated that the implementation of these more comprehensive and customer-oriented performance standards was among the long-term objectives of

the new system. They anticipate, however, that more traditional interim standards will be utilized in the short-term.

At the time of the site-visit, the Career Center Office had just begun to develop performance standards for itself and the MassJobs Council, including easy-to-understand measures of how well it is supporting the career centers in achieving system-level outcomes. The three general areas that will be addressed by these state-level performance standards include (1) financial viability of the career centers, including state success in developing an integrated funding stream to support center operations; (2) success of the state in developing the management information technology needed to support the delivery of technology-based services and program administrative functions; and (3) the integrity of operations of the career centers in both financial and programmatic terms.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

State-Level Organization and Governance

State Governance Structure. Two different entities share responsibility for planning, guiding, and overseeing the One-Stop system in Massachusetts: (1) the MassJobs Council and its Career Center Office, and (2) the Regional Employment Boards.

The MassJobs Council was created in 1988 to replace the State Job Training Coordinating Council required under the Job Training Partnership Act. The Council's 33 members include appointed and elected public officials, profit and non-profit service providers and community-based organizations, union representatives, consultants, and private sector employers. The new Council, although comprising many of the same stakeholders as the State Job Training Coordinating Council,⁹ was given a much broader mandate, including responsibility for coordinating all job-related education, employment, and training programs in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The Council concentrated its early activities in the following four areas:

⁹ Federal JTPA legislation mandates that State Job Training Coordinating Councils (STJCCs) secure participation by representatives of private sector employers, state agencies, the state legislature, organized labor, and community-based organizations. The MassJobs Council includes representatives from each of these areas, as well as from educational institutions and local governments.

- *Linking workforce development to economic development.* Early on, the Council perceived that an effective publicly supported labor exchange could serve as a valuable tool for economic development, and focused on developing regionally-oriented collaborative ventures between government and private industry designed to sustain economic viability and develop opportunities for economic growth.
- *Mobilizing broad-based private-sector involvement.* Because the Council was laying the foundation for a new system that would serve the interests of employer customers as well as individuals, Council members felt that it was crucial to secure private-sector input in designing and implementing the Council's statewide initiative.
- *Coordinating state-level agencies and departments.* The Council facilitated dialogue and strategic planning efforts between all state departments and agencies with oversight responsibility for state or federal employment and training programs. The Council also recruited new stakeholders not traditionally part of the employment and training network—such as welfare agencies and educational organizations—to participate in the dialogue.
- *Serving as a state-level policy broker.* The Council convened numerous forums on specific workforce-related initiatives such as school-to-work, education reform, and welfare reform, in an effort to inform comprehensive and impartial state-level strategic planning.

As part of its early One-Stop planning functions, the MassJobs Council also coordinated the activities of seven interagency work groups that were established to support One-Stop planning in the areas of (1) governance, (2) integrated funding, (3) quality assurance, (4) performance standards, (5) labor market information/MIS, (6) customer services, and (7) capacity building. The Council also convened a Commissioner's Policy Group, which comprised key policymakers from the planned state agency partners. Individual administrators were tasked with identifying sources of funds within their agencies and departments that could support career center services and discussing what roles their agencies would play under the new system.

Because the MassJobs Council is not a state agency or department, One-Stop planners anticipated that it would be viewed as an impartial entity without a special interest to protect in the transformation from the previous public agency-based delivery system to a new competitive system. However, over time, the MassJobs Council has taken on a greater and greater role in overseeing the implementation of the new career center system. This increased operational role was supported by an executive order by the governor in December 1993 declaring the Council an official Human Resources

Investment Council (HRIC) with statutory authority to oversee statewide workforce development programs.

Under its new role, the MassJobs Council is no longer viewed as an impartial entity, but rather as the primary agency most closely identified with the One-Stop initiative and responsible for coordinating and overseeing the statewide system transformation. The importance of its new role was highlighted by the designation of the state's Lieutenant Governor as the Council head. The Council continues to recruit and coordinate state-level agency participation and input in the career center initiative and facilitate the development of state policy to guide locally-administered career centers. However, as its One-Stop administrative responsibilities have grown, its relationships with other state agencies—some of which are being downsized and de-emphasized as a result of the One-Stop initiative—have become more complicated.

The Career Center Office is the staff-level unit created by the MassJobs Council in early 1995 to support the implementation of the statewide career center system. The Career Center Office works with the MassJobs Council to accomplish the following objectives:

- Defining the state-level standards for chartering individual career center operators.
- Establishing statewide quality assurance measures for the One-Stop career center system.
- Supporting the development of high-quality labor market information products.
- Marketing the One-Stop career center system on a statewide basis.
- Providing ongoing technical assistance to local REBs and career centers as needed.

Among the chief day-to-day responsibilities of the eight staff assigned to this office are the creation of an integrated funding stream to support the operation of local career centers, providing capacity building and technical assistance to Regional Employment Boards and career centers, as needed, and coordinating the development of the state-level technology-based systems to support local One-Stop operations. The staff in the Career Center Office are employees of the MassJobs Council and are not housed with or assigned to any other state agency.

State Agency Involvement. In other One-Stop implementation states, system transformation has occurred with the active involvement of a “lead” state-level agency or department (usually the agency responsible for ES and UI services) with participation from additional state and local partner agencies. In Massachusetts, however, the MassJobs Council—the state-level entity most closely associated with the One-Stop initiative—is not responsible for administering any programs. Because the state is committed to developing a network system of career centers that are “centrally guided and locally driven,” the MassJobs Council felt that it was crucial to devolve significant responsibility and decision-making authority to local-level actors. Most of the key decisions about the design and delivery of workforce development services under the new system are being made by Regional Employment Boards and local career center operators, with feedback from the communities and customers served by career centers.

The key role of existing state-level agencies and departments vis a vis the career center system is as a source of funds to support career center operations. Through Interagency Service Agreements negotiated by the MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office, a number of state agencies have agreed to “redirect” substantial amounts of discretionary and categorical funds to the operation of seven chartered career centers in three of the four initial workforce development regions. In exchange for the redirection of these funds, the MassJobs Council has assured each agency that categorical funds will be expended in accordance with federal requirements and that categorical reporting requirements will be met.¹⁰

State agencies that committed FY 97 resources to support One-Stop operations include the following:

- The Department of Employment and Training (DET) has been responsible for administering the ES, UI, Veterans Employment programs, and Trade Adjustment Assistance/Trade Readjustment Allowance programs through a system of field offices. As One-Stop career centers open, DET field offices are closed. A total of \$5.8 million in DET funding was committed to seven career centers through an Interagency Service Agreement for FY 97.

¹⁰ These assurances have been met with some degree of alarm by the designated career center operators, who anticipated providing integrated services with block grant funds that had few reporting or other “strings attached.”

- The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) is responsible for employment-related services to households receiving cash welfare payments. Through an Interagency Service Agreement with MassJobs Council, DTA committed up to \$3.0 million in FY97 funds for career centers to provide job search assistance to welfare recipients. However performance requirements may prevent career centers from “earning” all the money in the agreement.
- The Industrial Services Program has been responsible for administering JTPA Title III services to dislocated workers and providing business assistance and incumbent work training to at-risk firms. This agency, which is in the process of being merged with the Bay State Skills Corporation,¹¹ committed \$1.6 million in funds to support the delivery of core and enhanced services to individual and business customers at career centers. Funding will flow directly to designated Title III substate entities (the SDAs).
- The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission committed \$540,000 to support the delivery of career center services to individuals with substantial physical or mental disabilities.
- The Department of Mental Health was considering a contribution of \$250,000 to support career centers in providing employment-related services to individuals with mental illness histories.
- The Department of Education (DOE) signed an Interagency Service Agreement to provide \$200,000 to career centers for the provision of adult basic education services.
- The Commission for the Blind committed \$90,000 to support the delivery of career center services to blind customers.
- Because JTPA funds were committed to local service delivery areas through FY 97, JTPA Title II funds were made available through arrangements with local JTPA grantees. Only \$55,000 in JTPA Title II funds were committed to support career center system operations in FY 97.

State Framework for Local Governance

The MassJobs Council was eager to create a structure for the local governance of the state’s career center system for several reasons. First, the state’s vision was that the service delivery system should be locally controlled. Thus, to be consistent, the Council decided to construct the system from the bottom up, rather than from the top

¹¹ The new umbrella organization will be called the Corporation for Business, Work and Learning (CBWL).

down. Second, the MassJobs Council anticipated that state-level political turmoil might be minimized if local needs were able to drive state-level decisions, rather than the reverse. Thus, the Council prescribed a local process for One-Stop system design and implementation, but was not prescriptive in its approach to the organization of local workforce development systems or career centers.

Regional Employment Boards (REBs) are responsible for local implementation of the One-Stop initiative based on policy guidelines set by the MassJobs Council. The REBs are charged with chartering career center operators and monitoring their performance, developing high-quality local partnerships to ensure that career centers are meeting the needs of the local communities, and working with the career centers to establish continuous quality improvement mechanisms.

As the first stage in building a statewide system, MassJobs Council decided to select four Regional Employment Boards for participation in first-year implementation of the career center initiative. Additional REBs could apply for planning status and receive smaller grant awards to plan for implementation the following year, or could postpone transition activities altogether. The REBs interested in competing for implementation or planning grants were asked to submit proposals describing their visions for local workforce development systems that would meet the needs of their local communities.

In March 1995, a review committee composed of MassJobs Council members and staff, public agency partners, and representatives from several organizations that were consultants to the state in the development of the One-Stop initiative selected two REBs—the Hampden County and Boston Regional Employment Boards—for immediate implementation of career centers. Two additional regions—Metro North and Berkshire County were also selected to receive first-year implementation grants once specific implementation issues were addressed.

Shortly thereafter, an “implementers’ work group,” which comprised key individuals representing the implementer REBs, the MassJobs Council, the Career Center Office, and partner agency staff was established to work on three important aspects of the selected regional career center initiatives. These included (1) finalizing career center designs that were consistent with state-level requirements and met local-level objectives; (2) developing a process for requests for proposals (RFPs) to select

center operators; and (3) developing a plan for funding first-year center operations.¹² The group met weekly and developed protocols, procedures, and legal documents that would both meet the immediate needs of the first-round implementer REBs and support the career center initiative in the long term.

Consistent with state's vision of supporting local innovation, the procedures developed by the implementer's work group for selecting career center operators was quite flexible. MassJobs Council required only that the REBs' selection processes be consistent with their original proposals and that the REBs ensure that all public and private service providers or coalitions were permitted a fair chance to compete. The MassJobs Council accepted responsibility for developing an integrated funding stream that would enable program funds to be administered by any career center operator or coalition of partners selected by a Regional Employment Board.

The selection processes actually used by the four REBs that participated in first-year implementation funding varied considerably. In some regions, the entire REB was involved in the selection process, while in others a subcommittee was charged with this responsibility. Some REBs required bidders to present their proposals in person, others required only written proposals. Some REBs selected operators that proposed the strongest plans while others suggested that several applicants form partnerships and actively engaged in a negotiation process with prospective center operators. Since the REBs were expected to learn from their own first experiences and the experiences of other REBs in selecting center operators, they are permitted to modify their original selection process in the future.

In theory, once local career center operators are selected, the MassJobs Council will assume a much less active role in the oversight of the local system, while REBs will retain an active role in the ongoing governance of the local system. However, the full implementation of the One-Stop system on a statewide basis has been delayed, due to organized opposition from several quarters, including some state-level administrators and local-level state employee unions. The political controversy has slowed the process of opening career centers, prompted some REBs to abstain from a planned competitive

¹² One-Stop planners had anticipated that federal block grants would already be in place by this time. When federal block grants failed to materialize, the MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office staff realized that they needed to develop a strategy that would permit the integration of funds to support local career center operations.

RFP process for the coming year, and raised questions about how to accomplish the introduction of competition to public-sector programs without engendering a political backlash.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Since the implementation of the One-Stop initiative in Massachusetts requires dismantling the pre-existing employment and training system, communication and coordination around the One-Stop initiative at all levels has been highly charged. In the planning stages of the state's efforts to transform its workforce development system, the MassJobs Council and its staff served as the primary coordinating link between the various stakeholders. Initially, MassJobs Council concentrated its efforts on developing partnerships among economic development entities, private-sector employers, and state agencies and departments with responsibility for education and employment and training programs. The Council convened numerous meetings, conferences, and other forums in which strategic planning for a new system of customer-driven workforce development services occurred. The Council also convened the Commissioner's Policy Group of key policymakers representing the state agencies involved in workforce development and coordinated the activities of the seven interagency works groups that were established to support specific aspects of workforce development planning.

Effective communication and coordination among state-level stakeholders during One-Stop implementation emerged as a problem area for the MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office during the first year of implementation. As the state of Massachusetts began to move from the planning to the implementation stages of its career center initiative, the MassJobs Council's mission evolved and its ability to coordinate and maintain productive relationships with other state-level agencies and departments was constrained. Although the interagency work groups raised important questions and identified key implementation issues and challenges, workgroup members were not vested with decision-making authority on these difficult issues. By mid-1995, the decision was made to put the workgroups "on hold" until key decisions about career center implementation had been made. Some workgroup members felt that they had been removed from the process. Another workgroup called the Interagency Integration Committee was active from October 1995 to August 1996. Comprised of high-level staff from the various participating agencies, this group convened to address

some of the issues raised by the other groups around the integrated funding stream. However, it, too, lost momentum. None of the groups has since reconvened.

During the implementation phase, the staff of the state's Career Center Office have emerged as the primary facilitators of communication and coordination between One-Stop stakeholders. The Career Center Office has taken primary responsibility for coordinating (1) horizontal communication between the staff of various state agencies and departments involved in One-Stop initiative, not all of whom are supportive of the initiative; (2) vertical communication between the state and the REBs and between the state and the career centers; and (3) horizontal communication between the REBs, and in some cases, between career centers themselves. By playing an active role, the Career Center Office has provided a buffer between key agency stakeholders who are not in agreement about the career center initiative.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

The \$11.5 million received by Massachusetts as part of its One-Stop Implementation Grant and a related LMI grant has been used as "seed money" to support the operation of the state Career Center Office, develop a statewide information technology system (described below), develop high-quality marketing materials, support capacity-building efforts at the local level, and support the REBs chosen for early implementation in planning, chartering, and overseeing the operation of the state's initial One-Stop career centers.

However, ongoing operation of the One-Stop career center system as envisioned by the state depends on the availability of an integrated funding stream to support center operations. Planners at the state level identify the development of an integrated funding stream as among the most significant challenges the Massachusetts career center initiative has encountered to date. In One-Stop implementation states that have adopted a collaborative approach to restructuring workforce development services, partner agencies typically commit a proportion of their staff and budgets to the One-Stop effort. In Massachusetts, however, the competitive approach demands that partner agencies and departments transfer funds to the MassJobs Council, which then distributes those funds to the career centers to support integrated customer services, with no concurrent transfer of agency staff.

Initially, state planners assumed that federal workforce development block grant legislation would create an integrated funding stream. When block grant legislation

was not passed, Career Center Office staff went directly to the state agencies responsible for workforce development programs and asked them to commit funds to the career center initiative. The framework for an integrated funding stream was constructed around the development of formal Interdepartmental Service Agreements (ISAs). Early in the first year of the Massachusetts implementation grant, the MassJobs Council requested that all of the agencies involved in the One-Stop initiative commit their discretionary funds to the career center initiative. Later that year, agency and department managers were asked to identify additional portions of their budgets that could support career centers.

There was some reluctance on the part of many agencies to commit these funds in the absence of evidence that the career center initiative would be a success. Moreover, agency staff understood that by committing their program dollars and responsibilities to the career center initiative, they were putting their own departments in jeopardy—the more dollars and program functions they transferred to the career centers, the greater the likelihood of their own agencies being downsized and reorganized. For these reasons, negotiating funds transfers demanded considerably more time and effort than planners had anticipated.

Despite these obstacles, the MassJobs Council's Career Center Office succeeded in negotiating agreements with most of the state-level partner agencies, including the Department of Employment and Training, the Department of Education, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, and the Commission for the Blind. Formal agreements involving substate grantees were also developed to support funds transfers from the Massachusetts Industrial Services Program (responsible for JTPA Title III) and local JTPA service delivery areas (for Title II) to the local career centers.¹³ In FY 96, the total planned partner agency support for the operation of the career centers in the three selected regions totaled approximately \$10 million. However, these funds had not yet been transferred at the time of the site visit, forcing the one-stop staff to rely almost entirely upon grant funds.

A total of \$11 million in agency support has been committed through ISAs for career center operations during FY 97. The largest contributions are from the

¹³ These indirect arrangements were necessary because JTPA Title III funds must, by law, be allocated to substate entities, and because JTPA Title II funds were already committed to local service delivery areas under two-year contracts.

Department of Employment and Training, which is closing its local ES/UI field offices as career centers open (\$5.9 million in FY 97); the Department of Transitional Assistance, which has allocated funds to career centers for job search assistance to welfare clients (\$3.0 million in FY 97); and the Industrial Services Program, which is transferring responsibility for JTPA Title III services to dislocated workers to career centers as well as supporting the delivery of enhanced services to employers (\$1.2 million). To date, only a small amount of JTPA Title II funds have been provided to career centers by local JTPA service delivery areas. Together, these funding commitments will support all but \$1 million of the total \$11.9 million cost of operating the seven functioning career centers during FY 97.

State planners are under tremendous pressure to showcase the results of the career centers in the initial four regions to convince the state legislature and state agency partners that continuing to invest in career centers is an effective way to meet the workforce development needs of state residents. If all goes well for the One-Stop career center system, the political resolve will be found to continue investing in career centers using an integrated funding stream. Over time, integrated funds will not only support all workforce development services in the career centers, but will be used to support the operations of the state Career Center Office (through the charging of an administrative fee against the various funding sources). Planners anticipate that by July 1998, the statewide network of career centers will be self-sustaining through the integrated funding stream.

Although most respondents at the state level indicated that the integrated funding stream was meeting the short-term need for consolidated funding, they are still eager for the introduction of federal block-grants. Planners feel that block grants would facilitate the career center initiative in Massachusetts in three major ways: (1) by transforming the agency-centered budgeting that currently makes it difficult for state agencies to commit resources to a “competing” entity; (2) by eliminating the need for lengthy contract negotiations with the agency responsible for each categorical program; and (3) by eliminating restrictive program-based eligibility and reporting requirements, thereby making it much easier to operate an integrated program that provides universal access.¹⁴

¹⁴ When the partner agencies and departments committed funds to the One-Stop initiative on behalf of their categorical programs, some partners expected that the career centers would assume

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

The Career Center Office is responsible for all capacity building efforts required to support the One-Stop initiative. The Office has undertaken capacity-building efforts in three primary areas: (1) providing comprehensive and ongoing technical assistance to the Regional Employment Boards; (2) training career center management staff about categorical programs; and (3) training career center staff about the state's information technology system, including how to use labor market information products and how to prepare for state-level data collection.

In the Spring of 1996, the Career Center Office organized a technical assistance conference for members and staff of the Regional Employment Boards engaged in One-Stop planning or implementation. The conference provided information on specific One-Stop implementation issues and offered the opportunity for the members and staff of the regional boards to meet and interact with one another. The Career Center Office's objective was to establish a process for implementing and monitoring the statewide One-Stop system. During the conference, state staff instructed participants on the criteria the REBs and centers would be required to meet; offered technical assistance in developing legal documents, such as charters; and responded to issues and questions that had emerged for the earliest career centers that had already begun implementation. Career Center Office staff plan to hold a similar conference annually, to address ongoing One-Stop system-building needs and challenges.

In the absence of workforce development block grants, the career centers have been forced to take responsibility for categorical funding streams and have attempted to implement categorical programs in a totally new context. The Career Center Office, with the assistance of the Department of Employment and Training, has organized training sessions around the eligibility and reporting requirements for the different categorical programs. Locally, career center managers have worked with their REBs to develop protocols for implementing these programs in a One-Stop environment. State-level respondents indicated that local career center staff have struggled to adhere to the

implementation and reporting requirements identical to the programs formerly represented by these funds. The individual career centers, however, are committed to providing universal access to their customers and feel that program-based recruiting and reporting will seriously hamper their efforts to achieve universal services.

legal requirements of categorical programs while attempting to render program boundaries invisible to center customers.

Building staff capacity with respect to the state's information technology system has included two main components: (1) instructing career center staff in navigating the Massachusetts on-line Job Bank and other resources on the Internet, and (2) helping staff prepare to use the state's new data collection infrastructure. Although the staff of most career centers are already adept at manipulating on-line search tools, the Career Center Office provided training in the use of the World Wide Web in an effort to ensure a minimum level of competency in using Internet access and search tools among staff in all of the career centers. The training also provided an opportunity to solicit feedback from career center staff on the quality of state's automated customer information system, and to gather ideas for new links or products that would facilitate service at the local level.

In terms of state-level data collection, the Career Center Office is working with an outside consulting firm, *Synetics*,¹⁵ to develop an information system with the capacity to extract and manipulate data from all of the career centers. Since the centers' internal data tracking systems are not standardized, the Career Center Office and Synetics are working with centers to inform staff of state-level information systems development and to establish interface capability and reporting procedures.

The Career Center Office is committed to creating a coherent workforce development system rather than a loose collection of independently functioning career centers. At the same time, it wants to support local innovation in the design and delivery of customer services. To balance these sometimes conflicting goals, state staff seek to avoid an overly prescriptive training and technical assistance approach and encourage ongoing communication among the members and staff of all of the REBs and career centers.

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

The state has invested heavily in developing automated products that will support the delivery of core services to customers of the individual career centers. All career centers are required to provide customer access to the state's electronic Job Bank that

¹⁵ Synetics has since changed its name to Synetics/SAIC.

can be accessed through the state's Internet home page. This information system, with links to other state- and federal-level workforce development information and resources, is the one element of the career center system that will be consistent across sites. At the time of the site visit, the state had established electronic links from the One-Stop home page to a variety of other World Wide Web sites, including those of the individual career centers, colleges, universities, other training institutions, institutions offering financial aid, state and federal labor market information sources, state and federal economic data sources, and the statewide Job Bank. The state has supported local sites in establishing links to information about local service providers and employment and training opportunities.

The state is also developing a statewide Talent Bank, an Education and Training Database, and an account management system to track employer use of the career centers.¹⁶ Early versions of these systems can be accessed through the career centers, but the Career Center Office expects to refine them based on customer feedback from the career centers and on-line customer responses. The state is not involved in the development or procurement of self-contained automated products for the delivery of career exploration, resume development, or other core services in the career centers. Rather, center operators are free to select the products most appropriate for their local markets.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Career centers in Massachusetts are required to collect data to track center usage and inform their own continuous improvement efforts. These data are generally similar or identical to those required by the state to track system-level effectiveness, but are generated in a form that meets local needs rather than state requirements. Since the Career Center Office understands the career centers to be *its* customers rather than the reverse, the state has accepted responsibility for creating an architecture that will extract, manipulate, and store data, and an interface that will facilitate communication between the state system and each of the local systems. Each center is responsible for collecting a standard set of data on all individual customers and may select its own software for this purpose. The state system will then upload this information into its

¹⁶ *FutureWorks*, one of the career centers chartered by the Hampden County Regional Employment Board, purchased a similar system of its own and has continued to use it; other career centers use the system developed by the state. As new career centers open, they will be given the option of using the state system or developing their own.

data management system so that it can be shared with participating agencies at the state level.¹⁷ The Career Center Office envisions this system backbone being built according to a model of “just-in-time” data collection. This state-level architecture will eventually support career centers by eliminating the majority of their state-level reporting requirements, enabling them to focus on delivering services to customers.

The Career Center Office recognizes that the Regional Employment Boards also require electronic linkages to the career centers and the state Career Center Office. A \$2.7 million information technology (IT) bond measure has been introduced into the state legislature. The Career Center Office expects that it will pass and plans to commit a portion of these funds to developing electronic linkages between and among the centers, the REBs, and the Career Center Office. The remainder of the funds will be used to purchase several network servers to support further development of the statewide data extraction and reporting system.

Marketing

The Career Center Office’s marketing efforts have been carried out in consultation with a marketing advisory board composed of several individuals and groups of consultants involved in different aspects of marketing. The state has invested heavily in market research to identify customer needs as they have changed over time and by region. This research included telephone interviews with 200 owners or personnel managers of Massachusetts businesses, focus groups with employer and individuals customers, and a survey of employers. Informal feedback from the REBs, all of which have significant private-sector representation, has also been taken into consideration.

The research findings about customer needs and preferences have informed every stage of the development, implementation, and marketing of the One-Stop initiative. In fact, the MassJobs Council began marketing its One-Stop vision before implementation by publicly identifying the need for a new system and describing the features that its customers were demanding. Employers and job-seekers contacted during marketing research expressed frustration about their previous experiences with the public sector employment system, but agreed that if the state invested in a “totally new system,”

¹⁷ The state has faced a challenge in developing an interface that will permit data to be shared between its client/server network and the mainframe computers that store data in some of the participating agencies and departments.

they would give it a try *once*. The MassJobs Council and Career Center Office have used these findings to market the initiative within state government. If the process of implementing the career center system slows because of state-government indecision, MassJobs Council fears that customers will reject the system as “totally new,” and fail to make use of it.

Early on, the job of the marketing staff of the Career Center Office entailed managing the marketing that was already occurring through direct media coverage and subsequent coverage of political challenges to the entire One-Stop initiative. When the One-Stop grant was awarded, it generated significant and ongoing media coverage both of the grant and the system transformation the grant was supporting. Respondents at the state level expressed ambivalence about this attention: on the one hand, the media coverage generated interest in, and business for, the One-Stop centers; on the other hand, the public scrutiny served to politicize the entire change process. In Massachusetts, the career center initiative has established a considerable public presence and created political controversy. As a result, the Career Center Office and the career centers feel tremendous pressure to demonstrate that the career centers are effective.

As more career centers opened, and existing career centers began to conduct high volumes of business, the Career Center Office recognized the need to develop marketing materials that would bring more employers (and more *diverse* employers) into the career centers. The Career Center Office is working on a 25-page brochure designed for this purpose. The brochure will be available in the local career centers, along with local marketing materials. The Career Center Office has also developed a One-Stop logo, to be featured prominently in all of the career centers (although each center may also have its own logo). The logo does not represent the MassJobs Council or any other state agency or department. Rather, it is intended to represent the One-Stop initiative itself.

In Massachusetts, the key to marketing the career center initiative lies in the ability of the REBs to coordinate with the individual centers in attracting new business. The Career Center Office, therefore, encourages and promotes local marketing efforts and stands ready to assist career centers in developing and carrying out their local marketing plans.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Massachusetts planners had originally anticipated completing statewide implementation of career centers in all sixteen regions within the three-year implementation grant period. However, several members of the state legislature were concerned that the old system would be dismantled before there was evidence that the new system was effective. Under the threat of reversing One-Stop implementation, the MassJobs Council worked out a compromise with the Lt. Governor, the legislature, and the REBs whereby the roll-out schedule would be extended and performance data collected to inform the initiative's continued progress.

During the second year of the implementation grant, a total of seven career centers became operational across three of the four initially selected regions. An additional ten regions continued to plan for career centers, and the state continued to develop the technology-based backbone for core services including job banks, talent banks, an education and training database, labor market information databases, customer satisfaction databases and feedback mechanisms, and direct links for employer access.

Massachusetts has taken a bold and comprehensive approach to reinventing its public employment and training services and delivery systems. It is the only state to have adopted a thoroughly competitive approach to the provision of workforce development services; it is also the only state that is simultaneously constructing an entirely new statewide system of workforce development centers and dismantling its old employment and training system. The fact that no existing state agency is playing a lead role in One-Stop implementation, the emphasis on regionally-determined delivery systems and service designs, and the central role of market forces in system design and implementation also distinguish the Massachusetts One-Stop approach from that of other states.

The MassJobs Council and Career Center Office have faced numerous challenges in implementing the state's competitive approach to workforce development. Among the issues that continue to impact the state's progress in supporting the emerging statewide network of One-Stop career centers are the following: (1) maintaining a balance between providing clear leadership to support One-Stop system development through the Career Center Office and generating consensus among a variety of state-level stakeholders; (2) improving state-level resource allocation mechanisms and strategies; and (3) balancing state policy guidance on systemic One-Stop issues with

encouragement of local autonomy in developing a system that is “state-guided and locally-driven.” Each of these issues is addressed briefly below.

At the state level, the MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office face the challenge of providing strong leadership on the One-Stop initiative while maintaining quality relationships with partner state agencies and departments. This has been a formidable challenge in Massachusetts. Unlike states whose local One-Stop initiatives have been accompanied by a reorganization of state workforce development agencies to consolidate leadership of the One-Stop system within existing state agencies, Massachusetts has charged a separate entity, the MassJobs Council, with primary responsibility for the planning and administration of the One-Stop system. Although joint planning and decision-making between MassJobs Council and the partner state agencies has been a feature of One-Stop implementation in Massachusetts, the MassJobs Council Career Center Office has found it difficult to simultaneously provide clear leadership on the career center initiative and engage in collective decision-making with the state-level staff of programs whose program funds will ultimately support the new career center system.

Another challenge for the Career Center Office has been its charge to develop a mechanism to transfer of funds from various state agencies and departments to support the One-Stop initiative. Although Interdepartmental Services Agreements provide a short-term solution to this problem, their negotiation has absorbed considerable CCO staff time and caused confusion among the REBs and career center staff about what responsibilities they have to follow the regulations and reporting requirements that accompany dollars transferred to the career centers from the various categorical programs. The fact that the JTPA Title II system has not yet provided career centers with substantial funding support has made the funding issues even more difficult.

Although each career center is encouraged to develop innovative services and delivery mechanisms, the state also seeks to establish some level of consistency among the centers so that they will be recognized as parts of a single statewide system. The Career Center Office seeks to support local innovation, but is also concerned to demonstrate the effectiveness of the system as a whole to the world at large. Staff have found it difficult to strike a balance between encouraging local autonomy and providing guidance to support the common systemic elements of the career center initiative.

In spite of these challenges, the One-Stop initiative in Massachusetts has met with much success. Among the key innovations that have resulted from the One-Stop implementation process are the following: (1) the development of new partnerships among private and public sector organizations; (2) significant private sector support and involvement in planning and developing the new Massachusetts career center system; and (3) the introduction of multiple levels of competition to the process of selecting and maintaining career center operators.

The open bidding process has brought together coalitions of diverse organizations to operate career centers, including consortia of private firms and community-based organizations. The combined capacity of these different types of organizations to reach different sectors of the employer and job seeker communities has increased dramatically under the Massachusetts model of cooperation and coordination within a competitive framework.¹⁸

The private sector has been significantly involved in all aspects of planning and implementing the Massachusetts career center initiative. One-Stop planners recognized early on that employer support was needed to sustain the public employment system in any form, and was absolutely crucial to reforming it. Employers were consulted in market research and their feedback was incorporated into the new system design. Employers have also played key roles in every stage of implementation. Career Center Office staff indicated that if employer support had not been so strong and consistent, the entire career center initiative would have been threatened.

Finally, Massachusetts has introduced competition to the public sector in significant and comprehensive ways. Although many states have introduced a limited amount of competition to their employment and training programs, such as competition to select service providers for key functions, Massachusetts has opened the entire system to competition in an effort to ensure that all aspects of the system are performance-driven.

¹⁸ For example, in the Hampden County Region, one of the selected career center operators is a consortium including the local Department of Employment and Training, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the local Chamber of Commerce, the local community college, and the Donahue Institute at the University of Massachusetts. In the Boston Region, Drake Beam Morin, a private-sector outplacement firm, partnered with the local Department of Employment and Training to operate a career center.

Because of the dramatic change that the career center system will bring about, key legislators, social service providers, and welfare agencies are approaching this system transformation with apprehension. Only sustained and meaningful communication among all partners will make it possible to address the fundamental challenges posed by Massachusetts' One-Stop approach thoughtfully, with determination, and with good will. These qualities will be necessary, as well, in order to identify the lessons learned from the Massachusetts experience to inform system changes underway in other states.

APPENDIX N

FUTUREWORKS CAREER CENTER SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During September 1996

**FUTUREWORKS CAREER CENTER
SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS
One-Stop Profile**

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT	1
DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	5
Evolution of the Local One-Stop Design	5
Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals	7
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	11
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION	15
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES	16
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS.....	18
Physical Facilities	18
Staffing Arrangements.....	20
Capacity Building	21
Management Information Systems (MIS).....	23
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements.....	24
Marketing	27
DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS	27
Services for Individual Customers.....	27
Services for Employer Customers	29
CUSTOMER RESPONSE.....	30
Individuals	30
Employers	31
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	32

FUTUREWORKS CAREER CENTER SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Hampden County is a semi-urban region located midway between Boston and New York. The County is dotted with small cities, towns, and municipalities, including Springfield (the largest town with a population of 155,000 residents), Chicopee, Holyoke, and Ludlow. Industrial production and commercial trade were the mainstays of the region's economy until the late 1980s, when a major recession blanketed much of New England, including Massachusetts. Like other major industrial areas, the structure of the economy has changed drastically since that time. There are now substantially fewer manufacturing jobs and many of the manufacturing jobs that do exist require a high level of technical expertise. Employment opportunities in the retail trade and services sectors are increasing but do not match the wages previously paid in the manufacturing sector. These structural changes in the economy have resulted in a growing mismatch between the education, skills, and work experiences of many local job-seekers and the workforce needs of local employers.

The unemployment rates in the Springfield metropolitan area and Hampden County reflect this mismatch. Although statewide unemployment rates had shrunk to around 4.4% at the time of the evaluation site visit, Hampden County's unemployment stood at 5.1%, and Springfield's at more than 6%. Unemployment remained high, even though the local economy was expanding somewhat. Underemployment was also a concern among Springfield residents.

The FutureWorks Career Center is one of two One-Stop career centers serving residents of Hampden County. Hampden County residents may receive services either from FutureWorks, located in the City of Springfield, or from CareerPoint, a second One-Stop career center located about six miles away in Holyoke.¹ FutureWorks is

¹In fact, Massachusetts residents may receive services from any of the state's career centers.

unique in that it is the first One-Stop career center in the state of Massachusetts operated solely by a private for-profit entity.²

The selection of Employment and Training Institute, Inc. (ETI)—a private-for-profit firm based in New Jersey—to operate one of the two One-Stop career centers in Hampden County was strongly influenced by the commitment to a “competitive model” by the state of Massachusetts as well as by the members of the Hampden County Regional Employment Board (REB). Both state and regional workforce development planners believed that the introduction of competition into the design and delivery of government programs would revitalize the system, prompt improved performance, and spawn innovation. Moreover, the MassJobs Council wanted to use competition as a way to shift the focus of workforce development programs away from reporting requirements toward meeting customers’ needs. This new focus would, in turn, empower users of the system to make informed choices about how to meet their individual employment or training needs.

As described in the state profile, the MassJobs Council’s vision for a statewide career center system included competition at three levels. First, the 16 Regional Employment Boards in Massachusetts were invited to compete for One-Stop funds based on their proposals for implementing One-Stop Career Center systems in their respective regions. The incentive structure was such that the earlier sites would receive the bulk of funds and would inform the processes in the later implementation sites. The vision of the Hampden County Regional Employment Board was consistent with the state-level vision in its enthusiasm for a transformed system based on a competitive model. As a result, the Hampden County REB was selected by the state as one of four regions to receive first-year implementation grant funding, and one of two regions considered ready to implement an open competitive process to select career center operators and charter and oversee career center operations.

Second, through an open bidding process administered by each selected Regional Employment Board, public agencies, private firms, and community-based organizations would be able to compete for selection as center operators. The Hampden County Regional Employment Board’s request for proposals encouraged bidders to propose fee-

²Several of the One-Stop career centers operating in Massachusetts at the time of the evaluation site visit were operated by consortia in which private sector entities participated, but FutureWorks was the only center operated solely by a private company.

based “enhanced” services that, in combination with required core (free) services would make a full spectrum of workforce development services available to job seekers and employers. The REB also attempted to select different career center operators who would offer contrasting menus of services that would offer a high degree of customer choice. The Hampden County REB also sought center operators that demonstrated creativity in designing workforce development services and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The third level of competition envisioned by the MassJobs Council as part of the new statewide system of career centers was competition between local centers that would compete for the same customer base. Just as Regional Employment Boards were permitted a high degree of latitude in establishing their career center systems, local operators in Hampden County were permitted latitude in developing their vision for the operation of individual centers.

The two entities selected to operate career centers in Hampden County were each encouraged to develop their own areas of expertise. FutureWorks has enjoyed success providing a wide range of enhanced services to the employer community in Springfield, and has since become a major player in economic development and business networks throughout the county. CareerPoint, the second Hampden County career center—operated by a non-profit consortium of public educational institutions, public employment and training agencies, and the local chamber of commerce³—has focused on recruiting customers from minority communities.⁴ Both centers maintain a high level of contact with each other as well as with the other major education, employment, and training providers in the region. Electronic linkages to a statewide information system are perceived as important in weaving these independent providers into an integrated state system.

³CareerPoint is a private non-profit corporation created through the collaboration of the local Chamber of Commerce, Holyoke Community College, the Department of Employment and Training (whose local office staff previously provided ES, UI, UI profiling and worker reemployment, and TAA/TRA services to Hampden County residents), the Department of Transitional Assistance (whose local offices administering time-limited cash assistance under welfare reform), and the Donahue Institute of the University of Massachusetts.

⁴ CareerPoint is located in a predominantly minority community. One of the local partners in the CareerPoint Collaboration—the Chamber of Commerce—had developed a reputation for providing high-quality information and services to minority communities. CareerPoint has benefited from the Chamber’s experience and expertise.

The remainder of this profile focuses on the FutureWorks Career Center operated by ETI. However, it is important to understand that both centers—FutureWorks and CareerPoint—serve the same local community. The two centers are located within several miles of each other, and are available to serve the same job-seeker and employer base. They compete with one another, but they are also partners in fulfilling the needs of job-seekers and employers in Hampden County. The uncertainties of this relationship are indicative of some of the more fundamental questions that have emerged as the state has attempted to implement its controversial approach to redesigning workforce development services.

Several contextual factors have influenced the development and implementation of One-Stop Career Centers in Hampden County. These include (1) the highly charged political environment surrounding the career center system at both the state and local levels; (2) the need for the transformed system to respond to the challenges created by the implementation of welfare reform at the state and local levels; and (3) the structure of the Springfield-area economy and labor market. Each of these is addressed briefly below.

The implementation of the One stop initiative in Massachusetts has occurred in the context of a highly-charged political environment. Massachusetts' decision to use a competitive model to transform the public employment system has been surrounded by tremendous controversy. In June 1996, the state legislature attempted to restrict the state's ability to reallocate public funds from other employment and training programs to support the One-Stop initiative. Although the legislative opposition has, to some degree, subsided, career centers throughout the state, including FutureWorks, have come within days of being shut-down. Under a negotiated compromise, career centers in the four regions selected for initial funding will be permitted to continue operations, and ten additional regions will be permitted to plan for future career center implementation, while information about career center effectiveness is collected and reviewed. As a result, the experiences of the career centers in Hampden County are being observed with great interest by partisans on both sides of the issue.

The state has implemented dramatic changes in its welfare system, introducing both time-limited benefits and widespread work requirements. The MassJobs Council has been charged with developing a comprehensive strategic plan to assist welfare clients in finding gainful employment. The MassJobs Council and the career center system have been designated as the delivery system that will have the responsibility to

ensure that welfare recipients receive effective job search assistance. Changes in the welfare system at the local level have already impacted the clientele seeking services at the Hampden County career centers.

The state, including the Springfield area, is emerging from a lengthy and far-reaching recession, exacerbated by sizable reductions in defense industry sales in the late 1980s and early 1990s. After 1988, unemployment in the state of Massachusetts tripled, exceeding 7% by 1990. Since 1991, the state has experienced low, but steady job growth in most sectors, although manufacturing employment has continued to decline, as have employment opportunities in state and federal government agencies and departments. The Springfield area has experienced substantial, if uneven, growth in wholesale and retail trade, and moderate growth in the production and service sectors. A mismatch between the labor need of employers and the skills of job-seekers continues to plague the local economy. As a result both employers and job seekers perceive a need for assistance with the labor-exchange function as well as a need for increased workforce education and training.

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution of the Local One-Stop Design

The design of workforce development services at the FutureWorks Career Center has been influenced by the state's vision of a competitive system, by the Regional Employment Board's interpretation of that vision, and by the ability of the FutureWorks staff and management, with the strong support of the Regional Employment Board, to effectively combine workforce development theory and high-performance workplace practice.

The state vision, as described above and in the state One-Stop profile, calls for the delivery of integrated customer-driven services by center operators that are selected through a competitive process managed by Regional Employment Boards. As described in the One-Stop profile for the State of Massachusetts, federal block grant legislation was expected to create an integrated funding stream to support the delivery of workforce development services by a statewide network of One-Stop career centers. In the absence of federal block grant legislation, the state Career Center Office has negotiated "Interdepartmental Services Agreements" with the state agencies responsible for administering Employment Services, Title III services for dislocated workers, welfare-to-work services, vocational rehabilitation, services for the blind, employment services for individuals with mental health disabilities, and adult education services for

the allocation of agency funds for the operation of One-Stop career centers.⁵ Only a small amount of JTPA Title II funds for services to economically disadvantaged adults and youth was available for career center operations during the first implementation year, because JTPA two-year service delivery contracts were already underway.

In Hampden County, the Regional Employment Board expressed great interest in and enthusiasm for innovation in the reengineering of workforce development services. Although the Hampden County REB's request for proposals identified the minimum services that a center operator would be required to provide to job-seekers and employers, it also encouraged bidders to propose fee-based "enhanced services in order to make a "full spectrum of workforce development services available to job-seekers and employers in the county. As described previously, the REB envisioned that the operators of the two career centers would develop contrasting menus of services to increase overall customer choice.

The Regional Employment Boards in Massachusetts received initial funding to plan and implement career centers from the MassJobs Council. However, over time, they are expected to become self-supporting. Some REBs have opted to generate operating expenses by requiring center operators to "pay" a fee (e.g., \$100,000, which would be deducted from the operator's start-up funds) in exchange for the charter to operate a One-Stop career center. Rather than imposing a chartering fee, the Hampden County REB requires that center operators share a proportion of the fees generated from enhanced services with the REB. It is unclear whether these arrangements will be sustained over time.

Finally, the Hampden County Regional Employment Boards sought operators that demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of the state's vision for the future of workforce development services in Massachusetts. The Board was interested in operators that could demonstrate creativity in approaching workforce development issues and a commitment to continuous improvement. Just as the REBs were permitted a high degree of latitude in establishing their visions of local career center systems, the

⁵ Massachusetts has developed a statewide automated telephone system for taking applications for UI benefits that is operated separately from the career centers. At the two career centers in Hampden County, staff viewed this as a positive development, because it enabled the career centers to differentiate themselves from the old system of "unemployment offices" and to market themselves as brokers of career education and career development assistance.

selected career center operators were also permitted latitude in developing their visions for the operations of individual centers. The Hampden County REB had no preconceived ideas about particular types of services associated with particular operators, but placed a great deal of emphasis on operator capacity for innovation.

The proposal submitted by ETI for the operation of the FutureWorks Career Center articulated a vision consistent with that of MassJobs Council and the Hampden REB. In its proposal, ETI/FutureWorks evidenced a commitment to creating a “state-of-the-art” career center that would serve as a national model of comprehensive, customer-driven services. The staff at FutureWorks are knowledgeable about contemporary workforce development issues and skilled in high-performance workplace practices. Although FutureWorks and its “sister” career centers replace the local public Employment Service field offices previously operated by the state Department of Employment and Training, the vision for FutureWorks is not that of a “placement agency,” it is of a broker of community workforce development services, labor market information, and career education in Hampden County. Staff attitudes reflect this orientation. They are committed to applying continuous improvement strategies and team skills in the design and operation of customer services. Because it has been fashioned “of a whole cloth,” rather than piecemeal, the Center has been immune to the culture clash commonly experienced by staff in One-Stop Centers formed through the consolidation of multiple public agencies and departments.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals

Universal Access

FutureWorks Career Center has operationalized the concept of universal access in a variety of ways. Among the most innovative is the implementation of a universal membership system. When individuals visit the Center, they are encouraged to become members. Membership is available to anyone who visits FutureWorks.

The rationale for marketing services as membership-based is at-least three-fold. First, membership conveys to the customer the idea that he or she is important and deserving of high-quality service. Second, membership-based services imply that membership is separate from employment. Since FutureWorks is committed to educating the community about how to prepare for the “new workforce” through lifelong learning, the center encourages members to draw upon FutureWorks resources for their lifelong employment and training needs, not simply for the next job. Third, membership is a tangible means of preserving universality of access when members

have very different needs—all members receive the same membership card and enter the system in the same way, even though they may receive services of differing intensity.⁶

Providing a well-staffed, well-equipped resource room is perceived as another means of ensuring universal access. The resource room at FutureWorks is attractive and provides access to a wide range of information both on-site and through Internet access. Moreover, staff members in the resource room speak several languages and are equipped to assist FutureWorks' diverse membership. Some equipment has been adapted to meet the needs of the hearing- or sight-impaired. FutureWorks perceives the staff members of the resource room to be among the most valuable human resource assets in the center because of the number of members with whom they interact everyday and the value of the services they provide.

FutureWorks has adopted extended hours in an effort to render services more accessible to customers. The Center is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, with extended hours on Tuesday evenings (until 8:00 p.m.) and Saturdays (9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.). FutureWorks will also remain open beyond its normal operating hours for special projects such as job fairs or pre-arranged tours of the facilities.

Customer Choice

FutureWorks provides a wide range of services to job-seeker and employer members and ensures that these services are easily accessible. The Center sees itself as a major point of entry into the regional workforce development system, including the services provided on-site by FutureWorks staff as well as services provided by public and private providers throughout the region. FutureWorks offers high quality information about careers, jobs, training programs, and tuition assistance, and can provide counseling, assessment, and limited course instruction through the workshops available at the Center. Staff stated, "If we do not have the information, we will find it, and we'll assist our members in navigating their way through it." It should be noted that FutureWorks, in part because it has not taken over the functions of all public workforce development agencies, sees itself as a broker rather than as a provider of all

⁶ One FutureWorks "member," a welfare recipient, expressed enthusiasm for her card because it served as a tangible evidence that the system had invested in her: FutureWorks trusted her to "carry that card and run it through these machines just like all of the other people."

services to all people.⁷ Rather, its expertise lies in empowering job-seekers and assisting employers in meeting their workforce development needs. With few exceptions, the choice of service type and intensity is made by individual Center customers, rather than as a result of program-based requirements.⁸ FutureWorks seeks to provide its members with a wide array of services, access to services not available on-site, and information that will assist them in good career-decision-making.

Integrated Services

FutureWorks has identified service integration as its most challenging objective. Although the internal organization of services provided by ETI at the FutureWorks Career Center follows a fully-integrated design, not all public workforce development funds were reallocated nor all categorical program responsibilities reassigned to the One-Stop career centers. The most notable program/funding streams not yet consolidated into One-Stop career center operations at the state level are JTPA Title II funds for services to economically disadvantaged individuals and Title III funds for dislocated worker services. Both FutureWorks and the Hampden County Regional Employment Board anticipate that JTPA funds will eventually comprise a portion of the funds that support the statewide career center initiative. If and when JTPA funds are reallocated to state career center operators, the range of customer services available within career centers is likely to be further enhanced and Center staff will alter internal objectives, operations, and performance measures accordingly.

FutureWorks has developed two strategies to support integration of services under these circumstances. First, through staff training efforts, ETI ensures that Career

⁷ At the time of the site visit, although FutureWorks had replaced the local Employment Service field office operated by the state Department of Employment and Training, a number of other employment-related agencies continued to function within the same service area. These included a JTPA Title III-funded dislocated worker center, the local JTPA Title II administrative entity, and the local office of the state agency responsible for vocational rehabilitation. As an information and services broker, FutureWorks maintains regular contact with the agencies as well as a wide range of local education and training service providers.

⁸ Over time, FutureWorks has been forced to introduce distinct procedures to meet the service or reporting requirements of some categorical funding streams. For example, to meet its responsibility to provide reemployment services to UI profilees, FutureWorks schedules reemployment workshops for and monitors attendance by members belonging to this target group. To accommodate requirements for veterans' preference, an outstationed DET staff member at FutureWorks has a counseling caseload consisting exclusively of veterans. The Center, however, goes to great lengths to make these distinctions invisible to Center customers.

Specialists at the FutureWorks Center are aware of all training and workforce development services available to Center members. FutureWorks requires that all staff “become very familiar” with the requirements of the following programs or funding sources: JTPA Titles II and III; Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA/TRA); Full Employment Program (welfare-to-work program); Job Corps; state and federal student financial aid grants and loans; the federal Enterprise Zone program, veterans’ employment services; and vocational rehabilitation services.

Second, FutureWorks will assess the availability of funds in such programs, assist customers through the application and approval process, and conduct member follow-ups to ensure customer satisfaction with program services. One FutureWorks staff member is the designated “specialist” on these programs and assists FutureWorks members in applying for program services.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

The state’s emphasis on local autonomy in the design and operation of career center services and the wide variation in the capacities of center operators has made the development of performance measures at the state level a formidable challenge. The state has identified four general areas against which the career centers will be held accountable. These include: customer satisfaction; customer outcomes; market growth and penetration; and gross product. Although the state has developed performance measures in each of these areas, considerable responsibility in implementing such measures has been given to the Regional Employment Boards. The REBs are responsible for implementing the measures to assess the performance of individual career centers. There is considerable interest at the regional and local levels in establishing high-quality performance measures, but also widespread uncertainty about the nature of such measures and their use.

To respond to the state’s “competitive model,” FutureWorks’ management is attempting to establish performance criteria that accomplish three sets of objectives: (1) providing information about whether the Center has accomplished state, regional, and local goals; (2) allowing for comparisons of performance across local sites; and (3) informing the continuous improvement process within FutureWorks. To support these objectives, ETI has implemented a sophisticated management information system designed to track member outcomes.

Accomplishing state, regional and local goals. Because the career centers are replacing the local Division of Employment and Training (DET) field offices in their respective areas, the state of Massachusetts is under tremendous pressure—both inside and outside of state government—to demonstrate that its new approach to workforce development is a success. Under these circumstances, performance measures that compare outcomes of the old system to outcomes of the new system are crucial. At the same time, however, the new vision of workforce development has established different objectives than those associated with the old system. Negotiating measures that are both useful to practitioners of the new system and that allow for comparison to the performance of the old system poses a formidable challenge to the MassJobs Council, the REBs, and the centers themselves.

Comparing performance across different local sites. Another challenge posed by the “competitive model” of workforce development services in the state of Massachusetts arises from the emphasis on local autonomy. The Regional Employment Boards allowed considerable latitude in the development of plans for center operation. Presumably, centers will begin to develop “specialties” to enhance overall customer choice. However, if different centers specialize in different types of services or customers, this makes it difficult to compare the performance of “competing” centers.

Informing Continuous Improvement. FutureWorks, in addition to implementing a management information system designed to track customer outcomes, has developed and implemented a procedure to promote and monitor high-performance outcomes. The “No Excuses” Team is a cross-functional, rotating group of six FutureWorks staff charged with maintaining customer focus, designing mechanisms for customer feedback, and insuring that such feedback informs the continuous improvement process.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Local Governance Arrangements. The structure of the One-Stop initiative in Hampden County has been heavily influenced by organizational changes initiated at the state-level. In 1988, the state of Massachusetts enacted legislation that created both the state-level MassJobs Council and the network of Regional Employment Boards (REBs) that currently governs and oversees the state’s One-Stop career centers. The state Career Center Office serves as the day-to-day liaison between the MassJobs Council, its partner state-level departments and agencies, and Regional Employment Boards on

policy, procedural, and fiscal issues related to the start-up and operation of One-Stop career centers.

Regional Employment Boards were given considerable autonomy in developing local plans that meet identified workforce development needs and in selecting career center operators. The Hampden County REB formed a One-Stop Implementation Task Force to develop concrete strategies and methods for implementing the career center system in Hampden County. The members of this committee developed the strategy for implementing the competitive bidding process and wrote the request for proposals (RFP) from prospective career center operators. In Hampden County, the Regional Employment Board sought “inventive partners” rather than vendors who would carry out specific pre-defined services.

Because Hampden County was one of the first regions in the state to engage in a competitive bidding process, many important decisions had not yet been made about various dimensions of the career center system at the time the RFP was issued—including the nature of the integrated funding stream that would be used to support career center operations and the extent to which center operators would be responsible for operations/reporting linked to categorical programs. To ensure that the selected career center operators would be able to function in this rapidly evolving arena, the Hampden REB emphasized the importance of flexibility and the ability to work with other agencies, service providers, and community-based organizations in its request-for-proposal process.⁹

Locally, the selected career centers are responsible to the REBs for meeting the terms of their charters. The charters to operate career centers are revocable if center operators fail to meet identified performance benchmarks. Center managers and staff work closely with the REBs on policy and procedural issues, local economic development initiatives, and efforts to identify emerging community needs and strategies to address these needs. Center managers also maintain frequent contact with

⁹ Despite the emphasis on the need for flexibility, FutureWorks management have been dismayed by the need to adapt to circumstances that differ dramatically from the integrated funding stream and services described in the RFP. Among these differences are the need to operate TAA/TRA, and reemployment services for UI profilees according to the rules and reporting requirements of these categorical programs.

the state Career Center Office staff for technical support and assistance with reporting and compliance issues.

FutureWorks Career Center is managed by an Executive Director whose previous assignment for ETI was to design and operate a dislocated worker center in Connecticut based on the principles of customer-driven outcome-based services. The management team for the FutureWorks Center includes managers of the Center's four functional divisions (MIS/Administration, Career Development Services, Employer Services, and Community Relations/Marketing). Because all staff at the Center work for the same entity, establishing cross-agency staffing along functional lines has not been an issue.

Participating Local Agencies. The career center approach envisioned by the state and local workforce development policymakers would have "leapfrogged" the difficult process of building local partnerships among different workforce development entities by establishing a single career center operator responsible for offering all services under an integrated funding stream. In the long-term, the Hampden County REB and FutureWorks anticipate increased consolidation of workforce development services and the replacement of multiple categorical programs by a cohesive system with an integrated funding stream. At present, however, FutureWorks is functioning as a broker of services in an environment in which a number of different agencies, service providers, and categorical programs are still operating. In this context, the FutureWorks Career Center is becoming an increasingly important community resource in the areas of labor exchange and economic development.

To be an effective broker of community services, FutureWorks has invested heavily in outreach to (1) local institutional partners, (2) community-based organizations, and (3) area education and training providers. The relationship between FutureWorks and each of these types of organizations is addressed briefly below. FutureWorks anticipates that the network of these providers of training and other services will become increasingly organized and better able to support complementary community initiatives, such as welfare reform and school-to-work.

Institutional Partners are the other state agencies with which FutureWorks maintains cross-referral relationships and/or frequent institutional contact. Institutional partners include:

- The Hampden County Workers Assistance Center, which provides services to dislocated workers under JTPA Title III funds; and the

Massachusetts Industrial Services Program, which is the state-level agency that has been responsible for administering Title III services to dislocated workers and rapid response services to employers.

- The Hampden County Employment and Training Consortium, which administers services to economically disadvantaged workers under JTPA Title II.
- The Urban League and the Massachusetts Career Development Institute, which are contracted service providers under JTPA Title II.
- The regional office of the state Department of Employment and Training (DET), which is responsible for administering ES, UI, TAA/TRA, and reemployment services to UI profiles through field offices in areas that have not yet implemented One-Stop career centers.
- The local offices of the state Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), which is responsible for providing time-limited cash assistance and employment-related services to individuals under welfare reform legislation.
- The regional office of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, which administers vocational rehabilitation services to individuals with serious disabilities.
- The Massachusetts Commission for Blind, which administers rehabilitation services to individuals with visual impairments.

FutureWorks also maintains regular contact with a wide array of additional economic development entities, service providers, and educational programs and institutions. At the time of the site visit in September 1996, 48 such organizations had visited FutureWorks since its opening in June.

Community-based Organizations with which FutureWorks maintains regular contact include a wide range of social service and non-profit organizations, as well as libraries, civic associations, and religious or cultural institutions. At the time of the site visit, FutureWorks had contacted 81 such organizations in writing and by telephone in order to invite them to visit the Center and learn about the services provided there.

Potential Education and Training Provider Partners include training institutions with which FutureWorks (and the Department of Employment and Training field offices before the career centers opened) has not yet developed a formal cross-referral relationship. In an effort to expand the range of training providers with which the Center maintains ongoing relationships, FutureWorks has contacted 36 training institutions, colleges, universities, and academies in western Massachusetts to learn

more about their programs and invite them to learn about the services available at FutureWorks.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The environment at the FutureWorks Career Center supports a high level of both formal and informal communication. Formal channels of communication have been institutionalized in FutureWorks through the organization and management of staff. The managers of each functional area support innovation and creativity on the part of their staff by regularly soliciting their concerns, ideas and questions, and bringing them to the attention of other managers in an effort to ensure complementarity between the objective and strategies of these functional areas. Staff at FutureWorks are divided into four primary functional divisions, including (1) Career Development Services, (2) Employer Services, (3) MIS/Administrative Services, and (4) Community Relations and Marketing Services.

Teamwork and communication skills are evident among staff of all divisions at all levels. Staff of each division meet with the division manager weekly. Staff members are also encouraged to approach managers with questions or concerns as they arise. Managers, in turn, also meet with each other and with the Executive Director on a weekly basis, and are encouraged to bring other issues to the group's attention as they arise. Whole-staff meetings and brainstorming sessions also occur on a regular basis. All staff have can also send and receive both internal and external electronic mail.

Cross-functional teams are used to address specific activities. For example, Employer Services staff coordinate with Administrative Services staff to plan job fairs or other on-site services for employers. Career Development Services staff coordinate with Community Relations and resource room staff to identify providers of training for specific career areas. Teams are also formed to develop ideas for new services or new means of service delivery, or to address specific challenges. Once a cross-functional team's objectives are met, the team is disbanded.

Many communication mechanisms have also been established to promote customer feedback, which is then used to inform the continuous improvement process. FutureWorks' management sees its own staff as its customers, and uses similar feedback processes to ensure their satisfaction. Visible suggestion boxes are strategically located throughout the Center to encourage customer input into the strategic planning process, and to alert FutureWorks staff of problems or issues that

require attention. Staff who prefer anonymity are encouraged to contribute their ideas in this manner. FutureWorks also plans to develop customer satisfaction surveys to solicit comprehensive, formal input from its employee customers.

FutureWorks staff reported that current communication protocols and day-to-day procedures relative to state-level agencies and the Career Center Office were generally effective, and had improved over time. One area of concern early on was that Career Center Office staff negotiated agreements with different state agencies on behalf of REBs and the career centers that these regional entities had not been party to but were expected to abide by.¹⁰

FutureWorks, its “sister” career center—Career Point, and the Hampden County REB have also developed frequent and substantive communication and high-quality working relationships. As a result of the communication among these entities, the roles of the various organizations are clear and all three exhibit varying levels of interdependence. Despite the element of competition built into the relationship between the two regional career center operators, these two entities have developed complementary functions, and have even developed a coordinated programmatic response to serving individuals affected by welfare reform.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES

The MassJobs Council’s Career Center Office is the entity that currently provides Regional Employment Boards and One-Stop career centers with operating funds, based on a combination of federal One-Stop implementation grant funds and funds allocated by state agencies through Interdepartmental Service Agreements (ISAs). The state’s goal is to transition the emerging career centers as soon as possible from implementation grant support to ongoing federal workforce development funds supplemented by revenues generated at the local level through fees charged to career center customers for enhanced services.

During the initial stage of career center planning, four REBs were selected, through a competitive process, to receive federal One-Stop implementation grant funds

¹⁰ One example was an agreement made by the Career Center Office that One-Stop career centers would provide reemployment services to UI profilees under the Worker Profiling Reemployment Services program. Prior to being provided by the Career Center Office with instructions for conducting UI profiling, REBs and career centers had not been aware that they would be responsible for providing this service.

to support their initial system building efforts. The state had originally anticipated that federal workforce development block grants would provide an integrated funding stream to support the operation of the One-Stop career centers. When federal legislation was not enacted, the state Career Center Office took on the challenge of developing Interdepartmental Service Agreements (ISAs) with partner state agencies to support the statewide One Stop initiative in Massachusetts.

The partner agencies with which ISAs have been negotiated include: the Department of Employment and Training, the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Department of Education, Massachusetts Industrial Services Program, Massachusetts Rehabilitation Council, and the Commission for the Blind. With the exception of support from the JTPA Title II and Title III programs—which flow through designated local grantees—all funds supporting the career center initiative are negotiated at the state level and flow through the state Career Center Office. The Career Center Office then reimburses both the Regional Employment Boards and the career centers for service provided.

According to the state's planned expenditures for FY 97, the FutureWorks Career Center was expected to be reimbursed for \$1.8 million in operating expenses, of which 46% were to be provided by an Interagency Services Agreement with the Department of Employment and Training, whose local field offices were replaced by the two Hampden County career centers. The details of career center financing are largely transparent to the individual career center operators. However, along with the transfer of funds from some agencies have come responsibilities for program-based reporting. REBs and career centers had not anticipated that they would still be subject to state-level reporting requirements for individual funding streams. Staff expressed frustration over this issue, indicating that their time would be much better spent assisting customers than reporting information about them.

Another challenge in the implementation of integrated funded has been the exclusion of JTPA funds and services from career center operations. Although the state Career Center Office had anticipated that JTPA funds would flow through the centers, the state did not mandate the participation of the JTPA entities in the state of Massachusetts' career center initiative. During the first year of career center operations, JTPA funds were not available for the support of career center operations because two-year JTPA service providers contracts were already in effect. However,

JTPA service delivery areas have not rushed to put themselves out of business by committing JTPA funds to the One-Stop career centers.

In Hampden County, FutureWorks maintains a mutual referral relationship with the local JTPA entity, which will continue to receive JTPA funds for at least the next fiscal year. Planning for the reallocation of JTPA funding to support the career centers has met with tremendous resistance. Whether JTPA funds will flow through FutureWorks, or the other career centers after the next fiscal year is uncertain.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Physical Facilities

The FutureWorks Career Center is located in downtown Springfield, directly across the street from Springfield Technical and Community College. Although the complex in which FutureWorks is housed is the old Springfield Armory, most residents know the area as the former location of Digital Equipment Corporation, formerly a large employer in the area. Staff and customers remarked that the location “could not be better.” The Center is accessible via almost any bus route is and within walking distance of schools and a number of social service providers. There is ample parking on the grounds.

The office space is considerable. With over 18,000 square feet of office space, the facility occupied by FutureWorks is currently the largest career center in Massachusetts. The facility is also ideal for the needs of FutureWorks staff. There is sufficient privacy to ensure comfort for customers receiving one-on-one Center services such as counseling, yet the high-energy and activity level in the Center ensures that a staff person is always visible and willing to answer customer inquiries. A large conference space also enables staff to hold job fairs on-site and host large orientation sessions. Although customers must take the elevator to the third floor of the building, the signage, both inside and outside of the building, is adequate to ensure that customers can find the Center.

As soon as customers step off of the elevator, they are greeted by the reception-area staff and asked if they have visited the center before. Center members for whom this is a return visit generally have pre-scheduled appointments and know where to go. As they enter the facility, members “swipe” their membership cards through a reader and punch in a code to indicate the nature of their visit that day. New visitors are invited to take part in an orientation to the Center. Two orientation sessions are held

every day—at 10:00 a.m. and at 2:00 p.m. Additional orientations are scheduled for Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings to meet the needs of students or individuals who are employed, but may be seeking new opportunities.

Orientation sessions include a tour of the facilities and a brief introduction to the services provided at the center. Orientations are held in one of two large classrooms; seats are arranged in a circle. The orientation leader introduces himself or herself and then asks participants to introduce themselves. The leader takes notes on participants who might be eligible for categorically-funded programs and forwards this information to the staff assigned to collect the Center membership applications at the conclusion of the session. Customers are then invited to walk around, use the resource room, or ask any questions they might have.

Staff cubicles are arranged to represent a compromise between the need for privacy and the desire for an open environment. All staff are visible, but the short three-walled cubicles provide some protection from the commotion created as members walk by the cubicles on their way to seminars, computer courses, or other appointments. The resource room is large and includes access to the following: 14 small cubicles that serve as individual telephone stations; 7 larger cubicles that contain computer workstations for resume and cover-letter preparation; 12 computer terminals with access to the Internet; two TV/VCRs; and a library that contains tables and chairs, and shelves stocked with numerous books, pamphlets, and brochures related to workforce development. The walls contain job postings by area of interest that are color-coded to indicate the month the job was posted. The center also contains 12 other computer terminals in a classroom used for instruction in basic computer skills. All computers are equipped with *Windows 95*, and a wide array of common office software packages.

A large room is available for job fairs or receptions; FutureWorks has used it frequently since the Center opened. Several smaller rooms serve as on-site interview or assessment rooms for employers. Although neat, clean, and well-organized, the facilities are not “sterile.” The high ceilings and conspicuous red pipes and vents render the atmosphere less formal than traditional office space, and more comfortable for a greater variety of customers.

The Executive Director’s office is the most visible office in the entire Center. Directly across from the reception area, the Director maintains a visible presence in the

Center. Of the customers interviewed at the Center, more than half indicated that they had met her or seen her walking around the center. When not engaged in meetings, the Director keeps her door open and encourages Center members to use the suggestion box attached to her office. “These are your tax dollars at work,” she notes repeatedly, “we need you to tell us how best to use them.”

Staffing Arrangements

The 27 staff employed by ETI to staff the FutureWorks Career Center are assigned to four functional divisions, as follows:

- Eight *Career Development Services* staff are responsible for assisting individual customers with core and enhanced services. As described later in this profile, core services include services available to members of the general public free of charge; enhanced services include services available to customers eligible for specific categorical programs or services for which a user fee is charged. Career development services staff generally have graduate degrees in counseling. They coordinate closely with Employer Services staff.
- Eight *Employer Services* staff are responsible for assisting employer customers with core and enhanced services. These staff, many of whom were selected for their experience in the private sector or working with employers, coordinate closely with Community Relations and Marketing staff.
- Nine *MIS/Administrative Services* staff are responsible for maintaining and managing the MIS systems, the physical facilities, and the resource room. Administrative services staff also provide word processing services to FutureWorks staff and customers.
- Two *Community Relations and Marketing Services* staff are responsible for outreach, recruitment, public relations and the creation and maintenance of “interagency linkages,” which include partnerships between FutureWorks and other local service providers, training institutions, and economic development entities.

FutureWorks is managed by an Executive Director and a team comprised of the managers of the four functional divisions. If and when JTPA funds are added to the “integrated funding stream” supporting Center operations, additional divisions may need to be added to support expanded FutureWorks services. At the time of the evaluation site visit, all staff working in the FutureWorks Career Center were employees of ETI, with the exception of an outstationed Veterans’ Employment Services Representative—who was employed by the Department of Employment and

Training. Many of these staff were hired by ETI for FutureWorks Career Center because of their considerable experience in ES/UI or JTPA programs. However, since FutureWorks does not have co-located representatives from other agencies or programs, the organization of cross-agency staff along functional lines has not been an issue.¹¹

Capacity Building

Capacity building efforts with regard to local implementation of the career center initiative in Massachusetts have been undertaken by the regional level (the REBs) as well as at the level of career center staff.

Regional Employment Boards. As the career center initiative has evolved, the roles played by Regional Employment Boards have changed dramatically. Regional Employment Boards are granted considerable autonomy in designing and overseeing the career centers within their jurisdictions. To ensure a basic level of consistency across regions, however, the state Career Center Office has assisted the REBs in the planning and start-up of the career center system. For example, Career Center Office staff have provided training and technical assistance on specific procedures and topics common to all centers, such as management information systems and reporting issues. In addition, the Career Center Office has sponsored full-day, comprehensive technical assistance workshops for REBs involved in One-Stop planning or implementation during both the first and second years of the One-Stop implementation grant.

FutureWorks Career Center. In local One-Stop sites that represent coalitions of different partner agencies, team-building and training to meld diverse work “cultures” have emerged as important issues. At FutureWorks, however, staff are already part of the same organization and team-work is already an essential component of the corporate culture. There is little sense of hierarchy at FutureWorks. Rather, as noted by one FutureWorks career specialist, staff share a clear commitment to “doing whatever needs to be done to accomplish the Center’s mission—whether it’s part of [an individual staff member’s] job description or not.”

¹¹Since the site visit, plans have been made to co-locate staff from other agencies at the FutureWorks Center. Staff from the JTPA Title III substate entity are expected to be co-located at the Center starting in March 1997. It is possible that staff working for the JTPA Title II administrative entity will also be co-located at the Center in the future. This will dramatically change the integrated staffing design originally envisioned by the REB and planned by ETI as the chartered Center operator.

The staff of FutureWorks is also well-versed in the new paradigm of the high-performance workplace. FutureWorks managers and staff have implemented numerous high-performance practices in their own operations and are well-equipped to provide customers with high quality information about careers and labor markets and assist them in making important career decisions. Participation on the “No Excuses” Team (a cross-functional, rotating group of six FutureWorks staff charged with maintaining customer focus, designing mechanisms for customer feedback, and insuring that such feedback informs the continuous improvement process) provides staff with the opportunity to practice their high-performance work skills to improve customer services.

One capacity-building challenge with which FutureWorks staff have had to contend during the initial start-up phase has been deciding what training is needed immediately and what training is important over the long term. Staff training on all the FutureWorks technology systems received early emphasis. There are several reasons for this emphasis. First, FutureWorks’ customer service orientation requires that staff be able to use the newest technology in serving customers. Staff indicated that employer customers think that FutureWorks “means business” because staff can utilize the newest technology. For individual customers, staff familiarity with technology means that customers can get assistance in typing a cover letter on Word for Windows ‘95 or looking for jobs on the Internet. Second, staff familiarity with technology is part of a FutureWorks strategy to build a flexible staff. If all staff are trained in the use of the Center’s basic systems, then staff can easily float to stations other than their regular assigned job to accommodate fluctuations in customer flow. Finally, when staff members know how to use the Center’s technology, they can apply the technology-based tools to improve Center services, policies, procedures or protocols, or develop new services.

Training on additional topics (e.g., diversity, local labor markets, customer service) is also seen as important by *FutureWorks* managers and staff. However, managers indicated that prioritizing and finding time for such training was sometimes a challenge, given the high volume of customers requesting service from the Center on an ongoing basis. At the time of the site visit, all FutureWorks staff had completed both diversity and customer-service/empowerment training. Moreover, all staff had participated in each of the workshops available to FutureWorks customers, including

the orientation and career seminars, to enhance their ability to provide good information about these programs to their members.

Using a “train the trainer” model, FutureWorks staff members who are familiar with particular categorical programs are training all staff in program eligibility requirements, and procedures. All FutureWorks staff are responsible for familiarizing themselves with federal and state categorical programs, but staff members with high levels of expertise serve as “specialists” and train other staff in the details of these programs.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

The major components of the FutureWorks information systems infrastructure include (1) a customer information and tracking system; (2) an employer tracking system; (3) a system for collecting data on center usage; (4) job search systems; and (5) a system for tracking customer satisfaction. Although the state Career Center Office has been working on developing a system to extract career center data for use in a statewide summary reporting system, the current MIS systems in use at the FutureWorks Center have been initiated at the local level. The systems used primarily by Center managers are described briefly below. The job search systems and other customer-oriented services are described in the following section.

- FutureWorks maintains an in-house comprehensive customer information system supported by *Client IMS*, a DOS-driven database that manages information about individual members and determines program eligibility. The program also has interface capability with the data management systems operated by the state of Massachusetts.
- Another database holds information about employer members. This system, *Account Manager*, tracks information about employers’ use of center services and any financial transactions that occur between FutureWorks and employer members.
- The *bar code/swipe system* of individual membership cards tracks overall aggregate center usage and, through software developed internally, feeds this aggregate information into the individual case files of center members. This way, when members use the resource room or visit the center for self-driven services, their activity is reflected in their individual case files. Moreover, since the system uses codes to determine the use of individual services, FutureWorks can track the demand for its various services it offers, as well as the overall traffic in the Center.

Staff at FutureWorks identified several challenges with regard to the development and maintenance of effective and efficient information systems. First, since customer service is the priority of all center staff, FutureWorks is attempting to minimize time spent on data collection and reporting. The model FutureWorks has in mind is a system that would have access to all relevant data with “just-in-time” data manipulation and analysis. The idea is that all data on customers, services, and outcomes would be collected in a central location (file server) with tailored reports generated as needed to meet the needs of different staff members or funding sources. However, since data are currently collected through a variety of different systems that are not necessarily compatible with one another, staff face a challenge in establishing an interface that will permit data transfer across systems.

Second, the data collected must meet the needs of a wide range of users. The MassJobs Council, the REB, and different staff members within FutureWorks all have different data needs. At the same time, FutureWorks is resistant to collecting data that are not absolutely necessary. Determining the universe of data that is required to meet the needs of multiple users while avoiding extraneous data collection is a difficult balance for FutureWorks staff to negotiate.

Finally, the MIS staff members, although extremely technically competent and excited about learning and implementing new automated systems and procedures, are wary of “technology overkill.” As the manager of Information Systems noted, “technology is not the answer to every problem—some objectives are better accomplished using manual procedures. . . it’s our job to establish a balance between the two.”

FutureWorks looks to the state—the MassJobs Council and the Career Center Office—for assistance in establishing an efficient system to fulfill reporting requirements. Although the state is working with a high-technology consulting firm to develop a data extraction system that will collect data from the Career Centers with minimal burden on center staff, this system was not yet operational at the time of our visit. In this interim period, center staff have been working with the Career Center Office to identify reporting requirements and develop strategies to fulfill such requirements.

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

As part of an emerging statewide network of career centers, FutureWorks has access to customer-oriented LMI products developed at the state level and to labor market information developed by state-level agencies, as well as to products it has developed internally. Thus, in developing its menu of labor marketing information products to offer its customers, FutureWorks is able to build upon a strong foundation developed by the MassJobs Council, the Career Center Office, and state-level agencies.

The MassJobs Council Career Center Office has created a World Wide Web page available to anyone with Internet access. This web page contains links to other government agencies, including the state Division of Employment and Training, as well as to other publicly-funded employment resources such as America's Job Bank and the home pages of FutureWorks and other One-Stop career centers. The MassJobs Council's web page is a marketing and information tool that describes the state's new employment and training system and instructs users how to access the system either in-person or from their home computers. The texts of the MassJobs Council's Annual Reports from 1994 to the present can also be accessed through the MassJobs Council home page. Much of this text is devoted to explaining the "new paradigm" of workforce development services.

Through the MassJobs Council's web page, Center customers may also gain access to:

- On-line employment databases maintained by each individual career center as well as a statewide and national database available through *America's Job Bank*.
- *WinSearch*, a database comprised of current job announcements, which allows users to search job announcements contained in the system using key words.

Automated labor-exchange tools developed or purchased by FutureWorks supplement the information systems available on the MassJobs Council's Internet web page and support the Center's labor exchange function. *Resume Express* is a program currently under development that will allow FutureWorks to send disks or transfer electronic files to employers who will then be able to scan/search them for appropriate candidates. Locally-initiated automated products also include an on-line listing of posted jobs maintained by FutureWorks, which is linked to the FutureWorks Web Page and can be accessed through the computers available in the resource room. The same job listing are posted on the bulletin boards in the Center. The boards are industry- or

field-specific and the job-listings are posted on color-coded cards indicating the month in which the job order was placed. FutureWorks staff have also compiled several three-ring binders containing the World Wide Web sites of various employment bulletin boards. Members are encouraged to search through the binders and then tap into these home pages through the Internet. Assistance is available to members who are interested in posting resumes on-line or sending them directly to employers over the Internet.

In the FutureWorks Career Center, national, state, and local labor market information can also be accessed through more traditional paper sources available in the Center's resource room. There, job-seekers and employers will find the career resources library. The library holds a wide array of reference materials, including tools for career exploration, instructional material, guides to educational opportunities, and information about other public agencies and programs. A separate video library contains both informational and instructional videos for member use. A communication board contains recent articles on employment/training strategies of local labor markets, as well as information about local job fairs, seminars or community events of interest to job seekers and employers.

Several CD-based products also offer relevant labor market information. *Career Search* contains information about local businesses by name or by industry. *Job Analyzer* provides information about specific careers, including skill requirements, wage information, and projected growth. *CompuSelect* contains information and articles about job opportunities and firms in the computer technology industry. *Executive Advisor* is a self-driven career assessment package.

FutureWorks customers with whom we met during the evaluation site visit expressed great enthusiasm for many of these products, particularly the Internet access and various guides identifying job opportunities "on the Net." The Center plans to maintain its large paper bulletin boards containing job listings identical to those available in electronic format. This enhances customer choice and provides first-time visitors with information about the job opportunities available without overwhelming them by introducing them to so many resources all at once. Resource room staff indicated that the bulletin boards also double as a marketing tool for the high-tech job search tools available through the Center: as Center members arrive for a tour or for specific services, they often peruse the boards on their way in or out, and return later to

learn more about a specific job—at that time, staff will introduce them to the electronic labor market information and job search tools.

Marketing

The FutureWorks staff has engaged in substantial community outreach to service providers, training institutions and community-based organizations. Staff members have also been very active in community economic development initiatives. However, because of all of the publicity generated by the controversy over the state’s “competitive model,” FutureWorks has not had to conduct extensive marketing—it has drawn large numbers of visitors as a result of state or local media coverage or simply by word of mouth.

FutureWorks is, however, in the process of developing marketing strategies to reach populations not traditionally served by the public employment and training system, such as students in grades K-12 (through the state’s school-to-work initiative). For marketing materials, FutureWorks has used the state’s One-Stop brochures and press releases. In addition, staff have developed FutureWork’s own marketing tools for local use, including a listing of employer services targeted to local employers and monthly calendars describing Center activities.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

Core services currently available to all customers of FutureWorks Career Center include the following:

- *An orientation to the Center.* Two orientation sessions are held every day—at 10:00 a.m. and at 2:00 p.m. Additional orientations are scheduled for Tuesday evenings and Saturday mornings to meet the needs of students or individuals who are employed.
- *Job listings and job matching services* may be accessed from computers in the Center’s resource room or from any computer with the ability to connect to the Internet. All career centers in the state of Massachusetts share job listings with the state Career Center Office. Customers can access these listings over the Internet through the state’s Web site or the Web pages of the local sites. Paper bulletin boards at FutureWorks also display local job listings. Members may also access *America’s Job Bank* and numerous on-line labor exchange database through the Internet.

- *Access to Resume Express* (ETI's "talent bank") and scanning service are also available without charge to all Center customers.
- *Self-service and assisted access to labor market information* are available on-site in the form of written and automated information in the resource room and through remote access to the state's Web site.
- *Self-service career planning activities* within the resource room include a variety of CD-based programs for career exploration or assessment, software to practice and self-certify skills in typing and 10-key data entry, career planning videos, and information about providers of specific training programs and other supportive services.
- *Self-service job search training activities* within the resource room include videos, paper and electronic job search materials, and resume preparation assistance (both computer-based and assisted by resource room staff).
- *Referrals to available community services*, including training resources, and supportive services are provided by reception staff, career specialists, and through written materials in the resource room.
- *Assessment.* All customers are encouraged to develop an individual customer action plan with the assistance of an assigned career specialist. The plan is informed by a basic assessment of individual needs and skills.
- *A 15-hour on-site computer basics class* is offered free-of-charge. The class lasts three hours per day for one week and teaches basic keyboard/mouse skills. It prepares members to use the self-driven services available in the resource room.
- A comprehensive *Career Transition Seminar* is available to all customers. This seminar is a two-day orientation to careers and job search techniques in the 90s. It includes seven instructional modules, requiring both team and individual activities. This seminar is taught by a local instructor who works for FutureWorks on a contract basis.
- *Other specialized seminars and strategy sessions* on a range of topics to support reemployment are available to all customers.
- Organized *job search teams* are also available to all customers. These teams may be targeted to individuals facing specific barriers. The Over-the-Hill club, for example, is a group of older job-seekers who meet to share leads and discuss job-search strategies.

Although the development of fee-based services is a clear goal for the Center, enhanced services to individual customers were not emphasized during the first year of operations. Enhanced or fee-based services include the following:

- The Center offers *specialized assessment*, such as the Myers-Briggs personality test or evaluation and certification for specific skill-sets to customers who want to pay for such services, agencies who refer their clients on a fee-for-service basis, or employers who want to purchase such services on behalf of job applicants or current employees.
- *Success skills training*, rooted in the SCANS skills, is oriented to customers who are changing careers entirely or are employed by firms that are implementing team-based management practices.
- On-site basic skills, ESL, and ABE/GED training are available as dictated by customer demand.
- More advanced computer literacy courses can build upon the basic skills instruction offered to all FutureWorks members.

FutureWorks has also developed a number of formal strategies for assisting members who are likely to require more intensive services, such as recipients of transitional assistance to needy families. At the time of the site visit, however, these services had not yet been developed. Staff also envision some changes in the services provided if JTPA funds are reallocated to the career centers during the next fiscal year.

One group which the Center has a special mandate to serve is UI profilees. After negotiating its charter with the Regional Employment Board, FutureWorks found out that it would be responsible for providing services under the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) program. The Center is currently wrestling with how to provide services to UI profilees. Although staff are committed to providing the types of services members require, they want to avoid the stigma of associating particular customers with categorical programs. Currently, UI profilees are contacted through the mail. They are requested to call the center and ask for a particular (fictitious) individual. The use of this fictitious name upon calling identifies the customers to reception staff as UI profilees. Thus, without any “labeling” of these customers as participants in a particular program, Center staff assist UI profilees in receiving appropriate services.

Services for Employer Customers

FutureWorks has also developed a comprehensive menu of services for employer customers. Employer services fall into two different categories: core services, which

are available free of charge to all employers and enhanced services available on a fee-for-service basis. Services are as follows:

Core services include:

- Developing a customized employer services plan;
- Placing job orders;
- Screening and referral of candidates;
- Access to electronic databases of job-seekers; and
- Information on workforce development programs.

Enhanced services include:

- Specialized recruitment and screening;
- Testing, assessment, checking references of job applicants;
- Assistance with downsizing, including the provision of outplacement services to laid off workers;
- Success skills training for incumbent workers;
- Brokering of public financial incentives;
- Job task analysis;
- Seminars on workforce issues;
- Training in customized PC applications; and
- Consulting on human resources management issues.

FutureWorks experienced a high demand from employers both for core and enhanced services during its first year of operations. At the time of the evaluation site visit, the Center had held numerous job fairs and had performed specialized screening and testing of nearly 2,000 job seekers for local employers. FutureWorks expects the demand for these services to increase as more employers become aware of their availability.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

As a part of the local site evaluation process, conversations were held with a wide range of individual and employers customers using Center services. Among the individual customers we talked with (including dislocated workers from professional backgrounds, previous customers of the ES/UI system, and minority youth with no

formal training beyond high school) most expressed a high degree of enthusiasm about Center services. A number of customers expressed astonishment that so many of the services available at FutureWorks were available free of charge; several were delighted that their tax dollars were supporting services that they found useful. The younger customers also indicated that the services had been helpful and were particularly pleased with the information they had been able to access over the Internet.

Customers agreed that the greatest resource at the FutureWorks is the staff. Respondents expressed high praise for the counselors, the “teachers” (seminar leaders and the computer course instructor), and particularly, the resource room staff, who regularly help members navigate their way through resources available to them on a self-serve basis and assist them in receiving other services in which they might be interested. Despite the diverse clientele using the Center’s resources, no one expressed discomfort or intimidation with regard to the Center’s atmosphere or the diversity of Center customers.¹² One middle-aged dislocated white-collar professional noted that a service like FutureWorks should be available to everyone. He expressed delight that “such a nice place” was serving people “who really need the assistance” and also could accommodate individuals who preferred to search for work independently.

Employers

During the local site visit, we also contacted several employers who had used FutureWorks services, ranging from small independent businesses to large international firms. Without exception, employers expressed great enthusiasm for FutureWorks, responding that the services they received were “outstanding” and “excellent.” Several respondents spoke first on behalf of the firms they represented, and then offered their personal opinions, as taxpayers, about the services and the staff at FutureWorks. One such respondent indicated that she was delighted that there was “finally one quality resource for both job-seekers and employers,” and that she felt that her tax dollars were “being put to good use in supporting the career center concept.”

Some of the specific comments made by employers reveal the capacity of FutureWorks to provide relevant high-quality services to employers. Employers stated:

¹² Only one individual expressed frustration with his experiences. A long-time recipient of public assistance, he was dismayed that center staff encouraged him to attend the job search workshop before he received individualized assistance with specific job search activities.

- “FutureWorks understands that business needs support with human resource issues.”
- “They do not send us anyone who isn’t qualified.”
- “They are well-organized and they always return our calls.”

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Influences on Local Design. Although the state of Massachusetts had already embarked upon the transformation of its public employment and training system before receiving the federal One-Stop implementation grant, the grant was viewed as an important asset by advocates of the reform effort. Particularly in light of the political controversy that arose around the career center initiative, respondents at many levels indicated that the initiative would have been interrupted statewide in the absence of federal funding support.

The “competitive model” of service delivery adopted by the state and embraced by the Hampden County Regional Employment Board was another important influence on the local design of services in Hampden County and at the FutureWorks Career Center. The competitive model espoused at the state and regional level established the parameters under which local centers were required to operate. As a result, the experiences of FutureWorks, and its sister center CareerPoint have the potential to inform the future development of the “competitive model” in the state of Massachusetts and beyond.

A third important influence was rooted in ETI’s experience in operating similar Centers. Although the FutureWorks management and staff had not managed a comprehensive service center prior to FutureWorks, they had managed numerous “One-Stop” centers serving dislocated workers. Staff realized the difficulty of establishing a universal One-Stop center in an environment that still required categorical program-based reporting and eligibility procedures and appeared prepared to meet this challenge.

Finally, public support has been a key influence in keeping the centers, including FutureWorks, operational during a period of intense political opposition. This support has resulted in a broad-based dialogue about community employment and training needs, which has, in turn, informed the continuous improvement process inside FutureWorks and its “sister” center, CareerPoint. It may ultimately be such support

that prompts the decision to integrate JTPA funds in the centers at some point in the future.

Lessons Learned. The services available at FutureWorks have been extremely well-received among job-seekers and employers in Hampden County. Among the strengths consistently noted are: expertise and enthusiasm on the part of Center staff; access to high-tech job search tools; and overall quality of services and facilities. Particularly notable achievements of the FutureWorks Career Center are the high level of integration of services and the orientation of services around meeting customer needs and achieving a high level of customer satisfaction. Staff were visibly motivated by their work, and extremely responsive to customer needs. When FutureWorks staff were asked about their own job satisfaction, without exception they responded enthusiastically. Staff repeatedly stated, “Our managers model the empathy, enthusiasm, and professionalism that they want to see throughout the center—it’s contagious.”

The challenges FutureWorks faces in its efforts to continue to provide high quality employment and training services to county residents, however, are formidable. At the state level, maintaining support in the legislature for the career center initiative stands out as a serious challenge. Several other Regional Employment Boards have already slowed their progress or taken steps backward because of the political pressure they face.¹³ Staff at FutureWorks stressed state leadership and commitment to the competitive model as crucial in transforming workforce development services in Massachusetts and continuing to improve them over time. State-level planners have implemented the One-Stop initiative in a more piecemeal fashion than they had originally anticipated. As a result, the state has had to maintain separate employment and training systems—one for the regions that have adopted MassJobs Council’s One-Stop career center vision, and one for the regions that have not yet participated in the One-Stop initiative. The MassJobs Council and staff at the Career Center Office are concerned that the absence of statewide buy-in will compromise the success of the One-

¹³ Some local areas have retreated from the competitive approach altogether. In Berkshire County, for example, center operators were selected and notified of their selection when the local REB nullified the entire bidding process and retained the public agencies as service providers with no major change in workforce development services or their delivery. This action virtually removed the county from participation in the state’s One-Stop initiative.

Stop initiative in participating regions, and undermine the marketing of the career center model to new areas in the state.

Another difficulty that needs to be worked out among the MassJobs Council's Career Center Office, the Regional Employment Boards, and the One-Stop career center operators is the need to agree on the extent to which the career centers are responsible for program-based procedures and reporting. In negotiating Interdepartmental Services Agreements order to create an integrated funding stream for the One-Stop initiative, the Career Center Office promised that career centers would take on responsibilities they had never planned to shoulder.

Within FutureWorks, the coming year is expected to provide the serious challenge of serving large numbers of community residents who may not be job ready, as a result of welfare reform. Staff are currently developing a strategic plan and partnerships to address this need. Staff will also need to strategize about the means by which JTPA funds will be integrated into the Center's operations, if these funds become available, or about how to form a more effective partnership with the local JTPA entity in the absence of the transfer of such funds.

APPENDIX O

STATE OF MINNESOTA One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During September 1996

STATE OF MINNESOTA

One-Stop Profile

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	3
State-Level Organization and Governance	3
State Framework for Local Governance	5
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION	7
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES	9
DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	11
Evolution and General Description of the State One-Stop Design	11
Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals	16
IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS	19
Capacity Building and Technical Assistance	19
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements	21
Management Information Systems (MIS)	23
Marketing	24
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS	25
INFLUENCES ON STATE DESIGN	27
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	27

STATE OF MINNESOTA

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT

The state of Minnesota has a comprehensive strategy for One-Stop development designed both to improve service to employers and job seekers and to consolidate the delivery of workforce development services through co-location of relevant agencies. This strategy has developed out of a long history of program and agency consolidation. The administrator of the state's One-Stop implementation grant, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES), was created in 1977 as a result of the merging of the Department of Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Governor's Manpower office, and the Economic Opportunity Office.¹ In 1985, State Services for the Blind was added.

Beginning in 1986, MDES began to encourage physical co-location of Job Service and Reemployment Insurance² (JS/UI) Offices with other local providers of county, state, and federally administered workforce development programs. Thus, even prior to One-Stop Implementation, of the fifty JS/UI offices in the state, twenty were co-located with the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS), sixteen with JTPA service delivery areas, and seven with both DRS and State Services for the Blind. Twenty-three JS/UI offices also were contracted by JTPA service delivery areas to deliver all or part of their Dislocated Worker programs. As a result of this decade-long move toward co-location and inter-agency cooperation, many local Workforce Centers are well positioned to begin further integration of services to customers.

The state has enthusiastically embraced the concept of integrated service delivery for workforce development programs. In the introduction to its One-Stop proposal, MDES described Minnesota's proposed One-Stop approach as an opportunity to reform a workforce system based on "crisis intervention" and mired in a "complex, rigid, and

¹ The Department was called the Department of Jobs and Training from 1985-1994. Its current name, Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES) is used throughout this document, regardless of the time period.

² Unemployment Insurance has been called Reemployment Insurance in Minnesota since 1994. We use the more familiar "UI" designation throughout this profile.

incomprehensible mass of programs, laws, rules, regulations, and eligibility requirements that is riddled with duplications, gaps, and inefficiencies.” Minnesota’s One-Stop vision is to provide a skilled workforce through an “accessible, integrated employment and training system” by undertaking the following:

- emphasizing quality outcomes and satisfaction of both job-seekers and employer customers;
- providing tools for customers to make informed career, training, and hiring choices through assessment and LMI;
- supporting customer service through the establishment of an information system that promotes sharing of information and maximization of resources;
- replicating and expanding on already-existing innovations for comprehensive and high-quality training services;
- including all Minnesotans in the effort to enhance the state’s position in the “global marketplace.”

The state’s One-Stop vision is based on a consistent focus on customer needs, a recognition that employers are key customers, a goal of greater co-location and systems integration, and a strong emphasis on “getting the One-Stop message out” to both internal and external audiences. State respondents say they hope to defuse many of the potential “turf” issues associated with One-Stop implementation by focusing on what will work best for customers of the workforce development system.

The major thrust of the Minnesota One-Stop initiative is to encourage all of the various programs administered by MDES at the state level to co-locate and eventually integrate their operations at about 50 One-Stop centers—called Workforce Centers—throughout the state. Although a gradual roll-out of One-Stop centers was proposed in the Implementation Grant application, a more ambitious schedule has evolved since the grant became effective in July of 1995. Because state officials were pleased with the implementation of the initial One-Stops, a decision was made to speed up the implementation schedule. By the end of the first grant year, a total of 8 full-service Workforce Centers had been opened. It is expected that 42 centers (about 80% of the planned state total) will be operational by the end of the second grant year.

There are several contextual variables that have influenced One-Stop planning, design, and implementation in Minnesota. These include (1) recent low unemployment rates; (2) a history of promoting co-location of federal, state, and local workforce

services even before the One-Stop initiative; and (3) a clear view of the appropriate balance between state guidance and local discretion; and (4) strong support and involvement from top workforce development agency administrators.

- *Unemployment rates are currently low throughout the state.* Current unemployment rates in the state are about 3.2%, and have been around 3% for more than a year, compared to rates of 5-6% in the 1980s. As a result of tight labor markets, employers are having difficulty finding new workers. Thus, employers are considered a very important customer of the workforce development system.
- *Prior to the federal One-Stop initiative, Minnesota had begun to promote the co-location of its state Job Service/Reemployment Insurance offices with other providers of federal, state, and local workforce services.* The One-Stop initiative dovetailed nicely with this prior trend and extended its focus from the consolidation of physical facilities to the integration of services as a response to reduced overall budgets.
- *The Minnesota One-Stop initiative is based on a guiding principle of “state guidance and local implementation.”* Although the appropriate boundaries of state guidance and the limits of local discretion are still under discussion, the state’s philosophy of offering guidance to local areas by setting minimum criteria for certification of local One-Stop centers has been influential. According to this philosophy, local areas should be free to develop their own One-Stop systems in response to local needs, within the broad parameters established by the state.
- *Top state workforce development administrators have been very active in promoting the One-Stop vision both to internal governmental audiences and to the general public.* In 1996 MDES Commissioners made a high-visibility tour of the state to promote One-Stop centers. At local sites, these state officials met with local One-Stop partners, elected officials, and members of the public to address local questions and concerns about the state’s plans. The involvement by top-level officials has increased the visibility of the One-Stop initiative throughout the state and has been influential in encouraging local actors to assign high priority to the initiative.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

State-Level Organization and Governance

In Minnesota, the One-Stop initiative is viewed as the unifying theme or central core of all state planning, administration, and oversight of public workforce development services. One-Stop policy development and oversight at the state level is

provided by the state's Human Resource Investment Council (HRIC) which is called the Governor's Workforce Development Council. The Governor's Council, established in 1995 to replace the Governor's Job Training Council, is composed of 32 members, at least half of whom are nominated by local area representatives. State representatives include the Commissioners of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security (MDES), the Minnesota Department of Children, Families, and Learning (CFL), the Minnesota Department of Human Services (MDHS), and the Minnesota Department of Trade and Economic Development (MDTED), and the Chancellor of the Higher Education Board. Additional members represent the business community, labor organizations, and individual educational institutions.

The Governor's Council is responsible for (1) coordinating the development, implementation, and evaluation of the state's education and employment transition services, including youth services; (2) making recommendations for establishing an integrated system for education, service-learning, and work skills development; (3) advising the Governor on JTPA, Carl Perkins Vocational Education, National and Community Services, Adult Education, Wagner-Peyser, JOBS, Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET), Welfare-to-Work, School-to-Work, and other federal and state programs related to workforce development; and (4) establishing performance standards.

To coordinate and administer development of the One-Stop system—called the “Workforce Center System”—a Workforce Center Systems office was created within the Department of Economic Security in 1995. This office is responsible for administering the federal One-Stop grant, overseeing the development and expansion of One-Stop centers throughout the state, and coordinating the activities of a Workforce Center “Issues Team,” which serves as a vehicle for identifying and resolving issues related to One-Stop implementation. Although the Department of Economic Security (MDES) takes the lead in the development of the Workforce Center System, other state agencies are partnering in this endeavor. These agencies include the Department of Human Services and the Department of Children, Families, and Learning.

Services to welfare recipients have always been an important consideration in planning the state's One-Stop system. Historically, DES has been a major service provider in the delivery of employment-related services to AFDC and state general assistance recipients through contracts with MDHS. MDES has been designated as the agency responsible for designing, evaluating, and monitoring the STRIDE program

(Minnesota's statewide JOBS program for AFDC recipients) and has participated in the Minnesota Work Readiness program, which is targeted to able-bodied males on general assistance. MDES is also designated as the "employment arm" of the state's welfare reform pilot project called MNJOBS, which provides transitional services to welfare recipients who begin working. However, it is not yet clear whether this relationship will be continued under welfare reform. MDHS, which has the lead role in welfare reform, retains the right to designate the agency responsible for providing welfare transition services.

Local One-Stop centers are also important partners within the state's vision for school-to-work services, although the collaboration between local One-Stop centers and local school-to-work delivery systems is "presumed," not mandated. A "School-to-Work Transition Council" has been established at the Governor's cabinet level to promote interagency coordination on school-to-work issues. The "Youth Development Committee" of the Council is jointly staffed by DES and CFL employees. As key partners in the school-to-work arena, six MDES regional labor market analysts (described further in the section on LMI below) give technical assistance to school-to-work partners by providing them with accurate and useful labor market information that they can use in internal planning efforts and provide to students.

State Framework for Local Governance

At the sub-state level, the 17 existing JTPA service delivery areas have been redesignated as "Workforce Service Areas" (WSAs). In each area, local elected officials are required to appoint a local "Workforce Council" that expands the membership of the existing Private Industry Council. Workforce Councils are the "first level of governance" of the local One-Stop systems and share with the local elected officials the responsibility for making local service delivery decisions to assure customer satisfaction. All Workforce Councils must be comprised of at least 51% private-sector representatives nominated by local business organizations such as the chambers of commerce, but their size and subcommittee structure may be determined at the local level.

Workforce Councils have four major roles:

- to designate administrative entities, grant recipients, and program operators for local Workforce Center services;³
- to plan for collaboration among local partners in on-site review and oversight of program performance;
- to identify local service priorities and target populations for supplemental programming;
- to assure non-duplication of services.

Thus, under the new system, the service provider function is becoming distinct from the function of overseeing and administering workforce development program funding. Although they are not prohibited from directly operating programs (11 of the 17 local Councils also provide direct services), in general, Workforce Councils are expected to provide the “vision” for local workforce development efforts, rather than day-to-day management of service delivery. The local Workforce Council and elected officials are responsible for developing a two-year plan specifying the grant recipient, administrative entity, and program operator(s) for Workforce Centers. In addition, each center, with input from local elected officials, is responsible for developing a plan for integration of services within the certification parameters specified by the state. Under the state’s One-Stop planning and certification guidelines, these “local integration plans,” which are to be developed jointly by local Job Service, JTPA, Rehabilitation Services, and State Services for the Blind staff, must be approved first by local Workforce Councils and then by MDES. Local integration plans identify the services provided to employers and job seekers, and whether these services are “universal” (open to a universal population), or “eligibility-based” (available based on categorical funding sources).⁴

In every service area, Job Service is automatically responsible for job development, job listings, and job matching for all One-Stop partner programs. How other job seeking services are provided is determined at the local level, and in accordance with local conditions. The degree to which some specialized job

³However, to protect state employees from competition or privatization, the state mandates that the state Job Service will continue to administer Wagner-Peyser, UI, and Veterans’ Employment and Training programs.

⁴ Terminology describing these services was changed in 1996 from “core” to “universal” services, and from “restricted” to “eligibility-based.”

development functions are made available (including services available on a fee-for-service basis) can also be determined at the local level.

The Minnesota Workforce Center System has prepared a template for non-financial agreements to guide local partnership formation and specify the mutual responsibilities of local One-Stop partners within each workforce service area. For each local area, a “service delivery agreement” must be signed by the Workforce Council chair, local elected official(s), Job Service manager, and JTPA SDA director and approved by the MDES Commissioner. The service delivery agreement requires that “information on and initial access to” the following programs be provided at all proposed One-Stop Centers:

- Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser)
- Reemployment Insurance (UI)
- Veterans’ Employment Services
- JTPA Title II
- Dislocated Worker Services
- Title V Older Worker Services
- STRIDE program for AFDC recipients (JOBS)
- Food Stamp Employment and Training Services
- Work Readiness Services for General Assistance Recipients
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- State Services for the Blind.

The state also requires that each One-Stop center provide a minimum set of universal services for jobseekers and employers (described below under *Design of the State One-Stop Initiative*). In addition to these required programs and services, MDES recommends that local service delivery agreements include a range of other employment, education, and economic development agencies and programs.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Communication and coordination among state and local One-Stop partners takes place through a variety of means including a cabinet level workforce council, an “Issues Team,” the state’s One-Stop office, and quarterly partners meetings. Communication among state agency One-Stop partners occurs at the Governor’s Workforce Council. The hub of state- and local-level communication and coordination

of activities is the Minnesota Workforce Center System Issues Team, which usually meets twice a month. Issues Team meetings typically include the MDES Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners, the Director and Deputy Director of the Workforce Center System, and a cross-sectional representation of state and local Workforce Center partners. State-level One-Stop system development efforts are further coordinated by the Workforce Center Systems office which employs five full-time staff. Workforce Center staff administer the One-Stop grant and provide the guidance and leadership necessary to coordinate, review and monitor the accelerated implementation of One-Stops statewide.

Because system transformation at the local level is viewed as the first priority of the One-Stop initiative, promoting effective two-way communication between the state and local levels has received a strong emphasis. One objective of these efforts is to communicate effectively the state's One-Stop vision to the local representatives of the partner workforce development programs. The effectiveness of the state's communications efforts has been enhanced by the involvement of top agency officials in informational meetings. For example, to communicate the state's One-Stop vision to local partners, the state sponsors quarterly two-day-long "partners meetings" throughout the state, attended by the MDES Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, and Workforce Center System Director.

In addition to this regular forum for communication, these Commissioners also conducted a two-month long tour of all planned One-Stop areas in the summer of 1996, during which they made 42 presentations on the planned One-Stop Workforce Centers in 27 communities throughout the state. At each of the stops on the tour, local partners were asked to make presentations which detailed their local visions and progress in developing plans for their One-Stop Workforce Center and to address any obstacles to local area implementation that they had encountered. These meetings provided an opportunity for individuals to share their concerns and to pose questions about local integration. The tour was viewed as a great success in publicizing that Mdse.'s commitment to One-Stops came from the highest leadership levels.

Another objective of the state's One-Stop communication/coordination efforts has been to offer local partners an active consultation role in the development of state policies and procedures. Local representatives have been recruited for participation in the Issues Team subcommittees that developed recommendations for the state's One-Stop certification process. During the first year of One-Stop implementation, these

sub-committees were charged with (1) identifying current issues in their respective One-Stop subject areas; (2) determining which issue were best handled by the state or by local areas; and (3) determining the respective state and local roles in planning and implementation.

Involvement of local partners in One-Stop planning and policy development has also been furthered by the quarterly partners meetings, which include local Job Service managers and SDA Directors. During quarterly partners meetings, attendees hear and comment on reports by members of Issues Team subcommittees on specific aspects of One-Stop implementation. Based on local input from these quarterly meetings, the state has developed a system of “benchmarks” for certifying Workforce Centers. Additional issues on which local partners have provided input during partners meetings include the role of local partners, the content of local integration plans, measurement of customer satisfaction, and the development of unified application procedures.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

Minnesota’s One-Stop Implementation Grant application was approved by the U. S. Department of Labor in February 1995. As one of three “mezzanine” states, its first-year grant became effective July 1, 1995. The state has received a total of \$6.2 million in first and second year grant funds.⁵ Of the total two-year One-Stop implementation grant received to date, \$2.2 million has been allocated to local areas to support implementation efforts and another \$1.1 million has been divided among local areas on a formula basis to support field marketing.⁶ Approximately \$3 million was retained at the state level for these two years.

First-year local integration grants totaling \$1.2 million and second-year grants totaling \$1 million were allocated among 17 Workforce Service Areas on a formula basis, with a base grant of \$20,000. The amounts received by local areas ranged from \$29,000 to \$172,000 during the first year and \$26,000 to \$138,000 in the second year. Local integration grants to Workforce Service Areas have been used to support technology infrastructure and computers, servers, printers, and signage for local

⁵ The first year One-Stop implementation grant was \$2.7 million plus \$1.1 million in LMI funds for a total of \$3.8 million. The second year One-Stop implementation grant was \$2.4 million. No second year LMI award has been made. All figures are rounded.

⁶ \$612,000 and 460,000 for years one and two respectively.

Centers. To accommodate co-location, some local sites also used funds for remodeling, including upgrading physical facilities to meet requirements for access by individuals with disabilities and purchasing compatible phone systems. Other local funds were used to cross-train staff.

In addition to allocating local integration grants to service areas, the state also provided local areas with funds to support One-Stop marketing efforts. Second year marketing grants to the 17 local sites ranged from \$20,000 to \$50,000. Local marketing funds have been used to support 33 part- or full-time marketing positions. “Marketers” have played an active role in arranging for the publication of newsletters and mailings to employers and job seekers as well as in planning local Workforce Center “open houses” and other outreach activities.

Of the \$3 million retained by the state during first and second year One-Stop implementation, \$590,000 covers staff costs associated with the administration of the Workforce Center System. State administrative funds support five full-time staff members charged with implementing the One-Stop system statewide. Of the remaining grant funding retained at the state level, \$459,000 was allocated for statewide marketing efforts, \$1 million for labor market information projects, and \$1 million for related technology improvements. Because the state had originally requested \$10.2 million for the combined first and second year grants (\$4 million more than received), Minnesota respondents indicated that they have had to scale back or eliminate some of the proposed projects. The largest major cutbacks occurred in the form of reduced technology support to Workforce Centers which was cut from \$800,000 during the first year to \$180,000 in the second year.

MDES does not mandate formal cost-sharing agreements across programs at the local level, but all 17 Workforce Service Areas are required to negotiate non-financial agreements. Workforce Service Areas finalized their local planning processes and completed plans for local service integration in July 1995. As of June, 1996, all areas had updated local integration plans and had negotiated (or re-negotiated) non-financial agreements among partner agencies.

DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of the State One-Stop Design

The Minnesota state One-Stop initiative is based on the principle that implementation of One-Stop systems must occur at the local level with the state providing clear guidance. The state recognizes that local partners possess unique knowledge about the specific requirements of workforce development in their local areas. Much of the work of the state Workforce Center Systems office can be described as consensus-building among state and local partners.

The state has already come a long way in terms of overcoming barriers to greater coordination among the different agencies responsible for workforce development programs. In December 1993, the state's vision of co-location was first discussed at a state-wide meeting of Job Service managers and JTPA SDA directors. A second meeting, held in early 1994, also included representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation and State Services for the Blind. Respondents indicated that these different groups were initially "very jealous of their turf" and "had negative feelings about each other."

As a result of these meetings, however, participants began to agree that greater integration of services would be an essential feature of system improvements designed to enhance customer satisfaction. Focus groups held at this time with employers and individual customers revealed that both groups were highly critical of the public workforce development system. Employers criticized the existing system, with its multiplicity of job listing services as "wasteful of time and resources." Most employers indicated that it was difficult to get reliable labor market information and that Job Service failed to provide high quality service. Job-seeker respondents indicated that it was necessary to "learn the system" to receive adequate services. Persons with disabilities criticized the system as inconvenient. Because of the clear need to improve customer services and because co-location and consolidation of services were viewed as a necessary response to reduced funding levels, MDES leadership continued with the initiative to promote service co-location and consolidation, despite the fears of program staff and administrators.

In order to address these issues, a number of reforms associated with One-Stop implementation have begun. The state uses a certification process to guide local One-Stop system development efforts. A detailed checklist of "benchmarks" developed as

part of the certification process describes the requirements for local areas in the dimensions of local partnerships, governance, and service designs. MDES's benchmarks include measures of (1) integrated staffing; (2) co-location; (3) customer satisfaction; (4) inclusiveness and efficacy of governance structures; (4) comprehensiveness of services; (5) access; and (6) performance outcomes. These are briefly described below:

- *Integration of staffing* is measured by indicators such as the frequency of joint staff meetings and staff cross-training and the number of staff whose positions are funded from multiple program sources;
- *Co-location* is measured by the diversity of workforce services and related activities at Centers, and the amount of shared common use of resources including equipment and areas of the building, such as reception areas;
- To be certified as One-Stop centers, local sites must measure *customer satisfaction*; the results of any customer satisfaction surveys are reviewed as part of the certification process;
- The appropriateness of *governance structures* are assessed through measures such as the percentage of Center activities which were planned and reviewed by local Councils, and the degree to which the Center and governing bodies involve representatives from a broad spectrum of government entities;
- *Comprehensiveness* is measured by the scope of activities and services; services targeted to special populations must be available either on-site or through contractual agreements and/or non-financial agreements.
- *Access* measures include the percentage of activities or services that can be obtained through a single application or intake document, the percentage of off-site activities and services that are covered by a preliminary eligibility assessment, whether access is provided through toll-free telephone numbers, whether the Center offers extended hours and/or days of service, and whether there are any extension activities offered through arrangements such as mobile units or "out-staffing" at other locations.

In addition to the benchmarks listed above, a variety of core or universal services are mandated in the state's template for local implementation plans. Services offered at sites must be categorized as either "universal" services available to the general population (of either job seekers or employers) or "eligibility-based" services, reserved for individuals that meet the requirements established by categorical programs. In addition to the typology of universal versus eligibility-based services, the state specifies

three types of service standards: 1) “state-standardized” services must meet uniform standards established at the state level; 2) “locally customized” services must be present, but may be customized to meet local needs; and 3) “locally flexible” services may be initiated at local discretion to meet local needs.

Universal Services for Job Seekers. Universal services which are to be made available to all job seekers at Workforce Centers regardless of their eligibility for specific programs include the following:

- *Service Consultation and Eligibility Determination.* Workforce Centers are required to have a staff person who has an understanding of the broad menu of services available. This individual is often responsible for initial screening and referral to appropriate service providers.
- *Resource Center.* Resource Centers must contain information about career areas, the future outlook for employment opportunities in a variety of career categories, and state and national businesses (also see “employer profiles” below). Information is to be provided in a variety of media, including hard copy documents, periodicals, and videos. Resource Centers will also contain most, if not all, of the services described below.
- *Minnesota Career Information System (CIS).* This is a computer based encyclopedia on education and training programs available throughout the nation. It includes information on campus size, admission requirements, financial aid, and demographics. It also contains an interactive “Quest” preference testing module that helps job seekers determine their best occupational path.
- *Labor Market Information.* All Centers are to provide basic data on types of employment by region, as well as wage and labor market trends.
- *Information on Required Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Jobs,* based on information provided by employers and on generally accepted skill standards.
- *Information on Education and Training Programs.* Centers are to provide job seekers with information on long- and short-term education and training options, including the locations, methods, schedules, and application procedures and requirements. There should also be information on the quality of education and training providers as measured by completion rates and the wages of graduates.
- *Job Development and Job Listings.* Through outreach and marketing to employers, Centers are expected to encourage the listing of jobs. Job

listings include information on current vacancies, required skills and knowledge, hours, and benefits.

- *Hiring Requirements.* Centers are to provide information on how to gain access to jobs through unions or internal systems listings, such as civil service examinations.
- *Employer Profiles.* Centers are expected to maintain annual reports, reference books, and employer documents and videos to help job seekers determine appropriate employers and prepare for interviews.
- *Job Matching.* This service includes screening and referrals to jobs, and may involve scheduling appointments.
- *Referral Network.* This will involve electronically linked data banks on all services and organizations providing a variety of support services.

Universal Services for Employers. Responding to the demands of employers for access to a larger job applicant pool and to useful and accurate labor market information, MDES requires that One-Stops take steps to establish a set of universal services to be made available to businesses. These include the following:

- *Employer Library and Seminars.* Employer libraries, which are to be maintained by Job Service, are expected to contain information for employers on opportunities and requirements for starting and operating businesses. Seminar topics can include information on ADA, Workers' Compensation, Reemployment Insurance Tax, and other topics of interest to business.
- *Skill-based Job-Seeker Pool.* Job Service and Veterans' Employment Service representatives are expected to maintain easily accessible lists of individuals catalogued by skills. The list can also be used to provide aggregate data for labor market planning on the number of individuals possessing certain skills.
- *ADA Compliance Information.* Various agencies, such as Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, State Services for the Blind, and Veterans' Employment Service, are expected to maintain information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) so that employers can make provisions for compliance. Training for individuals and groups should also be provided.
- *Labor Market Information.* LMI for business planning, including wage and trend details, should be available through MDES regional analysts. Customized LMI analysis should also be available on a fee-for-service basis.
- *Economic Linkages.* Depending on local capabilities, referral to existing resources is to be made available through all core Center

partners. Referrals are to assist employers in continuing or expanding existing businesses or creating new business.

- *Employer Tax and Registration Services.* After the implementation of the planned “Uniform Business Identifier,” new businesses will be able to register at One-Stops using a single code recognized by 10 different state agencies.
- *Information and Referral for Customized Training and Employer Subsidies.* Although the services will be based on eligibility, all employers should have access to information on CJT and a review of available programs and service providers.
- *Other Core services* include job development, access to the state-wide job bank, Internet-accessible job listings, resume-matching through Minnesota SkillsNet, Employee profiling and assessment, and hiring advice and information on ADA, EEO, workers compensation, and UI.

Eligibility-Based Services for Job Seekers. Special services must also be available for persons eligible for categorical programs including Rehabilitation Services, State Services for the Blind, JTPA programs, and Older Worker Programs. These “eligibility-based” services for individuals include in-depth testing and assessment, personal profiling for labor marketing “viability,” income support (including UI, extended benefits, TAA), training in career decision-making skills, career counseling, case management, training assistance, classroom training, supportive services, training in job search skills, providing monthly payments on earned income credit, and follow-up services.

Eligibility- or Fee-Based Services for Employers. Special services to employers include an account representative service, which assigns an individual representative to a company to provide ongoing services and fulfill unique employer preferences; employer-requested testing to identify preferred job candidates; the provision of business planning data and customized LMI analysis; rapid response for planned large-scale layoffs; customized job training; current workforce skills assessment; and employer subsidies for hiring and/or training of employees.

The state does not mandate detailed criteria for One-Stop physical facilities. However, certification requires that all service providers be co-located and ideally occupy contiguous spaces. The floor plan should be functionally designed to encourage opportunities for team-building and partnering. Local partners are responsible for determining the suitability of One-Stop center facilities; but if needed, the state will assist them in this process. Local partners are expected first to examine the potential of

existing facilities and to make a determination if all of the partners specified in local plans can be accommodated. If this is the case, partners are asked to design a floor plan that includes common reception areas suitable for the operation of an integrated Workforce Center. When existing space does not allow for co-location of programs, local areas have the option to seek new sites in the community that will accommodate space and layout needs. State respondents are comfortable with the fact that the actual configuration of Centers will vary from place to place, and that much will depend on the past collaboration among partners.

State respondents realize that time is needed in the transition process. They allow Centers to start advertising themselves as “Workforce Centers” if, in the words of a major player in the state’s One-Stop initiative, they are “seeing the light at the end of the tunnel” in regards to meeting One-Stop criteria. At the same time, the state is cautious in this respect—a Center that is not well developed and uses the name “Workforce Center” could damage the image of the new system. According to one Workforce Center staff, “Workforce Centers are something new. . . .When our customers enter a Workforce Center, they should find something different and better, not just the same old stuff with a new coat of paint.”

Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals

The goal of the Minnesota One-Stop initiative is to transform a workforce services system characterized by fragmentation and duplication to one which offers comprehensive, integrated, and individualized services. All customers will be able to choose from a menu of high quality information sources and services. Ideally, these changes will enable the public workforce development system to become the “service provider of choice” for all Minnesotans. Customers are expected to experience the same comfortable and friendly environment that they would find in a library.

Universal Access

The state of Minnesota has made a commitment to provide all populations with an “array of job seeking and employment development assistance.” To this end, an “elements matrix” has been designed that details the universal services that must be provided at local Workforce Centers. The state also strongly advocates that local partners extend Center access, when appropriate, through (1) mobile outreach to rural communities and (2) extended evening and weekend hours of operation to accommodate employed individuals who may wish to explore further career options.

Universal services for job seekers are designed to fulfill many of the potential needs of these customers. Customers are to be offered information on national, state, and regional labor markets and employment trends; employers; job listings; the knowledge, skills, and abilities required for specific jobs and careers; and the availability and quality of local education and training programs. This information is to be made available in a variety of media, including printed materials, videos, and computer databases and software. The state also has a strong commitment to enabling persons with disabilities to access all center services, and compliance with all aspects of the Americans with Disabilities Act is another state priority. To further this commitment, the state intends to make services and information available in a variety of formats, so that non-English speakers as well as those with visual or hearing impairments can also benefit.

Another system goal related to customer choice is that all residents should have access to the services of a Workforce Center regardless of where they live. In metropolitan areas, in which a number of centers are established, customers are encouraged to use whatever facility they feel is best suited to their individual needs. As communications among Centers becomes more developed, customers will be able to initiate services at one site and receive ongoing services at another. The state also emphasizes mobile outreach for residents of rural communities that lack easy access to a Workforce Center. The Workforce Center system in Minnesota also allows all residents to access automated One-Stop information services through bulletin board and Internet systems from their homes as well as from public institutions such as libraries.

There is also a commitment to providing universal access to employers. In addition to universal services open to all job seekers, the state requires local centers to offer all employers a menu of core services. These include access to materials on starting and operating businesses; information and seminars on dealing with government regulations; labor market information for business planning purposes; and access information on customized job training; access to lists of job seekers by skills categories, the state-wide job bank, Internet job listings, and electronic resume matching.

Customer Choice

Minnesota furthers the goal of customer choice by providing job seekers and employers with accurate and detailed information on the array of service options available to them. By doing so, it is expected that customers will be able to make

informed choices on the agencies or training institutions that will best serve their needs. If customers are not satisfied with their original choice of training provider, they should be able to change programs or service providers. By moving toward a system of local governance that separates the provision of services from oversight and administration, the ability of local Workforce Councils to act as “honest brokers” of information promoting customer choice among providers is expected to be enhanced.

Integrated Services

Minnesota’s vision of workforce development involves co-locating and integrating all of the six required DOL One-Stop programs and providing access to as wide a range of other workforce and support services as possible at its Workforce Centers. Additional programs that must be accessible through the Minnesota Workforce Centers include JOBS, Food Stamp Employment and Training, Vocational Rehabilitation, the state’s Work Readiness program targeted to general assistance recipients, and State Services for the Blind. In addition to mandating these programs, the state encourages local centers through its One-Stop benchmarking and certification procedure, to develop broad partnerships with other employment-, education-, and economic development-related agencies and programs.

Through integration, is expected that (1) wasteful duplication will be eliminated; (2) partners within the system will be able to concentrate on those aspects of workforce development they do best; and (3) continuing gaps in employment and training services will be identified. To ensure the highest degree of coordination and integration of service delivery, the state has mandated that each Center have in place a process to promote integration of the following activities across partner programs and agencies: common intake, eligibility determination, UI profiling and reemployment services, assessment, case management, and job development and placement.

As mentioned earlier, MDES is now undergoing an aggressive campaign to co-locate all of the services over which it has fiscal and administrative control. As of March, 1996, MDES held leases at 117 separate locations, and although a high percentage of Job Service offices are already co-located, there still remain a number of single service “stand-alone” offices. The state has announced that it will no longer pay the leases of these offices when their current leases expire. In addition to providing better service to customers, Minnesota’s approach is expected to lead to savings in both facility costs and center management costs.

Performance-Driven/Outcome Based

The state has identified seven core areas in which One-Stop outcomes are to be measured: customer satisfaction, services to employers and job seekers, universality, choice, labor market services, integration, and financial accountability. Customer satisfaction surveys are expected to be conducted at all Centers during their first-year of operation to establish baseline data by which improvement in this area can be measured. Centers must show continuous progress in offering access to electronic services and must document their ability to offer customers the widest possible range of choice of services and service providers.

State respondents identified the weakest link in performance assessment as the limited ability of the state and local areas to collect and analyze performance data. To address this issue, a Data Unification Management Program was proposed in April, 1996. The purpose of this program is to determine what data are mandated for collection across all of the federal- and state-funded programs. In addition, the program would identify what data are “unnecessary” from the perspective of assessing One-Stop performance and request waivers to eliminate the unnecessary data to reduce the overall data collection burden. It was still unclear at the time of the evaluation visit, however, whether funding would be available for this project.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

In its efforts to transform itself into a “total quality” organization, MDES has placed an emphasis on staff development. While not specific to One-Stop implementation at the outset, these capacity building efforts have been focused on supporting organizational change designed to improve the quality of customer services. Over time, the One-Stop vision has become the embodiment of the systems change that the state is trying to support through capacity-building efforts at the state and local levels.

In January 1993, a survey of JS/UI staff was undertaken in an effort to determine the training and staff development needs of personnel at the state and local levels. All managers, supervisors, and “lead workers,” and 25% of all other staff in the division were included in this survey. Staff indicated in this survey that there was a need for more program-based training and that training should be regular and on-going and should consider the long-term needs of employees for developing and diversifying their work. In response to a related concern for promoting positive organizational change

through training, a labor-management team was established in October 1993 to assist the department in establishing an effective training model.

As a result of these activities, the director of Training and Learning Resources at MDES began an “integrated needs assessment” of all partners in the One-Stop initiative. Training and technical assistance for JTPA SDA staff, which had begun in the Fall of 1994, was expanded to include staff from Job Service and other partner staff such as State Services for the Blind and the Division of Rehabilitation Service. Two “tracks” for on-going training were designed, one for line employees and another for supervisors and directors.

Current ongoing staff training efforts administered by MDES focus on *technology* and *integrated service delivery*. Specific areas of training include (1) training in the new desktop computer technologies which are becoming available at all Centers; and (2) training on the key functions and responsibilities of “service consultants,” who serve as the first point of contact at Workforce Centers. MDES, through its St. Paul Training Center, also offers a regular schedule of classes for front-line staff including

- *computer classes* on topics such as basic PC and Windows functions, word processing, and intranet and Internet technology;
- *employee development classes* on such topics as employee career development, working with the media, “dealing with difficult people,” communications, sexual harassment, new employee orientations, customer service, making effective presentations, customer office ergonomics, and an overview of ADA regulations which focuses on awareness of disabilities.

Specialized training programs and courses for targeted groups and specialized programs are also offered.

In 1995, MDES (through its Office of Quality Resources) also joined forces with the state JTPA Association⁷ to launch a “Workforce Excellence Initiative” funded in large part by a grant from the McKnight foundation. The objectives of this initiative include (1) *combining resources* in Workforce Centers and creating a “model partnership” among federal, state, local, and private organizations; (2) *promoting customer satisfaction and continuous improvement* based on TQM criteria; (3)

⁷ The JTPA association was formed for two primary reasons: (1) to provide capacity building and technical assistance and (2) to organize JTPA directors into a more cohesive group.

providing training and technical assistance to all partners involved in Workforce centers; and (4) introducing "best practices" through replication of products and resources developed throughout the country. Some of the products under development include an automated self-assessment instrument, a "Workforce Excellence Guide," and Workforce Excellence training. Workforce Excellence training will be offered to groups of approximately 100 people at a time in a "train the champion" model. It is expected that about 80% of the individuals participating in training will be from Workforce Centers and 20% from MDES headquarters offices. After a pilot product has been field tested, training will be available throughout the state from March to September, 1997.

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

Four LMI priority areas have been identified: (1) regional labor market analysis; (2) electronic data provision; (3) the development of new information including consumer reports; and (4) improved local content and delivery of existing LMI.

To improve regional LMI services, MDES created six new regional LMI analyst positions. Regional analysts are teamed in pairs to serve Workforce Centers in the North, South, and the Twin Cities metropolitan region. Regional labor market specialists have four major responsibilities:

- determining local information needs which will allow Centers to better serve job seekers and employers. This includes working with Centers to gauge local information needs and working with local staff to ensure that Resource Rooms are well stocked with materials;
- organizing and developing new labor market data;
- interpreting trends in the job market and providing this information through both regular and special reports;
- speaking to Workforce Center staff and business, education, and community groups about the state's LMI system and providing them with up-to-date assessments of labor market conditions.

Regional LMI analysts are playing important capacity-building and information-dissemination roles. They have developed a standardized collection of 100 LMI publications and have helped to inventory and stock resource rooms in centers that have already achieved One-Stop certification as well as those that are working toward certification. Regional analysts have also provided training in the use of career and occupational information software that has been installed on Resource Room

computers. In addition, analysts have conducted a number of LMI training sessions and helped host a “LMI User’s Conference” intended to acquaint One-Stop staff with available LMI. This conference was well-received by local staff.

When the state received fewer One-Stop funds than expected, a number of the planned LMI projects were cut back or postponed until other funding sources could be identified. Lack of available funds resulted in the discontinuation of several planned LMI projects, such as an analysis of current jobs in demand and the development of local skills inventories for use by employers. Several other projects, including OLMID database expansion and the development of consumer reports, were scaled back.

Despite concerns about funding for LMI, the following projects were completed with a combination of One-Stop and other funding streams:

- The first “Higher Education Consumer Report” has been published and distributed.
- The OLMID database now supports an Occupational Information System which is available at One-Stop Centers. Regional analysts are available to train local staff in its use.
- An improved “Minnesota Salary Survey” has been released and a benefits survey is in progress.
- Employment projections were released on a schedule synchronized with national projections. In previous years, there had been lags of one year or more. Employment projections data are currently published and are available through several electronic occupational information systems.
- An Internet web site is currently operational for support of One-Stop Centers and is heavily used. A regional “LMI homepage” has also been developed and will be available in the near future.
- New publications are available including state and regional employment projections, an LMI products and services catalogue, and regional newsletters.
- A “Human Resources Information System,” modeled after the North Carolina systems, is currently under development and is expected to be operational in all One-Stop Centers by early 1977.
- LMI for business planning is also available through the new MDES regional analysts. The information available includes wage, employment trends, available job applicant characteristics, and local demographics. Customized LMI analysis is also available on a fee-for-service basis.

- Monthly and quarterly LMI publications were expanded to include more regional analysis. These have begun to be published “on-line.”

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Minnesota is part of GEORGE, a multi-state consortium working to develop software to support integrated intake and the delivery of post-intake services in a One-Stop environment. This integrated information system would allow One-Stop “case managers” to schedule client services, take case notes, develop customer work plans, and plan transition services. This project was undertaken to unify the multiplicity of data collection, reporting, and administrative tracking activities currently required to meet federal and state reporting requirements for multiple categorical funding streams, and to prepare for a more simplified set of program requirements at some point in the future. An integrated management information system is expected to allow a number of agency users in a center to function as a team. The system would allow centers to track outcomes for individuals receiving services from multiple agencies. It would also permit case managers to schedule customers for services provided by a variety of service providers and share relevant case notes with case managers in other systems.

State respondents described the current information requirements placed on One-Stop systems as unrelated to the ultimate program goals. As expressed by one state respondent, “the current systems. . . are directed toward program administration purposes, they’re not designed for workforce development.” State respondents also expressed the opinion that the current lack of consensus about measuring the outcomes for One-Stops makes it difficult for states to design their information systems, since they are struggling to “anticipate what [federal] outcome standards might be.”

State MIS staff are also critical of the slow national pace in moving away from the present fragmented information and reporting systems for workforce development services. State respondents stated that some of the difficulties in designing and implementing more unified information systems have their roots in the history of “fractured” administration at the state and national levels. Some respondents believed that a stronger direct federal role in the development of integrated client-level information and case management systems might be preferable to the current consortium approach that encourages groups of states to work together on these issues.

Although the idea of developing a standardized uniform reporting format has some appeal, MDES respondents indicated that they have already made a large investment in their current data processing systems and hope to build on existing

information systems by “tying them together, and putting a unified face on them.” They are somewhat optimistic about being able to link the various MDES-related information systems but view the development of common intake with other agencies, such as MDHS, as a greater challenge. The amount of data required for JTPA program administration, although fairly substantial, is much less than that required for MDHS income maintenance programs, which currently require completion of a 30-page application.

Marketing

State staff distinguish between “internal” and “external” marketing. Internal marketing is seen as closely linked to the issues described above under communication and coordination. One of the major goals of internal marketing is convincing local partners that One-Stop centers can benefit both customers and individual partner programs. In marketing One-Stops to internal customers, the state describes the cost savings that can be achieved by sharing the costs of shared facilities and equipment. They also indicate that the money saved as a result of reducing duplication of services and equipment can be used to save jobs and ultimately provide more services to customers.

External marketing is seen as the responsibility of all One-Stop partners. It is expected that all employees be prepared to talk about the benefits of the new system to both employers and job seekers. However, state and local staff realize that the general public is only gradually becoming aware of the improvements brought about by One-Stop and related systemic reforms. In order to make the One-Stop system changes more visible, MDES created a marketing staff position for the Workforce Center System in mid-1996. In addition, thirty-three staff in local offices have been assigned to marketing activities, with a minimum of one “marketer” per Workforce Service Area.

At both state and local levels, marketers have targeted employers as the primary One-Stop customers to whom outreach needs to be conducted. A variety of business forums, such as chambers of commerce, will be used to promote the new One-Stop services available to businesses. One of the major selling points to employers is that the new workforce system will save employers’ time in recruiting, because *all* of the job-seeker populations will be available in one pool, in contrast to the previous system, in which various programs tried to place their “own” participants.

Two other activities have also resulted in increasing public awareness of the state's One-Stop initiative. In February 1996, MDES, in collaboration with a Twin Cities public television station, sponsored a two-hour prime-time "on-the-air job fair," hosted by two popular metropolitan area news reporters. The job fair elicited more than 280 new job postings from businesses and resulted in the referral of 516 job seekers. As a result of favorable responses by employers, job seekers, and the media, ongoing "On-Air Job Fairs" have been scheduled on a commercial television station. Another commercial television station in the metropolitan area has also begun to regularly air "video résumés," in which job seekers briefly describe their skills and experiences.

Other marketing efforts include the preparation of guidelines for the use of the Minnesota Workforce Center System logo by local Centers certified as One-Stops, the establishment of a monthly MDES publication called "Connecting," and the development of a template for an eight page newsletter, "Connection," which can be used by Workforce Service Areas to provide information about Workforce Centers to the general public. The state plans to continue to assist local marketing efforts by providing local marketing staff with desktop publishing software for use in generating newsletters. In addition, a series of "employer conferences" which would introduce the Workforce Center System to employers is also under discussion.

The following report excerpted from a St. Paul newspaper illustrates the generally positive reception given to Workforce Centers by the news media:

Minnesota Workforce centers are state-operated offices that serve job-seekers and employers. There is never a fee, and anyone—unemployed or working, teen-ager or retiree—can make use of the services offered. There is one price to pay, however. You'll have to check your previous experiences with government agencies at the door. The new Workforce Centers are really the old unemployment offices. Same staffs, and, in many cases, same locations. But a whole new outlook. . . I have spent my share of time in government-operated jobs offices . . . and this is one of the friendliest places I have ever experienced.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Minnesota's initial plan was to create a series of customer-friendly offices through co-location of agencies under MDES. According to Workforce Center System respondents, during the process of applying for a federal One-Stop Implementation Grant, the system's designers realized that in addition to co-location, there were more

far-reaching opportunities for improving service to customers. As a result, designers of the system have shifted the focus of the Minnesota One-Stop initiative from not only improving the efficiency of the system to finding what they describe as “new ways of doing business.”

The state's One-Stop system is currently based on a set of 17 local plans designed to implement the vision contained in the state's One-Stop proposal. Although it was originally envisioned that One-Stops would be implemented throughout the state over a three-year period, the plan has since been revised so that the majority of Workforce Centers will be operational by the end of the second year of implementation. According to the director of the Workforce Center system, “we see no reason to stretch the implementation process out over three years. Our goal is to get it up and operational as fast as possible, to get results, and to ensure continuing funding.”

Not all Centers, however, are achieving the goals articulated by the state as quickly as others. Some Centers were described as “ahead of the vision,” bringing into the mix a wide range of non-Labor partners and overcoming such challenges as creating “real” roles for Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind. Although many local areas have continued to make progress toward One-Stop goals, others were described as being “trapped in a ‘this too will pass’ mentality.”

MDES will certainly face major challenges in increasing the number of One-Stops from 8 to more than 40 by the end of the second implementation year. Local areas are charged with designing their own implementation plans and time schedules, but according to state respondents, not all have expressed the same level of enthusiasm. Resistance to the “new way of doing business” shows up in a variety of forms. For example, some local staff have demanded that they be able to keep private offices, although MDES's policy is to encourage as much accessibility to individual customers as possible, while ensuring that adequate private space is available to those staff who can demonstrate that a majority of her customers need privacy. Another obstacle to smooth implementation is conflict at local levels about regulations and laws concerning what materials and equipment can or cannot be shared. Workforce Center respondents, however, indicate that many of these obstacles to One-Stop implementation turn out to be minor and can be addressed in a way which is acceptable to One-Stop partners.

INFLUENCES ON STATE DESIGN

The Minnesota Workforce center system was envisioned as a state-local partnership that would focus on customers' needs and ensure a balance of state and local influence in decision-making. It was also considered important for unions to be consulted in this process and for them to continue to represent their constituency staff in Workforce Centers.

Prior to the federal initiative, Minnesota had begun the process of promoting co-location of its Job Service/Reemployment Insurance offices with other providers of federal, state, and local workforce services. The federal-level One-Stop design and vision added impetus to this process, particularly as it emphasized integration and co-location of services. Reform was seen as a positive step toward reducing waste and duplication of services. State respondents were enthusiastic about One-Stop, which they described as a "visionary" federal initiative which complements their own concerns with total quality management. As a result, Minnesota has aggressively promoted One-Stops and has involved top MDES officials in an effort to communicate the federal-state One-Stop vision to local partners throughout the state.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

Minnesota's Workforce Center System has developed a vision of a customer-oriented workforce system, and has established clear and practical guidelines for helping local areas realize the goal of opening as many One-Stops throughout the state as rapidly as possible. The One-Stop initiative has also strengthened local partnership building and supported previously existing state-wide initiatives that promoted co-location of workforce services and the development of MDES as a "total quality" organization. Efforts to publicize the new system, bolstered by the Commissioners' tour of the state and the hiring of "marketers," have met with initial success. Minnesota has also experimented with several innovative ideas including collaboration with broadcast media for promoting concepts such as On-the-Air Job Fairs and video résumés. All of these factors have prompted the state to push its One-Stop implementation time-table forward.

During the evaluation visit, respondents identified several continuing challenges to One-Stop implementation in Minnesota. The most difficult challenge over the next few years will be to increase the involvement of "non-DOL partners" in the workforce system. A second challenge, at both the state and local levels, will be to overcome still existing tendencies to "think programmatically rather than in terms of service

delivery.” A third obstacle will be to find ways to improve services in the face of decreasing overall funding levels. Perhaps the most important challenge will be to continue the task of consensus building. The process of implementing any large organization change demands an extraordinary commitment of time and effort. “Ideally we would have spent two or three years building consensus, making local partners part of process, getting buy-in before implementing One-Stops throughout the state,” said one key Workforce Center System respondent. “We have, however, committed to making this process as fast as possible. This means that we have to review all quarterly updates, keep on top of facilities problems, ADA conformity, problems arising in issues teams meeting, making sure that we’re up to speed on everybody’s progress. What we want from reluctant participants is at least to have them come to the table.”

During the first year of One-Stop implementation, local areas have been allowed a fair amount of latitude in designing their local systems. During this period of early implementation, the Workforce Center team at the state has facilitated broad-based consultation among key state and local staff. As a result of this experience, the state has made a further commitment to One-Stop centers (e.g., by announcing that it will no longer pay for leases of “stand-alone” service provider sites that offer only limited services after the current leases expire) and, furthermore, has identified “best practices” at some local sites. In the process, the state has also developed a clearer idea of what it thinks One-Stop Centers should look like. In part because of the accelerated roll-out of One-Stops, however, some locals are concerned about an “over-specification” or “cookie cutter” approach by the state. State Workforce Center Systems respondents insist, however, that it is not their intention to “micro-manage” the process of building local partnerships nor to dictate how resources should be shared at the local level. They point to the fact that locals have flexibility in determining the extent to which non-mandated partners are included in the One-Stop design, as well as the extent to which “additional” or non-mandated services are made available.

APPENDIX P

MINNESOTA WORKFORCE CENTER - ANOKA COUNTY BLAINE, MINNESOTA One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During September 1996

**MINNESOTA WORKFORCE CENTER - ANOKA COUNTY
BLAINE, MINNESOTA
One-Stop Profile**

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT 1

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP
INITIATIVE 5

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION 10

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES..... 12

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE..... 13

 Evolution and General Description of Local Design 13

 Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals..... 14

 Physical Facilities 17

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS..... 18

 Staffing Arrangements 18

 Capacity Building..... 19

 Management Information Systems (MIS) 21

 Labor Market Information (LMI) and Related Information
 Technology Improvements 22

 Marketing 23

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS 24

 Services for Individual Customers 24

 Services for Employer Customers..... 26

CUSTOMER RESPONSE 27

 Individuals 27

 Employers 28

INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN AND LESSONS LEARNED 29

MINNESOTA WORKFORCE CENTER - ANOKA COUNTY BLAINE, MINNESOTA One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The Minnesota Workforce Center of Anoka County is located in the city of Blaine, a Twin Cities suburb about 25 miles north of downtown Minneapolis. Anoka is Minnesota's fourth largest county, with a population of approximately 275,000. Although the county's residents are predominantly European-American (97%), non-European immigrant populations are increasing partly due to the existence of a refugee resettlement program in the county. The county has a relatively low rate of poverty. In 1990, an estimated 4% of all Anoka County families lived below the poverty level, but nearly one-quarter (23%) of female-headed households lived below the poverty level. 87% of county residents have a high school diploma or GED, and average annual household income in 1990 was approximately \$40,000.

In recent years, new job creation in the county has outpaced population growth. Sectors such as instruments, medical products, and business services accounted for the largest percentage of new jobs created during the first half of the 1990s. Throughout the 1990s, although Anoka County has generally had the highest unemployment rates of the counties within the metropolitan area, rates have been lower than the state average. From 1990 to 1993, unemployment in the county has averaged slightly under 5%; since 1994, the rate has declined. The present level of unemployment is estimated at 3%.

One-Stop implementation in Anoka County has been built on a strong foundation of collaboration among workforce and social service providers at both at the state and local level. As described in the state profile for Minnesota, consolidation of workforce development programs under Minnesota's Department of Economic Security (MDES) began in 1977 with the merging of the Department of Employment Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, the Governor's Manpower office, and the Economic Opportunity Office. In 1985, State Services for the Blind was combined with existing

MDES programs.¹ Since 1986, one of the state’s goals has been to encourage physical co-location of Job Service and Unemployment Insurance² services with as many local service providers as possible.

In Anoka County, the first steps toward a consolidated workforce center came in 1988, when the Anoka County Board of Commissioners and the Anoka County Private Industry Council (PIC) integrated welfare employment and training programs with JTPA and other employment and training initiatives within the Anoka County service delivery area (SDA). In 1991, a large group of workforce development and human service agencies relocated to a new shared physical facility—the Anoka County Human Service Center.

In 1995, after four years of co-location and increasingly collaborative planning, the county’s JTPA administrative entity called the Anoka County Job Training Center (ACJTC), the Blaine office of MDES’s Job Service/Unemployment Insurance (ES/UI), and the Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS) joined together to form the “Minnesota Workforce Center – Anoka County.” In June, 1996, the Anoka County Income Maintenance Department and Child Care Assistance became co-located partners within the Workforce Center. State Services for the Blind (SSB) is also considered an official partner although it does not have staff housed at the Center.³

As described in more detail later in this profile, the core partners in the Anoka County Workforce Center—the agencies responsible for JTPA, ES/UI, Vocational Rehabilitation, Income Maintenance, and Child Care Assistance—have developed an integrated Center under the One-Stop initiative that takes advantage of the specialized functions of each agency partner. A cross-agency consolidated planning and oversight process is used to shape these differentiated functions into a coordinated workforce development service delivery system. In addition, the core public agency partners in

¹ Although MDES was renamed the Department of Jobs and Training in 1985, its earlier name, the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, was restored in 1994. The Department of Jobs and Training and the Department of Economic Security are both referred to as “MDES” in this profile.

² Unemployment Insurance has been called Reemployment Insurance in Minnesota since 1994. We use the more generic Unemployment Insurance (UI) designation throughout this profile, as well as the generic designation ES (for Employment Service) to refer to the Minnesota Job Service.

³State Services for the Blind staff are available on an “on-call” or referral basis to serve Center customers.

the Anoka County Workforce Center are co-located with twenty other human services and education providers in a clean and modern building known as the Anoka County Human Service Center, construction of which was completed in 1991. One observer has termed this a “Center around the Center,”⁴—a Workforce Center housed within a larger social service complex in which a range of services are available, including educational, counseling, income maintenance, and various support services.

The local vision of One-Stop is to provide employment and training programs within “a seamless system that supports community-based coordination with other service programs.” The goals of the system are to

- emphasize quality outcomes and customer satisfaction from job seekers and employers;
- provide the means for customers to make informed career, training, and hiring choices through effective assessment and labor market information;
- support customer service through an information system that promotes sharing of information and maximization of resources;
- replicate and expand on already-existing innovative efforts to provide comprehensive, high quality employment and training services;
- increase the global competitiveness of the workforce.

Several key factors have influenced the context within which the local One-Stop vision has emerged. These include (1) a history of innovative approaches toward inter-agency team-building; (2) local political and financial support for the creation of a coordinated system for workforce development; (3) a high degree of cooperation and coordination among the core partners of the Workforce Center and between these partners and the other agencies co-located at the Human Service Center; (4) a proactive and coordinated public support system in the context of welfare-to-work and school-to-work initiatives; (4) present low unemployment rates and a consequent tight labor market; (5) a decline in overall funding at the Center; and (6) a site that is well equipped for establishing a One-Stop. Each of these factors is briefly described below.

- *Since the mid-1980s, a variety of Anoka County agencies have collaborated in the forming of “fusion teams.”* These teams began to

⁴ Sheryl L. Head, 1994. “Factors in the Creation of Skills Centers: Five Case Studies,” Training and Employment Program, Center for Policy Research, National Governors Association.

form around specific innovative programs such as the Minnesota Parents Fair Share (MNPFS), a program for non-custodial parents of AFDC recipients, which originated in Anoka County. These teams included representatives from such agencies as the Job Training Center, the Minnesota Department of Human Service, and the County Attorney's Office.

- *There is strong local political and institutional support for the creation of a coordinated system for workforce development.* The Anoka Center is a product of ongoing cooperation among city and county governments and departments, non-profit agencies, and private foundations that has led to securing a One-Stop site and achieving continued funding for innovative programs.
- *There is a history of inter-agency cooperation both among Workforce Center "core" partners and with the other agencies that are co-located at the Human Service Center.* Workforce Center partners have had some degree of coordination of services since their co-location in the Human Service Center, and a close collaboration had been formed with the County's Income Maintenance and Child Care Assistance staff prior to their co-location at the Workforce Center in 1996. Well-developed communication mechanisms are also in place to enable workforce efforts to be coordinated with a wide range of agencies and organizations, many of which are also co-located within the larger context of the Human Service Center.
- *The Center is proactively involved in welfare-to-work and school-to-work efforts.* With the recent addition of the County's Income Maintenance and Child Care Assistance staff as core partners of the Workforce Center, and the receipt of a school-to-work implementation grant in partnership with educational institutions, the Center is laying the foundation for increased activity in areas related to transitions to employment.
- *At present, the rate of unemployment in the county is low.* The unemployment rate in the county is currently at about 3%. Although this has made it easier for job seekers to find work, employers are having difficulty finding well-trained personnel. To assist employers, a system of employer "account representatives" has been established at the Center.
- *The Center is faced with the challenge of serving larger numbers of customers with a decreasing budget.* Overall funding levels for all Center programs decreased by 6% in 1996. At the same time the Center is maintaining its commitment to serving a "universal population," including customers from outside the county. This

situation has placed stress on staff and management to “do more with less.”

- *The building that houses the Center is generally well suited for a One-Stop.* The Human Service Center is a well-maintained building located in a park-like setting on ten acres, and rental costs for social service agencies and programs are below commercial rates in the area. The Center is easily accessible for most north Twin Cities area residents by car and has a large parking area. Public transportation is also available to the Center.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Policy Oversight. Anoka County is a single-county service delivery area (SDA) under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). As is the case for all of Minnesota’s 17 existing SDAs, it has been redesignated as a “Workforce Service Area.” A seven-member County Board of Commissioners acts as the grant recipient for all Title II and Title III JTPA funds. In 1995, the existing Private Industry Council’s (PIC) membership was expanded to create a local “Workforce Council” that coordinates with the County Board of Commissioners in determining local service delivery decisions. The County’s Workforce Council is comprised of a majority of private-sector representatives and is chaired by a private-sector representative. The State’s Job Service, the State’s Rehabilitation Services, the County’s Income Maintenance Department, and local technical and community colleges are also represented on the Workforce Council.

In Minnesota, Workforce Councils have responsibility for (1) selecting local priorities for service and target populations; (2) assuring non-duplication of workforce services; (3) jointly planning for collaboration, on-sight review, and oversight of program performance; and (4) and determining the most effective designation of administrative entities, grant recipients, and program operators for the Workforce Center. Although local Workforce Councils have substantial discretion in selecting local service providers, the state requires that MDES continue to be the grant recipient and administrative entity for Wagner-Peyser, VETS, and UI funds.

Day-to-day governance of the Workforce Center is provided by a Steering Committee that directs, coordinates, and oversees Center operations. The Steering Committee is co-chaired by the directors of four agencies within the Center (JTPA, ES/UI, Rehabilitation Services, and Income Maintenance). Meetings of the Steering Committee, which are held every three weeks, are attended by about twenty

supervisory staff and directors from all agency partners at the Center including representatives from Child Care Assistance and the State Services for the Blind. The Steering Committee makes recommendations to the Workforce Council on issues of service improvement, provides input to the preparation of Workforce Center budgets and service coordination plans, oversees customer satisfaction and outcome measurement, and maintains ongoing communication with front-line staff on a variety of policy, funding, and operational issues.

Participating Agencies. As of June 1996, there were six major public agency partners of the Workforce Center, five of which are co-located within the Human Service Center. These are as follows:

- *Anoka County Job Training Center (ACJTC).* The Job Training Center is a county department and is responsible for JTPA and Title V Older Workers Programs. Through cooperative agreements with the Income Maintenance Department, the Job Training Center is also responsible for providing employment and training services to participants in Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET), STRIDE (JOBS) and the Minnesota Family Investment (MFIP) programs. It also receives funds to operate the local Minnesota Parents' Fair Share program, a non-custodial parent support program.
- *Job Service/Unemployment Insurance* provides Wagner-Peyser, Unemployment Insurance, and Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS).
- *Division of Rehabilitation Services (DRS).* DRS, a division of the Minnesota Department of Economic Security, has also been co-located at the Human Service Center since its opening in 1991. Although it has been part of coordinated Center management since 1991, DRS operated independently of ES/UI and the Job Training Center prior to its inclusion as a formal Workforce Center partner in 1995, largely because of its focus on the disabled, who were perceived as having special needs.
- *Anoka County Income Maintenance.* In 1996, the County's Income Maintenance Department joined the other three core partners, whose directors have co-managed the Workforce Center since the opening of the Human Service Center in 1991. Income Maintenance staff currently co-located at the Center include all intake workers and several financial specialists. Plans are currently underway to co-locate all remaining Income Maintenance staff at the Center as soon as physical renovations are completed.

- *Anoka County's Community Social Services and Mental Health - Child Care Assistance (CCA)*. All CCA staff joined the other core partners at the same time as the Income Maintenance staff. CCA offers financial assistance in paying child-care costs for families receiving public assistance and other low-income families.
- *State Services for the Blind (SSB)*. SSB is a mandated One-Stop partner under the Minnesota Workforce System One-Stop certification process. Although not a co-located partner because most of the services for the blind are concentrated in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area, SSB staff are available to meet with Workforce Center customers on an "on-call" or referral basis.

In addition to the Workforce Center partners listed above, several other agencies that offer workforce-related services are co-located at the Human Service Center.

These include the following:

- *Achieve*, which operates under the County Human Service Division, offers a "sheltered work" environment for persons with developmental disabilities;
- *Metro North Learning Lab*, a joint project of six independent school districts, provides adult basic education (ABE), General Equivalency Diploma (GED) preparation, and English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction.
- *Educational Opportunity Center (EOC)* provides counselors who staff the Career Resource library in the Workforce Center on a part-time basis. The goal of the EOC is to assist adults from diverse backgrounds in entering or returning to schools and colleges. Using a variety of assessment, career exploration, and career workshops, EOC staff provide guidance, personal assistance, and referrals on a variety of academic, financial aid, and career development concerns.

Non co-located organizations that have workforce development as an important part of their mission, and with whom the Workforce Center partners maintain close links include the following:

- *Rise, Inc.* provides training and placement services in private industry for people with disabilities.
- Educational and training providers such as *Anoka-Ramsey Community College* and *Anoka-Hennepin Technical College* offer services to Center customers enrolled in funded education/training programs.

A number of additional agencies and organizations located at the Human Service Center offer a wide variety of advocacy, counseling, and referral, services targeted to disadvantaged and disabled populations. These include the following:

- *Anoka County Community Action Program* is a private non-profit social service agency serving disadvantaged and low-income populations through a variety of programs including Head Start, Weatherization, Housing Rehabilitation, and Energy Assistance.
- *Anoka County Community Health and Environmental Services* provides medical and nutritional services for families and children through on-site immunization programs, a Well Child Clinic, and the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program.
- *Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Anoka County* provides advocacy and support services to people with developmental disabilities.
- *Catholic Charities* provides a wide range of charitable services to children, families, the elderly, homeless, and refugees.
- *Child Care Resource and Referral* offers information and referrals to child care providers.
- *Community Emergency Assistance Program* offers emergency assistance including an on-site “food shelf” and provides services to help families become self-sufficient.
- *Consumer Advocates for the Handicapped* provides advocacy for persons with disabilities.
- *Family Resource Center* operates through a consortium of eight school districts and offers family education services for children and adults as well as on-site day care for infants and children receiving services at the Human Service Center. For program participants, day care is paid for through specific Human Service Center agencies and is available to others on a sliding scale basis.
- *Judicare* offers free legal advice and representation in civil cases for low-income County residents.
- *Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota* provides counseling services and assistance in finding affordable housing.
- *United Way’s First Call for Help* offers 24 hour information and referral services.
- *Wilder Child Guidance Center and Domestic Abuse Program* offers counseling services for children and families and group therapy for domestic abuse.

An important aspect of the Workforce Center is its holistic approach to the integration of welfare-to-work and school-to-work initiatives into the design of service delivery. Two events have promoted these efforts: the move to incorporate the County's Income Maintenance Staff into the Workforce Center and the receipt of a school-to-work implementation grant by the Workforce Center and several education partners.

Linkages with welfare-to-work programs. The Anoka Workforce Center is currently beginning what one respondent described as "the next level of integration" of the welfare system with the workforce development system. In June 1996, 26 Income Maintenance Department intake staff and 9 Child Care Assistance staff joined as partners of the Workforce Center. As soon as a new fourth floor of the Human Service Center is completed in 1997, the remainder of the approximately 100 Income Maintenance staff—those working with ongoing cases—will also be housed within the Workforce Center.

The timing of the integration of Income Maintenance and Child Care Assistance staff into the Workforce Center is viewed as particularly appropriate, because new state welfare reform measures stipulate that as of July 1997, all AFDC recipients with children aged 3 or over will be required to begin looking for work within ten days after finishing a 30-day group orientation. Income Maintenance and Child Care Assistance staff view their adjustment to the Workforce Center as a "major culture shift," but were nearly all positive about the expected benefits to customers. Because the new emphasis will be on helping customers find work rather than administering benefits payments, staff felt that by joining as full partners of the Workforce Center, they were strategically placing themselves to prepare for major changes in the content and focus of their work.

Income maintenance staff have had brief orientations to the programs available through Workforce Center partners, and are optimistic that further integration of staff functions will occur over time. They also see obvious benefits to their customers with the co-location and coordination of services with their workforce development partners. One example of these benefits is that customers making the transition from welfare to work will spend less time in scheduling appointments at different sites. Also, because of the orientation of the Center to preparing customers for work, as well as the availability of affordable and convenient child care through the Family Resource Center, income maintenance staff believe their customers will be better able to

concentrate on the job search. According to an Income Maintenance staff person, “We wouldn’t have been able to do what we are doing if the Workforce Center concept was not in place. You need this kind of stable structure to implement welfare-to-work.” “The message is very different now,” said one key Job Training Center staff person. “It’s about *work first* from the first day of screening and all throughout orientations, workshop and job search process.”

School-to-Work. Workforce Center staff collaborated on the writing of a school-to-work grant with five local independent school districts, business leaders, and the local community college and technical college. They received a \$650,000, five-year school-to-work implementation grant and, at the time of the evaluation visit, were in the process of interviewing for a full-time coordinator of school-to-work efforts.

The Workforce Center is to act as the “hub” for Anoka County’s school-to-work implementation, serving to bring parties involved in school-to-work together. The Center will also coordinate collection and dissemination of labor market information, which seen as very much lacking in the schools, and has plans to link schools electronically to MDES and other computer databases and programs. Much of the effort will involve educating the community about the purposes of school-to-work. In the words of one key respondent:

One-Stops have given school districts and community agencies one place to turn for employment services. A lot of teams of from the high schools have come out to see who we are, but some people still don’t realize what we can do, working together as completely as we do. We see school-to-work as a crucial part of our service to the community. Our part is in the coordination of services to youth—not just those going on to college. There is a need to educate people that school-to-work is not narrowly vocational, but is concerned with a broad approach to the workplace. It’s also not an apprenticeship in which people will be channeled into one area. It’s career education, discovery, looking for the *right* career interest.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Because the Anoka model of integrated service delivery stresses not only co-location but coordination of service delivery among a wide range of partners, providing formal mechanisms for communication among partners is seen as crucial. In addition to the Workforce Center “Steering Committee”, whose role has been discussed above, there are several forums for communication at the Anoka Center. These include a Workforce Center “Coordination and Planning Group,” which meets to discuss issues of Center policy and coordination; “Operations Committees” that address specific

aspects of Center operation and provide feedback to the Steering Committee, and a broader “Human Service Advisory Group,” which includes representatives from many of the agencies co-located in the Human Service Center complex.

The *Workforce Center Coordination and Planning Group* meets on a quarterly basis. The group, which is co-chaired by the directors of Job Training Center, Job Service, the Division of Rehabilitation Services, and Income Maintenance Services, provides a forum for planning, implementing, and managing a coordinated system of employment and training. The Coordination and Planning Group meetings are described as relatively informal, and they provide an opportunity for partners to discuss a range of policy matters. In addition to the five core Workforce Center partners (Job Training Center, Job Service, and Division of Rehabilitation Services, Anoka County Income Maintenance, and State Services for the Blind), other partners in the Coordination and Planning Group include Anoka-Ramsey Community College, Anoka-Hennepin Technical College, Rise Incorporated, Metro North Learning Lab, the Family Resource Center, and the Anoka County Community Action Program. This shared leadership structure of the Workforce Center has increased the ability of local service providers to combine program strategies and offer innovative service programs.

Cross-agency “operations committees,” comprised of front-line and supervisory staff from the participating Center partners, provide the opportunity for agency staff to discuss and provide input and feedback to the Steering Committee on common service functions (intake, assessment and career planning, job search, training, case management, and employer services, services for the general public) as well as Center-wide operations and management issues (staff training, budgeting and accounting). Another committee, the “customer advisory group,” solicits input from focus groups of staff and customers and makes reports on customer feedback to the Steering Committee.

The *Human Service Advisory Group*, composed of all Workforce Center partners and other agencies that are co-located at the Human Service Center, has held regular monthly meetings since the Center began operations in 1991. These meetings provide a forum for Workforce Center partners to coordinate workforce development efforts with the range of social and educational service providers represented at the Human Service Center.

Although there are many opportunities for direct service staff at the Center to participate on these various interagency advisory and operations committees, the different agencies that comprise the Workforce Center still have their own data systems and telephone lines. State and County employees, for example, are on different telephone networks. To facilitate day-to-day communication across staff employed by different agencies, the Center partners are exploring the feasibility of a common telephone system for all Workforce Center staff.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

The Anoka County Workforce Center has received support from a variety of public and private non-profit sources. The building that houses the Human Service Center is located in a park-like setting on ten acres donated by the city of Blaine. The city acquired the land through a tax sale and issued tax-exempt revenue bonds to finance construction of the facility. After the municipal bonds are retired, the building will be owned by Anoka County. United Way of the Minneapolis area donated \$500,000 over five years for program operation, and the McKnight Foundation gave funds that were used to assist agencies relocate to the new Center. Because the building is publicly owned, rental costs are lower than in comparable commercial sites.

Although an integrated Center budget is prepared annually for the purpose of establishing total Center revenues—with the exception of the One-Stop funds which are jointly administered by the Workforce Center partner programs—each agency is responsible for administering its own funds and each has its own rental agreement with the Human Service Center. The Center has been struggling with ways to maintain high levels of service to a universal population. Revenues received by Workforce Center partners have continued to decline in recent years. Center-wide revenues for 1996 were 6% lower than for 1995, declining from approximately \$4.5 million to \$4.2 million. Major cuts were experienced in JTPA funding. From 1995 to 1996, Title II-B Summer Youth Employment Program funding was reduced by 43%, Title IIA by 42%, and Title III by 31%, and federal EDWAA formula funding by 29%. Staffing levels have continued to be reduced over the past two years, at the same time that caseloads have increased.

The Center as a whole received \$57,000 in One-Stop Implementation Grant funding from the state for program year 1995 and an additional \$51,000 in 1996. These funds were used for remodeling (e.g. taking down the walls that separated Job Service from the Job Training Center), for materials and equipment for the Resource

Center and Computer Rooms, and for funding a variety of staff positions related to providing universal services. The County contributes additional funds that are used to pay for services available to all Center customers. Although there are no formal cost-sharing agreements across programs at the local level, non-financial agreements among partners have been signed. Provisions also exist for Workforce Center partners to contract with each other for the delivery of services.

According to Center managers, declining funding levels have taken a toll in terms of reduced employee morale. Another source of financial stress has to do with the Workforce Center's commitment to offer core services to a universal population, including out-of-county residents. Although at the time of the evaluation visit no statistics were available on the proportion of out-of-county residents accessing universal services, there is evidence that this proportion is relatively high. One indicator of the number of non-county residents served comes from a survey of Unemployment Insurance claims taken at the Anoka Center. During the first months of 1996, only 58% were originated by Anoka County residents, with another 32% from the neighboring urban counties of Hennepin and Ramsey, and another 10% from other counties in the Twin Cities region and elsewhere in the state.

MDES officials have consistently stated that there would be no cutbacks because of One-Stop. However, according to one local respondent, "while you really have to give the state credit for that decision, at the same time, in this atmosphere of continuing funding cutbacks, staff are concerned—it's hard for staff sometimes to see the positive side of things when they are looking at losing jobs."

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of Local Design

The creation of the Anoka Human Service Center was the result of dynamic leadership and advocacy within a broader political environment that emphasizes consensus decision-making. With the support of city and county political leaders, community organizations, and philanthropic foundations, strong advocates of a comprehensive Human Service Center—including the director of the Anoka County Community Action Program (CAP) and the director of the Anoka County Job Training Center—were able to realize their vision of a conveniently located Center in which a variety of social, educational, and workforce development services could be located. The construction of the building that houses the various Center agencies provided the

basis for a broad partnership among various human service, educational, and workforce development agencies.

The most recent catalyst for a new design for integrated service delivery was the preparation for a local One-Stop Implementation Grant application in the December 1994. As part of the planning process, state and local partners began to conduct an analysis of common functions. Although the local agencies responsible for JTPA, ES/UI, and Vocational Rehabilitation Services had been co-located at the Human Service Center since 1991 and had developed a degree of coordination of services since that time, it was not until late 1994 and early 1995 that these partners began to work together intensively. One respondent characterized this developing relationship within the Workforce Center and among the partners at the Human Service Center as follows:

It's more than a partnership, it is a collaboration. There are many 'cross-wires' of funding, but for me the collaboration is the spirit of oneness that we are all serving the same families. We have gone to partners for letters of support. They all know what we're doing. We have a collaborative in that we care about each other's success.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals

Universal Access

The partners at the Anoka Workforce Center have developed a service delivery strategy to reach as wide a population as possible and have achieved a high level of visibility to a broad customer base. As described in a later section under core services, a "Career Resource Room" houses a number of automated services available to all interested customers. Additional self-service resources available to all customers include a phone bank, and self-service copy and fax machines.

Partly because of its location in the Human Service Center, the Workforce Center has become known as *the* place in the county to come to prepare for work. Center services are well publicized, and information on Center workshops, programs, and other core services are explained to customers during an orientation. The Center is easily accessible by automobile from most locations in the Twin Cities area, but although it is served by two bus routes, there are still some problems with mass transportation access. People in many areas of the metropolitan region, including some Anoka County areas must still pass through downtown Minneapolis to come to the Center.

The Center provides extended hours of service in order to reach working and under-employed persons looking for opportunities to upgrade skills or change careers, as well as to increase the accessibility of Human Service Center-based classes in ESL, GED, and adult basic education.

Customer Choice

The Anoka County Center is designed to offer county residents a choice of workforce development services in a non-bureaucratic “customer-friendly” atmosphere. The Anoka Center is committed to providing customers a comprehensive menu of services to facilitate customer choice. The Career Resource Room offers services available to the general public. Using these self-service options, individuals can research on-line job listings, call job-line numbers, and access labor market information. They can also practice interviewing skills using interactive computer software, use typing and other office software tutorials, locate information on other community resources, and obtain information about scholarships and career training.

Orientation and information sessions let customers know what other services are available. All customers may register for job search assistance, obtain information about UI benefits, and attend meetings of the Job Club, a networking and support group. Individuals eligible for Unemployment Insurance, categorical programs such as JTPA, welfare-to-work programs, and other services targeted to youth, veterans, older workers, or other groups are informed about their service options.

Integrated Services

Anoka County has a decade-long history of developing innovative interagency collaborative approaches to community problems. The experience of Anoka County with the Minnesota Parents’ Fair Share (MNPFS) in the mid-1980s is one early example of forming “fusion teams”—bringing together diverse county, state, and non-profit agencies to work toward a common goal.⁵ These and other collaborative

⁵ Front-line staff at the Anoka County Job Center saw the limitations of trying to collect child support payments from unemployed non-custodial parents was difficult, and understood that jail sentences for so-called “deadbeat dads” only exacerbated this problem. In 1987, involved staff from several county offices and departments developed a collaborative team to plan the Anoka County Child Support Assistance Program, which provides a range of services to unemployed or underemployed non-custodial parents whose children are receiving public assistance. A more complete discussion of MNPFS, particularly as it relates to the Anoka case, is contained in Sweeney, Kathleen, 1996, “A Shared Leadership Model for Human Service Program Management,” *International Journal of Public Administration*, 19 (7), 1105-20.

management approaches have provided a model that has guided the development of Anoka's Workforce Center.

In response to the state's vision of developing a seamless system of employment and training, the Anoka Workforce Service Area has developed a local integration plan that promotes coordination among on-site service providers. As part of the integration plan, a coordination agreement is in effect between the Job Training Center (JTPA) and the Blaine Job Service/Unemployment Insurance Office (ES/UI). Contracts for services are used as needed to clarify and define the agreements between these agencies.

The Anoka County approach to consolidation and integration of One-Stop services tends to maintain a clear "division of labor" among programs, so that individual agencies are still responsible for certain functions. Cross-agency planning and oversight committees ensure that the overall service system is coordinated by providing the opportunity for all partners to have substantial input into the design and participate in the oversight of these various functions. For example, although initial intake and customer orientation are performed by ES/UI staff, an "Initial Services Committee," formed in January 1995 with staff from the Job Training Center, Job Service and Unemployment Insurance, and the Division of Rehabilitation Services, identifies the range of customer services and formulates procedures for integration of the intake function across all partner programs. Similarly, a multi-agency "Employer Services Committee" provides on-going suggestions for streamlining services to employers through the system of "employer account representatives," even though the employer services function is staffed by Job Service and coordinated by a "marketer" who is also an MDES employee.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

Developing a system for measuring customer satisfaction with Center services, and for assessing Center-wide outcomes in a way that goes beyond current programmatic reporting requirements, has been the subject of on-going discussions of the customer satisfaction and employer services committees. In addition to local efforts to develop performance measures for the Center, a system of One-Stop performance measures is being developed at the state level.

Since 1995, individual customers have been asked to provide opinions of Center operations and services using feedback forms that are available at reception and through

participation in regular “customer advisory” focus groups. Although data on customer satisfaction have been collected, respondents believe that there is not yet an effective system to analyze and disseminate the information to front-line staff. To remedy this situation, an Evaluation Committee, charged with formulating an effective system for evaluating Center-wide performance, was being established at the time of the evaluation visit. Some initial suggestions made by the Committee include sending surveys by mail to Center customers and having a “mystery shopper” (someone from outside the Center who would pose as a customer) report on Center services and customer-friendliness.

Physical Facilities

The Human Service Center is located on a ten-acre parcel. There is an attractive lawn and parking area in front of the building, and a large pond in the back. The second floor of the building is shared by Job Service, Rehabilitation Services, the Job Training Center, and Metro North, which provides adult basic education, ESL, and GED courses. A portion of the third floor is occupied by additional Job Training Center staff and the staff from Income Maintenance and Child Care Assistance. There are currently five large rooms used by the general public. All of these rooms are located near the main customer entrance of the Workforce Center. They include a Job Search Area, the Career Resource Library, a Personal Computer Lab, a Job Club Room, and a Phone Room. There are also several conference rooms and classroom areas within the Workforce Center. Because of demand for more space in the complex, construction of a fourth story on top of the existing three-story, 100,000-square-foot building was expected to begin in October, 1996 and to be completed by 1997. At this time, the Workforce Center areas will be remodeled to increase the space of the Resource Room and other areas intended for public use.

Anoka County Workforce Center staff and other partners believe that having space available at a relatively low cost at the Human Service Center is one of the most important underpinnings of the success of their project. Respondents were extremely pleased with the work of the building maintenance staff, and said that good building management “made all the difference,” in providing a space that was clean and inviting. “If we had located in an old government-style building,” said one person, “it wouldn’t be the same. This place makes people feel good about coming here.”

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Staffing Arrangements

Since co-location of core Workforce Center partners in 1991, and particularly since the official Workforce Center partnership was formed in 1995, there have been on-going efforts to coordinate and integrate functions. Integration efforts, which are based on the principle of a “partnership of equals,” have been focused on core agency practices in six major areas: intake, assessment and career planning, job search, training, case management, and employer services. Although not all of these functions are cross-staffed by employees of the different agencies represented at the Workforce Center, activities in each of these areas are coordinated through multi-agency Operations Committees (see “Communication and Coordination” and “Integrated Services” above).

To coordinate the design and delivery of services to welfare recipients, cross-agency teams composed of staff from Income Maintenance, Child Care Assistance, the Job Training Center (which delivers welfare-to-work services), and Job Services have been initiated. Integrated team supervisors meet regularly in a welfare-to-work “steering committee” co-chaired by directors of the Job Training Center, Income Maintenance, and Child Care Assistance to discuss questions of further integrating service delivery. In addition, a welfare-to-work “planning committee” comprised of front-line and supervisory staff also meets to coordinate such activities as integrated job search and employer services.

At the time of the site visit the following staffing arrangements were in effect:

- Reception is jointly staffed by ACJTC and Income Maintenance. Receptionists direct individuals seeking program services to intake staff who are also located in the reception area. Other customers wishing to access “universal” services such as computer-assisted resume preparation, labor market information, and information on education and training providers are directed to the Resource Room or other appropriate areas within the Center.
- ES/UI staff are responsible for intake services for the general public (those not directly referred to other service providers at the Center). Staff make an initial determination of program eligibility and provide an orientation to Center services, going over the “menu” of services offered with each individual. After an initial eligibility determination has been made, customers are registered for Unemployment Insurance, Job Service, Older Worker or Senior Community Service Employment

Program (SCSEP) programs as appropriate or referred to other programs for which they may be eligible.

- Services available to the general public are generally cross-staffed by several agencies. For example, Job Service and ACJTC staff work in teams to staff the Career Resource Center. They are assisted in this on a part-time basis by counselors from the Education Opportunity Center and by DRS staff who provide information on rehabilitation services and employer requirements for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). ACJTC staff also provide a three-day Career Exploration Workshop for the general public. ACJTC and ES/UI staff jointly provide a variety of job search seminars which range from two-hour “mini-seminars” to full-day sessions (see “Services to Individual Customers” below).
- ACJTC staff provide employment and training service for individuals who qualify for all JTPA programs. In addition, through a contractual arrangement with the Income Maintenance Department, they provide employment and training services to participants in welfare-to-work programs such as the Food Stamp E&T program, STRIDE (JOBS), Community Work Experience Program (CWEP), the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), and the Parent’s Fair Share program.
- DRS staff provide services to customers directly referred to them by outside organizations and to walk-in customers expressing interest in receiving DRS services.

Capacity Building

Although MDES’s Office of Training and Learning Resources offers a regular schedule of classes in St. Paul for front-line, supervisory and management staff, Anoka staff indicated that they did not often have a chance to attend many of these courses. Because of a large demand for training, state training staff have recently begun to offer half- and full-day sessions on-site in Anoka on topics such as labor market information customized for the local area and training for Workforce Center staff. The Anoka Center has also contracted with the local community-technical college to offer “train the trainer” workshops on large-group presentation skills. Capacity-building workshops have also been held at Anoka by private vendors such as Greg Newton.

Although the original three partners of the Workforce Center have been co-located since 1991, respondents indicated that the “real work” of trying to coordinate service delivery began after December, 1994, when the Job Training Center, Job Service, and the Division of Rehabilitation Services saw themselves as “literally thrown together” in formulating a proposal for local One-Stop implementation. Beginning in

1995, local partners conducted a series of workshops intended to provide overviews of programs to staff from other agencies. Although some staff indicated that the amount of information provided at these sessions was “a bit overwhelming,” most felt that since that time they had gained a good understanding of the programs of partner agencies.

More importantly, staff felt that because of the formalization of relations of partner agencies under the Workforce Center, they were able to gain first-hand knowledge of programs by working on various operations committees and by being in daily contact with staff from partner agencies. “Before there was nothing formal,” said one Job Training Center staff person. “Now there is much more cooperation among partners that happens as a part of everyday operations.” Another respondent put it this way:

There are many different ideas about what cross-training means. Here, we interpret cross-training as informing people about what we do. It doesn't mean that everybody does case management, or that we could do someone else's job. I think 'cross-inform' is a more accurate description of what we do. We perform a lot of duties together, and we have built a process that is a much better relay system. All of us know each other's business.

Perhaps the most important change is that because of the implementation of the Workforce Center concept, we can attach what was before only somebody's name to a person. We all feel free to go next door [to our partners] to ask questions. Before, some people might have considered that 'intruding on their space.' Everyone's made a commitment not to schedule their days too tightly so that they have time for interacting. This has been a great benefit to our customers. If we see that they have a specific need, we can introduce them to someone that can help.

The relatively recent inclusion of the Income Maintenance Department and Child Care Assistance as core Center partners, the passage of welfare reform legislation, and the planned move of 60 additional income maintenance case workers to the Center during 1997 has resulted in the formation and training of cross-agency teams to consolidate planning and delivery of services for what are now five distinct welfare-to-work programs: (1) Food Stamp Employment and Training; (2) Community Work Experience Program for two-parent AFDC families; (3) STRIDE for AFDC recipients; (4) ACCESS, a program that offers child-care subsidies to non-STRIDE participants; and (5) the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP), a program that offers various work incentives to welfare-to-work customers. Teams composed of staff from

Income Maintenance, Child Care Assistance, and the Job Training Center have undergone several days of team-building training led by outside consultants. Training has consisted of principles of team formation and structure, laying ground-rules for team meetings, personality assessment, and coping with change.

It is expected that capacity building efforts will be enhanced in mid-1997 with the launching of a “Workforce Excellence Initiative” funded by the McKnight foundation and the U.S. Department of Labor, and developed jointly by MDES and the state’s JTPA Association. The objectives of this initiative include (1) finding effective ways to combine resources in Workforce Centers to create model partnerships among federal, state, local, and private organizations; (2) promoting customer satisfaction and continuous improvement; providing training and technical assistance to all Workforce Centers partners; and (3) introducing best practices through replication of products and resources developed throughout the country.⁶

As a result of a strong emphasis on cross-training and coordination of activities across multiple agency partners, staff identification with individual partner agencies is becoming less strong. For example, at conferences attended by inter-agency teams, it has become common for staff to introduce themselves as working for the Anoka Workforce Center, rather than for the particular agency that employs them. Staff proudly point to the fact that their name-tags refer only identify themselves as staff of the Minnesota Workforce Center – Anoka County, and that it is difficult for customers or visitors to distinguish what person works for which agency.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

The State of Minnesota is part of GEORGE, the multi-state consortium working to develop integrated intake and to create electronic tools to manage clients’ One-Stop activities after they have proceeded through the intake process. This integrated information system would allow One-Stop “case managers” to schedule client flow, take case notes, develop work plans for customers, and plan transition services.

Local Workforce Center partner staff have developed a common three-page application on which preliminary program eligibility determinations are based. They are hopeful that new state-developed MIS will enable them to further streamline local information systems in order to provide more easily accessible client-level data across

⁶ Further details on this initiative are included in the Minnesota state profile.

programs, rather than focusing so heavily on programmatic reporting needs. “A lot is geared toward filling out end reports,” said one respondent. “The system is not really geared to providing us with useful information.”

At the same time, the establishment of a Workforce Center has made it easier to share information. Before integration of services, sharing data was more difficult—early problems often revolved around varying interpretations of Minnesota data privacy laws. Recent clarifications at the state level have since, in the words of several local staff, “freed people to be more practical.” Staff see the focus as the *strategic* and *permissible* sharing of information. County files, for example, are now accessible to ES/UI staff on an “as-needed” basis.

One of the major tasks of bridging MIS across programs involves other technical issues such as determining the most effective ways to link communication systems. There is the presumption that Workforce Center partners will eventually share a single file server, a single leased communication line, and shared network resources through the state’s communication network, MNET.

Labor Market Information (LMI) and Related Information Technology Improvements

Local staff at Anoka were particularly pleased with improvements in the accessibility of labor market information since the implementation of One-Stop in Minnesota. Many Anoka staff persons attended a state-sponsored conference on LMI in September and were impressed by the quality of the presentations and the information that was made available to them.

One of the most direct benefits of One-Stop implementation has been the development and continuous expansion of the Resource Center. The Anoka Resource Center contains a well-stocked library that provides job-seekers with information about career areas and the outlooks for employment opportunities in those areas. Another direct benefit has come in the expansion of availability of computers that customers can use to access career and labor market information. As a result of expansion of computer access, customers have easy access not only to job listings and basic data on types of employment, wages, and labor market trends in the local area, but also to the Minnesota Career Information System (CIS), an easy-to-use computer-based encyclopedia on education and training programs available state-wide.

The recent creation by the state of six regional labor market analyst positions was seen by local respondents as a particularly positive development. The regional analyst for their area has been very helpful in providing assistance in conducting an inventory of materials, and in providing new materials for the Resource Center. Local staff stated that they felt very comfortable about contacting their regional analyst at any time to request LMI. One supervisor described the new improvements in LMI that had resulted since One-Stop implementation:

There have been new materials developed since the Workforce Center concept has become implemented. For instance, the state has just packaged new materials that allow counseling staff to assess the quality and placement rates of any education or training program in the state. Before, we would have had to contact individual schools to get this kind of information. But I think the biggest improvement has been in our comfort levels with using LMI and improved access to information when we need it.

He described a recent case in which he had contacted the regional analyst for information about determining eligibility for a customer in a dislocated worker program:

I had a printer who said that he needed full-time training, that he couldn't get a job without training. I knew that printing was a volatile industry, but I didn't have much specific information on the field. I called the regional analyst, and was able to get information on local area growth rates in that person's field very shortly afterwards. Before, I could have contacted someone at the state, but it would have taken me much more time to get the information I needed. In this case, I was able to make an eligibility determination within days.

Marketing

Another major change that has resulted from One-Stop implementation in Minnesota is the establishment of a "marketer" position at each Workforce Center. In Anoka, the marketer's duties include publicizing the services of the Workforce Center to job seekers and coordinating outreach efforts in the employer community.

The local marketer, in collaboration with operations committee staff, develops a variety of flyers, brochures, and media releases that describe the local Workforce Center services. In addition, local staff coordinate with Human Service Center partners in publishing materials that detail the range of services that are available to Anoka County residents at the Center. For example, a monthly calendar of scheduled workshop and resource area activities is printed and made available to customers.

Because of the state's increased emphasis on services to employers, one of the most important functions of the marketer is coordinating the system of account representatives that was developed by Job Service staff prior to the establishment of the Workforce Center in 1995. The marketer attends employer group meetings, such as those offered by Chambers of Commerce, and puts employers into contact with Job Service "account representatives." Because of current tight labor market conditions, many employers contact the marketer with urgent job requests. The marketer disseminates these requests throughout the Center, by circulating flyers to staff and posting them in public areas such as the Resource Center, and by sending e-mail messages to Center staff describing the available position.

Unemployment Insurance tax auditors are also performing new "marketing" duties in the context of the Anoka One-Stop. Because they come into contact with many employers in the course of insurance audits, the state has been promoting an expanded role for them in promoting workforce development services. Auditors are now encouraged to educate employers about the range of workforce services available to them, including funding for training of current and prospective employees, the use of the Center for conducting interviews, and information sessions for new employers on topics such as filing quarterly report forms, applying for an UI registration number, and calculating UI tax rates.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

The Anoka Workforce Center offers a range of services to customers, including self- and staff-assisted computerized services and individualized services. Core services for individuals available through the Center include:

- Computer-scanning of resumes for job matching;
- Job postings from area employers;
- Job hotlines and information and procedures on civil service recruitment;
- Registration for Job Service;
- Access to personal computers for resumes and cover letters;
- Telephones and answering service to support job search efforts;
- Group job search clubs;
- Career exploration through the Minnesota Career Information System;

- Labor market information; and
- Individual career guidance and assessment.

In addition, a variety of workshops are available at no cost to the general public. These workshops, jointly staffed by ES/UI and ACJTC employees, cover a range of career exploration and job search topics. Workshops are offered at regularly scheduled times on a weekly basis, and last from two hours to a full day. On topics for which several sessions are offered, participants may attend either or both “modules.” Specific workshops offered at the Center include the following:

- *Tour of the Facilities.* This workshop on “Next Steps” introduces job seekers to the resources available at the Workforce Center, including computers, reference materials, and the “Job Club.”
- *The Creative Job Search Basic Workshop* offers an overview of the emotional, attitudinal, and financial transition processes involved in employment transitions. This module is recommended as a prerequisite to the others.
- *Applying Skills to the Job Search* assists job seekers in learning to identify and speak about their skills and accomplishments in preparation for the interview process.
- *Written Credentials.* Offered in two modules, these workshops focus on the variety of techniques used in writing resumes, cover letters, and follow-up letters.
- *Applications and References.* Job seekers are taught how to match their experiences and skills with those required by employers on application forms, and how to identify the most suitable persons to list as references.
- *Interviewing.* In the first session on this topic, participants learn about key interview questions and legal rights, and practice interviewing techniques. In the second session, up to ten participants are videotaped in 5-minute mock interview sessions.
- *The Hidden Job Market.* The first of these sessions discusses the variety of methods used to find jobs, including networking, responding to advertisements, and contacting agencies and companies. In a subsequent session, job seekers learn how to use the telephone in the job search—they prepare a script and contact employers during the workshop.

Other services, available to individuals eligible for categorical programs, include services available through all JTPA programs, Title V Older Workers Programs, Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET), Minnesota Parents’ Fair Share, Community

Work Experience Program, Unemployment Insurance, Veterans Employment and Training Services, Rehabilitation Services, State Services For The Blind, and STRIDE programs for welfare recipients.

Services for Employer Customers

Employer services in Anoka County are intended to support local employers in their efforts to “maintain economic stability and provide employment opportunities to job seekers in the community.” In order to accomplish these goals, the state has sought to re-focus efforts on services to employers. At the Anoka Center, this is being accomplished in three ways: (1) through the institution of a system of employer “account representatives,” (2) through increased outreach into employer communities using marketing activities and participation in employer associations, and (3) by adding an “educational” or marketing aspect to the work of the Unemployment Insurance’s Random Audit Unit, as described in the section on “Marketing,” above.

Job Service has designated five staff to act as employer account representatives. Although the function of the representatives is similar to the function carried out by the previous Job Service “interviewers,” the increased emphasis on employer services has changed the proportion of time that is spent courting employers. Job Service interviewers used to spend the majority of their time with individual customers, whereas employer account representatives now spend most of their time on activities targeted to employers. These include more intensive screening of prospective employees for specific job openings, sending letters and visiting employers, attending Chamber of Commerce meetings, holding “Job Fairs,” and increasing the Center’s visibility in the community. Activities are coordinated by the marketer.

Staff respondents identified major advantages to the new emphasis on employer services. According to one Job Service respondent, advantages of the new system include:

- *Preventing duplication of effort in job placement contacts to employers as a result of improved communication across all employer service staff and use of a shared employer database.*
- *Promoting coordination with vocational and technical colleges on providing job assessment services to local employers, using the “Work Keys” system, in which Job Service staff have been trained.*

- *Streamlining employer services*, by sharing job orders from “desperate employers” across all partner agencies. This has enabled the Center to provide timely referrals to employers seeking new staff.
- *Addressing employers’ need for good labor market information*, including providing information to employers considering relocating to the county, as a result of information that can be accessed by Job Service staff over the Internet.
- *An increased ability to visit employers at their worksites*, which enables employer service representatives to have a much clearer understanding of employers and their needs and personalizes the service relationship.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

Customers receiving a wide range of services at the Center were invited to a focus group discussion. Several of the respondents had participated in the “Customer Services Advisory Group” described earlier in this profile. The focus group was also attended by two staff members of the Advisory Group, a JS/UI representative, and a Job Training Center vocational counselor. In addition, a job placement specialist from Rise, Inc., was in attendance. Customer respondents included a woman whose son had received assistance from the Division of Rehabilitation Services, several STRIDE program participants, a participant in UI Profiling and Worker Reemployment Services, and several dislocated worker program participants.

Many of the focus group respondents, particularly those with previous experience with Job Service or welfare-to-work services noted that a strong customer service orientation had developed at the Workforce Center. Nearly all respondents believed that Workforce Center staff treated them as individuals. Some commented that they no longer felt that they were being “categorized” by programs they participated in, and many others commented on the dignity and respect that they were accorded at the Center. Below are four brief excerpts from the group discussion.

According to one participant in the STRIDE program for AFDC recipients, there was much less of a stigma attached to receiving help at the Workforce Center:

The thing that has gotten better is the quality of service, the respect that people give you. Before, you really felt the hatred toward you, the disgust that you were receiving public assistance.

Another respondent, who had received Social Security Disability payments for 16 years, had this to say about the evolution of the workforce system in Anoka:

It used to be very hard to get any kind of service through Job Service. If you wanted to access State job leads, they'd funnel you back through Rehabilitation Services. Job Service would treat you as if you were unemployable. It shouldn't be like that. Everybody should be treated as if they could do something. There has been a big improvement in attitude. There is an attitude of cooperation that didn't exist before.

One woman whose son had received Rehabilitation Services for over a decade had this to say:

I have seen a big change over the years and through talking to people here. I know that if you come in here looking for work, the staff really care and they'll help you figure out what to do. This Center has definitely made a big difference.

Another respondent had this to say about her perception of "seamless services" and "universality" at the Center:

One thing I like about this place, is that you're treated as an individual. You don't have to have a problem to want to come here. You're not automatically categorized - pegged into one strange little group or another. There are a lot of resources that can be used by the general public, not just for people needing special services.

Employers

As a result of the changes in job seeker and employer services, staff respondents indicated that employers are now much happier about the job applicants referred to them:

"They tell us that the quality of job applicants is improving. By spending time on 'quality initiatives' asking employers different questions about their needs, through better preparation, better transition workshops that help job seekers understand their own skills, we are also doing a much better job in serving employers."

An employer focus scheduled during the site visit was attended by only two individuals, both of whom were members of the local Job Service's Employer Council (JSEC). One was the human resource manager for a large food distribution company. The other was an employee of Rise, Inc., which is an agency that assists individuals with disabilities to obtain private sector employment. The food distribution company, which is headquartered in Houston and has 69 operations branches throughout the country, employs 580 people in neighboring Ramsey County. The human resources director of this company described her experiences working with Center staff:

Our company has found that the Department of Economic Security offers a lot of useful services. We know that they can do on-site training for workers that lose their jobs, help them to write resumes. We have an account representative here now. Before we'd fax openings to about 30 different places. Now we mostly just send them here. They're able to do most of the screening we need. For example, we need a lot of drivers. They're able to verify that drivers have the right qualifications, a commercial driver's license, enough experience, and so forth, before they send them out to us.

Rise Inc. has worked closely with the Workforce Center in helping develop "job-readiness, job-seeking, and job-keeping skills" among people with disabilities or other serious barriers to employment. The representative had this to say about some of the changes that came about with the creation of the Human Service Center:

The Department has become much more user-friendly. I remember several years ago showing up for my first meeting with staff. I needed to know where to go, but I just got barked at. Now the whole atmosphere is different with the new Workforce Center. People feel comfortable. I appreciate what it means to lose a job. I had to apply for unemployment insurance in 1988. It was such a humiliating experience to ask for money. If I hadn't needed it, I would have waked right out of the door. Things are so different now. You can get help with doing resume searches. There are just a lot more services for employers and for job applicants. It's really nice that so many things are located in one building like child care, a clinic, and WIC programs. People now have one place where they can go instead of running all around.

INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN AND LESSONS LEARNED

Staff at the Anoka County Workforce Center see themselves as being "ahead of the curve" in anticipating the national move toward One-Stop Centers. They see national and state priorities as "validating" their decision to co-locate and coordinate services. They realize that bringing several agencies together is a difficult task, but one that they have been able to accomplish successfully through the institution of a variety of communication and coordination mechanisms. According to one respondent, the process of "taking stock" of the variety of workforce related programs, and designing a system based on the strengths that each partner brings, has been the most important priority for Center staff and management.

Most staff respondents believed that although the major impetus for the development of the local One-Stop came from the local level, much of what they had recently accomplished was facilitated by the both the federal and state emphasis on integrating services in One-Stops. Several respondents pointed to the "philosophical

commitment” of the current MDES Commissioner as making a big difference: “Her approach is a big switch from the way that we used to do things,” said one staff member. “It does not mean that integration is easy. We had a lot of fights, a lot of mistrust, particularly at the beginning. But if we ticked somebody off, we made sure that we put the issue on the table. Once issues were out in the open, they were easier to deal with.”

Staff also believe that integration was easier to accomplish at the local level than it was at the state or national levels. “It’s helpful to understand how systems at the state level are put together,” said one key respondent. “We’re putting together things that are not put well together at 390 [MDES Headquarters in St. Paul]. It’s hard for them to see out of their stovepipes—they don’t see clients.”

The commitment to shared leadership among workforce partners at the Center has facilitated the transition of the Anoka Center to a well-developed One-Stop that is well positioned to integrate future welfare-to-work and school-to-work initiatives. There has been a strong emphasis on maintaining regular and open lines of communication among Workforce Center partners and other providers of support services through forums such as advisory groups, a steering committee, and operations committees. There are now greater opportunities for staff input through the committee structure, and several Center employees indicated believe that their suggestions result in more useful services to their employer- and job-seeking customers.

Staff at the Anoka Center have challenged themselves to create a new structure for workforce development, while at the same time maintaining their focus on high-quality customer service under conditions of diminishing resources. According to one key staff person, “We’re serving more people, and at the same time we’ve stepped ahead of the wave. . . We created our own ideas on how to make the system work.”

APPENDIX Q

STATE OF OHIO One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During August, 1996

STATE OF OHIO

One-Stop Profile

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	3
State-Level Organization and Governance	3
State Framework for Local Governance	7
DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	8
Evolution and General Description of the Design	8
Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals	12
Communication and Coordination	18
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES	19
IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS.....	21
Capacity Building and Technical Assistance	21
Improvements in Labor Market Information and Related Technology-Based Products	24
Management Information Systems.....	26
Marketing	27
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS	28
ASSESSMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED.....	29

STATE OF OHIO

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT

Earlier in this decade, Ohio began to build the basic policy framework from which its One-Stop system would be launched. In 1991, the governor appointed a Human Resources Advisory Council to review the status and assess the proliferation of workforce development programs. The Advisory Council's report, *Windows of Opportunity*, concluded that one billion dollars was being allocated to 15 different state agencies responsible for the 51 different direct employment and skills development programs, with only limited cross-program coordination. The governor then charged the Human Resources Advisory Council with developing a comprehensive "agency coordination" plan. The Council's blueprint for interagency coordination was laid out in its subsequent report called *Jobs: Ohio's Future*.

In 1993, the governor formed the Governor's Human Resources Investment Council (GHRIC), whose overriding agenda has been the "effective provision and coordination of economic development, education and human resource investment services, maximizing funds and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort." While *Jobs: Ohio's Future* continues to be the guiding plan for overall consolidation of workforce development services, another report—*For the Common Good*—emphasizes the importance of strengthening the linkages between workforce development programs and education and training programs targeted to at-risk youth and welfare-dependent adults, using interagency "linkage teams."

Together, these planning documents provide a basic blueprint for preparing Ohio's workforce for the twenty-first century. The statewide workforce goals expressed in these documents include the following:

- to make Ohio businesses more competitive in the global marketplace;
- to ensure that all Ohioans achieve the skills and abilities needed to succeed in a high performance workplace; and
- to help all citizens to become self-sufficient.

The long-term goal of Ohio's One-Stop initiative is to develop an integrated service delivery system that provides access to multiple core employment and training

services utilizing a systems approach that embraces multiple models for one-stop service delivery including co-location and no-wrong-door models based on local needs and local design. Partners in local One-Stop systems will use electronic linkages to share information across programs. From whatever point they enter the system, customers should encounter a single or universal registration process, staff that have been cross-trained, and access to self-service tools.

However, rather than attempting to transform its diverse local service delivery systems immediately according to a single consolidated “One-Stop” model, Ohio is encouraging each local area to decide how to build on existing programs and partnerships and what organizational configurations will work best for them, given the mix of programs and services already in place. Because state policymakers recognize the importance of variations in local labor market conditions and other local features, they emphasize that One-Stop delivery systems will also vary from locality to locality. State respondents believe that local One-Stop employment and training delivery systems must be “locally driven” to be effective. To ensure that local systems are responsive to local citizenry as well as to the state’s workforce development goals, the state has determined that One-Stop systems must be designed and developed via a state/local partnership in which all partners have “joint commitment, responsibility and liability.”

Several factors are influencing how the One-Stop system in Ohio is taking shape: (1) the diversity of the state’s economy; (2) a tradition of local autonomy in the delivery of training, employment, and human services; and (3) the state’s emphasis on developing networked One-Stop *systems*, rather than integrated career *centers*. Each of these factors is briefly described below.

- *The diversity of the state’s economy.* Ohio is a large state that encompasses striking economic contrasts. On the one hand, the state has several large relatively prosperous metropolitan centers that have emerged from the recession of the late 1980’s and early 1990’s with low unemployment rates. On the other hand, the state also contains sparsely populated areas with high unemployment rates where recovery from severe economic dislocations has not taken place. For example, large urban areas such as Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Columbus contrast sharply with rural southeastern Ohio, where the economy is still devastated by the decline of the coal mining industry. As a result of these dramatic differences in regional economies, the workforce development challenges faced by different regions are very different.

- *A tradition of local autonomy.* Due to the state’s economic, social, and cultural diversity, state leadership believes that it is critical for local stakeholders to decide how the training, employment, and human services delivery system will be developed and implemented, within broad parameters developed by the state. Furthermore, Ohio currently has 30 SDAs, 76 local offices of OBES, 88 counties, and other locally configured employment and training delivery systems. Rather than imposing a standardized One-Stop framework on top of these diverse institutions, the state calls for the creation of local governing bodies that have the authority to shape the local one-stop system to meet local needs. While this may result in a slower decision-making process, it nevertheless guarantees that all will have a voice in the design of the local system.
- *The use of a “system” approach.* As indicated earlier, Ohio is allowing local areas to develop their own system boundaries and then to determine what will constitute the One-Stop service delivery “system” within those boundaries. The state requires each local system to provide at least one One-Stop center where core One-Stop services will be available. The local system may also include independent service sites for all participating partners.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

State-Level Organization and Governance

Policy Oversight and Governance. The state supports One-Stop system development throughout Ohio by developing the guidelines that influence local One-Stop system development, making decisions about the allocation of One-Stop Implementation Grant funds to local areas, and monitoring and supporting local progress in system implementation. The state is also responsible for certifying local One-Stop systems.

Several different entities are involved in implementing and overseeing Ohio’s One-Stop approach at the state level, including (1) the Governor’s Human Resources Investment Council (GHRIC), (2) the One-Stop Standing Committee of the GHRIC, (3) Statewide Interagency Work Teams and (4) a One-Stop Project Management Team

within the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services.¹ These entities and their roles are described below.

The major policy body for state workforce development programs and issues is the Governor's Human Resources Investment Council (GHRIC), which was formed in 1993 in response to the Job Training Reform Amendments of 1992. Its thirty-one members include representatives from business, labor, education, and community leadership. As described previously, the Council is responsible for overseeing the delivery of cost-effective services in the areas of economic development, education, and human investment services with particular attention to promoting coordination and avoiding unnecessary duplication of effort across multiple programs and funding streams.

The One-Stop Standing Committee of the GHRIC was established as one of four GHRIC standing committees in order to deal with specific One-Stop development issues and to provide the advocacy needed to move this important program forward. The creation of this oversight body as an arm of the GHRIC has enabled the Committee to overcome many obstacles and barriers to the implementation of a One-Stop system because of the key positions that the GHRIC members hold in the overall employment and training arena. The One-Stop Standing Committee takes the lead in encouraging state agencies to develop coordination agreements to further One-Stop implementation, reviews the work of the Statewide Interagency Work Teams (described below), and is responsible for making recommendations to the GHRIC about the certification of local One-Stop systems.

A state-level One-Stop Workgroup monitors and supports the implementation and ongoing operation of One-Stop systems in Ohio. Each of the state agencies and departments involved in One-Stop system development is represented on the Ohio One-Stop Workgroup. The Workgroup plays a direct, "hands-on" role in the day-to-day planning and development of the One-Stop system. It has direct responsibility for One-Stop development and implementation and reports to the GHRIC One-Stop Standing Committee. Statewide Interagency Work Teams led by members of the Statewide One-

¹A Statewide One-Stop Workgroup was a precursor to the GHRIC One-Stop Committee and no longer exists. It was the original state level planning body and included representation from the same partner and stakeholder groups as are now represented on the GHRIC One-Stop Committee.

Stop Workgroup have the responsibility for dealing with specific policy and implementation issues that are statewide in nature.

As the lead state agency involved in the One-Stop initiative and the grant recipient of the DOL One-Stop Implementation Grant, the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) houses a One-Stop Project Management Team that oversees the DOL grant and provides technical assistance and consultation to local sites, including assistance related to team-building and local governance. The One-Stop Team Manager is responsible to the GHRIC One-Stop Committee and serves at the pleasure of the Governor, but reports to the OBES Administrator, since OBES is the lead state agency in Ohio's One-Stop effort.

State Agency Partners. At the local level, the state has established a hierarchical classification of One-Stop partners, consisting of (1) mandated partners, (2) optional or desirable partners, and (3) encouraged partners. The mandated One-Stop partners in each local area include the agencies responsible for JTPA, ES, Veterans Employment Services, UI and Title V of the Older Americans Act. The state agencies associated with the mandated local partners include the following.

- *The Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES)* is the agency responsible for the Job Training Partnership Act programs, Employment Service programs, Veterans' Employment Services, and Unemployment Insurance. As the lead agency of the state One-Stop initiative, OBES co-chairs the Statewide GHRIC One-Stop Committee.
- *The Ohio Department of Aging* is the state agency that oversees local "aging" networks that receive funds to provide Senior Community Service Employment Programs to seniors under Title V of the Older Americans Act.

The second tier of potential One-Stop partners are defined as "optional or desirable" partners. The state has defined the agencies responsible for the following programs as optional or desirable partners in each local area: (1) welfare reform and welfare-to-work programs, (2) vocational education, (3) adult basic education and literacy programs, and (4) two-year colleges (vocational technical schools and community colleges). Local areas interested in One-Stop certification must involve partners responsible for three of the four optional program areas. State agencies responsible for "additional mandatory" programs include the following.

- *The Ohio Department of Human Services* oversees the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Program and other welfare-to-work programs administered in Ohio by county welfare agencies.
- *The Vocational and Career Education Division of the Ohio Department of Education* oversees secondary and adult vocational education programs available to adults in Ohio through public school systems. In addition, a total of 35 Vocational Education Full Service centers offer workforce training, employee testing and assessment, technical skills training, customized training, and job placement services to unemployed and under-employed adults.
- *The Adult Basic and Literacy Education Programs Division of the Ohio Department of Education* oversees adult basic and literacy education programs in Ohio. A statewide network of school districts, institutions, and community agencies provides direct services to learners. The state recently established a statewide literacy resource center at Kent State University that provides information and assistance to employers and service providers.
- *The Ohio Board of Regents* oversees the operation of public two-year colleges. Two-year colleges in Ohio include both vocational technical institutions and community colleges.

The third tier of potential One-Stop partners are defined as “encouraged partners.” Partners encouraged at the local level include the agencies responsible for (1) vocational rehabilitation, (2) school-to-work transition programs, (3) the Ohio Industrial Training Program—a state-funded program that awards grants to private employers to upgrade the skills of their current workers, and (4) other community programs that provide support services, such as day care, transportation, and housing assistance to disadvantaged residents. State agencies responsible for these programs include the following.

- *The Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission* administers vocational rehabilitation services targeted to individuals with substantial physical or mental disabilities. Services include evaluation and employability planning, counseling and guidance, and occupational and financial assistance.
- *Ohio’s School-to-Work transition project*, is a multi-agency collaborative effort led by the Lieutenant Governor’s Office, oriented to improve the alignment between school and work. The School-to-Work team is comprised of state legislators, employers, organized labor, the Department of Education, the Department of Human Services, the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, and other stakeholders. At the time of the site visit, 11 pilot projects were operating in the state to test

different service models. The School-to-Work team is represented on the GHRIC One-Stop Standing Committee. Its presence ensures that School-to-Work planning will be aligned with One-Stop system development.

- *The Ohio Department of Development* administers the Ohio Industrial Training Program. This state-funded program supports training for incumbent workers. One part of the program places economically disadvantaged individuals in employment supported by job- and classroom-based occupational training.

State Framework for Local Governance

It is the state's goal to integrate and incorporate as many employment and training programs into local One-Stop systems as possible, while still providing some flexibility at the local level. Local areas are given substantial discretion in designing entities to govern their One-Stop systems. The state requires that whatever governing body is designated, it include all key stakeholders in the local One-Stop system, including mandatory, optional, and encouraged partners. The local governance structure for One-Stop systems must have participation from employer and job-seeker customers, business, organized labor, and local elected officials. Localities must also demonstrate a strong linkage with the local Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC) and between the JSEC and the Private Industry Council, to ensure that local employers will be strongly connected to the new employment and training system.

Local areas may use their Private Industry Council (PIC) as the governance structure for their One-Stop system, but the JTPA administrative role of PICs must be kept separate from their One-Stop policy function. In addition, local areas are required to establish linkages between their local One-Stop system and existing coordination initiatives, including the local School-to-Work initiative, Vocational Education Full Service Programs (described above under state vocational education partners), and Common Good teams.²

Ohio describes the process of developing local One-Stop systems as a process of developing state and local agreements about how services will be provided, how service providers will be selected, how customers will be assisted and how the One-Stop

²Common Good teams were established in 1989 under the auspices of Ohio Department of Education. Originally the focus was on establishing linkages between welfare-to-work and education programs. The local Common Good teams have since evolved to include all the major employment and training partners. There are 35 local teams currently in existence in various parts of the state.

system will be financed. Thus, agreement about the local governance structure is only one step in negotiating a series of agreements about the future of local workforce development services.

DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of the Design

The federally-funded One-Stop initiative builds on and furthers existing state initiatives. By the time Ohio received official DOL designation as a One-Stop implementation state, the state had already begun to develop and implement a strategic plan to promote the consolidation of employment and training services so as to reduce costs and inefficiencies. The initial strategy, developed and implemented by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES), called for the creation of Customer Service Centers (CSCs), which would consolidate service delivery for the ES and UI programs using integrated application forms and cross-trained staff. Additional local workforce development programs were also invited to co-locate with ES/UI in CSCs. Though less sweeping in its scope than the One-Stop initiative, the move to create Customer Service Centers was an important precursor of One-Stop in Ohio.

OBES Customer Service Centers remain a “key component” of local One-Stop designs. At the time of the evaluation site visit, seven Customer Service Centers were operational and nine additional Centers were in the process of development or renovation. All local areas are required to involve existing CSCs in local One-Stop system-building efforts. Some CSCs may also be used as test sites to pilot the use of an enhanced Ohio Job Net system to provide automated One-Stop services as part of an integrated statewide system.

Another experience that was influential in building collaborative partnerships among state and local employment and training representatives was the development of Ohio’s plan to implement a Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS) system. Ohio’s process for designing this system brought together state and local service providers to discuss how to utilize existing resources to best meet the needs of dislocated workers. As a result of this design process, representatives from the employment, training, and human services sectors experienced the potential for working together without “turf” issues being paramount. The development of the Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services plan used a consensus-based team-building process that combined program design ideas provided by local partners with support provided by state-level systems. The successful experience planning the WPRS

system provided state policy makers with the impetus and the determination to move forward with the group's One-Stop vision. A similar interagency collaborative process was used to develop the state's One-Stop Implementation Grant application to DOL.

Ohio's vision for transforming local workforce development systems includes designing and delivering services that:

- offer customer choice and promote customer satisfaction;
- address the full range of customer needs and goals;
- are viewed by customers as seamless high quality services;
- are delivered using systems that are cost-effective and cost-efficient;
- satisfy the current performance goals and standards for existing programs.

As indicated earlier, Ohio's One-Stop vision is that local systems must be designed to meet the specific needs of customers and harness the specific resources available in each local labor market. A fundamental requirement of the state design is that the mandatory local partners must reach agreement on the local design before seeking One-Stop funding from the state. To guide local partners in the development of their own local agreements, the state has established a set of "certification parameters." The certification parameters described below are used to review the applications from local areas for funding to support the implementation of their One-Stop "systems."

- *Geographic boundaries.* While Ohio expects to eventually have a One-Stop Career Center system in each of its 30 SDAs, it has left the development of the actual One-Stop system boundaries to the localities. Parameters established by the state for grant application include the following: each proposed multi-county system must include at least 200,000 residents, and the counties it comprises must be contiguous; to apply as a single-county system, a county must have 800,000 or more residents. Furthermore, all mandatory partners must agree when SDA lines are to be crossed by One-Stop system boundaries.
- *Local governance structure.* As described in the previous section, local governance structures must include representation from all local program partners. All key players must be in agreement about the local governance structure.
- *Mandatory partners/programs.* As previously described, agencies responsible for all DOL-funded programs are mandatory partners. Local systems must also obtain participation from three out of four

“optional” partners/programs including welfare-to-work, vocational education, adult basic education, and two-year colleges. Participation by agencies responsible for vocational rehabilitation, school-to-work, Ohio Industrial Training Program, and other local programs serving economically disadvantaged residents is encouraged, but not required. Where Customer Service Centers (described above) exist, they must be included as participating partners of the local One-Stop system.

- *Universal access to core services.* All One-Stop systems must provide the following basic core services: (1) customer-oriented information on careers, labor markets, jobs, and the availability of quality education and training programs; (2) testing and assessment; (3) information on the initial eligibility requirements of programs in the community; (4) information on job openings and hiring requirements; and (5) assistance with job search. Ohio’s statewide automated job matching system—Ohio Job Net—must be available to all customers and local system plans must describe how the automated system will be used.
- *Integrated program delivery.* To meet the state’s requirement for integrated services, at least one physical site within each local One-Stop system must qualify as a “One-Stop Center” by

Services throughout local One-Stop systems, but particularly in One-Stop Centers with co-located partners, are to be provided in a seamless manner. Suggested strategies include: (1) integrated intake through the use of a system-wide common intake procedure; (2) the use of staff cross-trained in multiple programs and able to perform broad, rather than narrow, functions; (3) electronically shared information; and (4) integrated job development and job placement services across local partners.

- *Attention to the needs of special populations.* Localities must indicate how each special population will be served. Special populations will include veterans, dislocated workers, economically disadvantaged adults and youth, older workers, individuals with disabilities, and UI recipients. Local plans must also address how the One-Stop system will serve cash assistance recipients, in accordance with the state legislation on welfare reform.
- *Local match requirement.* Localities must commit an in-kind match of 10% of the federal One-Stop Implementation Grant funds received.

The state has also developed a procedure for evaluating whether an individual service site can be designated as a One-Stop “center.” To qualify as a One-Stop center, a local site must provide information on and access to each of the mandatory programs—JTPA, ES, UI, Veterans Employment Services and Senior Community Services Employment Program—plus three of the four optional programs—welfare-to-

work, vocational education, adult basic education, and public two-year colleges. To be designated One-Stop centers, local sites must also offer each of the required core services (described above) to all customers.

Thus, while the state permits substantial flexibility in the development of local One-Stop systems—including variation in the extent of co-location among participating partners—the parameters clearly call for system consolidation to emphasize the delivery of services that encompass a broad range of funding streams and programs and that are viewed as seamless from the customer perspective. The state guidelines for local designs raise issues that are sometimes complex. Here are some examples:

How to achieve a state-wide system given limited resources. Initially, Ohio planned to develop 30 local One-Stop systems (corresponding to the 30 existing JTPA service delivery areas) that would each build on existing JTPA and ES/UI service sites. Partners in each local area would redesign the services offered by existing sites within a local area to achieve customer-driven, user-friendly, seamless service, through a transformation process that emphasizes implementing electronic linkages, cross-training staff, and developing self-service opportunities. However, since DOL One-Stop implementation funding will not be available at the requested level and Ohio's administrative cutbacks have resulted in a reduction in the number of ES/UI offices, Ohio may find it difficult to support enough local sites to achieve a statewide system. Nevertheless, as it moves through the three-year implementation period, the state will work with the localities that go through the competitive bidding process, to determine what configurations might adequately serve local labor markets as well as providing Ohio with maximum geographic coverage.³ In addition, the GHRIC One-Stop Committee is assessing the potential for seeking alternative funding, possibly from the state, for a fourth year of implementation to ensure that Ohio meets its goal of 30 systems, thus covering the entire state.

How to further the state vision using a variety of local partnership and service delivery configurations. The state has allowed local discretion in the configuration of the local governance structure, the number and types of programs to be integrated, the number and location of service sites within the One-Stop system, the relationships

³ Since 1988, 22 Ohio counties have been without a local office for the delivery of ES and UI services as a result of limited state funds. Because of this, the One-Stop selection process will encourage the geographic expansion of One-Stop systems to include under-served areas.

among different sites, and the selection of the One-Stop operator and fiduciary agent. Given this broad local discretion, Ohio may find it difficult to ensure that local One-Stop systems are furthering a common statewide and federal One-Stop vision. The GHRIC One-Stop Committee, however, continues to address the issues that will ensure that local systems further a common statewide and federal One-Stop vision.

How to achieve active participation by all the desired local partners. It is difficult enough to consolidate policies and procedures among different DOL programs administered by the same state agency. Ohio's vision of integrating services across a broad range of local partners and programs is very ambitious.

How to achieve integrated service delivery across program partners. Ohio has recognized that it will take time to develop and/or expand integrated services. Each of the following subsystems will be phased in as they are completed and ready for implementation:

- *Integrated customer information* will facilitate common registration by providing access to customer information on the participating program databases.
- *Customer record of service* will track an individual's progress across various employment and training programs in relation to his or her employment plan.
- *Training quality information* will provide information on the completion, retention and success rates of students enrolled in various training institutions.
- *Ohio Job Net* will be enhanced to provide a single point of access for labor exchange services.
- *Labor market information* will provide comprehensive information regarding occupational trends and projects.

Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals

Although the state One-Stop design defers many of the details of One-Stop system design to the localities, state-level respondents say that Ohio has not lost sight of how its design supports the four federal One-Stop goals.

Universal Access

Ohio encourages localities to be creative in designing their systems to provide services relevant to the population they are serving. Through its local One-Stop

systems, Ohio intends to provide universal access to the following core services to all population groups:

- Intake and assessment and testing for programs offered by mandatory partners (e.g., ES, UI, JTPA, Veterans' Employment Services, and Older Worker programs);
- Orientation and information on all employment and training services available within the geographical area including job openings, job referrals, and job search assistance and placement services;
- Quality labor market information, including data on labor market trends, careers, job categories, and skills needed for the local labor market;
- Assistance with initial UI claims.

While One-Stop systems are not required to provide additional services to the general population, Ohio does give extra points in its One-Stop grant application review process to local sites that offer additional core services that include 1) in-depth assessment and counseling, 2) case management, 3) training, and/or 4) skill validation to certify qualifications of job applicants.

Customer Choice

The intent of Ohio's design is to provide customer choice in three major ways: (1) providing the information needed to make informed choices; (2) making it possible to access information at multiple locations within the local One-Stop system; and (3) providing the option of using self-service means of accessing services.

Providing information is seen by Ohio as key to individual self-empowerment. Therefore, much of the systems development during the next three years will focus on developing improved ways to provide user-friendly information. Products in development include a system for gaining easy access to Job Net and the Internet—which is Ohio's skills-based automated job matching system—and integrating Job Net with information on additional employment and training services and partners. In addition, the Ohio Career Information System (OCIS) will provide information on training providers, including information available through the National Center for Education Studies.

Self-service options will include electronic linkages and the use of out-stationed staff and/or cross-trained staff to assist in the self-service process. Multiple self-service stations will be available, including kiosks in libraries and at One-Stop centers.

Interactive voice response is also planned for UI customers. In addition the OCIS will be available as part of the automated LMI system.

Integrated Services

Ohio views integration of services as having the customers' needs as the ultimate focus. The state wants local sites to integrate as many employment and training programs as possible but to include only those optional programs that make sense in the local environment. As defined by the state, the requirement for integration of services is met if at least one physical location in each local system provides customers with information on all participating programs and provides program access through intake, assessment, and preliminary eligibility assessment. The actual direct delivery of services—such as in-depth assessment, testing, counseling, training, job search assistance, etc.—does not need to be provided at the One-Stop site. However, in rating local area applications, the state will give priority to sites that provide maximum direct service delivery at the One-Stop center.

Ohio is in the process of developing tools that localities can use in integrating services. Various integration tools are in different stages of planning and implementation.

- *A model orientation workshop* is being developed as part of Ohio's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services. This model workshop may also be used to serve a broader One-Stop population.
- *A "rolling common intake" plan* is being developed to facilitate easy access to customer information by the various partner programs. Once in place, each customer will have to provide information only once in order to activate his/her application.
- *A customer "record of service"* will be integrated into a tracking system that will provide information on services provided as well as outcomes achieved. This system will follow the client through his/her various interactions with the employment and training system and will also be used for performance measurement.
- The state also encourages local areas to *cross-train staff to carry out broader cross-program functions*, in order to provide seamless services and facilitate the "no wrong door" approach. State efforts to support staff training are described in a later section.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

Final performance guidelines and goals were left purposely vague in Ohio's One-Stop implementation proposal to DOL, with the intent that a performance plan would

be developed in the first year. As part of the performance plan, state One-Stop partners would study the issues and make recommendations to the GHRIC.

Once the state One-Stop implementation grant was received, a statewide Work Team was assigned to deal with the issues of program performance. Concerns included how to develop a performance measurement approach that will build on existing efforts, recognize local design variants, and adequately measure services to all customers of the One-Stop system. It was decided that in order to measure the success of the local One-Stop systems in a fair and equitable manner, interagency monitoring teams would conduct individualized on-site evaluations of the progress of each One-Stop site.

The Program Performance Work Team also undertook to recommend performance measures and methods for use across all local One-Stop systems. The Team identified three important areas that needed attention in the development of a system to measure One-Stop performance:

- *Customer service satisfaction* measures and the development of methodologies to assess customer and service satisfaction;
- *Measures of customer outcomes and performance* and reporting methods to support these measures;
- *Overall assessments of local system operation* to be performed by cross-program monitoring teams, along with assessment tools to be used by assessment teams for use by the teams and a method for collecting and organizing relevant information and providing it to the GHRIC One-Stop Committee.

As a result of its work in these areas, the statewide Program Performance Work Team recommended that the GHRIC One-Stop Committee adopt performance measures for each of the primary customers—employers and job seekers—centered around five goal areas. Exhibit 1 summarizes the recommended measures. The GHRIC approved these recommendations on an interim basis. They will also be reviewed by the legislature to determine whether they provide the information the legislature may wish to compile on the One-Stops.

During the second year of its One-Stop Implementation Grant, Ohio plans to establish the actual performance standards and adjustment processes, if any, and identify the consequences for sub-standard performance. The results of the performance measurement system will be published annually for each local one-stop

Exhibit 1
Recommended One-Stop Performance Measures for
Job Seekers and Employers

Goal Areas	Employer Measures	Job Seeker Measures
Customer Satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five dimensions of service: awareness, convenience, service features, quality, and respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five dimensions of service: awareness, convenience, service features, quality, and respect
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of job orders filled compared to job orders listed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment 13 weeks after program and employment and wages/earnings and benefits 1 year after program
Tracked Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity of jobs listed and job applicants • Of all new hires, percent listed/filled by One-Stop (market share) • Diversity of size of employers using system • Number of employers using system as a percent of market (by industry/region) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service equity: economic status, educational status, age, race, gender • Number of customers as a percentage of the population (market share)
Value Added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of customers that achieved one or more skill enhancements (the enhancement should provide skills or credentials needed to achieve long-term employment) 	
Cost-Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in UI Tax Rate (tracked information) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Return on investment: total costs invested compared to the return on investment in terms of reductions in welfare benefits, time on welfare, UI payments, time on UI, and increases in earnings and tax revenues

system as well as for the state as a whole. The state will award “performance ratings” to each One-Stop system based on its achievements.

Ohio’s performance management system is designed to be implemented in two phases, *basic and enhanced*. During the *basic* phase, local sites will use information currently available and continue to meet current reporting and performance requirements. In addition, the state is encouraging local sites to use locally-designed tools—like comment cards, focus groups and telephone surveys—to measure customer satisfaction. A new measure of integration of services called “services received” is also being created. This measure will count individuals who are tracked as moving into another program and who actually receive services from that program.

In preparation for the *enhanced* phase, the state will develop new procedures for tracking individuals and services across different programs through the use of shared, automated case management tools. During the *enhanced* phase, an integrated individual service plan will become the yardstick by which One-Stop successes will be measured. During this phase, more systematic and in-depth customer satisfaction assessments will be conducted. Assessments of customer satisfaction will be conducted semi-annually for each One-Stop area and performance levels will be indexed against state performance.

Having developed the necessary basic data elements for the recommended measures, the Program Performance Work Team is now working with the information technology division on developing the information systems and data management infrastructure to implement the planned system. In addition to obtaining feedback on possible information system designs from the local One-Stop “lead” staff, the Work Team will also be dealing with such long-range issues as who will collect the data and where it will be stored. Other challenges Ohio faces in regard to performance measurement include: (1) how performance will be measured for the self-service system (e.g., kiosks in libraries and malls); (2) how to resolve potential cross-program conflicts in the definitions of outcome and process measures, both for DOL-funded programs as well as for programs funded by different federal agencies; and (3) how to integrate information that is currently stored using dramatically different information

systems maintained by the various education and training agencies participating in the One-Stop system.⁴

Program Performance Work Team participants interviewed for this study expressed concern about the lack of consistency between the measures proposed for evaluating the One-Stop system and the measures currently used to assess the different categorical programs. In order to conduct useful evaluations of One-Stop, they said, common definitions and common goals are needed throughout the entire system. Respondents are also concerned that decisions being made at the state and federal levels concerning welfare reform will have an important impact on what it will be important to measure and how the data will be collected. Despite the frustrations of dissimilar reporting measures and changing contexts, however, respondents expressed assurance that the customer satisfaction and other performance measures they have identified provide a solid foundation for measuring One-Stop success at both the local and state levels.

Communication and Coordination

The complexity of achieving the needed communication, collaboration, and cooperation among so many different agencies and counties has proven to be a massive task for Ohio. Information sharing is a key part of the system developed by Ohio to support such a large and complicated undertaking.

Ohio has designed its One-Stop system so that cross-agency communication among state-level partners takes place in the normal course of system planning and implementation efforts. Agency partners communicate through their representatives on the various Work Teams, in their reports and recommendations to the GHRIC One-Stop Committee and in their One-Stop Work Team meetings. In addition, information-sharing agreements have been developed at the state and local level to enable One-Stop partners improve the delivery of services to One-Stop customers. At the state level, the information-sharing agreement includes the major education and training agency partners: the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services and the Departments of Education, Aging, and Development. This agreement will be used as a model for the development of more specific local information-sharing agreements.

⁴ For example, the state Department of Education does not identify customers using social security numbers, and the community college system does not maintain a statewide database.

The State Project Management Team and Project Manager also play major roles in facilitating communication and coordination among partners at the state level and between the state and the local One-Stops. The Project Management Team ensures that the members of the GHRIC One-Stop Committee and the interagency Work Teams that oversee local One-Stop implementation and performance have sufficient information to perform their oversight functions. The Project Management Team also collects and disseminates summaries of interagency Work Team meetings, facilitates communication among state and local One-Stop actors and disseminates information about best practices. Local workgroups are required to summarize their activities in a quarterly report to the State One-Stop Project Manager, who disseminates this information to the members of the various local and state workgroups.

The Management Team also develops and disseminates a monthly newsletter—“The One-Stop Link”—which provides information on the status of and new developments in the local One-Stop systems. Summaries of the accomplishments of the One-Stop Work Teams are provided in the newsletter. The state also facilitates periodic “Partners Helping Partners” conferences that promote communication and exchange of best practices among the staff of local One-Stop systems. Through highlighted presentations by state Work Team members, these conferences also promote communication between state and local staff.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

A number of funding issues are influencing the progress and pace of Ohio’s transition to a statewide One-Stop system. Ohio initially requested just over \$9 million in DOL One-Stop implementation grant funds for each of three years, for a total federal investment of \$26.4 million. These funds, in combination with its own planned investment of \$28 million—largely to develop information systems and renovate existing Customer Service Centers—were expected to enable Ohio to complete its One-Stop system development within the three-year implementation grant period. The original plan called for the establishment of thirty local One-Stop systems, which would have covered the state by generally paralleling the existing SDA configuration. Seven pilot sites were planned for the first year, then eleven or twelve sites were to be established in each of the final two years of the implementation grant.

However, with a first-year DOL grant award of only \$6.7 million and an initial lack of information about the amount of federal funding that would be available for the second and third years of the implementation grant, Ohio was forced to revamp its plan

and schedule for the development of local One-Stop systems. Among the changes made were a reduction or delay in some of the planned state and local support mechanisms, a reduction in the planned state project staff from four to three positions, and an uncertainty about how many second and third year sites would be approved for implementation funding.

Ohio has made it clear that funding reductions have not altered its basic approach to One-Stop planning. The state has maintained its planned allocation level of \$440,000 for each of the seven first-year pilot sites, for a total of \$2.4 million. The revised first-year budget allocates grant funds to the following activities:

- *Local Site Funding.* Seven sites have been funded at an average level of \$440,000 per site for the first year. Implementation grant funds must be used as “seed” money at the local level. Funded activities may include technical assistance and capacity building efforts. Although funding may be carried forward into the second year for one-time purchases, funding for staff cannot be carried forward.
- *Labor Market Information.* Originally, Ohio had planned to spend about \$2 million for upgrading labor market information during the 3-year funding period. Under the revised budget, this was reduced to just under \$400,000 for the first year and approximately \$240,000 for the second year. Second year projects will include developing labor market information that can be accessed via the Internet and supporting the Professional Development Institute, which will teach local One-Stop staff how to use labor market information. Because of the DOL funding reductions, some planned activities will be dropped, delayed, or funded from other resources.
- *Ohio Job Net Equipment for One-Stop Sites.* Approximately \$1.2 million of the DOL grant funds will be used to purchase Job Net workstations, train OBES field staff in the use of Job Net equipment, and develop Job Net kiosks.
- *Other State Systems.* During the first implementation year, planned expenditures for Ohio Job Net imaging systems were shifted to Veterans funds. This included data technician staff, a Network Administrator and the power supply. Some of these activities are expected to be funded from the second year of the Implementation Grant.
- *Integrated Customer Information System.* Using approximately \$800,000 in first year implementation grant funds, Ohio will undertake a major project to develop a “record of service” system. Under this system, three separate management information systems (for UI, JTPA and the Job Net) will be developed on a front-end database system that

has software that allows staff to enter, access, and update client data when additional services are provided. Development of this system will reduce duplicate data entry and facilitate information sharing across programs.

- *Other Technology-Based Support.* First year funds totaling approximately \$350,000 will be used for two projects: (1) to fund staff support for the expansion of the state communications network, including network management functions; and (2) to support measurement, evaluation, and research activities (e.g., the development of methods to measure customer satisfaction).

Implementation grant funding for Ohio's second year totaled \$4.1 million, about half of what was requested. Of that amount, about \$2.68 million was planned to fund seven new local One-Stop systems, to be selected on the basis of competitive proposals. Local sites will also receive some additional funds for information systems equipment and capacity building and technical assistance activities. Ohio will wait until the third-year funding level is announced to decide how many additional sites will be established with DOL grant funds for the third and final year.

To make up for some of the funding shortfalls, Ohio has leveraged supplementary funding from other programs. Some examples of contributions from other funding streams include the following: 1) Job Net workstations for staff were purchased using \$222,000 of Worker Profiling funds; 2) Job Net kiosk purchases were supplemented with current JTPA EDWAA Governor's Reserve funds; 3) \$1.4 million from the ES Automation grant was used for Job Net kiosk equipment; and 4) funding for the Job Net imaging system was supplemented with funds from the Veterans Program. Moreover, the GHRIC One-Stop Standing Committee is considering a range of strategies to secure additional funding to support One-Stop system development, including the pursuit of general revenue funds and the utilization of funds contributed by partner programs. Another strategy being considered is to request that the five major agency partners each contribute one staff person to augment the Project Management team.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

Developing a viable capacity building mechanism for Ohio's local One-Stop systems is a daunting challenge because of the range and variety of partners participating in the local systems. Another complicating factor is that staff are located

in a number of different physical locations that are linked electronically, rather than sharing the same facility. Each of the first seven sites currently in operation have large and growing numbers of agency partners; one system already has more than 60 partners. Developing the capacities for all partners and staff within each participating organization to perform at their optimum level is a task that will span a number of years. Each year, Ohio plans to focus its state-level capacity building efforts on the localities that receive implementation awards that year.

The Human Resources Work Team assigned to address staff development needs associated with One-Stop implementation initially outlined several overarching capacity-building goals:

- *Staff Utilization.* To develop models for how to deploy existing staff to accomplish the work of the One-Stops;
- *Capacity Building.* To explore existing staff expertise and what new skills staff need to accomplish the new tasks that they will need to do in the One-Stop setting;
- *Resources.* To utilize available capacity-building resources for the first year;
- *Labor Issues.* To determine how staff job descriptions and pay scales should change as One-Stop staff modify their roles and responsibilities.

However, capacity building, as one state respondent expressed it, “is like nailing gelatin to the wall.” The Human Resources Work Team continues to confront a number of issues as it attempts to develop a framework for capacity building for the first year and beyond. As in other areas of One-Stop system development, the challenge for the state is to provide a general approach to capacity building, while at the same time leaving enough flexibility to accommodate variations in local capacity building activities across local sites.

Some first-year capacity building and training activities have been provided to state-level One-Stop entities. For example, members of the GHRIC One-Stop Committee and the cross-program monitoring teams have received training on the requirements of the One-Stop system.

Training for staff in the local sites that received first-year implementation funding has been hampered by a lack of capacity building funds in the first year project budget. Furthermore, after analyzing the training needed to enable One-Stop staff to work effectively as members of inter-agency teams, the State Human Resources Work Team

determined that they needed to design a long-term capacity building and technical assistance approach. Thus, during the first year of the implementation grant, staff used already existing training resources to support the first-year pilot sites and focused on developing a long-term training and capacity building approach that can be implemented over an extended period to support the One-Stop operations.

To respond to the immediate needs of the local pilot sites, the Human Resources Work Team undertook to provide orientation and discussion sessions for members of local governance boards. Using the model developed in Barry Johnson's book, *Polarity Management: Identifying and Managing Unsolvable Problems*, the Work Team has attempted to work with governance groups to identify issues, barriers, and concerns at the local level as well as those that concern the relationship between the local and state level (e.g., the roles of each partner, common terms, goals for a transformed employment and training system). The Work Team facilitator indicated that training provided to members of local governing boards has assisted board members in better understanding the One-Stop concept. Training has also enabled local board members to support local agency partners in the development of their own One-Stop designs within the guidelines set by the state. Board members have also been provided with materials developed by the State of Ohio Office of Quality for the purpose of improving group interaction, communication skills, and the ability to work toward a common goal. Training topics have included Problem-Solving, Communications Skills, Reaching Consensus, and Strategic Planning.

To identify the additional capacity-building needs of local One-Stop system partners, focus groups comprised of local One-Stop stakeholders convened to discuss what types of training are needed at the local level and to identify potential training vendors. In response to identified problems, members of the State Project Management Team have disseminated information on best practices, provided individualized technical assistance to local areas on a site-by-site basis, and promoted information sharing among peers by sponsoring "Partners Helping Partners" conferences (described above under Communication and Coordination).

In addition, local One-Stop staff have received training and technical assistance from a variety of state entities. Front-line staff have received training to enable them to function as "customer service representatives." Cross-program training has made it possible for partners to provide customers with better information about and referral to their sister partners within their local One-Stop system. Team- and quality-based

training, such as Q-Step and Simply Better are also considered important training tools for One-Stop partners at both the state and local levels.

To develop the long-term training plan, the Work Team is in the process of identifying more specifically what training needs to take place, what should be the training responsibilities of the local sites and how training should be delivered (i.e., by the state, by local vendors or state-supported private vendors). One important source of training and technical assistance that has been identified and is already in operation is a Professional Development Institute that is operated by OBES' Labor Market Information Division. The Institute will train One-Stop staff on how to use labor market information, based on case study examples.

Improvements in Labor Market Information and Related Technology-Based Products

The Labor Market Information Division of the OBES is the principal agency responsible for the production, analysis, and dissemination of labor market information for Ohio. The LMI division is supported by the Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (OICC), comprised of some of the same partners involved in the Ohio One-Stop Workgroup. OICC has been central to the integration of the labor market and career information system and was instrumental in the development in 1987 of an automated labor market information system.

The two major products that support the delivery of automated labor market information to Ohio job seekers and employers are the Ohio Career Information System and the Ohio Labor Market Information (LMI) System. A recently added product is the Economic Development and Employment Planning Information System. Due to high utilization of these products by a range of user groups, OBES and its LMI Division are strongly committed to the continued development of an automated delivery system for labor market information. However, these systems have been operating on aging technology platforms that make it difficult to offer user-friendly access to employer and job seeker customers. System improvements currently underway include the upgrading of these systems to take advantage of new information-sharing and information-management technologies. Planned changes will increase the ability of the automated system to provide a user-friendly interface for direct use by customers as well as support "system-wide integration" by making the automated systems available to staff and customers in a large number of local service sites. However, while Ohio has a

strong commitment to upgrading its automated information systems, current fiscal resources limit how quickly it can transition to the new technology environment.

Although Ohio currently lists all its job openings on America's Job Bank, there is still work to be done, LMI leadership indicates, to provide better access for employers interested in posting job openings. Ohio has embarked on a number of substantial enhancements to its present Job Net system to support the implementation of the One-Stop concept. Projects currently underway have projected completion dates ranging from six months to three years; projects are in varying stages of development, pilot testing, or implementation.

Selected projects funded with the One-Stop Implementation Grant include: (1) the development of improved technology platforms (e.g., local area networks and Internet access) to support the delivery of automated career and labor market information to One-Stop customers via Ohio's Job Net Information System⁵; (2) the development of a "micro-occupational information system" to provide integrated information to employers, individuals, and service providers on current and projected labor market demands and related training resources by occupation; (3) the development of an electronic bulletin board to share state labor market data banks and local community service directories with dial-up users; (4) an analysis of the specific skills demanded and supplied in different labor markets to improve the labor exchange process; and (5) the development of an electronic customer satisfaction survey for Job Net users to support the measurement of system outcomes.

Other planned enhancements to the technology-based products available to One-Stop customers include: (1) the development of an imaging component for storage and management of job seeker work histories, (2) utilizing America's Talent Bank for storage of resumes (which will provide immediate referrals of qualified job candidates by enabling employers and applicants to exchange information directly), and (3) a resume preparation system available at the one-stop site. Additional technology-based products and services planned for One-Stop systems include the use of touch screen kiosks to obtain customer satisfaction information, incorporating self-assessment tools

⁵ Since August 1996, Ohio Job Net has been available on the Internet. All OBES Customer Service Centers and other ES service sites already have the capacity to access the Internet. One of the second-year Implementation Grant projects is to make Internet access available from all Ohio One-Stop Centers.

into automated systems, and adding an on-line community services directory. Finally, the Ohio Occupational Information Coordinating Committee will develop two self-help publications designed to provide One-Stop customers with comprehensive labor market information. These products will be disseminated as hard copy and in electronic form on the Job Net.

Management Information Systems

Due to the complexity of integrating information systems, Ohio will provide a statewide system for use at the local level. This strategy will also reduce development costs and will promote statewide consistency of core services and performance measurements. At the same time, it will allow the use of both “off-the-shelf” and locally-developed software.

Ohio has developed a One-Stop information strategy that builds on the current overall information system approach. The state’s newest system, *Ohio Job Net*, will support the critical One-Stop direct service function of job development and job placement. It is also the platform on which a new integrated management information system will be built to support the delivery of integrated One-Stop services. The One-Stop system will use an *integrated customer information* approach to take advantage of the substantial investments already made in automated MIS systems for specific employment and training programs. The One-Stop system building challenge will be to provide One-Stop staff and customers seamless access to the information and functions they need from these existing automated systems.

Information access and sharing among existing systems will be facilitated by the state’s adoption of open system standards for the statewide communications network. These standards require that all new computer systems and upgrades follow the Government Open Systems Interconnection Profile. The barrier of confidentiality in sharing information among service providers has already been eliminated for OBES programs (e.g., ES, UI, JTPA, and Veterans Employment Services). Local confidentiality agreements will be executed among the partners in each local One-Stop, system, permitting staff to access all necessary data from any of the databases and systems maintained by the partner agencies overseen by OBES. Additional agreements will be required in local sites where Human Services Department programs will be included; mechanisms to deal with these issues are currently in the discussion stage at the local and state levels.

Ohio's overall information system plan for One-Stops, which covers the delivery of automated information services to One-Stop customers as well as the management of information for administrative purposes, consists of three major components:

- *Ohio Job Net.* As described previously, this improved state-of-the art labor exchange system will be expanded to provide direct self-service access to all One-Stop individual and employer customers. In addition, it will be used by all One-Stop staff to support the integrated system-wide delivery of job referral and job placement services.
- *Integrated Customer Information.* Program integration and performance measurement will be supported by providing seamless access to and tracking of customer information currently found in three existing information systems: Ohio Job Net, the JTPA system, and the UI Benefits system. Integration will also be supported by an automated referral system linking Ohio Job Net and JTPA and featuring an "expert front-end" that simplifies the use of the UI system for initial claims taking by cross-trained staff from other programs.
- *Labor Market Information.* Ohio's existing automated LMI system will be enhanced and access expanded for both staff and customer use.

During the first year of the One-Stop Implementation Grant, electronic linkages among partner agencies were not yet in place. Although OBES offices could share information over the Ohio Job net system, other partners in local One-Stop systems could not yet exchange information.

Marketing

The Marketing Communications Work Team was charged with the task of exploring such issues as defining the state's role in providing marketing assistance to local One-Stop systems and determining what marketing efforts should be undertaken at the state level. The Marketing Work Team defined its role as providing unifying marketing themes and marketing resources for the local systems to use. In keeping with this role, the Work Team has developed a state One-Stop logo and a brochure. The state logo is used on the Job Net kiosks, along with a local logo where one has been developed.

The Work Team plans to provide the local One-Stops with tools to develop their own marketing strategies and to work with the local marketing workgroups when they request assistance. Under consideration is the development of an informational video that could be modified and used at the local level as well. A state-wide issue is the question of how much to market the One-Stop systems to employers before the One-

Stop systems are fully formed. Another factor affecting One-Stop marketing strategy with respect to employer customers is the generally low unemployment rate, which makes it difficult for the One-Stop system to meet employer demands for qualified job applicants.

An analysis of the current One-Stop context has led to preliminary state marketing decisions to stress general One-Stop services rather than specific programs, and to provide information on the transition to the new One-Stop system and its positive impact on improving customer access to services. To support local marketing efforts, the Marketing Work Team has developed some general themes which it suggests should be incorporated in local market efforts directed to customers and service providers. In addition it has developed a list of suggested activities to be executed at the state and local level in the areas of public relations and advertising.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

Ohio's initial three-year implementation plan included several key initiatives: it anticipated the establishment of 30 One-Stops, roughly one within each of the 30 SDAs. However, since DOL funding was less than anticipated, Ohio revised its implementation plan. Seven sites received implementation funding the first year, to be used as pilot sites to test various innovations. Seven additional sites are scheduled to receive implementation funding the second year. The number of additional sites to receive implementation grant support during the third year will depend upon the level of DOL funding received. As a part of its "systems" planning, however, OBES will continue with its development of Customer Service Centers which integrate ES and UI services and expand partner co-location and service integration. The existence of 19 Customer Service Centers in a number of locations throughout the state reduces the pressure on the state to move more quickly in One-Stop system development than it feels comfortable in doing.

Labor market information and management information systems enhancements, some of which require testing and implementation over a longer period of time, have been spread out over the three-year period. The Job Net information system development, which includes design work and programming, is scheduled for completion by the end of 1997. Providing wider access to Job Net and training staff from multiple agencies to use the Job Net system will, of course, extend into the third year, since some of the One-Stops sites will not be established until then. Other system

development efforts, such as the resume preparation system, are scheduled to be completed during the first year.

ASSESSMENTS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Several key themes have so far influenced the shape of Ohio's One-Stop efforts. First, Ohio is developing a *system* of electronically-linked service sites that build on existing resources, rather than implementing new stand-alone One-Stop career centers. The economic and cultural diversity of the state, reduced funding at the state and DOL level, and the need to cover all areas in the state with adequate employment, training, and human service-based systems has influenced Ohio to develop strategies that link existing service components into an integrated One-Stop system that will enable Ohio's workforce and businesses to remain competitive in the global marketplace.

Second, Ohio's "non-cookie cutter" approach has given the local systems great latitude in shaping their service delivery options to serve local needs. The decision-making and governance process by which the system is being designed is also uniquely Ohio's. Work Teams at the state level and their counterparts at the local level are composed of mandated and encouraged agency partners as well as business, labor, and other community stakeholders. The Work Teams' preliminary research, guiding principles, and recommended courses of action are reviewed and approved by the respective governing entities at the local and state level. While this method has reduced "turfism" and prevented control of the One-Stop system by any single agency at the state or local level, the resulting decision-making process can sometimes be lengthy, resulting in valuable time lost. Moreover, while it is important that key agency and department representatives at high levels are involved in the process, some have complained that they and their key staff members are spending inordinate amounts of time on One-Stop issues, when they should be devoting more time to their primary duties.

Ohio's history of agency and stakeholder collaboration at the local level, however, has helped local partners move to a collaborative approach that involves a wide range of employment, training, and human service partners. The range of education and training agencies involved in key planning committees and groups such as Common Good Teams, Vocational Education Full Service Centers, and the School-to-Work initiative ensure wide-spread agency participation in the One-Stop planning process. Ohio, however, as is the case with many other states, will need to find a way to integrate more fully those agencies responsible for welfare-to-work and school-to-

work initiatives. These agencies have historically been separate from the employment and training delivery system but are essential partners in developing community strategies to ensure that individuals receive the supports they need to move into the labor market.

Finally, the issue of inadequate funding will continue to influence the pace of Ohio's transition to the One-Stop system. While Ohio has attempted to be creative in its use of DOL funding streams, it is also considering other methods to get the job done. Admitting that Ohio may need a fourth implementation year to achieve statewide implementation of the One-Stop system may ultimately be preferable to rushing to achieve nominal statewide implementation without adequately preparing the infrastructure and support systems needed to support local One-Stop operations.

APPENDIX R

WOOD COUNTY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTER BOWLING GREEN, OHIO One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During August, 1996

**WOOD COUNTY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTER
BOWLING GREEN, OHIO
One-Stop Profile**

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	3
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION	9
DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	10
Evolution and General Description of Local Design.....	10
Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals	12
Physical Facilities	16
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES.....	17
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS	19
Staffing Arrangements.....	19
Capacity Building	20
Management Information Systems (MIS).....	21
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements.....	23
Marketing	24
DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS	26
Services for Individual Customers.....	26
Services for Employer Customers	29
CUSTOMER RESPONSE.....	31
Individuals.....	31
Employers	32
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	33

WOOD COUNTY EMPLOYMENT RESOURCE CENTER BOWLING GREEN, OHIO

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Ohio has allowed local areas to define their own One-Stop system boundaries and develop their own One-Stop governance structures. In northwestern Ohio, workforce development and human service agencies in Wood and Lucas Counties have formed a two-county “One-Stop System.” These two counties also constitute a two-county JTPA service delivery area. The two counties combined have a labor force of just over 300,000. Lucas County includes Toledo, a large ethnically diverse urban center, and its more affluent suburban environs. Wood County, with an area of about 620 square miles, is predominantly rural. Most Wood County residents live in small villages and towns surrounded by wheat and soybean fields. Bowling Green, the county seat, is also the largest town in Wood County with a population of just over 28,000 people.

At the time of the site visit, two service sites within the local One-Stop system had been designated by the state as One-Stop career centers and had received implementation grant funds to support their transformation efforts. These included the Lucas County One-Stop Employment Resource Center—housed in the Toledo Employment Service Office—and the Wood County Employment Resource Center—housed in the Wood County Justice Center, five miles from Bowling Green. Since the time of the site visit, an Ohio Bureau of Employment Services’ Customer Service Center¹ located near the Toledo airport—about fifteen miles from the center of Toledo—has also received official designation from the state as a One-Stop career center. Additional service sites operated by the various employment, training, and human service agencies and organizations participating in the local One-Stop initiative

¹ Customer Service Centers are sites sponsored by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) for the integration of ES and UI staffing and services. Additional workforce development agencies are often invited to co-locate at Customer Service Centers. Local areas are required by the state to involve OBES Customer Service Centers in local One-Stop systems. Individual Customer Service Centers may also request official designation as One-Stop centers, if they meet the qualifications.

are also considered part of the local One-Stop system. The Wood County Employment Resource Center is the primary focus of this profile.

Several key factors have influenced the development of the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop system. These include: (1) a shift in the local economic base from basic manufacturing to the service and information sectors; (2) the fact that older experienced workers have experienced a disproportionate share of the impacts of these economic dislocations; and (3) difficulties making services accessible to residents of the two-county area, as a result of limited public transportation. In combination, these factors have caused One-Stop agency partners in Lucas and Wood counties to attempt to make significant improvements in how services are provided to unemployed and welfare-dependent residents within the emerging One-Stop Center System.

- *A shift in the local economic base from basic manufacturing to the service and information sectors.* Once the hub of auto and auto supply manufacturing industries, some of the larger manufacturing employers in Toledo and the surrounding area are being replaced by small firms that employ 50 to 100 persons. Although overall unemployment rates are currently low, the two counties have also been affected by layoffs and closures at aerospace and defense manufacturing facilities. Increased automation, intended to increase competitiveness at the firm level, has also contributed to corporate downsizing and layoffs. Although manufacturing concerns still employ about 11,000 workers locally, the major growth industries are the production of services as well as local and state government. Wood County's largest employer is Bowling Green State University. To adjust to these structural shifts, residents need good information about labor market trends, occupational choices, and education, training, and employment opportunities. Despite the sizable pool of dislocated workers, employers say they need assistance finding qualified job applicants in the tight labor market.
- *Older experienced workers have experienced a disproportionate impact of these economic dislocations.* Individuals dislocated as a result of the decline of the manufacturing sector are not as likely to be hired into emerging sectors due to age discrimination, limited education, and other factors. They tend to be unemployed longer than those dislocated from other industries; most are in their mid-forties, they often lack a high school education and the skills which could qualify them for employment in the information and service industries. The employment practices of firms in new and emerging firms also leads to limited opportunities for the reemployment of dislocated workers. Firms are working existing employees longer hours and attempting to increase productivity and stabilize their existing workforces rather than hiring

new workers. As a result of these trends, a wide variety of local residents, from skilled to unskilled workers, need assistance obtaining financial, social, and employment services.

- *Difficulties making services accessible to residents of the two-county area.* The centralized physical location of employment, training and social services providers has made it difficult for individuals to access to the services that could make them employable. An aging and inadequate transportation system throughout the two-county area contributes to the problem of accessing services. In Wood County, for example, which has no public transportation system, almost 20% of the population must use transportation alternatives to a private car. In the absence of mass transit, local One-Stop partners plan to make services more accessible to local residents by maintaining multiple service sites dispersed throughout the service area—connected through electronic linkages and a “no wrong door” policy.

Lucas and Wood County’s One-Stop vision was strongly influenced by its assessment of the mismatch between labor market needs and residents’ skills as well as by the direct feedback from customers on service gaps in an SDA-wide survey conducted in 1994. The local vision is very similar to the state’s: the One-Stop system must be customer-driven, effectively address the needs of the future workforce and the universal customer (defined as new labor market entrants, incumbent, and transitional workers), and serve the employment and training needs of the counties’ employers. Local One-Stop planners say that services must be comprehensive, integrated, holistic, timely, simple and of high quality, and offered by staff who are well-trained, professional, courteous and responsive. The director of the Toledo Area PIC also indicated that the vision would evolve as the system expanded and its goals were further clarified. This respondent also emphasized that expanded technological linkages will allow *all* agencies and organizations to have equal access to the One-Stop system, whether or not they are participating partners.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Local Level Organization and Governance. Early on, the state of Ohio emphasized that potential applicants for local One-Stop System implementation grants should develop their local designs based on the requirements of the local labor market and the perceived needs of their varied local partners. State policymakers emphasized that “flexibility” and “local design” were keys to developing a workable local system. Although Ohio’s long-term goal is to establish thirty local One-Stop systems, each with

at least one qualifying One-Stop center, the establishment of system boundaries was also left to the discretion of local grant applicants. Wood and Lucas Counties elected to apply for One-Stop implementation grants as a single One-Stop System, since they are contiguous counties, part of the same JTPA service delivery area (SDA), and each County had already developed functioning relationships with a wide range of agency partners.

The local governance system for the Lucas/Wood County One-Stop system generally mirrors Ohio's state-level One-Stop decision-making structure. A Lucas/Wood County Governance Council oversees system development and has created formal Workgroups to develop designated aspects of the local One-Stop system. Local partners decided to create a new governmental structure rather than use an existing policy board—such as the local Private Industry Council—to ensure that each partner has an equal voice in discussing and making decisions on those issues which affect all partners.

The local Governance Council is comprised of all the participating partners that have a full-time or part-time on-site presence at one of the local One-Stop Employment Resource Centers (ERCs). Additional members include representatives from stakeholder entities such as the County Commissioners, employer and economic development groups, the union representing some state employees, and managers of **the** local Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) offices. Local system partners are expected to participate fully in the implementation and continuing improvement of the operations, administration, monitoring, and evaluation of the One-Stop centers. They are also expected to help attain the benchmarks and goals which the state establishes for local One-Stop systems.

The Governance Council generally attends to the provision of universal or core One-Stop services to the “Universal Customer.” According to Ohio's design, the responsibilities of local governance bodies include (1) ensuring that its One-Stop system is implemented in accordance with the local and state agreements, (2) ensuring that performance standards are achieved for specific outcomes, (3) overseeing the management of each One-Stop center; (4) assisting in the development and approval of local agreements among all partners, and (5) providing local budget oversight. The Governance Council's decisions are made by consensus. Council decisions are usually based upon the recommendations made by Workgroups that develop recommended plans of action on a variety of specific One-Stop implementation issues. The

Governance Council is required to meet bimonthly, disseminate its minutes to all the Workgroups and submit written quarterly reports to the One-Stop Committee of the GHRIC.

The Toledo Area Private Industry Council (PIC) provides key support functions to the local Governance Council. The PIC is the signatory and fiscal agency for the local One-Stop implementation grant. It also provides staffing for the Council, submits reports to the Council's Finance Workgroup and ensures financial accountability for the grant, and is responsible for monitoring One-Stop implementation progress and submitting periodic progress reports on the grant to the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, which is the state agency responsible for administering the local implementation grants.

The Workgroups established by the Council are intended to research and then make recommendations to the Governance Council relative to their stated responsibilities. Each member of the Governance Council must be either a chair or a member of at least one Workgroup. Workgroups currently consist of: Management Information Services, Training and Capacity Building, and Marketing and Finance. Separate Workgroups discuss design and operational issues relevant to the individual Lucas and Wood County ERCs. Part-way through the initial implementation year, several additional Workgroups were disbanded as separate entities and their functions were merged with the functions of other Workgroups or the full Council.

One-Stop Center Managers are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the designated One-Stop Centers and for implementing Workgroup Action Plans approved by the Governance Council. Center Managers are also responsible for implementing training, capacity building, monitoring, and evaluation procedures, as well as providing information on center operations to the Council's Workgroups. The center manager for the Lucas County ERC—called a Facilitator—is a PIC employee. The Wood County ERC is co-managed by senior staff members from the Toledo PIC and the Wood County Department of Human Services.

Half-way through the first year of operations of the local One-Stop system, a half-day retreat was held to give partners an opportunity to discuss their progress and suggest modifications to the local governance system, as well as provide an opportunity to assess the strength of partner agencies' commitment to the One-Stop system. One identified problem was the slowness of the decision-making process. To shorten the

time needed to make and implement One-Stop decisions, the partners attending the retreat agreed to eliminate a separate Administrative Workgroup and merge its membership into the full Governance Council. Under the new system, Workgroups can make recommendations to the full Council and implement their Action Plans as soon as they are approved by the Governance Council.

Many respondents identified “consensus building” and “eliminating turfism” as key implementation challenges facing the local One-Stop system. However, most partners indicated that the One-Stop structure for collaboration, despite its slowness, still is preferable to other governance options. The acting director of the PIC indicated that the decision by the local partners to continue the partnerships for a second year—even though sites receiving first year One-Stop implementation grants will not be eligible to receive continuation funding from the state—is proof that the commitment to the One-Stop System “way of doing things” is still very strong.

Participating Local Agencies. Ohio’s One-Stop guidelines require that local partners must include the agencies responsible for all DOL-funded programs. In addition, agencies responsible for three out of four additional programs (welfare-to-work, vocational education, adult basic education, and public two-year colleges) must be included in order to compete for a DOL One-Stop grant, or to be designated as a One-Stop center. In the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop system, all core partners are required to out-station staff at the designated One-Stop centers at least part-time. Partners also maintain “home sites” at their own facilities. Mandatory and other partners serving customers at both ERCs have been cross-trained. This allows them to assist customers in accessing One-Stop information services, to understand more about the eligibility requirements for their partner agencies, and to make good referrals.

At the Wood County Employment Resource Center, partners have emphasized the importance of referring customers to the appropriate agency or organization. Part-time co-location is viewed as a tool to ensure that appropriate referrals are made as well as an opportunity to provide direct customer services. Representatives of all the mandatory programs are on-site at least once a week—on Wednesdays for a minimum of four hours; on other weekdays they may be contacted for appointments at their home sites. Representatives of additional non-mandatory program partners also visit the One-Stop site, but less frequently. They may also be reached at their home sites for appointments.

Agencies participating in the Wood County Employment Resources Center are described below, along with a brief summary of their program responsibilities and roles within the One-Stop center.

- *Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES)*. OBES is the state's lead agency for the One-Stop initiative. OBES maintains a home site in a central location in Bowling Green. OBES Customer Service Representatives responsible for ES and UI have been cross-trained and are able to assist customers with both programs. On Wednesdays, an OBES Customer Service Representative visits the Wood County ERC where he/she provides on-site registration for Unemployment Insurance, Employment Services, JTPA Title III, and Veterans Employment Services.
- *Green Thumb, the service provider for Senior Community Service Employment Program, Title V, Older Americans Act*. During the first year of One-Stop implementation in Lucas and Wood County, Green Thumb assigned a staff person on-site at the Wood County ERC only on Wednesdays. However, during the second year of One-Stop operations, Green Thumb is planning to pay for a receptionist who will be present at the ERC three days a week. On-site Green Thumb staff provide customers with information about their services and programs, conduct eligibility determinations and make referrals to other services.

The JOBS Program of the Wood County Department of Human Services (DHS). This county agency operates financial assistance programs and welfare-to-work programs for county residents. The home site for this agency is also in the Wood County Justice Center and many of its clients are referred to the Employment Resource Center to attend a mandatory Job Club offered at the ERC. A JOBS program staff member assigned full-time to the ERC acts as the center co-manager. JOBS staff provide on-site services and referrals to center customers each weekday. On-site services include the review of applications and determination of eligibility for DHS services, including financial assistance and referrals to training, Job Club, a GED class (also available to the general public), and Community Work Experience.

- *Toledo Area PIC*. The PIC is responsible for the delivery of JTPA services. The PIC has assigned a full-time staff member to the Wood County ERC. This individual acts as the other center co-manager. In addition, he provides information about JTPA services, eligibility information, enrollment, and referral to JTPA-funded training. The PIC staff also conducts follow-up and tracks activities provided to One-Stop customers.

- *Penta County Vocational School.* Penta provides an on-site Adult Basic Education/GED class. On-site staff also provide orientation, eligibility determination, and program registration for off-site training offered by the school. At its home site, Penta staff also provide career guidance, counseling, job seeking skills and career development activities.
- *Owens Community College.* Ohio's two year community and technical colleges fall under the jurisdiction of the Ohio Board of Regents. Initially, Owens Community College assigned a staff to provide on-site orientation, eligibility screening, and registration for community college classes. However, midway through the first year of implementation, Owens withdrew its staff representative from on-site participation since not enough One-Stop customers were being referred to community college services.

Non-mandatory partners who participate in the Wood County ERC program are not, on site each week as a general rule; however, they may always be contacted at their home sites. They include the following:

- *Wood County Work Industry.* Located adjacent to the Wood County Justice Center, this agency administers a voluntary work experience program for offenders. Employers may purchase goods and services from the program.
- *Wood County Alcohol, Drug Abuse, Mental Health Services Board.* Located in the Justice Center, this agency provides referral and assistance to individuals who qualify for its services.
- *Wood County Veterans Assistance Center.* Funded through a small local county tax, services provided by this program include information on employment and training programs and some financial assistance.
- *The Rehabilitation Services Commission* administers the vocational rehabilitation services program targeted to individuals with substantial physical or mental disabilities.
- *YW Child Care Connections.* Representatives of this agency assess local child care facilities and assist working parents to find suitable child care. Staff from this program may be contacted at their home site.
- *First Call for Help.* United Way of Greater Toledo provides information on the range of services available to customers throughout the two-county area. They also publish a brochure that lists local various services and programs including legal aid, child care, mental health, employment and training.

A third group of organizations, referred to as "affiliated partners," consist largely of community-based organizations, which do not have an on-site presence, but which

may refer clients to the ERC and also receive referrals. These partners are a part of DHS's extensive case management system network. The DHS center co-manager meets regularly with these organizations and keeps them informed of county-wide One-Stop activities.

In summary, the organization of the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop effort is characterized by a consensus form of governance in which all partners have an opportunity to participate in decision making through the Governance Council as well as in the development of the fundamental One-Stop System structure (as it evolves) through participation in the various Workgroups. A wide range of local mandatory and non-mandatory partners have staff located at the Wood County Employment Resource Center using a variety of arrangements, including full-time co-location of some programs and weekly outstationing of staff from other programs at the One-Stop center.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Communication Within the Local System. The governance structure for the local One-Stop system affords many opportunities for communication among local partners. Below is a list of some of the mechanisms that are used to “get the word out” on what is being recommended and accomplished for the system as a whole, as well as for the Wood County center.

- *Workgroup meetings.* The required bi-monthly meetings of each of the Workgroups provide the opportunity for informal information sharing among system partners.
- *Dissemination of Workgroup minutes.* Minutes of each Workgroup's meetings are shared with the members of the Governance Council and each of the other Workgroups. The PIC is responsible for disseminating the proceedings of Workgroup meetings.
- *Governance Council reports.* Workgroup reports and recommendations are presented to the Governance Council. Council actions in the form of meeting minutes and reports are also disseminated by the PIC staff to the various One-Stop partners.
- *Coordination with other agencies.* The DHS co-manager for the Wood County Employment Resources Center has monthly meetings with a number of “affiliated partners” (described in the previous section) as part of its case management system for welfare recipients. This provides another avenue for communication exchange and information sharing on the activities of One-Stop partners in Wood County.

A retreat attended by all local project partners mid-way through the first year provided an additional opportunity for staff from all agencies to discuss progress, determine gaps, assess partner attitudes and needs, and plan for the next year.

State-Local Communication. Ohio uses several mechanisms to keep locals informed about state level One-Stop plans and activities. First, the state invites representatives from its local One-Stop systems to apply for membership on the state-level One-Stop Work Teams. In a few instances, Lucas/Wood County partners have been able to take advantage of this opportunity. For example, the state Human Resources Work Team includes two members from the Lucas and Wood County Capacity Building Workgroup.

Second, to provide an opportunity for local One-Stop systems to share their experiences with other local areas, the state One-Stop Management team has sponsored several “Partners Helping Partners” conferences designed to share information and best practices among the One-Stop implementation sites. The state plans to sponsor more such information sharing conferences as new sites come on line.

Third, as described in the state profile, the state Management Team also publishes a monthly newsletter, “The One-Stop Link.” The purpose of the newsletter is to inform state and local level partners and stakeholders on progress of the One-Stop systems as well as to report on state level activities and accomplishments. Although local respondents agreed that they are well-informed about local activities, several commented that they would appreciate having a more consistent and reliable mechanism to keep informed about state One-Stop plans and activities.

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of Local Design

Local planning for improved system coordination and integration began in 1994, when representatives from a number of local agencies met to develop applications for Governor’s Reserve Funds for JTPA Special Projects and OBES-sponsored UI Collaboration Grants to establish “one-stop shops” for dislocated workers. The Toledo Area Private Industry Council (PIC) acted as the convener of an interagency team to develop each county’s grant applications. To plan for a comprehensive and coordinated approach to the delivery of services to dislocated workers, staff in each county assessed the skills and requirements of the local work force in relation to the needs of existing employers as well projected new employment opportunities.

Wood County agencies also built on their experiences developing an inter-agency human resources case management network for individuals receiving assistance from the welfare system. As part of this case management system, a variety of human service-related agencies had begun meeting on a monthly basis to foster mutual referrals and overall coordination efforts. In addition, JOBS and Wood County JTPA were co-located in what is now the Wood County Employment Resource Center. In that partnership, they provided “whatever services were needed” to welfare and JTPA - eligible clients. As a result of these collaboration efforts, these two agencies began to develop closer ties with OBES-funded programs, since it became obvious that job search and employment services were an essential element of the services to promote client well-being and self-sufficiency.

In connection with these planning efforts, each county also initiated a thorough assessment of its workforce development system by surveying residents about their workforce development service needs and their experiences accessing unemployment insurance, employment services, education, training and social services. Survey findings revealed that customers perceived a serious problem of duplication of effort and insufficient coordination among different employment-related service systems. Identified service gaps included an absence of career development services, the need for a coordinated effort to address child care and transportation needs, and a need for timely and useful services for employers and incumbent workers.

In response to its grant applications, Lucas County was awarded a UI Collaboration project by OBES for the establishment of a one-stop shop for dislocated workers, located at the Toledo PIC offices. In mid-1995, soon after one-stop implementation efforts for dislocated workers began in Lucas County, the state announced the availability of local implementation grants in connection with its statewide One-Stop Career Center System initiative. Lucas County’s experience developing a one-stop shop for dislocated workers and Wood County’s history of strong partnerships among a large number of human service agencies and the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) as part of its welfare-to-work system provided firm starting places from which each county could pursue further system integration. The Private Industry Council convinced the two counties to merge their interests to apply for a first year Ohio “One-Stop System” grant.

The Lucas and Wood County application was approved for funding as part of the state’s first-year One-Stop implementation phase. The funding period established for

the local implementation grant was November 1995 through October 1996. Ultimately a two-month extension was granted to permit expenditure of the grant funds through December 1996. The specific designs for implementing One-Stop services were similar in both counties. Each county planned to develop a physical facility—referred to in each county as an Employment Resource Center—that would have a small full-time staff, supplemented by additional staff outstationed on a part-time basis from the home sites of each of the participating agencies. In each county, the participating partners in the local One-Stop system planned to achieve full integration of services by implementing a “no wrong door” policy, integrated management information systems, and automated technology-based services for customers, and cross-training direct service staff to provide information about the services provided by all local partners.

At the Wood County Employment Resource Center, five full-time on-site staff were designated to support ongoing Center operations. These included co-managers from the Wood County Department of Human Services and the Toledo Private Industry Council and a receptionist. In addition, each co-manager supervised a staff member from their agency who provided case management and referral for individuals eligible for their respective programs. Additional partners would provide on-site services at least one day a week. Core services—including information, referral, pre-eligibility screening, assessment/testing, information about job openings, and job search assistance—would be provided on site or through referral to partners at their home sites. In addition to the core services required by the state, the local One-Stop plan called for the provision of tracking and follow-up/case management services to all One-Stop customers. The labor market exchange services would be enhanced by a self-service kiosk connected to Ohio’s Job Net automated system, which allows customers to register for UI benefits, review employers’ job orders, and obtain basic labor market and information.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals

Universal Access

Policymakers at the PIC and One-Stop center level have emphasized the importance of serving the “Universal Customer,” a term they use to refer to individuals from three groups: new labor market entrants, incumbent workers, and transitioning workers. To meet the needs of all these customers will require the development over time of a broad range of “workforce development” services to address both employer and individual customer needs.

The workforce development goal for the Lucas and Wood County Employment Resource Centers states that a customer should, "...be able walk into any community agency, One-Stop Site or Family Resource Center and receive referrals to all social service, community, and employment and training services." During the first year of its operation, the local One-Stop system has made significant progress toward that goal. Three sites, including the two Employment Resource Centers funded through Ohio's One-Stop implementation grant and an OBES-sponsored Customer Service Center, have received official state designation as One-Stop centers. The existence of multiple service locations—including not only official One-Stop centers, but also the home sites of participating agencies—will ultimately allow customers to access One-Stop services from a wide variety of geographic locations. This feature of the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop system is important, given the lack of an efficient public transportation system and the existence of a significant number of residents that do not have access to a car.

At the present time, access to the Wood County Employment Resource Center site located five miles from the center of town may be difficult for those who do not have their own means of transportation. A taxi ride from the center of Bowling Green to the ERC costs one dollar. However, when the "no wrong door" vision for the entire system becomes a reality (i.e., when system-wide interconnected computers make intake and referral possible across multiple sites), customers will be able to access services not only through the designated One-Stop centers but also through partner agency home sites, educational institutions and local community based organizations.

The Wood County Employment Resource Center is currently in the process of developing universal services. During the first year of One-Stop operations, customers were offered on-site intake and needs identification, registration for UI benefits and ES services, and information about and referral to a broad range of other employment and training programs, and social and human service agencies. At the present time, intake, referral, tracking, and follow-up are accomplished using paper forms and hard-copy case files. However, planned improvements in automated information systems will make universal access a reality over the next two years. Although the Wood County ERC provided automated labor market and job information to all customers through a single Ohio Job Net kiosk during its first implementation year, planned improvements in computer systems and communication networks will enable the ERCs to offer

customers PC-based access to Ohio Job Net services at multiple workstations during the coming year.

To achieve universal access, the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop system will also need to increase the One-Stops' visibility and promote widespread utilization of One-Stop services. Planned marketing efforts to convince both job seekers and employers of the benefits of using the new system are described in a later section.

Customer Choice

The Ohio One-Stop vision suggests that effective customer choice must begin with providing customers the information they need to make informed choices. A necessary second step is helping customers access whatever assistance or information they require through the local One-Stop service network. During the first year of One-Stop operations, partners in Wood County improved the mechanisms used to provide information to Wood County residents about available services. For example, the Wood County United Way agency published an attractive brochure, "First Call For Help," that provides descriptions on how to access a wide range of community programs, including those provided through the Wood County Employment Resource Center.

Because staff at all the One-Stop centers are now cross-trained, they can conduct effective intake interviews and are able to make more and better referrals to employment, training, and social services. Current technology-based products and systems that provide customers with labor market information include the Ohio Job Net kiosks and Ohio's Home Page on the Internet. The Home Page was established by the state during the summer of the first One-Stop implementation year. This resource serves both individual customers and employers who have Internet access from their own computers or through OBES offices. Internet access from the Wood County Employment Resource Center should be implemented during the second year of One-Stop operations.

Customer choice is also augmented by the wide range of service providers participating in the One-Stop system in Wood County, including not only the Department of Human Services, JTPA, and the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (ES and UI), but also such specialized agencies as the Rehabilitation Services Commission, the Veterans Assistance Center, and Substance Abuse Services. The active involvement of specialized agencies makes it possible for the One-Stop center

staff to refer individuals to agencies that will offer them core services tailored to their special needs.

Integrated Services

“Customers do not care which agency the staff is from, they just want service.” Consistent with this statement made by one of the One-Stop managers, Lucas and Wood County intend to meet the goal of the “delivery of seamless services” using the following strategies:

- (1) *Cross-training of reception and intake staff.* Cross-training improves the capabilities of on-site partners to provide improved assessment, referral, and ongoing tracking and case management services to center customers. This was completed during the first year.
- (2) *Improvements to Ohio’s Job Net.* The development and maintenance of Ohio’s Job Net is the responsibility of the state OBES’s LMI Division. The One-Stop vision is for this automated system to be available to customers from the home sites of all One-Stop partner agencies. By the end of the second year of One-Stop implementation, it is planned that improvements to and broader dissemination of the Ohio Job Net system will allow One-Stop center staff to register customers and enter job orders into Ohio’s Job Net system directly from their personal computers.

Yet to be fully realized are improvements planned for the second and third year of state and local One-Stop implementation that will greatly assist in the integration of services across partners. These enhancements include the implementation of a computerized intake and referral system. Under Ohio’s planned intake, referral, and tracking system, information entered into a single registration form—called a “customer record of service”—will be transferable to any local One-Stop partner agency. Through technological linkages among local partners, all agencies will be able to retrieve basic client information from the common intake form, record referrals to additional partners, track clients, and record outcome and service data to be used for measurement of system performance.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

The state One-Stop Program Performance Work Team has taken primary responsibility for measuring the performance of the local One-Stop systems. During the first implementation year, this Work Team developed a draft performance measurement plan, which was approved by the GHRIC. The Work Team has emphasized that the program performance system must measure services to all

individual and employer customers for the One-Stop system. During the second implementation year, the state plans to establish the actual performance standards and adjustment processes, if any, and identify the consequences for successful or sub-standard performance.

In the interim, state cross-program monitoring teams have evaluated each of the local One-Stop systems that received implementation grants against self-determined goals and benchmarks. The state monitoring teams prepared a monitoring report on each local system with recommendations for local system improvements. These reports were shared with the local area and submitted to the state Governance Council. In addition, the Governance Council required the Toledo Area PIC—as the fiscal agent for the grant—to monitor local One-Stop implementation activities. Quarterly reports must also be submitted to the GHRIC. With approval from the Governance Council, the PIC has supplemented its other monitoring activities with the use of a monitor who assesses the quality of One-Stop services by pretending to be a system customer.

Physical Facilities

The Wood County Employment Resource Center is located in the County Justice Center complex, about five miles from the center of Bowling Green. This pleasant complex—which also houses the Wood County Department of Human Services and many of its social service agency partners—consists of a number of one-story brown wooden buildings interspersed with landscaped areas and sidewalks. The entire complex was built in the early 1980's; the building housing the ERC was built by public assistance recipients as part of a work experience/training program. The ERC shares its building with the Jail Industry program, a program that provides work experience for local adult correctional system inmates. The building was recently refurbished to provide sufficient space to accommodate the needs of the different agencies participating in the One-Stop center.²

The interior of the building appears friendly, rather than intimidating, and is almost cozy. The reception area is located just inside the front door. To the right of the front door is the Ohio Job Net kiosk, close to the counter where the receptionist

² For three years prior to the establishment of the ERC, the Wood County Department of Human Services and JTPA had used this building to provide employment related services for DHS- and JTPA-eligible clients with co-located staff. Services provided included GED and job search classes as well as referral to other training and employment and related programs.

greet customers. To the left of the reception area and down the hall are offices used by the center co-managers and their staff and smaller rooms used by the various on-site partners. Farther down the hall and away from the rest of the building are classrooms used for the GED and Job Club classes. The One-Stop Reference Room, also located close to the classrooms, is available for use during normal business hours.

Informational materials inside the Reference Room include telephone directories from multiple counties, daily newspapers, a job-posting board, other informational brochures, county and city maps, and a copier. Telephones are also available for use by job applicants. During the second year of One-Stop operations, personal computers will be installed in a room within the ERC for use by One-Stop customers. Information available on the computers will include: career information, enhanced labor market information, and resume writing software.

Plans are underway to make the ERC easier to locate. Directional signs will be posted at several road junctures as well as within the County Justice Center campus. (The ERC is located on the outer edge of the campus.) A sign on the building will also identify the Center. There is ample parking space.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

Ohio requires that local One-Stop implementation grants be used primarily for one-time start-up costs. Although some carry-over funding is permissible, all expenditures related to staffing must be used during the one-stop grant period. The Wood and Lucas County One-Stop system received a 12-month implementation grant of \$217,000. The grant period officially began in November 1995. The state subsequently approved an extension to the end of December, 1996.

The activities for which the local grant funding was earmarked included:

- Staff costs for a receptionist at the Wood County ERC and the Lucas County One-Stop facilitator;
- Cross-training and capacity building for local partner staff;
- Networking and computer software and related items;
- The purchase of two Ohio Job Net kiosks, one to be installed within the Wood County ERC; and
- One-Stop marketing efforts.

Ohio requires local implementation grantees to match at least 10% of the state grant amount with in-kind contributions and to describe how other existing resources

will be used to support the development of the One-Stop system. Local contributions during the first year of One-Stop operations included:

- Office space and furniture for the Wood County ERC provided by the Wood County JOBS program;
- Office space and furniture for the Lucas County ERC provided by the Toledo office of the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services;
- MIS support and resource library materials provided by the Toledo Area Private Industry Council;
- Computers, workstations, and training space paid for with the Lucas County OBES UI Collaboration Grant awarded for the development of One-Stop services for dislocated workers;
- On-site direct service staff time and planning time contributed by the participating local partners. The One-Stop-specific staff positions funded by the participating partners during the first year of One-Stop operations include the One-Stop center co-managers of the Wood County ERC and two staff assistants (contributed by the Toledo Area PIC and the Wood County Department of Human Services).

The value of the local contributions was estimated at just under \$500,000. Initially, the Toledo Area PIC had also planned to provide the salary of the Lucas County ERC facilitator for the entire grant year. However, when the agency's JTPA funding was reduced by 40% in 1996, it was forced to withdraw this support six months into the first year, and implementation grant funds were shifted from the training budget to cover this key staff position.

The Lucas and Wood County One-Stop proposal to the state indicated that other revenue sources, such as the marketing of fee-based services to employers, would be considered. Services that were mentioned as possibilities for fee-based services included workshops on workplace-related issues, specialized on-site customized training and other innovations which the employer community might find useful. The local partners did not pursue these options during the first year of One-Stop implementation.

One of the issues discussed by local partners during the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop retreat in August of 1996 was whether the participants were committed to continue the One-Stop concept beyond the year of implementation grant funding, and if so, what funds and other resources could be identified to support second year operations. The PIC leadership pointed to the fact that partners are willing to share in

the ongoing costs of maintaining the new system as a clear demonstration of partner commitment to the new system.

Local funding commitments made for the second year of One-Stop operations include in-kind partner contributions of about \$400,000 to cover such cost items as on-site partner agency staff, occupancy costs, and the provision of some staff training by outside providers. The Wood County Department of Human Services and JTPA will continue to fund their center co-managers and one staff assistant for each co-manager. Green Thumb will supply a Senior Community Service Program work experience participant to serve as center receptionist three days a week. The JTPA case manager will provide additional reception and intake support during the two days the Green Thumb receptionist is not working. Other expenses, such as telephone, other communications support, and office supplies will be prorated among partners.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Staffing Arrangements

Co-managers provided by the Wood County Department of Human Services and the Toledo Area PIC are responsible for day-to-day management and operations of the Wood County ERC. The co-managers work as a team; both individuals said that they “do what is necessary to keep the Center operating.” The DHS co-manager is chair of the Wood County Center Workgroup (which includes all Wood County agency partners). The JTPA co-manager is in charge of the financial aspects of operating the center and coordinating its software and hardware needs.

Shared day-to-day responsibilities of the Center co-managers include overseeing the scheduling and operation of the Center, assisting in resolving conflicts among partners, and carrying out the action plans approved by the Governance Council. In addition to their One-Stop management responsibilities, the center co-managers are also responsible to their respective agency for program-related duties. Staff from each agency assigned to them conduct more detailed eligibility determinations for their respective programs and assist in referring customers to services offered at the center as well as by their respective agencies.

While co-managers are responsible for implementing and overseeing the One-Stop training, capacity building, monitoring, and evaluation procedures, all local agency partners are expected to share responsibility for meeting local One-Stop goals as well as furthering Ohio’s state goals. At each of the One-Stops in the local system,

OBES ES and UI representatives have been cross-trained, renamed Customer Service Representatives, and have taken on the functions of assisting customers with both ES and UI services. As described previously, all mandatory agency partners provide on-site service staff at least one-half day each week and offer off-site staffing assistance to Center customers as needed, through referrals to the partner agencies' "home sites." Non-mandatory agency partners also assign staff to visit the Center on a periodic basis, but the frequency of visits may be less than once weekly.

The center receptionist is trained to provide customers with information about the Center, assist customers in operating the Ohio Job Net kiosk, register customers, conduct an initial identification of customers' requirements, and schedule appointments with appropriate partners.

Capacity Building

The state-level Human Resources Work Team is working on developing a long-term capacity-building plan to support staff in the operation of local One-Stop centers. Although developing long-term capacity-building plans, the Work Team also wanted to support staff training efforts undertaken by the local One-Stop systems that received first-year implementation grants. Thus, as a starting point, the state-level Human Resources Work Team plan to conduct workshops to assist local One-Stop governing boards to function more effectively.

At the local level, One-Stop partners found that the resources available for capacity building were not adequate to cover the training needs of One-Stop staff and staff at partner agencies.³ Early on, the local Capacity Building Workgroup conducted a needs assessment which indicated that partners perceived that training would be needed in four broad areas. In order of priority, these were 1) computer/software topics; 2) operations (intake, case management, partner cross-training to enhance collaboration); 3) human relations; and 4) a partner orientation to other available community resources.

Capacity-building strategies completed the first year included the following:

³ A more substantial level of grant funding had initially been planned for staff training needs. However, a shortfall in the local PIC budget forced the local partners to transfer these funds to cover the salary of the Lucas County ERC manager.

- *Partner cross-training*, in which each partner provided an oral presentation and written information describing its agency or organization, the services available, and eligibility criteria for each program described. This training was well received by all partners.
- *Cross training for ES and UI staff*, which prepared these staff for their positions as Customer Service Representatives, capable of conducting intake, identifying customer needs and referring customers to appropriate agencies and other partners.

Plans for further capacity building during the second year of One-Stop operations include improving the foundation for high quality customer service by providing training to receptionists on telephone techniques, how to make referrals, and other topics. Computer training is also planned for year two, after the new computer systems and software have been installed.

Capacity building, as interpreted at the local level, also included strategies to building community support for and understanding of the new One-Stop system. Activities related to these strategies are described in this profile under Marketing.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Ohio has indicated that each One-Stop system is expected to develop its own management information system. To support local system development efforts, the state will (1) create a new “expert front end” to simplify the taking of UI initial claims by cross-trained staff from other agencies; (2) support the development of an integrated customer information system to access and track customer information currently found in three different information systems (ES, UI, and JTPA); (3) develop support and measurement systems for the One-Stop initiative, including an evaluation and research capability; and (4) manage the information network and systems.

The Lucas and Wood County One-Stop MIS Workgroup was formed to:

- serve as an advisory group for the integration of computer software to access and share information on referral, registration, and program scheduling;
- provide or obtain high quality training in computer software applications for appropriate staff;
- ensure appropriate application, usage and maintenance of all computers within the system in order to respond to the present and future needs of the Universal Customer; and
- ensure proper confidentiality of computer records.

Early on, the Workgroup identified three predominant concerns: (1) how to address partner concerns related to confidentiality and security of customer information; (2) how to gain consensus among partners for the implementation of a universal One-Stop customer data sheet; and (3) how to create local networks to connect the three One-Stop centers and the Toledo Area PIC. A broader local concern was how to ensure that decisions made about the design of a local system would ultimately be compatible with the planned statewide “integrated state information system.”

The Workgroup’s initial efforts focused on how to interconnect the One-Stop sites and agency partners for the purpose of cross-agency data sharing, including identifying existing PCs that could be used in networking, networking systems already in place, and the availability of assistance or funding from the state. To assess partners’ views on information-sharing needs as well as confidentiality concerns, the Workgroup surveyed all local partners. The survey results indicated an overriding concern on the part of all partners about maintaining confidentiality regarding client information. The Workgroup concluded that it would not be possible to implement an integrated local MIS system until a universal confidentiality agreement was negotiated among the local One-Stop partners.

Limited funding for the local MIS system was also viewed as a barrier to its early development. Just over \$100,000 in implementation grant funds was available to support the development of an integrated information system in Lucas and Wood Counties. (This total includes funds from the state share of the DOL Implementation Grant as well as funds from the local grant.) In addition, ten PCs were purchased with UI Collaboration Grant funds. It is anticipated that local partners will provide funds and in-kind contributions to enhance the local communications network. Respondents from the Toledo Area PIC suggested that the wider community should also provide resources to access and sustain this system.

In the absence of consensus on what data should be included in a comprehensive local universal intake form, first year activities included the development and implementation of several “paper” forms. These include a Common Intake Form, a Customer Service Form, a Referral Form, and a Follow-Up Form. These forms were developed for use by the One-Stop receptionist and the system partners to gather basic data on clients and to track them through the system. A “Glossary of Terms” defines the terms, services and systems used in the intake and referral process.

Although operational, there appear to be some gaps in the inter-agency client tracking system as it is currently functioning. For example, as mentioned during the participant focus group, one UI beneficiary who arranged—through a referral by the One-Stop system—to participate in a small business development program at the local vocational school was later notified by UI that her benefits were being terminated “due to claims inactivity.” This occurred even though she had been told by the ES/UI representative at the Wood County Employment Resource Center that she would be appraised of available positions and notified for job interviews as appropriate.

Goals for the second year of One-Stop operations include purchasing additional PCs and enabling all local partners to link into the existing system to access and input client data. Both the Lucas and Wood County ERCs will pilot the state’s common data base—referred to as the “rolling common intake” and “record of service”—which will require job seekers to input basic demographic data only once at a One-Stop or a partner agency and to share information about subsequent service utilization and outcomes. Computer training for all partners and receptionists is scheduled for early in the second year, as a cooperative effort sponsored by the local MIS and Training and Capacity Building Workgroups.

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

At the state-level, the Labor Market Information Division of the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services (OBES) is working to enhance the automated information available through the Ohio Job Net and make this information available to staff and customers in a large number of local service sites. During the first year of One-Stop operations, the Wood County Employment Resource Center offered on-site customers access to Ohio Job Net services through a stand-alone kiosk with a touch-screen interface for user-friendly access. Available through Ohio Job Net are the following automated services: Job Service registration, inquiring or updating the Job Service application, requesting a personal job match, conducting a general job search, and accessing career and labor market information. Employers, educational institutions, and other customers may now access statewide labor market information through the Internet on Ohio’s Home Page. In addition, employers with Internet access will soon be able to enter job orders directly on the Ohio Job Net. Ohio’s Career Information System (OCIS) is also available on the Internet, but access is limited to subscribers who pay an OCIS fee to access this information.

During the second year of One-Stop operations in Wood and Lucas Counties, the installation of new computer equipment in the Employment Resource Centers networked to a local server will allow the partners at the three One-Stop centers to (1) enter job orders on Ohio Job Net; (2) register customers on the Ohio Job Net and (3) register customers for agency services using the common intake process and database described above. Customers will also be able to access Ohio Job Net's automated career and labor market information on a self-serve basis by using networked computer workstations in the Employment Resource Centers. Plans also include linking other agencies and organizations through a dial in process which would also allow them to access services and make client referrals.

Marketing

Concerns identified by the local Marketing Workgroup during the first year included (1) how to increase the community awareness of the One-Stop system and advertise the existence and location of the One-Stop centers within the local system; (2) how to attract employers to the new system; and (3) how to tailor marketing strategies to the different needs of the individual One-Stop centers.

Building community awareness of and support for the local One-Stop system is viewed as a capacity-building strategy within the local One-Stop system and has been coordinated with work of the local Capacity Building Work Group. To orient the community to the One-Stop System, local partners organized and conducted two "Community Forums" early in the first One-Stop implementation year, one in Lucas County and one in Wood County. Both Community Forums involved residents, employers, and public officials. Both were designed to orient the community at large to the One-Stop system and to assist residents and employers in understanding what the system is and how it will meet customer needs for employment, training, and labor market information. Although center managers and partners at both One-Stop centers were somewhat disappointed by a low employer turnout, the public media did attend the events, resulting in good newspaper coverage.

Additional marketing strategies to increase customer awareness of and support for One-Stop services can be described as a series of incremental steps to provide the general public with a sense of what is being attempted, as well as efforts to invite community input to be used in shaping the new system to be more responsive to customer needs. Marketing products/activities carried out during the first year of One-Stop operations included the development and distribution of brochures describing each

local Employment Resource Center, the distribution of rolodex cards with the center's address and phone number, improved center identification, greater visibility in the local telephone book, signs and posters to clearly identify the center location, and—for the Wood County Employment Resource Center—the installation of road signs directing drivers to the Center. Local One-Stop partner and affiliated agencies also helped publicize the existence of the ERCs. An excellent informational brochure called "Help for Hard Times" published by the Wood County United Way includes the Wood County ERC as one of a number of community services described in a series of "pull-out" page.

Within the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop system, the Marketing Workgroup identified differing marketing requirements for each of the One-Stops. At the time of the evaluation site visit, the Lucas County ERC, located in the center of Toledo, was working with over a hundred customers per week, but the Wood County ERC was scheduling far fewer customers, perhaps only an average of a dozen or so customers per week. This indicated to the Workgroup that a "one size fits all" marketing strategy might not work. Although both centers needed to increase participation by local employers, the Wood County ERC also needed to attract more job seeker customers to the Center.

Local marketing plans for the second year of One-Stop operations include: the completion and use of two seven-minute videos describing the services available through the One-Stop system (one for employers and one for job-seeker customers) and focusing their efforts to gain employer interest and support, particularly in Wood County. Planned marketing activities targeted to employers in Wood County include: (1) "Business After Hours" open houses at the Center, (2) the conduct of a *Wood County Town Hall meeting* on the One-Stop system, to be co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, and (3) employer lunches profiling individuals who have used the ERC and employers that have used the new system and support it. The objective of these marketing efforts will be to convince employers to make the One-Stop system the access point for job orders as well as to increase their participation in the Employment Resource Centers in other ways. Achieving full-scale employer participation has taken on new importance in response to welfare reform initiatives introduced at the state and federal levels.

At the state level, one of the first year goals of the Marketing Work Team is to support local areas in marketing One-Stop services to employer and job seeker

customers. During the first year, state developed a One-Stop logo and brochure to support local marketing efforts, primarily at the state level. However it has been somewhat difficult to coordinate state and local marketing efforts in the Lucas and Wood County system. Early in the One-Stop implementation grant period, members of the local Marketing Workgroup met with the state Marketing Work Team to identify common concerns and interests. Difficulties identified at that meeting included the use of different names and different logos at the state and local level to market One-Stop systems. The state refers to One-Stop centers as “career system centers” while the local system refers to them as “Employment Resource Centers.” The logo used at the state level (a fat “1” with arrows encircling it) is markedly different from the local used at the local level (a “1” in the center of a hexagon shaped like a traffic stop sign). The partners in the local One-Stop system decided to keep their own logo. To avoid confusion, a state-local agreement was reached which will allow local logos to be used in conjunction with the state logo, when that appears to be appropriate. For example, while the Job Net kiosks would prominently display the state logo, local logos could also be displayed.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

Ohio requires local One-Stop systems and designated One-Stop centers to provide universal access to the following core services: (1) intake and assessment for all required programs (ES, UI, JTPA, Senior Community Services, Veterans’ Employment Services and three of the following four programs: welfare-to-work programs, vocational education, adult basic education, and two-year colleges); (2) orientation and information on all employment and training services; (3) quality labor market information; (4) testing; (5) integrated job development, including information on job openings and referrals to posted jobs; (6) job search assistance; and (7) assistance with UI claims. In addition, the state offered extra points to local areas applying for One-Stop implementation grant funds if local One-Stop systems offered any of the following services: in-depth assessment and counseling, case management, or training and skills validation to certify the qualifications of applicants for jobs with specific employers. The state encouraged, but did not require, local areas to customized core employer and job-seeker services to respond to local labor market conditions.

The basic customer service philosophy in the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop system is that customers are best qualified to make their own decisions regarding their service path; beyond intake and an initial identification of needs, customers are expected to request the services they wish to access. During an initial contact with the receptionist at the Wood County Employment Resource Center, customers are provided with an orientation to the One-Stop center, its partner agencies and its services. Customers are offered the opportunity to register for One-Stop services by completing a Common Intake Form.

Initial information on eligibility requirements for programs available in the community may be provided to the customer by staff from any of the on-site partners. Based upon the information provided on the initial intake form and a discussion with the customer regarding his/her needs and requirements, the customer is referred and/or scheduled for an appointment with on-site JTPA or DHS staff or from one of the local One-Stop partner agencies. During the meeting with an agency/program partner, the individual is provided with detailed information about how to access the services of interest to him/her. As indicated earlier, it is then up to the individual customer to make personal choices about the appropriate next steps, e.g., direct job development assistance, further career development services.

The core services available on-site at the Wood County Employment Resource Center or through referral to partner or affiliated agencies are described below.

- *Information on jobs, careers, labor markets, and employment and training programs* is provided to the universal customer by a wide range of organizations, some of which are oriented to serving the “universal customer” and some of which are oriented to the special needs of targeted population groups. Access to job listings and job matching is also available to all customers through the Ohio Bureau of Employment Service’s Ohio Job Net kiosk that supports self registration, independent job search, and self-service referrals. Self-service information is also available in the Resource Room in each Employment Resource Center; a bulletin board in the reception area posts currently available jobs.
- *Application and receipt of UI benefits.* Initial applications are processed by cross-trained ES/UI staff, called Customer Service Representatives. Services are available at the ERC on the scheduled day or through referral to the OBES home site. Once the computer network has been expanded, staff from other agencies will be cross-trained to assist customers with UI applications at their own home sites or at the ERCs.

- *Testing and assessment* using specific tests such as vocational interest and aptitude tests, as well as tests of basic and work-related skills is available through OBES, Penta Vocational School, and Owens Community College. Testing and assessment for targeted populations is provided by the County Departments of Human Services (for welfare recipients), the PIC (for JTPA-eligible customers) and Green Thumb (for older workers).
- *Job openings, information on employer hiring requirements, referrals and job placement assistance* is provided at the Centers by OBES Customer Service staff during on-site days or by referral to an OBES home site. Customers may access automated information on a self-service basis on the Ohio Job Net kiosk at the ERCs or over the Internet. Additional services are provided to members of targeted groups by the agencies serving special populations.

One of the most popular on-site staff-assisted job search services at the Wood County Employment Resource Center is a Job Club funded by the County Department of Human Services and staffed by a Job Search Coach. This Job Club, offered six hours a day five days a week at the Center, is a mandatory service for many individuals receiving cash assistance from DHS. However, the service is also available to the “universal customer” at no charge. It is a very popular workshop and is the predominant local mechanism used to provide customer assistance in the areas of job referral and job placement services.

- *Referral to available community services and resources* is provided by the Center receptionist, as well as by staff from the local partner agencies. In addition, written materials and brochures on community resources are provided to Center customers, including an excellent brochure developed by the Wood County United Way, called “Help for Hard Times.”
- *Access to ABE/GED classes:* ABE/GED classes are provided on-site at the Wood County Employment Resource Center by Penta Vocational School to all DHS or JTPA eligible applicants. Others not eligible for these programs may also enroll. No fees are charged.
- *Self-service access to information on local employers and training providers* is available in the Center’s Resource Room.
- *Career planning and career preparation information and activities* are available from the local education and training partners. Although automated career information is available on the full version of Ohio Job Net; it is not yet accessible to customers at the Wood County Employment Resource Center. Penta County Vocational School provides career guidance, counseling and career development activities at its home site. This institution also offers a “Starting Your Own

Business Class” which has received rave reviews from some of its graduates.

If an individual is identified as having special needs (e.g. a substance abuse problem, or a disability) or meeting the eligibility criteria for special programs (e.g., veterans’ services or the JOBS program for cash assistance recipients) he/she will usually be referred to the organization or agency that targets its services to that specific client population. For example, persons eligible for or receiving public assistance will be referred to the Wood County Department of Human Services for information on jobs, careers, employment and training programs, while individuals not qualifying to these programs will be referred to providers providing the same core services to the general public, such as OBES or the Penta County Vocational School. Mandatory partners serving special populations include: Green Thumb (older workers); Wood County Alcohol, Drug Abuse and Mental Health Services (individuals with substance abuse or mental health barriers to employment); Wood County Department of Human Services (welfare recipients); the Rehabilitation Services Commission (individuals with disabilities) and the Toledo Area PIC (economically disadvantaged individuals or dislocated workers).

Special needs will also be addressed through supplementary referrals to a number of affiliated social service agencies. Wood County has a wide range of services available to populations with special needs, particularly those who require financial or other assistance. Referrals to these so-called affiliated partners are made as appropriate. The list of affiliated organizations and agencies includes the Veterans Assistance Center, United Christian Fellowship, and YW Child Care Connections.

Services for Employer Customers

The Lucas and Wood County One-Stop proposal stated that service to employers is “...recognized as the primary reason for the existence of the One-Stop system, and all partners view it as their job to anticipate and deliver services to employers.” The Lucas and Wood County partners have tried to orient employers to the new system by highlighting the benefits of coordinated inter-agency job listing and job placement services. During sessions designed to orient employers to the One-Stop system (e.g., community forums, “town halls,” and “business after hours” sessions), employers have been invited to provide input as to what other “value added” employer services might be provided, either free of charge or for a user fee. The Governance Council and the

Job Service Employer Committee (JSEC) are also discussing ways to serve employers and keep them informed about One-Stop system enhancements.

Universal services currently available to employers free of charge consist of:

- *Dissemination of job orders*, which are posted on Center bulletin boards as well as on the automated Ohio Job Net kiosks located in each of the Centers. During the second year of One-Stop operations, job orders will be shared with all partners via a networked system of Ohio Job Net computers available at partner home sites as well as at One-Stop centers.
- *Joint One-Stop recruitment efforts* in response to posted job orders, including assessment of job applicants for new and expanding employers.
- *Availability of office space* for use by employers in reviewing applicant resumes, interviewing job applicants, etc.
- *Referral of appropriate candidates* for position openings.
- *Information and assistance* with the layoff process for employers undergoing a reduction in force.

Fee-based services are under general consideration by the local One-Stop system, but at this point their development is not a priority. Services that have been identified for potential development as fee-based services include (1) *customized training* (either on-site training or off-site industry- or employer-specific training provided by a vocational school or community college); and *employer-focused workshops* for managers on such topics as violence in the workplace, diversity training, legal issues affecting employers, etc. In addition, it has been suggested that employers might be open to providing general skill training of new job entrants in the workplace if there were financial incentives—such as reimbursement of training expenses—for hiring workers belonging to identified target groups.

As part of the overall state One-Stop initiative, Ohio is improving the content and delivery modes for local labor market information. One project funded with the state's One-Stop implementation grant funding includes the development of a "micro-occupational information system" to provide integrated information to employers, individuals, and service providers on current and projected labor market demands and related training resources by occupation. Another funded project is the development of an electronic bulletin board to share state labor market data banks with dial-up users. As a result of these projects, a wide range of information is now available to Ohio

employers free of charge on Ohio's LMI Home Page. Many employers in Ohio are not yet aware of the availability of this information. The state plans to publicize its new Internet accessibility and expanded labor market information early in 1997.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

Most of the individuals interviewed said that they had not been aware of the One-Stop system prior to their contact with the Wood County Employment Resource Center. Each of the respondents we talked with had heard about the Center through a friend or relative. Customers appeared to appreciate the changes the One-Stop system is trying to bring about in the design and delivery of services. Comments about the services received fell into the following general categories:

- *Initial in-depth orientation.* Individuals indicated that they were provided with a list of the different kinds of assistance available at the One-Stop during their initial visit to the Center.
- *Range of options and assistance.* Respondents indicated that partner agencies and/or on-site staff were available to provide the specific types of assistance needed. For example, staff/partners could assist with resume development, provide a typewriter, type a resume if the customer could not type, etc. In other words, customers felt that the One-Stop staff and partners would do their best to provide whatever was needed to assist them with the job search or transition to another career.
- *Financial assistance.* Customers indicated that they were helped with tuition assistance, applying for a loan from a bank, etc.
- *Programs to suit the individual's requirements.* Customers were assisted variously with accessing skill-based training (through a vocational school), adult basic education/GED training on-site at the One-Stop, entrepreneurial training for starting a business, and on-site job search training and assistance.

Customers indicated that the One-Stop system was different, in both concept and "in reality," from the "old" system. In the previous system, they explained, you went in, registered, and were given an appointment for a posted job, even if it had little to do with your background experience or skills. In the new system, they said, your past experience and skills were seen as valuable and worth working with, rather than something to "toss out." The partner agency counselors and job club instructor helped customers see that their past experience *did* have value in the workplace, and helped

them with needed skills upgrading, a better presentation of skills, and the emotional support needed to increase their self image.

A “sense of dignity” was a phrase often used by respondents in describing how they were treated by staff in the local One-Stop system. “They treated me like a person, one of them, not some alien creature.” “They encouraged me when I felt like I had nothing to offer.” Several respondents said that counselors were “upbeat” at a time when they themselves felt discouraged. Several respondents indicated that the on-site job club was particularly useful, because it provided group support and taught participants how to market themselves. For one individual, this meant the difference between not “snagging” a job interview—prior to participation in the job club—versus being offered three jobs. Personalized assistance was noted by respondents as being very important. They especially appreciated that staff were willing to offer them the personal support they needed as they moved through a particularly difficult time in their work lives. Respondents who had attempted to use the automated Ohio Job Net kiosk could not find suitable job matches; others responded that they simply “did not think it would have anything” for them.

Employers

Employers indicated that they thought the system was “more user-friendly for both customers and employers.” Employers particularly applauded eliminating duplication of effort by having all agencies “under one roof.” As employers, they appreciated having only “one number to call” to post a job listing and request referrals, as well as a single source for labor market information. They also appreciated being able to contact the same staff person over time and the opportunity to develop rapport with a One-Stop staff member who understood their employment needs and would work with them to find a good match.

Most of the employers contacted in connection with the evaluation tend to use the One-Stop system for postings entry-level jobs rather than openings for more highly-skilled individuals. Although aware of the new option of posting job openings directly via the Internet, most still use the telephone to post job orders with ES/UI staff. They are aware that postings appear on the Ohio Job Net kiosks as well as at all OBES and One-Stop locations. They are also aware that they have a choice about whether to provide all job seekers with employer information or whether to suppress employer information on the public listing.

Employers identified their biggest challenge as attracting qualified job applicants in the current tight labor market. Lack of basic skills, they said, is wide spread, making it important to involve schools in the delivery of skill-based training and adult basic education to individuals who want to enter the labor market or make a career transition. A few employers expressed dissatisfaction with the job matching and referral procedures in place prior to the One-Stop system. In the past, they indicated, applicants had not been carefully screened and were not qualified for the available positions. They hoped that under the One-Stop system, candidates would be better prepared for the job interview, more experienced or trained in the position for which they were applying, and provided with more careful public agency follow-up after placement.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The Wood County Employment Resource Center offers an example of a One-Stop center in which one of the primary on-site partners is the agency responsible for providing welfare benefits and welfare-to-work services. As stated by the Director of the Wood County Department of Human Services, it was “natural” for the Human Services agency to play a major role in the design and development of the local One-Stop center, because it played the key role in building an inter-agency case management network prior to the One-Stop system and because the rest of the JOBS and related human-services programs are located within the same physical complex as the One-Stop Center. This close link with the welfare system is particularly appropriate now that the county will be dealing with a number of welfare reform implementation issues.

The realization of the One-Stop vision in Wood County will depend on the achievement of electronic linkages among the different agencies in this rural county. In this environment, a “no wrong door” approach is critical to ensure access for county residents who are closer to the home sites of partner agencies and affiliated agencies than to the Employment Resource Center. In the interim, the co-location of all partners at the ERC one day a week—and the full-time location of a PIC staff member at the Wood County ERC as Center co-manger—are clear statements of commitment to the development of a seamless system by the participating agency partners.

As a local *system*, the Lucas and Wood County One-Stop has achieved participation by a wide range of organizational partners, with disability-related, welfare, and educational institutions well integrated into the total program. OBES, although the lead agency for the DOL Implementation Grant at the state level, is

merely one among a number of equal partners within the Lucas/Wood County system. As a *center*, however, the Wood County Employment Resources Center has not yet achieved widespread public visibility and, at the time of the evaluation site visit, was receiving a low volume of on-site customers.

Respondents involved in the Lucas/Wood County One-Stop system agreed that—although the first year effort had been difficult and time consuming—both partners and customers had benefited from the system transformation efforts to date. Although the consensus governance procedures as originally designed were somewhat cumbersome, partners were able to make some mid-year simplifications to speed up the implementation of Governance Council decisions. When state One-Stop monitors criticized the local system for not developing formal inter-agency agreements, local partners defended themselves, saying that they had been able to make considerable progress without developing detailed written agreements.

Key challenges still faced by the local system include (1) developing a more efficient integrated referral and tracking management information system; (2) ensuring that customers have effective access to labor market information to support them in making good decisions about careers, training, and jobs;⁴ and (3) responding to the job development/job placement demands that will be created by federal and state welfare reform legislation.

⁴ The single Ohio Job Net kiosk available at the Wood County ERC may not be sufficient to meet this need.

APPENDIX S

STATE OF TEXAS One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During May 1996

STATE OF TEXAS

One-Stop Profile

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT	1
EVOLUTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF STATE ONE-STOP DESIGN.....	4
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	5
State-Level Organization and Governance.....	5
State Framework for Local Governance	7
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION	10
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES.....	12
RELEVANCE OF THE STATE DESIGN TO THE FOUR FEDERAL GOALS	13
Universal Access	13
Customer Choice	14
Integrated Services	15
Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based	16
IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS	17
Capacity Building and Technical Assistance	17
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements.....	19
Management Information Systems (MIS).....	21
Marketing	23
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	24

STATE OF TEXAS

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT

The state of Texas has embarked on an ambitious plan to fully integrate over twenty distinct workforce development programs under one administrative roof, the Texas Workforce Commission. This reorganization has entailed massive state-level organizational change, and has contributed to the rapid pace of program integration at local One-Stop “Career Centers.” Fundamental to statewide efforts has been a strategic vision for a statewide system of Career Centers in which customers can conveniently access information and services tailored to their specific needs.

Texas workforce development programs have a long history of coordination and co-location. For example, a “comprehensive office model” project dating back to the 1970s involved the merging of job information services, labor exchange, and inter-agency employment development teams. More recently, since 1990, the state has encouraged the co-location and coordination of services offered by the Texas Employment Commission (TEC) and the Department of Human Services (DHS) on behalf of residents receiving public assistance. TEC, for example, has held a statewide DHS contract for the delivery of work-related services to public assistance recipients under both the JOBS program for AFDC recipients and the Food Stamp E&T program. In addition, many local sites have experience coordinating the delivery of JTPA and ES services through co-location and coordination agreements. These experiences helped pave the way for the emergence of the statewide One-Stop initiative in 1992 and 1993.

The state’s One-Stop mission is “to place Texans in jobs and equip workers with the skills that foster economic development.” Stated system-level goals include the development of:

- a statewide system of local workforce development centers where all clients and employers can conveniently access a network of information and services responsive to their individual needs; and
- a state and local strategic planning, evaluation, and accountability system for the state’s workforce development programs and activities.

In addition, the state has established One-Stop program goals of providing Texas residents with the skills necessary for educational and career advancement (including adult literacy, basic education skills, and specific occupational skills) as well as providing youth with the knowledge, skills, and behaviors needed for the transition into productive careers and lifelong learning. The One-Stop initiative in Texas has been explicitly intertwined with the goals of welfare reform, which include using a “work first” approach to increase the percentage of Texans who become and remain independent of public financial assistance.

As described later in this profile, the state’s vision of One-Stop services begins with the dissemination of a number of state-developed technology-based products to assist job seekers and employers (e.g., job matching and career information systems, as well as a “consumer report card” system of information on local education and training providers), but also includes the development and implementation of a wide range of locally-developed integrated core services tailored to the needs of individual job seekers, students, and employers.

To accomplish these ambitious goals, the state’s One-Stop strategy emphasizes local initiative and control in the planning and operation of local workforce development boards (“Boards”) responsible for the design and operation of local One-Stop centers. The state role in the development of local One-Stop systems is to encourage and support the development of local One-Stop models rather than to disseminate a standardized state design.

Key state design criteria emphasize the need to involve all DOL-funded programs in at least one operational full-service One-Stop center within six months of workforce board certification and to plan for the inclusion of a wider range of local partners by the end of the first year of One-Stop operations. In areas where they have begun to operate, boards assume many of the planning, monitoring evaluation, and fiscal functions for local workforce programs. Although local areas retain the option of not forming boards, and can maintain or expand their present workforce governance systems, *all* areas are encouraged to develop One-Stop Centers.

Technology is perceived as a key factor in developing an integrated workforce development system and realizing the vision of providing quality information to a universal customer base. In this regard, the Texas State Occupational Information and

Coordinating Committee (SOICC) has provided the foundation for a labor market and career information system.

A number of key variables have influenced One-Stop planning, design, and implementation in Texas. These include, among other things, (1) the rapid pace of organizational change; (2) extreme diversity within the state and a resulting sensitivity to issues of local autonomy; (3) historical links between workforce development restructuring and welfare reforms; and (4) strong political and legislative support for revitalizing workforce development efforts. Each of these contextual variables is discussed briefly below.

- *Major reorganization and consolidation of workforce development programs have affected the pace of implementation of the statewide One-Stop Career Center system.* There are dramatic changes occurring at both the state and the local levels. In some cases, reorganization has prompted rapid co-location and integration of services. At the same time, because of the breadth of changes to the Texas workforce system, some One-Stop initiatives have been delayed until the organizational and operational structure of the Workforce Commission becomes institutionalized. To some degree, local levels have had to wait for the major reorganization to “shake out” at the state level before they can get consistent guidance and direction.
- *Texas’s large size, diversity, and history of strong local autonomy have prompted the state to adopt a flexible One-Stop implementation model.* Texas is comprised of 254 counties, 35 SDAs, and 28 Workforce Development Areas. The state has very wealthy urban and suburban areas with highly diversified economies. At the same time, a fifteen-county area along the Mexican border is the poorest region in the nation. And whereas Texas is home to some of the nation’s top universities, half of working-age Texans read at the lowest levels of literacy. Responding to this high degree of diversity and aware of the importance of local autonomy, the state has recognized the need to support a number of different One-Stop models designed and governed locally, rather than proposing a more standardized state system. The state therefore sees itself in an *advisory* and *supportive* role for local areas with respect to One-Stop implementation.
- *Workforce development initiatives and welfare reform are closely linked.* One important legislative initiative, HB 1863, for example, was originally conceived as a welfare reform measure. Based on a “work first” approach, the bill was originally intended to encourage an increased emphasis on employment, training, temporary assistance, and support services. When finally enacted, however, it had become much

broader in scope, touching nearly every facet of workforce development. Because of this unique legislative history, One-Stop implementation in Texas faces a dual challenge: on the one hand, the state wants the system to become universally accessible; on the other hand, there is a clear concern for addressing the needs of those who may be less prepared to enter the workforce. This is likely to result in extremely broad service menus at One-Stop Centers, a careful balancing act to meet the needs of employers and job seekers, and serious questions of how to prioritize different needs given limited program dollars.

- *There is political support at the highest levels of state government for revitalizing workforce development.* State respondents indicated that there is strong bi-partisan support from the legislature and governor for workforce development reform, and that the administration has acted decisively on policy recommendations of the state's Human Resource Investment Council called the Texas Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness ("State Council"). One result of this political support has been the development of a high-quality state-level One-Stop team, whose head was the former executive director of the State Council.

EVOLUTION AND GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF STATE ONE-STOP DESIGN

The statewide One-Stop approach to the delivery of services in Texas began with a series of state-sponsored studies and legislative initiatives. In 1992, an influential report from the State Comptroller's Office focused on the state's workforce development efforts. This report highlighted the low level of literacy among state residents and sought to focus attention on improving basic skills, which has since been a consistent part of the state design for One-Stop services.

In 1993, Senate Bill 642, "The Workforce and Economic Competitiveness Act," was passed. Among other things, the Act (1) provided for the creation of a State Council to advocate for the development of an integrated workforce development system; (2) gave a mandate to the State Council to designate local workforce development areas throughout the state (a total of 28 areas were created); and (3) encouraged local officials to form local workforce development boards to plan and oversee the delivery of all local workforce training and services programs.

SB 642 identified six core services to be available at local workforce development centers established by local boards: (1) labor market information; (2) common intake and eligibility determination for all local workforce development programs and services; (3) independent assessment of individual needs and the development of

individual service strategies; (4) coordinated and continuous case management and counseling; (5) individual referral for services, including basic education, classroom skills training, on-the-job training, and customized training; and (6) supportive services. Although not mandated by statute, the state also requires that certain employer services be in place at workforce centers.

In 1995, two events further promoted the development of the One-Stop initiative in Texas. First, the federal One-Stop Implementation Grant provided funding to encourage the formation of local workforce development boards and local One-Stop systems. Second, the passage of House Bill 1863 mandated the integration of workforce development programs, creating the Texas Workforce Commission, a “super-consolidated” agency. As a result of these factors, the Federal One-Stop effort received strong support within the state of Texas, particularly as the initiative related to program consolidation.

The state has adopted a phased approach to One-Stop planning and implementation. During the first phase beginning in early 1995, five pilot areas were chosen to receive implementation grant funds. Another seven areas were selected for implementation in mid-1995. Further, it was expected that each workforce development area in the state would have at least one One-Stop Career Center by the end of 1996. Within these Centers, the state encourages the adoption of a strategy of three tiers of service (self-service, group services, and individualized services) as the means to achieving universal access while still addressing the needs of customers who need more intensive assistance. The intended key state-level functions are viewed as: (1) guiding and supporting the development of local One-Stops in planning and operation, including the development of the planning guidelines and benchmarkings (which rely in part on local self-assessment); (2) promoting peer-to-peer exchanges; (3) taking the lead on the development of evaluation and performance measures, and (4) developing and refining technology-based products and MIS systems to support integrated intake and case management.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

State-Level Organization and Governance

There are two major entities responsible for workforce governance, the Texas Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness and the Texas Workforce Commission, which is responsible for administrating the workforce development

programs. Currently housed within the Workforce Commission, a “One-Stop team” functions as the staff-level planning body for the One-Stop initiative.

Senate Bill 642 created the State Council, and charged it with planning, developing, and evaluating an integrated workforce system. With its establishment in September 1995, the State Council replaced five different previous state advisory committees and councils. The State Council’s extremely broad role in the One-Stop system is to set overall state workforce development goals and policies and guide the Texas Workforce Commission in the administration of the integrated state workforce development system. The Council’s duties include identifying local workforce development areas and boundaries, developing criteria for certification, approving local workforce development board plans, and making recommendations to the governor about such initiatives as school-to-work.¹ The Council has also conducted needs assessments on a variety of customer groups, and has established statewide goals and core performance measures for service delivery.

The Texas Workforce Commission, state-level agency responsible for administering workforce development programs, replaced the Texas Employment Commission (TEC) and all its previous functions as of June 1, 1996. The TWC is built on the infrastructure of the TEC, which was the fiscal agent and grant administrator for One-Stop implementation. TEC administered all unemployment insurance (UI) and employment service (ES) funds through 11 regional offices and 200 local offices and service points. TEC also administered a variety of other programs including Work and Family Policies, Job Counseling for Displaced Homemakers, Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA), Veterans Employment (VETS), Project RIO (Reintegration of Offenders), and was the contractor selected by the Texas Department of Human Services for the delivery of JOBS and Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSE&T) delivery.

The State Occupation Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC) which had previously been housed under the Texas Employment Commission, will also move under TWC’s umbrella. SOICC will continue its mandate to coordinate the development and dissemination of labor market, occupational, and career information for five agencies: (1) the Texas Education Agency (TEA) including K-12 and higher

¹ The State Council has the planning grant for School-to-Work in Texas. Implementation has been moved from Higher Education (THECB) to the Texas Workforce Commission.

education; (2) the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB); (3) the Texas Department of Commerce (TDOC); (4) the Texas Rehabilitation Commission; and (5) the former Texas Employment Commission.

Finally, the TWC is now responsible for administering a number of workforce development programs that were previously administered by other agencies. Thus, TWC is currently responsible for all the programs included in Table 1.

With the exception of TEC, all other agencies that previously administered workforce development programs remain intact, having relinquished authority over only those programs merged into the Workforce Commission. By March, 1996, JTPA and other programs formerly administered by Texas Department of Commerce's workforce division, as well as JOBS and Food Stamp Employment and Training, had merged with TEC under the Workforce Commission. Other programmatic responsibilities under the Commission include the regulation of proprietary schools, Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS), relevant child care programs, and adult basic education. Most of the agencies listed above continue to coordinate their workforce planning efforts through representation on the State Council.²

A "One-Stop implementation team" was formed in January 1995 as an inter-agency team under the direction the former executive director of the State Council. This One-Stop team was comprised of staff assigned from TEC, TDOC, the Texas Education Agency (TEA), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS). In February, 1996, these five part time staff members of the One-Stop implementation team were replaced by two full time employees of the One-Stop office under the Texas Workforce Commission.³

² This is done through representation by the Chairs of the State Board of Education, THECB, the Texas Workforce Commission, and the presiding officers of the Board of Human Service and TDOC's Policy Advisory Board.

³ For the purpose of this profile, "One-Stop Implementation Team," or "State One-Stop Team" are used to refer both the agency team, comprised of representatives from 5 agencies, in place from 1/95-2/96 and the full-time staff of the One-Stop office under TEC/Workforce Commission in existence after 2/15/96.

Table 1
Programs Administered by the Texas Workforce Commission

<u>Programs</u>	<u>Previous Administrative Entity</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployment Insurance (UI) • Employment Service (ES) • Work and Family Policies • Job Counseling for Displaced Homemakers • Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) • Job Corps • Veterans Employment (VETS) • Project RIO 	<i>Texas Employment Commission</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JTPA • Literacy programs 	<i>Texas Department of Commerce (TDOC)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adult Education • Proprietary school regulation • Apprenticeship training • Education and job training coordination 	<i>Texas Education Agency (TEA)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-secondary vocational and technical job training (CJT) 	<i>Community Colleges, School Districts</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • JOBS and related employment and child care programs • Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSE&T) • Program support for JOBS and FSE&T 	<i>Texas Department of Human Services (TDHS)</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior Citizens Employment 	<i>Texas Department on Aging</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School-to-Work (Planning Activities) 	<i>Texas Council on Workforce and Economic Competitiveness</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Service 	<i>Governor's Office</i>

State Framework for Local Governance

HB 1863, in addition to mandating the consolidation of all workforce development programs, encouraged the formation of local workforce development boards. Article 11 of HB 1863 established a framework for decentralized planning through these boards, which were to be made up of representatives from the business, labor, and education sectors, as well as community based-organizations and the general public. Although the state expects that local workforce boards will become the most prevalent system of local governance, local areas retain the option to maintain distinct advisory and governing bodies such as Private Industry Councils (PICs), Job Service Employer Committees (JSECs), Quality Workforce Planning Committees (QWFPCs), or other multi-agency management teams. At the time of the evaluation visit, 12 out of 28 workforce development areas in the state had completed applications for workforce development boards and seven had been certified.

The Texas Workforce Commission plays three roles vis-à-vis these boards: it administers state funds, oversees the operation of the boards, and provides advice to local boards and centers. As fiscal agent, the Commission continues to be the state administrator of workforce development funds. In its oversight capacity, the Commission reviews local workforce development board plans to insure that local areas have met a set of minimum criteria for certification, and then forwards its recommendations on to the State Council and to the Governor for final approval. The Texas Workforce Commission is also charged with conducting on-site reviews to ensure that minimum criteria for local One-Stops are met. In its advisory capacity to local boards, the Commission has disseminated “Workforce Development Board Planning Guidelines” to the 28 designated workforce delivery areas in the state. When requested, the Commission provides technical assistance to local areas in the process of forming boards.

Local boards in turn are responsible for planning, contracting, oversight, and evaluation of local service providers, but the maintenance of federal standards for categorical programs is the joint responsibility of boards and the Texas Workforce Commission. One major difference between the system of local boards and previous systems is the separation of administrative and service delivery provision functions. Under the workforce board system, local areas will have much greater discretion in selecting service providers, including the possible option of selecting non-governmental

entities to deliver local workforce development services funded by DOL and other federal and state sources.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The One-Stop implementation team has served as a facilitator for inter-agency communication among various partners, has helped to coordinate discussion on integration of workforce development programs at the state level, and has provided a central point of contact at the state for many local One-Stop sites.

During the initial stages of One-Stop implementation, a crucial step for creating the conditions for state-level communications involved the formation of an interagency One-Stop team. Prior to the formation of the integrated TWC, this team began to formulate innovative ideas and practices for encouraging inter-agency partnering. The One-Stop team's function of facilitating inter-program communication at the state level may become less important over time as the integration of TWC becomes complete. As staff cohesion builds within the Workforce Commission, it is likely to become easier to elicit input from different workforce development programs under the Commission and to promote cross-program staffing and training.

In terms of providing a point of contact at the state for many local One-Stop sites, the One-Stop team is likely to continue to play an important role. The team has created both formal and informal mechanisms for communication between the state and local areas making the transition to One-Stop Centers. These mechanisms include:

- *Participating directly* in helping to solve problems that arise in existing or planned One-Stop implementation areas. One-Stop team respondents see their role as facilitators for One-Stop Center operators. In this capacity, the One-Stop team often advocates on behalf of local Centers among the various state agency partners.
- *Convening regional forums* held at different locations within the state to communicate about One-Stop activities at the state level, and to determine regional concerns, solicit input, and identify local One-Stop priorities and barriers.
- *Providing a channel of information from local sites to various policy-making and technical assistance entities.* The One-Stop team, for example, maintains regular communication with SOICC and the State Council. Based on the experience of local Centers, the team provides input to state-level workgroups charged with such tasks as developing performance measurement and evaluation standards.

- *Holding local conferences* with program staff, Career Center operators, and, where applicable, with local workforce development boards, either existing or in the process of formation. For staff and Center operators, these conferences are intended to present progress reports from pilot sites, status reports on state systems, and models of One-Stop development. Although these meetings often grow out of formal bi-annual One-Stop benchmark visits, the discussions that follow are often very informal.

Program administrators in local areas saw direct communication with the state One-Stop team as extremely valuable. One local respondent described the team as a strong advocate for One-Stops, “trying to grease the skids” with the variety of partner state agencies involved in One-Stop. Periodic meetings with local One-Stop partners are also an extremely important part of the state-level One-Stop team’s communication efforts. These meetings are designed to “bring to the table” representatives from as many One-Stop partner agencies as possible. It has been the experience of the state One-Stop team that informal communication is often most effective, and these meetings are characterized as often *informational* and *interactive*.

These informal meetings often grow out of more formalized “benchmarking” visits, which are based on a set of broad, but clear targets. With the recognition that “expertise regarding how One-Stop should be implemented is at the local level,” benchmarking is based primarily on local self-assessments, with visits from the state One-Stop team intended for verification. State respondents emphasize the importance of inter-agency teams in site visits, with teams generally comprised of two visitors from different agencies. These teams look for measured progress, and attempt to avoid being “overly quantitative” in their assessments.

The benchmarking visits are intended to provide the opportunity for local sites to describe their current situation and the problems they have encountered. In addition to benchmarking by the state, the use of peer resources for mutual technical assistance is strongly encouraged, end-of-implementation-year reviews are conducted by peer review teams, and representatives of local area One-Stops have formed quality assistance groups using peer review processes.

Many sites approach these processes as an opportunity to cull suggestions and request technical assistance from state staff and peer reviewers, while other sites prefer to deal with any problems they encounter locally. State respondents indicated that they respect both approaches, and that they are concerned with maintaining flexibility in

dealing with a wide range of concerns related to communicating with local sites while continuing to communicate the need for systemic reform and program consolidation. They emphasized that a coordinated plan for state-to-local communication must take into consideration the variety of forms that One-Stop has adopted in different parts of the state and the varying stages of development at existing or planned One-Stop sites.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

The state has used One-Stop implementation funding to realize its vision of promoting One-Stop pilot projects throughout the state, and to develop a sophisticated technological infrastructure capable of supporting labor market and other information systems. During the first and second year of the One-Stop Implementation grant, Texas received a total of \$13.4 million (including \$1.7 million in LMI funding the first year to support the One-Stop initiative). Approximately \$3.5 million (roughly one-quarter) of the total One-Stop funding across both years has been reserved for use at the state level to support the development of financial systems, performance measurement and evaluation systems, and the development and refinement of technology-based customer products, such as the state's career information systems and occupational wage database.

Of the remaining implementation and LMI grant funds, \$500,000 has been allocated to providing financial incentives for the formation of local workforce development boards, \$5 million has been provided to 12 local areas to support the implementation of "pilot" One-Stop systems, \$2.5 million has been earmarked for supporting One-Stop system development in the 16 areas that did not receive pilot funding, and \$1.5 million has been allocated to support local implementation efforts related to improved LMI, including the purchase of hardware and software to implement the state's career information systems and to develop eligibility and assessment software for the pilot sites.

Perhaps the most important issue in Texas One-Stop development in the future will have to do with the integration of funding streams. When legislation mandating program consolidation (HB 1863) was passed, it was anticipated that many of the fiscal accountability issues associated with categorical funding streams would have disappeared by fiscal year 1997 with block granting of federal workforce development programs. During the time of the site visit, it appeared much less likely than it had even a year before that Congress would pass block grant legislation for workforce programs. This situation has to some extent hindered Texas' plans for administering

integrated services, because all of the reporting and eligibility issues and regulatory requirements of the DOL categorical programs are still in force.

At the time of the evaluation visit, for example, the state was reluctant to pilot the cost-sharing approaches described in the DOL cost allocation TAG, largely because of concerns about potential audit exceptions. Nevertheless, the approach to integrated workforce development systems supported by the state implies that the services provided by One-Stop centers *will* be supported using funding for categorical programs. Under these conditions, local workforce development boards and local service providers will continue to be responsible for expending moneys from each categorical funding stream in a manner that is consistent with the legislative and regulatory requirements for individual programs.

Another unexpected challenge faced in One-Stop implementation in Texas had to do with the issue of preparing physical facilities for One-Stop delivery. During the planning process, the degree to which facilities issues would become important had been underestimated. Many existing state buildings were not suitable for One-Stop Centers, leaving many potential Centers the option of either investing in renovation of existing structures or leasing commercial space, which also often required some alteration of floor plans to accommodate One-Stops. Key respondents noted that it has been a time-consuming process to obtain federal waivers for the expenditure of One-Stop grants on the rehabilitation or renovation of physical facilities.

RELEVANCE OF THE STATE DESIGN TO THE FOUR FEDERAL GOALS

Universal Access

One-Stop Centers are envisioned as central points of access to information and services that address the needs of all individuals in an area. An important objective of Texas's One-Stop system is the achievement of the federal goal of *universality*, interpreted as giving "all population groups, including individuals and employers, access to a broad array of services and information from a comprehensive assortment of employment, education and training programs." "Customer empowerment" is a key concept in the realization of universality.

To achieve universal access, the state has implemented a system of three tiers of service. In this system, the majority of customers access self-service options (the first tier), with progressively smaller numbers of customers participating in group services (the second tier), and then individualized services (the third tier). By providing access

to more self-directed services, the emerging One-Stop system can manage an increasing number of customers in an environment of diminishing funding for employment and training.

Career Centers are committed to providing a professional atmosphere providing access to high-quality information and services regardless of whether individuals are eligible for specific programs. At the same time, several questions still remain regarding the degree to which the vision of universal access will cause a shift of resources and opportunity from targeted populations to a universal population. Respondents indicated that services to targeted populations would remain an important component within the state's One-Stop vision and planning despite the goal of working toward serving a universal population. Key respondents are aware of the continuing needs of special populations, and believe it necessary to honor an ethical commitment to see that they continue to be appropriately served.

The provision of services to a universal population, therefore, is perceived as an incremental process requiring a balancing of the needs of targeted populations with the needs of the broader public. As described below, optimizing self-directed services (including improving public access to a variety of electronic technologies and printed reference materials) and expanding opportunities for group and specialized services are important steps toward reaching the federal goal of universality.

Customer Choice

Improving customer choice for workforce development services is seen as one of the most crucial objectives within the statewide One-Stop system. Important keys to enhancing customer choice are (1) providing access to quality comprehensive information and (2) working to help customers understand the range of workforce development options available to them.

A major response to the federal objective of *customer choice* has been the development of access to a variety of technological options. All One-Stops are required to submit plans to provide for coordinated use of existing and planned technological resources, including direct on-site access to labor market and career development information through user-friendly terminals in One-Stop Career Centers. Job listings can also be accessed from remote home or business locations, and through "Job Express" kiosks located in many areas throughout the state (see section on LMI below).

Customer choice is achieved by providing “tiers” of service made up of “self-service” options and “enhanced” services:

- Tier I Information & Self-Service.* This service tier includes self-directed information searches of computerized LMI and education and training options, as well as use of printed and audio-visual reference materials.
- Tier II Group Services.* Services available in this service tier include workshops on the job search process, explanations of UI benefits, and job matching.
- Tier III Intensive & Individualized Services.* Services in this tier are provided by case managers, who serve as customers’ primary contact within the system. These more personal services are considered very necessary components of a responsive service delivery system. They are generally available through categorically funded programs.

By providing a flexible design in which customers have a choice of service level, the system frees staff members from many formerly routine activities, giving them more time to provide more personal assistance for those customers who need it. Moreover, by encouraging the efforts of One-Stops to coordinate with other agencies and community groups, the state has actively promoted the concept of broad-based community participation in the provision of employment and training services to people with serious barriers to employment.

Integrated Services

The goal of the Texas One-Stop system is to transform service delivery from a program-based approach to a system geared to meeting the needs of the individuals served. One-Stops are strongly encouraged to establish linkages with other organizations and systems to develop a “holistic approach” to meeting client needs. Centers are expected to take active steps to become the principal points of contact for employers and individuals for *any* employment related activity. Toward these goals, One-Stops are required to demonstrate increasing levels of program integration over time.

In addition to providing access to all required DOL-funded programs by the end of the first implementation year, all One-Stops are required to submit a plan to provide full access to programs mandated by HB 1863, such as Food Stamp Employment and

Training, JOBS, and Adult Education programs. Other minimum criteria for local One-Stop systems include providing labor market information, implementing common intake and eligibility, and assessing individual needs. Depending on local visions for One-Stops, Career Centers are encouraged to establish links with other governmental and non-governmental programs with a focus on workforce development, and to provide on-site access to as many other non-mandated services as feasible.

At present, statewide One-Stop system integration in Texas is based upon sharing information among service providers and the coordination of activities among programs. Although programmatic cross-training is not a requirement for One-Stop sites, local partners are encouraged to develop cross-program training related to the specific circumstances at individual sites.

Nearly all our respondents emphasized that One-Stop implementation should be thought of as a continuing process. Much of the success of service integration will ultimately depend on the ability to manage a diversity of funding streams in such a way as to create “seamless services” from the customer’s perspective. The broad scope of integration efforts mandated by HB 1863 has also created a series of challenges. As described in the section on MIS below, some of these challenges involve realizing the goals of integrated intake and case management across a broad range of the Workforce Commission programs.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

There is a strong commitment in Texas to establishing a One-Stop system that is *performance-driven* and *outcome-based*. The State Council has been instrumental in developing a core set of performance measures approved by the governor in 1994. These are based on labor market outcomes (entered employment rate, earnings gain rate, and employment retention rate), a variety of learning outcomes (educational achievement rate), access equity measures, and customer satisfaction/quality assurance measures for individual One-Stop Centers. In addition to state efforts, a variety of locally designed performance measures have been designed.

The State Council, in consultation with SOICC, has provided a set of clear outcome-based performance standards for One-Stops spanning the range of existing Workforce Commission programs. In addition, local sites and regional One-Stop networks are to establish procedures for measuring performance relevant to local conditions. For example, several of the Centers have sign-in sheets and customer

satisfaction surveys, which in addition to surveys on customer satisfaction and usage included SOICC LMI programs, allows them to document the number of clients served, document Center use, and incorporate customer feedback into the local planning process. Other Centers have considered issuing cards to customers that would be used like library cards and enable Centers to track service utilization patterns.

Performance measurements under a One-Stop environment, however, continue to be a conceptual challenge at both the state and local levels, particularly for service providers that have traditionally focused on measuring performance within distinct categorical programs. State respondents have argued that the first three One-Stop goals of universal access, customer choice, and integrated or “seamless” services require a “paradigm shift” in the way that performance and outcomes are measured. Issues such as who gets credit for placement among various agencies involved in One-Stop are less relevant than in the past, particularly in light of the desire to efficiently consolidate workforce development services.

Key respondents pointed to several major changes that have occurred since programmatic performance measures were conceptualized. One major change is the ability of individuals to gain electronic access to job and training information. Another change has to do with the gradual shift in the employer/employee “social contract” regarding life-time employment. Under these conditions, respondents believed that measures should be geared toward strategies that emphasize “success in life-long learning” and minimizing periods of unemployment. Existing programmatic measures were criticized as taking an “overly-narrow view of the real benefits of workforce development.” As a result, respondents argued for taking into consideration the possibility that *job* security may no longer be a realistic goal, and that long-term *employment* security may be a more adequate measure of systemic success. In the absence of comprehensive systemic measures, the state has continued to build on existing program-based performance standards in addition to addressing the new performance issues associated with integrated workforce development systems.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

State capacity and technical assistance has been implemented through two major avenues: ad-hoc “team-building” at local Centers and more formal “regional forums.” These approaches are briefly described below.

From late 1994 through 1995, there was a dedicated staff position for One-Stop capacity building. Recently, however—in part because of the reorganization of state-level workforce development efforts—many of the state’s planned “capacity building” efforts have been deferred until after the consolidation of the Workforce Commission is completed. At the time of the site visit, there were no designated “capacity building” personnel, but the Workforce Commission’s Technical Assistance Director, together with other members of the One-Stop team, served as *de facto* facilitators for local team building.

Much of their work was done informally, and can best be described as “putting out brush-fires” through conflict management with Career Center partners. When technical assistance teams are asked to address local inter-agency issues, they often initiate day-long meetings with key local agency representatives with the objective of finding ways to overcome obstacles to cooperation. State teams are able to approach these local group-building exercises with a good deal of sympathy because they have all gone through a similar process of forming state-level inter-agency teams.

A major challenge to capacity building throughout the state revolved around the question of how to build strong local partnerships in an era of declining overall funding for workforce development. State respondents were clear in their understanding that program consolidation and declining funding might create “winners and losers” among various One-Stop partners, and this reality made the “selling” of the idea of forming partnerships and strategic alliances difficult. State respondents, however, continually emphasized the degree to which One-Stop concepts were accepted enthusiastically in many areas of the state, and that there was enough “local wisdom” in the majority of these areas to build effective One-Stop Centers.

Four regional capacity building forums took place in September and October, 1995 on such themes as discussion of the state’s One-Stop framework, managing the change process, and customer satisfaction. As part of its efforts to further promote its vision of One-Stop Career Centers, the Workforce Commission also recently sponsored a major capacity building initiative in the form of a statewide “Texas Career Center Conference” in May 1996 that was attended by approximately 1200 participants (also see “Marketing” below).

The state team continues to encourage local Centers to cross-train their partners, and to voice their concerns about collaboration in a constructive way. Consensus

building is seen as a process that demands time, a commitment among partners to “put all their issues on the table,” and a willingness to go through all of the stages of group process. Key One-Stop players believe that the rewards of maintaining a central vision, and seeing this vision become realized, are great. In spite of the many challenges involved in capacity building, one state respondent reported that “we constantly hear that doing Career Centers is *fun*. People are genuinely excited about going to work, and about making this happen.”

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

The state of Texas has consistently excelled in developing enhanced labor market information (LMI) and other technology-based products, and customer access to information technology is seen as a cornerstone of the Texas One-Stop system. SOICC has been responsible for developing recent career development systems. These have included a case management tool (called RESCUE) originally intended to help dislocated workers determine the type of training needed in order to speed re-entry into the labor market and a user-friendly comprehensive career information delivery system (called Texas CARES) oriented to career exploration for people with little work experience. SOICC also continues to update work on existing labor market information systems including expanding the labor market planning capabilities of its LMI system. SOICC is also the lead organization in a national consortium to develop a consumer report system (CRS).

RESCUE has most recently been adopted by the Texas One-Stop Career Centers to assist the larger audience of Texas citizens who are using it to explore career alternatives and develop personal action plans for career development. This product provides information about occupations, training programs, social services, public schools and colleges, regional industries and employers, and a variety economic and demographic information. Texas CARES combines approaches intended to develop self-knowledge and to access occupational and educational information, and allows users to explore both educational and occupational options. The system integrates video materials, “help balloons” and various easily understandable icons which assist users in finding information on career skills and other occupational information. It was expected that CARES and RESCUE would be accessible at nearly all of the One-Stop centers by the end of June, 1996.

The Workforce Commission's labor exchange electronic labor exchange system (Job Express) provides an additional tool for implementing a vision of an "information-driven workforce development system" that is readily accessible to individual customers and responsive to employer needs. Currently, 40% to 50% of all job listings on Job Express are "unsuppressed," allowing job-seekers to contact employers directly through a self-directed electronic job search. Another 30-40% of job listings are "partially unsuppressed" (i.e. the job description is available to all customers, but the employer's name is not shown). Partially unsuppressed listings require some screening by local offices, which determine if the prospective employee meets the minimal qualifications for the position and verify whether the position is still available. Only 20% of statewide job listings are currently "fully suppressed," available to job seekers only through the Workforce Commission.

Job Express can be accessed through Workforce Commission offices and One-Stop Centers, and is also available through a toll-free bulletin board service (BBS) and through Job Express "Kiosks." Customers can find these kiosks in areas of high pedestrian traffic, such as malls and 24-hour discount stores located throughout the state. In addition to providing access to the Job Express database, these kiosks are connected to America's Job Bank, which contains job listings from all over the country, and the Governor's Job Bank, which lists State government employment opportunities. At the time of the state visit, the Job Express system had experienced in a one-year period a six-fold increase in the number of customers accessing the automated system or "hits." There are currently plans to provide access to several of these information systems through the Workforce Commission's World Wide Web site.

Other information systems and technology-based products in existence or under development include:

- an automated planning model and database (SOCRATES), which provides extensive labor market information to public planners, employers, workforce development specialists, and labor market analysts within each of the 24 Quality Work Force Planning Committees in the state;
- a Consumer Report System (CRS), for which Texas is the lead state in a consortium of six states. CRS database and application software is intended to supply "report cards" on the labor market outcomes achieved by participants in local education and training offerings; and

- a geographic-based system called GEM which provides demographic, employment, and income information for each of Texas' 254 counties, in an easily understandable narrative form. This system was scheduled to be tested in Texas Career Centers on or near the time of the evaluation visit.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

The state has attempted to take the lead in the development of information systems to support integrated client services, including the development of an integrated system for eligibility and intake and for the sharing of service referral, case management, and program outcome information across program partners.

Restructuring of management information systems in Texas is taking place both against the background of consolidation of workforce programs and in an era of rapidly evolving computer technologies that have allowed for the provision of a variety of information services to customers. But although clear progress has been made in some areas, such as voice-activated UI claims-taking, progress in other areas has been slowed down by a variety of obstacles, including competition among different state agency partners and their proposed MIS contractors, the distinct reporting needs of different categorical funding streams, and concerns about confidentiality.

The automation of unemployment insurance (UI) benefits through voice response units (VRUs) is one example of the automation of formerly routine staff activities. Applicants for continuing UI benefits can now file their claims through a completely automated telephone system. Most beneficiaries of UI now choose the option of using VRU services rather than coming into Workforce Commission offices to file claims. This system also has the benefit of offering the flexibility to accommodate non-English language speakers—it is currently available to speakers of Spanish, and can easily be modified to serve members of other large minority language groups in Texas, such as speakers of Chinese and Vietnamese.

In 1995, new computer systems requirements occasioned by the One-Stop initiative, the rapid consolidation of programs, and the resultant need for greater flexibility, prompted the Commission to phase out its mainframe system in favor of modular computer systems based on “scaleable platforms.” In the past, TEC had made prescriptive choices about the design of information systems; now, however, because of the existence of a myriad of local information systems architectures and communications infrastructures representing large capital investments, and because of plans to design a single client database for integrated intake and case management, an

“open” architectural system was designed to accommodate existing information systems. A TCPIP-based network was put in place in order to give local areas access to wage and job information, and to allow for an eventually-integrated client management system (CMS). This new “Texas Workforce Integration Network” system (TWIN) will also provide a gateway to the internet and a variety of other communication services.

However, although the technical capacity for sophisticated MIS exists in Texas, development of common application and eligibility systems and systems for integrated assessment and case management—all key elements of the state’s original One-Stop proposal—has been delayed due to a variety of obstacles. Under competitive bidding arrangements for information systems, different agencies formed partnerships with different computer and information companies. Because of this competition, respondents noted that state One-Stop partner agencies were less likely to collaborate in building integrated systems. After a series of discussions involving the respective legal departments of various state agencies, for example, no consensus had been reached on standards for common intake and eligibility, let alone for integrated assessment and case management.

All respondents agreed that there were substantive issues of confidentiality, particularly in a One-Stop environment where non-governmental employees might be able to gain access to confidential information on individuals or employers. In order to deal with these potential problems, adequate training in the ethical issues related to confidentiality and clients’ rights would be required, and proper sanctions would have to be in place when those ethics were violated. Respondents, however, see the current debate on confidentiality as more a legal and political problem than a technical one, suggesting that a variety of “firewalls” and access codes could be a part of a system-level endeavor to safeguard confidentiality. Respondents stressed, however, that although *state-level* efforts have been delayed, various *locally initiated efforts* at the level of either regional “networks” of One-Stops or individual Career Centers have progressed, and have often outpaced state MIS development efforts. Several local sites, for example, have developed their own common intake and eligibility procedures, and several are in the process of linking these information systems through wide area networks.

Marketing

Until fairly recently, local sites have had the major responsibility for their developing their own marketing plans, with the state acting in a supportive role. By providing local areas with information and prototypes used in marketing campaigns in a variety of locations throughout the state and nation, the state used a “tool kit” approach to helping local sites with marketing.

More recently, the state has been involved in directly promoting the One-Stop concept. At the time of the evaluation visit, state-level marketing efforts were tied to planning for a large and well publicized conference which was to take place in Dallas at the end of May, 1996. The conference was to have the dual purpose of introducing the new Workforce Commission and promoting the state’s vision of One-Stop Career Centers to the larger public. Central to One-Stop marketing efforts was the establishment of a “common identity” for Career Centers throughout the state. It was expected that the upcoming conference would generate considerable media publicity in the form of newspaper, television, and radio commentaries.

Internal marketing efforts were to include a “simulated career center” in which agency partners would showcase their vision of a One-Stop Center in operation, intended to help conferees understand how a non-program-based case management system serving “multiple target populations” was intended to function. Live interactive tours of the office were being planned throughout of the conference. Another marketing effort tied to the conference involved displays of children’s artwork related to career goals.

Longer-term goals of the marketing team within the Workforce Commission’s Office of Public Information and Media included the development of a *cohesive identity* for the statewide One-Stop system. In this respect, the team faced several challenges. First, it was recognized that One-Stop Centers in the state varied greatly in their institutional histories (e.g., the configuration of “lead” partners and the degree of participation by partner agencies and community organizations). Second, “buy-in” of top Workforce Commission leadership on a comprehensive marketing plan was necessary, but this process had met with delays during reorganization, because its leadership was still in the process of establishing priorities and delineating various roles and responsibilities within the new organization. As a result of these delays, regional One-Stop systems and local Centers were not waiting for the state to introduce

marketing plans, and were independently pursuing a variety of local marketing strategies.

Therefore, much of the state's concern had to do with the *timing* of their marketing efforts, and how marketing efforts would be accepted by local sites. Local sites had come up with a variety of names for their centers, and while many had "Career Center" in their names, others did not. In many cases, local areas had invested considerable time and money in their own marketing efforts, and part of the question for state marketing personnel was "how to get the horses back in the corral." If the state were to take a strong lead in building a cohesive identity for One-Stop, there was concern that they would be faced with a "hard sell to get some sites to drop their local identities."

As a part of their marketing efforts, a new logo had been designed with the designation "Texas Career Centers," and was to be used on state publicity materials as of June 1996. Local sites which had been certified as One-Stop Centers could place logo decals on their front doors, and use it as a part of their signage. It was suggested that use of the new logo by Career Centers would be similar to a "Good Housekeeping seal of approval," and would imply that centers displaying the logo would have services meeting state standards. Agreement on a standardized name for One-Stops throughout the state had some other important real-life implications for customers. For example, in light of the high degree of labor mobility in Texas, a cohesive identity and a standard name would help individuals to easily locate these "Career Centers" when coming to a new area.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The state of Texas has a highly ambitious One-Stop vision that emphasizes the use of a variety self-service electronic technologies to complement group services and case management. In designing its One-Stop system, the state has emphasized a flexible approach suitable for a large state characterized by diversity and a desire for local autonomy. At the same time, the state has maintained its commitment to providing adequate levels of technical assistance and support for local implementation areas. The experience of building a state-level inter-agency team prior to One-Stop implementation has facilitated the process of establishing local Career Centers. This emphasis on inter-agency coordination, and the obstacles involved with such coordination, has given the state's One-Stop team a deep understanding of the issues that arise at local levels, and of the means to facilitate team building.

The Texas approach to One-Stop design and implementation is characterized by several features, including: (1) strong state leadership to create a consolidated workforce development system; (2) recognition of the importance of local variations in the organization, design, and delivery of services; (3) an organizational structure that emphasizes participation in planning and governance at both the state and local levels; (4) a vision of tiered services; (5) the development of relevant and useful indicators of system-wide performance including customer needs assessment and measures of customer satisfaction; and (6) a continuing emphasis on improving a well-developed technological infrastructure.

SOICC has been a major force in providing many of the information-related tools which are a key component of the state's vision of emphasizing an "inverted pyramid" of services, in which the largest proportion of customers will have convenient access to a variety of self-service options. In particular, SOICC has developed an impressive array of LMI modules, with many different applications geared to a variety of audiences. The state One-Stop team has also developed a thoughtful "benchmarking" instrument, which is not only a tool for state oversight of local areas, but also promotes understanding of the types of technical assistance required by individual One-Stops. Although local reactions to benchmarking vary from place to place, many local sites find the process helpful in determining how far they have come in the process, and where further efforts are required.

The Texas One-Stop initiative has clearly proceeded rapidly in many areas. State legislation supporting the US DOL's One-Stop goals of increasing collaboration and reducing duplication of efforts has been a key factor in the degree to which One-Stop goals have been vigorously pursued in Texas. By mandating consolidation, the state legislature has provided a foundation to an integrated workforce development system. Under the new system of local workforce development boards, local areas also have the option of increasing their autonomy and flexibility to respond to local workforce development needs.

The consolidation of a very broad range of workforce programs under one administrative entity has at the same time facilitated progress and created a series of challenges. Despite progress in many areas, the state is still in an early stage of development, having just completed its first wave of local One-Stop implementation. The state is also still struggling with several aspects of its One-Stop initiative which have yet to be resolved. Difficulties involved with introducing greater levels of

competition into the system, and developing integrated systems of intake and case management across programs, are some of the examples noted in this profile.

Overall, however, the state of Texas has taken bold and comprehensive measures in furthering the One-Stop initiative. Despite the various challenges described in this profile, the state has profited from the experiences gained in inter-agency consolidation, and has attempted to share these experiences with implementation sites. In its role as facilitator, the state-level team intervenes when appropriate, but prefers to act in a support role by helping local sites during the process of rapid change brought about by the movement to develop a strong and integrated workforce system. There is a recognition that real reforms take time, and that in order for workforce development efforts to succeed in Texas, the process of establishing solid partnerships, at both the state and local levels, is essential.

APPENDIX T

ARLINGTON CAREER CENTER One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During May, 1996

**ARLINGTON CAREER CENTER
ARLINGTON, TEXAS
One-Stop Profile**

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	4
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION.....	7
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES	8
DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	10
Evolution and General Description of Local Design	10
Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Themes	11
Physical Facilities	14
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS	15
Staffing Arrangements	15
Capacity Building.....	15
Management Information Systems (MIS)	16
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements	17
Marketing.....	18
DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS.....	19
Services for Individual Customers	19
Services for Employer Customers.....	21
CUSTOMER RESPONSE	22
Individuals	22
Employers	23
INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN	24
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	25

ARLINGTON CAREER CENTER

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

Arlington is a city of approximately 300,000 within the Dallas-Fort Worth metropolitan area, located mid-way between Dallas and Fort Worth. A product of rapid urban/suburban development over the last thirty years, Arlington and its environs are still in the process of developing the physical and social services infrastructure typical of longer-established urban areas. For example, Arlington is currently the largest urban area in the U.S. without a public transportation system. The development of the Arlington Career Center as part of a county-wide One-Stop workforce development system reflects an interest among local elected officials to develop a “state-of-the-art” human services delivery system to meet the needs of Arlington residents.

Tarrant County, which contains both Fort Worth and Arlington, has a diversified manufacturing base. However, by the end of the 1980s, the economy was highly defense-dependent. As a result, the local economy was adversely affected by the down-sizing among defense industry contractors that was a national trend between 1990 and 1995. The dislocation among local defense industry workers awakened an awareness among local community leaders of the importance of making workforce development services accessible to Arlington residents. To realize locally-based workforce development services, Arlington separated itself in 1994 from the Fort Worth service delivery area (SDA) for the JTPA system and joined the Balance of Tarrant County SDA. As part of the Tarrant County SDA, Arlington was able to secure its own JTPA service center while planning for the development of One-Stop workforce development services.

The Arlington Career Center (“Center”) is part of a network of seven career centers and three satellite offices developed in Tarrant County as part of the One-Stop career center initiative. Workforce development agency partners at the Arlington site have a strong recent history of collaboration that pre-dates the One-Stop Implementation Grant. As described in greater detail in the section on governance below, a local Job Training Interim Committee was initiated in 1994. Regular committee meetings over an 18 month period led to the establishment of the Arlington

Career Center as a One-Stop center based on interagency collaboration and planning and coordinated service delivery.

The stated vision of the Arlington Career is to provide a “One-Stop Career Center which serves individuals from all segments of the community with useful information and integrated services that develop job related skills and connect job seekers with employment opportunities.”

Several interrelated factors have influenced the context within which the local One-Stop vision continues to emerge and take shape. Significant contextual variables include: (1) the importance of early pilot funding from the state to support the development of the local One-Stop vision; (2) strong local support from elected officials and agencies, including community block grant support for the development of a new career center facility; (3) a commitment to strong interagency communication and coordination among local workforce development and human service agencies; (4) strong leadership within the local workforce development partnership from the local JTPA administrative entity; (5) uncertainty about how the different partners will work together in a new county-wide workforce development system; and (6) the need to respond to the lack of transportation resources in the local community. Each of these factors is briefly described below.

- *Tarrant County was a recipient of one of the first five local One-Stop pilot implementation grants awarded within Texas.* As one of the first One-Stop implementation sites in the state, the Center has had time to develop many of the key aspects of its One-Stop vision.
- *The Center has profited from strong local political and community support.* In response to a 1992 United Way study that identified unemployment, underemployment, and skills deficits among adults in the Arlington community, support emerged for enhanced workforce development services. In 1993, a consensus was reached among political leaders and service providers that individuals and businesses would benefit from a career center, and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were allocated for a Center. By the spring of 1995, nearly \$1.3 million in CDBG funds had been earmarked for the purchase and/or renovation of a local career center facility.
- *There is a commitment to inter-agency coordination and communication throughout the county.* There is a history of inter-agency coordination in Arlington and a continuing interest among partners in the One-Stop project to link various social services and workforce development efforts.

- *The Center is an example of a JTPA-led program working in close partnership with the local Texas Workforce Commission offices to encourage a broad interagency partnership at the Center.* The Center's vision has been to include as many partners as feasible into the activities of the Center, including not only the operators of the mandated programs (e.g., JTPA, ES), but also community based organizations, local training providers and social service agencies. This continuing drive to promote wide partnership at the Center builds on County experiences of inter-agency coordination and communication, which began even before the One-Stop initiative.
- *The dynamic context within which One-Stop is emerging offers many challenges.* These include the relatively recent nature of workforce development services based in the Arlington community, uncertainty about which agencies will continue to provide what types of services, and difficulties to-date in finding a site large enough to accommodate a wide array of partners.
- *The lack of public transportation in Arlington has provided the impetus for a local network model for the provision of workforce development services.* Lack of public transportation continues to be a barrier for those without cars who need to access workforce development services. In light of this, emphasis has been placed on establishing a network of Centers, ranging from full service Career Centers such as the one in described in this profile, to smaller satellite locations offering a more limited array of services.

As a result of the interaction of multiple factors, the Arlington Career Center has developed a One-Stop Center that builds on partial, rather than full, co-location of interagency partner services. Using the existing JTPA service system as the foundation for on-site Center staff and services, the Arlington Career Center has developed a One-Stop approach that involves of a wide range of interagency partners in planning and providing universal customer services through a variety of on-site, "on-call," and closely coordinated staffing arrangements and service offerings.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Beginning in the summer of 1994, a 22-member Job Training Interim Committee, representing a broad range of workforce development and social service agencies, began meeting on a regular basis. The purpose of these meetings was to explore options for facilitating co-location among partner agencies, sharing key information about agency programs and plans, and developing integrated services. Supported by key staff from the Arlington Human Service Planner's office, the local JTPA administrative entity, and the local Texas Employment Commission office, the planning process culminated in the establishment of the Arlington Job Training Center at its present location in November 1994.

After the Arlington Job Training Center was established as a One-Stop Career Center, governance functions were assumed by a "Site-Based Management Committee," which is currently chaired by the Arlington Center site manager. This committee, comprised of 24 committee members and fifteen ex-officio members, includes broad representation from on-site service providers, and other agencies participating in local One-Stop planning and policy development. It includes a number of individuals who were involved in the initial development of the local One-Stop career center concept.

Simultaneously with the planning and initiation of the Arlington Career Center as a One-Stop center, the county has been preparing for a county-wide transformation of the administration and oversight of workforce development services. Key changes include the consolidation of two Private Industry Councils (one for Fort Worth and one for the Balance of Tarrant County) into a single Workforce Development Board (WDB), which was to have responsibility for county-wide planning, monitoring, and evaluation of workforce development services, including ES, JTPA, school-to-work, welfare-to-work, and adult basic education programs. Each of the old Private Industry Councils held what were expected to be their final meetings in July 1996. All of the members of the WDB have been appointed and "transition" meetings have been held in anticipation of state certification of the new WDB, which was expected to occur by mid-August 1996.

The relationships between the county Workforce Development Board and local career centers had not yet been fully developed at the time of the site visit. However, the broad outlines of their future relationships are clear. State legislation establishing

WDBs call for a separation of planning, evaluation, grants administration, and oversight functions from the delivery of services. Over time, the agencies operating local One-Stop centers will be selected and funded by and receive their policy guidance and oversight from the county WDB.

The key agency partners involved in the Arlington Career Center are described below, with a brief description of the services each provider at the Center:

- *Tarrant County Employment Network (TCEN)*. Prior to the organizational changes associated with initiation of the One-Stop system in Tarrant County, TCEN was the JTPA administrative entity for the Balance of Tarrant County (excluding Fort Worth and three small adjacent cities). TCEN is viewed as the “lead operating agency” for the Arlington Career Center and is also responsible for operating another Tarrant County Career Center. TCEN was also the One-Stop Implementation Grant recipient for Tarrant County during the first and second grant years. The Program Manager for the Arlington Career Center is a TCEN employee. She also currently serves as the chair of the interagency Site-Based Management Committee that oversees Center operations. This position is expected to rotate among partners.
- *Texas Employment Commission/Texas Workforce Commission (TEC/TWC)*.¹ An active partner in the current Center operations, TWC staff participate in the provision of Center services, including employment services, individualized job referrals, veterans assistance, Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) information, unemployment insurance applications, and labor market information. As of May 1, 1996, a full-time JOBS counselor had been stationed at the Center to assist in the transition from welfare to employment. In addition to TWC staff stationed at the Center, additional TWC staff are “on-call” from their office located a block from the Center, are routinely contacted by Center staff, and will walk to the Center to meet customers.
- *Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC)*. TRC is co-located in the One-Stop Center, and their offices occupy about one-third of Center space.

¹ Texas House Bill 1863, which became effective on September 1, 1995, mandated the integration of over twenty workforce development programs from a variety of agencies into a newly created Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). With the exception of the Texas Employment Commission (TEC) which was fully subsumed under the TWC, all of the other agencies continue to exist, losing only authority over the various workforce related programs merged into TWC. By March, 1996, JTPA and the Texas Department of Commerce’s workforce division had completed the merger under TWC, and the Department of Human Service’s JOBS programs and Food Stamp Employment and Training will have moved by June 1, 1996. Former TEC offices are referred to throughout this profile as TWC offices.

TRC provides employment and training services for persons with disabilities, including assessment, case management, job training, and placement services.

- *Tarrant County Junior College (TCJC)*. TCJC offers adult basic education classes at the Center, and also contributes to the operation of an on-site “Learning Center.” TCJC also maintains an on-site presence for a satellite of their *Small Business Development Center*, which provides information to persons seeking to start or expand business.
- *Goodwill Industries*. Goodwill is another key partner in One-Stop planning. Although the Goodwill Rehabilitation Program staff are not currently co-located at the Center, the organization has entered into serious discussions about jointly purchasing a future site with other current partners. Goodwill currently offers on-site computer and clerical training at the Center.
- *Fort Worth Independent School District (FWISD)*. FWISD is a member of the Site-Based Management Committee and offers on-site evening classes in three levels of English as a Second Language (ESL).
- *Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP)*. The local operator of this program is a member of the Site-Based Management Committee. Agency staff are stationed at the Center twice a week for the provision of its Older Worker Program and other services for older individuals.
- *Tarrant County Human Services (TCHS)* sends a representative to the Center on a visiting basis (generally once a week) to provide emergency grants and administer General Assistance (GA) programs.

Other agencies and individuals participate on the Site-Based Management Committee, but do not provide on-site services. A partial list includes:

- *Arlington Independent School District (AISD)*. AISD currently manages a JTPA contract with *Venture Alternative Senior High* which tries to get out-of-school youth back into the school system, and together with groups such as *Arlington Youth Services*, and the *Boys and Girls Club of Arlington* is active in school-to-work programs.
- *Arlington Human Service Planners (AHSP)*. AHSP is the joint social service planning arm of United Way and the city of Arlington.
- *University of Texas Arlington’s Division of Continuing Education*.
- *Private sector representation*. Several private sector representatives provide strategic planning input to the Site-Based Management Committee.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Several formal mechanisms for communication are in place to facilitate communication between and among local One-Stop partners. Some of these are specifically focused on the Arlington Career Center, while others are broader in scope and encompass county-wide efforts in social services and workforce development. Center based communication and coordination mechanisms are described below.

- *The development of a wide-area network with the capacity to support electronic communication* (e.g., e-mail) within the Arlington Center and between Center staff and partner agencies and other network sites, is a high priority and is being addressed as part of the development of the technology infrastructure for local One-Stop operations.
- *The Arlington Site-Based Management Committee* meets on a regular basis to coordinate Center activities, share information on service provision, and establish long-range planning goals for the Center. In addition to full committee meetings, there are also two active sub-committees on *employer services* and *customer satisfaction*.
- *Center-Based Work Groups*, which are teams of front-line staff, meet regularly to discuss current service practices across partner agencies and opportunities for improved coordination or integration of services. These include groups on *customer service, assessment, information services, and employer services*. Two other groups, *scholarship management* and *academic services*, provide information on educational opportunities related to career development. Work groups provide regular updates on their activities at staff meetings.

In addition, several of the One-Stop partner agencies participate in other forums that deal with issues related to broader social service objectives. These include:

- *The Arlington Human Service Planners*, the planning group for social service provision, which seeks to coordinate city services and non-governmental community based organizations.
- *Social Services Providers Network*, a network of managers and front line staff in government and community-based social service agencies.
- *Emergency Assistance of Tarrant County*, an inter-agency forum for providers of emergency assistance.

Active participation by a wide range of agencies is viewed as one of the strengths of the Arlington Center. However, as might be expected in a situation with many active partner agencies, communication and coordination was described as sometimes “unwieldy.” Challenges include the fact that some individuals or agencies “drop in

and out” of active participation because of the large time commitment involved in participation in multiple partnership initiatives. In spite of the challenges involved in coordinating meetings among the diverse membership of the Committee, most of the regular participants saw these scheduled meetings as extremely valuable. Members commented that the Committee provided an important opportunity for service providers to “network” and share information about the array of workforce development programs available at the Center and other sites throughout the county. Respondents said the Committee also allowed members to plan their activities with a view toward the total needs of the community and to reduce interagency duplication of effort.

Communication between local One-Stop actors and the members of the state’s One-Stop Implementation Team was described as taking place on an “as-needed” basis when questions arose. The state’s approach to communication was viewed as emphasizing “top-down” communication, from state staff to *top management staff* from the Center and other participating agencies. Although several key respondents indicated that they would appreciate more regular communication with the state, it was understood that the state One-Stop Team was busy with the transitions mandated by TWC and with preparation for a major conference scheduled for the end of May 1996. The conference was intended to publicize the new Texas Workforce Commission and promote the One-Stop concept through an exhibition of a functioning “model One-Stop Center.”

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES

First year Implementation Grant funding for One-Stop implementation throughout the Tarrant County system funding totaled \$307,000, and second year funding is expected to be \$150,000. During the transition to a local Workforce Development Board, The Tarrant County Employment Network (TCEN) was designated as the fiscal agent to receive Implementation Grant funds. These funds have been used for several purposes, including:

- The staffing of interim positions to develop integrated One-Stop processes and procedures, and to modify MIS systems for the county-wide network.
- The purchase of equipment and materials, such as software and videos, that would be used by a universal customer base and the various partners at One-Stop Career Centers.

Individuals hired for the countywide staff positions funded with the implementation grant have been instrumental in developing management information system linkages between TCEN and other partner agencies and collaborating organizations. Activities carried out by these staff have included configuring computers and networks and installing networking equipment and lines throughout the county Career Center system. These activities will help support the management functions of the newly formed county Workforce Development Board by making it possible to provide access to common client databases, share information across partner agencies, and make the network vision a reality.

In terms of overall Center operations, the integration of multiple funding streams for the provision of universal and integrated services was described as an “operational and conceptual challenge.” At the time of the site visit, there were no formal cost-sharing agreements among Center partners. Even the arrangements for sharing of the physical space at the Arlington Career Center are informal. With the exception of the Texas Rehabilitation Commission, which occupies nearly one-third of the Center facility and houses its entire staff at the Center, none of the partner agencies pays TCEN (the primary lease holder) for space occupied at the Center.

Partners at the Arlington Career Center currently operate shared functions by sharing resources mainly through in-kind contributions of staff and equipment. The Texas Workforce Commission and the Tarrant County Employment Network, for example, have a formal contractual arrangements to maintain staff at the other’s service sites. Tarrant County Junior College has donated furniture and software used in the study room, classroom, conference room, and reception and office areas of the Arlington Career Center’s Learning Center. Goodwill Industries provides instructors for its “quick computer classes” provided at the Center. Four to five slots are reserved in these classes for JTPA participants at no charge (the classes are available to the general public for on a fee-for-service basis) in exchange for space at the Center. Several other partners, including the Senior Community Services Employment Program have contributed publications and other reference materials to the Center’s library.

Despite the fact that these arrangements have worked fairly well to date, TCEN’s fiscal manager indicated the desire to develop formalized cost-sharing agreements, as well as more detailed agreements specifying other non-financial responsibilities and expected benefits among partners at the Center. Center staff are also actively researching possibilities of charging fees for some services both to businesses and

individuals, and are in the process of taking stock of both available resources and Center capabilities. In the opinion of several respondents, local One-Stop centers have the potential to generate their own funds through fee-for-service arrangements, since they are regarded as offering high quality workshops and training. This would enable the Center to expand its business service offerings and make some individual services available to individuals who are not eligible under existing categorical programs.

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of Local Design

The Arlington Career Center came about as the result of a broad based interagency initiative with strong local support and funding. The Arlington Center traces its history to a 1992 study conducted by United Way which identified unemployment, underemployment, and skills deficits among Arlington adults. In response to this study, local officials and community leaders formed a multi-agency team in the summer of 1993, with the goal of developing plans for a locally-based integrated workforce development system. Events moved quickly. By the spring of 1994, Arlington had separated from the Fort Worth SDA, joined the Balance of Tarrant County SDA, and secured PIC approval for plans to develop a career center for the delivery of JTPA services in the city of Arlington. The city government earmarked a \$200,000 community development block grant (CDBG) for the creation of a Job Training Center in Arlington.

The One-Stop concept has continued to receive strong local political support from the office of the mayor and from the county judge, both key positions. In the spring of 1995, the city set aside an additional sum of over \$1 million in CDBG funds for the purchase and/or renovation of a career center facility. When, in November 1995, the Tarrant County Employment Network chose a building that had been vacant for a decade and had been only recently renovated as the site for the new Arlington Career Center, it was hoped that several additional workforce development partners involved in career center planning would be able to locate their own offices in the same complex. However, several of the non-profit organizations which had originally hoped to locate in the same building with the Center were not able to afford rents in the building. Efforts to purchase the building on behalf of several partners were not successful.

Because the physical facility selected for the Arlington Career Center did not lead to full co-location of multiple agency partners, the One-Stop model that has evolved

draws on the combined features of “co-location” and “no-wrong-door” approaches. The service approach emphasizes sharing staff across multiple agencies and local service sites, including part-time and full-time out-stationing of staff from a variety of partner agencies at the Arlington Career Center. Although many agency partners are represented at the Center, the Center has not had to deal with the “culture clash” that is likely to arise from full co-location of large programs with different histories, as has occurred in other One Stop Centers throughout the country that have brought full ES/UI and JTPA operations together at one site.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Themes

Universal Access

Although the Arlington Career Center has grown out of a JTPA-funded service delivery system, the partners at the Arlington Center have developed a service delivery strategy to reach a universal population. Through the implementation of the concept of different tiers of service (e.g., self-service; group services, such as workshops; and intensive individual services) self-service options are used to accommodate an increased volume of individual customers, including individuals from the general public not eligible for specific categorical programs. To enhance the Center’s visibility to a broad customer base, partners in the Center use regular meetings and forums involving Center partners and other agencies, as well as the preparation and distribution of flyers and information packets on Center workshops and services.

The Center also provides extended hours of service three evenings a week, in order to reach working and under-employed persons looking for opportunities to upgrade skills or change careers, as well as to offer increased customer access to Center-based classes in ESL and computer instruction. As described in a later section under core services, most universal services at the Center are accessed through a “Resource Room” and a “Career Library.” The Resource Room, which offers access to the Job Bank, computers, a phone bank, and fax machines, is one of the most popular services offered at the center.

Customer Choice

The Tarrant County network of full-service and satellite career centers is designed to offer county residents a choice of where to access workforce development services. Within the Arlington Career Center, customers are able to access to a wide variety of services.

Currently, the Resource Room and Career Library offer the services available to the general public. Using these self-service options, for example, individuals can research on-line job listings, call job-line numbers, and access labor market information. They can also practice interviewing skills using interactive computer software, use typing and other office software tutorials, locate information on other community resources, and obtain information about scholarships and career training.

Orientation and information sessions let customers know what other services are available. All customers may register for job search assistance and information about UI benefits, or attend a Job Forum, a weekly networking and support group, to which guest speakers, including area employers, are invited to speak.

Individuals eligible for categorical programs such as JTPA, JOBS, TAA, or other services targeted to youth, veterans, older workers, or other target groups are informed about their service options.

Integrated Services

The partners in the Tarrant County Career Center network have adopted a flexible network approach to the provision of One-Stop services, with each of the seven full-service Career Centers in the County offering a different configuration of co-located and “no wrong door” linkages to comprehensive services for Center customers.

Because the facility selected for the Arlington Career Center did not lead to the degree of co-location originally envisioned, service integration among Center partners who are not co-located is expressed through close coordination of activities among partners, resulting in personalized services to Center customers. For example, if an individual Center customer who is a veteran indicates an interest in career or placement counseling, a Veterans’ Services representative from the nearby TWC office is “on call” and will come to the Center to meet with the individual. In general, physical proximity allows for frequent face-to-face and telephone contact between staff of the Arlington Center and nearby TWC staff, and for coordination of services on behalf of individual customers. Although some respondents indicated that there would have been advantages to a greater degree of co-location, others felt that a smaller Center with fewer on-site staff has made it easier to create a “customer-friendly” office, in contrast to a larger-scale facility, which might have had a more bureaucratic atmosphere.

Among staff co-housed at the Arlington Center, while cross-training among staff from different agencies is still in an early stage, there are plans to cross-train staff to

facilitate integration of core services and case management functions. As the lead agency operating the Arlington Career Center, TCEN is committed to providing “seamless services” to customers by promoting coordination among on-site service providers. All staff at the Arlington Center, no matter what agency they work for, are identified by their name badges as “Arlington Career Center” staff. Many of the common functions within the Center, including customer reception, orientation, and intake have been integrated across all in-house staff. The Center appears to have achieved the goal of “seamless” services from the customer perspective, as indicated by the fact that Center customers who participated in focus groups during the site visit were unaware that Center staff were employees of a number of different agencies.

While the Center is faced with many internal management challenges around issues of cost-sharing, cost-accounting, and assigning credit for customer outcomes, there is a clear commitment to ensure that these questions do not become their customers’ problems.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based Measures

Respondents expressed an interest in measuring both the short- and long-term impacts of the One-Stop system. They also felt that accountability issues are changing as part of the transition from an employment and training system that provides personal assistance to individuals and is held accountable for individual placement outcomes, to a system in which many customers may find their own jobs through access to unsuppressed job listings available through electronic bulletin boards accessed at a distance.

Under such conditions, measurement of consumer satisfaction is increasing in importance. A local customer satisfaction team was established to assess individual and employer customer feedback. The team draws on assessment techniques recommended by sources such as the technical assistance guides prepared as part of the ES “Simply Better” initiative. As a result of team efforts, customers using the Center are currently asked to complete a form with suggestions, comments, or complaints. Completed forms are posted in the Resource Room and customer feedback is regularly reported to staff.

Respondents indicated that it is difficult, under the rapidly changing environment prompted by One-Stop, to assign “credit” to any agency for outcomes, as is currently required by a variety of program-specific performance and accountability measures,

particularly since several partner agencies often work with the same customer. Respondent stated that within a One-Stop environment, performance measurements should capture system-wide benefits. Center staff expressed frustration that program-specific performance measures have not kept pace with the rapid changes brought about by the initiation of One-Stop centers.

Physical Facilities

The design of a One-Stop facility has been a major issue for the Arlington Career Center. It was originally envisioned that a common facility would be found to accommodate all of the original partners involved in the design of the Center. In November 1994, TCEN moved into the current Center location. The facility is two blocks from an office of the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), and a half-mile from the Arlington Human Services Complex. For a variety of reasons, other partners were not able to locate in the same complex. Although the Center has adapted to the lack of full co-location at the current facility, the search continues for another location that would permit additional partners to locate with TCEN in a shared “workforce development campus.”

At the present Center location, the main customer entrance leads into an attractive atrium area of the two-story brick office building. A stairway leading to the second floor divides the ground floor into two halves. Turning right from the atrium area, customers enter a small welcome area, where they are greeted by a receptionist. Staff at the Center indicated that having a reception area was a small thing with a big impact, and was influenced by the desire to achieve a “private sector” image. According to one respondent, “[because we have a reception area] there is no bullpen approach—keeping people penned up while waiting for us to call them. Having this space, the receptionist is free to interact with clients.”

Immediately behind the reception area is a Career Library, which has an information desk staffed by a full-time Center employee. Customers can reach the Resource Room either through the Career Library, or by walking down the main corridor. (Services available in the Resource Room and Career Library are described under core services, below.) The remaining portion of the ground floor is occupied by a Learning Center which is used for adult basic education classes and computer courses and by the Texas Rehabilitation Commission. Second floor office space has been leased to private businesses. The exterior of the building is well maintained; there are

landscaped areas with recently planted bushes, and there is adequate customer and staff parking on the side and to the rear of the building.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Staffing Arrangements

Although the local Texas Rehabilitation Commission (TRC) office is the only other agency that is fully co-located with TCEN at the Arlington Career Center, a number of other agencies house some staff on a full-time or part-time basis at the Center. In a parallel fashion, some TCEN staff are outstationed at the TWC offices in Arlington and at Bedford (about fifteen miles from Arlington) to support the One-Stop delivery of JTPA-funded services at these career centers.

TWC locates some of its full time staff at the Center, so that customers can apply for unemployment benefits and, since May 1996, Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Assistance, without leaving the Center. Also as of May 1996, a full-time JOBS counselor at the Center to assist Center customers who are eligible for, or currently participating in both JOBS and JTPA services.

Other examples of on-site Center staffing arrangements involve Goodwill Industries and Tarrant County Junior College. TCJC's community service arm reaches hard-to-serve populations through its on-site adult basic education and GED preparation classes. TCJC maintains a teacher's aide at the Career Center's Learning Center. ABE/GED classes offered at the Center are open to the general public. In exchange for classroom space at the Center, TCJC reserves a certain number of slots in each class for JTPA customers. Goodwill's Rehabilitation Program currently provides instructors for on-site computer and clerical training programs. These classes are available to the general public on a fee-for-service basis. In exchange for access to classroom space at the Learning Center, Goodwill allocates an average of four of ten slots in each course free of charge to JTPA customers.

Capacity Building

Capacity building efforts for Center staff include both state-directed and locally-initiated efforts. Because of the large geographical size of the state and limitations on travel budgets, only management staff from the Center and its partner agencies have been able to attend state-initiated staff training offered in other locations. In a few cases, often in tandem with bi-annual "benchmarking" visits, state One-Stop teams and

SOICC representatives have traveled to Arlington to provide technical assistance and training.

Despite the relative lack of state-initiated training, capacity building efforts within the Center do not appear to have suffered. Locally-initiated training sessions have been provided to Center staff and there are plans to hire outside consultants to conduct additional staff training workshops. Limited cross-training has been provided to Center staff on the specific content of employer services, unemployment insurance benefits, and JTPA programs, and on other partner agency programs. In addition, site-based work groups, discussed earlier, have also been a source of capacity building at the Center. Each of these groups is charged with preparing updates on their work on specific topics (assessment, customer service, information services, employer services, academic services, and scholarship management) for presentation to Center staff. Through these activities, front-line staff have pooled their knowledge and expertise in specific areas.

Capacity building efforts at the Center have not had to respond to organizational conflict or staff trauma as a result of merging the staff from multiple agency cultures. Although many partners are represented at the Center, the Center does not house the full staffs of several major programs (e.g. ES/UI and JTPA) in one location. Perhaps as a result, the Center has not had to adjust to organizational change as at some One-Stop centers nationwide. Rather, the staff at the Arlington Career Center have the luxury of being able to absorb a relatively small number of representatives from many partner agencies into a predominantly JTPA-driven organizational culture.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

The state of Texas, through TWC, has been instrumental in the design of One-Stop management information systems. They have assisted local sites, including the Arlington Center, to establish computer protocols for accessing a variety of state databases. However, the development of integrated intake, assessment, and case management tools for use at the local level has been delayed as a result of competition among the partner state agencies and their respective private sector partners for contracts to develop a statewide MIS. Legal issues about confidentiality have also been a source of disagreement among state agency partners. Because of these difficulties at the state level, TCEN's MIS staff have been given the "green light" to move ahead with their own local integrated systems. Locally initiated efforts have progressed

rapidly, and in some areas, such as integrated intake, have outpaced state MIS development efforts.

The objectives for the management of information systems at the Arlington Center are to design and implement an open computer system conforming to industry standards that connects to the MIS systems of all agencies that want to be partners in the One-Stop system. In mid-1995, partner agencies formed an information technology group at the Resource Connection, a second One-Stop site in Fort Worth. This group later began the joint development of an integrated MIS system at the Resource Connection which has become the networking hub of a county-wide automated intake and case management system.

During the site visit, respondents described a high level of cooperation, particularly among the 'big players,' JTPA and TWC, in working toward such a system. Although not all elements of such a system are currently in place, rapid progress is being made to reach this goal. As of June 1996, the *information technology* work group was holding weekly meetings with the technical and operations staff of One-Stop partner agencies and other local agencies participating in the development of a shared integrated management information system. During a recent meeting, each agency presented its most recent information requirements for intake and case management, and a preliminary decision was made to purchase "off the shelf" intake and "pre-assessment" modules developed by DSI, a private software vendor. This is seen as an interim solution to implementing integrated intake and assessment, pending development of an integrated system at the state level.

The Center has already developed and implemented an automated system to track customer use of the Center and its services. In terms of the ability to share client-level information among partner agencies, rapid progress is also being made. During the evaluation site visit in May 1996, TWC staff were still obliged to telephone the Center for information about JTPA clients. Since that time, more TWC offices have become networked, and now have the capability to access shared databases. It is anticipated that most of the agencies involved in the information technology committee will soon be linked through a wide area network (WAN).

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

The state of Texas has also been instrumental in developing enhanced labor market information for improved technology-based products for One-Stop customers.

The Arlington Center has access to the full array of labor market information and related information technology from the Texas State Occupational Information & Coordinating Committee (SOICC).² These include two statewide LMI systems, Texas “Rescue”—a case management tool originally intended for dislocated workers and to emphasize skills transfer—and Texas CARES (the Career Alternatives Resource Evaluation System)—a user-friendly comprehensive career information delivery system oriented to career exploration for people with little work experience.

These LMI products as well as Job Express, TWC’s job listing service, are available to Center customers at 12 computer terminals located in the Center’s Resource Room. Job listings can also be accessed from remote home or business locations using a PC with a modem by connecting to a bulletin board service (BBS). As a result of remote dial-in access to TWC’s automated job listings, there has been a rapid expansion in the number of customers using this service. Job Express *kiosks* are also located in several locations throughout Arlington in areas with high pedestrian traffic such as malls and discount stores.

At the time of the evaluation site visit, Internet access via the computers at the Center was a priority project, and has since been completed. As a result, the Center has experienced a rapidly increasing demand for access to computers and plans to expand the number of computer terminals available at the Center.

Marketing

Marketing One-Stop career centers is viewed as the responsibility of the workforce development *system*, including the county network and the state, rather than of individual career centers. However, TCEN has invested in its own marketing efforts in the area of business services, and has prepared and distributed a professionally-designed color brochure describing its services to businesses. In addition, to fulfill its local outreach and marketing needs, local partners have prepared an orientation packet that describes individual, group, and self-services offered at Career Centers. Individual flyers from the orientation packet are also distributed to partner agencies.

² SOICC has responsibility for technology and information related to occupational information for five state-mandated partners including Texas Education Agency (TEA), JTPA, the Department of Economic Development, Department of Rehabilitation, and TEC.

Although the Center has not paid for general advertising, the programs offered at the Center have received press coverage in local papers, and specific events sponsored by Center partners, such as quarterly job fairs, are well publicized. Open houses, which Center staff have also found to be effective in publicizing Center activities, are held periodically. For example, Center staff were planning with the local Chamber of Commerce for a Chamber-sponsored open house at the Center late summer 1996.

The Center also relies heavily on linkages with other agencies to publicize its services, and respondents indicated that marketing efforts have increased since the implementation of the One-Stop concept.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

The Center has drawn on the concept of an *inverted pyramid* of service delivery. Because of continuing reductions in funds for social and career development services, some respondents used the metaphor of medical triage, or "treating the severely wounded first," as central to the implementation of multiple tiers of service. In their view, One-Stop is much more than a *technological* revolution, but it was becoming clearer that because of diminishing resources, people have to do more for themselves. Respondents indicated that an important function of staff at One-Stop centers is increasingly teaching people how to use available resources. At the same time, there is an appreciation among Center staff that customers are in different positions on a learning curve. The challenge of designing and implementing services in a One-Stop setting is to offer universal services while continuing to meet the needs of those requiring more individualized services, through a thoughtful tailoring of the mix of services to meet the needs of their customer base.

In the hierarchy of services provided by a variety of programs and agencies, the first tier of "core services" include those available to the general public at no cost. The Resource Room and Career Library are the location of most core services within the Arlington Career Center. Core services appear to be highly valued by Center customers. For example, a large majority of customers surveyed during the first quarter of 1996 indicated that they had come that day to use the Resource Room and Career Library. Services available through the Resource Room/Career Library include:

- Assistance with learning to use résumé writing software

- Access to free fax and telephones for contacting employers
- On-line job listings through the state's Job Express and America's Job Bank
- On-line labor market information
- Interactive computer programs for enhancing interviewing skills
- Information on other community resources
- Information on scholarships and career training
- A variety of computer tutorials for typing and using software

The Career Library also contains written reference materials on companies, resume writing and job search strategies, as well as newspapers and periodicals containing job listings. The Career Library has a staffed information desk. During a focus group conducted as part of the evaluation visit, several customers commended the individual staffing the information desk for her knowledge about the materials in the room and the quality of professional assistance provided.

The Center also offers all customers information about the range of programs and services offered by Center partners and a preliminary or final determination of eligibility for these programs. Center staff (either TCEN staff or outstationed staff from other agencies) can register customers with TWC for employment services, take UI applications, and offer customers access to programs and services available from JTPA, JOBS services for AFDC recipients, Food Stamp Employment and Training Services, Veterans' Employment and Training Services, Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits, and Older Worker Programs. Because the Texas Rehabilitation Commission has its offices in the same facility, customers with disabilities can be easily referred there for services.

Additional services housed at the Center, some of which are available to the general public at no cost, include ABE, GED, and ESL classes offered through the on-site Learning Center by staff from the Tarrant County Junior College and the Fort Worth Independent School District. Computer training classes offered by Goodwill at the Center are available to the general public on a fee basis.

The second and third tiers of service available through the Center include group workshops and the provision of individualized assessment, career counseling, and training supports. Because the Arlington Career Center originated as a JTPA-funded facility and JTPA still pays for the majority of staff stationed at the Center, eligibility

for JTPA is still currently a requirement for access to many of the second and third tier Center services provided at the Center.

“Second-tier” services consist of group workshops. The Center offers a series of highly-regarded subject-specific modular workshops of about two hours duration on such subjects as job hunting techniques, effective telephone contact, applications, resumes, interviewing skills and practice interviews. These workshops were originally designed to be part of a comprehensive menu of services available to JTPA participants as part of an individual education, training, or reemployment plan. JTPA-eligible individuals who are participating the services provided by another agency (e.g., JOBS or FSE&T) may also sign up to attend workshops at the Center. At the present time, some non-JTPA eligible customers are offered access to these workshops on a space available basis. Center staff are considering how to develop other funding streams, including the possibility of fee-for-service arrangements, to make group workshops available to the general public.

Third-tier services available to Center customers include the specialized services funded under specific categorical programs. For customers qualifying for these programs, services include individual assessment of basic skills, interests, and aptitudes and development of a job search or training plan. Other services provided to Center customers include tuition assistance in approved training, career interest matching, financial aid counseling, continuing individualized job search assistance, customized resume development, and a variety of support services including transportation assistance.

Services for Employer Customers

Although services for employers are not yet as well-developed as those for individuals, the Arlington Center has the potential to develop strong employer services using the same broad-based interagency collaboration, networking, and partnerships it has exhibited in the development of services for individual job seekers. An interagency Employer Services Unit within the Center has initiated contacts with small and medium-sized businesses in Arlington, using the business-oriented marketing brochure discussed above.

Core services offered to employer customers at no charge include job listings, managed by TWC staff, and access to individualized referrals from Center job developers and job brokers. Among the expanded services offered to employers in the

past is customized job training. TCEN has a track record of providing customized training for large local employers. TWC and TCEN have also conducted large scale recruitment efforts for large local employers involving assessment, screening, and placement. As a result of its past successes in providing firms assistance in meeting their recruitment and customized training needs, an active center-based work group is considering how to develop fee-based specialized business services.

Related to the work of the Employer Services Unit are several entrepreneurial training programs offered on-site by Center partners. These include the *Small Business Development Center* (SBDC) and the *Electronic Commerce Resource Center* (ECRC). SBDC is a professional management counseling service operated by TCJC using funds from the Small Business Administration and the U.S. Department of Commerce. SBDC programs include one-on-one counseling to new entrepreneurs and to established businesses, and classes on subjects related to the start-up of new businesses. Links with other business related services through the SBDC include the Texas Manufacturing Assistance Center and Internal Revenue Service seminars. ECRC plans to begin a thirty hour course at the Center for small business customers. This course will focus on teaching business-related computer skills and Internet use.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

As part of the evaluation site visit, a focus group was arranged with individual customers receiving a broad range of Center services, ranging from self services to intensive services. Individual respondents were uniformly enthusiastic about the services they had received at the Center. Several respondents indicated that the loss of employment had been a traumatic experience, describing their initial reaction to the experience using terms such as “humiliated” and “stunned.” Respondents indicated that they viewed the Center as a place to get their lives back together, to meet and share information about job leads with other people that were looking for work, and as a place that boosted their morale. “The whole idea of the place is to get people back to work,” said one respondent. “This is the best place for someone who wants to improve their life.” In general, customers believed the Center offered a significant departure from “traditional” workforce development services in terms of the level of staff support, the professional environment, and the range of available services and customer choice.

Several pointed to résumé writing, salary negotiation, and other workshops held at the Center as very informative and helpful, and crucial to their job search. Others pointed to the willingness of Center staff to assist them in using technology to do searches through job banks or to research companies on-line. One customer praised the “patient and professional attitude” of the Career Library and Resource Room staff. Another found that the Center offered him a menu of choices and opportunities: “I would go to as many workshops as I could,” said one customer, “and if there were none on that day, I would still come in to use the computers and check job listings in the Resource Room.”

While many of the respondents made use of self-service and group service offerings, others required more individualized attention. One of the respondents had been unemployed for one and half years during which his family lost all of their possessions except for one bed. “In the process of packing,” he said, “I had to leave behind an \$800 sofa that no one would buy. We had to leave behind the dishes we got on our wedding day. I hope my wife and children never have to go through that again, experience that level of poverty.” After filing for bankruptcy, he enrolled in a JTPA-funded technical training program through the Center, and was able to find work as a mechanic.

To summarize, individual customers were very complimentary in their assessment of staff and programs offered at the Center. They commented on the broad mix of services available, included well-developed self-service options and group workshops related to job search and employment skills preparation. Customers that had participated in staffed services such as workshops and individualized training programs found the services valuable in increasing their morale and preparedness for the transition back to employment.

Employers

Site visitors met with a business representative who sat on both of the existing Tarrant County Private Industry Councils as well as an individual who had co-chaired the Arlington Interim Job Training Committee. Both respondents had been involved in planning for the transformation to a One-Stop center and spoke from this perspective, rather than offering a purely “employer perspective.” These respondents felt that many of the area’s large employers were aware of, and had used the services available from Center partners. Interviewees agreed that it would be important to involve more small

employers in the activities of the Center and to publicize the kinds of employer services offered.

Some of the programs recently introduced at the Center, such as the Small Business Development Center (SBCD) were too new, according to respondents, to have produced tangible results. Respondents agreed that the mechanisms used to make services more attractive to employers, such as job brokering and customer account representatives, were now well established, and that further development of business services was only a matter of time and effort.

INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN

The federal One-Stop Implementation Grant was an important catalyst in speeding up the process of coordinating workforce development services in Arlington. The grant made possible: 1) a strengthening of the coordination and communication among the many One-Stop partners both at the Center and throughout the Tarrant County system, and 2) rapid progress in linking the various information technology systems of TCEN, TWC, TDHS and other agency partners.

State-mandated integration of a myriad of workforce development programs under one administrative roof, was also clearly an important impetus for the rapid and broad-ranging changes that have come about in Tarrant County as part of the One-Stop planning and implementation process. The state has been highly influential in its clear policy support for the development of integrated local One-Stop centers, while at the same time, through the creation of local Workforce Development Boards, has encouraged a great degree of local control over local workforce development planning and resource allocation. The state has also made a large investment in information technologies, from which the Arlington Center and the broader Tarrant County network of One-Stop career centers have benefited.

Because the new WDB had not yet been certified, it was still unclear what types of changes will be implemented at the local level as the new system for local governance is established, and what impact this will have on service providers and the range of customers served at One-Stop Centers. Respondents at the Arlington Center are, however, confident in the belief that they will be able to offer a broad range of workforce related services to a diverse customer base. Because Tarrant County One-Stop planners have been proactive in establishing a broad-based collaborative effort throughout the county, and because there is continuing strong political support for

workforce development efforts among local and county officials, Center staff feel that they have established a strong foundation for continued evolution of the One-Stop approach in Tarrant County.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The national One-Stop initiative has had a strong impact on the formulation of clear policy objectives and effective implementation of many of the One-Stop goals in Arlington, Texas. Key One-Stop players there consistently stress the importance of working together in broad coalitions, and view the One-Stop philosophy as a radical departure from previous ways of doing business. They counsel new One-Stop practitioners about the importance of maintaining excitement about the project, while at the same time being prepared for a multitude of difficult adjustments that require “taking a deep breath and jumping in.” One-Stop offers the opportunity to work with a wide variety of people, agencies, and employers. From their perspective, participants in One-Stop initiatives must be also be willing to spend a great deal of time and effort on “internal marketing” to partners, through extensive meetings, and consensus and capacity building efforts.

Building local political and financial support for these efforts is also another important part of the equation for success. While workforce development and social service provision were not a major priority in Arlington throughout the 1980s, defense cutbacks prompted local civic leaders to reassess the need for locally-based workforce development services. As a result of the commitment of key community leaders, interagency policy forums were initiated and a consensus was established around furthering an integrated workforce development approach. Because many of these developments occurred before the One-Stop Implementation Grant was received and before the passage of state legislation mandating consolidation of workforce programs under the TWC, the local transition to One-Stop Career Centers was greatly facilitated.

APPENDIX U

LAKE JACKSON CAREER CENTER LAKE JACKSON, TEXAS One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During May 1996

LAKE JACKSON CAREER CENTER
LAKE JACKSON, TEXAS
One-Stop Profile

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	3
Regional Governance	3
Center Governance.....	4
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION	7
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES.....	8
DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	10
Evolution and General Description of the Local Design	10
Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals	11
Physical Facilities	15
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS.....	16
Staffing Arrangements.....	16
Capacity Building	17
Management Information Systems (MIS).....	17
Improvements in Labor Market Information and Related Technology-Based Products	18
Marketing	19
DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS	20
Services for Individual Customers.....	20
Services for Employer Customers	22
CUSTOMER RESPONSE.....	22
Individuals.....	22
Employers	23
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	24

LAKE JACKSON CAREER CENTER

LAKE JACKSON, TEXAS

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The Lake Jackson Career Center is one of four existing and two planned One-Stop centers in the 13-county Houston-Galveston “Gulf Coast” area of Texas. These One-Stop centers are being developed as part of the regional Gulf Coast Career Center system by an interagency regional steering committee led by the Houston-Galveston Area Council, which is the administrative entity for one of the JTPA service delivery areas in the Houston-Galveston region.

The Lake Jackson Career Center (“Center”) is located in Lake Jackson, a town of 32,000 people located about an hour’s drive from Houston. The Center serves all of Brazoria County, which has a population of 220,000. Although much of the county area is rural farmland, the county has a diversified economic base, with manufacturing accounting for one-quarter of all non-agricultural employment. Several major petrochemical plants are located in the county, the largest of which is owned by Dow Chemical. Despite being more affluent than many Texas counties—with a median household income about 25% above the state average—Brazoria County has experienced a steady increase in unemployment during the first half of the 1990s, from about 5% in 1990 to over 7% in 1995. Currently, unemployment has stabilized at slightly under 7%.

The Gulf Coast Career Center system was initiated in 1994 when the agencies responsible for the JTPA, ES/UI, and JOBS programs joined in a partnership to plan a regional One-Stop system in response to the state’s One-Stop Implementation Grant RFP. Although it was not included in the earliest stages of the One-Stop planning process, the Lake Jackson Center was ultimately chosen by the regional planning committee as a One-Stop site because the Lake Jackson office of the Texas Employment Commission had recently co-located with the JTPA provider. Planning for One-Stop implementation in Lake Jackson began in July 1995, at about the time One-Stop implementation funding was received by the Gulf Coast regional partnership.

The regional One-Stop planning partnership has enthusiastically embraced the vision of universal customer-driven One-Stop services. The planning committee's vision for the Gulf Coast Career Centers is that they will function like *libraries*, with an emphasis on self-service access to information. At the same time, customers should be able to approach staff freely with particular questions and individual needs. Specific regional One-Stop goals include the creation of a region-wide workforce system which (1) provides convenient access to a network of information and services, (2) is evaluated on the basis of labor market outcomes, efficiency of service delivery, and customer satisfaction, and (3) offers universal access to information and services that significantly support and enhance the skills necessary for career and educational advancement.

Several key variables are influencing the context within which the Lake Jackson Career Center is developing. These include: (1) negotiations surrounding the creation of a single Workforce Development Area encompassing the city of Houston, the balance of Harris County (in which Houston is located), and the surrounding 12 counties; (2) rapid changes in the organizational structures for workforce development programs at the state and local levels; (3) substantial “downsizing” among major employers in the Lake Jackson area, relatively high unemployment rates, and an urgent need for retraining among workers dislocated by recent layoffs; and (4) a community culture that has caused staff to emphasize personal relationships in their system-building efforts. These contextual variables are briefly described below:

- *Negotiations are underway between the city of Houston and surrounding counties to create a unified “Gulf Coast Workforce Development Area.”* In the interim, the city of Houston continues to maintain a JTPA delivery system that is separate from that in the surrounding counties. At the time of our visits, members of a workforce development board had not yet certified. It is expected however, that a major new organizational partner—the city of Houston’s JTPA administration, “Houston Works”—will eventually join the regional One-Stop planning partnership.
- *The One-Stop approach in Texas is evolving within a context of rapid organizational change.* The merging of over twenty workforce development programs under the auspices of the Texas Workforce Commission mandated by House Bill 1863 (see Texas state profile), has resulted in short-term uncertainty about the state’s blueprint for integrating workforce development services. This uncertainty was

expected to continue until the policies of the newly integrated agency were further clarified.

- *Major employers in the Lake Jackson area have been downsizing for a prolonged period and the level of skills needed for current job openings has escalated.* For example, Dow Chemical, which had formerly employed over 10,000 persons at its Lake Jackson plant, now has fewer than 5,000 employees and is continuing to reduce staffing levels, with another round of lay-offs expected in late 1996. Because of continuing layoffs by major local industries, many dislocated workers have found that their existing level of education and skills is inadequate in the changed labor market. Even many entry-level positions now require post-secondary education and/or skills certification.
- *In a rural setting such as Lake Jackson, there is a strong value placed on informal relationships and communication.* Many respondents, including Center staff and employers, emphasized the importance of personal relationships and contacts. One-Stop development has been facilitated by the existence of long-standing working relationships among Center partners and between Center staff and customers.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Using its One-Stop Implementation grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Texas awarded a series of One-Stop implementation grants to 12 local areas to “pilot” One-Stop systems. In addition, financial incentives were offered to all areas for the formation of Workforce Development Boards to oversee integrated One-Stop services. In July 1995, the Houston-Galveston Area Council, on behalf of an interagency partnership, received a One-Stop implementation grant from the state to pilot One-Stop centers in the 13-county Gulf Coast region.

Regional Governance

The regional partners that applied for a state One-Stop implementation grant included the Houston-Galveston Area Council (the administrative entity for the 12-county Gulf Coast JTPA service delivery area), the Balance of Harris County JTPA administrative entity, the Houston Regional Office of the Texas Employment Commission (TEC), and the Houston Regional Office of the Texas Department of Human Services (DHS). The Houston-Galveston Area Council acts as the grant recipient and fiscal agent for the partnership. The city of Houston had applied to the state to maintain a separate Workforce Development Area with its own board, but this request was turned down by the state. As a result, the Gulf Coast regional partnership

will face the challenge of integrating the city of Houston's JTPA entities into this broad regional partnership.

After the receipt of the One-Stop implementation grant in July 1995, the regional One-Stop planning committee was expanded to include the agencies responsible for adult education and literacy services, the Title V older workers program, and vocational rehabilitation services, as well as labor and employer representatives. The expanded committee prepared a three-year plan for the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Area. Original members of the planning committee have continued to function as a steering committee for Gulf Coast One-Stop implementation.

A regional board, whose members have been appointed by each of the 13 county judges (chief elected county officials), will provide formal governance of the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Area. After the Gulf Coast Workforce Development Board is certified by the state, it will have broad-ranging responsibility for regional workforce development services, including ES, UI, JTPA, school-to-work, welfare-to-work, adult basic education, and proprietary vocational education programs. It was expected that the Board would be approved by the Texas Workforce Commission and certified by the governor by mid- to late 1996. Pending certification, the Gulf Coast Career Center system is overseen by a regional Workforce Advisory Committee and the Houston-Galveston Area Council's board of directors, which is composed of local elected officials from the thirteen counties and major cities in the region. The Area Council board currently has final responsibility for review and oversight of the regional career center system and reports on progress in implementation and performance.

Center Governance

State legislation calling for the creation of regional workforce development boards requires that planning, evaluation, grants administration, and oversight of workforce development services be separated from the *delivery* of services. Agencies operating local One-Stop centers will be selected and funded by, and will receive their policy guidance and oversight from, the regional boards.

Most of the One-Stop advisory and planning functions currently take place at the regional level. At the Lake Jackson Career Center, a site-based management committee—comprised of the center manager (a TEC employee), program supervisors for UI, ES, JTPA, and JOBS, and the local veterans employment services representative (LVER)—is responsible for day-to-day administration, staffing, and

scheduling. ES and UI functions had been integrated even prior to One-Stop implementation. ES/UI staff, who also have been trained to screen for JTPA and other program eligibility, are referred to as the “Customer Services” unit of the Center. The “Career Service Unit,” which occupies an adjacent space within the Center, administers JTPA and several other eligibility-based programs. The partners with a full-time on-site presence at the Lake Jackson Center include:

- *Texas Workforce Commission.*¹ Programs administered by TWC employees include Employment Services (ES), Unemployment Insurance (UI), and Veterans Employment and Training Services (VETS) and JOBS case management. In addition, TWC has a service delivery contract with the Houston-Galveston Area Council for the delivery of JTPA services to dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged individuals, FSE&T, and Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS). As noted above, the Customer Services and Career Services Units maintain separate staff, even though both are TWC employees.
- *Interfaith.* Interfaith, a local service provider co-located at the Center as of April 1996, provides services to JOBS “Work First” participants in a multi-county area in the Gulf Coast region, through a contract with the Texas Department of Human Services.²

At the time of the site visit in May 1996, a number of other agencies and programs had arranged with the Center to establish an on-site presence as well. These include:

- *Palacious Independent School District.* School district staff were scheduled to maintain an on-site presence during the summer of 1996 as part of their contract to provide intake and case management for the JTPA Title II-B summer youth employment program. Although much of the actual work is carried out at local schools, the Center offers an office “base” for staff activities and provides filing cabinets and access to telephone message machines.
- *Service, Employment, and Retraining (SER).* Staff employed by SER, a JTPA Title II subcontractor to the Houston-Galveston Area Council, administer on-the-job training services for JTPA Title II recipients.

¹ TEC has now become part of the new consolidated Texas Workforce Commission.

² Since the time of the site visit, administration of Work First, the welfare-to-work program has been consolidated within the Texas Workforce Commission, which has continued to subcontract with Interfaith for the delivery of services to JOBS participants in Lake Jackson.

- *Career Recovery Resource Inc.* is a non-profit Houston-based organization that operates the local *Title V Older Worker Program*. Three participants in the Title V Senior Community Service Program (SCSP) work part-time at the Center on a rotating basis. At least one SCSP trainee is on-site at any time during office hours. In addition to recruiting and performing intake for new SCSP participants, the Title V trainees act as “resource guides” for the Center’s automated job information system and help administer and collate job application forms for local employers.
- *Consumer Credit Counseling Service (CCCS)* is a community-based non-profit organization that offers Center customers free counseling in budget planning, dealing with creditors, avoiding bankruptcy, consolidating debt, and managing finances during periods of unemployment. CCCS services are funded through contributions by creditors.
- *United Way* is an umbrella organization of non-profit service organizations that offers various kinds of on-site counseling and assistance at the Center. United Way services include crisis intervention and other emergency assistance including providing information about food pantries, utility assistance, and transportation to medical providers. The local staff of United Way and CCCS have received cross-training in each other’s programs and provide on-site services to Center customers on alternating weeks.

In addition to organizations and programs that maintain staff on-site at the Center, there are additional partners in the local One-Stop effort with whom Center staff maintain frequent contact, and for whom they make referrals. These include the following:

- *Brazosport Community College*, located about 3 miles from the Center, maintained on-site staff at the Center on a trial basis during April and May 1996, but was unable to continue this relationship due to staffing and logistical problems. BCC continues, however, to offer job training and certification programs as a funded JTPA service provider, and offers testing and GED classes to the general public. Intake and assessment for these programs are done both at the Center and at the College.
- *Alvin Community College (ACC)*, located 30 miles from the Center, provides JTPA-funded training, literacy, and adult basic education programs. Center JTPA staff provide intake and assessment at ACC two times a week during peak enrollment periods.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Center staff identified the effective communication of One-Stop goals and vision to staff as a crucial component of local One-Stop implementation. The Lake Jackson Center was not originally considered by the Area Council for One-Stop implementation, but was later included in the grant proposal for One-Stop funding largely because there was already co-location of key programs. Because of Lake Jackson's late selection as a One-Stop center, staff of the Center partner agencies were not as prepared for One-Stop implementation as staff at some other local sites. As a result, early attempts by Center management to move rapidly toward cross-program staff training and integration of services lacked the "buy-in" of staff.

Although the initial Center manager was described as a dynamic proponent of One-Stop concepts, including integration of services across Center partners, she tried to dictate changes through a "top-down" management approach rather than trying to communicate with staff and gain a consensus about the desirability of the planned changes. Local respondents indicated that staff had not had enough time to come "up to speed" on many of the core philosophies of the One-Stop vision. The rapid nature of the attempted One-Stop staffing changes, in combination with other stresses, led to widespread demoralization and dismay among Center staff.

After an initial ambitious effort to train all Center staff on all Center programs and services during the first grant implementation year, the Center manager left her position. An interim manager, a long-time TEC employee brought out of retirement, opted at least temporarily, for a more evolutionary approach. Respondents stressed that, in the future, it would be essential for One-Stop goals and visions to be communicated to *all* of the staff, including management, supervisors, and front-line staff. In response to this need, the new Center manager established an on-site management committee which now serves as the principal mechanism for communication among on-site partners. He has also attempted to build consensus about the pace and depth of changes necessitated by legislated program consolidation and the creation of a One-Stop Career Center.

Current efforts to promote communication and information exchange among local partners at the Center are impeded by the absence of a shared information system. For example, the computers used by the Customer Services staff are "dumb terminals" wired directly to TWC databases residing in the state mainframe. "We're suffering from that," said one respondent. "Everybody else is PC-based. There's no way to

access other people's systems." As a result, Customer Services staff cannot access automated JTPA data and reports, Career Services partners cannot access TWC job listings, and none of the other partners can communicate with the state's automated welfare information system. Furthermore, according to another respondent, "There's no link of any kind from Lake Jackson [to] . . . other centers. None of the systems are integrated. Data can be entered, but that's about it." Plans are underway to remedy this situation. It is expected that a local area network (LAN) will be available in both Lake Jackson and another Gulf Coast Career Center by January 1997, and that the region will be linked by a wide area network (WAN) at about the same time.

Because Lake Jackson is part of a regional network of One-Stops, local Center staff communicate with both the region and the state on One-Stop issues. From the perspective of local Center partners, communication with the regional One-Stop steering committee is essential in order for local Center staff to receive "process facilitation" and training for One-Stop related activities. Because the regional steering committee, like the state One-Stop team, is comprised of representatives from all of the core partner agencies located at the Center, regional steering committee members act as the "first line" of communication with Center staff and management in helping to interpret changing policies and regulations in a One-Stop environment.

Center communication with the state "One-Stop team" takes place mainly through on-site visits, referred to as "benchmarkings." Benchmarkings offer the opportunity for informal discussions between Center staff and state One-Stop team members about the Center's progress, including specific implementation problems it is facing.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

Of the \$213,000 One-Stop grant received by the Houston-Galveston Area Council to support the implementation of Gulf Coast Career Centers, \$30,000 was allocated to the Lake Jackson Center. Most of the local grant was used for renovation of the physical facility to make it more suitable for One-Stop operations. Before One-Stop implementation, although the Customer Services and Career Services programs were located in the same building, they were physically separated by a wall. The One-Stop implementation funds were used to remove the wall and connect the two spaces. The One-Stop grant also was used to purchase equipment that could be used by all Center customers, including computers for a shared resource room and front entrance area and fax and copy machines available to all Center customers. The grant also enabled the

Center to purchase software, video materials, and reference books for the resource room and subscribe to publications for the resource room.

At the present time, although ES and UI programs are in the process of moving toward full integration, Career Services and Customer Services have remained largely separate and distinct, at least partly as a result of the accountability requirements of their separate categorical funding streams. At the time of our evaluation visit, no staff positions were cross-funded between the two programs and the agencies responsible for Career Services and Customer Services maintain separate rental agreements for their adjacent office space.

Although no formal cost-sharing agreements have been developed among the core partners key funding streams (ES, UI, JTPA, JOBS) at either the regional or Center level, the regional One-Stop steering committee has described cost allocation issues as a “major priority” for the second year of the implementation grant. The committee is also considering a variety of alternatives for integration of program budgets and fee structures, following the practices suggested in the DOL cost allocation TAG.³

Until now, emphasis has been placed on developing a “solid marriage” by coordinating services among all of the partner agencies. In the words of one regional respondent: “All partners had a commitment to bring to the table what we each had. Our first priority was to make service delivery more blended.” Instead of formal cost-pooling arrangements for the operation of Center services, there is a great deal of informal sharing of equipment, resource materials, and staff to provide seamless core services to the general public. For example, JTPA funds are currently used to pay the salary for the coordinator for the resource library/resource room.

The One-Stop implementation grant also made it possible, for the first time, to purchase equipment that is officially for use by all Center customers. A fax machine and copier purchased with One-Stop implementation grant funds have been placed in locations accessible from both the Career Services and Customer Services portions of the building, and are clearly marked for use by the general public. Additionally, many

³ After the site visit was completed, the regional One-Stop steering committee applied to become a demonstration site to test the application of the principles in the DOL cost allocation TAG and has been approved as a pilot site.

of the materials in the Center's resource center—which is open for use by the general public—were purchased with implementation grant funds.

Additional resources are shared informally. Telephones, copiers, and fax machines on the Customer Services “side” of the building are informally available for use by individual customers: “If a customer is over on this side and wants to use these machines they are free to do so,” said one supervisor, “we don't make them go to the other side.” In addition, Center staff from multiple partner agencies have contributed materials to the resource center and share in the cost of its operation by assisting Center customers in their use of the center.

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of the Local Design

The primary catalysts for changes in the design and delivery of workforce development services in Lake Jackson were the federal One-Stop initiative and the enthusiastic response at the state and regional levels. The decision to co-locate in a Lake Jackson facility a few months prior to the receipt of the One-Stop grant by the Gulf Coast region, was made both to address practical concerns—the ES and UI programs had outgrown its former office space—as well as to further One-Stop principles.

Because co-location of partners pre-dated One-Stop implementation by only a few months, and because Center staff had not been directly involved in the initial stages of the regional One-Stop planning process, staff initially found themselves overwhelmed by what they saw as the Center manager's unrealistic expectations for rapid service integration. Despite this, the Lake Jackson Center has made progress in moving toward many of the federal One-Stop goals. Some of the most important features of the Center's One-Stop design, which are discussed in greater detail in later sections, include:

- Development of a system of *integrated intake*.
- Creation of a *resource room and library* and designation of a full-time staff person as *resource coordinator*.
- Adaptation of the *physical structure* and design of the Center facility so that Career Services and Customer Services areas are connected, and so that individual customers have free access to most of the building, rather than limiting them to a small waiting area when not accompanied by a Center staff member.

- Providing all Center customers with access to fax machines, copy machines, and long distance telephone lines for individual customer job searches.
- Development of an improved system of interagency referrals by *cross-training staff* about the on-site and off-site programs and services available to customers.
- The sharing of Center facilities with community organizations interested in the on-site delivery of complementary services to Center customers.
- Establishment of a series of *mini-seminars* available to the general public on subjects related to job search and employment preparedness.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals

Universal Access

It is in the areas of universal access and customer choice that the Center has made its greatest strides since the onset of One-Stop implementation. Six priority areas have been identified as key to achieving the goal of universal access:

- The establishment of a self-service area that offers individual job seeking customers access to automated job banks, career exploration systems, and resume writing software.
- The creation of a resource room and library offering all Center customers access to general information on the labor market, occupations, wages, and industries, as well as information on education and training opportunities and current job openings.
- Enhancement of customer awareness of available services through a variety of means, including the creation of a “resource coordinator” position.
- The availability of all “core” DOL programs at the Center and the provision of information on these services through on-site orientations and mass marketing materials, such as brochures and flyers.
- The development of a sequence of modular job search seminars open to the general public on an open-enrollment basis.
- The provision of automated information on training providers and educational institutions via user-friendly career information systems appropriate for entry level as well as more highly skilled workers.

At the time of the evaluation visit, most of these components of universal services were already available to customers, although some were still in early stages of development and implementation. Automated career exploration and labor market information targeted both to new job entrants and experienced workers had recently

become available (via the “Texas Cares” and “Rescue” systems). It was expected that resume writing software would shortly be available on the Center’s self-service computers. A computer-assisted orientation to the Center had been prepared and was available for viewing in the lobby. Modular open-enrollment job search “mini-seminars” were offered to the general public on a regular basis.

Improving Center identification and visibility is also recognized as an important key to make Center services accessible to a broader customer base. At the time of the evaluation visit, most residents identified the Center with the “Texas Employment Commission,” or as the “unemployment office,” but new signs were being designed to strengthen its image as a “Career Center.” Although Center staff believed that longer hours of operation would help make the Center more accessible to potential customers, the Center was open only until 5:00 p.m. largely due to the limited number of available staff.

Customer Choice

Center staff indicate that the changes that have taken place during the first year of One-Stop implementation represent a major improvement in the range of choices available to customers. Prior to the implementation of the One-Stop design, customers for ES and UI were required to sign in, fill out a form, and wait in a “bullpen” waiting area until they were called for a particular service. In contrast, all customers now have access to a wide range of Center facilities and services any time the Center is open, whether or not they have come to apply for a specific categorical workforce development program. According to one staff member, customers no longer feel that they are coming to the “unemployment office”—the new emphasis is on getting customers “quickly acclimated to the idea that they’re in the world of work.”

The new emphasis on self-service represents a major change in the way business is conducted at the Center. Although some people using the Center do not need help in using the self-service options, many of the customers in the Lake Jackson service area have worked in building and construction-related trades and are not proficient in the use of computers. According to local respondents, an important element in improving customer choice at the Center has been the creation of a “resource coordinator” position. The resource coordinator has a broad overview not only of all individualized and group services available at the Center, but also of the self-service options available to customers.

According to staff, the implementation of One-Stop has greatly changed the mix of clients and the variety of services offered at the Center. Staff and individual customers agree that this fact has, in turn, brought about a profound change in the relationship between customers and One-Stop staff. As expressed by one respondent: “Many of the offices before were divided into departments. You could see that some clients were embarrassed at being crowded into one section. Before the emphasis was on *waiting*, now they feel comfortable coming over to visit us and we can point them in the direction they want to go. We also give customers a list of places that they can go to get services that may not be offered here—they never go away empty handed.”

Integrated Services

Across programs, the approach to integrated services that is now being pursued at the Center can be described as improving coordination and handoffs among Center staff responsible for different programs. Former ES and UI staff had been cross-trained for some time and form what is now known as the Customer Service Unit. Members of this unit are trained as “generalists” to recognize the need for case management or other specialized services. In addition to administering ES and UI programs, these staff screen for potential JTPA and other “Tier III” service eligibility.

The Career Service Unit is composed of “specialists” who administer JTPA, Food Stamp Employment and Training programs, Project RIO (Reintegration of Offenders), JOBS case management, and Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services (WPRS). Staff in the Career Services Unit share case management responsibility through common case readings, so that the customer is provided cross-program service and duplication of effort is reduced. The Career Services Unit may also provide case management services for customers who are not eligible for individual programs when specific needs are recognized or individualized services are requested.

While staff retain distinct functions, the Lake Jackson staff have worked hard to make the lines between services offered to customers as transparent as possible, and as a result, Center customers are less and less aware of the separate program identities because of improved coordination across programs. In addition, services provided by one or another of the Center partners are available to the general public as part of the core One-Stop offerings. As described earlier, these include a staffed resource room and modular group seminars on a variety of employment preparation and job search topics.

In addition, staff representing the various programs at the Center met after One-Stop implementation to decide what data items were essential for determining minimum eligibility criteria for all programs, and developed a common application form now used during the integrated intake procedure.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

Although the different funding streams administered by the One-Stop partners each have their own program-specific performance measures, both local and regional respondents stressed the need for some locally-determined performance measures to guide Center operations. In late 1995, the regional One-Stop partnership formed a “customer satisfaction work group,” and several partners attended customer satisfaction seminars sponsored by the Texas Department of Commerce (which administered JTPA programs at that time). While the specific aim of the training was measuring customer satisfaction in JTPA Title III dislocated worker programs, members of this group felt that these processes had wider applicability not only in assessing programs offered at local career centers, but in assessing the facilities and services of the Center as a whole. A two-page prototype survey was developed for use by all customers served at Gulf Coast career centers. It was subsequently modified to fit on a 5 x 7 card.

Lake Jackson Center respondents also believe that they need a new performance management system that can capture system-wide performance to supplement measures of performance of individual programs. For example, among the customers not covered by current performance measures are employed persons who use the Center services to look for a better job or to upgrade their skills, customers who use the resource room or other self-service options without requesting services from any program-specific funding stream, and customers who find jobs through electronic access to automated job banks. Staff are concerned, however, that additional performance measurement efforts would either require additional funds or would take time away from what staff perceive as the more important goal of service provision.

Because current accountability procedures do not permit the Center to account for services provided to or outcomes achieved by a number of its customers, staff have considered asking for the social security number of all Center visitors. This would allow the Center to track whether individuals using Center services had entered employment over time. However, there were no immediate plans to implement this procedure at the time of the site visit.

Physical Facilities

The Lake Jackson Career Center is located near the end of a commercial strip mall near a state highway. For about ten years prior to the opening of the Lake Jackson Career Center, this location was used as the site for JTPA dislocated worker programs. In March, 1995, the Texas Employment Commission decided to move its ES/UI operations to office space adjacent to the existing JTPA program offices. This decision was made because the old TEC facility in a nearby town was no longer large enough to accommodate TEC services and because recent state legislation had encouraged co-location of workforce services. Partly because the key partners were already co-located at Lake Jackson, this site was selected by the regional One-Stop planning group to become a One-Stop career center.

Driving into the shopping mall, potential customers see a sign pointing to the "Texas Employment Commission." A request has been made to the highway division to have the sign changed to "Gulf Coast Career Center," but the changes had not been made as of the evaluation site visit. The Center is visible from the shopping area of the mall. Of the approximately 11,000 square feet of space available in the Center facility, about 4500 square feet is used as office space for the 29 Center staff. The remainder houses common areas, such as the resource room/library, four conference rooms large enough to accommodate up to twenty people, a computer lab with 16 personal computers, and break rooms for both customers and staff. There is adequate parking and the building is accessible to persons with disabilities.

As described earlier, One-Stop implementation grant funds were used to remove a wall between what were to be known as the Career Services and Customer Services portions of the facility. Although the current facility is joined, the space assignments still reflect the origins of the Center in two separate but side-by-side Career Services and Customer Services operations. However, the flow of clients within the Center was redesigned so that there would be no "bullpen" customer waiting area which separated customers from staff. Currently, when a customer enters the Center through the front door, he/she enters a small reception area which contains several "Job Express" terminals and a desk staffed by a "Resource Coordinator."

Customers have access to all areas of the Center. To the left is a resource room/library with publications related to employment and training, a computer with information on career exploration ("Texas CARES") and several additional computers that can be used to prepare resumes. As mentioned previously, the office space is

divided into two major sections, the Customer Service section in which UI, ES, JOBS, and Veterans Employment Services (VETS) are provided. Guest desks are provided in this area for use by various local community organizations. A hallway which has a fax machine and a copier for customer use leads to the Career Services office area on the left. On the right there is a computer lab with 16 terminals, one of four conference rooms, and a customer break room.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Staffing Arrangements

The ES and UI functions have been consolidated at the Lake Jackson Center and were provided by an integrated ES/UI staff prior to the One-Stop initiative. The VETS program, although also administered by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), has been and continues to be staffed separately from ES/UI functions. Under the current “coordination rather than consolidation” approach to integration of services, JTPA services, although they are also provided by TWC staff under contract to the Houston-Galveston Area Council, are delivered through the separate Career Services Unit staff.

Supervisors for all core programs—ES/UI, VETS, JTPA, and JOBS—meet with the Center site manager (a TWC employee) in weekly site-based management meetings. There have been discussions of forming cross-agency functional teams for job development, placement, and for employer services, but at the present time, these functions have not been integrated across the core partners. Services funded by other co-located programs, such as the Senior Community Service Employment Program, United Way, and Consumer Credit, are provided by paid employees, interns, and volunteers associated with each program partner.

At the time of the evaluation visit, other than the consolidation of ES/UI staffing, no staff positions were cross-funded by the major Center program funding streams (ES/UI, JTPA, and JOBS). Of the 29 full-time equivalent staff at the Center, 13 staff are employed in the delivery of JTPA services and 10 staff in the delivery of UI/ES. Other programs with dedicated TWC staff included VETS, Food Stamps Employment and Training, UI Profiling, and a Reintegration of Offenders program (Project RIO). A 1.5-FTE position for Human Services staff is funded by Brazoria County.

Thus, with the exception of the Customer Services programs, in which there is a high degree of functional integration, program-specific staff depend on a shared intake procedure and coordinated cross-program referrals to accomplish integration of services

for customers. As a result of these coordination efforts, initial intake staff have knowledge of basic requirements for all the programs offered at the site, and staff from all programs participate in the regularly scheduled orientations for individuals coming to use the Center.

Capacity Building

Staff training has been a two-edged sword at the Lake Jackson Center. On the one hand, the site-based management team indicated that staff training related to One-Stop implementation has been very useful. Training has been provided through a number of sources, including the International Association of Personnel in Employment Security (IAPES), the Houston Club Institute, and TEC-sponsored regional “train the trainers” sessions. Staff particularly praised a series of training modules on team-building, change management, and quality customer services that was prepared by the Harris County Private Industry Council, one of the agencies participating in the regional One-Stop partnership. In addition, several respondents had recently attended an off-site training on diversity called “Across Borders” and had found that it improved their ability to understand different organizational cultures and communicate across agency lines.

On the other hand, local respondents noted that the scheduling of multiple training initiatives during a short time period has exacerbated the work demands and time pressures on staff. Throughout 1995 and 1996, staff vacancies combined with increased customer flows made it difficult for TEC staff to keep up with their assigned workloads. Moreover, One-Stop training was only one of a series of capacity-building initiatives affecting Center staff. According to one supervisor: “We’ve had all types of training and meetings since February [1996]. These have included team management training, diversity training, and training on the redesign of UI benefits [to implement remote call-in for the initiation of UI claims]. Oftentimes we’ll have two to four staff members out of the office in a given week. Nobody objects to the idea of training, but much of it has little to do with building Career Centers.”

Management Information Systems (MIS)

The Lake Jackson Career Center has developed an integrated intake form, on an interim basis, to support integrated customer reception and referral. However, at the present time, there is no integrated client-level management information system across the different participating programs. The development of an integrated MIS is widely perceived as a state-level function. Local initiatives to integrate eligibility

determination and case management functions depend on progress being made at the state level.

Client confidentiality, especially as it relates to the need to protect sensitive information in case records maintained by the Department of Human Services (DHS), is considered another barrier to full integration of case management functions at the local level. These barriers were perceived to exist even though many respondents believed that they could be overcome through the use of security procedures such as passwords. Similar confidentiality issues regarding confidential information about employers in ES/UI databases have been resolved through the use of passwords that restrict staff access to such information on a “need to know” basis.

Improvements in Labor Market Information and Related Technology-Based Products

As in the development of an integrated MIS, most of the initiatives to develop One-Stop technology-based products are viewed as state functions. The primary technology-based products developed at the state level include Texas CARES, an automated career information delivery system designed for individuals with little work experience; RESCUE, a case management tool designed to help more experienced workers determine additional training needs; Job Express, an electronic labor exchange system; and Socrates, an automated labor market information system. (See the Texas state profile for more information on these products.) Direct customer access to these products was a very recent phenomenon at the Lake Jackson Career Center at the time of the site visit and Center staff were still learning about the levels of staff support needed in order for customers to use these products. Local respondents indicated that Texas CARES was considered the easiest to use. Both RESCUE and Job Express required that staff spend time with customers explaining their use. According to one staff person, “They’re supposed to be user-friendly systems, but they still require a lot of staff intervention.”

Hard-copy versions of labor market information, prepared at the state or regional level, are also provided to employer customers. For example, the Center distributes monthly updates of labor market information, prepared by the Houston-Galveston TEC regional office, to local employers. Businesses are provided with labor market information on the Brazoria Metropolitan Statistical Area, employer guides and information on topics such as wage and hour laws and other employment law issues,

lists of independent contractors, and information about hiring practices and how to prepare employee handbooks.

Electronic kiosks, which have been developed in Texas to provide access to labor market information and job listings public locations with high pedestrian traffic, had not yet been installed in Brazoria County at the time of the site visit. Local respondents look forward to using kiosks as an effective way to “get information out to rural communities,” and have identified a local Wal-Mart store as a good location for a kiosk. They are currently waiting for state approval of the funding needed to install a kiosk. Some respondents, however, noted that they had heard that the information available through kiosks is not always regularly updated.

Marketing

State and local One-Stop actors often share responsibility for marketing One-Stop Centers. State-wide marketing efforts for One-Stop, however, were delayed during the massive reorganization of workforce development agencies into the new Texas Workforce Commission during 1996. As a result of delays in the development of a formal statewide marketing plan, Lake Jackson, like other local areas, developed its own local marketing strategy. Respondents indicated, however, that they had hoped that the state could provide a newsletter or multi-media marketing tools that could support local marketing efforts.

A detailed career center marketing plan has been developed at the regional and local levels and is being implemented in Lake Jackson/Brazoria County. Local respondents recognize the importance of marketing in helping to change the public’s perception of the Center from that of unemployment office to integrated career center. As part of the local marketing plan, advertisements for Center services, including “Job Search Seminars” and “Career Assistance,” have been run on a weekly basis in a variety of local and regional newspapers. Newsletters and brochures prepared by various Center partners have described the Center’s activities with displaced homemakers as well as its Title V Older Workers program. Center services have been listed in publications prepared by the local Chambers of Commerce and other civic organizations.

In addition to formal marketing efforts, local respondents indicate that in a small community such as Lake Jackson in which “everybody knows one another,” informal marketing is often one of the most effective ways to conduct outreach. “This is a very

tight-knit community,” explained one respondent. “Much of the ‘marketing’ happens when we get people in here who tell their neighbors about our services.” Staff are also actively involved in a variety of public presentations and displays publicizing Center services. For example, Center services are publicized in a variety of social calendars, and the Center sponsors job fairs at local malls and at the county fair. Many local staff are also involved in a variety of community activities in schools, churches, and veterans organizations, and are regularly called on to speak at a variety of events, including those sponsored by high schools and United Way. Center staff also address employer groups on questions regarding taxes and unemployment claims.

Discussions about expanding local marketing efforts in the future have addressed the possibility of obtaining free public service announcements from the local cable television channel. Other ideas suggested have included posting announcements in free papers and distributing informational flyers in locations such as stores where large numbers of people congregate.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

The Center has drawn on the concept of an inverted pyramid of services in which it is anticipated that the largest number of individual customers will use self-service options, with increasingly smaller numbers will use group services, and the smallest number will access intensive individualized services.

The Center offers all customers information about the range of programs and services offered by Center partners and a preliminary or final determination of eligibility for these programs. Upon arrival at the Center, customers are offered the following program-specific service options, based on their expressed interest and eligibility:

- Employment services (ES), available to the general public.
- Unemployment insurance benefits (UI).
- JTPA programs and services for dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged individuals.
- JOBS services for AFDC recipients.
- Food Stamp Employment and Training Services for recipients of Food Stamps.
- Veterans’ Employment and Training Services.

- Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits for dislocated workers whose employers were affected by international competition.
- Older Worker Programs available under Title V of the Older Americans Act.

In addition, core Center services—available to the general public at no cost—include:

- Access to on-line job listings through the state's Job Express and America's Job Bank.
- Other automated labor market information.
- Access to the Career Library, which offers a variety of publications on local and national companies, and jobs and salaries, as well as job search manuals and other materials.
- Access to free facsimile machines and telephones for contacting employers.
- Information and referrals to supportive services and other community resources.
- Information on scholarships and career training.

Core services available on a self-service basis will be expanded over time. The Center is planning to offer a variety of computer-assisted learning options as well as access to resume-writing software.

Group workshops and seminars, also available at no cost to the general public include:

- *Total Image Update.* Participants learn how to dress for interviews and careers while remaining true to their personalities and budgets.
- *Money Management.* These seminars, offered by Consumer Credit Counseling, help participants learn how to manage their budgets, especially when their personal financial situations have changed.
- *Stress Management.* This seminar teaches how to cope with the stress of unemployment and the job search process.
- *Exploring Career Options.* This seminar covers areas such as making use of career interest surveys, exploring interest areas, and choosing careers.
- *Job Search.* This seminar covers implementing job search plans and using Center and community resources in the job search process.

Services for Employer Customers

At the time of the site visit, an employer service unit had recently been formed at the Lake Jackson Center, and was in the early phases of planning for the expansion of employer services. Currently, most services to employers continue to be rather traditional—the filling of job orders and assistance with unemployment claims questions. Although there has been discussion of having individuals in the Center act as “employer service representatives” for different companies, this system has not been formally instituted. Rather, employers generally seek out the people with whom they have developed a long-standing working relationship, and find that these people are usually the best equipped to answer their questions.

Center staff indicate that they are looking forward to expanding employer services. One of the biggest challenges is “getting the message out” that a broader array of employer services is available. To date, marketing Center services to employers has occurred largely through informal contacts between Center staff and local employers. Services that are currently available, though under-utilized, include the provision of information to employers on training opportunities at proprietary schools and training assistance paid for through the state’s Skills Development Fund. On an informal employer survey designed to find out what services employers would like from a career center, the most common responses were “qualified workers” and useful labor market information.

Employer services are better developed at the regional level, where there are employer services specialists working out of the TEC regional office in Houston. Regional employer services representatives make visits to outlying communities and assist center staff in designing customized recruitment and training services for local employers.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

A focus group was conducted with eight individual Center customers, all of whom turned out to be participants in the JTPA dislocated worker program. These customers expressed satisfaction with the quality of the services they were receiving. However, there was no opportunity to discuss how the general public was reacting to the available core Center services.

Center staff indicated that the self-service technology-based products introduced as part of the One-Stop effort are less relevant to job seeker customers in rural areas than they would be in more urbanized areas, because most customers are already aware of the major employers and contact many employers directly to inquire about employment opportunities. This appears to be less true for more highly-skilled workers, who were described as valuing access to electronic job postings, and who respond in great numbers to automated job listings for positions requiring advanced technological skills.

Employers

A focus group was held with five human resource or personnel representatives from area employers. These employers were primarily interested in the job placement function and other services traditionally offered through TEC, and were generally positive about these services. All the employers indicated that the most important thing to them about the Lake Jackson Center was that they could deal with a *local* office. According to one representative, “If this office wasn’t here, we’d have to deal with someone in Lubbock or Houston, and they would have little of the local knowledge or the local people needed for the job.” People here understand our industries -- you have to know how to have a rapport with foremen, with supervisors.”

Employer respondents expressed some hesitation about the move toward more reliance on technology-based products for job seekers. “Now it’s up to the individual to find their own job,” said one respondent about on-line job searches, “but a lot of these workers really need more one-on-one contact. There needs to be someone to intercede on behalf of the employee. TEC used to do that for people. More and more, now they’re turning it back to the individual to find their own jobs.” At the same time, employers recognized the need for an expansion of “traditional” job matching services, and of the need for a comprehensive system which can not only provide job referrals, but also help job seekers enhance their job search and specific occupational skills.

Local employers emphasized the need for formal training and skills certification to prepare job seekers for employment in the local labor market. They noted that even in construction jobs, certification levels were being pushed upwards, making it more difficult for people with fewer certifiable skills to find employment. Most of the industry representatives said that they now insisted on some form of craft certification. According to one respondent, “It used to be that contractors hired the first 50 people that applied for a job. If somebody looked strong, they hired him. Now we need to

put an emphasis on training for jobs. We're worried there won't be anyone around to do the jobs we have locally when our current workers drop out in their late 40s and 50s. Centers like this one can make a big difference in getting people into occupations and training that are needed around here."

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

The federal One-Stop initiative has clearly influenced the direction of the Lake Jackson Career Center, although the rapid pace of moving from co-location of services (which existed even before the One-Stop implementation grant) toward integration of services has been a source of tension for Center staff, particularly during the early months of the implementation grant period. The state has provided information and technical assistance to the regional steering committee and directly to Lake Jackson management and staff throughout its development as a One-Stop. As the integration of programs under the Texas Workforce Commission is completed, it is expected that state-level policy guidance will continue to be an important element of One-Stop implementation in Texas.

The most important influence on the Lake Jackson Center has been the thoughtful planning process and clear vision provided by the regional One-Stop steering committee for the Gulf Coast region. Local staff praise the planning efforts at the regional level and view the regional steering committee as being committed financially and emotionally to the One-Stop initiative and sympathetic to local implementation challenges. Although Lake Jackson is part of a region in which a vibrant and dynamic team of One-Stop planners is attempting to develop a network of One-Stop centers, it will take time and a great deal of effort for the full One-Stop vision to be implemented in this rural/industrial county, 50 miles distant from Houston and isolated from other urban centers.

To date, the Lake Jackson Center has made strong progress in creating a system that responds to the employment and training needs of individual job seekers and local staff look forward to offering a menu of enhanced services to employers in the near future. The Center, after only a year of operation, is still in the early stages of developing an identity as an integrated "Career Center." Part of this may have to do with the fact that planning functions were concentrated at the regional level in Houston. It is only more recently that *Center* staff have participated in a meaningful way in decision making through a site-based management committee. Now that there is more of a sense of local control, ideas about improving Center services are being generated

locally. “We now have a lot of ideas about where we want to go,” said a local respondent, “and in about six months we think we will be in a place where we are comfortable with the changes.”

The experiences at the Center highlight several important lessons regarding building One-Stops. In the early phases of implementation, staff had little input into the design of the local system for service delivery. Because planning for the system had occurred at the regional level (in Houston), Center staff were unable to share the vision of One-Stop service during the initial months of the implementation grant period, despite (or perhaps because of) the presence of a dynamic center manager. The situation improved considerably when a local management team was established consisting of supervisory staff from the participating programs. As this management team began to establish its own goals and vision for the Center, they were able to reestablish a sense of local control over the transformation process.

Center staff indicated that they have learned the importance of several factors that can facilitate the transformation of workforce development services to realize the One-Stop vision:

- The ability to set realistic expectations of what can and cannot be accomplished: these include the expectations of *customers*, *staff*, and *the Center as a whole*.
- The encouragement of the active involvement by all staff, including management teams at the earliest stages of the One-Stop planning process. Lake Jackson Center staff believe that many of the problems that occurred during early implementation could have been avoided had there been more local input into the design and vision of the Center.
- Placing high priority on communication across partner agencies among Center staff, with particular emphasis on building relations among supervisory staff. With regular forums for discussion, supervisors can relay the problems that they perceive among staff, such as staff overload and stress, and can take steps to modify strategies toward One-Stop implementation as the need arises.

Despite some early challenges, local respondents were visibly proud of what had been accomplished at the new Center, particularly when compared to the former ES/UI and JTPA operations. Customers are no longer separated from the staff, but can come directly to the desk of anyone in the Center. There is no need to wait until you are called—customers can make good use of their time in the resource room, computer lab, or can contact employers immediately by using the phone banks and fax machine

available to them. Where once customers experienced a sense of frustration with “the system,” and often felt a sense of embarrassment at having to turn to “the unemployment office” for assistance, they now have a wide variety of resources at hand to speed re-entry into the job market.

APPENDIX V

STATE OF WISCONSIN One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During December 1995

STATE OF WISCONSIN

One-Stop Profile

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	3
State-Level Organization and Governance	3
State Framework for Local Governance.....	5
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION.....	6
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES	7
DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE.....	9
Evolution and General Description of State Design	9
Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals	11
IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS.....	14
Capacity Building and Technical Assistance.....	14
Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements	15
Marketing.....	17
IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS.....	18
INFLUENCES ON STATE DESIGN	18
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	19

STATE OF WISCONSIN

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE STATE CONTEXT

The state of Wisconsin has come into the One-Stop demonstration with a well-developed approach that has been extensively piloted in a number of local sites over the past ten years. Local One-Stop service sites, called *Job Centers*, have been conceptualized since 1987. The USDOL One-Stop implementation grant is supporting Wisconsin's efforts to accelerate and expand upon the One-Stop approach statewide.

There are many contextual variables that have influenced, and continue to influence, One-Stop planning, design, implementation, and progress in the state of Wisconsin. The primary federal-level influence is clearly the prospective change from multiple funding streams to the consolidation of workforce development programs under block grants. Developed as a system to promote *service coordination* in the context of multiple categorical programs, Wisconsin's One-Stop approach is expected to evolve more rapidly toward *service integration* once federal block grant legislation is passed.

At the state level, there are numerous contextual variables influencing One-Stop implementation and progress, three of which appear to be key: 1) the merger between two major state agencies; 2) a controversial welfare reform initiative that eliminates AFDC; and 3) state legislation requiring the realignment of SDA boundaries. These influences, singularly and in tandem, represent strong challenges for the state, but are generally believed to be supportive of the statewide One-Stop initiative. Each is briefly described below.

- The merger between the Department of Industry, Labor & Human Relations (DILHR) and the Department of Health & Social Services (DH&SS), scheduled to be effective 7/1/96, will create a new Department of Workforce Development. This major organizational change represents a consolidation of key One-Stop players. In the long run, consolidation should enhance One-Stop coordination efforts by unifying the entities responsible for school-to-work, welfare-to-work, vocational rehabilitation, and JTPA, ES, and UI programs under the leadership of a single state agency. In the short run, the magnitude of

these organizational changes has caused uncertainty about exactly how agency policies and staff functions will be affected by consolidation.

- The state of Wisconsin has long been active in welfare reform initiatives, testing various approaches through federal waivers to the AFDC program. The state's newest welfare reform proposal, called *Wisconsin Works* or *W-2*, would replace welfare grants to employable individuals with a system of services designed to encourage immediate attachment to the labor force. This highly controversial initiative is still being designed and debated in the state legislature. Regardless of its eventual form, the welfare reform initiative is expected to increase greatly the demands made on the state's workforce development service system. The state is committed to using its Job Center system for delivery of employment-related services to *W-2* participants as part of a "Partnership for Full Employment."
- A bill currently before the state legislature recommends the realignment of local workforce development planning areas from 17 (the current number of SDAs) to a smaller number, perhaps 10. Although reducing the number of SDAs is believed to be facilitative of the One-Stop initiative (e.g., increasing administrative efficiency in response to decreasing resources), the proposed shift would necessitate substantial reorganization among local planning teams that have already made significant strides to develop collaborative partnerships and design coordinated services within the current planning areas.

It is within this environment of uncertainty amidst substantial changes that Wisconsin is striving to support the creation of coordinated local workforce development systems. Although the state wants to provide effective guidance in the development of local One-Stop systems, it has declined to prescribe a standardized design for local Job Centers to follow, for several reasons. First, state One-Stop policymakers feel that the federal program environment is still too uncertain to make final decisions about what One-Stop systems should look like. Second, the state is committed to offering substantial latitude for local discretion so that the local designs for the statewide system "percolate from the front line." According to the state's vision, services that respond to customer "needs" or "demands" should be the primary consideration that drives local design variants. As a result, the state has developed only a general blueprint for what a local Job Center should look and feel like—the *Job Center Standards* (described later). The state has also undertaken state-level projects in the areas of capacity building, customer satisfaction, cost allocation, facilities, and marketing to support local One-Stop design and implementation efforts.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

State-Level Organization and Governance

The entity with oversight over all workforce development programs is the *State Human Resources Investment Council* (HRIC), established by state law in December, 1994. Although similar in structure and function to the former governing body—the State Job Training Coordinating Council, called the “Wisconsin Jobs Council”—the HRIC was established to be more comprehensive in scope and include top-level agency administrators, as well as to be responsive to DOL’s One-Stop Solicitation for Grant Application (SGA). The 30-member HRIC consists of three working committees, each devoted to a different set of issues and challenges. Plans are currently underway to restructure the HRIC into a smaller *Council on Workforce Excellence*.

The *State Collaborative Planning Team* (SCPT), established in 1989, is a state-level interagency team that guides the One-Stop effort in Wisconsin. This team consists of middle and upper-level managers from all of the nine One-Stop partner agencies. The role of the State Collaborative Planning Team is to advise the HRIC on One-Stop implementation and progress. (This structure is mirrored at the local level with Local Collaborative Planning Teams that guide local One-Stop plan development.) The state partner agencies involved in Wisconsin’s One-Stop effort are:

1. *Department of Industry, Labor & Human Relations* (DILHR), which is responsible for JTPA, ES, Labor Market Information, and Apprenticeship programs, through its Jobs, Employment & Training (JETS) Division, as well as UI, and School-to-Work programs (through its Office of Workforce Excellence).
2. *Department of Health & Social Services* (DH&SS), which has responsibility for the JOBS program for AFDC recipients, the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program, and the Vocational Rehabilitation program, through a separate VR division.
3. *Wisconsin Technical College System Board*, which sets policy and coordinates across 16 autonomous technical college districts that have their own taxing authority and are primarily responsible for post-secondary and vocational education.
4. *Department of Public Instruction* (DPI), which has authority over K-12 education.
5. *Educational Approval Board*.
6. *Department of Veterans’ Affairs*.

7. *Department of Development*, which is responsible for economic development programs and initiatives.
8. *Department of Corrections*.

By virtue of the historical context, administrative authority, or responsibility for specific funding streams, some One-Stop partner agencies have more prominence and day-to-day operational involvement than others. Thus, although the state's One-Stop initiative represents a partnership among these agencies, DILHR's role is prominent because it is responsible for a number of the programs mandated for inclusion in the One-Stop initiative (e.g., JTPA, ES, LMI, Apprenticeship, and UI), has been experimenting with similar initiatives for several years, and is responsible for administration of the USDOL One-Stop implementation grant through its JETS Division. In addition, notwithstanding the general spirit of collaboration among all partners, three key players bring major funding streams to the effort: DILHR, DH&SS (soon to be merged with DILHR) and the Technical College System. (These three key partners at the state level mirror the mandatory "core partners" at the local level, as described later.)

Each partner agency brings to the One-Stop effort a unique program culture and set of operating principles. The need to cultivate this broad range of partnerships while respecting differences in the cultures, missions, and perspectives of participating agencies has been a challenge. Some agencies, for instance, by virtue of their mission, target services to a particular population segment. Others focus more on services to the general public. Moreover, some partner agencies are smaller in size as well as scope, are "non-mandated" partners, and have struggled with "being heard."

By and large, the challenge of dealing with this "multi-culturalism" has been met by state efforts to maintain clear and open communication across and within agencies and involve all actors on interagency teams and workgroups. One-Stop partner agencies are learning to work together, sometimes struggling, but moving forward as norms and other behavioral guidelines are established, either formally or informally. Partner agencies are beginning to recognize that, over time, state agencies' roles within the One-Stop system may evolve as partners focus more upon their core competencies, and thereby add value to the overall system. Thus, some agencies are experiencing—and probably will continue to experience—a redefinition or reshaping of roles and responsibilities, particularly in cases where agencies have traditionally focused on a particular segment of the population.

State Framework for Local Governance

The framework for local governance is similar to that in place at the state level. *Local Collaborative Planning Teams* (LCPTs) are the local planning structures guiding local One-Stop efforts and consisting of representatives from each local partner agency. Indeed, a critical stage of local-level implementation of the Job Center initiative in the state of Wisconsin was the formation of the LCPT in each of the 17 current SDAs. Formed initially to develop “core coordination documents” describing the coordination of programs and services within each local planning area, LCPTs are responsible for planning how to expend the majority of funding received under Wisconsin’s federal One-Stop Implementation grant.

In addition, local policy boards—called *Human Resource Investment Boards* (HRIBs)—are expected to be in place by January 1997. Although many of the specific elements are yet to be determined (e.g., required composition of the boards, whether boards will play an administrative or merely a policy guidance role with respect to local Job Centers), the primary purpose of the HRIBs will be to ensure that One-Stop customers and investors (i.e., individual job seeking customers, employers, and taxpayers) have a voice in the development of the local One-Stop system and that customer feedback is used to improve Job Center system performance. The state’s vision is that these local boards will not deliver services directly. Instead, they will provide policy direction to, and conduct strategic planning for, the local One-Stop Job Center system. In general, local boards will have oversight responsibility for the same programs locally that the state Council on Workforce Excellence will oversee on a statewide basis.

Local governance has emerged as a politically-charged issue and a key challenge for the state. One of the reasons for the volatility of the issue is probably related to the fact that HRIBs are being planned *after*, rather than *before*, the development of LCPTs and local One-Stop centers. Therefore, as latecomers to the local planning process, the HRIBs may be seen as a potentially destabilizing influence on local interagency partnerships that have evolved up to this point. In addition, although HRIBs are expected to perform a strategic planning function within a framework devised by the state Council on Workforce Excellence, the details of the relationship between state and local governance boards is not yet clear.

The state has responded to the tension surrounding the issue of local governance by soliciting local input through a *Local Dialogue* process that took place from July

1995 through September 1995. Each local area received funding to sponsor formal dialogues, providing a forum for discussions pertaining to the possible structure, composition and oversight responsibilities of the HRIB. A report on these meetings was discussed by the State HRIC in December 1995. Due to the complexity and sensitive nature of local governance issues and the uncertainty surrounding federal legislation, recommendations on HRIBs were postponed until May 1996. Presently, the State HRIC is considering a number of different models for the proposed HRIBs. Both state and local One-Stop actors agree that the best-case scenario would have been the establishment of local governing boards or the consolidation of existing disparate ones earlier in the One-Stop implementation process.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

The primary method to establish and maintain open lines of communication and facilitate ongoing coordination between and among state-level partners is the use of teams, in which broad-based participation is the norm. This starts at the top with the State Collaborative Planning Team, which has representation from all of the partner agencies, ensuring each a voice in One-Stop planning and implementation. In addition, numerous interagency teams focus on particular functions related to the One-Stop initiative, such as Capacity Building, Marketing, and Technology Initiatives, each described later. Local One-Stop actors are usually represented on these interagency functional teams as well, since local input is placed at a premium. The information generated from the various teams is, in turn, provided to the “Job Center Team,” which coordinates the implementation of specific actions related to each topic area. Although state-level partners have generally found the level of interagency coordination and cooperation facilitative and, in some cases, “awesome,” there is growing awareness that an increasing number of workgroups and teams could become counterproductive.

Communication between state and local One-Stop staff makes use of several different channels. Broad-based state and local participation on various planning workgroups is one way of keeping communication channels open and soliciting local input. Statewide and regional meetings and conferences have also taken place to discuss One-Stop design and implementation issues and share information about local variants of the One-Stop approach. Moreover, another means of communicating with local Job Centers is through state “Local Liaisons,” each responsible for a particular territory. The Local Liaisons identify One-Stop implementation problems, provide

technical assistance resources, and work closely with local areas during the process of local One-Stop design and implementation. Information obtained by the Local Liaisons also flows to the Job Center Team.

The staff manager of the One-Stop Implementation Grant within DILHR's JETS Division also circulates "Information Memos" to Local Collaborative Planning Team leads to share information about One-Stop developments at the state level. Information Memos cover a range of issues from responses to questions that have been asked, to information about new issues that are arising. Although the information in these memos is presented in a conversational and informative way and appears to go to key local One-Stop actors, the Waukesha respondents indicated that there are some problems in getting information to the field in a timely manner.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING, AND FISCAL ISSUES

The initial investments to pilot a comprehensive and seamless workforce development service system in Wisconsin were made with state general revenue funds. Other major funding sources used to support the development of different aspects of the One-Stop system include several ES Automation Grants (largely responsible for the creation of JobNet, the state's automated labor exchange system) and a five-year \$27M School-to-Work grant. Therefore, although the USDOL One-Stop implementation grant represents a significant source of funding that has indeed acted as a catalyst for Job Center implementation statewide, it is only one of a number of funding sources contributing to the One-Stop system and supporting structures, initiatives and products.

The state received a first-year One-Stop implementation grant of \$3.5M, and a first-year separate LMI grant of over \$400,000. It has been the state's intention to use One-Stop grant monies for the most "prudent" types of activities—activities that would not be funded otherwise—with the lion's share of the state's implementation grant (i.e., over 70%) being allocated to local areas in the form of: (1) local implementation grants (allocated to all local planning areas based upon the size of the civilian labor force), (2) local governance/transition grants to support the creation of a local Human Resource Investment Board, and (3) local pilot projects (competitively awarded based on local innovations). As a result of receiving less funding than expected (30% less than the \$5M requested), the budgets for several planned areas, including information systems and the three types of local grants, were reduced.

Because the state decided to allocate the majority of One-Stop Implementation Grant funds to Local Collaborative Planning Teams on a planning year basis, with an initial 12-month implementation period of July 1, 1995 through June 30, 1996, the expenditure rate has been slow. It is expected that spending rates in the latter part of the implementation period will increase.

In addition, as a result of the myriad organizational changes that have been taking place—partly a result of the One-Stop restructuring and partly a result of other factors such as federal or state program cuts—several partner agencies have experienced staffing reductions. For example, local JTPA administrators, who are often key partners on local collaborative planning teams, have sometimes found it difficult to carry out both One-Stop planning and conduct of their program-specific responsibilities as a result of reductions in overall program funding. Similarly, ongoing budget cuts within the federal ES program have resulted in a series of staffing cutbacks within state and local Job Service operations. Indeed, one of the original incentives for self-service methods of delivery in Job Centers was the high level of staff reductions throughout the Job Service. In some cases, state-and local-level staff reductions have necessitated either putting off One-Stop development activities (e.g., the state-level marketing effort for the One-Stop implementation grant was temporarily postponed when several state-level communications staff were let go), or coming up with ways to do more with less.

Although seeking a high degree of coordination is a clearly established norm among state agency partners, efforts to implement a One-Stop system have been undertaken without efforts to consolidate individual program funding streams. Because of a view that fiscal accountability requires the maintenance of separate funding streams, state agency partners in Wisconsin have not negotiated cost-sharing, cost-pooling, or similar arrangements. Each agency charges its activities to its own program funds. Partners generally believed that until federal funds were provided to states in the form of block grants, true integration of services through consolidation of funding would be thwarted by the need to account for each funding stream using different rules and requirements.

This was also the case in the local site visited. Different partners with different reporting requirements were not eager to merge funds from different sources to support integrated service delivery designs. And, in terms of following the guidance offered in DOL's Cost Allocation TAG, it was believed that, although the TAG was an excellent

piece of work technically, following the principles and practices espoused in the TAG would place local areas at risk, particularly for expenditures from non-DOL funds. The financial liability and potential for disallowed costs were perceived to be so prohibitive that local areas would avoid any new way of allocating costs “like the plague.”

At the time of the site visit, the state was participating in discussions with a few local areas (not visited by the research team) about undertaking pilots to test the cost-sharing approaches described in the Cost Allocation TAG. However, the state described these sites as facing difficulties because of the fact that in Wisconsin the One-Stop initiative pertains to numerous agencies and programs beyond DOL, which have not necessarily approved the approaches recommended. In general, it is believed that the cost allocation practices described in the TAG are best designed to deal with fully integrated service delivery approaches, which local sites are reluctant to pursue prior to the implementation of workforce development block grants. As a result, a wait-and-see stance with respect to cost allocation issues and practices has been adopted by many key players.

An issue of particular interest to the numerous One-Stop stakeholders nationwide is the issue of cost savings or prospective cost savings resulting from the establishment of a One-Stop service delivery system. Although there are clearly areas in which cost savings have been experienced in the state of Wisconsin (e.g., increasing the emphasis on self-service access by job seekers to automated job listings has reduced the need for field staff to support job search activities), the fluidity and dynamism of the current environment and the embryonic nature of One-Stop system-level accountability procedures makes assessing the level of cost savings difficult at best. Whereas the need to identify cost savings and to demonstrate cost-effectiveness is perceived as important at the state level and early pilot efforts identified specific overhead savings, it was strongly believed that it would be difficult to measure cost reductions or to place a specific dollar value on the increased benefits in terms of the improved quality of customer services.

DESIGN OF THE STATE ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of State Design

The One-Stop initiative in the state of Wisconsin represents a work-in-progress that can be traced back nearly a decade. The framework that materialized in 1990 for a more efficient and effective service delivery system was predicated upon the desire to

increase the level of coordination among key funding streams: Wagner-Peyser, JTPA, JOBS, Vocational Education, and Adult Education. (Although the School-to-Work initiative in Wisconsin is housed within DILHR, the One-Stop initiative and the School-to-Work initiative have developed along independent but parallel paths.) Based upon this early vision of a coordinated service delivery system, the state council at the time promoted the “Job Center” concept, secured state funding for local pilots, involved local areas in the planning process, and established local structures called Local Collaborative Planning Teams to develop local coordination plans. Coordinating these funding streams required the involvement of four key partners at the local level (which still represent the required minimum core partners)—the PIC or JTPA administrative entity, the local Job Service, the JOBS administrative entity, and the local Technical College District.

In its initial efforts to develop a seamless and comprehensive workforce development system, the state identified five specific activities and services believed to be common across all programs: intake, assessment, case management, employer services, and interagency areawide planning. Therefore, local Job Centers were built upon interagency practices that unify these five functions. The state established “benchmarks” for each function to guide local areas in their development of customer-oriented delivery systems. These benchmarks evolved into Wisconsin’s *Job Center Standards*, widely considered to be the backbone of the state’s design for the One-Stop system.

Wisconsin’s input into the federal One-Stop design resulted in a fair degree of congruence between Wisconsin’s efforts in these five functional areas and what USDOL ultimately proposed as “minimum core services” to be delivered through a One-Stop system. The state expanded the scope of its Job Center Standards to include DOL core services (e.g., labor market information and job search training and assistance), thereby aligning the state and federal visions. The Job Center Standards, discussed more fully in a later section, have continued to evolve and shape the design framework for Wisconsin’s One-Stop system, guiding local operations.

The One-Stop effort in the state of Wisconsin is perceived, above all else, as an organizational and structural means to the end of improved customer services. According to the One-Stop manager within Wisconsin’s DILHR, the One-Stop system represents the infrastructure—a store with shelves, a loading dock, cash registers and such. At present, the contents of the shelves are defined by different state and local

program initiatives, funding streams, and specified target groups (e.g., JTPA, local School-to-Work initiatives). Notwithstanding this metaphor, the state's conceptual framework for a local One-Stop system calls for a network consisting of:

- At least two full-service Job Centers in most SDAs;
- “Other staffed service locations” tied to Job Centers by various means (e.g., formal two-way referral, electronic communication linkages);
- “Self-service sites” at a variety of high traffic public access sites in the community; and
- An information technology infrastructure based on state-sponsored designs adapted to local needs.

According to the state's vision, no single agency or program will own or run any local Job Center. Rather, each Job Center is to be run by a consortium—a “partnership of equals”—that includes the four core partners at a minimum. Implicit in this rather broad design framework is the latitude for local discretion and the recognition of differences across local areas. Indeed, local flexibility and discretion are perceived as key design elements, facilitating responsiveness to local customer needs. Each local One-Stop center is encouraged to develop services and structures tailored to the needs of local employer and job seeker customers beyond the core services and within the state's functional framework using either co-location or a “no wrong-door” approach to coordinate among local partners and their programs. Local areas, however, have most often perceived co-location as a necessary (though not a sufficient) condition for efficient and effective Job Center operations.

Relevance of the State Design to the Four Federal Goals

Universal Access

The state anticipates that the federal goal of the *Universality* of One-Stop services will be achieved as all employers and individuals come to view Job Centers as the vehicle of choice for all workforce development needs. While offering services to economically disadvantaged customers and other “target groups,” the system will endeavor to avoid a “welfare-system” image. There is a difference of emphasis among different One-Stop partners, however, between making services available to the general public and developing services to meet the needs of specific target groups. According to the state's One-Stop vision and design, all customers will have access to a set of core services available free of charge, including access to *Job Net*, an automated listing of job openings, *Career Visions*, an automated career information delivery system, and

resource libraries offering a broad range of print and multi-media materials providing labor market, career, and job information. Non-program-eligible customers may be required to pay for some services beyond a set of core services. Whereas fee-for-service arrangements are believed to be one strategy to make a wider range of services available to the general public, procedures for fee-based services are still in the early stages of development.

This was also the case in the local site visited. Therefore, although there is wide recognition that services in a One-Stop environment must be universally available, there is not yet a clear strategy for how to provide a broad range of services to individuals not eligible for specific categorical programs.

Customer Choice

Improved customer choice is one of the key goals of the state's One-Stop initiative. By allowing each local Job Center to design a service delivery system that is tailored to local needs, the state hopes to offer each customer a choice among attractive service options. The primary response to the federal One-Stop objective of *Customer Choice* has been the development of self-service as well as assisted service options. The state has taken the lead with respect to developing the infrastructure to support the former and provided guidance to local areas with respect to the latter. All partners agree that technology-driven, user-directed services such as automated job banks and career information software are essential to make services available to large numbers of employers and individuals. Both state and local respondents agree that the objective of both the technology-driven self-service options and assisted-service options is to increase the service choices available to One-Stop customers. However, while state One-Stop partners tend to emphasize the importance of the self-service systems as a key element of the One-Stop service delivery approach, local One-Stop partners in Waukesha perceived the "personal" assisted services provided by Job Center staff as the key to providing services responsive to customer needs.

Integrated Services

There is a clear desire to move toward *Integrated Services* in terms of service planning and delivery across workforce development programs. Indeed, this is a primary reason why the state has required local Job Centers to be operated by an interagency "partnership of equals" that, together, develops a plan for the design and delivery of services. At present, statewide One-Stop system integration in Wisconsin is built around the five common functions previously referenced (i.e., intake, assessment,

case management, employer services, and planning). It is expected that partner agencies will minimize service duplication and maximize the resources available for customer service by sharing common service functions and infrastructures.

Although integration is a clear goal of the state's One-Stop system, in practice there is actually a *continuum of integration*, ranging from coordination among distinct programs, to consolidation of activities or services across programs. Without the implementation of federal block grants, it is believed that individual programs will maintain their own separate identities and complete integration of services will be unlikely. These beliefs were echoed at the local site visited. In the current multi-program and multi-funding stream environment, the local site visited for the evaluation had progressed to widespread "coordination" of functions across all program activities, but had stopped short of service integration.

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

At the present time, the *Job Center Standards* represent a primary mechanism through which the state is cultivating a performance-driven/outcome-based One-Stop system. This series of process standards, representing the culmination of several years of planning efforts, were developed by a state-local interagency team and were approved by the HRIC in February 1995. The standards describe the characteristics of a well-coordinated local employment and training service delivery system (*functional standards*) and identify the minimum menu of services that all Job Center sites are expected to provide on-site to a universal customer base that includes individuals and employers (*service standards*). Thus, the Job Center Standards consist of functional standards pertaining to *how* specific services are delivered, as well as service standards pertaining to *what* specific services are available. For example, one service standard is that testing and assessment be available to a universal customer base; one functional standard is that assessment be non-redundant across participating partners.

In order for a local area to be considered a One-Stop Job Center, it must be in conformance with the standards. A current priority for the state is field-testing an evaluation guide, developed in-house, in order to assess whether and to what extent local Job Centers are meeting their Job Center Standards.

In addition to the Job Center Standards themselves, the state's One-Stop design framework includes the expectation that information about processes, outcomes, and customer satisfaction will guide continuous improvement efforts and that such data will

also be used to certify local One-Stop centers, generate incentive awards, and trigger other consequences. An extensive program of statewide customer-focused research targeted to samples of job-seeker customers, employer customers, and Wisconsin taxpayers is currently underway. The identification and measurement of quantitative outcome-oriented goals, however, is much more rudimentary in nature and represents a challenging area with which the state has just begun to deal. State respondents expressed a desire to develop *feasible* and *valid* outcome measures for the One-Stop system. However, partner agencies are approaching the issue of specific One-Stop outcome measures with caution and trepidation, borne perhaps of past experiences with numbers that are easily manipulated, quantitative measurements that actually possess minimal utility but which make for pithy sound-bites, and the strong belief that specific quantitative measurements are premature in a system that is very much in a stage of development. At the time of this writing, the state had procured a consultant to assist the One-Stop players in working through these and similar issues.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STATE SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Capacity Building and Technical Assistance

The state has placed a high priority on capacity building and related projects to support Wisconsin's implementation of a statewide One-Stop system. The effort is supported by a three-year budget of more than \$300,000 from the federal One-Stop implementation grant. As in other supportive initiatives and projects, DILHR's JETS Division is leading the effort and facilitating partner agency involvement on an interagency "Capacity Building Team," which has responsibility for assessing the training needs of all One-Stop partners and developing a training response. Currently, the state is approaching capacity building in a strategic manner, working toward establishing a capacity building *structure*.

The majority of work in this area has revolved around surveying state and local One-Stop actors to identify training needs. A recent survey identified *team building* and *customer service* as priority training areas for 1996. The state has also conducted surveys specifically targeted to local One-Stop actors to identify and develop a roster of training resources and to gain input regarding what local sites are doing to meet their "functional" Job Center Standards. The goal of these efforts is to complete a job/task analysis that will lead to the identification of key competencies of all local Job Center staff based on the functional standards with a SCANS overlay (e.g., identifying listening skills that are part of the intake process). An automated needs assessment tool

has been developed for use by over 2000 local Job Center staff statewide. Results from the first assessment of Job Center staff will be used to develop curricula so that, in the near future, local One-Stop staff and managers would have access to a broad menu of training options and could register for training relevant to specific key competencies they would like to improve.

In terms of more immediate needs or specific technical assistance, “Local Liaisons” play a key role. Employed by DILHR to interface with local One-Stop actors, the two Local Liaisons are in a position to identify resources and assess immediate needs for assistance. This information is transmitted to the Capacity Building Team, which also provides “just-in-time” training when needed (e.g., conflict resolution training to help a local site deal with tensions among partners).

One-Stop respondents at the local site recognized the state’s need to concentrate its energies on soliciting input and collecting various types of information in order to establish a foundation for future capacity building efforts. However, a conflict existed between planning for an ongoing capacity building structure and addressing the immediate needs of local areas during the early stages of One-Stop design and implementation.

Labor Market Information and Related Information Technology Improvements

State-level One-Stop actors view labor market information (LMI) and information technology (IT) from a highly comprehensive perspective, one that views IT as the infrastructure that supports the LMI content that drives both workforce development planning and individual customer service. According to this view, which is promoted by ALMIS (America’s Labor Market Information System), LMI includes both general information about local education and career opportunities and data on individual labor market transactions (information on individual job seekers and available job openings). When viewed in this way, LMI improvement is actually the linchpin of the entire One-Stop system. State respondents generally believed it would be beneficial if LMI was viewed nationally as an integral part of the One-Stop initiative, rather than as an independent but related initiative.

An “intense” challenge for LMI-related initiatives in the context of a One-Stop service delivery system is the need to make products and technology useful and customer-friendly. One of the ways the state has responded is to modify or develop new products/technology to meet the needs of different types of customers (e.g.,

dislocated workers and dropouts). Despite these efforts, which have included a series of focus groups and the conduct of numerous customer surveys, system design is still a formidable issue, particularly in terms of accommodating systems to meet the needs of individuals with disabilities. Furthermore, the general belief that “technology” will solve any and all difficult or menacing tasks places unrealistic expectations upon a system that is already reeling from a lack of national investment amidst demands from numerous layers of customers.

Two major information technology products support Wisconsin’s vision of a One-Stop service delivery system: *Career Visions* and *JobNet*. *Career Visions* is the state’s automated Career Information Delivery System (or CIDS), the major vehicle for the electronic delivery of self-service career exploration and decision-making information for individuals. It is a multimedia career exploration and information database accessed through a user interface produced by the University of Wisconsin, and consisting of three major databases (occupations, colleges and universities, and programs of study). This enjoyable and relatively easy to use system is perceived to be geared more for youth in grades 7 through 12 than adults (the major market is the public school system). Although the state’s original LMI grant was reduced, combining the available funding with Wisconsin’s UI profiling grant allowed the state to implement *Career Visions* in 60 Job Centers or affiliated sites.

JobNet, developed in-house chiefly through ES Automation grants, provides job seekers with information on job openings submitted by employers. *JobNet* is a PC-based, self-service, touch-screen customer information system. Customers can register for services and obtain information on available local and state job openings. In actuality, *JobNet* is a primary means of retooling and reengineering Wisconsin’s Job Service. The goal for *JobNet* installations is 72 sites by July 1996, with 45 sites achieved as of March 1996.

In addition to these two primary LMI products, which the federal One-Stop implementation grant is helping the state to “roll out” to local Job Centers, the federal One-Stop grants are also supporting additional Information Technology (IT) projects to further Wisconsin’s vision of a statewide One-Stop system. One project is designed to develop a “universal menu of services” for all Job Centers. Called the “*Menu of Services Project*,” the expectation is that individuals will be able to review, select, and automatically register for a locally programmed menu of services on-line. Current plans are to implement this project on a pilot basis using *JobNet* as the host system.

Among the planned capabilities of this system is the ability to assess initial eligibility for some services. The state plans to conduct an initial pilot of this project, and, if the customer response is positive, implement the menu of services approach statewide.

Another IT project is the establishment of information-sharing linkages across data systems, called the “*IT Blueprint Project*.” In the short-term, project completion will prevent the need for duplicative data entry and facilitate inter-program sharing of information to support the case management function. In the longer-term, the completed “blueprint” will guide state and local IT development to ensure state-local connectivity and compatibility while encouraging local refinements and innovations.

Further IT projects carried out with the federal LMI grants associated with One-Stop include the creation of an automated LMI data “warehouse” to allow easier access and manipulation of multiple LMI datasets by LMI staff. The Occupational Information System (OIS) will permit education and E&T program planners to compile information from multiple sources on labor shortages and surpluses and show the relationships between educational preparation and occupations.

Marketing

Marketing is viewed as critical to the success of the One-Stop initiative—marketing to individual job seekers, the general public and, particularly, employers. Consistent with the model of strong state leadership with local flexibility, the state believes that the most effective marketing will be conducted at the local level. To support local marketing efforts, the state is planning to prepare marketing materials on a statewide basis. However, progress in developing marketing materials was delayed due to an unexpected loss of communications staff within DILHR and the omnipresence of more pressing priorities among other DILHR One-Stop staff. As a result of these factors, One-Stop marketing efforts—however crucial—made little headway during the first year of the implementation grant. State plans call for increased marketing activities during the second year, as more local One-Stop systems become more widespread.

Numerous other statewide initiatives—such as the state’s welfare reform proposal and the School-to-Work initiative—led other DILHR divisions and other agencies and departments to move forward with their own workforce development marketing plans, which would have resulted in parallel marketing efforts to employers and workers. Recognizing the importance of a coordinated marketing effort for the One-Stop system,

an Interagency Guidance Team on Marketing was formed and, at the time of the site visit, the Marketing Team was in the process of securing a marketing consultant so that all of the One-Stop partner agencies and programs could focus on marketing the workforce development system as a whole. A statewide workforce development marketing plan was expected by March 1, 1996.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

The state of Wisconsin is clearly moving forward rapidly in its attempts to implement a One-Stop service delivery system. Rather than phasing in One-Stop planning and implementation a few local areas at a time, the state is moving forward on the development of an extended network of 62 Job Center sites simultaneously. Progress is being made in numerous areas, from cultivating an extensive range of state and local partnerships, to broad-based customer research. It is also apparent, however, that the state is behind its initial proposed timetable in several areas. For instance, the two primary information technology projects are both behind schedule, accounting, in part, for the level of underexpenditure of the implementation grant. In addition, implementation of DOL's Cost Allocation TAG has been pushed back, as have final recommendations on local governance structural arrangements. The state's original objective of having all local sites meet the *Job Center Standards* was originally scheduled to be achieved by December 1997. Achievement of this objective has now been scheduled for June 1998. The delay in many areas is probably something to be expected, given the massive organizational changes that are occurring at the state level among the One-Stop partner agencies. Such large-scale organizational change often takes longer than key actors initially expect, in part because much takes place that was not, and probably could not, have been anticipated.

INFLUENCES ON STATE DESIGN

Notwithstanding the key contextual factors mentioned in the first section of this profile, other influences have also affected One-Stop design, implementation, and progress in the state of Wisconsin. Wisconsin has a long history of collaboration and years of experimentation with precursors of the One-Stop initiative that have served the state well in its present efforts. The substantial involvement of numerous state agencies and local-level partners has clearly supported statewide efforts and helped to establish broad-based commitment for the consolidation of workforce development programs and services.

Another primary factor that has facilitated One-Stop progress and implementation is Wisconsin's strong economy. Low unemployment and widespread labor shortages have created a climate conducive to experimentation and heavy employer involvement. For example, the current job search assistance practice of making employer job orders available to the general public (i.e., unsuppressed job orders through JobNet) and minimizing applicant pre-screening may not be as acceptable to employers when the job market is not as tight.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

In summary, the Wisconsin approach to One-Stop design and implementation is characterized by several features, including: (1) strong state leadership to create a coordinated infrastructure and guide the development of local One-Stop systems, with substantial room for local variation in the organization, design, and delivery of One-Stop services; (2) a planned strong integration of welfare-to-work initiatives into the One-Stop system; (3) a vision of tiered services offering Wisconsin residents a range from self-service delivery, to guided services, to case managed services; (4) an approach to One-Stop service delivery that currently emphasizes coordination among disparate funding streams, but which may move rapidly toward integration of services after federal block grant legislation is passed; (5) a strong interest in gaining active employer involvement in One-Stop services and basing system design on ongoing measurements of customer needs and desires; and (6) an organizational structure that emphasizes a consortium of equal agency partners and structures for interagency participation in planning and governance at both the state and local levels.

Wisconsin offers many lessons and, given the benefit of hindsight, perhaps much that would have been done differently. One of the most difficult lessons learned involves the case of local governance. It is widely accepted that the ideal situation would have been to design local governing structures in advance of initial One-Stop planning and implementation. It is to its advantage that the state has historically enjoyed a substantial level of involvement and commitment across state and local agencies, which will probably serve to ameliorate at least some of the discomfort inherent in the formidable process of establishing local boards.

The involvement of as broad a range of state agencies as possible has been both challenging and facilitative of Wisconsin's progress. Despite different missions, cultures, and perspectives, a focus on common interests has helped partner agencies move beyond their differences to focus on a collective goal. Whereas it takes little

effort to focus on differences (e.g., one agency serves “veterans,” another serves “individuals with disabilities,” yet another serves “economically disadvantaged”), the common focus was the establishment of a system to serve *customers* through a unified system. Although working with so many different partners continues to offer many challenges, this common focus has emerged as the foundation for agency rapport and the initiation of a team approach.

The state of Wisconsin is still struggling with developing its One-Stop system and will probably continue to do so. Despite undeniable progress, it is in a formative stage of development. Perhaps the experience of Wisconsin, well-known as a leader in these efforts, is instructive in that it cautions various stakeholders to temper expectations with the unmistakable reality that cultural change is a long-term process.

APPENDIX W

WAUKESHA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER PEWAUKEE, WISCONSIN One-Stop Profile

Based on a Site Visit Conducted During December 1995

**WAUKESHA COUNTY
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER
One-Stop Profile**

CONTENTS

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT	1
ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	3
COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION.....	6
FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES	7
DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE	8
Evolution and General Description of Local Design	8
Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals.....	9
Physical Facilities	12
IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS	13
Staffing Arrangements	13
Capacity Building.....	13
Management Information Systems (MIS)	14
Labor Market Information and Related Improvements.....	15
Marketing.....	16
DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS.....	17
Services for Individual Customers	17
Services for Employer Customers.....	19
CUSTOMER RESPONSE	21
Individuals	21
Employers	22
INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN	23
ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED	24

WAUKESHA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CENTER

One-Stop Profile

DESCRIPTION OF THE LOCAL CONTEXT

The Waukesha County Workforce Development Center (“WDC” or “Center”) opened its doors in January 1995, after an intensive two-year planning process. The Center is located on the campus of the Waukesha County Technical College in the city of Pewaukee. Waukesha County is part of a three-county One-Stop planning unit called the “WOW” SDA because it is comprised of three counties: Waukesha, Ozaukee, and Washington. Each of the three counties has a local One-Stop center. Waukesha County is the largest of the three counties, with several population centers and a range of suburban, urban, and rural areas.

Key partner agencies, each representing major funding streams, had been working collaboratively for several years prior to the opening of the Center. JTPA/Title III experiences were credited as providing the opportunity for some of the initial forays into coordinated service delivery (e.g., through rapid response teams that included participation from a number of different local agencies). What has emerged as the Workforce Development Center is the product of several years of discussions among key staff from the participating local partners, including the Wisconsin Job Service, the WOW Private Industry Council, the Waukesha County Technical College, the Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services, the Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation, and Partners for Education, Inc. The active involvement of the County Executive is also credited with providing the leadership that helped the participating partners see beyond their individual concerns to a common mission and customer service approach.

The vision of the Workforce Development Center is believed to be inherent in its name. Although most local One-Stop sites within the state of Wisconsin call themselves “Job Centers,” partner agencies in Waukesha County prefer this designation, perceived to be indicative of a more comprehensive view, as enumerated in its mission statement:

The purpose of the Workforce Development Center is to advance the economic well-being of the region by developing and maintaining a quality workforce and by serving as the focal point for local and regional workforce development initiatives. This is to be achieved through the co-location and integration of employment, training, education, and economic development services for job seekers, workers and employers.

Waukesha County is the fastest growing county in the state of Wisconsin, experiencing one of the lowest unemployment rates in the nation, as well as fiercely swift business expansion. Due to this rapid economic growth, employers are projected to have a continuing problem with an adequate supply of entry-level and skilled workers. Indeed, local fast-food establishments have offered health benefits in order to attract workers. This economic environment offers many opportunities for partner agencies (e.g., employer interest in and support for workforce development activities), as well as challenges (e.g., the lack of a public transportation system to support access to county jobs by workers from the central city of Milwaukee).

In addition to the local economy, the state's proposed realignment of SDA boundaries from 17 to possibly 10 is a key contextual variable offering both challenge and opportunity. Local One-Stop actors believe that the proposed realignment of planning units will transform the current three-county SDA into a four-county SDA that would include neighboring Milwaukee. There is some concern that Milwaukee, which is much larger and more economically and socially diverse, will overshadow the three counties that currently comprise the WOW SDA. Thus, although it is recognized that Milwaukee offers many advantages to Waukesha County (e.g., source of labor), and that coordinated efforts are in the best interests of both counties (e.g., realizing the potential for creating an integrated labor market by linking Milwaukee's surplus of job seekers with WOW's surplus of unfilled jobs), there is some tension around consolidating the local workforce planning unit with Milwaukee County.

The prospective block-granting of federal workforce development programs continues to influence local progress toward a fully integrated service delivery system. Local actors actually believed that block grants would have been in place by this time, facilitating movement toward their vision of the Workforce Development Center as a *business*, with each of the partner agencies as "departments" within a company. However, the current reality of different funding streams with different restrictions and requirements is perceived as mitigating against the achievement of true integration and

the ultimate realization of the local vision, concerns that were echoed by state-level representatives as well.

ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

As required by the state, the Workforce Development Center has a *Local Collaborative Planning Team* (LCPT) guiding One-Stop planning and implementation, similar in structure and function to the State Collaborative Planning Team. Membership on the LCPT consists of the four state-required “core” partner agencies—the local Job Service, JTPA PIC, JOBS administrative entity, and the local Technical College. The LCPT has responsibility over the entire three-county SDA, of which Waukesha is a part. Partner agencies believe that the LCPT represents a true partnership between agencies focused on the common mission of workforce development.

The state’s planned framework for local Job Center governance revolves around the establishment of local *Human Resource Investment Boards* (HRIBs). This proposed structure has emerged as a politically-charged issue, perhaps because these local governing bodies are being planned *after* the establishment of the LCPT and the actual development of local centers such as the WDC. Representatives from local partner agencies are vehemently opposed to what is perceived as the imposition of another layer of government and bureaucracy and are concerned with the potential destabilizing effect this mandated structure may have on the current collaborative process that has emerged and evolved and that partners believe has worked exceptionally well. Currently, the state’s plans for the establishment of HRIBs have been postponed until late spring 1996 (or after the passage of federal block grant legislation).

Currently, the day-to-day operation of the WDC is overseen by a *Management Team* consisting of top-level representatives from six of the key partner agencies (listed below). It was established nearly two years prior to the opening of the WDC to enable key players to negotiate the mechanics of a workforce development center that was to be based on customers and founded on agency partnerships. The Management Team is currently responsible for the ongoing operation of the Center, with decisions made on a consensus basis. By all accounts, this is a highly effective team. It is not surprising that this administrative arrangement is perceived by local actors to be a key part of the local governance structure. Indeed, local actors believe that the Management Team at the WDC functions as an HRIB, although it is currently not an incorporated entity.

Although there is no “lead agency” responsible for managing the Workforce Development Center, joint Center funds (provided for in the lease payments made by each participating partner) are used to support a full-time Center Manager and portions of the salaries of other staff, whose efforts support the operation of the Center as an entity. The Center Manager, who had only been in her position for a short period prior to the site visit, views her role as facilitating and urging Center partners toward increasing unification and consolidation of their functions over time. As she described it, “The Center partners have “gotten married.” It’s my job to help them realize what comes after the wedding to build and maintain a strong marriage.”

There are nine local agency partners currently involved in the Workforce Development Center as listed below. Each has a physical presence at the Center.¹

- *Wisconsin Job Service*, which provides ES services to the general public, including UI claimants.
- *WOW Private Industry Council*, which is responsible for administering services under JTPA Title II and Title III, which it provides through contracts to several service providers, who are also co-located at the Center.
- *Waukesha County Department of Health & Human Services*, which has located not only its contractors for the JOBS program for AFDC recipients and the Food Stamp Employment and Training Program at the Center, but also the entire county income maintenance staff that provide economic assistance to “able-bodied” county residents.
- *Waukesha County Technical College*, which provides a wide range of education and occupational training programs to students, assessment services and career exploration to individual WDC customers through an on-site Community Career Center, as well as customized training services to local employers.
- *Waukesha County Economic Development Corporation*, which is a private non-profit organization focused on attracting and retaining companies in the county.
- *Partners for Education, Inc.*, which is a private non-profit organization created by local school districts with the objective of developing and cultivating linkages between K-12 education and local businesses.

¹The Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, although not part of the initial planning process, is slated to come on board as an additional co-located partner agency.

The following three partner agencies are contracted to provide specialized services to targeted populations:

- *Kaiser Group, Inc.* is a private for-profit contractor providing case management and customer services to targeted populations (JTPA, JOBS and FSE&T). This provider was selected through a competitive RFP issued jointly by the PIC and the County Department of Health and Human Services for the JTPA, JOBS, and FSE&T programs.
- *LaCasa de Esperanza* is a CBO that works with non-English speaking customers, offering a variety of case management and customer services to targeted populations. This provider was also selected through a joint RFP process.
- *AFL-CIO* is contracted to provide specialized services to dislocated workers.

In summary, the partnership developed for the Waukesha Workforce Development Center is distinguished by: (1) the consensus-oriented model for Center management and the lack of any designated lead agency; (2) the strong lead role played by the local Economic Development Corporation in unifying outreach to and encouraging active participation by local employers; (3) a strong local emphasis on the importance of involving the K-12 schools in efforts to provide a well-trained workforce for the future; and (4) the integration of the economic assistance function within the Center while avoiding a “welfare” mentality or image and emphasizing employment for customers as the mission that unifies all project partners.

As stated in a Memorandum of Understanding that was signed by the partner agencies nearly two years before the facility was operational, each agency agreed to take the lead on a different specialized function within the Center. This agreement has fostered a sense of cohesion and partnership, while acknowledging and capitalizing on specific expertise and minimizing duplicative efforts. For instance, the Job Service agreed to take the lead on staffing the self-service job information, the reception area, and the “job order services” unit. The PIC agreed to take the lead on a variety of administrative services, including the development of common computer information systems. The PIC also acts as the fiscal agent for the local One-Stop implementation grant. The Waukesha County Technical College agreed to take the lead on facilities management as well as the provision of career assessment services. The County Department of Health and Human Services was the obvious agency to lead the coordination of services to able-bodied public assistance recipients. Likewise, the

Economic Development Corporation naturally was the agency to coordinate business development services to county firms.

As a result of this agreement, partner agencies perceive collaborative efforts to build on the strengths of each agency and to naturally “feed off of each other.” This spirit of collaboration and cooperation has perhaps been fostered by the lengthy period of negotiation and detailed planning that involved all levels of staff from the partner agencies and that took place *before* co-location actually occurred. The opening of the Center represented the achievement of a common goal, despite differing agency cultures, missions and perspectives.

COMMUNICATION AND COORDINATION

Formal communication and coordination mechanisms in place at the Workforce Development Center include a variety of multi-agency committees, workgroups and teams, each with responsibility for specific areas and functions, and each open to all levels of partner agency staff (with the exception of the Management Team). For instance, the Integrated Services to Job Seekers Committee is concerned with issues and challenges regarding services to individual customers. Similarly, the Integrated Services to Employers Steering Committee is concerned with services to employer customers. In most cases, each of the Center’s committees and teams were established one or two years *before* the Center was opened. Therefore, these formal mechanisms not only enhanced communication and coordination, but allowed partner agency staff to build trust and experience working together as a team. In addition, because the issues and challenges that were originally faced by the various groups have necessarily changed and evolved, so have the responsibilities of each of the teams. For instance, the Building Environment Committee, originally established to decide on such matters as color schemes and furnishings, has evolved into the Building Operations Committee, now charged with the responsibility of ensuring a comfortable work environment within the Center.

In addition, the co-location of staff from numerous agencies, by its very nature, enhances communication. This was, in fact, a primary reason why initial plans for a center placed co-location at a premium. The belief that there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction was echoed repeatedly by all levels of partner agency staff. Case managers, for instance, believed that the ability to “walk over” to someone from a different agency enabled them to be more responsive to customer needs. Heads of local agency partners, who might have been located “a few miles” from other partner

agencies before the Center was built, expressed the tremendous difference co-location has had on the efficiency and effectiveness of their organization. To support their physical proximity, one of the first tasks the Center workgroup on MIS undertook was to develop common automated systems for the exchange of electronic mail and sharing of individual staff schedules and conference room schedules among all Center staff, regardless of specific agency affiliation.

Other mechanisms and procedures to enhance communication and coordination across local agency partners include the cross-training of staff in various areas (e.g., information technology) regularly scheduled inter-agency meetings, and a monthly WDC newsletter that gives all Center staff information on activities that have taken place or plans for the near future.

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS, BUDGETING AND FISCAL ISSUES

The Workforce Development Center was built with funds from the county and the local Technical College, demonstrating the commitment of key partner agencies to the One-Stop concept, which included co-location as a basic premise. The total cost of the new facility was \$2.3M. Because different agency rules and requirements precluded building ownership by any of the contributing partners, and because all partner agencies wanted to be “equal” in the building (with no specific partner owning it), it was determined during initial planning stages that each partner agency would hold separate leases with a “neutral” owner. The Technical College Foundation Board was chosen to have “ownership without risk and without return.”²

Aside from the lease agreement to which each participating partner makes a monthly contribution that supports the costs of operating the shared physical facility and the Center Manager position, the Center has few joint sources of funding. Exceptions include the local One-Stop implementation grant provided through the State to support local One-Stop implementation progress and a One-Stop Local Learning Laboratory grant (which is shared by both the WOW and Milwaukee SDAs). The

² The Waukesha County Technical College, which is a key local partner, is a separate entity from the Technical College Foundation.

JTPA Private Industry Council has responsibility for all funds coming through the Center and is the fiscal agent for the local One-Stop grant.³

Notwithstanding these joint funding sources, there are five major federal workforce development funding streams represented by the Center partners: Wagner-Peyser, JOBS, JTPA, Adult Basic Education, and Carl Perkins. A number of the project partners also manage activities involving additional federal, state, or local funding streams (for example, the Technical College operates extensive educational, technical training, and business assistance programs beyond its role as the local agency responsible for Adult Basic Education and Carl Perkins funding). At the present time, each partner agency maintains its own budget. There are currently no written financial agreements between the partners.

From a fiscal perspective, the Center operates like nine different companies—each with its own lease and its own budget. In general, the partner agencies contract with one another for specific services. Few costs are *Center* costs. Therefore, it is difficult to discern the exact overall costs involved in maintaining the Center. Although this is contrary to the local One-Stop vision, which is predicated in part upon the Center operating as *one business* with nine different departments, the integration of funding at the level of service delivery in the current multi-program environment is not perceived as prudent or realistic. Therefore, although partner agencies clearly coordinate in terms of the planning and delivery of specific services (e.g., workshops), partner agency funds are not co-mingled.

DESIGN OF THE LOCAL ONE-STOP INITIATIVE

Evolution and General Description of Local Design

As previously described, general principles guiding the design of the Workforce Development Center included co-location, equal partnership, complementarity of partner agency roles, and the decision to promote the *functional integration* of staff from a variety of agency partners. Rather than viewing the Center in terms of the program priorities of the individual partners, which vary in terms of target populations and available services, the new Center vision depends on viewing the needs of the

³ At the time of this writing, the local One-Stop grant expenditure rate for the WOW SDA was approximately 60%, with the expenditure rate in Waukesha County reportedly higher due chiefly to the cost of new equipment.

customers as the starting point, and enabling individual customers to navigate the multi-agency system to access comprehensive services responsive to their needs.

The One-Stop vision promoted by the Center Manager consists of coordinating existing services to meet customer needs, or as she expressed it, “wrapping the services around the customer.” Customer-responsive service design and delivery are intended to go several steps beyond coordination of existing services to include the coordinated development and implementation of new workforce development services to meet identified service gaps. For example, the Center Manager was very enthusiastic about the progress made by Center partners as a group to address the need expressed by local businesses for a pool of qualified apprenticeship applicants.

Relevance of the Local Design to the Four Federal Goals

Universal Access

The Workforce Development Center is conveniently located on the Technical College campus, which is near a major interstate and served by public transportation. According to the local design framework, the Center itself is the place of activity, although some services might be accessed off-site (e.g., classroom training at the Technical College). Whereas unstaffed access points are planned for the future, they are currently not a part of local design due primarily to cost considerations. The vision is that the Workforce Development Center will be the “hub of the wheel, with kiosks being the spokes.”

Local One-Stop actors expect the Center to be viewed as a professional entity dedicated to comprehensive, high-quality workforce development needs for all individuals and employers, rather than as a “human services agency” that portrays a “welfare image.” Indeed, this stance was one of the catalysts for including Economic Development as a key partner.

However, one challenge with which project partners are grappling with respect to achieving the federal objective of *Universality* is how to make a broad range of services available to the general public, given that a number of the federal funding streams managed by project partners are targeted to specific groups. Although all One-Stop customers can access services such as JobNet and Career Visions and can obtain career assessment services, more intensive services are often reserved for individuals eligible for categorical programs. One response to this challenge has been the exploration of

fee-based services. Another has been to share information when there is unused space available in various workshops and sessions offered by a given agency.

Customer Choice

Local respondents generally agreed that technology-driven user-directed services such as automated job banks (*JobNet*) and career information software (*Career Visions*) are important strategies to make services available to large numbers of customers. Both databases can be accessed in person (evening and weekend hours are available) or by personal computer. However, local respondents do not perceive self-service automated information systems as the only means by which the local One-Stop Center is responsive to individual and employer needs. Rather, “personal” services provided by staff were also considered crucial. Several case managers and customers described the “key feature” of responsive services as guiding the customer through the system and helping to enhance customer self-esteem by treating all customers with respect and offering them encouragement to pursue their employment goals.

Integrated Services

Integration of services at the WDC is predicated upon the co-location of partner agencies, the specialization of different project partners, and the “functional integration” of agency staff, so that staff are situated in the building by function (e.g., job placement), and not by agency. However, although customers are encouraged to make use of all relevant services available in the Center, the realities of categorical program funding and accountability continue to reinforce the delivery of distinct services by each agency and a perspective within each participating program of concern about “*my statistics, my numbers, and my people.*” Thus, the current situation in the Waukesha County Workforce Development Center would more accurately be described as coordination, rather than integration of services.

One of the key issues surrounding this federal objective is what is perceived by local respondents as an unrealistic federal view of what integrated services should mean in a One-Stop system. This is an issue approached with both concern and trepidation. Local players voiced the concern that if the federal objective is “taken too far,” it could mean that the diversity in viewpoints and perspectives each of the partners brings to the One-Stop effort may be lost. Respondents also expressed a concern that integrated services may be inappropriately perceived as a “one-size-fits-all” approach.

Thus, for example, from the perspective of these local actors, it is not problematic that there are currently three agencies at the Center providing resume services. Although seemingly duplicative and not “integrated,” integration is not perceived as a valid objective in this instance “because it depends on the end user.” Individuals may need more intensive or less intensive services, so that importance is placed upon agency *coordination* with respect to resume services. It is believed that, in a customer-oriented service delivery system where the customer comes first and where vastly different populations receive a range of services, it should be possible to have different agencies providing similar services.

Thus, in actual practice, there appears to be a *continuum of integration*. Although there are some functional areas in which Center partners continue to operate similar or “parallel” activities (e.g., there are multiple procedures for intake, job listings, and job search/job placement services among the Center partners), in a number of functional areas, customers are referred to a project partner that specializes in these services. For example, three different levels of career assessments are available to a wide range of customers through WDC’s Community Career Center operated by the Technical College with support from multiple funding sources, and most customers use the automated JobNet listings maintained by Job Service (although the Technical College still operates its own job listing service for employers who prefer to use this system). Integration of services to “targeted populations” has been furthered by the use of a “joint RFP process” to contract for the delivery of services to JTPA, JOBS, and Food Stamp Employment and Training Program participants. (Once the contracts were awarded, however, the primary contractor established separate case management staff to serve the participants in JOBS versus JTPA programs.)

Performance-Driven/Outcome-Based

Partner agencies agree that the local One-Stop system should be driven by customer feedback and continuous improvement. Local efforts to measure Center performance, however, are in their infancy. In terms of quantitative measures, notwithstanding individual program accountability requirements (e.g., placement rates for JTPA), partner agencies have difficulty even compiling “utilization” numbers for the Center as a whole. In addition, the local Center partners have not yet developed an approach to analyzing and using these data. A variety of efforts are underway to measure customer satisfaction using individual- and employer-focused surveys. Some

of these seek information on the customer response to specific services and activities, while others are more geared toward assessing the overall Center experience.

In general, however, local actors are struggling with performance measurement in a local One-Stop system that brings together numerous partners and populations with varying kinds and levels of expectations. Present efforts are concentrated on collecting data on numerous aspects of the Center's design and delivery of services. The recent formation of the *Data Collection Committee* is testimony to the growing awareness that information-gathering should be designed to capture useful information that can be used for continuous feedback and improvement.

Local One-Stop players believe that performance measurement within a One-Stop context should be predicated upon the ability to measure *system* performance (i.e., Center performance as a whole) and, ultimately, financial savings—a viewpoint also expressed by state-level actors. At the present time, however, different requirements for different programs are perceived as problematic. Local actors also voiced concerns about how performance data might be used to compare local areas that operate in very different contexts.

Physical Facilities

According to local actors, the building itself is important to the goals of the Center—"what it looks like, where it is, and how it's marketed." Many factors were considered in selecting the site and designing the WDC. Chief among these were proximity to the interstate highway, accessibility to Waukesha County employers and residents, visibility, and a positive image. The Center was designed to meet the needs of all Center partners, with all design decisions based on consensus.

The Center has two main entrances. The Business Services Entrance, for employer customers, is staffed by an employee of the Economic Development Corporation. The entrance for individual customers is staffed by a Job Service employee. Neither entrance looks like the "back" of the building. This decision was based on the desire to make each type of customer feel comfortable and perceive that the Center was designed "for them."

In addition to the reception areas, the building contains shared classroom space for training and group activities, a "Job Information Center," which houses labor exchange information, a "Community Career Center," which contains a variety of career exploration tools, a child care facility for use by parents visiting the Center,

space for employer interviews and seminars, common staff meeting rooms, a small lunchroom, and space jointly used for mailing, copying, and other administrative functions. Individual work stations are arranged on a *functional* basis so that staff from various agencies can work together on similar tasks. Although much attention has apparently been paid to detail (e.g, including attractive business-like furniture and decor and motivational quotations on wall decorations and computer “mouse” pads), it is generally agreed that space is somewhat tight. Partner agencies built a facility that met their current needs. Additional space was not provided to encourage expanded use by local agencies or programs not housed at the Center. Space limitations may become more of an issue in the future as the Center expands its menu of on-site services.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

Staffing Arrangements

More than 100 individuals staff the Workforce Development Center. Staff are situated in the building based upon function, so that “case management” staff are located in the same area, regardless of agency affiliation. One of the initial concerns for local partners was the fact that salary and benefit scales might be markedly different for individuals employed by separate agencies but working in a similar capacity at the Center. Although initially a source of concern for staff carrying out a given function, local respondents indicated that this issue “has receded a lot.” Despite the heightened awareness of different personnel policies, wages, and benefits, the morale among staff working at the Center is high due to the collaborative environment and the increased “community spirit” across partner agencies. One agency manager remarked that, “after staff come here, they don’t want to leave.”

Local actors believe that the WDC is a “listening and learning organization” that is in a state of evolution. It appears that local actors are building upon each other’s strengths so that, as remarked by one agency representative, “As a result of being aware of each other, we’re becoming more generalists in our awareness but more specialized in what we do.”

Capacity Building

Particular emphasis has been placed on the cross-training of all WDC staff in areas that include teambuilding, customer service, as well as technical training in information technologies. Many of these locally-initiated efforts took place *before* the Center was operational. For example, prior to Center opening, two retreats were attended by all levels of partner agency staff. According to respondents, these were

invaluable teambuilding experiences and, especially in the case of early efforts, helped to dispel a great deal of “agency baggage” concerning turf issues.

Although external trainers have been contracted in the past and are expected to be consulted in the future, in general, partner agencies currently rely on internal resources for capacity building and training needs. For instance, both before and after the Center was opened, staff from each of the partner agencies organized presentations and informational training sessions for the other agencies. These efforts facilitated the involvement of all levels of agency staff and allowed local actors to focus on similarities as well as areas of expertise. In addition, specialized training takes place, particularly involving the use of the technology available at the Center.

Management Information Systems (MIS)

Coordination and consolidation of the information systems used by all partner agencies remains one of the most important local implementation challenges facing the WDC. Lead responsibility for projects relating to MIS development for the Center was assigned to the Private Industry Council. Projects identified as highest priority include: (1) systems to facilitate day-to-day communication among partner agencies; (2) development of a shared file of information on local employers; and (3) development of a shared system to capture information on individual participants.

To promote day-to-day communication among staff within the WDC, two initiatives have been undertaken. The first initiative was to establish a common electronic mail and on-line scheduling system (allowing all Center staff to access each others' daily schedules and to reserve conference rooms) so staff could “act like and feel like one organization, or at least a number of organizations with the same goal.” The second initiative was to help agencies that used mainframe-based MIS systems equip all Center-based staff with PC's that could both “emulate” dumb terminals to access their agency's mainframe computer and give them access to the PC-based communications network within the Center.

To develop a common data base on employers, the Center undertook the development of a “comprehensive employer file.” This is an interactive, user-friendly, PC-based system that tracks all contacts with area employers. System design, which took into account individual agency needs, took approximately one year and was completed before the Center was operational. Information on employers can be printed based upon several options, including, for example, all employers contacted within a

specific timeframe or by a particular agency staff. The system is believed to be essential in supporting coordination of employer contacts among Center partners. With the help of this system, the partner agencies have established an informal “account” system, with a single Center staff assigned as the official “account representative” for each employer.

The area with which local actors have struggled the most is how to collect or share common information about individual program participants. Currently still in the planning stage, a shared information system is under development that would capture basic information on participant demographics and services received in a user-friendly, menu-driven manner. Initial registration in the system would be accomplished by customers who would be able to peruse an on-line menu of service offerings and indicate interest in specific services using PCs installed in the lobby.

Center partners are not attempting to design a common MIS system that would replace their own individual record-keeping requirements. Individual agency MIS requirements are perceived to be too diverse to consolidate. For example, one agency requires 24 different screens of participant information, whereas another requires 5 screens. Instead, the Center is developing a tracking system to capture a few “core” measures that different programs collect in common and that could be used to generate broad statistics about participants and the services they use. Each participating partner is expected to collect additional data based on its own reporting requirements. Local actors believe this to be the most prudent approach until federal and state reporting requirements are integrated across programs.

Labor Market Information and Related Improvements

The WDC has integrated the state’s automated labor market information tools (JobNet and Career Visions) into two staffed labor market information centers within the Center. Labor Market Information is available through the WDC’s “Job Information Center” (JIC) and “Community Career Center” (CCC). The JIC currently contains 12 terminals for individuals interested in searching on-line for a local, state, or national job through *JobNet*, the state’s on-line job posting/labor exchange system. The Job Information Center also contains a number of publications with labor market information in print format as well, including state-developed occupational and wage surveys tailored to specific regions. WDC staff are available to assist customers in accessing labor market information. In addition, a state-employed labor market analyst works at the Center one day per week.

The CCC has the look and feel of a library and is home to a bank of PC's on which individuals can use *Career Visions*, the state's on-line career exploration system, in addition to variety of additional software, some on CD-ROM with both video and sound capability. There are also numerous career and occupational reference books, some of which are geared for specific populations (e.g., youth); information on four-year colleges; and over 100 videotapes on various occupations. Also available is an on-line program that customers can use to access information about the performance of Technical College programs (including wage rates of graduates and placement rates). At least one staff person is always available to serve walk-in customers. Because the materials at the CCC are continually expanding, a current priority is the development of an inventory that can be used by internal staff and distributed to local schools.

Automated labor market information is also available to customers from a distance using Internet linkages. The feasibility of cable linkages to schools are also being explored as a way to make the resources of the Center available to a broader audience.

Marketing

Marketing efforts at the Center are guided by a multi-agency Marketing Committee. Based on the local One-Stop implementation grant, the marketing budget for the WOW SDA is \$41,000, of which Waukesha County receives 78%. This does not include, however, efforts initiated by specific partner agencies that support local efforts (e.g., this budget does not include the marketing budget for the Technical College).

Marketing was relatively low-key before and shortly after the Center was opened, reflecting local partners' caution and perhaps uncertainty about the level of demand for Center services. Initial priorities included the development of a logo for the Center that was acceptable to all partners. Local actors believed it was important for all staff to be able to distribute business cards portraying a single identity when the Center officially opened. *The Workforce Development Center: Where People and Jobs Connect* is prominently displayed throughout the Center, as well as included on stationery and "badges" that are worn by all staff. In addition to the logo, initial marketing priorities included the development of a brochure and a videotape describing the Center in the words of key staff from all partner agencies.

To date, marketing efforts have been broad-based and focused on both individuals and employers. This reflects, in part, the newness of the Center and the need to establish some kind of foundation within the county. However, there have also been some targeted efforts, many of which have been both resourceful and positive in outcome. When the Center opened, for instance, partner agencies used the Center's letterhead to contact all area Chambers of Commerce in writing to solicit input and ideas pertaining to a flag for the Center. This generated a number of questions about the Center, which was part of the original intent.

It is expected that marketing efforts will be more specialized and focused during the first half of 1996, with 75% of WDC marketing funds being targeted to individual job seekers. Local actors are poised for a media campaign that will include billboard and mail advertising, Career Expos, job fairs, on-site recruitment, and the sponsorship of Center tours. The substantial increase in marketing activity is driven by the severe labor shortage in Waukesha County and the consequent need to recruit individual job seekers. However, it is also the case that the partner agencies have now established a track record working together and are more comfortable promoting the Center and its services.

DELIVERY OF ONE-STOP SERVICES TO CUSTOMERS

Services for Individual Customers

The Workforce Development Center offers a broad range of on-site services to individual customers. Service coordination, as well as the initiation of new services is the responsibility of the multi-agency *Integrated Services to Job Seekers Committee*. Services currently available to all job seeker/worker customers include:

- *Computerized listings of local, state, and national job openings and other labor market information*, provided through the Center's Job Information Center, staffed by the Wisconsin Job Service (described in the section on Labor Market Information and Related Improvements).
- *Career information, including information about occupations and training resources and information about the performance of specific programs*, provided through the Center's Community Career Center, staffed by the Technical College.
- *Assessment and interpretation of basic educational skills, vocational interests, and occupational aptitudes*, provided through the Center's Community Career Center. As the agreed-upon partner responsible for assessment services (selected through a joint RFP process), the

Technical College offers three different levels of assessment to different customer groups including the general population, JTPA clients, JOBS clients, and at-risk youth.

- *On-site child care*, staffed by the local YWCA and funded through a subcontract with one of the service provider partners at the Center, available to Center customers for up to 2.5 hours at a time.
- *Job placement and job search assistance*, which is available through a number of different agencies and programs, including Job Service, the Technical College System, and contracted providers for individuals enrolled in categorical programs, such as JOBS and JTPA. The level of assistance and the intensity of these services vary substantially from source to source. Each provider makes an effort to share its resources with other agencies on a space available basis.
- *Information and referral to other needed service*, through distribution of information about services available from other community agencies.

Services available to individual job seekers based on their eligibility for special program funding include:

- *Financial assistance*, provided on-site by staff from the Waukesha County Department of Health and Human Services to “able-bodied” residents eligible for AFDC, medical assistance, and/or Food Stamps.
- *Education or job training/retraining support and assistance*, available to individuals eligible for the JTPA or JOBS programs through contracted service providers housed at the Center, through the Technical College, or through other community educational institutions.
- *Veterans’ services*, including job counseling and assistance available from special veterans’ staff within the Job Service.
- *Case management services*, available to individuals enrolled in categorical education and training programs such as JTPA and JOBS.

Individual Center customers are informed about the range of available services upon arrival to the WDC. Local actors believe that the menu and quality of individual services are continuing to improve and evolve within the One-Stop context. One area that holds much potential, for instance, is collaboration of Center partners in the design and delivery of various on-site workshops. For instance, local partners recently designed an evening workshop for students and their parents on career planning, based on the belief that parents are the primary influence on students’ career planning. Called “Parents-as-Partners,” this workshop has received high praise, and there are

currently waiting lists to attend. These and other locally-developed workshops and seminars appear to hold great promise for the future of the Center.

Local actors would like to view each individual seeking services at the Center as a “customer” without regard to eligibility for a particular program. The reality of specific funding streams for specific populations, in addition to shrinking funds in general, has made this viewpoint appear somewhat unrealistic, however, so that providing comprehensive services to the general public has emerged as a key issue. Although various short-term options have been exploited (e.g., not precluding individuals from attending on-site workshops for targeted groups when space is available), local actors are exploring the possibility of fee-for-service arrangements as a longer-term response. Currently, the only fee-based service for individuals at the Center is resume preparation. During 1996, partner agencies plan to survey individuals receiving services from the Center regarding the price at which they would be willing to pay for specific services.

Services for Employer Customers

Several committees guide the development and delivery of the Center’s services for employer customers, most notably the *Integrated Services to Employers Steering Committee*, comprised of partner agency representatives that meet regularly, and the *Employer Advisory Committee*, comprised chiefly of representatives from area employers, which currently meets on a quarterly basis and which provides a structured forum for employer input and feedback.

Although including the Economic Development Corporation as a key partner has clearly enhanced the Center’s legitimacy and credibility with area employers, local actors believe that a “multi-directional approach” is crucial to overcoming what is perceived as “the employer perception of the welfare stereotype.” One-Stop actors have seized upon various opportunities to broaden the image of the Center, including sponsoring employer seminars on topics of significant interest (e.g., the current labor shortage and workforce diversity). Additional efforts include acting as a liaison between area businesses and schools, facilitating the recruitment of individuals interested in apprenticeships and similar arrangements, conducting employer needs analyses and developing training around those needs and, in general, cultivating an “identity” for the Center within the business community.

Local One-Stop actors believe that employer services offer many opportunities for the Center, and services continue to evolve. Key partners involved in the delivery of services to employers include Job Service and the Technical College's Center for Business and Industry. At present, the WDC offers:

- *A range of recruitment services*, currently the most popular service with employers. Recruitment services available to employers include job order services, applicant referrals, assessment of job applicants, participation in job fairs, participation in internship programs, and access to national job listings. Currently, employers can "list" job orders by using the Job Service's on-line, labor exchange system (*JobNet*) and/or using the Technical College's system, also on site. Employers are encouraged to use both. Although seemingly duplicative, partner agencies realized that employers may have had negative past experiences with the Job Service and/or positive experiences with the Technical College, and wanted to offer employers a choice. Moreover, employers that are seeking graduates with specific credentials may use the system offered by the Technical College for this reason as well.
- *Technical assistance and a variety of employer-oriented workforce development services*, including business relocation/expansion assistance, outplacement services, business needs analysis, labor market information, information about linkages with school districts, tours and presentations, and coordination of youth apprenticeships.
- *Workforce training services*, including customized training, on- or off-site workshops, seminars and skills upgrading.

Through the Economic Development Corporation, the Center also offers various forms of financial support to local businesses, including assistance obtaining economic development financing and business loans.

Many of the Center's business services are fee-based, most notably customized training and consulting services. In fact, customized training on TQM is currently one of the most popular services. Local actors are eager to further explore fee-for-services arrangements. Several employer focus groups have been conducted to assess employer needs and willingness to pay for specific services. Feedback indicates that area employers are especially interested in paying for the screening of prospective employees.

CUSTOMER RESPONSE

Individuals

In addition to brief and informal conversations with Center users during the evaluation site visit, a focus group was held with individuals currently participating in activities and services at the Workforce Development Center. Focus group participants varied in terms of demographic characteristics, program eligibility, as well as the services that they were receiving. Customer response to the Center and its services was overwhelmingly positive. It was believed that the difference between the WDC and “traditional” services was quite pronounced, like “night and day.”

Focus group participants recounted past experiences working with different agencies in different environments. The Workforce Development Center was a clearly different paradigm. It was mentioned that even the layout and the professionalism of the environment was “full of hope instead of despair.” One young woman recounted her experiences with traditional “human services agencies,” stating that “...you walked in and you were a criminal and you were a jerk. Here they treat you with respect...The receptionist doesn’t care why you’re here. They’re there to help you.” Similarly, a middle-aged man who was an airplane pilot teaching individuals to fly was using the Center to find a part-time job because business was slow in the winter. He reiterated the theme that “the old systems aren’t working,” mentioning that he had familiarity with “other government offices like Social Security offices and welfare offices.” “This is different. The people are professional. It’s a positive environment. I’m very impressed.”

The access to multiple resources was viewed as especially important. For instance, one woman in her mid-20’s with four children originally came to the Center to apply for AFDC. She stated that “*Everyone* and *everything* was out here. You can get in touch with all these agencies, and it worked out real well for me.” This individual is currently completing a non-traditional training program in plumbing and is also attending an on-site job-seeking workshop. Many participants also stated that they liked the self-directedness of the Center and the ability to use various equipment at their own convenience. This was the case for one focus group participant who was a veteran about to lose his long-held job at a major area employer. He came to the Center looking for job information and was introduced to the on-line *JobNet* labor exchange information system. Although uncomfortable at first with the technology, he currently feels proficient and at ease. The major benefits to him include the fact that no

“intermediary” is necessary, although he felt more comfortable knowing that staff would be available to assist, stating that “They bend over backwards for you and give you excellent information.” The fact that the Center offered evening and weekend hours was also perceived as important.

Although self-directed activities and services were clearly viewed as important, it was also believed that there was no substitute for face-to-face interaction. Human contact was wanted and needed, especially by a few of the participants who unequivocally stated that their case manager was “key” for them. The experience of one participant is a case in point. In his late 30’s, this man was an ex-offender who came to the WDC to apply for General Assistance. He recounted “horror” stories of working with another non-partner agency for almost a year, following “dead-end job leads” and being required to participate in months of testing that was perceived as repetitive and a waste of time. He didn’t expect the support and assistance he received at the WDC. It was clear to him that his WDC case manager was a strong advocate, even driving him to meetings with his parole officer and encouraging him to make use of his degree in business and explore job leads via the *JobNet*. In another case, a young woman credited her case manager as helping her achieve her GED, “see past the obstacles” and receive computer and office skills training. She had a job interview scheduled the following day and stated, “I don’t know what I would have done without her guidance.”

Employers

Employer feedback regarding WDC services and activities was garnered through both an individual meeting, as well as through the perusal of a videotaped employer focus group that was conducted the week prior to the on-site visit. The response to the Center, as well as its services, was very positive. The WDC was considered to be a professional environment offering professional services, which was clearly a departure from what employers were accustomed to based either on past experience or stereotypical understandings.

In terms of specific services, respondents praised both the training programs sponsored by the WDC as well as recruitment services. One employer opined that “the nicest thing is the ordering. You can put in a job order and it goes everywhere. We’ve had great luck with getting people.” In another case, a Human Resources Manager from a major national retailer stated that her company recently added a second shift and needed more than 100 employees within a short period of time. Although difficult,

especially considering the current labor shortage, she said that when she approached Center staff and discussed her needs, “It was never a matter of ‘I don’t think we can do it.’ It was ‘Let’s talk about *how* we can do it’.”

INFLUENCES ON LOCAL DESIGN

Notwithstanding the key factors discussed early in this Profile—the local economy, the proposed reduction in the number of local planning units, and the expected changes associated with block grants—there are several local-level factors that have influenced local One-Stop design and implementation. The broad range of partner agencies involved in the WDC, for instance, has facilitated local efforts to create a more comprehensive workforce development service delivery system. In terms of specific partners, the inclusion of the Economic Development Corporation has influenced the Center’s reputation within the business community, and the inclusion of Partners for Education helps maintain a focus on youth and educational issues. In addition, the involvement of all layers of partner agency staff in the development of the local design has been a dramatic influence on local implementation. The many opportunities to work together *before* the Center was operational were invaluable experiences in terms of building trust, rapport, and hashing out issues before the Center was opened.

State-level influences on local One-Stop design and implementation include an extended history of state efforts to encourage coordinated workforce development planning and service delivery across local agencies and programs. State attempts to influence local One-Stop efforts began several years ago with the requirement for the development of local plans called Core Coordination Documents. More recently, the state developed Job Center Standards and allocated One-Stop implementation grant funds to local areas to be used to further the achievement of these standards. Although proud that they are perceived as early pioneers of the state’s Job Center initiative, WDC staff view the bureaucracy associated with statewide implementation of the Job Center model with some concern. Local staff perceive that, while their early experiences helped lead to the development of the state’s Job Center Standards, the standards themselves may not be flexible enough to capture the uniqueness of each local One-Stop site. State-level design work and infrastructure investments have also shaped the local use of information technology products such as JobNet and Career Visions. Whatever form of the proposed welfare reform package passes the state

legislature will also be an important influence on the services available through the WDC in the future.

ASSESSMENT AND LESSONS LEARNED

It is clear that the Waukesha County Workforce Development Center has made significant strides in creating a customer-oriented, comprehensive service delivery system. Meaningful collaborative relationships across numerous local partners have enabled local One-Stop actors to move forward toward the achievement of a common mission in which all partners can add value to the effort and “feed off of each other.” The experience of the WDC may be somewhat unique, however, in that the Center is a new facility, jointly designed and managed by the partner agencies. It is likely that that entire experience had a catalyzing effect on agency partnerships. Key lessons learned include the tangible benefits resulting from the involvement of all levels of staff from a broad range of local partner agencies, in addition to the importance of continued cross-training and teambuilding efforts.