

10. PROVIDING TRANSFORMED ONE-STOP SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

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10. PROVIDING TRANSFORMED ONE-STOP SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS

INTRODUCTION

The success of local One-Stop systems will depend on whether they can help employers find qualified workers, job seekers prepare to enter high-quality jobs with career potential, and workers enhance their skills on an ongoing basis to match the rapidly changing skills required in the workplace. Both employers and job seekers face new challenges in the global economy as a result of rapid changes in work-place technology and the skills required of workers. In an expanding economy in which local unemployment rates often hover between three and five percent—down from eight to ten percent a decade ago—One-Stop systems must pay careful attention to current and projected employer needs if they are to succeed in balancing the needs of employer and job-seeker customers.

Many firms require high-quality affordable services to help them recruit, screen, select, and train qualified workers for new job openings. Over the last decade, a number of firms have reduced their internal capacity to conduct staff hiring and training by trimming staff from their human resources divisions. As a result, many firms have begun turning to labor-market intermediaries for a variety of staffing-related services—including help in recruiting, screening, and training new staff.

Employers are also seeking help in training incumbent workers for evolving job responsibilities in the rapidly changing workplace. Increasingly, employers are encouraging or requiring current employees to upgrade their skills over time to keep up with changing workplace demands. They are looking for assistance from public and private training providers to provide customized training to members of their current workforce.

An important objective of One-Stop systems is to promote local economic growth and vitality by making it easier for employers to meet their hiring and staff development needs. However, to succeed in marketing their services to employers, One-Stop partners often have to overcome widespread employer dissatisfaction with

previous public sector labor exchange and training programs.¹ Many employers have expressed frustration with public-sector workforce development agencies, complaining that staff were unresponsive to their needs and that the services were confusing and duplicative, required excessive paperwork, and resulted in the referral of inappropriate job applicants.

One-Stop systems have taken on the challenge of changing employers' low opinions of public workforce development services. To make employer services more valuable to employers, One-Stop systems are planning to redesign "core" labor exchange services for employers. They have also begun developing a number of "enhanced" employer services—including management assistance, intensive recruitment and applicant screening for large-scale hiring efforts, and customized training for incumbent workers.

To improve employer services, One-Stop systems need to address several goals:

- Redefine the employer as a core customer of the public workforce development system.
- Provide simplified access to an integrated menu of employer services.
- Link employers to high-quality information that is responsive to their needs and interests.
- Improve the quality of labor exchange services for employers.
- Offer enhanced employer services on a fee-for-service basis (and free of charge to firms that qualify for special assistance).

In addressing these goals, One-Stop systems need to involve employers in the process of redesigning employer services, including both the minority of employers who are already customers of public workforce development services and the majority of employers who are unaware of these services or are disengaged from the system. Employer involvement will help ensure that the system changes are relevant to employers needs. Involving employers in the redesign process also provides the

¹ One-Stop planners in one large metropolitan area that conducted a survey of local employers found that only about 10% of area employers used the public labor exchange system. Furthermore, most employers that listed hourly jobs with public workforce development services did not consider public sector services when seeking individuals to fill salaried positions.

opportunity to inform all employers about the potential benefits of participating in One-Stop services.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES TO TRANSFORM SERVICES FOR EMPLOYERS

GOAL 1. REDEFINE THE EMPLOYER AS A CORE CUSTOMER OF THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Most One-Stop centers find that they need to redesign their basic employer services—even core services that are available free of charge—to attract a larger share of the employer market. To convince a wide range of employers to use One-Stop services, centers need to convince local employers that they will receive services that compare favorably with the fee-based services available from private labor market intermediaries in terms of customization to individual employer needs, quality, timeliness and effectiveness of services.

One of the keys to getting many employers to try the services available from One-Stop centers is to convince employers that they are important and valued customers of the public workforce development system and that One-Stop services have been designed with their needs in mind. Three strategies can be useful in accomplishing that goal: (1) ensure that One-Stop partners understand the needs and interests of current and potential employer customers; (2) ensure that One-Stop staff are prepared to offer employer-friendly services; and (3) ensure that One-Stop facilities are attractive to employer customers. Employer involvement in shaping new service designs will also help employers “buy-in” to the redesigned One-Stop service system.

Strategy 1. Ensure that One-Stop Systems Understand the Needs of Employer Customers

One-Stop centers can use a variety of methods to gain a better understanding of employers’ needs. One approach is to gather information from employers already using their services. Many One-Stop centers survey their current employer customers about the employers’ business practices and requirements. The purpose of such surveys are to (a) ascertain current employers’ labor-exchange needs, (b) assess their opinion of the ability of the public sector system to satisfy those needs, and (c) obtain their suggestions about how to improve services offered to employers.

One-Stop centers can also engage employers in discussions about their service needs and interests through a variety of mechanisms, such as:

- Holding “open houses” at the new One-Stop centers. Such open houses not only orient employers to existing services at the center, they also provide an opportunity to solicit employer input on how to reshape employer services.
- Establishing an ongoing employer advisory committee, which can provide employer feedback on a regular basis.

In addition, One Stop centers may want to reach out to new employers not currently using the public workforce development system. Employers unaccustomed to using the public labor exchange system are typically small- or medium-sized, technology-based, and either in need of skilled technicians and middle managers or part-time or temporary employees. One-Stop centers may also find that the growing number of private labor market intermediaries—including “head-hunter” firms, outplacement firms, and firms leasing temporary or permanent contract workers—are potential One-Stop employer customers, especially for automated systems that provide information about and access to job seekers and firms seeking new workers.

Reaching out to these additional employers requires a proactive approach of contacting new employers to learn about their hiring and workforce development requirements. For example, One-Stop employer-customer service representatives can visit new employers to become more familiar with the specific detailed operations and hiring needs of those employers and then develop services that would satisfy the requirements of those firms. At the same time, customer service representatives need to recognize that many employers’ human resources staff may not be able to spend a lot of time with One-Stop system representatives. Thus, center staff need to learn how to make their contacts with employers concise and to the point.

Examples of Learning about Employers’ Needs

Example #1—Conducting Surveys of Local Employers. The Indianapolis Private Industry Council commissioned a private firm to survey how local employers perceived the public workforce development system. The survey showed that a large group of employers did not currently use the public

labor-exchange system and demonstrated the need for redesigned employer services. Employers indicated that they needed a quicker response to job orders listed by employers and wanted a single contact person or customer service representative assigned to each firm. **Indianapolis, Indiana**

Example #2—Conducting Focus Groups of Employers. In Maryland, a state-level Employer Access Workgroup conducted 18 “employer dialogues” with 400 employers to assess the ability of the state’s workforce development system to meet employers’ requirements. One result was the development of a plan for a distinct “employer access cluster,” which will allow employers to dial up a bulletin board containing information designed for them on labor market trends, descriptions of job-seekers, and other program information useful to businesses. **State of Maryland**

Example #3—Holding a Community Forum. The Toledo area One-Stop system, in conjunction with its administrative entity, held a community-wide forum for employers and individual customers on how to improve One-Stop system services. The local Chamber of Commerce also sponsored “employer after hours” sessions periodically to continue the dialogue about improving One-Stop services for employers. **Bowling Green, Ohio**

Example #4—Establishing an Employer Advisory Committee. At this center, the Employer Advisory Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis, provided a structured forum for employer input and feedback. As a result of the employer needs expressed by members of this advisory committee, the center undertook several new activities, including sponsoring employer seminars on topics of significant interest (e.g., the current labor shortage and workforce diversity) and acting as a liaison between businesses and schools to identify individuals interested in apprenticeship positions. **Pewaukee, Wisconsin**

Example #5—Actively Recruiting New Employers. At this center, staff reached out to new employers on an individual basis. Instead of waiting for employers to come to the center, center staff regularly read the business section of local newspapers and actively searched out new employers. The staff in Connecticut’s Business Services Units also assign case managers to large regional employers to ascertain their needs and provide individualized services. **New London, Connecticut**

Strategy 2. Ensure that One-Stop Career Center Staff Can Offer Employer-Friendly Services

A major barrier for One-Stop systems to overcome is the common employer perception that public workforce development services are mired in paperwork and bureaucracy and that staff do not care about meeting employers’ needs in a timely and efficient way.

To improve the responsiveness of their staff and procedures, One-Stop centers can:

- Create a “work culture” that emphasizes the importance of customer service and customer satisfaction for employer services.
- Involve One-Stop agency partners experienced in providing individualized services to employers, particularly economic development agencies. These agencies can be included in a variety of roles, as either on-site or off-site partners.
- Hire staff with private sector experience to fill key positions. The objective of this strategy is to ensure that staff understand employer requirements and are motivated to make employers feel like valued customers.

Examples of Ensuring Staff Can Offer Employer-Friendly Services

Example #1—Improving Staff’s Customer Service Skills. In Connecticut, state trainers have improved One-Stop customer services by holding multiple rounds of training on three basic customer service skills: (1) telephone skills; (2) basic communication skills, including active listening and problem solving; and (3) skills specifically related to One-Stop services. **State of Connecticut**

Example #2—Including Economic Development Agencies as Key Partners. In this center, the participation of the local economic development corporation as a key One-Stop partner enhanced the center’s legitimacy and credibility with area employers. The center carefully cultivated its image within the business community as a place that employers can go to get their needs met. **Pewaukee, Wisconsin**

Example #3—Establishing Referral Linkages with Economic Development Agencies. Strong referral and service-coordination linkages with the local economic development agency and the community college’s customized training department improved the capacity of this One-Stop center to address employers’ needs for more intensive services. These off-site partners offered a wide range of employer services, including business planning, business counseling, employer seminars, customized training, and relocation information and assistance. **Columbia, Maryland**

Example #4—Hiring Staff with Private Sector Experience. Most of the ten employer services staff at this center were selected because of their experience in the private sector or in working with employers. **Springfield, Massachusetts**

Strategy 3. Ensure that One-Stop Facilities are Attractive And Business-Like in Appearance

Making the One-Stop facility inviting and professional-looking is an important asset in attracting employers as customers. Particularly attractive to business

representatives are centers with sufficient space for interviewing and screening job candidates, ample parking space, and prominently displayed signs advertising the location of the center.

Examples of Making Facilities Attractive to Employers

Example #1—Locating One-Stop Centers in Attractive Facilities. Prior to the One-Stop initiative, some of the partners in this site were housed in a commercial space that provided little privacy for employer customers. When the partners relocated, they sought a facility that would be appropriate for employers to conduct job interviews. They also invested in modern furniture and other aesthetic features to ensure that the center was inviting and business-like in appearance. **Lawrenceburg, Indiana**

Example #2—Providing a Separate Employer Reception Area. As a physical reflection of the fact that both job-seekers and employers are core customers, this center created two main entrances—one for employers and one for individual customers. The partners wanted to make each type of customer feel that the center was designed “for them.” The business services reception area is staffed by an employee of the Economic Development Corporation; the individual customer reception area is staffed by a Job Service employee. Neither entrance looks like the “back” of the building. **Pewaukee, Wisconsin**

GOAL 2. PROVIDE SIMPLIFIED ACCESS TO AN INTEGRATED MENU OF EMPLOYER SERVICES

“Too often you could never get anyone to answer your phone calls; but, on the other hand, you were bombarded with requests for employment and information by a number of organizations and agencies—often different offices or staff from the same agency.”

As illustrated by the quotation above, prior to the One-Stop initiative, employers often complained that the services offered by public workforce development agencies were uncoordinated and unresponsive, resulting in duplication and wastefulness. To

improve employer services, One-Stop centers need to create a simplified and coordinated system by which employers can access the services or information they need. Specifically, employers need a unified way to list job openings and get job referrals and a single place to go to get information critical to the success or expansion of their businesses.

To create such a system, One Stop centers can: (1) develop a unified One-Stop plan for the delivery of services to the business community, (2) coordinate the service delivery roles of the various One-Stop partners, and (3) develop a unified marketing approach to inform employers about the services available to them through the One-Stop system.

Strategy 1. Plan a Unified Employer Service Approach

Using inter-agency work groups, consisting of staff from many One-Stop partners, can be an effective tool in planning a unified approach for the design and delivery of employer services. These committees are typically made up of representatives of key One-Stop partner agencies (e.g., JTPA, ES, UI, welfare-to-work, vocational rehabilitation, community colleges) as well as business associations and interested local employers. These inter-agency teams can plan an integrated menu of employer services, particularly in local sites where a number of different agencies are co-located within One-Stop centers.

One-Stop systems can also coordinate their planning for employer services by involving private industry in the school-to-work and welfare-to-work initiatives. Particularly in local economies with tight labor markets and labor shortages, One-Stop partners often find it to their advantage to take a “big picture” approach to workforce preparation and to encourage employer involvement in the design of services to enhance the skills of future labor market entrants. In this economic context, enhancing the skills of future job seekers is often viewed as a high priority by employers. Teaching employers how to make effective use of workers drawn from an applicant pool made up of a large number of new labor market entrants—youths and welfare recipients—is viewed as a high priority by public sector planners.

Although inter-agency work groups can be established at the state level, those formed at the regional, local, or career-center level are generally better able to respond to the concerns of the local employer community.

Examples of Planning a Unified Approach to Employer Services

Example #1—Forming a Local Inter-Agency Work Group. At this center, an “Integrated Services to Employers Steering Committee,” comprising representatives from nine local partner agencies, was charged with designing a local One-Stop menu of services for employers. This committee was also responsible for soliciting input from a separate employer advisory committee about ways to expand or improve employer services.

Pewaukee, Wisconsin

Example #2—Forming Regional Inter-Agency Work Groups. In Connecticut, “business services units” have been established in all nine regions of the state. These regional units—staffed by individuals from the state agency responsible for overseeing JTPA, ES, and UI services—have forged close alliances with the state agency responsible for economic and community development and the local boards responsible for overseeing JTPA services. Through their inter-agency alliances, the business services units hope to become regional brokers of One-Stop services for businesses—offering a range of services directly as well as facilitating employer linkages with other relevant agencies and organizations. Regional employer service specialists support the delivery of a well-developed menu of employer services across all local One-Stop centers within the region. **State of**

Connecticut

Example #3—Coordinating Planning with the School-to-Work Initiative. In this rural community, where the labor market is tight and employers have difficulty finding qualified workers, local employers encouraged the One-Stop center to establish closer linkages with the school-to-work initiative to increase the pool of job applicants available to employers. As a result, the center developed several linkages between One-Stop and the schools, including establishing ways for students to use the career and labor market information resources available in One-Stop centers and developing job search workshops targeted to high school students. **Lawrenceburg,**

Indiana

Example #4—Coordinating Multi-Agency Marketing. The Baltimore One-Stop centers coordinate marketing activities in conjunction with Employ Baltimore, a city-wide campaign to support local businesses and encourage employers to hire city residents. The city and other partners involved in the initiative have closely coordinated through the local One-Stop network, the service-delivery vehicle through which Employ Baltimore is to be implemented. To unify employer marketing efforts, cross-agency teams have developed protocols that staff from multiple agencies will use to enhance the coordination of their efforts. **Baltimore, Maryland**

Strategy 2. Coordinate the Delivery of Employer Services

The next step is to develop a consolidated menu of employer services. Often One-Stop centers move toward a more integrated system for delivering employer services over time, using several different service delivery approaches. Even when full integration is not immediately attainable, employers can benefit by greater coordination of employer services.

Several approaches to enhanced coordination are possible. One approach is to have a lead One-Stop agency “broker” employer services by providing information to employers about the services provided by all One-Stop partners and facilitating employer referrals among these partners.

A second approach is for agencies to share information about employers—such as the history of employer contacts made by various One-Stop partners or whether a firm already has a “customer service representative” assigned by one of the partners. The development of a shared database with information on the hiring requirements of all active employer job listings can be a very effective mechanism to improve the timeliness and efficiency of applicant referrals.

A third approach is to assign specific service delivery roles to different partner agencies to take advantage of the specialized skills of each agency’s staff. For example, the ES might provide all the labor information services while the economic development agency might provide unified referrals to business services.

Yet another approach is for One-Stop partners to develop “shared” or consolidated employer services that are provided by staff from multiple partners. Employers tended to respond very positively to evidence of coordination and resource-sharing among public agencies. Examples of shared or consolidated employer services include:

- An integrated interagency case management team for employers, with one liaison or case manager assigned to each employer.
- Integrated post-employment follow-on services to employers who hire One-Stop customers.
- The development of a single One-Stop employer resource center that offers employers information about hiring laws and rules and best practices in recruiting, screening, and hiring new employees, and provides referral sources for management assistance and worker training.

Examples of Coordinating Delivery of Employer Services

Example #1—Brokering Employer Services. JTPA, ES, and UI staff located at this One-Stop career center attempted to broker the diverse services for employers offered by all key One-Stop partners. In particular, One-Stop career center staff informally coordinated agency contacts with local employers. They also worked to increase employer awareness of the enhanced business services available from the continuing education center of the local community college and from the business resource center, which is operated at a separate location by the local economic development authority. Enhanced business services available from the employer resource center include business planning, business counseling, employer seminars, and relocation information and assistance. **Columbia, Maryland**

Example #2—Specializing the Services Provided by Different Agencies. In this center, partners specialized in different employer service functions. The ES and technical college placement service provided labor market information and labor exchange services; the technical college’s Center for

Business and Industry offered customized training and assistance with business expansion or relocation; and the local economic development corporation helped link businesses to various forms of financial support.

Pewaukee, Wisconsin

Example #3—Sharing Employer Services. At this center, four different public One-Stop agencies, several community-based organizations, and JTPA service-provider organizations jointly sponsored job fairs. Staff attributed the high level of employer participation in these events at least partly to the high level of inter-agency cooperation among center partners.

New London, Connecticut

Strategy 3. Inform Employers about the Range of Services Available from One-Stop Partners

To be successful in coordinating the delivery of employer services, One-Stop centers need to make sure that employers are aware of the range of services available to them through the One-Stop system. To meet this need, One-Stop states and local sites can develop a variety of consolidated marketing, information, and referral mechanisms, including the following:

- *A statewide employer-oriented marketing brochure* that both explains efforts to transform employment and training services throughout the state and markets these new services to employers who have not frequently used public services prior to One-Stop.
- *A marketing videotape targeted to employers* with information about all the services available to employers from the One-Stop system.
- *An on-line bulletin board service* that provides automated descriptions of employer services available from various One-Stop partners.
- *A “calendar of events” on the state or local One-Stop system’s Web site* oriented to employers.
- *An extensive face-to-face orientation for employers* who are visiting One-Stop centers for the first time.

Examples of Informing Employers about Services

Example #1—Establishing a Web Site for Employers. The One-Stop network, the umbrella organization for the seven career centers in Tarrant County, developed a Web site with electronic linkages to employer resources both within and outside of the Texas Workforce Commission. Employers can access a wide variety of information about training opportunities, support for business development job fairs, as well as information about the One-Stop career centers in Tarrant County.

Arlington, Texas

Example #2—Conducting Customized Orientations for Employers. This center provides employers with a customized information session to introduce them to the services available through the center. The session is particularly targeted to employers that are new to the area or have not used the public employment services before. **Blaine, Minnesota**

Example #3—Developing a Video for Employers. In addition to the employer-oriented video developed by the state, a One-Stop center in Boston developed its own video for employer customers. This video features a virtual “tour” of the center, during which individual career center staff describe the services they provide on-site. **State of Massachusetts**

GOAL 3. LINKING EMPLOYERS TO HIGH-QUALITY INFORMATION

Businesses need access to a wide range of information about labor markets, workforce characteristics, and local communities to make sound decisions about initial business formation, the location of business facilities, and strategies to use for promoting business growth and expansion. This information has traditionally been provided by state workforce development agencies in the form of periodic published reports and statistical abstracts. Some employers have criticized published data for being out-of-date by the time it becomes available, as well as for not being sensitive enough to regional and local variations within a state.

Improved technology for collecting, retrieving, and sharing information has made it possible for One-Stop systems to redesign the ways that information is provided to local businesses. Overall, these changes are intended to:

- Be responsive to employers' information needs and interests.
- Coordinate and unify the delivery of high-quality information relevant to business needs.
- Improve the timeliness and accuracy of the information, and allow employers to extract information at the level of aggregation relevant to their needs (e.g., state, locality, or census tract).
- Expand the types of information available to employers through One-Stop centers.

Different strategies can be used to provide employers with high-quality information on (1) labor markets, (2) education and training resources, (3) government regulations and programs, and (4) business management issues and assistance.

Strategy 1. Improve Labor Market Information

Accurate labor market information is essential for business planning and forecasting. Increasingly, labor market information can be offered through a variety of flexible formats, including user-friendly electronic databases from which employers can retrieve the particular information they want. Dial-up electronic bulletin boards or Internet Web sites permit employers to view and retrieve a wide range of information on occupation and industry trends, employment levels, characteristics of job seekers, and features of local communities.

In addition, One-Stop centers can use a variety of other formats to provide information to the business community, including:

- Seminars for employers on local labor market trends and strategies for success.
- Staff to act as “labor market analysts,” providing individualized consultations on labor market conditions for individuals or groups of business representatives.
- Detailed reports on the education and demographics of the resident labor force in specific local areas, designed for use by businesses considering relocation or expansion in the area.

Examples of Improving Labor Market Information

Example #1—Making Labor Market Resources Available On-Line.

Maryland designed its CareerNet Web site so that employers can directly access a wide variety of information such as labor force data, information on current job seekers, and wage surveys. This Web site also provide links to resource guides and other agencies offering labor market information designed for employers, such as the Maryland Business Information Network. **State of Maryland**

Example #2—Hiring Labor Market Analysts. Using its One-Stop implementation grant funds, Minnesota hired six regional labor market analysts to develop high-quality labor information and ensure that it is accessible to customers. These labor market analysts are also responsible for supporting local staff in interpreting labor market trends, preparing special analyses for employers, delivering presentations to business groups about local labor market conditions, and ensuring that the state's One-Stop centers are well-stocked with labor market information. **State of Minnesota**

Strategy 2. Provide Information about Training and Education

Because employers are increasingly concerned about how to enhance the basic and occupational skills of their workers, they have a greater need for information about education and training resources. One-Stop systems can offer employers more detailed information about DOL-sponsored apprenticeship programs, public and private providers of training for incumbent workers, and funding sources for training.

Information about customized training services available from local technical schools and community colleges can be made available through written materials, as well as through consultations with program staff. Employers can use this information to find out about the fees charged for employment and training services and how to obtain training subsidies targeted to “at risk” or expanding firms through government-funded programs.

Examples of Providing Information about Training and Education

Example #1—Making Information Available by Telephone. The Connecticut Department of Higher Education has a toll-free information number that provides information on career and education opportunities throughout the state. **State of Connecticut**

Example #2—Providing Information about Economic Development Activities. In Tarrant County career centers and partner agencies, employers are provided with information about and assistance in applying for the “Smart Jobs” program, which offers state funding for workforce training for “at risk” employers. Information about this program is also available through structured linkages on the Texas Workforce Commission’s Web site. **Arlington, Texas**

Example #3—Linking Employers to Resources to Support Training. The CareerNet Web site in Maryland provides a menu of employer services and information, as well as linkages to a wide variety of other business resources provided by other agencies. Through this Web site, for example, employers can access information about training incumbent workers and the training resources available. **State of Maryland**

Strategy 3. Provide Information about Government Regulations and Programs

Another of the criticisms that employers have about the public sector is that government regulations and paperwork are too complex and the multiplicity of programs is too confusing. To meet these concerns, One-Stop centers can provide employers with a centralized source of information about government regulations and programs, as well as support in dealing with them. The objectives of making this information available centrally are to reduce the burden of government-required paperwork for employers and to minimize the staff time spent dealing with rules infractions, penalties, and appeals.

One strategy is to make written information available as part of “employer resource centers,” where employers can access information on such government laws and regulations as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the requirement for early employer notification of plans for large-scale layoffs, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) requirements, Unemployment Insurance compensation and related regulations, Occupational Health and Safety Administration requirements, and tax credits for hiring members of targeted groups. Information about tax and licensing issues, business development opportunities, or changes in state and federal regulations affecting the business community are also popular subject areas. These employer resource centers can be located either at the same sites as One-Stop job-seeker services or in separate centers specializing in business services.

One-Stop centers can also provide information on compliance with governmental regulations by offering employers consultations with center staff. Another approach is to make compliance information available in self-service formats, either through computer access at the career center or via remote access from the employer’s own worksite.

Examples of Providing Information about Regulations and Programs

Example #1—Establishing Employer Libraries. In Minnesota, employer “libraries” provide detailed information on a wide range of employment-related programs and regulations. Other One-Stop partners and programs, such as Vocational Rehabilitation and Veterans’ Employment Services, are also expected to provide information on their programs at these employer libraries. **State of Minnesota**

Example #2—Putting Business Resources On-Line. Iowa has made a wide variety of information available to employers through its Web site, including up-to-date information on policy changes that will impact the business community. **State of Iowa**

Example #3—Using a Variety of Formats to Provide Information about Business Development Assistance. In the *Connecticut Works* center in New London, Connecticut, the account representatives in the business services unit can consult with employers about business expansion opportunities and help employers access other agencies and departments. Similar information is also available on-line through the state's Web site.
New London, Connecticut

Strategy 4. Provide Information on Business Management Topics

A final type of information that One-Stop centers can offer to employer customers is related to business start-up and business management. Drawing on the expertise of economic and business development partners, One-Stop centers can develop employer seminars or information sessions to respond to particular management-related concerns expressed by local businesses.

Examples of Providing Information on Business Management Topics

Example #1—Providing Seminars on Business Management Issues. The Wood County Employment Resource Center planned to poll employers on their interest in participating in workshops on such topics as violence in the workplace and workforce diversity and then develop programs to meet those needs.
Bowling Green, Ohio

Example #2—Providing Individual Consultations to Employers. The Business Service Units within One-Stop career centers in Connecticut offer workplace consultation services to employers to help them understand issues related to total quality management and continuous improvement, as well as public laws and regulations related to their responsibilities as employers.
State of Connecticut

GOAL 4. IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LABOR EXCHANGE SERVICES TO BETTER MEET EMPLOYERS' NEEDS

A number of different One-Stop partner agencies have offered labor exchange services to employers in the past. The ES has been the primary provider of such services, but many additional agencies (e.g., JTPA service providers, educational institutions, welfare-to-work providers, and programs serving individuals with disabilities) have also offered employers labor exchange services. These services have included the posting of job listings, recruitment and screening of applicants for posted jobs, job matching to link job applicants to available work opportunities, and job development to make employers aware of the availability of qualified workers. As noted previously, some employers have criticized such services because of the duplication of employer contacts across agencies, the lack of timeliness in referring applicants, and the absence of appropriate skills among the referred applicants.

The One-Stop systems can make a number of changes to their core labor-exchange services in response to these criticisms, including: (1) improve procedures used to list jobs and recruit interested applicants, (2) clarify descriptions of jobs and required skills, and (3) improve the tools for matching job seekers to employers.

Strategy 1. Improve Job Listing and Recruitment Procedures

Developments in information technology have made it possible to create improved job-listing systems that are more sophisticated and easier for customers to use and that can be shared among local One-Stop partners and across geographic units. With such information technology, job listings collected by one One-Stop partner or at one location can be easily shared throughout the state or local system as well as nationwide. From employers' perspective, the use of such automated databases to disseminate job announcements greatly increases the effectiveness of their listings.

Although job information systems are at different stages of development, most One-Stop centers can use technology to establish new procedures for matching employer requirements to qualified job-seekers.

Many One-Stop centers continue to screen interested applicants before referring them to employers. However, an increasingly common strategy is to encourage employers to post "unsuppressed" job orders that include the employer's identity in the public listing and instruct interested applicants to apply directly to the employer. One-

Stop systems generally make both suppressed and unsuppressed listing available and allow employers to select the method of posting job listings with which they are most comfortable.

Although not all employers are comfortable with using unsuppressed job orders—because they fear being deluged with large numbers of inappropriate applicants—some employers have found that unsuppressed job orders result in a higher rate of success in filling positions. These employers report a larger applicant stream and a quicker response to job announcements compared to the use of suppressed listings. To deal with the increased applicant flow generated by automated listings, many of these employers have developed more sophisticated in-house applicant screening and selection procedures or purchased help with the early stages of applicant screening from public or private labor market intermediaries.

Sophisticated technology can allow employers to post their own job orders. With such systems in place, employers can post their own job listings via dial-up bulletin boards, faxed-in job listings, or direct Internet access. The advantages of making the job listing process a self-service function are that it (1) frees up staff to provide other services to employers and job seekers and (2) gives employers greater control over the recruitment function.

However, the advantages of retaining job posting as a staffed function are that One-Stop center staff can (1) develop a personalized relationship with an individual company's human resources staff, (2) become familiar with the firm's hiring needs and counsel them on writing effective and accurate job descriptions, and (3) assess the firm's interest in additional One-Stop services.

Examples of Improving Job Listings

Example #1—Establishing Automated Local Talent Bank. This center maintains an internal talent bank using the Win-Search database. Although the service is not fully self-access, staff work with employers to identify appropriate search terms with which to screen the resumes on the database. Staff then send selected resumes (on-line, on disk, or on paper) to the

employer for review or conduct further screening and refer only appropriate candidates. **Springfield, Massachusetts**

Example #2—Establishing a State-Wide Database. This state maintains a Web-site through which employers can post job openings. Employers may provide as much or as little information as they desire in their job descriptions, which will become a part of local, state, and national job banks. The state has also established links with America's Talent Bank. Although the latter service was not yet fully-operational at the time of the evaluation site visit, employers can learn about the mission and capacity of the Talent Bank and will soon be able to register for the service on-line.

State of Maryland

Strategy 2. Clarify Job Descriptions and Skill Requirements

One-Stop systems can also improve labor exchange functions by helping employers better specify the skills and qualities that they want in job seekers. In contrast to the technology-based improvements in job listings described above, improving the effectiveness of job descriptions and skills statements usually requires individualized attention from One-Stop staff.

One approach for improving the accuracy and clarity of job descriptions is initiating a new skills-based system of job description to replace outdated industry- and occupation-based job descriptions. This is being done at the national level through the development of O*NET.

However, even before changing to a whole new system of describing jobs, One-Stop centers can use several approaches to help employers identify the essential skills that job seekers must possess, including:

- Expanding their interviews with employers to ask more questions about the skills required for a particular job.
- Having employer-service representatives visit the job-site to get a clearer understanding of the business and the nature of the work performed by employees.

- Conducting task analyses at the employer’s job site, which are intended to identify the skills necessary for successful job performance.

Examples of Clarifying Skill Requirements

Example #1—Conducting Worksite Visits. At this center, employer account representatives make services easier for employers to access. Because the city is relatively small, One-Stop staff often have the opportunity to visit the worksite of employers for whom they are providing screening services. Because of their satisfaction with this service, many employers have expanded their use of other center services.

Lawrenceburg, Indiana

Example #2—Analyzing Work Tasks. This center uses a proprietary system to analyze job tasks and create a profile of the workplace basic skills necessary to successfully perform in a given position. The system can also be used to assess applicant skills to improve the matching process. The system can also be used to help develop curricula for training incumbent workers. This system, Work Keys, was developed by American College Testing (now ACT, Inc.). **Des Moines, Iowa**

Strategy 3. Improve the Tools for Matching Job Seekers to Employers

Matching an applicant’s skills to those an employer requires for a particular position is often difficult. One approach that state One-Stop systems can use to reduce the number of “mismatches” is to design sophisticated job matching systems. To make these systems work, local sites must collect and record accurate information about job seekers using characteristics and measures that are compatible with those used by employers in their job orders. Job-matching systems require a fairly high degree of staff involvement and a commitment to assisting employers individually with their labor exchange needs.

An alternative approach is to de-emphasize the job matching responsibilities of public sector staff and encourage employers to play a more active role in screening

applicants. Under the “Talent Bank” initiative, employers can directly access automated listings that describe job seekers, which enables employers to directly review, screen, and select applicants. This initiative, piloted in five states and promoted for implementation nationally by DOL, depends on the ability of employers’ own staff to use technology to scan information about the individuals in the applicant pool. Although access to an unscreened pool of applicant resumes can be a powerful tool in the hands of trained human resource professionals with software designed to search and sort for desired characteristics, it is not yet clear whether this technology will be embraced by employers, or whether they will want public employer service representatives to continue doing the hands-on work of screening and matching job applicants prior to referral.

Examples of Improving Matching Tools

Example #1—Developing Software to Match Job Seekers to Employers.

Minnesota SkillsNet system is a statewide automated job information systems that can help One-Stop staff match the characteristics of current job seekers to the characteristics required in current job listings. In the Minnesota Workforce Center—Anoka County, a client assessment database shared by the center and vocational and technical colleges helps provide information on job seekers as input to the matching process. **Blaine, Minnesota**

Example #2—Using America’s Job Bank. Connecticut is one of three pilot sites for America’s Job Bank, the national database of job-seeker resumes. Although the services is not yet fully operational, employers will soon be able to log-on, self-register, and search through resumes at their convenience. At that point, employers may contact job-seekers directly, or ask their local One-Stop Center to conduct additional screening. **State of Connecticut**

GOAL 5. OFFERING ENHANCED EMPLOYER SERVICES

In addition to providing labor exchange services for employers, One-Stop systems can provide a number of enhanced services to employer customers. To develop the

capacity to meet employer needs for enhanced services, One-Stop partners often plan for active involvement by economic and community development agencies and departments, chambers of commerce, and community colleges' business service units, all of which have credibility with employers. These organizations are likely to be key players in analyzing employers' needs and developing new and improved services and products for employers.

Enhanced employer services often fall into three general categories:

(1) assessment of the skills of a firm's incumbent workers, combined with help in designing and delivering training to enhance these skills; (2) intensive customized recruitment and screening services for large-scale hiring efforts; and (3) management assistance and support for helping firms start up, remain financially viable, and expand. Additional categories of enhanced services could be developed to meet the identified needs of local employers. Although many enhanced employer services are activities already being offered to employers by individual partners, One-Stop systems allow these agencies to organize enhanced services into integrated systems. One Stop systems can also offer these services to additional employers on a fee-for-service basis.

Strategy 1. Provide Services to Assess and Train Incumbent Workers

Increasingly, employers need to encourage, support, or provide ongoing training of existing workers to redress basic educational deficits, enhance skills, and meet the needs of changing technology. Both public and private education and training providers have developed specialized fee-based services to address these needs. One-Stop services can help employers access the resources available to them from public workforce development agencies to train incumbent workers.

Examples of Providing Services to Assess and Train Incumbent Workers

Example #1—Providing Customized Training Services. The technical college—an active partner in this One-Stop center—has a long history of offering on-site or off-site customized training to incumbent workers,

including training on total quality management (TQM) tools and techniques. To make these services more affordable to small- and moderate-sized employers, the technical college was planning to develop some off-site “generic” TQM training sessions to which firms could send employees.

Pewaukee, Wisconsin

Example #2—Providing Retraining to Expanding and Relocating

Employers. In the Des Moines metropolitan area, the Economic Development Group, which is housed within the local community college, offers subsidized employee retraining services to qualifying expanding and relocating businesses through a state-funded “New Jobs” incentive program.

Des Moines, Iowa

Strategy 2. Provide Customized Recruitment and Screening Services for Large-Scale Hiring Efforts

One Stop centers can also provide customized assessment and screening services for employers who are undertaking large-scale hiring efforts and want to out-source the early stages of the hiring process. Often these services can be funded through economic development initiatives or, alternatively, can be offered on a fee-for-service basis to employers.

Examples of Providing Customized Recruitment and Screening Services

Example #1—Developing a Menu of Fee-for-Service Options. At this center, the ES, the economic development group of the area community college, and the Chamber of Commerce are developing a range of fee-for-service options for employers, including recruitment and screening for large-scale hiring efforts. Business service representatives will work with employers to develop recruiting plans and procedures for screening job-seekers to meet employer needs. **Des Moines, Iowa**

Example #2—Conducting Job Fairs and Large-Scale Recruitment. This center regularly conducts job fairs and large-scale hiring efforts for employers. It can host such events at the center or send staff to another site to conduct recruiting and screening. Employers can choose their level of involvement in this process. The center charges fees for some of these services. **Springfield, Massachusetts**

Strategy 3. Provide Business Planning Assistance and Training

One-Stop centers can also help major employers their ongoing management needs by: (1) providing business planning data and customized analysis of labor market information, (2) assisting firms in recruiting for specialized positions, and (3) consulting on issues related to government regulations and the hiring process. These services can be provided free of charge to firms that are targeted as having important economic development potential (e.g., a firm considering locating a new manufacturing facility in the local community) and offered on a fee-for-service basis to additional firms.

Examples of Providing Management Assistance and Training

Example #1—Linking Entrepreneurs to Resources for Small Business Development. The Arlington Career Center in Tarrant County, Texas, links employers to entrepreneurial and small business start-up training programs offered by a number of local agencies and organizations. The Small Business Development Center, for example, is a professional management counseling service operated by the community college, a partner in the One-Stop initiative. The center's programs include one-on-one counseling to new entrepreneurs and established businesses and classes on subjects related to starting new businesses. **Arlington, Texas**

Example #2—Providing Customized Training to Employers. At the Waukesha Workforce Development Center, various partner agencies offer customized services, including training on total quality management techniques, assistance in obtaining economic development financing and business loans, and business process analysis. **Pewaukee, Wisconsin**

RESOURCES

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS USED TO LEARN ABOUT AND DESCRIBE EMPLOYERS NEEDS

Attachment 10-A. A Business and Industry Questionnaire Developed by WORKFORCE ONE, the Northeast Regional Workforce Development Board in Chaplin, Connecticut (1995)

This questionnaire was used to assess local employer needs. A report based on this employer needs assessment was completed by WORKFORCE ONE in October, 1995.

Attachment 10-B. A Newsletter Article on Findings from a Massachusetts Business Survey

This article describes findings from a survey of 200 Massachusetts businesses in the manufacturing, health care, information technology, and financial fields. Respondents indicated substantial interest in using One-Stop career center services.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS USED TO INFORM EMPLOYERS ABOUT ONE-STOP SERVICES

Attachment 10-C. Brochure Announcing Minnesota's Annual Employer Conference: "Building a Winning Workforce" (1996)

This annual conference, co-sponsored by a number of different workforce development and business organizations, provides workshops on a number of different

topics of interest to Minnesota business owners, managers, and human resource professionals.

Attachment 10-D. Employer Services Available Through the Minnesota Workforce Center System

This brochure was designed to inform employers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area about services available from the Minnesota Workforce Center system. It also includes a form that businesses can use to submit information on new job openings by fax.

Attachment 10-E. Minnesota Newsletter Articles Describing “Brown Bag” Dialogue Sessions For Local Employers (1997)

Attachments include state and local newsletter articles describing how local Workforce Centers in Minnesota have organized informational lunches for employers on topics of interest. Employers are able to obtain information on interesting topics, share information, and provide thoughtful feedback.

EXAMPLES OF MATERIALS DESCRIBING COORDINATED AND EXPANDED EMPLOYER SERVICE MENUS

Attachment 10-F. Wisconsin State Guidance on Unified Employer Services Structures (1995)

In its Technical Assistance Guide for Wisconsin Job Centers, the state of Wisconsin describes desirable features of unified employer services at the local level, describes related state-level activity, and provides three examples of “model practices” in local centers.

Attachment 10-G. Anoka County, Minnesota’s List of Services to Employers

This leaflet was developed to let employers know about the range of employer-oriented services at the Minnesota Workforce Center–Anoka County in Blaine, Minnesota.

Attachment 10-H. Waukesha County (Wisconsin) Workforce Development Center's Menu of Services for Employers

This attachment includes a graphic describing employer services, a list of available services, and instructions and a form that employers can use to place a job order by fax.

Attachment 10-I. Springfield, Massachusetts: A Leaflet on What FutureWorks One-Stop Career Center Can Offer Employers

This leaflet explains core and enhanced services available to employers.