



Meeting the Needs of People with Disabilities in the One-Stop System

Section Purpose

Provide an overview of the role of One-Stop services in meeting the needs of people with disabilities

Section Contents

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One-Stop Systems: Serving People with Disabilities

By David Hoff, Institute for Community Inclusion

The One-Stop system was created to provide universal access to all job seekers and employers who want information, counseling and help in finding education, jobs, and job training. The One-Stop system can meet the needs of a diverse range of individuals, and this includes people with disabilities.

Disability— What does it mean?

Disability is an extremely broad term, encompassing many different conditions and people from all walks of life. When organizations are considering how best to serve people with disabilities, a great deal of emphasis is often placed on physical access. While this is clearly important for people who use wheelchairs, or people with sensory disabilities (such as people who are blind, visually impaired, or deaf), there are people with other types of disabilities for whom physical access is not an issue. For people with learning disabilities, mental retardation, mental health issues, head injuries, and many other conditions, the issue is not so much one of access to facilities as of access to programs and services. This means that the One-Stop system needs to design programs and services so that people with all types of disabilities can benefit from them. Also, it is important to keep in mind that in many cases, a person's disability is not readily apparent. A One-Stop Center may work with a customer with a disability and not even know it, unless the customer has chosen to disclose information about their disability. Therefore, services must be designed in a way that anticipates meeting the needs of a broad diversity of individuals, including people with disabilities.

In striving to effectively meet the needs of individuals with disabilities, the One-Stop system may have questions and concerns. The following are some basic thoughts and guidelines.

Why should the One-Stop system serve people with disabilities?

- **People with Disabilities are a Major Segment of the Population** - People with disabilities make up a substantial portion of the workforce and potential workforce of this country - by some estimates, approximately one in seven individuals in this country has some type of disability. The One-Stop system and One-Stop Centers are intended to meet the broad range of employment and training needs of the service delivery area, and every service delivery area includes a substantial number of people with disabilities.
- **People With Disabilities Need the Kind of Help One-Stops Can Provide** - Only about 30% of adults with significant disabilities are participating in the nation's workforce, as compared to 80% of the general population. Yet studies show that the vast majority of unemployed people with disabilities want to work. People with disabilities need the type of expertise and assistance that the One-Stop system can provide to help them find and succeed in employment. The One-Stop system can play a significant role in increasing the workforce participation rate for people with disabilities.
- **People With Disabilities Can Meet Employer Needs** - Many businesses and employers in the United States are experiencing significant labor shortages. People with disabilities have a diversity of skills and abilities, and can meet many employer needs. The One-Stop system can play a significant role in assisting employers to tap into the underutilized pool of people with disabilities, to help meet their labor needs.

- Employment of People with Disabilities is a National Priority - In the last few years, addressing the issue of chronic unemployment for people with disabilities has become a major national priority.
 - People with disabilities are mentioned throughout the Workforce Investment Act (WIA - the legislation that governs One-Stop services) as a target population which WIA is intended to benefit.
 - In 1998, President Clinton established the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities for the purpose of “creating a coordinated and aggressive national policy to bring adults with disabilities into gainful employment at a rate that is as close as possible to that of the general adult population.”
 - The Ticket to Work and Work Incentives Improvement Act of 1999 (TWWIIA) is in the process of being implemented. TWWIIA was passed by Congress with the specific goal of improving employment outcomes for people with disabilities.
 - The Social Security Administration has been making a number of regulatory changes to make it easier for people with disabilities receiving disability benefits to return to work.
 - The Federal Government has recently committed to hiring 100,000 new federal employees with disabilities by the year 2005.
 - The U.S. Department of Labor now has an Assistant Secretary for Disability Employment Policy, to coordinate efforts and maintain a focus on employment of people with disabilities.
 - In announcing his “New Freedom Initiative” in the early days of his administration, President Bush emphasized his commitment “to tearing down the remaining barriers to equality that face Americans with disabilities” in part by “increasing the ability of Americans with disabilities to integrate into the workforce”.
- It's The Law - WIA states that One-Stop Centers must be universally accessible to everyone who wishes to receive services, including people with disabilities. Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations for WIA are all very clear:
 - People with disabilities have a right to use the services of the One-Stop system and One-Stop Centers
 - One-Stop Centers must be readily accessible to people with disabilities
 - People with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations when using One-Stop services.

For more information on the non-discrimination issue, see Section 2; for information on accommodations for customers with disabilities, see Section 3.

Guidelines for Serving People with Disabilities

Don't exclude or segregate, provide universal access and supports - In providing services to customers with disabilities the rules of thumb should be:

- Pro-active, anticipatory design of services and facilities to provide universal access to the diversity of individuals in the local community, minimizing the need for special accommodations and assistance
- Having a core value of assisting and supporting people with disabilities so they can fully participate in all One-Stop activities like any other customer

Good Customer Service Principles Are Your Guide - Meeting the needs of a person with a disability in the One-Stop system is in many ways not greatly different than working with any other customer. While some technical information may be helpful (see section 7 on job development), simply by practicing good customer service skills, you will be able to assist many customers with disabilities to benefit from the services of the One-Stop system. These principles include:

- ◆ Make people feel welcome - Like any One-Stop customer, people with disabilities should be made to feel welcome from the moment they enter the front door of a center. If someone with a disability comes through the door, treat them in the same manner as you would anyone: with respect, dignity, common courtesy, professionalism, and a helpful attitude. The location of the One-Stop Center is instrumental in creating a welcoming environment. Is it in an area easily accessible by public transportation, and easy to find? If not, many people with disabilities, as well as other job seekers who don't drive, will have difficulty accessing services of the One-Stop Center and system.
- ◆ Create an atmosphere in which people are comfortable asking for assistance - Have you ever been in a situation where you had questions or needed assistance, but didn't feel comfortable asking? It's important that the One-Stop system have an atmosphere where all customers, including people with disabilities, feel comfortable asking for help. To do this effectively goes beyond posting signs that say, "If you have any questions, just ask," or a perfunctory, "Any questions?" at the end of orientation. It means regularly asking all customers if they need help, or need any information clarified. It also means responding to requests for assistance in a way that respects the individual, and makes them feel glad that they asked.
- ◆ Value diversity - For the One-Stop system and One-Stop Centers to meet the workforce development needs of their local service delivery area, it's important that all One-Stop staff and the One-Stop system value the unique skills, personality and contributions of each individual, and recognize that everyone has gifts and talents to provide. The One-Stop system can and should meet the needs of a wide range of individuals and encourage and assist employers to diversify their workforce.
- ◆ Don't automatically steer people with disabilities to "disability only" services - Your state's public vocational rehabilitation (VR) system is an important partner in the One-Stop system, and your One-Stop Center may have other special programs for people with disabilities. While services from VR and other specialized activities may be helpful, these should not be the only options available. People with disabilities are entitled to the same full range of core services as anyone else, and should also be considered for the full variety of intensive and training services—not just the disability-specific ones— available through the One-Stop system.
- ◆ Include people with disabilities like you would anyone else - People with disabilities should be offered the same menu of services as all other customers, and encouraged to take full advantage of One-Stop services. Do not assume that a person with a disability wouldn't be interested or wouldn't benefit from a particular activity or service. If there are concerns that a person with a disability may have difficulty using a particular service, don't automatically start looking for alternatives or specialized services. Instead, determine how the individual can best be supported and assisted to use the service as it exists, or how the service can be redesigned to be more universally accessible to people with disabilities and others.

- ◆ Ask first, before helping - Don't assume that a person with a disability needs help. As with anyone else, before assisting someone with a disability, ask them whether they need assistance, and be sure to clarify what kind of assistance they need.
- ◆ Speak to the person directly - If another person accompanies an individual to a One-Stop Center (such as a personal assistant, or family member), be sure to speak directly to the individual who is applying for or receiving services. The person with a disability is the one looking for a job and using the services; therefore, he or she should be asked the questions. Do not ask the companion questions about the job seeker.
- ◆ Don't stereotype - People with disabilities are as unique and diverse as everyone else, and should be treated as individuals. Don't assume, for example, because you have a friend who is blind, you understand the needs of all blind people, or because you had a neighbor with mental retardation that you understand the needs of all people with mental retardation.
- ◆ Become familiar with local disability resources - One of the key themes of WIA is collaboration. While the One-Stop system has an important role to play in helping people find employment, some individuals' needs go beyond One-Stop resources and expertise. One-Stop Centers and the One-Stop system can assist people with disabilities not only by directly providing services, but by learning what additional resources are available in their community, and how customers can use these resources to help meet their support needs.
- ◆ Provide many opportunities for feedback - Any business that practices good customer service regularly solicits feedback from customers in a variety of ways, through both formal and informal mechanisms. Customer surveys, comment cards, focus sessions, as well as conversations with individual customers, can provide the One-Stop system with a sense of how it is doing in meeting the needs of all customers, including people with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Labor has invested heavily in using a process for customer feedback called Simply Better, which local One-Stop systems may find useful.
- ◆ Go beyond current customers for feedback - Customer feedback should not end with individuals already using One-Stop services. The WIA Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity regulations specifically require that the One-Stop system do outreach and marketing to people with disabilities. Make efforts to solicit feedback from those who are not currently using the One-Stop system to determine what steps to take so that the One-Stop system is seen as a valuable resource by a wider spectrum of the population. The One-Stop system should also solicit feedback from customers who were not successful in using One-Stop resources, to find out what would have enabled the customer to have a more successful experience. One-Stop Centers and the One-Stop system can then use this information to improve services and market services to new audiences.
- ◆ If you don't know, ask! - If you're not sure how to handle a situation with a person with a disability, ask the individual. Like all of us, people with disabilities themselves know best what they want and need.
- ◆ Relax - Don't get overly concerned about doing something "wrong" when you work with people with disabilities. If you use common sense, are friendly, courteous, and respectful, and provide opportunities for feedback, you are well on your way to meeting the needs of people with disabilities.

Asking About Disability and Respecting Confidentiality in One-Stop Service Delivery

By David Hoff, Institute for Community Inclusion

For a variety of legal, ethical, and practical reasons, the One-Stop system should create a culture that shows respect for an individual's right to privacy. Local One-Stop systems should have clear guidelines for staff concerning sharing of any personal information about a customer with other staff and service providers, including information about a person's disability. People with disabilities vary significantly in their comfort level concerning disclosing information about their disability. It is important that One-Stop systems consider disclosure and confidentiality issues in service delivery for people with disabilities, and that One-Stop staff be well versed in proper guidelines for respecting the privacy of all customers.

Different rules for service providers and employers

There are important distinctions about inquiries and disclosure of disability-related information:

- Through the course of delivery of services, One-Stop staff may become aware that a customer has a disability. As a provider of services, the One-System is legally permitted to make inquiries about the presence of disability (see below for more specific guidelines)
- Employers however, are not permitted to ask about the presence of a disability, prior to an offer of employment.

The implication of this distinction is that One-Stop staff may have more information about a customer, then they are permitted to provide to employers they contact on behalf of a customer. What this also means is that the One-Stop system must abide by one set of rules as an employer, and another as a service provider. One-Stop staff should clearly understand this distinction. (Further information about disclosure in the job development process is contained in section 7 on job development.)

Inquiries Must Be Done for a Good Reason

One-Stop staff may not make unnecessary inquiries into the existence of a disability and it is a completely voluntary decision by the customer concerning whether or not to supply any disability information. Possible reasons for asking about disability include:

- to determine if the individual is eligible for special services or funding
- for data collection purposes as stipulated by the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity regulations
- as part of the process for provision of accommodations so the individual can fully benefit from services.

Requests for information concerning the presence of a disability cannot be used as a basis for excluding individuals from receiving services. It is illegal to deny services based on an individual's disability, unless the disability cannot be reasonably accommodated (for more specific information, see the piece entitled "One-Stop System: Legal Guidelines & Requirements for Serving People with Disabilities" in section 2)

Suggested Guidelines for Disability Inquiries

The One-Stop system and One-Stop Centers are advised to make any inquiries concerning disability with caution, limiting the request for information only to that which is absolutely necessary, and taking the necessary steps to ensure that this information is kept confidential. The following are suggested guidelines for inquiries about disability issues:

Registration and intake

- Requests for information about presence of a disability during the registration/intake process should be made only in writing (i.e., individuals should not have to verbally respond to questions such as “Do you have a disability?”, particularly in a public area, group setting, or area where they could be overheard). A simple yes/no check-off box on the registration/intake form is suggested.
- If an individual will need assistance in filling out a registration/intake form, this should be done in a private area, where responses will not be overheard.
- The reason(s) for asking for this information should be made very clear (e.g., providing this information may make you eligible for services to which you may not otherwise be entitled).
- It should be stated both verbally and in writing, that the decision to disclose any information concerning the presence of a disability is strictly voluntary.

During the course of service delivery

- Discretion should be used in discussing disability issues with customers. As noted, people with disabilities vary significantly concerning their openness about disability issues, and comfort level in others knowing about such issues. If One-Stop staff anticipate that disability-related issues may arise during a discussion with a customer, staff should ask the customer if they would prefer to hold the meeting in an area where the conversation will not be overheard by others (e.g., one-on-one in a private office, and not in an office cubicle where conversations are easily overheard).
- One-Stop staff should avoid asking about presence of disability or specific questions about an individual’s disability in group settings.
- Knowledge and access to information concerning an individual’s disability should be limited only to staff who require this information for service delivery.
- Staff should be respectful of privacy issues when discussing a customer’s needs with other staff. Particularly when discussing more sensitive issues (for example, a history of mental illness), only those staff who are specifically involved in service delivery for the individual should be part of such discussions. Such discussions should be held in a private area, where they cannot be overheard.
- The information requested and discussed with customers and One-Stop staff should be limited strictly to that which would impact the job search/placement process. For example, the full medical history of a person’s disability is not necessary, when all that is needed is information concerning how the disability will impact the person’s ability to obtain and maintain employment.

Maintain confidentiality of records

- Steps should be taken to ensure that records and case notes are kept confidential. This includes keeping paper files and records in secure places, and designing electronic information systems with multiple levels of access, so that access to personal information about a customer is available only to One-Stop staff who require it to meet that particular customer's needs.

Guidelines for staff

In sharing personal customer information with others, One-Stop staff should consider the following issues:

- Will the sharing of personal customer information result in the ability of the One-Stop system to better meet the customer's needs?
- Am I limiting the information shared strictly to what is relevant to this situation?
- Is it possible for me to discuss an issue with others without identifying the customer by name?

One-Stop Assistance to Employers in Hiring - Concerns Regarding Disclosure

By David Hoff, Institute for Community Inclusion

A potential concern about disclosure relates to the services that the One-Stop may provide to employers. Some One-Stops offer “pre-screening” of job applicants as an employer service, and in some cases fulfill a major portion of the hiring function typically performed by employer human resource departments. However, if an individual in a protected class (such as a person with a disability) feels that they have been discriminated against during the hiring process, the One-Stop system could be accused of discrimination, if they are performing candidate screening or handling the entire hiring process for the employer. This situation becomes particularly problematic, and creates significant liability concerns, when One-Stop staff are performing part of the “hiring function” for employers, and the One-Stop system has obtained information about the individual during the course of service delivery, beyond which employers are typically entitled to in making hiring decisions (including the fact that a candidate has a disability). The following are considerations around this issue:

Limit customer information - yes or no?

- To avoid possibility liability for discrimination, the One-Stop system could simply limit the amount of information it gathers from customers (including not asking about disability). However, this may also limit the ability of the One-Stop system to provide quality services that meet individual needs, as it may be helpful to have specific background information on an individual (which could include the fact that a person has a disability). While One-Stop staff should never make unnecessary inquiries of a customer, placing severe limits on the amount of information that staff can gather about a customer, will make it difficult to consistently provide quality services to job seekers, particularly those needing a significant level of assistance. There needs to be recognition that the service of assisting individuals to meet their employment and training needs, is considerably different from assisting an employer to meet their human resource needs.
- Even if a One-Stop places strict limits on the information it gathers during the intake/ registration process, during the course of service delivery, it is likely that a range of background information about an individual will be discovered, and this information could go well beyond what an employer would typically find out during the hiring process. This is particularly true if the One-Stop is working with an individual on a more intensive, one-on-one basis. This information could not only include disability, but other information such as: economic situation, medical history, family background, etc.

Employer referrals vs. pre-screening

- There is a significant difference between referring candidates to employers, and pre-screening candidates. The One-Stop system should be very clear to employers, job seekers and staff concerning the parameters of the One-Stop’s role in referring specific individuals to employers. It is recommended that One-Stops be very cautious about indicating that they “pre-screen” candidates for businesses. One-Stops should recognize that it is the employer’s responsibility to make a hiring decision from a range of candidates.

- Part of the One-Stop staff's professional responsibilities is to counsel and advise individuals concerning potential employment opportunities which match the customer's needs and interests. There is a significant difference though, between advising an individual and directing them (i.e., telling them what they can and cannot do). In referring individuals to employers, in order to avoid any perception that the One-Stop system is being discriminatory in its referral process, the One-Stop should:
 - a) refer anyone who meets the general criteria provided by the employer
 - b) never prevent an individual from applying for a position, or refuse to refer an individual to an employer, even if One-Stop staff feel the individual is not qualified or appropriate for the position
 - c) be expansive and not exclusive in providing job seekers ideas and leads about potential employers and positions.

Maintaining separation between job seeker and employer services

The One-Stop system should be very cautious about undertaking any part of the human resource functions of businesses.

- If the One-Stop system has decided to perform part of the human resource function for a business (beyond referrals of candidates to employers), there should be very clear "firewalls" between the staff who work with employers, and staff who provide services to job seekers.
- If the One-Stop will be performing part of the hiring process on behalf of employers, there should be clear limits on the information that staff working on behalf of employers have access to, concerning the background of an individual. This should be limited to no more than the typical information that any employer is entitled to concerning a candidate.

One-Stop Systems - Connecting with Disability Resources

While customers with disabilities should have full access and use of the complete of range of One-Stop resources and services available to all customers, there are times when resources and expertise may be necessary that are specifically related to the individual's disability. The public Vocational Rehabilitation system (VR) is the only disability specific agency that is a mandated partner in the One-Stop system. State and local systems may have additional public and private disability agencies as partners. When One-Stop staff have questions, public VR and other partners with disability expertise can be an excellent resource. In addition, every state and local area has a multitude of local resources that can assist local One-Stop systems to meet the needs of people with disabilities. There are also a variety of national information resources which can be of assistance.

By taking advantage of available local and national resources, One-Stop systems can play a significant role in meeting their community's needs not only for quality employment and training services, but also as an information conduit, resource, and referral point. The variety of available disability resources can assist One-Stop systems in a variety of ways:

- for answering questions that One-Stop staff may have concerning service delivery for customers with disabilities (such as advice on meeting the needs of a customer who is deaf)
- for specialized assistance and resources to enable the One-Stop system to meet the specific needs of customers with disabilities (such as expertise and resources related to job accommodations)
- as a resource for services beyond (but not in place of) what the One-Stop system can typically provide (such as specialized transportation, ongoing assistance with benefits management, or intensive post-placement job site support)
- as a resource to customers for information and resources beyond what the One-Stop Center itself is able to provide.

Examples of the disability resources, beyond public VR, that may be available to assist One-Stop systems in meeting the needs of people with disabilities:

- Non-partner public disability agencies (such as Departments of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities)
- Resources from the Social Security Administration (over 8 million nationally receive cash benefits from Social Security on a monthly basis due to disability)
- Community rehabilitation providers (agencies which provide intensive job placement and support services for people with disabilities)
- Independent Living Centers (organizations run by and for people with disabilities which provide a variety of services)
- Protection and Advocacy Organizations (organizations in each state which protect the rights of people with disabilities, and can provide assistance with ADA issues)
- Advocacy organizations for specific disabilities (there are many different national organizations dedicated to specific disabilities, most of which have state and local chapters, which have a variety of expertise and resources available)
- Assistive technology projects (each state has an organization which is dedicated to meeting the assistive technology needs of people with disabilities).

These are just examples, and there are many others as well. Section 14, at the end of this manual, contains a comprehensive listing of disability resources. Many of the national resources listed have state and local contacts. Additionally, throughout this manual are listed a variety of resources pertaining to the topic being discussed. Additionally, Section 11 contains information on the disability service system, which can assist One-Stop systems in understanding how services for people with disabilities are organized, and what types of resources may be locally available.

How to Connect

The following are some ideas on how One-Stop systems can connect with and utilize the variety of available disability resources.

- Dedicate a portion of your One-Stop web site to links for local and national disability resources. This can be useful both for customers and staff.
- Have literature and information from local organizations available in your resource library
- Hold an open house for local disability organizations at the One-Stop Center, so they have an opportunity to learn about the One-Stop system
- Meet individually and as a group with local disability organizations to learn how these organizations can assist the One-Stop system to meet the needs of customers with disabilities, and also how the One-Stop system can assist these organizations in meeting their needs
- Consider having an advisory group, made up of representatives of various disability organizations, which meets on a regular basis to discuss the role of the One-Stop system in meeting the needs of people with disabilities
- Have staff from local disability organizations conduct presentations and workshops at the One-Stop Center, possibly together with One-Stop staff. For example, in the Boston area, disability organizations have provided presentations at One-Stop Centers on Social Security Disability Benefits, and Using Personal Networks.
- Have staff from local disability organizations available on-site at the One-Stop Center at specific times to work with customers (for example, a representative from the local Social Security office)
- Be flexible about staff from local disability organizations and agencies using the resources of the One-Stop Center to meet the needs of the individuals served by the organization.

These are just examples, and there are likely many other ways that One-Stop systems can work together with disability organizations to each other's mutual benefit. The important thing for One-Stop systems to recognize is that working collaboratively with the various disability resources will not create more work for One-Stop staff, but instead will allow the One-Stop system to meet the needs of customers with disabilities in a much more comprehensive and quality way.

One-Stop Centers: A Guide for Job Seekers with Disabilities

by Sheila Fesko, David Hoff, Melanie Jordan, Kristin Fichera & Cynthia Thomas

*The following material is reproduced from the Institute for Community Inclusion publication **Tools for Inclusion** (family and consumer series); Volume 8 Number 1 - February 2000. Copies of this publication may be obtained by contacting the Institute (contact information on p. 20)*

Introduction

One-Stop Centers were developed to bring together employment and training services that work with all people into one place and make it easier for job seekers and employers to use these services. One-Stop Centers first began in the early 1990's as demonstration projects, and have expanded so there are now One-Stop Centers opening in all areas of the country. Services available through the One-Stop system include such things as: information about job vacancies, career options, and relevant employment trends; instruction on how to conduct a job search, write a resume, or interview with an employer; referral to training programs and unemployment insurance claim processing.

One-Stop Centers are part of America's Workforce Network, the new federally-sponsored nationwide employment and training system. The One-Stop system is designed and required to meet the needs of all job seekers who want to use the system. This includes people with disabilities. The establishment of the One-Stop system across the country provides a wonderful opportunity for people with disabilities to receive services in new and different ways, right alongside everyone else. This brief is designed to help you use the One-Stop system. It includes information on what services are available, how to make the best use of those services, and how to advocate to get the services you want and need. The brief describes general information about the One-Stop system and then answers specific questions individuals with disabilities may have about these services.

The expansion of the One-Stop Centers was authorized in a law called the Workforce Investment Act that was signed in 1998. This law has several main principles that influence services.

- **Universal Access.** Any individual should be able to go into a One-Stop and receive services called core services, to assist in making decisions about what career to pursue and in the actual job search.
- **Streamlining services.** Employment and training programs for all people should be brought together, and be easily accessible via One-Stop Centers.
- **Increased accountability.** The One-Stop system is being evaluated based on how many people get jobs and the satisfaction of the customers.
- **Empowering individuals.** Customers should be given more information about services in order to make informed choices and have more control of their services.
- **State and local flexibility.** Local One-Stop systems can set up services in different ways to respond to the needs of their local community.

The Workforce Investment Act is a new law and, in many areas, the One-Stop system is just beginning. All of the goals of the law may not be achieved yet, but Centers are working toward achieving these principles. Individual states are developing plans for how they will implement the Workforce Investment Act.

Who is eligible to receive services from the One-Stop system?

Everyone can use services provided by the One-Stop system. Even if you receive services from another agency, you have the right to access One-Stop services.

What kinds of services are available through the One-Stop System?

There are three levels of services available through the One-Stop system and adults typically move from one level of service to the next depending on their needs. Each level of service is described below. The first level of service is called core services and they are usually self-directed in nature. For individuals who try core services but have not become employed, intensive services may be available, if the One-Stop Center determines that core services are not sufficient to obtain employment. Training services are available to individuals who meet eligibility criteria, and have used core and intensive services, but still are not successfully employed. In addition support services may be provided by a One-Stop to people receiving any service, so that the services an individual receives are effective.

Core Services

Core services are those services that are available at no cost to everyone. Individual One-Stops determine how their core services are provided. An individual may receive core services as part of a large group, or service may be provided one-to-one. The following is a sampling of the types of core services that may be available:

Sample Core Services:

- intake and orientation
- work skills exploration
- resource library which includes access to computers, telephones, fax and copy machines
- searches for jobs and training
- access to job banks or listings of available jobs
- Internet access
- resume development
- job search skills training
- networking skills workshops
- interview techniques workshops
- referral to an employer with current job openings
- customer satisfaction follow-up
- determination of eligibility for additional services

You should ask the One-Stop staff to help you create a plan or list of ideas on how you can get the most out of the services of the One-Stop at no cost and without having to apply for additional services. Making a plan or list like this will allow you to get the most out of the core services.

Intensive Services

Intensive services are available to individuals who are unable to obtain employment by using core services, and who meet specific eligibility criteria. These services are free to individuals who meet eligibility criteria. One-Stops may have projects or services that are targeted toward specific groups such as teenagers, veterans, people with disabilities and people with limited incomes. Funding for intensive services and special projects comes from a wide variety of sources including state and federal funds, employers, unions and other places. In some cases, Centers may allow individuals to pay for intensive services from their own funds. Talk to staff at the One-Stop about various options for funding these services.

Sample Intensive Services:

- comprehensive assessments of skills and service needs
- development of an individual employment and career plan
- customized screening and assessment
- reference/background checks
- intensive career counseling
- in-depth interviewing skills development
- computer workshops
- one-to-one assistance with updating your resume, cover letters and thank you letters
- case management
- training

Training

Referral for training services may be available to individuals who have used core and intensive services and have not become successfully employed, and meet eligibility criteria. The type of training that is offered varies between local One-Stop systems and is based on the employment needs of the local economy. Individuals eligible for training services use what are known as Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). You can use an ITA to freely choose training services from any eligible organization that provides training. Listed below are some of the types of training services available from the One-Stop system. Talk with staff at your local One-Stop Center about what is available.

Sample Training Services:

- occupational skills training
- on-the job training
- update work skills
- job readiness training
- adult education and literacy
- customized training for an employer who commits to hiring

How do I find out about One-Stop Centers and where they are located?

One-Stop Centers go by a variety of names depending on the state. Some states use the same name for all centers throughout the state (for example in New Hampshire, all centers are called "New Hampshire Works"), while in other states (such as Massachusetts), the name is different in each local area. Centers are not typically listed in the phone book as "One-Stop Centers." You can find the location of your local One-Stop by contacting America's Service Locator from the U.S. Department of Labor, on the Web at: www.servicelocator.org, or toll-free by phone at (877) US2-JOBS [877-872-5627]. You can also contact your state, county, or local department of labor or employment listed in the government section of the phone book. You should be able to find out where your local One-Stop Centers are located through these sources.

If there is more than one One-Stop Center in my area, can I use more than one?

You can visit and use the core services of any One-Stop Center. You may want to check with different Centers to see which one has the core services that best meet your needs. However, you may only be able access intensive and training services from specific Centers, due to residency or other requirements.

How do I start using the services of a One-Stop Center?

One-Stop Centers vary in how you initially begin to use the services. It is probably a good idea to call your local Center and find out the steps involved. At some One-Stops you can simply walk in the door and start using many of the core services, while others require registration and orientation before using any of the services - and may offer orientation only at certain times, or on certain days. Remember, it costs nothing to use the core services. (Please note that some Centers do charge small fees for incidental expenses associated with core services such as faxing, using the photocopy machine, etc. This varies from Center to Center.)

What should I expect on my first visit to the Center?

On your first visit to the One-Stop, you may attend some type of orientation session and receive a tour of the facility, or at least be able to sign up for orientation (all Centers are required to provide orientation). You may be asked to fill out some type of registration form. At some Centers, you will receive a card, which you need to present each time you attend, while at other centers you only need to sign your name on an attendance sheet, or can just walk in. No matter what the procedures are at your local Center, you should be made to feel welcome!

Once you have completed any requirements of the One-Stop to use the services such as initial registration and orientation (and remember, this varies from Center to Center), you may begin to use the services and resources that are available.

How do I go about using One-Stop Center services?

Find out what the core services are at the Center you are using. Find out about any incidental fees that may be charged (such as faxing and copying) and make a plan to maximize your use of services without having to spend money or obtain funding for services.

- Sign up for workshops that you want to attend
- Review the One-Stop Center's monthly activity calendar to see if there are activities you want to attend (i.e., peer support groups, workshops, etc.); you should check the calendars often
- Explore resources in the Resource Library
- Use computers and the Internet to look up job openings, to create a resume, and to write cover letters
- Look through career exploration books
- Post your resume on the resume bank (a set of resumes that employers can look at on a computer and will help them to find potential applicants)
- Participate in any on-site recruiting activities that occur at the center (i.e., an employer might go to a Center and interview job applicants there) .

What should I expect from the services I receive at the One-Stop Centers?

Most of the core services of the Centers are designed to be fairly self-directed. This means that you should not expect to receive a lot of one-to-one assistance from One-Stop staff (although you should never hesitate to ask for help if you need it). You can bring someone with you to help if you would like. You will possibly be making a lot of decisions on your own concerning what services to use. For example, Center staff usually do not provide people using only core services direct help in finding a job; however, Center staff do have contacts with a great deal of local employers. If you get to know some staff at the One-Stop and build relationships with them, you may be able to use

them as part of your personal network through which you find a job. If you receive intensive services from the One-Stop system, you will get more intensive personalized services.

Should I tell staff at the One-Stop Center about my disability?

It is your personal decision whether to tell staff about your disability. There may be advantages and disadvantages so you need to decide what is best for you.

Under the ADA, One-Stop Centers can ask if you have a disability to determine if you are eligible for certain services. However, disclosing your disability and information about it, is strictly voluntary. (This should not be confused with the employment provisions of the ADA under Title I, which prohibit employers or potential employers from asking about the presence of a disability prior to making a conditional offer of employment.) However, if the Center asks about disability, these questions should be asked of every customer of the One-Stop, not just in cases where the Center staff feel a customer may have a disability. If the One-Stop asks about disability, they must have a good reason to ask (i.e., they are trying to identify individuals who might qualify for special programs and services for people with disabilities).

Disclosing your disability can have some real benefits. By doing so, you can receive the accommodations and assistance you need and are entitled to, to fully benefit from the services of the One-Stop Center. By disclosing, you may also become eligible for special programs available for people with disabilities.

As a person with a disability, how can I advocate for myself to get the services I want from a One-Stop Center?

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a law that was passed in 1990 to assure that people with disabilities have the same opportunities for meaningful participation in our society as everyone else. Under the ADA, as someone with a disability, you are entitled to request accommodations and assistance in order for you to understand, use and benefit from the services that a One-Stop Center has to offer. It should be expected that the Center will work with you to make your involvement there successful. Here are some tips to help you get the most from your One-Stop Center experiences.

- During your initial visit at the Center ask for any assistance you need to help you understand the range of services the One-Stop can provide. Some accommodations that might be helpful include: an individual meeting rather than group orientation; help with filling out any registration forms; brochures, flyers, and other information in an alternative format such as a different language, Braille, or large print; sign language interpretation; using a tape recorder to remember information.
- Bring a friend or family member with you to help you use the books and computers in the resource library in order to check job openings, compose your resume and cover letters, fax applications, etc. You can also bring a staff person from another agency with which you are working.
- Gain an understanding of all of the Core services, classes, and other free resources and activities (such as computer lab) that are part of using at a One-Stop.
- Request an individual meeting with Center staff to develop a plan or a list of ideas that can help you make the best use of the services and opportunities available at the One-Stop.

- Stay informed about ongoing activities such as employer interviews or presentations held at the Center, as well as workshops and “hot job” leads. Look for flyers, posters, newsletters, etc.
- Get to know the front desk staff. You will then feel comfortable asking them for helpful general information including what current events and activities are happening or coming soon.
- Other important people to get to know are the library staff. They can be extremely useful in answering your questions as you use the resource library (career books, magazines, newspapers, job postings, fax and copy machine) and the computers and Internet.
- As you settle into using the One-Stop Center, be sure to ask for any accommodations you may need such as: a larger/accessible work station at the computer; resources in a different language; Braille, large print, TTY, interpreter services, etc.; assistance using information you don’t understand; adaptive equipment to use computers and phones.

What can I do if I feel that the One-Stop Center staff are not making the accommodations I need?

Information concerning non-discrimination including what to do if you feel you have been discriminated against, must be posted in each Center, and also reviewed during orientation sessions. If you have tried to ask for help and feel that the Center is not making a reasonable effort to meet your needs, you should bring the matter to the attention of the staff member involved, as well as the management of the One-Stop Center, in an effort to get your needs met. In most cases, by calmly and clearly clarifying your needs with Center staff, issues can be resolved fairly easily. With the implementation of WIA, each Center is required to have an Equal Opportunity Officer, and if you feel it is necessary, you should ask to speak to this individual to discuss the issue. However, in cases where your efforts to resolve the situation with a Center have not been successful, you can contact the U.S. Department of Labor’s Civil Rights Center (CRC), which is responsible for ensuring that One-Stop Centers do not discriminate. Other information concerning your legal rights may be available from your state’s Protection and Advocacy Organization and other legal advocates. You should also feel free to contact the local Workforce Investment Board, which is the local board that oversees One-Stop Centers, or your state Workforce Investment Board.

Can I use a One-Stop Center if I am already receiving services from another agency?

Yes. If you are receiving employment services from another agency you can also utilize core services of the One-Stop system. In fact the core services may be helpful to you and your current service provider. In addition, you can utilize core services any time in your career. If your employment services provider helps you become familiar with how to use the One-Stop now, you may be able to use the Center on your own in the future if you want to change jobs. You may also want to speak with your counselor at the other agency about whether you are eligible for some of the special projects at One-Stop Centers. They could refer you to the Center and help you get these services.

How would services through the One-Stop system supplement what I am getting from another agency?

- Access to computers. Using a computer can help you develop a professional looking resume and cover letters. In addition you can use the Internet at One-Stop Centers to help you find out about job openings, to submit your resume to a number of different resume banks, and to learn more about companies where you would like to work.

- **Workshops.** Many One-Stops offer some workshops as part of the core services. Workshop topics may include resume writing, interview skills, introduction to the Internet, job search skills and information about industries that have a demand for new employees. While the agency helping you find a job may also offer support in these areas, you may want to review the workshop calendar for the Center you are using to determine if any offering would be useful in your job search. Participating in the workshops may also allow you to meet fellow job seekers who can provide support and advice.
- **Job Referral.** The staff at the Centers work with employers to help them find qualified applicants for job openings. While they will not provide individualized job development as part of the core services, they may have job leads that you will not learn about through other sources. If you find out about a job through the One-Stop, the Center staff and your employment service provider can work together to make sure you receive the individualized assistance you need to follow-up on the job lead.

Should I let my counselor know that I am working with the One-Stop Center?

Yes. If you are also working with a Vocational Rehabilitation agency and/or with a private employment program to help you with your job search, let them know about your involvement with the One-Stop Center. Everyone can then be working together to best meet your employment goal.

Conclusion

The One-Stop system expands the resources available to individuals with disabilities looking to work and provides an opportunity to receive services side-by-side with the general public. We hope the information in this publication will help you to make most effective use of these services. As you are using the services of a One-Stop Center, keep the following in mind: Centers have a wide array of resources that help you to obtain and succeed in employment; you have the absolute right to use these services, and to be treated in a welcoming and respectful manner. Recognize that this is a new system, and that One-Stops are still learning how to best provide quality services for all people, including people with disabilities. While hopefully your experience will be a completely positive one, if you have concerns about how the services of a One-Stop are being provided, remember that it's your responsibility to make the Center aware of your concerns, and to educate and advocate in a positive and effective manner, so that your needs, and the needs of all people with disabilities are met.

The most effective way that One-Stop Centers can learn how to meet the needs of people with disabilities is by people with disabilities going out and actually using the services of a One-Stop. We encourage you to go visit your local One-Stop Center, and find out what it has to offer. The use of One-Stops by people with disabilities, combined with education and advocacy, will ensure that this new service system is able to fully deliver on its potential for helping people with disabilities succeed in employment.

Resources

To find out the location of One-Stop Centers in your area, contact America's Service Locator (www.servicelocator.org); phone (Toll-Free Helpline): (877) US2-JOBS [877-872-5627]

Case Study 1

Jen, who has a visual impairment, was looking for a job and decided to register at a One-Stop Center. She chose to go to Boston Career Link because it was conveniently located. When Jen joined the Center, she felt welcomed. During the orientation, she learned that although the Center was designed to be generally self-directed, people were extremely helpful to her when she asked for help. For example when she asked a staff member to help her fill out some of the forms, the staff member was very respectful and also very helpful in completing the forms.

The variety of different services available in one place was important to Jen. For example, she was able to use the resource library, attend workshops (some of which were paid for by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind), attend job fairs, and fax her resume to employers all from one location. Center staff were good at getting information to her in formats which she could read. Staff members would regularly e-mail to her home the monthly calendars, announcements of current events, and other notices that were available at the One-Stop Center.

The counselor Jen worked with helped her to clarify her work goals. He helped her to direct her own job search, and encouraged her to make cold calls to employers. The counselor met with her weekly and gave her job leads regularly. He also brought her resume to places of employment in order to market her skills and abilities to various organizations.

Jen found it very helpful to make connections with the leaders of those workshops she attended at the One-Stop. She got better at making connections with people as she became more comfortable at the Center. Making good connections with people was very important to her because it became easier for her to ask those people for help when she needed it. She recommends that individuals pay attention to networking opportunities with the Center staff since they can direct you to job leads. She left the One-Stop Center with a lot of good information that will continue to be helpful to her in the future. One last tip that Jen shares with others who are using One-Stops, is that the more effort you put into your job search; the clearer you can be about your career goals; and the more you can recognize areas where you may need help and areas you can be more self-directed, the more you can get out of using a One-Stop Center.

Jen gives credit to the One-Stop Center counselor for assisting her with obtaining the job she currently holds. When asked if she would consider using the Center again for her job search, she said she definitely would. She also said that she often recommends the One-Stop to others who are participating in a job search.

Case Study 2

Jim had been working for many years in a job he disliked. His efforts to find a new job on his own were unsuccessful. Jim's counselor from the Vocational Rehabilitation agency referred Jim to a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) for individualized job placement services. Jim and his employment specialist worked together to develop a career plan and to update his resume. In addition to providing job development services, the Employment Specialist went with Jim to the local One-Stop. She attended the orientation session with him and, together with a career counselor at the One-Stop, they identified core services that would complement the work that she was doing with Jim. Jim decided to post his resume on a number of resume banks and signed up to attend an industry briefing session. Jim was looking for a job in human services and an industry briefing at the One-Stop, conducted by a number of large local human service providers, gave him more specific information about the types of jobs available in his community. Jim and his Employment Specialist then worked together to contact these employers. Jim recently obtained a new job. In addition to accomplishing his primary goal of finding a new job, he has become familiar with a local resource, available to the general public, that can be used in the future as he progresses through his career.

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The Role of Public Vocational Rehabilitation and One-Stops

By David Hoff, Institute for Community Inclusion

Each state's public vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency is a mandated partner in the One-Stop system. As a mandated partner, VR must make available via the One-Stop system, the core services applicable to VR. The exact nature of the VR and One-Stop partnership is going to vary significantly from state-to-state, and even within states, depending on the structure of services, statewide agreements, and content of the local Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between VR and the Local Workforce Investment Board. Here are some basic guidelines for One-Stops to keep in mind, concerning their partnership with public VR.

Not everyone with a disability qualifies for VR services

The definition of who qualifies for VR services is much narrower than the broad definition of disability under the ADA. Only people with a disability that interferes with their ability to get or hold a job are eligible for VR services. Therefore, there are many individuals with disabilities who will come into the One-Stop system who do not qualify for VR services, but who can benefit greatly from other One-Stop services.

Order of selection issues

In states where VR funding is not sufficient to serve all eligible clients, there may be an "order of selection" in place, whereby VR is able to accept only those individuals with the most significant disabilities who could benefit from VR services. If there are individuals who qualify for VR services, whom VR is currently unable to serve, other One-Stop services can play a key role in helping customers who might otherwise not be able to get services.

Requirements for referral to non-VR programs

VR is required to refer individuals who are unable to receive VR services due to ineligibility or order of selection issues, to other components of the state's workforce investment system.

Qualified individuals do not have to accept VR services

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) regulations are very clear - even if a One-Stop customer qualifies for VR services, they are not required to use VR services. Individuals who choose not to use VR services, have the absolute right to utilize One-Stop core services, and any other One-Stop services that they qualify for.

VR funds and staff may not be used for non-VR purposes

The partnership between the One-Stop and VR must abide by the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. For example, VR staff at a One-Stop may do such things as determining eligibility for VR services, explaining VR services during an orientation session, conducting a workshop for VR clients, and providing direct assistance to VR clients. However, VR staff and funds cannot be used to meet the needs of non-VR clients. For example, VR staff cannot help a non-VR client with their resume or in finding a job.

An interactive relationship

The WIA regulations state that the relationship between VR and the One-Stop system should be interactive in nature, with referring of individuals by VR to other components of the One-Stop system, and the One-Stop system similarly referring individuals to VR. Ideally, the One-Stop

system can be designed in such a way that individuals will fully benefit from the potential of the One-Stop system, through blending of One-Stop partner services. An individual would utilize VR services as needed, but also benefit from the wide array of other services available as well. One of the major challenges of the One-Stop system will be to do this in a way that creates the perception of seamless service delivery from the customer viewpoint, and also makes the individual fully aware of the options available to them.

Options for people with disabilities

The bottom line is that people with disabilities have a number of options in using One-Stop services. They can: 1) receive most or all of their services exclusively from VR; 2) receive some services from VR, and other services from other One-Stop partners; 3) only use non-VR One-Stop services.

How people with disabilities use One-Stop services is going to be highly dependent on individual needs, choices, and eligibility.

A Mutually Beneficial Relationship

Ideally, VR and the rest of the One-Stop system can mutually benefit from each others' expertise. Here are just a few examples of how such a partnership can work:

- VR can assist One-Stop Centers in assuring that the facility and services are fully accessible - both programmatically and physically.
- VR can assist customers who are using non-VR One-Stop services to find employment, with obtaining assistive technology, arranging for job accommodations, and developing post-employment supports, as long as they also qualify for VR services.
- If VR staff are assisting people to finding employment, they can utilize the various job search services of the One-Stop system, including job listings, on-site employer interviews and information sessions, as well as employer contacts of other One-Stop staff. VR staff can similarly share their employer contacts with other One-Stop staff.
- VR clients can avail themselves of the various workshops the One-Stop Center may offer, such as resume development, interviewing skills, etc.
- VR staff can assist clients in accessing other services available within the One-Stop system, including other intensive services, as well as training services.
- Through creating understanding among other One-Stop staff concerning the services of VR, other One-Stop partners can utilize the expertise of VR to meet customer needs, and refer individuals to VR who could benefit from VR services.

A well developed partnership will allow the resources of VR and other partners to be used in a broader yet more efficient fashion, and allow VR to focus on its particular areas of expertise.

For additional information on the requirements and parameters of the public vocational rehabilitation partnership with the One-Stop system, see "Summary of Regulatory Requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation Programs under WIA" and "Policy Brief: Provisions in the Final Regulations Governing the State VR Program Describing the Interplay with the WIA and TWWIA" elsewhere in this section

Summary of Regulations for Public VR Programs Pertaining to WIA & One-Stop Systems

The following is a summary of the requirements for State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs, under the federal regulations governing VR programs [published in the Federal Register on January 17, 2001 - 66FR 4380-4435].

Requirements as a Partner Under WIA

- State VR programs must be an integral part of the statewide workforce investment system
- State VR programs must participate as a partner in the One-Stop service delivery system
- As a required partner, the VR program must:
 - make available via the One-Stop system the core services applicable to VR
 - use a portion of VR funds to create and maintain the One-Stop service delivery system, and provide core services
 - enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Workforce Investment Board relating to the operation of the One-Stop service delivery system including:
 - ◆ a description of services
 - ◆ how the cost of the identified services and operating costs of the system will be funded
 - ◆ methods for referral
 - Participate in the operation of the One-Stop system consistent with the MOU and Rehabilitation Act
 - Serve as a representative on the Local Workforce Investment Board
- The VR program must ensure that its application forms are widely available throughout the state, particularly in One-Stop centers.

Relationship of State Rehabilitation Council and SWIB

- The State Rehabilitation Council must carry out its designated functions after consulting with the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)
- The State Rehabilitation Council must include at least one representative of the SWIB. However, this individual cannot represent another organization on the Council besides the SWIB.

Cooperative Agreement Requirements

At the state level, the VR program must enter into cooperative agreements with other One-Stop partners, and replicate these agreements at the local level between local VR offices and local entities of the One-Stop system. The purpose of entering into these cooperative agreements is to increase the capacity of partners, and the One-Stop system as a whole, to better address the needs of individuals with disabilities.

These cooperative agreements may provide for:

- cross training and technical assistance regarding VR services, including eligibility criteria and benefits of VR services
- the use of information and financial management systems that link all partners of the One-Stop system to one another, and that include employment statistics, job vacancies, career planning, and workforce investment activities
- the use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, resource information, and human services hotlines

- the establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to facilitate job placement
- the identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources
- specification of the financial responsibility of each partner of the One-Stop system with respect to providing and paying for necessary services, consistent with the Rehabilitation Act, other Federal requirements, and state law
- procedures for resolving disputes among partners of the One-Stop system

Parameters for Use of VR Funds in One-Stop System

- VR funding must be used in a way that is consistent with the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations.
- VR funds cannot be used for services to individuals who do not meet the priority for services under the order of selection.
- However, within the One-Stop system, VR funds can be used for intake and other expenditures that VR would normally expend prior to determining eligibility.

Requirement for All Partners to Serve People with Disabilities

- All partners in the workforce investment system (and not just VR) have a legal responsibility under WIA to serve people with disabilities.
- Some individuals with disabilities may receive the full scope of services they need through the One-Stop system without accessing the VR program at all. Others may be referred to VR for all services, or an individual may receive a combination of services from VR and other One-Stop system partners.
- If an individual is eligible for VR services and chooses not to use VR services, he/she has the right to use any other services of the One-Stop system for which they are eligible.

VR Statewide Assessment Must Include Needs of Individuals Not Served by VR

- The VR state plan must include the results of a comprehensive statewide assessment.
- This assessment must identify the vocational rehabilitation services needs of, among others, individuals with disabilities served through other (non-VR program) components of the statewide workforce investment system.
- The VR state plan must describe strategies the state will use to address the needs identified in the comprehensive assessment, including, among other things, strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities.

VR Information and Referral System Must Include Referrals to Non-VR Programs

- The VR program must implement an information and referral system.
- Among other things, this system must refer individuals with disabilities to other appropriate Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system.
- If an individual is referred to another program (including other components of the state's workforce investment system) through VR's information and referral system, documentation must be provided on the nature and scope of the services provided by VR to the individual, and on the referral itself.

Requirements for Prompt Handling of Referrals to VR

- The VR program must have procedures for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services, including referrals of individual made through the One-Stop system.
- Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, including applications through common intake procedures of One-Stop Centers, an eligibility determination must be made within 60 days, subject to specified exceptions. An individual is considered to have submitted an application when an agency application form has been signed by the individual (or his/her representative), or has completed a common intake application form in a One-Stop Center requesting vocational rehabilitation services.

VR Must Refer Individuals It Is Unable to Serve to Non-VR Programs

- In an individual is determined ineligible for VR services, the individual must be referred to other training and employment-related programs that are part of the One-Stop system.
- In the event that VR services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities applying for services, the state must show the order for selecting eligible individuals. The “order of selection” must assure that individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of VR services. If due to operating under an “order of selection”, VR is unable to serve an otherwise eligible individual, VR must assist this individual to secure employment assistance from other entities, particularly other programs of the statewide workforce investment system

Requirements for Referrals to Other Programs

In making referrals to other programs, VR must refer the individual to the other programs of the statewide workforce investment system best suited to address the specific employment needs of an individual with a disability. In making a referral, the VR program must provide the individual who is being referred:

- a notice of the referral to the agency to which the individual is being referred
- information identifying the specific point of contact within that agency
- information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment.

IPE Must Include Responsibilities of Other Entities

- An Individual Plan for Employment (IPE) is required for delivery of VR services. The IPE must include, among other things, the responsibilities of other entities to provide services and benefits to the individual, and how such services will be coordinated.

VR Not Required to Pay Cost of Access to One-Stop System

- VR programs are not required to pay for the costs of providing individuals with disabilities access to the One-Stop system. The One-Stop system is responsible for the costs of providing access for individuals with disabilities, per the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act.

Excerpted and adapted from “Policy Brief: Provisions in the Final Regulations Governing the State VR Program Describing the Interplay with WIA and TWWIIA” by Robert Silverstein, published by the Institute for Community Inclusion, Center on State Systems and Employment (RRTC)

Provisions in the Final Regulations Governing the State VR Program Describing the Interplay with WIA AND TWWIIA

The following material is reproduced from the Institute for Community Inclusion, Center on State Systems and Employment (RRTC), Center on Workforce Investment and Employment Policy (RRTC) publication Policy Brief; Volume 3 Number 2 - February 2001

INTRODUCTION

On August 7, 1998 President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public law 105-220). Title I of the Act provides assistance to states interested in establishing statewide and local workforce investment systems (Title I of WIA). Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act sets out a complete rewrite of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, including the State vocational rehabilitation program (State VR program).

On August 11, 2000 the Secretary of Labor published in the Federal Register (FR) final regulations implementing Title I of WIA. These regulations are codified at Part 662 of Title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR). On November 12, 1999, the Secretary of Labor published interim final regulations implementing section 188 of WIA pertaining to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. These regulations are codified at Part 37 of Title 29 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

On December 17, 1999, President Clinton signed into law the Ticket To Work and Work Incentive Improvement Act (TWWIIA). On December 28, 2000, the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration issued a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking implementing the new Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (Ticket to Work Program) authorized under TWWIIA.

On February 28, 2000, the Secretary of Education published proposed regulations governing the State VR program. [65 FR 10620-10665] On January 17, 2001, the Secretary of Education published final rules governing the State VR program. [66 FR 4380-4435] These final regulations replace current regulations codified at Part 361 of Title 34 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

The purpose of this policy brief is to identify and describe the provisions of the final regulation describing the responsibilities of a designated State unit to design and operate the State VR program as an integral component of the statewide workforce investment system, as envisioned by WIA. The final regulations envision major systemic changes in the operation of the State VR program through the creation of a streamlined, collaborative partnership with other components of the statewide workforce investment system. This new “partnership” requires a more “activist role” by State VR agencies regarding the provision of services to persons with disabilities in the State VR program itself as well as other components of the workforce investment system.

The purpose of the policy brief is also to identify and describe the provisions in the final regulations describing the relationship between the State VR program and the designated State unit and the new Ticket to Work Program.

BACKGROUND-THE GOAL OF TITLE I OF WIA

What is the overall goal of Title I of WIA?

The overall goal of Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (Title I of WIA) is to increase employment, retention, and earnings of persons (including persons with disabilities) participating in employment-related activities supported by an integrated workforce investment system. The establishment of a One-Stop service delivery system is the cornerstone of the legislation. [65 FR 10620 (February 28, 2000)]

The intent of this system is to streamline and expand access to numerous workforce investment and educational and other human resource services, activities and programs for job seekers, including individuals with disabilities, and for employers. Rather than requiring individuals and employers to seek workforce development information and services at several different locations, Title I of WIA requires States and communities to create a user-friendly One-Stop system through the coordination at the “street level” of multiple workforce development programs and resources. [65 FR 10620 (February 28, 2000)] This “seamless” system has been described by the Department of Labor (DOL) as a “one right door and no wrong door approach.” [64 FR 18669 (April 15, 1999)]

This One-Stop service delivery system must be designed to address the needs of all individuals, including individuals with disabilities. In order to make services available under the One-Stop system to persons with disabilities, the system must be “accessible” consistent with the provisions of WIA, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. [65 FR 10621, (February 28, 2000); 64 FR 9403-9404 (February 25, 1999)]

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE VR PROGRAM AND WIA

What is the relationship between the State VR program and WIA? Why is the State VR program included as part of the statewide workforce development system?

The State vocational rehabilitation services program (the State VR program) must be an integral part of a statewide workforce investment system. [34 CFR 361.1]

The preamble to the proposed regulation explained why. Participation by State units administering the VR program will result in enhancing the range and quality of services accessible to program participants. Collaboration is intended to produce better information, more comprehensive services, easier access to services, and improved long-term employment outcomes. Thus, effective participation of the State VR program is critical to enhancing opportunities for individuals with disabilities in the State VR program itself as well as other components of the workforce investment system in each State and local area. [65 FR 10621, 10624 (February 28, 2000)]

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

Do the regulations implementing WIA apply to State vocational rehabilitation agencies?

Yes. The regulations in 20 CFR Part 662 (which implements the One-Stop system requirements under Title I of WIA) apply to the State VR program. In addition, 29 CFR part 37 (which implements the civil rights requirements under section 188 of WIA) applies to the extent programs and activities of the State VR program are being conducted as part of the One-Stop service delivery system. [34 CFR 361.4]

Citing to these parts of the Federal regulations is intended solely as a means of notifying state VR agencies of their regulatory obligations as One-Stop system partners. Title I of WIA and the implementing regulations specify that partner programs, such as the designated State unit, are to participate in One-Stop system activities in a manner that is consistent with Federal law authorizing the individual partner program. In other words, designated State units must partner with other components of the One-Stop system in accordance with Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations. [66 FR 4417 (January 17, 2001)]

SUBMISSION OF THE STATE PLAN

What is the relationship between the State plan submitted under the Rehabilitation Act and the State Plan submitted under WIA? Each State is required to submit its State plan for the VR program on the same date that it submits either a State plan for Title I of WIA or a State unified plan under Section 501 of WIA. In other words, a State has three options for submitting its VR State plan.

- First, a State may submit a separate VR State plan on the same date as the State submits its State plan under Title I of WIA.
- Second, a State may include the State VR program as part of the State unified plan submitted under Section 501 of WIA. If the State elects this option, the portion of the State unified plan for vocational rehabilitation services must meet the State plan requirements specified in the regulations governing the State VR program.
- Third, a State may submit a separate VR State plan on the same date as it submits its State unified plan (that does not include the State VR program) under Section 501 of WIA. [34 CFR 361.10]

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STATE REHABILITATION COUNCIL AND THE STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

What is the relationship between the State Rehabilitation Council and the State Workforce Investment Board?

The State Rehabilitation Council must carry out its designated functions after consulting with the State Workforce Investment Board. [34 CFR 361.17(h)]

Must the State Rehabilitation Council include at least one representative of the State workforce investment board?

Yes. [34 CFR 361.17(b)(1)((xi)] A Council member who serves on the State Workforce Investment Board, however, cannot represent both the Board and another organization on the Council. [66 FR 4423 (January 17, 2001)]

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT

What are the responsibilities under the CSPD to train staff regarding WIA?

The State plan must include the State agency's policies and describe the procedures and activities the State agency will undertake to ensure that all personnel employed by the State unit receive appropriate and adequate training.

The specific training areas for staff development must be based on the needs of each State unit and may include, but are not limited to training regarding the Workforce Investment Act and the amendments to the Rehabilitation Act made by Title IV of WIA. [34 CFR 361.18(d)(2)(i)]

REQUIREMENTS RELATED TO THE WIA SYSTEM

Is the State vocational rehabilitation agency a required partner under WIA?

Yes. The designated State unit or the sole local agency under the supervision of the State unit is responsible for participating as a partner in the One-Stop service delivery system under Title I of WIA. [34 CFR 361.13(c)(1)(v)]

What are the general responsibilities of a State vocational rehabilitation agency as a mandatory partner under Title I of WIA?

As a required partner, the designated State unit must carry out the following functions [34 CFR 361.23(a)]:

- Make available to participants through the One-Stop service delivery system the core services that are applicable to the Program administered by the designated State unit;
- Use a portion of funds made available under the Program administered by the designated State unit (consistent with Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations) to create and maintain the One-Stop service delivery system and provide core services;
- Enter into a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Local Workforce Investment Board relating to the operation of the One-Stop service delivery system, including a description of services, how the cost of the identified services and operating costs of the system will be funded and methods for referral;
- Participate in the operation of the One-Stop service delivery system consistent with the terms of the MOU and the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations;
- Serve as a representative on the Local Workforce Investment Board.

Under what circumstances may designated State units use State VR funds to pay for core services and other activities made available by One-Stops?

Participation by designated State units in the One-Stop system must be performed in a manner that is consistent with Title I of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations. Thus, participation by the designated State units in the cost of core services or any other One-Stop system activities cannot result in expenditures for services to individuals who do not meet the priority for services under the order of selection. The designated State unit, however, can participate, as appropriate, in the cost of intake and other expenditures that would normally be borne by the designated State unit prior to determining eligibility and the individual's priority category under the state's order of selection. [66 FR 4425, 4426 (January 17, 2001)]

What are the responsibilities of other partners in the workforce investment system to serve persons with disabilities?

All partner programs (not just the designated state unit implementing the StateVR program) have a legal responsibility under Title I of WIA, the ADA, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act to serve persons with disabilities. Some individuals with disabilities may receive the full scope of needed services through the One-Stop system without accessing the State VR program at all; while others may be referred to the designated State unit for a program of VR services or receive a combination of services from the State VR program and other One-Stop system partners. [66 FR 4425 (January 17, 2001)]

Nothing in Title I or Title IV of WIA or the implementing regulations should be construed to require designated State units to pay the costs of providing individuals with disabilities access to the One-Stop system. In fact, that responsibility falls to the One-Stop system in accordance with the ADA and Section 504. [66 FR 4425 (January 17, 2001)]

In addition, some individuals who are eligible for VR services may choose not to participate in the VR program and, therefore, also may be served exclusively by other partner programs of the One-Stop system. [66 FR 4425 (January 17, 2001)]

What are the specific requirements regarding the entering into of cooperative agreements between State VR agencies and other partners?

The State plan must assure that the designated State unit or the designated State agency enters into cooperative agreements with other entities that are partners under the One-Stop service delivery system and replicates those agreements at the local level between individual offices of the designated State unit and local entities carrying out the One-Stop service delivery system or other activities through the statewide workforce investment system. [34 CFR 361.23(b)(1)]

The purpose of entering into of these cooperative agreements is to increase the capacity of the partners, and the One-Stop service delivery system as a whole, to better address the needs of individuals with disabilities. [65 FR 10624 (February 28, 2000)]

These cooperative agreements may provide for [34 CFR 361.23(b)(2)]:

- Intercomponent training and technical assistance regarding the availability and benefits of and information on eligibility standards for vocational rehabilitation services and the promotion of equal, effective, and meaningful participation by individuals with disabilities in the One-Stop service delivery system and other workforce development activities;
- The use of information and financial management systems that link all of the partners of the One-Stop service delivery system to one another and to other electronic networks and that relate to subjects such as employment statistics, job vacancies, career planning, and workforce investment activities;
- The use of customer service features such as common intake and referral procedures, customer databases, resource information, and human services hotlines;
- The establishment of cooperative efforts with employers to facilitate job placement and carry out other activities that the designated State unit and the employers determine to be appropriate;
- The identification of staff roles, responsibilities, and available resources and specification of the financial responsibility of each partner of the One-Stop service delivery system with respect to providing and paying for necessary services, consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulation, other Federal requirements, and State law; and
- The specification of procedures for resolving disputes among partners of the One-Stop service delivery system.

COMPREHENSIVE STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT; STATE STRATEGIES

Must the comprehensive statewide assessment address the needs of individuals with disabilities served by other components of the workforce investment system?

Yes. The VR State plan must include the results of a comprehensive statewide assessment, particularly the vocational rehabilitation services needs of, among others, individuals with disabilities served through other components of the statewide workforce investment system as identified by those individuals with disabilities and personnel assisting those individuals through the components of the system. [34 CFR 361.29(a)(1)(i)(C)]

Must the state develop strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities?

Yes. The VR State plan must describe strategies the State will use to address the needs identified in the comprehensive assessment and achieve agreed on goals and priorities, including, among other things, strategies for assisting other components of the statewide workforce investment system in assisting individuals with disabilities. [34 CFR 361.29(d)(5)]

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS WITH PRIVATE NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Do the regulations include any obligations/restrictions relating to agreements between state VR agencies and employment networks under TWWIIA?

The state plan must describe the manner in which cooperative agreements with private nonprofit vocational rehabilitation service providers will be established. [34 CFR 361.31] Neither Title I of the Rehabilitation Act nor the implementing regulations are intended to limit or prohibit the establishment of fee-for-service or other reimbursement type agreements between the designated State unit and employment networks. Typically, fee-for-service arrangements enable private service providers to purchase from the designated State unit services that are needed by an individual with a disability who is not a state VR program participant. In addition, nothing in Title I of the Rehabilitation Act or the implementing regulations affects the ability of the designated State unit to serve as an employment network as authorized under TWWIIA. [66 FR 4426 (January 17, 2001)]

INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Do any of the requirements relating to information and referral services under the State VR program apply to WIA?

Yes. The designated State unit must implement an information and referral system. The system must, among other things, refer individuals with disabilities to other appropriate Federal and State programs, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system. [34 CFR 361.37(a)(2)]

In the event that vocational rehabilitation services cannot be provided to all eligible individuals with disabilities applying for the services, the State plan must show the order for selecting eligible individuals. The “order of selection” must be consistent with criteria established by the State and assure that individuals with the most significant disabilities will be selected first for the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. A designated State unit operating under an “order of selection” must assist eligible individuals who otherwise would not receive services from the State unit to secure needed employment assistance from other entities, particularly other program components of the statewide workforce investment system. [34 CFR 361.37(a)(2)]

In making referrals, the designated state unit must refer the individual to Federal or State programs carried out by other components of the statewide workforce investment system best suited to address the specific employment needs of an individual with a disability. In addition, the designated State unit must provide the individual who is being referred by the designated State unit a notice of the referral to the agency carrying out the program, information identifying the specific point of contact within the agency to which the individual is being referred, and information and advice regarding the most suitable services to assist the individual to prepare for, secure, retain, or regain employment. [34 CFR 361.37(c)]

What responsibilities does the designated State unit have to establish and implement standards for the handling of referrals?

The designated State unit must establish and implement standards for the prompt and equitable handling of referrals of individuals for vocational rehabilitation services, including referrals of individuals made through the One-Stop service delivery system. [34 CFR 361.41(a)]

Once an individual has submitted an application for vocational rehabilitation services, including applications made through common intake procedures in One-Stop centers, an eligibility determination must be made within 60 days, subject to specified exceptions. An individual is considered to have submitted an application when the individual or the individual's representative has completed and signed an agency application form or has completed a common intake application form in a One-Stop center requesting vocational rehabilitation services. [34 CFR 361.41(b)(1) and (2)]

The designated State unit must ensure that its application forms are widely available throughout the State, particularly in the One-Stop centers established under Title I of WIA. [34 CFR 361.41(b)(3)]

If an individual is determined to be ineligible for State VR services, what is the responsibility of the State unit to refer the individual to other programs that are part of the One-Stop system?

If the designated State unit determines that an individual is ineligible for vocational rehabilitation services, the unit must, among other things, refer the individual to other training and employment-related programs that are part of the One-Stop service delivery system under Title I of WIA. [34 CFR 361.43(d)]

CONTENT OF THE INDIVIDUALIZED PLAN FOR EMPLOYMENT (IPE)

Must the IPE describe the responsibilities of entities other than the State VR program to provide services and benefits?

Yes. The terms and conditions of the IPE must include, among other things, the responsibilities of other entities as a result of arrangements made under the comparable services and benefits requirements (see below). [34 CFR 361.46(a)(6)(iii)]

Must the IPE provide for coordination of services provided under the IPE with services provided under other Federal or state programs?

Yes. The IPE must provide for the coordination of services provided under an IPE with services provided under other individualized plans established under other Federal or State programs. [34 CFR 361.46(b)(5)]

RECORD OF SERVICES

Must the designated State unit provide documentation on services provided to an individual who is referred to other programs within the One-Stop service delivery system?

Yes. In the event an individual is referred to another program through the designated State unit's information and referral system, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system, documentation must be provided on the nature and scope of service provided by the designated State unit to the individual and on the referral itself. [34 CFR 361.47(a)(13)]

SCOPE OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION SERVICES

What services related to WIA must the State unit ensure are provided to individuals with disabilities?

The term “vocational rehabilitation services” includes, among other services, referral and other services necessary to assist applicants and eligible individuals to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system. [34 CFR 361.48(d)]

COMPARABLE SERVICES AND BENEFITS

How are referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies under WIA treated under the comparable services and benefits provisions?

Referral and other services to secure needed services from other agencies, including other components of the statewide workforce investment system, are exempt from the comparable services and benefits requirement if those services are not available under the Rehabilitation Act and implementing regulations. [34 CFR 361.53(b)(3)]

Must the interagency agreements include policies relating to comparable services and benefits?

Yes. The State plan must assure that the Governor, in consultation with the entity in the State responsible for the vocational rehabilitation program and other appropriate agencies, will ensure that an interagency agreement or other mechanism for interagency coordination takes effect between the designated State vocational rehabilitation unit and any appropriate public entity, including the State entity responsible for administering the State Medicaid program and a component of the statewide workforce investment system to ensure the provision of vocational rehabilitation services (other than services exempt from the comparable benefits and services requirement) that are included in the IPE. [34 CFR 361.53(d)]

Does a “Ticket” provided under the Ticket to Work Program constitute a comparable service and benefit for purposes of the state VR program?

Because Social Security recipients with disabilities are issued “Tickets” under TWWIIA in order to receive employment-related services from an employment network, the “Ticket” constitutes a comparable service and benefit under the state VR program. Thus, to the extent that a ticket holder is receiving services from another entity (i.e., an employment network), the designated State unit need not expend state VR program funds on services that are comparable to the services the individual is already receiving. On the other hand, if the individual initially chooses the designated State unit as its employment network (or otherwise transfers his or her ticket to the designated State unit) then the individual would be served solely by the designated State unit and the ticket would not be considered a comparable service and benefit. [66 FR 4418 (January 17, 2001)]

PARTICIPATION OF INDIVIDUALS IN COST OF SERVICES BASED ON FINANCIAL NEED

May the designated State unit charge SSI and SSDI recipients for the cost of vocational rehabilitation services?

There is no Federal requirement that the financial need of individuals be considered in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services. The designated State unit may, however choose to consider the financial need of eligible individuals for purposes of determining the extent of their participation in the costs of vocational rehabilitation services. The authority to consider participation of individuals in the cost of vocational rehabilitation services based on financial need does not, however, extend to individuals determined eligible for Social Security Disability Insurance and Supplemental Security Income benefits. [34 CFR 361.54, 66 FR 4433 (January 17, 2001)]

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For more information on this study, please contact Robert Silverstein at (202) 223-5340 or email at Bobby@CSADP.org.

For additional information about the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act from a disability policy perspective, see Policy Briefs entitled:

Policy Brief Series

- Provisions in the Workforce Investment Act Relating to Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability and the Development by Governor of a Written Methods of Administration (March 2000, Vol. 2, No. 3)
- Provisions in the Workforce Investment Act Describing the Interplay between Workforce Investment Systems and Vocational Rehabilitation Programs (April 1999, Vol. 1 No. 1)

Additional RRTC/ICI Publications on WIA and One-Stop systems:

- Tools for Inclusion: People with Disabilities: Having A Voice In the Development and Implementation of the New Workforce Investment System (March 2000, Vol. 8, No. 2)
- Tools for Inclusion One-Stop Centers: A Guide for Job Seekers with Disabilities (February 2000, Vol. 8, No. 1)
- Institute Brief: WIA and One-Stop Centers: Opportunities and Issues for People with Disabilities (December 2000, Vol. 10, No. 1)

For additional information about the implementation of the Ticket to Work Program see the following RRTC/ICI Publications:

- Policy Brief: Proposed Regulations Implementing the Ticket To Work and Self-Sufficiency Program (The Ticket to Work Program) (February, 2001)
- Tools for Inclusion: The Proposed Ticket to Work Regulations (February 2001)
- These publications are available via the Institute for Community Inclusion web site at: www.childrenshospital.org/ici

Also see the following papers:

- A Description of the Workforce Investment Act From a Disability Policy Perspective (Silverstein, January, 2000)
- A Preliminary Analysis of the Relationship Between the Workforce Investment Act and the Federal Disability Policy Framework (Silverstein, January, 2000)

The Workforce Investment Act: Opportunities and Issues for the Disability Community

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Major changes in the employment and training systems across the country are currently taking place, changes that could have a significant impact on services for people with disabilities. These changes are a result of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), a federal law, effective July 1, 2000, which governs how publicly-funded workforce investment and training services operate. The new federally-sponsored nationwide employment and training system established under WIA is called “America’s Workforce Network”. This publication provides a basic overview of WIA, and examines the impact of this law on the lives of people with disabilities, as well as the systems and organizations that assist them.

What are the basic principles of WIA?

There are six key principles of WIA:

- Streamlining services: Multiple employment and training programs are integrated into one system
- Universal Access: Every individual, including people with disabilities, has access to basic or “core” services
- Increased accountability: States, local service areas, and training providers are held accountable for performance results
- Strong role for local boards: WIA establishes Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) which play a strong role in the implementation of WIA
- State and local flexibility: States and local areas have a great deal of flexibility in how funding is used to customize services to meet the needs of the local community
- Improved youth programs: The act establishes a youth council in each area, and links youth programs more closely to local labor market needs.

What does WIA replace? What is different about WIA compared to previous legislation?

WIA replaces the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). While some activities and services that occurred under JTPA continue under WIA, others change significantly. Some of the major changes:

- No more prerequisites for receiving services. Under WIA, all adults age 18 and older are eligible for core services. Under JTPA, only economically disadvantaged adults, age 22 or older, received any services.
- WIA establishes a One-Stop delivery system for accessing employment and training services. Some of the services that have traditionally been available at state, county or local offices of employment and training (i.e., “job service” “unemployment offices”) will now be available via One-Stop Centers.

- Under WIA, Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are established for purchasing training services; training was previously provided through contracts with training providers.
- Private Industry Councils (PICs) and Regional Employment Boards (REBs) are replaced by local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). Under JTPA, PICs could directly operate programs; under WIA, Local Workforce Investment Boards may not operate programs, unless this requirement is waived by the Governor.

How can people with disabilities benefit from WIA?

Job Seeker Assistance: One of the goals of WIA is to establish a system so that all job seekers have easy access to services to help them find a job and advance their careers, and also meet employer workforce needs. Under WIA, the many different federally funded employment and training programs are brought together. The goal is a more simplified “user friendly” system for job seekers to easily access the services they need to find and maintain employment. People with disabilities will potentially benefit from this overall push for higher quality and easy access to services.

Full Inclusion: WIA’s core principle of “universal access” allows people with disabilities to benefit by having access to the same services as everyone else. Receiving services side-by-side with other members of the general public, promotes the idea of people with disabilities being fully integrated into the mainstream community. Under WIA, services are to be “readily accessible” meaning that most people with disabilities should be able to use services without having to ask for accommodations. At the same time, when needed, people with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations in order to access services under WIA.

Focus on People with Disabilities: WIA places a focus on the need for the employment and training services to meet the needs of people with disabilities. In the past, people with significant disabilities have not usually benefited from these “generic” services. However, people with disabilities are mentioned throughout the WIA legislation and regulations, as among the groups and individuals that WIA is designed to serve. These are very specific mechanisms with the legislation to make sure that people with disabilities are well served by each state’s workforce development system.

Why is it important for people with disabilities and advocates for people with disabilities to pay attention to WIA?

Significant resource and service delivery decisions are being made as part of WIA activities. Since WIA merges many different workforce programs, and establishes a system designed to meet the needs of all job seekers, there are competing priorities of populations and individuals to be served. Therefore, advocacy efforts are essential to ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are not overlooked, and that people with disabilities are well served under this new system.

THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

What is the One-Stop system?

The One-Stop system operates through a network of centers in each state. These centers provide a variety of services to assist individuals to meet their employment and training needs, while also assisting local employers to meet their needs for qualified personnel. Each state is required to have at least one comprehensive center that is physically located in each local service delivery area.

What is a local service delivery area?

Service delivery areas are designated by the Governor of each state, and based on a variety of factors, such as population, local labor market areas, and the need to provide services within a reasonable travel distance for individuals. Some states have many local workforce investment areas, while others will only have a few or just one. Any unit of local government (such as a city or county) with a population of 500,000 or more, is automatically approved as a local workforce investment area.

What about rural areas, and states with low population density?

In addition to full service One-Stop Centers, local service delivery areas are permitted to have “satellite centers” which provide access to WIA services. In rural areas and in states with low population density, “satellite centers” and other alternative service delivery mechanisms (such as roving vans) are being used to deliver One-Stop services.

My state has had One-Stop Centers for several years. Why did they exist before this law?

One-Stop Centers were established as demonstration projects in most states, prior to the passage of WIA. WIA establishes One-Stops as a permanent part of the workforce development and training system, and the major mechanism for accessing services under this system. One-Stop Centers that opened prior to the implementation of the law on July 1, 2000 continue to exist, but with possible changes to conform to the new law.

There are three categories of One-Stop services: core, intensive, and training.

Core Services are provided at the Center and are available to anyone. Core services include: outreach, intake and orientation; initial assessment; determination of eligibility for additional services; job search and placement assistance; career counseling; labor market information.

Intensive Services are intended for eligible individuals who have not become successfully employed as a result of core services. Intensive services are provided either directly by the Center or through a contract with a service provider. Examples include: comprehensive assessments of skills and service needs; development of individual employment plans; group and individual counseling; case management.

Training Services are intended for eligible individuals who have not become successfully employed as a result of core and intensive services, and are not typically provided by the One-Stop Center. Types of training include: occupational skills training; on-the-job training; skills upgrading; job readiness training; adult education and literacy training; and customized training for employers. If funds for intensive and training services are limited, priority is given to individuals with low incomes, and individuals receiving public assistance; people with disabilities should be among those given priority under these criteria.

What are ITAs?

ITAs are Individual Training Accounts. With limited exceptions, training services under WIA are provided through ITAs. If a person is determined eligible for training services under WIA, the individual receives an ITA, which he or she then uses to obtain training services from any

approved provider of training services. The specifics of how ITAs operate vary in each state and local area, but could include vouchers, draw-down accounts, etc. To help guide individuals in choosing a training provider, the One-Stop system must make information and data available on each provider's performance.

PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION UNDER WIA

Vocational Rehabilitation: Where does it fit in?

The public Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) System is one of many mandated partners in the One-Stop system, with VR services available to at least some degree via the One-Stop system. Specifics on how these services are delivered by the One-Stop system vary from state to state system (this includes both general VR services, and services for the blind and visually impaired, which are part of the public VR system). For example, in some cases the entire local office of VR is located at the One-Stop Center, while in other cases, individual VR counselors are based at a One-Stop on a full-time or part-time basis. While under WIA each state's public VR System must be an integral component of the workforce investment system, VR continues to exist as a separate program, with its own federal funding source.

What does being a required partner mean?

Each partner must make available through the One-Stop system the "core services" that are applicable to the partner's programs. The WIA regulations outline a variety of core services, but specifics on what these "core services" mean for each partner, and how they are delivered, is determined at the state and local level. Additionally, each partner must provide funding to create and maintain the One-Stop system to the extent consistent with the legislation that governs that partner's programs; for example, funding provided by the VR system cannot violate the Rehabilitation Act. Each partner also participates in the operation of the One-Stop system, and serves on the Local Workforce Investment Board.

Besides Vocational Rehabilitation, what are the other required partners?

Under WIA, the other required partners in the One-Stop system are:

1. Federally funded Adult, Dislocated Worker, & Youth Activities
2. Employment Service programs under the Wagner-Peyser Act
3. Federally Funded Adult Education & Literacy Programs
4. Federally funded Post-secondary Vocational Education
5. Federally funded Welfare-to Work programs
6. Federally funded Senior Community Service Employment Activities
7. Trade Adjustment Assistance & NAFTA Adjustment Assistance
8. Veterans Employment & Training Programs
9. Employment & Training Programs of the Federal Community Services Block Grant
10. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development Administered Employment & Training Programs
11. Programs under state unemployment insurance laws.

Unlike VR, none of these other required partners only funds services for people with disabilities. However, all provide services that can benefit people with disabilities, and people with disabilities should be among the individuals served by these other partners.

In examining WIA, should the focus on disability-related issues go beyond the role of VR in this system?

Yes. The role of public VR is only part of what people with disabilities and advocates should be concerned with in looking at WIA. There are a wide range of services beyond those available from VR that people with disabilities are entitled to and could benefit from in this new workforce investment system.

What is a MOU?

A MOU is a Memorandum of Understanding. A MOU is required between each partner (such as state VR) in the One-Stop system and the Local Workforce Investment Board. Included in this MOU must be a description of services that are provided by the partner via the One-Stop system, how the costs of these services are funded, and how the partner contributes to the operating costs of the One-Stop system. The MOU must also indicate how individuals will be referred between the One-Stop operator and One-Stop partners.

What about other disability agencies? How are they involved?

The public Vocational Rehabilitation system is the only disability focused agency that is a required partner in the One-Stop system under WIA. However, states and local areas can have additional partners in the One-Stop system, which could include public disability agencies such as state or county mental health agencies, state developmental disability/mental retardation agencies, and others. Additionally, there are a number of options for non-partner disability agencies (both public and private) to work in a collaborative fashion with the workforce investment system, and with One-Stop Centers, without being partners. Examples of such collaboration include: funding of services for specific individuals, acting as a resource and consultant to One-Stops on meeting the needs of the population served by that agency, assisting service providers under WIA to serve individuals served by the agency, etc.

How do partners deliver their services via the One-Stop system?

Partnership arrangements will vary, depending on the structure of the local One-Stop system and MOU's. The basic types of arrangements at full-service One-Stop Centers include:

- **Simple Co-Location with Coordinated Delivery of Systems:** Under this type of arrangement, several partner agencies share space and coordinate services, but each maintains their own separate identity and controls their own resources.
- **Full Integration:** All partner programs are coordinated under one management structure and accounting system. There is joint delivery of program services, and resources are combined.

Full Integration is ultimately what is envisioned under WIA. However, given the various funding streams, regulations, and management structures that various partners operate under, it is expected that it make time some time for the One-Stop system in many local areas to evolve towards a fully integrated system. Not only will it take some time to work out the operational

details, but the various partners need time to learn about each other, and develop an understanding of how they can work in a collaborative fashion to each other's mutual benefit.

When a person goes to a One-Stop Center, how do they access the services of various One-Stop partners?

Ideally, a One-Stop system has intake and registration systems designed so that individuals can easily access the best combination of partner services, in a way which is seamless and user-friendly, and meets their individual needs. An individual should experience intake and orientation so that, in addition to being made aware of the universally accessible core services which all individuals can utilize, the One-Stop will be able to quickly determine the full array of additional services from various partners that the customer may be eligible for; the One-Stop then works in collaboration with the customer to determine which partner's services will best meet his or her individual needs. From the customer's perspective, the important thing should be that they are receiving the core, intensive, and training services they need to obtain employment and advance in their careers, and not be concerned about "who is paying for what". There should not be the need to apply for every partner's services separately, or the customer to engage in extensive negotiation and advocacy to receive the services of each partner. The details of how services are provided in an integrated, seamless way by the various partners should be worked out "behind the scenes."

SERVICE OPTIONS UNDER WIA

There are several options for people with disabilities. Here are some of them:

- **Directly accessing core, and non-disability intensive and training services:** Like anyone else, people with disabilities have the right to come into a One-Stop Center and use the core services that are available. Additionally, they could be determined eligible for intensive or training services not targeted specifically for people with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have a right to be given full consideration for such non-disability services.
- **Accessing VR services:** If eligible, an individual can access and receive services from the state Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agency via the One-Stop. However, not all individuals with disabilities are eligible for VR services, and there is no requirement that eligible individuals must use VR services. If an individual chooses not to use VR services, they are still entitled to use the full range of other One-Stop services which they are eligible for.
- **Accessing other disability services:** Via the One-Stop, an individual may be able to access special programs for people with disabilities, such as intensive services delivered by the One-Stop, or referral to a disability agency (such as an approved community rehabilitation provider) for intensive or training services.
- **Using the One-Stop in collaboration with a community agency:** If an individual is already being served by a community rehabilitation provider (CRP) or other community agency, the agency staff can assist the individual to use the core services of the One-Stop as part of their overall efforts to help the individual obtain employment. This option is available for any individual served by any community agency.

It is important that people with disabilities recognize the range of service options available to them under WIA, both disability and non-disability specific, and advocate for delivery of services in a way

that meets their needs, and with which they are most comfortable. In many cases, a person with a disability may best be served by a combination of services from different One-Stop partners and collaborators (possibly including VR).

What about services for youth?

A significant focus of WIA is on services for youth ages 14-21. Many youth with disabilities are eligible for youth activities, and these activities can play a significant role as part of a successful transition from school to adult life. Each local workforce area has a Youth Council which helps coordinate youth activities. For information on youth activities in your area, contact your Local Workforce Investment Board.

Service Options Beyond WIA

Services that fall under WIA are just one of the options available for people with disabilities who need employment and training services. There continue to be a variety of employment services for people with disabilities, which do not require going to a One-Stop. These include services available or funded via:

- state departments of developmental disabilities/mental retardation
- state or county mental health systems
- the Social Security Administration
- school systems
- the Department of Veteran's Affairs
- other entities.

There also continues to be an extensive network of private provider agencies in every state.

These various service options are accessed as they have always been, by registering or applying directly to the agencies that are providing or funding these services. However, there may be some level of collaboration between these other service options and the workforce investment system. For example, some individuals receiving services from a community rehabilitation provider, are using the core services of a One-Stop to assist them in their job search. In some states and local areas, the mental health and developmental disability systems have agreements to work together with the workforce investment system. In many ways, One-Stops should be viewed as a complement to existing services, rather than a replacement. There are a wide variety of ways that services under WIA can fit into the overall service delivery structure for people with disabilities, and many of these are just beginning to be explored.

GOVERNING STRUCTURE FOR WIA

- At the national level, the Employment and Training Administration of the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) coordinates WIA activities.
- At the state level, a State Workforce Investment Board, appointed by the Governor, provides monitoring and coordination of each state's workforce investment system. Among the responsibilities of this state board are submission of a five year state plan to USDOL, development of state performance measures, establishment of local workforce investment areas, development of allocation formulas for funds to local areas, and development of procedures for certifying training providers.

- At the local level, each service delivery area's workforce investment system is overseen by a Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB). Among the activities of the LWIB, are choosing and overseeing the One-Stop operators, developing a five year Local Workforce Investment Plan, identifying eligible training providers, and developing agreements with all of the One-Stop partners. Members of this board include representatives of: education, labor organizations, economic development agencies, all One-Stop partners (including vocational rehabilitation), and community-based organizations. This board is appointed by the Chief Local Elected Official (often the mayor of the major city in the area or the head of the elected county board).
- Board membership: The chair as well as the majority of the members on the state and local boards must be representatives of business. There is no requirement that the membership of LWIBs include people with disabilities. However, the WIA legislation urges the inclusion on these boards of people with disabilities, and organizations representing people with disabilities.

MONITORING AND INFLUENCING WIA

There are a variety of ways that people with disabilities and advocates can monitor and impact what's occurring under WIA. When it appears the needs of people with disabilities are not being properly met, it is usually best to assume that this is due to lack of awareness and mis-assumptions, rather than deliberate discrimination. In many cases, making those involved aware of the situation, and providing some education combined with gentle but firm advocacy, can often resolve issues. However, when issues have gone unresolved, if circumstances warrant it, people with disabilities should use the formal complaint procedures available, contact oversight bodies, and involve legal advocates.

Here are ways people with disabilities and advocates can monitor and influence what's occurring under WIA.

Become familiar with WIA requirements

Through publications such as this and others, become familiar with the opportunities and requirements under WIA for serving people with disabilities. In particular, become well-informed about the equal opportunity and non-discrimination regulations for WIA, so that you understand the rights of people with disabilities in using services under WIA and are able to monitor and advocate to ensure these regulations are enforced.

Monitor the local delivery of services under WIA

Visit your local One-Stop, and see how welcoming it is for people with disabilities.

- Examine both the physical accessibility, as well as the ability of people with disabilities to easily access services.
- Observe whether people with disabilities are being served together with other customers of the One-Stop and have access to all core services.
- Also note whether individuals with disabilities are considered potentially eligible for a range of intensive and training services, and not just those funded by Vocational Rehabilitation or services only for people with disabilities.
- If necessary, meet with the Center's Equal Opportunity Officer, Center Director, or contact the Local Workforce Board or other officials, if there are concerns about the delivery of services for people with disabilities at the One-Stop or under other WIA programs (such as services for youth).

Provide input into new centers

If there are plans to open a new One-Stop Center in your area, find out who is involved in the development of the center (centers are chartered by Local Workforce Investment Boards). Advocate and be a resource so that centers are designed to truly provide universal access for all people with disabilities both physically and in the delivery of services.

Stay informed about state or local board activities

Find out if the state or local board has a mailing list, and ask to be put on it. The State and Local Workforce Investment Boards are required to have regular open meetings at which they make information on board activities available to the public. Call your state or local board and find out the schedule and location of public meetings. Attend meetings, and get to know the board members. Provide feedback concerning how One-Stops and other services under WIA can best help people with disabilities achieve their employment and career goals. Local boards are required to make available minutes of formal meetings upon request.

Monitor the Annual Report to USDOL

Each state is required to report annually to USDOL on how well the state's workforce investment system is doing in helping people with disabilities find and maintain employment, and what steps are being taken to ensure ongoing improvement in this area. Obtain this report to ascertain the state's perception of progress in meeting the employment needs of people with disabilities. Provide feedback concerning what steps the state should be taking to improve outcomes. Monitor the state's follow-through in the commitments it makes to USDOL.

Provide input to the state board on local board performance

The state board provides oversight of the local boards, and will be re-certifying local boards when WIA has been in place for two years. Provide feedback to the state board on how your local board and service delivery area is performing in assisting people with disabilities to meet their employment and career goals.

Advocate for board membership

Find out who is on your state and local workforce investment boards. If it hasn't occurred already, advocate that people with disabilities be included in the membership of these boards.

Consider becoming a member of your Local Workforce Investment Board

Through membership on your Local Workforce Investment Board, you can have a significant voice in the implementation of the Local Plan and workforce investment activities. Local Boards are required to make information available to the public concerning how to become a member of the board; as noted earlier, the boards are appointed by the Chief Local Elected Official (usually the mayor of a major municipality, or elected head of a county board). Remember, that at least 50% of the membership of each board must be business. Human service agencies may find better success in becoming a member of a board as a business, rather than a community agency. As members of the local board, human service agencies can work to ensure that people with disabilities are fully included in the workforce development system. In addition, they can work with the local system to address their own, often significant workforce needs as employers.

Get involved with a local board committee

Much of the work of local boards is accomplished through committees. You do not have to be a member of the local board to be on a committee, and committee membership can be an excellent opportunity to have input and build relationships. Ask your local board about opportunities for committee membership.

Monitor MOA Compliance

Each state is required to have a Methods of Administration (MOA) which details how the state will ensure compliance with the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Regulations for WIA, mentioned above. Monitor activities under WIA to ensure compliance with the commitments made in the MOA. If necessary, utilize the complaint procedures within these regulations, to ensure that the rights of people with disabilities to services are enforced.

Review and Update of MOA

The Governor of each state must review and update the MOA at least every two years. As you monitor compliance with the MOA, provide feedback concerning modifications that should be made, to ensure equal opportunity for all individuals under WIA, including people with disabilities.

In your advocacy efforts, continually keep disability issues in the forefront. Remind the officials responsible about the core values of WIA, and how these core values are as applicable to people with disabilities, as to anyone else.

ISSUES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WIA

The basic principles of WIA—universal access, empowering individuals through customer choice, streamlining services with integration of services offered, flexibility, accountability to the user—are concepts that people with disabilities have long encouraged and pushed to be part of service delivery systems. However, the actual application of these concepts will determine whether WIA truly delivers on its potential for people with significant disabilities.

Opportunities under WIA

If WIA delivers for people with disabilities in a positive way, people with disabilities receive the assistance they need to obtain quality jobs, side-by-side with non-disabled individuals. Under this positive scenario, people with disabilities, along with all other individuals served under WIA are not provided services with a conscious or sub-conscious “take it or leave it” attitude, but instead have choice and control over the services provided. It is also not left to the responsibility of the individual with a disability to negotiate the maze of funding mechanisms in order to obtain the employment services they need. From the perspective of the job seeker with a disability, funding is provided in a simple and seamless way.

Concerns about WIA

This optimistic scenario under WIA is in contrast to other possible alternatives. To successfully obtain employment, people with disabilities often require a more intensive level of assistance and level of resources than typical job seekers. There is also significant specific expertise that is often

required to meet the needs of people with significant disabilities. In its efforts to meet the needs of all job seekers, there is concern that the specific and often unique needs of people with disabilities will be overlooked under WIA, or not met in an effective fashion.

Also, what is exactly meant by the WIA principle of “accountability for results?” Are services provided and funded under WIA held accountable for meeting the needs of the entire workforce or potential workforce, including people with disabilities? Or are acceptable outcomes focused primarily on the rate of placements, number of placements, and job retention? If the latter is the case, then people with more significant disabilities are not going to be served well (if at all) under WIA, as there is often the perception (whether true or not) that such individuals require more time and are more risky to place. In essence, there is the potential for “creaming” of the individuals perceived to be the most “job ready,” with individuals with more significant needs left unserved.

Another issue is that placement of people with disabilities in sheltered work settings, and similar non-integrated work settings, is possibly considered an acceptable outcome under WIA. This is a concern to those who feel the expected outcome for people with disabilities should always be placement directly in integrated community settings, and not in segregated facilities.

Role of VR

Another issue for people with disabilities is the role of state vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs as a mandated partner in the One-Stop system. Does this mean that vocational rehabilitation will collaborate more effectively with other agencies in the workforce development arena, to better meet the needs of people with disabilities? Or, will it mean that the targeted resources for people with disabilities under vocational rehabilitation become diluted and less effective as they are combined with those of other agencies?

A related concern is the need to make sure that the VR System is not considered the only option for service delivery under WIA for people with disabilities. In connection with the role of VR, it has been observed that the general workforce development system at times has the following misperceptions:

- a) the public VR system serves all people with disabilities
- b) to obtain job placement assistance, all people with disabilities must be served through the VR system.

Reality is that people with disabilities are served by a number of agencies, such as state mental health agencies, and state developmental disability/mental retardation agencies, which often serve many more people with disabilities than the public VR agency. There are also many people with disabilities not served by any disability funding agency, who simply want quality job placement services. Like any other member of the general public, people with disabilities are entitled to the full range of services available under WIA, and not those services only available or funded by VR.

Youth Services

A final issue is the ability to take full advantage of the major opportunities available for youth with disabilities under WIA. The youth activities under WIA can play a significant role in a successful transition from school to adult life; as a result of fairly liberal eligibility criteria, many youth with

disabilities qualify for these services. However, youth with disabilities must ensure that local officials are aware of and comply with these eligibility criteria, allowing for maximum access to youth activities. Also, advocacy needs to occur so youth with disabilities are fully integrated into activities, with their support and accommodation needs met.

Need for Advocacy

Despite the relatively low national unemployment rates, only about 30% of adults with significant disabilities are participating in the nation's workforce, as compared to 80% of the general population. Such a low rate of workforce participation begs for different approaches to meeting the employment needs of people with disabilities. WIA holds forth the possibility of new and innovative services to assist with obtaining employment. But will the promises of WIA turn out to be an empty promise for people with disabilities? Much is dependent on whether the needs of people with disabilities are considered as WIA is implemented, and that people with disabilities are advocating to ensure that WIA delivers on its promise of "universal accessibility" and quality service delivery.

What laws protect people with disabilities in the delivery of services under WIA?

In receiving services under WIA, people with disabilities are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, both of which prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. In addition there are specific regulations which are designed to ensure that states, local areas, and WIA service providers (such as One-Stop Centers) provide equal opportunity and do not discriminate against people with disabilities as well as other individuals and groups. Among the requirements of these regulations:

- facilities and services must be "readily accessible"
- staff must be trained to ensure equal opportunity and nondiscrimination
- all WIA service providers must have an Equal Opportunity Officer
- outreach must occur to specific groups including people with disabilities.

The regulations also contain specific complaint procedures if an individual feels they have been discriminated against in the delivery of services.

ISSUES FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SERVING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

For Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs), multicultural agencies, Independent Living Centers, and other community organizations serving people with disabilities, implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), provides opportunities for new and different collaborations and enhanced service delivery. Among the purposes of the One-Stop Centers established under this system, is to assist all job seekers in obtaining employment, while assisting employers to meet their human resource needs. This system can potentially benefit community organizations in a number of different ways. A few examples:

- The job listings, and other job search resources available via a One-Stop Center can enhance the existing job development resources of a community organization.
- Community organizations can provide training to the people they serve on using a One-Stop, thus not only assisting individuals to meet their immediate needs for employment, but also by teaching them how to use a resource that can assist them throughout their working career.

- Community agencies can work collaboratively with One-Stop Centers in providing services, such as Job Seeking Skills groups within One-Stop Centers, resume development classes, and mutual sharing of knowledge on finding employment for people with significant barriers.
- One-Stop Centers can serve as a possible source of referrals for community organizations, to provide the intensive level of job placement assistance that is not typically available through the relatively self-directed core services of One-Stop Centers.
- One-Stop Centers can also assist community organizations in meeting their own staffing needs, as a source of candidates for staff positions at the community agency.

Other Opportunities

Working with One-Stops, however, is not the only opportunity for community organizations under WIA. Under WIA, significant decisions are being made concerning the allocation of training and service dollars. This provides opportunities for community agencies for expansion of services, or provision of services in new and different ways. In particular, opportunities for community organizations may be available through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) which allow individuals to purchase training services from a vendor of their choice. A significant piece of WIA also focuses on the needs of youth, with the establishment of Youth Councils, providing potential opportunities for community organizations who are involved, or wish to be involved, in transition services for students with disabilities. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Labor regularly issues grant submission requests for special projects, which community agencies may wish to pursue, possibly in collaboration with other entities. Similar funding opportunities may also be available from state and local workforce boards. With these opportunities though comes a note of caution. Community organizations could potentially be left “out of the loop” when it comes to decisions around allocation of training and service dollars under WIA. The ability of community organizations to take advantage of the potential opportunities under WIA, is dependent on their ability to connect with the state and local boards and officials making such decisions.

Recommendations for community organizations under WIA include:

- Management staff of community organizations should find out where the One-Stop Centers are in their local area, and visit the centers. (There may be more than one center located in the area served by the community organization.) Make an appointment with the center director(s), and explore avenues for possible collaboration. Ensure that your community organization is recognized as an important member of the community who wishes to be involved in a collaborative way with the One-Stop Center.
- All staff of community agencies who are involved in assisting job seekers with disabilities to obtain employment should visit the local One-Stop Center(s) to develop an understanding of the services available, and how these services can be utilized as part of service delivery for the individuals they work with.
- Build connections with your Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) in order to ensure that your agency and the individuals you serve are given full consideration in decisions related to the allocation of training and service funds. Find out how to get involved in board activities, either through membership on the LWIB, or on a board committee. Ask about how the board is administering Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). Find out about the process

for becoming an approved provider of Training Services using ITAs, and determine whether this is something you wish to pursue.

- Regularly monitor the funding opportunities from the US Department of Labor for special project opportunities.
- Talk to One-Stop Centers and LWIBs about assistance in meeting agency staff recruitment and training needs.

ISSUES FOR PUBLIC VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION

Each state's public vocational rehabilitation (VR) agency is a mandated partner in the One-Stop system. As a mandated partner, VR must make available via the One-Stop system, the core services applicable to VR. The exact nature of the VR and One-Stop partnership is going to vary significantly from state-to-state, and even within states, depending on the structure of services, statewide agreements, and content of the local Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between VR and the Local Workforce Investment Board. Here are issues for consideration by VR in partnering with One-Stops.

Not everyone with a disability qualifies for VR services

The definition of who qualifies for VR services is much narrower than the broader definition of disability under the ADA. Only people with a disability that interferes with their ability to get or hold a job are eligible for VR services. Therefore, there are many individuals with disabilities who will come into a One-Stop who do not qualify for VR services. While VR may not be able to assist every person with a disability who comes in contact with the One-Stop system, VR should be prepared to provide direction on service alternatives to VR.

Order of selection issues

In states where VR caseloads are near full capacity, there may be an "order of selection" in place, whereby VR is able to accept only those individuals with the most significant disabilities who could benefit from VR services. If there are individuals who qualify for VR services, whom VR is currently unable to serve, other One-Stop services can play a key role in helping customers who might otherwise not be able to get services.

Qualified individuals do not have to accept VR services

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) regulations are very clear - even if a One-Stop customer qualifies for VR services, they are not required to use VR services. Individuals who choose not to use VR services, have the absolute right to utilize One-Stop core services, and any other One-Stop services that they qualify for.

VR funds and staff may not be used for non-VR purposes

The partnership between the One-Stop and VR must abide by the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act. For example, VR staff at a One-Stop may do such things as determining eligibility for VR services, explaining VR services during an orientation session, conducting a workshop for VR clients, and providing direct assistance to VR clients. However, VR staff and funds cannot be used to meet the needs of non-VR clients. For example, VR staff cannot help a non-VR client with their resume or in finding a job. Therefore, no matter what level of integration is occurring between VR and the One-Stop system, there must be mechanisms in place to ensure that the resources of VR are utilized to serve only people with disabilities.

An interactive relationship

The WIA regulations state that the relationship between VR and the One-Stop system should be interactive in nature, with referring of individuals by VR to other components of the One-Stop system, and the One-Stop system similarly referring individuals to VR. Ideally, the One-Stop system can be designed in such a way that individuals will fully benefit from the potential of the One-Stop system, through blending of One-Stop partner services. An individual would utilize VR services as needed, but also benefit from the wide array of other services available as well. One of the major challenges of the One-Stop system will be to do this in a way that creates the perception of seamless service delivery from the customer viewpoint, and also makes the individual fully aware of the options available to them.

Options for people with disabilities

The bottom line is that people with disabilities have a number of options in using One-Stop services. They can:

- 1) receive most or all of their services exclusively from VR
- 2) receive some services from VR, and other services from other One-Stop partners
- 3) only use non-VR One-Stop services

How people with disabilities use One-Stop services is going to be highly dependent on individual needs, choices, and eligibility.

A Mutually Beneficial Relationship

WIA offers an opportunity for VR to work in a much more collaborative way with other service systems. This could benefit VR twofold:

- VR will have the opportunity to share its expertise with a much wider audience, thus not only benefiting more individuals with disabilities, but also allowing other service systems to recognize the enormous expertise and importance of VR as part of the overall service delivery system.
- VR will also have the opportunity to utilize the resources of other partners and services, allowing the resources of VR to be stretched to serve more individuals and/or individuals with more significant needs.

Ideally, VR and the rest of the One-Stop system can mutually benefit from each others' expertise. Here are just a few examples of how such a partnership can work:

- VR can assist One-Stop Centers in assuring that the facility and services are fully accessible—both programmatically and physically.
- VR can assist One-Stop customers who are using other One-Stop services to find employment, with obtaining assistive technology, arranging for job accommodations, and developing post-employment supports, as long as they also qualify for VR services.
- If VR staff are assisting people to find employment, they can utilize the various job search services of the One-Stop, including job listings, on-site employer interviews and information sessions, as well as employer contacts of other One-Stop staff. VR staff can similarly share their employer contacts with other One-Stop staff.
- VR clients can avail themselves of the various workshops the One-Stop may offer, such as resume development, interviewing skills, etc.

- VR staff can assist clients in accessing other services available at the One-Stop Center, including other intensive services, as well as training services.
- Through creating understanding among other One-Stop staff concerning the services of VR, other One-Stop partners can utilize the expertise of VR to meet customer needs, and refer individuals to VR who qualify and could benefit from VR services.

A well developed partnership will allow the resources of VR and other partners to be used in a broader yet more efficient fashion, and allow VR to focus on its particular areas of expertise.

WIA will no doubt lead to VR working much more collaboratively with other service providers and funding agencies. Under WIA, it will be essential that VR make every effort to ensure that its vital role for people with disabilities is recognized and utilized.

ISSUES FOR PUBLIC NON-PARTNER HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

The federal legislation and regulations implementing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) mandate a number of partners that are to be part of the Workforce Development system in each state. The only mandated partner that is specific to people with disabilities is the state Vocational Rehabilitation agency. However, WIA does not prohibit a state from including other state agencies and programs as partners. Other potential partners include state developmental disability agencies, state mental health agencies, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), and others. Whether or not other partners should be included is being left to the discretion of individual states and local service delivery areas. The questions for those agencies that are not mandated WIA partners are:

- Are there opportunities in my state for non-mandated agencies and programs to become WIA partners?
- What are the requirements and process for becoming a partner?
- What does being a partner mean for our agency, and what will it require of our agency?
- What are the potential advantages and disadvantages to becoming a partner?
- What are the potential advantages and disadvantages to not becoming a partner?
- Besides being a WIA partner, are there other avenues and opportunities for our agency or program to become involved in WIA activities and services?

Agencies and programs that are not mandated WIA partners have three options:

- 1) They can ignore WIA under the presumption that it does not impact them and/or provides no opportunity to positively impact the services they provide.
- 2) They can learn about WIA, not necessarily with the intent of becoming a partner, but to at least develop a core understanding of the issues involved, the impact WIA has in their state and possibly on their particular agency, and to look for avenues for collaboration with the workforce investment system.
- 3) They can actively advocate for their inclusion as a partner in WIA.

It behooves any agency which in one way or another is involved with assisting individuals to find employment to avoid the “head in the sand approach” of option # 1. It makes much more sense to at least develop an understanding of WIA, and possibly advocate to become a WIA partner. Significant workforce development and labor exchange services are provided under WIA, with many of these

services offered via One-Stop Centers. Major decisions concerning allocation of workforce development resources which fund training and placement services, are made by the state and local officials overseeing WIA. With such critical decisions being made concerning services and resource allocation, it is important that non-mandated agencies be aware of what is occurring, because:

- it potentially presents enormous opportunities for better meeting the needs of individuals served by the agency. Even if an agency is not a mandated partner, individuals served by that agency, are still entitled to receive services under WIA.
- in the implementation of WIA, it is important that the needs of the population served by the agency be considered.
- as decisions are made concerning shifting allocation of resources under WIA, non-mandated agencies need to be “at the table” to ensure that decisions are made that won’t result in a loss of resources to the agency.

For agencies whose focus is not specifically on people with disabilities (such as TANF), WIA offers the promise of collaboration with other agencies, which will assist such agencies in meeting the needs of their clients with disabilities. One of the basic tenets of WIA is multi-agency partnerships, which in theory enables the sharing of expertise and resources in meeting the needs of individuals with significant barriers to employment, including people with disabilities.

What does it mean to be a WIA partner?

This varies from state-to-state, since the federal requirements for being a WIA partner are general in nature, with each state figuring out what works best for them. Agencies should consider the following in deciding whether or not to become an optional partner under WIA.

- What can be gained as a partner? Does it enable the people served by the agency to receive better services? Does being a partner under WIA, allow the agency to focus more on its areas of expertise, allowing the agency to utilize the expertise of other agencies as part of service delivery? Does becoming a partner allow the agency to have more of the “inside track” in becoming involved in workforce investment activities? Does becoming a partner allow for expansion or more efficient use of resources?
- What are the possible concerns over becoming a partner? Will the agency have to give up control of some of its resources? Is the One-Stop system capable of meeting the needs of the individuals served by the agency in a quality way? Will the energy and effort that will have to go into coordination with other partners be worth the end result? Would the agency be better off working in a collaborative way with the workforce investment system, and One-Stop system, without becoming an official partner, being able to experiment with various types of involvement on a formal and informal basis?

The following are recommendations for agencies and programs which are not mandated WIA partners.

- Find out who is involved in the implementation of WIA in your state, and determine if there are ways for you to learn about and have input into the process of implementation (contact information is contained in the resource section at the end of this publication)
- Find out about the make-up of your state and local WIA boards. Who is on the board? Are there individuals who are able to represent the needs of your agency, and the people it serves?

- Learn what being a partner in the One-Stop system entails. Obtain information about the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) being developed and used in your state between local Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop partners, which will provide information on specific parameters and requirements of being a partner. Talk to individuals from agencies that are One-Stop partners, particularly at the local level, and find out what their experience has been. Keep in mind that many of these partnerships are still in their early stages, so how these partnerships will operate over the long-term remains to be seen.
- Find out if your state and/or local WIA service delivery areas, are considering having WIA partners besides those that are federally mandated. If your agency is not currently being considered as an optional partner, and it is something you feel would be of benefit to your agency, advocate to become a WIA partner.
- Determine what other mechanisms and options are available, besides becoming a partner agency, for accessing the resources resulting from WIA in order to benefit the individuals served by your agency.
- Learn about the changes in services and resource allocation that are occurring within your state under WIA. Determine how your agency can position itself to respond effectively and to take advantage of these changes.

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*Listing current as of 3/2001 - updated listings are
available at: <http://wdsc.doleta.gov/disability>*

Rehabilitation Services Administration Regional DOL/One-Stop Disability Coordinators

Region	Contact Person	Phone	Fax	E-mail
I	Maryanne Langton Richard Lawrence Department of ED/OSERS J.W. McCormack PO and Courthouse Room 232 Boston, MA 02109	617-223-4086	617-223-4573	Maryanne_Langton@ed.gov Richard_Lawrence@ed.gov
II	Anthony Spinelli Department of ED/OSERS 76 Park Place, Room 1236 New York, NY 10007	212-264-4016	212-264-3029	Anthony_Spinelli@ed.gov
III	Anthony Renzi Department of ED/OSERS The Wanamaker Building, Suite 512 100 Penn Square East Philadelphia, PA 19107	215-656-8531	215-656-6188	Anthony_Renzi@ed.gov
IV	Darlo Koldenhoven Department of ED/OSERS 61 Forsyth St. SW, Room 18-T-91 Atlanta, GA 30303	404-562-6330	404-562-6346	Darlo_Koldenhoven@ed.gov
V	Charles Linster Department of ED/OSERS 111 N. Canal, Room 1048 Chicago, Illinois 60606	312-886-8625	312-886-8623	Charles_Linster@ed.gov
VI	Martha Garber Department of ED/OSERS Harwood Center 1999 Bryan St., Suite 2740 Dallas, TX 75201-6817	214-880-4927	214-880-4931	Martha_A._Garber@ed.gov
VII	Geraldine Harris Department of ED/OSERS 10220 N. Executive Hills Boulevard Kansas City, MO 64153-1367	816-880-4102	816-891-0807	Geraldine_Harris@ed.gov
VIII	Marian Fuller Department of ED/OSERS Federal Office Building, Suite 310 1244 Speer Boulevard Denver, CO 80204-3582	303-844-2135	303-844-6269	Marian_Fuller@ed.gov
IX	Joe Pepin Madeline Majete Department of ED/OSERS Federal Office Building, Room 215 50 United Nations Plaza San Francisco, CA 94102	415-437-7852 415-437-7854	415-437-7848	Joe_Pepin@ed.gov Madeline_Majete@ed.gov
X	Diana Koreski Department of ED/OSERS 915 Second Avenue, Room 2848 Seattle, WA 98174-1099	206-220-7840	206-220-7842	Diana_Koreski@ed.gov

Current as of 3/2001 - updated listing available at: http://wdsc.doleta.gov/disability/htmldocs/rsa_regional_coord.html

USDOL One-Stop Disability Coordinators

Region	Contact Person	Phone	Fax	E-mail
I Boston	Jose Melendez or Holly O'Brien USDOL/ETA JFK Federal Bldg, Rm E-350 Boston, MA 02203	617-565-2246	617-565-2229	jmelendez@doleta.gov hobrien@doleta.gov
I New York	Ellyn Spratt-Soualah USDOL/ETA 201 Varick St., Rm 755 New York, NY 10014	212-620-6816	212-337-2144	espratt-soualah@doleta.gov
II Philadelphia Region	Sharon Duckett USDOL/ETA P.O. Box 8796 3535 Market St., Rm 13300 Philadelphia, PA 19104	215-861-5217	215-861-5261	sduckett@doleta.gov
III Atlanta Region	Tom Nelson USDOL/ETA Atlanta Federal Ctr, Rm 6M12 60 Forsyth St., S.W. Atlanta, GA 31313	404-562-2119	404-562-2153	tnelson@doleta.gov
IV Hub Dallas Region	James Howard USDOL/ETA Federal Building, Rm 317 525 Griffin St. Dallas, TX 75203	214-767-2154	214-767-4952	jhoward@doleta.gov
IV Hub Dallas Region	Lynn Kinzer USDOL/ETA 1999 Broadway St., Ste. 1780 Denver, CO 80202-5716	303-844-1654	303-844-1744	lkinzer@doleta.gov
V Hub Chicago Region	Tom Dilisio USDOL/ETA 230 S. Dearborn St., Rm 628 Chicago, IL 60604	312-353-4218	312-353-4474	tdilisio@doleta.gov
V Affiliate Chicago Region	Pam Bouallegue or Fred Homan USDOL/ETA City Center Square 1100 Main St., Suite 1050 Kansas City, MO 64105	816-426-3796 x244 816-426-3796 x247	816-426-2729 816-426-2729	pbouallegue@doleta.gov fhoman@doleta.gov
VI Hub San Francisco Region	Sarah Jang Deirdre Miles-Briscoe USDOL/ETA 71 Stevenson St., Rm 830 P.O. Box 193767 San Francisco, CA 94119-3767	415-975-4668	415-975-4612	sjang@doleta.gov dmiles-briscoe@doleta.gov
VI Affiliate San Francisco Region	Mary Edgar or Rosemary Kafara-Cowen USDOL/ETA 1111 Third Avenue, Ste 900 Seattle, WA 98101-3212	206-553-4386 x8002	206-553-0098 x8018	medgar@doleta.gov rkarafa@doleta.gov

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