Arkansas Workforce Development Board

April 23, 2019
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Embassy Suites
11301 Financial Centre Pkwy
Little Rock, AR 72211
AGENDA

April 23, 2019

ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
FULL BOARD MEETING

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Estimated Time: 2 hours, 12 minutes

Call to Order (1 min) .................................................................................................................. Tom Anderson, Chair

Restructure of Board and Committee Meetings (3 min) ................................................... Arnell Willis, Board Director
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Agenda Item 1: ACTION
Minutes of January 24, 2019 Full Board Meeting (1 min) .............................................. Tom Anderson, Chair

Report of Chairperson (5 mins) ............................................................................................. Tom Anderson, Chair

Report of Director (5 mins) ........................................................................................................ Daryl Bassett, Director
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Report of Staff (5 mins) ........................................................................................................ Kris Jones, Employment Assistance - Assistant Director
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Agenda Item 2: INFORMATIONAL
Report on Board Training and Surveys (5 mins) ..... Kris Jones, Employment Assistance - Assistant Director
Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Report of Committee-

- Strategic Planning Committee Overview (2 mins) ............... Karen Breashears, Committee Chair

Embassy Suites
11301 Financial Centre Parkway
Little Rock, AR 72211
Strategic Committee Agenda Items

Using the Arkansas Workforce Development System (10 mins) ........................................... Mike Rodgers, Business AWDB Member

Agenda Item 3: INFORMATIONAL
One-Stop Certification Process (2 mins) ........................................... Karen Breashears, Committee Chair

Board Discussion-
Workforce Center Visits and Center Certification Improvements (10 min) .... Tom Anderson, Chair

Agenda Item 4: INFORMATIONAL
Strategic Sections of the WIOA State Plan (4 mins) ...................... Karen Breashears, Committee Chair

• Vision and Mission
• Goals (Strategic Plan)
• Assessment Process
• Apprenticeship

Program & Performance Evaluation Committee (2 mins) ....... Abby Houseworth, Committee Chair

Program & Performance Evaluation Committee Agenda Items

Agenda Item 5: ACTION
Introduction to the Arkansas Workforce Development Board Dashboard (5 mins) ........................................ Kris Jones, Employment Assistance - Assistant Director Arkansas Department of Workforce Services

Board Discussion-
Dashboard (15 mins) .............................................................. Abby Houseworth, Committee Chair

Agenda Item 6: ACTION
Introduction to Workforce System Evaluation (5 mins) ........ Abby Houseworth, Committee Chair

Board Discussion-
Evaluation (15 mins) .............................................................. Abby Houseworth, Committee Chair

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
Oversight Committee (10 mins) .................................................. Gan Nunnally, Committee Chair
Agenda Item 7: INFORMATIONAL

Local Workforce Development Board Presentations

Eastern Arkansas Workforce Development Board Presentation (10 mins) ............... Dave Brady, Director
Workforce Development Board of Eastern Arkansas

Little Rock Arkansas Workforce Development Board Presentation (10 mins) ........... WJ Monagle, Director
Little Rock Workforce Development Board

Board Open Discussion (5 mins) .............................................................................. Tom Anderson, Chair

Announcements (2 mins)

Adjournment

NEXT MEETING DATES

July 16, 2019
October 15, 2019
January 21, 2019
April 21, 2019
AGENDA ITEM 1: ACTION: Minutes of the January 24, 2019 Arkansas Workforce Development Board meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: It is recommended that the Arkansas Workforce Development Board approve the minutes of the January 24, 2019 meeting.

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: Minutes of the meetings are attached.
The Arkansas Workforce Development Board convenes the first quarter meeting of 2019 on January 24, 2019, beginning at 10:00 a.m. The meeting was convened at the Crowne Plaza, 201 South Shackleford Road, Little Rock, Arkansas. Chair Tom Anderson presided with the following members present: Governor Asa Hutchinson, Mr. Daryl Bassett, Ms. Karen Breashears, Mr. Lindsay Brown, Mr. Scott Bull, Dr. Charisse Childers, Ms. Marcy Doderer, Mr. Jeff Griffin, Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. Randy Henderson, Ms. Abby Houseworth, Mr. Alan Hughes, Ms. Rebecca Ives, Mr. Alan McClain, Dr. Maria Markham by proxy Ms. Alisha Lewis, Mr. George Nunnally, Mr. Mike Preston, Ms. Cassondra Williams-Stokes, Mr. Paul Rivera was represented by Ms. Candice Lawrence, Dr. Julie Roberson, Mr. Mike Rogers, and Mr. Kelley Sharp.

Mr. Chad Bishop, Ms. Melissa Hanesworth, Mr. Johnny Key, Ms. Holley Little, and Mr. Robert Thorne were unable to attend.

Chair Anderson called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. upon seeing a quorum.

Chairman’s Comments: Chair Tom Anderson announced the four new Board Members recently appointed by Governor Asa Hutchinson and their affiliation, and recognized Arkansas Workforce Development Board Director Arnell Willis, who introduced Governor Asa Hutchinson.

Governor’s Address: Governor Asa Hutchinson thanked the Arkansas Workforce Development Board members for their service, time, and hard work. The governor shared some highlights of his administration including new businesses moving to Arkansas an increase of registered apprenticeship programs from 88 to 117, and an increase of apprentices from 3,500 to more than 6,000. Other highlights include an increase of career learning centers, reducing the number of school districts without access from 54 to 17, the Arkansas Works Initiative, and an update of the on-going government transformation. Both the Arkansas Workforce Development Board and the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services will become a part of the new Arkansas Department of Commerce.

Agenda Item 1 – ACTION – Minutes of the October 9, 2018, Full Board Meeting: Chair Tom Anderson asked if there were any additional corrections or revisions to the October 9, 2018, Full Board meeting minutes.

Hearing none, a motion to accept the October 9, 2018, meeting minutes was made by Mr. Alan Hughes and seconded by Mr. Kelley Sharp. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.
Report of Chairperson: Chair Tom Anderson reminded board members of the board training and orientation at 1:30 p.m. after lunch. He informed members of an upcoming trip with Director Arnell Willis to Washington D.C. to meet with other constituents for the National Governors Association. He noted other state boards are not as far along in their WIOA implementation as Arkansas.

Report of Director: Chair Anderson recognized Mr. Daryl Bassett of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. Mr. Bassett welcomed new members. He spoke about the skills gap; youth ages 16-24 not in school or working, a low unemployment rate of 3.6%, and encouraged new members to reinvigorate current and previous members to be active, creative to make things better.

Agenda Item 2 – INFORMATIONAL – Reports:

Report of Staff: Chair Anderson recognized Board Staff Mr. Kris Jones. Mr. Jones referred board members to Agenda Item 2 in the agenda book for the Report of Staff on the updates of activities and projects of Salesforce, VOCAL, Technical Assistance Training grant, Executive WIOA Roundtable, National Governor’s Association meeting, report of findings from the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) Title 1 Monitoring that took place September 17-21, 2018, and Title 1 Workforce Development Board Performance Negotiation.

Mr. Jones provided an overview of Rapid Response for members and guests. He recognized the Division Chief of the Governor’s Dislocated Worker Task Force, Mr. Jay Bassett, to clarify the requirements for services through the Worker Adjustment Retraining Notification (WARN) Act system. Companies do not have a legal requirement to announce in advance a pending layoff or closure. The exception would be if the WARN notification is triggered, as described by Mr. Bassett.

Mr. Jones provided information on Career Pathways, Salesforce, and the annual report template. Arkansas had three requirements for a narrative report of up to 25 pages to (1) identify waivers (Arkansas has zero), (2) describe the evaluation process used, and (3) describe the customer satisfaction process used by the state. Arkansas has not completed the last two requirements due to waiting on approval of the USDOL Technical Assistance project to build an on-going evaluation process.

A motion to accept the template to use for the annual report as presented by Mr. Kris Jones with no additional revisions was made by Ms. Abby Houseworth, and seconded by Judge Brandon Ellison. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.

Report of Committees:

Strategic Planning Committee: Committee Chair Karen Breashears provided the Strategic Planning Committee report with the assistance of Dr. Charisse Childers. Dr. Childers reported the committee met via teleconference January 10, 2019, and approved the committee minutes of the September 10, 2018. Committee members heard from the Workforce Director Arnell Will on the committee Action Plan updates, Mr. Kris Jones on the USDOL Monitoring visit of September 17-21, 2018; Mr. Mark McManus on Business Services activities update, and Mr.
Eduardo Lemm on Targeted Populations activities update. The next meeting will be April 9, 2019, with the time to be determined.

Hearing no additional questions or comments, Chair Anderson moved to the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee.

Program & Performance Evaluation Committee: Chair Anderson asked Committee Chair Abby Houseworth to provide an update for the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee. Ms. Houseworth reported the committee met via teleconference on January 10, 2019, and approved the September 10, 2018, meeting minutes. Highlights included an update from Mr. Eduardo Lemm on Targeted Populations activities and committee discussion on how to modify the updates on Targeted Populations to increase the outcomes and information for future updates. Mr. Kris Jones also provided an update on the USDOL On-site Monitoring Visit conducted on September 17-21, 2018. The committee will meet again on April 9, 2019, with the time to be determined.

TANF Oversight Committee: Chair Anderson recognized Committee Chair George Nunnally to provide an update on the TANF Oversight Committee. Chair Nunnally reported the committee had a quorum and approved the September 10, 2018, committee meeting minutes via teleconference on January 10, 2019.

Chair Anderson reported the committee heard a report on federal legislation and the impact of the expiration of TANF funding on December 21, 2018. States are allowed to utilize unspent federal funds. Arkansas will continue to operate until legislation is passed. Other updates include State policy changes to the Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program for adjustments of eligibility with a new minimum wage, special program improvement initiatives: Career Connect Subsidized Employment Pilot, new initiatives that have been or will soon be implemented as a result of the Act of 1705 of 2005, and an update on the action plan to aid in monitoring required activities of the committee established in the by-laws, goals and objectives identified in the state plan. The next meeting will be April 9, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

Agenda Item 3 – ACTION – Council Resolution 2019-1 (Stipend Payment): Chair Tom Anderson reminded board members the Council Resolution must be approved by the Board during the first meeting of each calendar year in order to allow board-member stipends in accordance with Arkansas Law.

A motion to approve the Council Resolution 2019-1 (Stipend Payment) as presented with no revisions was made by Ms. Marcy Doderer, seconded by Ms. Karen Breashears, and passed unanimously with none opposed.

Agenda Item 4 – INFORMATIONAL – Division of Services for the Blind Program Update: Chair Anderson recognized Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind Program Administrator Ms. Betsy Barnes to provide board members an overview of the program for individuals being served through the Division of Services for the Blind to make them employable, independent, and advocate for themselves in seven areas of the state. Ms. Barnes
provided a brief overview and video of the three-week program JumpStart, which provides work experience for approximately 30 youth from all over the state in June.

**Agenda Item 5 – INFORMATIONAL – Arkansas College and Career Coach Program:** Chair Anderson recognized Associate Director of the Arkansas Department of Career Education Ms. Sonja Wright-McMurray to provide an overview of the Arkansas College and Career Coach Pilot Program. Career Coaches begin working with students in the 9th grade to assist them in developing a six-year career plan. Ms. Wright-McMurray referred board members to the handout in the agenda book for additional information and locations. Dr. Childers added that the Arkansas Department of Career Education will be working with the Department of Education to develop one plan to ensure all students, regardless of where they live, have a career plan.

**Special Projects:** Chair Anderson recognized TANF Oversight Committee member Ms. Mary Franklin who works for the Department of Human Services Division of County Operations. She provided an overview of the Arkansas Works Medicaid program that serves able-bodied adults 19-64 years of age who have income at or below 138% the federal poverty level.

**Agenda Item 6 – INFORMATIONAL – Business Services Update:** Chair Anderson recognized Mr. Mark McManus to provide an update on Business Services. Mr. McManus reported a workshop was conducted October 30, 2018, at Pulaski Technical College to provide awareness of programs across partners. He informed the board ADWS purchased 35 licenses for the CRM Salesforce to utilize with the Local Workforce Development Areas, core partners, and other additional programs.

**Agenda Item 7 – INFORMATIONAL – Targeted Populations & Training Update:** Chair Anderson recognized Mr. Eddie Lemm to provide an update to board members on outreach efforts to Targeted Populations. Mr. Lemm informed board members that he has also been serving as the Seasonal Migrant Farmer Advocate. Mr. Lemm provided updates that included how he has been able to provide information to this population about WIOA services.

**Board Open Discussion:** Chair Anderson stated the Board usually has a standing agenda item for open floor discussions. Due to the training in the afternoon, Chair Anderson informed board members that he deferred the agenda item for later in the afternoon during the Full Board Orientation and Training for all board members. Board members will have a lot of time together to discuss additional items for discussion.

**Council Resolution 2019-2:** Chair Anderson announced the governor requested a resolution from the Arkansas Workforce Development Board supporting his State Government Transformation Plan. Chair Anderson requested a motion to approve the resolution.

A motion was made for the Arkansas Workforce Development Board to support the transformation plan of the governor by Mr. Gan Nunnally, seconded by Mr. Alan McClain. The motion carried unanimously with none opposed.
**Announcements:** Chair Anderson announced lunch will be provided for board members by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. The board training will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the afternoon in the same room.

Board members are required to complete the packet for board membership. Chair Anderson recognized Board Staff Ms. Rebecca Edwards provide a brief overview of the board membership packet. Ms. Edwards began by reminding board members that they are required to complete the Financial Disclosure statement and file it with the Secretary of State by January 31, 2019. Ms. Edwards stated a notary is onsite to assist in submitting their Financial Disclosure statements for Board Staff to file for them with the Secretary of State. Board members were requested to complete the packet by the end of the day.

Chair Tom Anderson announced the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services mobile workforce center is out front for board members to take a tour during lunch.

Chair Anderson stated the dates of the Full Board meetings will be sent to board members soon. This will allow board members to block off the dates of the Full Board meetings. Once the location and times are determined, they will be sent out at a later date by Board Staff.

**Adjourn:** Chair Tom Anderson adjourned the meeting at 12:23 p.m., on a motion made by Mr. Kelley Sharp, seconded by Ms. Karen Breashears, and carried unanimously with none opposed.

_____________________________________
Tom Anderson, Board Chair  
Arkansas Workforce Development Board

_____________________________________
Arnell Willis, Director  
Workforce Development  
Department of Workforce Services

*Minutes recorded by Rebecca Edwards*  
*Department of Workforce Services Staff*
AGENDA ITEM 2: INFORMATIONAL: Report of Board Training and Survey Results

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014 was landmark legislation designed to improve our nation’s public workforce system.

In the State of Arkansas, the 90th General Assembly passed the Arkansas Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2015 (Arkansas Act 907). Both of these important pieces of legislation outline a workforce development plan for Arkansas.

Periodically, it is necessary for Board members to revisit important aspects of their role as a member of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board. The most recent training session was conducted on January 24, 2019.

One of the outputs from this training session was the distribution of a survey that asked each State Board member to list and rank discussion topic of importance/relevance to them.

A report of the Board Training and the results of the survey will be provided to the Board.
AGENDA ITEM 3: INFORMATIONAL: One-Stop Certification Process

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires State Workforce Boards to establish the objective criteria and procedures to use when certifying its One-Stop Centers, officially called Workforce Centers in Arkansas.

The certification/recertification of all Arkansas Workforce Centers must be completed using the approved Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Application. This application is designed to ensure minimum standards are met and that the Arkansas Workforce Center brand name is protected.

Periodically, the Arkansas Workforce Development Board must review its Arkansas Workforce Center Certification Application to ensure that the certification process leads to the ongoing development of the state’s workforce development system.

Contained herein is the current version of the Arkansas Workforce Center Certification for discussion by the Board.
**APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Contact Person/Title:</td>
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<td>Hours of Operation:</td>
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**Type of Certification:**
- [ ] New Certification
- [ ] Recertification – Date of Last Certification

**Level of Certification:**
- [ ] Comprehensive
- [ ] Affiliate
Purpose of Certification

The goal of the certification process is to develop a world-class workforce center network that meets and exceeds the minimal requirements established by the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). It is critical to make the centers user friendly and attractive, creating a public image that is inviting to jobseekers, education seekers, and employers seeking skills and talent in the local labor markets.

This document brings all the tools approved by the Arkansas Workforce Development Board (AWDB) into a single reference for Local Workforce Development Board members involved in certifying or recertifying local Arkansas Workforce Centers. It is the intent of the Arkansas WDB to provide this instrument as a guide to what is expected, not to provide the means of how it is to be accomplished. Ongoing organizing, implementation, and ensuring continuous improvement of the local certification process are the responsibility of the local WDB.

Included are minimum core standards that must be a part of the local certification/recertification process. In a clear, concise manner this guide documents the Arkansas Workforce Centers Certification Process needed by the local WDB when conducting certification site visits. It also reviews the Quality Assurance Process to be used by the local WDB to ensure minimum standards are met and that the Arkansas Workforce Center brand name is protected. It is expected that each local workforce development area may supplement these core standards with additional locally applicable criteria and performance measures to ensure continuous improvement.

Certification is not just about a one-time designation. It is an ongoing process that keeps all parties involved and achieving at high performance levels. As such, the certification process also allows for achieving excellence standards as continuous improvement planning occurs. This certification process serves as an opportunity to continually re-examine, improve, and revise procedures to ensure that the Arkansas workforce development system is a primary asset in Arkansas’s economic growth and subsequent high-quality of life.

Part I

Introduction

The following are core principles for building and continually improving the Arkansas Workforce Center system:

- High-quality services to employers, with quality expectations defined by business and industry needs.
- High-quality services to individuals, with quality expectations defined by system users.
- Single points of access for a wide array of integrated and coordinated publicly available services.
- Customers who are empowered by information and user-friendly system tools.
- A variety of access points and services that attract a broad range of system users.
- Coordination of funding sources aimed at addressing identified customer priorities.
- Reducing unnecessary duplication of services.
- Increased accountability at all levels.
- Infusion of continuous improvement methods throughout the system.
- Increased overall value of the system through new, creative partnerships.
Historical Background

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the State Workforce Development Board (WDB), in consultation with Chief Elected Officials and Local Workforce Development Boards, to establish objective criteria and procedures to use when certifying its American Job Centers (20 CFR 678.800, 34 CFR 361.800, and 34 CFR 463.800), known in Arkansas as Arkansas Workforce Centers. The certification process establishes a minimum level of quality and consistency of services in Arkansas Workforce Centers across the State. The certification criteria allow States to set standard expectations for customer-focused seamless services from a network of employment, training, and related services that help individuals overcome barriers to obtaining and maintaining employment.

The State Workforce Development Board (WDB) must establish objective criteria and procedures for the Local WDBs to use in evaluating the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement of Arkansas Workforce Centers. Local WDBs must follow procedures and criteria established by the State WDB and certify its workforce centers and its workforce center network at least once every three years (20 CFR 678.800, 34 CFR 361.800, and 34 CFR 463.800); this includes comprehensive, as well as affiliate centers. Local WDBs may establish additional criteria relating to service coordination achieved by the one-stop delivery system.

The State of Arkansas was divided into ten (10) local workforce development areas based on common geographic and economic factors. Each area contains at least one comprehensive service center, and may have other affiliate centers as part of local access networks connected to the comprehensive sites.

This system provides customers a single point of contact for employment, training, education, and supportive services. Under the oversight of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, Arkansas Workforce Centers in communities throughout the State integrate multiple workforce development programs and resources, and make them available to individuals at the “street level” through a user-friendly delivery system.

It was envisioned that the local Arkansas Workforce Centers would be designed by employers for employers, to help find and train qualified workers, and assist qualified workers to find jobs in business and industry. The idea was to simplify the maze of current programs into a comprehensive, streamlined system of services for jobseekers and employers, eliminating the need to visit different locations and understand multiple, complex program requirements.

A significant key to implementing the Arkansas Workforce Center system was the “no wrong door” approach to providing services that encompasses the principles of universal access, integration, co-location, collaboration, and performance as the building blocks to the system. With the “no wrong door” philosophy, when a customer approaches any Arkansas Workforce Center partner requesting assistance with employment and training needs or services in support of the customer’s job search or skill development, the customer is able to access the best mix of services from the combined menu of all partners’ resources, and gain immediate access to the appropriate next step.
The system was designed to be an open marketplace where:

- Employers define the skills and workforce levels they need.
- Jobseekers are armed with information and resources to acquire and document skills they can use in the marketplace.
- Employers, through participation on workforce development boards, are able to hold the system accountable through performance standards, strategic information, and system oversight.
- The Arkansas Workforce Center brand name is widely recognized and valued.
- Public resources are targeted and coordinated toward clearly identified customer needs.

The Future

Workforce development depends heavily upon the vision and leadership of our State’s employers. The Arkansas Workforce Centers will bring about the integration of Federal, State, and local workforce programs, giving employers and workers a chance to connect in real or virtual communities, and access labor market information, education, and training. Progress toward complete implementation of Arkansas’s workforce development vision is ongoing. A crucial element in this is the continued involvement of business, industry, and community leaders.

Ultimately, the workforce development system is designed to increase the employment, retention, occupational skill levels, and earnings of Arkansas's workers through universal access to career management tools and high quality service, while creating a well-trained, more competitive workforce for Arkansas's employers. As a result, these systems will improve the skills of the workforce, increase worker income with resulting increases in family self-sufficiency, reduce welfare dependency, enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the State of Arkansas, and ensure a high quality of life for all Arkansans.

Part II

The State Workforce Development Board’s Vision, Mission, and Philosophy

Vision
Arkansas will have a world-class workforce that is well educated, skilled, and working in order to keep Arkansas’s economy competitive in the global marketplace.

Mission
To promote and support a talent development system in Arkansas that offers employers, individuals, and communities the opportunity to achieve and sustain economic prosperity.

Arkansas’s Talent Development System Philosophy

- We believe that there must be a pipeline of skilled workers for employers and a job for every Arkansan that wants one.
- We believe that the talent development system of Arkansas must be relevant to the labor market in order to meet the needs of employers and jobseekers, and for Arkansas to compete globally.
- We believe that every Arkansan should have opportunity and access to training and education that leads to a career with gainful employment.
- We believe innovation and partnerships centered around local economic priorities maximizes effectiveness and puts the State in the best position to address local and regional workforce needs.
- We believe Arkansas’s workforce system should be a viable resource for business and industry.
- We believe that in order for the talent development system to be the preferred system, the system must be accountable, flexible, and align education and training with business and industry needs.
- We believe that in order for the talent development system to be effective, we must eliminate overlap and duplication of resources and services and streamline investment of funds.

**Vision for the Arkansas Workforce Development Delivery System**

The publicly funded workforce system envisioned by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is quality focused, employer-driven, customer-centered, and tailored to meet the needs of regional economies. It is designed to increase access to, and opportunities for, the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need to succeed in the labor market, particularly those with barriers to employment. It aligns workforce development, education, and economic development programs with regional economic development strategies to meet the needs of local and regional employers, and provides a comprehensive, accessible and high-quality workforce development system. This is accomplished by providing all customers access to high-quality workforce development centers that connect them with the full range of services available in their communities, whether they are looking to find jobs; build basic educational or occupational skills; earn a postsecondary certificate or degree; obtain guidance on how to make career choices; or are businesses and employers seeking skilled workers.

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board adopted a vision for the Arkansas Workforce Development Delivery System at their regular quarterly meeting in October 2015. This vision provides standards for a high quality workforce center including customer service, innovation and service design, and systems integration and high-quality staffing.

Under WIOA, partner programs and entities that are jointly responsible for workforce and economic development, educational, and other human resource programs collaborate to create a seamless customer-focused workforce delivery system that integrates service delivery across all programs and enhances access to the programs’ services. The workforce delivery system includes six core programs (Title I adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs; Title II adult education and literacy programs; Title III Wagner-Peyser program; and Title IV vocational rehabilitation.
program), as well as other required and optional partners identified in WIOA. In Arkansas, these programs are administered by the Arkansas Department of Workforce Services (Titles I & III), the Arkansas Department of Career Education (Title II), Arkansas Rehabilitation Services (Title IV) and Division of Services for the Blind of the Arkansas Department of Human Services (Title IV). Through the Arkansas Workforce Center network, these partner programs and their service providers ensure that businesses and jobseekers—a shared client base across the multiple programs identified above—have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes. Under WIOA, workforce centers and their partners:

- Provide jobseekers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages.
- Provide access and opportunities to all jobseekers, including individuals with barriers to employment, such as individuals with disabilities, to prepare for, obtain, retain, and advance in high-quality jobs and high-demand careers.
- Enable businesses and employers to easily identify and hire skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.
- Participate in rigorous evaluations that support continuous improvement of workforce centers by identifying which strategies work better for different populations.
- Ensure that high-quality integrated data inform decisions made by policy makers, employers, and jobseekers.

The management of the Arkansas workforce delivery system is the shared responsibility of States, local boards, elected officials, the core WIOA partners, other required partners, and workforce center operators. The Departments encourage all of these entities to integrate the characteristics below into their work, including developing state, regional, and local strategic plans; establishing workforce center certification criteria; examining the state, regional, and local footprint of workforce centers; conducting competitions for selecting workforce center operators; developing local Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs); updating other workforce center policies and procedures; and operating and delivering services through the Arkansas Workforce Centers.

**Characteristics of a High-Quality Arkansas Workforce Center**

The characteristics identified below, consistent with the purpose and authorized scope of each of the programs, are designed to reflect elements that contribute to a high-quality workforce delivery system. They demonstrate the spirit and intent of the WIOA, and they will strengthen the successful integration and implementation of partner programs in Arkansas Workforce Centers. For clarity and readability the characteristics have been grouped into three functional categories: (a) Customer Service; (b) Innovation and Service Design; and (c) Systems Integration and High-Quality Staffing.

**Customer Service**

Arkansas Workforce Centers provide excellent customer service to jobseekers, workers and businesses. Meeting the needs of jobseekers, workers and businesses is important in developing thriving communities where all citizens succeed and businesses prosper. High-quality workforce centers:

- **Reflect a Welcoming Environment**
  Reflect a welcoming environment to all customer groups who are served by the workforce centers. All workforce center staff are courteous, polite, responsive, and helpful to jobseekers, businesses, and others
who visit the workforce centers, either in person or by telephone or e-mail. Moreover, workforce center staff are sensitive to the unique needs of individuals with disabilities and are prepared to provide necessary accommodations.

- **Provide Career Services that Empower**
  Provide career services that motivate, support and empower customers, including individuals with disabilities, to make informed decisions based on local and regional economic demand and effectively attain their personal employment and education goals.

- **Value Skill Development**
  Value skill development by assessing and improving each individual’s basic, occupational, and employability skills.

- **Create Opportunities**
  Create opportunities for individuals at all skill levels and levels of experience by providing customers, including those with disabilities, as much timely, labor market, job-driven information and choice as possible related to education and training, careers, and service delivery options, while offering customers the opportunity to receive both skill-development and job placement services.

- **Improve Jobseeker Skills**
  Improve the skills of jobseeker and worker customers. Workforce centers offer access to education and training leading to industry-recognized credentials through the use of career pathways, apprenticeships, and other strategies that enable customers, including those with disabilities, to compete successfully in today’s global economy. They provide businesses with access to the quantity and quality of talent they need and support upskill/backfill strategies that expand job opportunities in the community.

- ** Deliver Quality Business Services**
  Develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist specific businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy. To support area employers and industry sectors most effectively, workforce center staff identify and have a clear understanding of industry skill needs, identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers, and coordinate business services activities across workforce center partner programs, as appropriate. This includes the incorporation of an integrated and aligned business services strategy among workforce center partners to present a unified voice for the workforce center in its communications with employers. Additionally, workforce centers use the forthcoming performance measure(s) on effectiveness in serving employers to support continuous improvement of these services.

**Innovation and Service Design**
Arkansas Workforce Centers reflect innovative and effective service design.
- **Integrate Intake Process**
  Use an integrated and expert intake process for all customers entering the workforce centers. Frontline staff are highly familiar with the functions and basic eligibility requirements of each program, and can appropriately assist customers and make knowledgeable referrals to partner programs, as needed and as appropriate given the authorized scope of the program.

- **Actively Engage Industry Sectors**
  Design and implement practices that actively engage industry sectors and use economic and labor market information, sector strategies, career pathways, Registered Apprenticeships, and competency models to help drive skill-based initiatives.

- **Use Market Driven Principles**
  Balance traditional labor exchange services with strategic talent development within a regional economy. This includes use of market-driven principles and labor market information that help to define a regional economy, its demographics, its workforce and its assets and gaps in skills and resources.

- **Use Innovative Delivery Models**
  Incorporate innovative and evidence-based delivery models that improve the integration of education and training, create career pathways that lead to industry-recognized credentials, encourage work-based learning, and use state-of-the-art technology to accelerate learning and promote college and career success.

- **Offer Virtual and Center-Based Services**
  Include both virtual and center-based service delivery for jobseekers, workers, and employers. Both methods of delivery support the talent needs of the regional economy, although each may better serve different customers with different levels of service needs at any given time. The workforce delivery system can expand its reach by delivering robust virtual services; and increasing the accessibility of those services through community partners, such as libraries, community and faith-based organizations, and other partners.

- **Ensure Access to All Customers**
  Ensure meaningful access to all customers. Workforce centers must be physically and programmatically accessible to all customers, including individuals with disabilities. In so doing, workforce centers use principles of universal design and human-centered design, such as flexibility in space usage; the use of pictorial, written, verbal and tactile modes to present information for customers with disabilities or limited English proficiency; providing clear lines of sight to information for seated or standing users; providing necessary accommodations; and providing adequate space for the use of assistive devices or personal assistants. Workforce centers use assistive technology and flexible business hours to meet the range of customer needs.
Systems Integration and High-Quality Staffing

Arkansas Workforce Centers operate with integrated management systems and high-quality staffing. High-quality workforce centers:

- **Reflect Robust Partnerships**
  Reflect the establishment of robust partnerships among partners. The workforce center operator facilitates an integrated, co-located partnership that seamlessly incorporates services of the core partners and other workforce center partners.

- **Organize Services by Function**
  Organize and integrate services by function (rather than by program); when permitted by a program’s authorizing statute and as appropriate, and by coordinating staff communication, capacity building, and training efforts. Functional alignment includes having workforce center staff who perform similar tasks serve on relevant functional teams, e.g., Skills Development Team, Business Services Team. Service integration focuses on serving all customers seamlessly (including targeted populations) by providing a full range of services staffed by cross-functional teams, consistent with the purpose, scope, and requirements of each program.

- **Use Common Performance Indicators**
  Use common performance indicators to ensure that federal investments in employment and training programs are evidence-based, labor market driven, and accountable to participants and taxpayers. Center performance is transparent and accountable to the communities and regions served; data entry staff are trained and understand the importance of data validation, data collection processes, and the importance of accurate reporting.

- **Offer Highly Trained Career Counselors**
  Staff the center with highly trained career counselors, skilled in advising jobseekers of their options, knowledgeable about local labor market dynamics, aware of available services inside and outside the workforce center, and skilled in developing customers’ skills for employment success.

- **Implement Integrated Policies**
  Develop and implement operational policies that reflect an integrated system of performance, communication, and case management, and use technology to achieve integration and expanded service offerings.

- **Cross-Train and Equip Center Staff**
  Train and equip workforce center staff in an ongoing learning process with the knowledge, skills, and motivation to provide superior service to jobseekers, including those with disabilities, and businesses in an integrated, regionally focused framework of service delivery. Center staff are cross-trained, as appropriate, to increase staff capacity, expertise, and efficiency. Cross-training allows staff from differing programs to understand every program and to share their expertise about the needs of specific populations so that all staff can better serve all customers. Center staff are routinely trained and are
keenly aware as to how their particular function supports and contributes to the overall vision of the local board.

- **Maintain Integrated Case Management**
  Develop and maintain integrated case management systems that inform customer service throughout the customer’s interaction with the integrated system and allow information collected from customers at intake to be captured once. Customer information is properly secured in accordance with personally identifiable information guidelines, and facilitated as appropriate, with the necessary memoranda of understanding or other forms of confidentiality and data sharing agreements, consistent with federal and state privacy laws and regulations. Data, however, would be shared with other programs, for those programs’ purposes, within the workforce system only after the informed written consent of the individual has been obtained, where required.

**Part III**

**Role of the State Workforce Development Board for Certification**

The Arkansas WDB will establish and coordinate policy for use by local workforce development boards in conducting certification and recertification of Arkansas Workforce Centers. This policy will be provided to the local workforce development areas. The Arkansas WDB will ensure that the workforce centers meet the minimum criteria to be designated as a certified Arkansas Workforce Center. The Arkansas WDB will seek to ensure that other State agencies participate fully in the workforce centers, through MOUs, resource sharing, and cost allocation. If the Arkansas WDB decides that these standards are not being met, the local WDB will be notified and a corrective action plan will be requested. If the deficiencies are not corrected in a timely manner, decertification of the center will be recommended to the Governor.

**Role of the Local Workforce Development Board for Certification**

It is the responsibility of the local WDB to select a One-Stop operator through methods described in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. The local WDB is also responsible for certification and recertification of the Arkansas Workforce Centers in their area. The local WDB will use the minimum criteria provided by the Arkansas WDB. The local WDB has the authority to add criteria beyond the State minimum levels. In order to ensure quality, best practices are encouraged throughout the workforce system; any additional criteria should be shared with the other areas and the State Board. The local WDB has the responsibility to monitor the Arkansas Workforce Centers to ensure compliance with the certification/recertification process. If the local WDB determines that these standards are not being met, the One-Stop operator will be notified and a corrective action plan will be requested. The local WDB has the authority to revoke certifications and/or select new operators, if standards are not met and corrective actions of the operator are not successful. The Local WDB will seek to ensure that adequate, attractive, and functional facilities are provided.
Part IV

Arkansas Certification Policy

As a Statewide system, Arkansas Workforce Centers cover metropolitan areas as well as rural areas. Therefore, different types of centers are required in order to meet our customers’ needs, ensure statewide coverage, and provide easy access to services. The overall Arkansas workforce development system is a combination of a wide array of public and private resources and programs. Comprehensive Arkansas Workforce Centers are the cornerstones of information and access to these resources. The comprehensive centers are complemented by affiliate centers that provide broader access but more limited on-site service offering connections back to the comprehensive sites. Centers must:

1. Be strategically located to maximize service to employers and employees.
2. Have enough traffic to warrant operations.
3. Provide on-site services (interpreter, documents, etc.) based on demographic need.
4. Have hours of operation that are based on customer needs and are customer driven.
5. Ensure that uniform procedures are in place to implement priority of service for veterans, individuals with disabilities, English-as-a-Second Language persons, and any other priority populations identified at the federal, state or local level for job placement.
6. Ensure that priority of service for job training opportunities for veterans, individuals with disabilities, English-as-a-Second Language persons, and any other priority populations identified at the federal level is clearly implemented for all U.S. DOL programs such as employment, training, and placement services.

The minimum core standard certification criteria approved by the Arkansas WDB will be used to certify comprehensive centers, as well as affiliate centers. Consistent with the State Plan, the Local WDB will certify each local workforce center. At its discretion, the local WDB may set certification requirements and/or standards that exceed the minimum criteria established by the Arkansas WDB.

As stipulated by federal law, all Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance requirements must be met before a center is eligible to receive the Arkansas Workforce Center certification, or utilize the Arkansas Workforce Center name and logo.

Local WDBs will notify the Arkansas WDB when a certification is issued, renewed or revoked. Marketing activity utilizing the Arkansas Workforce Center name is allowed when the local WDB approves and issues a certification. If a certification is revoked, the affected center must cease using the Arkansas Workforce Center name in all marketing until the identified problems are addressed.

One-Stop Evaluation and Certification Criteria
LWDBs (or the SWDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one-stop operator) must use the Application for Arkansas Workforce Certification approved by the State WDB. The State WDB, in consultation with local Chief Elected Officials and LWDBs, must review and update the one-stop certification criteria every two years as part of the review and modification of the WIOA State Plan.
Local WDBs can establish additional criteria and set higher standards for service coordination than those set by the State. If they do, they must also review and update those additional criteria and standards every two years as part of the WIOA Local Plan update process. Additional criteria must be clearly identified in addenda to the *Application for Arkansas Workforce Center Certification*.

**One-Stop Certification Frequency**

One-stop sites will be evaluated and certified no less than once every three years. Local WDBs (or the State WDB in those cases where Local WDBs are the one-stop operator) may conduct site evaluation and certification as determined appropriate and warranted. In support of the goal of continuous improvement, each certified site will provide an annual report to the State and Local WDB detailing the progress toward reaching higher standards set forth in the certification criteria.

**Certification Teams**

One-stop certification teams will be established by Local WDBs (or the State WDB in those cases where Local WDBs are the one-stop operator) and are responsible for conducting independent and objective evaluations of one-stop sites and making certification recommendations to Local WDBs (or the State WDB in those cases where LWDBs are the one-stop operator).

One-stop certifications teams are comprised of Local WDB members and staff and individuals who represent local partners with specific expertise serving populations with barriers. Certification team members should be free of conflicts of interest. Certification teams may utilize experts from the state level or outside of the local area to ensure evaluations are objective. They may also utilize local experts who represent targeted populations but have no financial ties with the one-stop site.

Note: Per 20 CFR 678.800(a)(3), the State WDB, rather than local one-stop certification teams, must certify one-stop sites if Local WDBs are the one-stop operator.

**Certification Determinations**

One-stop certification teams will render written determinations within 30 days of conducting one-stop site evaluations. There are three possible determinations: (1) certification, (2) provisional certification with a requirement that one-stop operators provide action plans and timelines for meeting certification standards, and (3) not certified or decertified.

Provisional certifications must be accompanied by detailed description of the issues/concerns identified so one-stop operators have sufficient information around which to develop required action plans and timelines. A determination to not certify a one-stop site must be accompanied by a detailed description of the deficiencies, including an explanation as to why the certification team believed the deficiencies could not be addressed or resolved provisionally.

**Appeals**

Operators of comprehensive one-stop sites that are not certified may choose to appeal those determinations, in writing, to the Local WDB (or the State WDB in those cases where Local WDBs are the one-stop operator). Those
appeals will be subject to the processes and procedures outlined in locally-required dispute resolution and appeal policies (or WIOA Title I Policy 5410 in those cases where the State WDB is the certifying body).

Non-Certification
If an existing comprehensive one-stop site is ultimately not certified following a standard or “for-cause” evaluation, the Local WDB and one-stop operator must have a plan to ensure continuity of service between the time a site is not certified and a new one-stop operator is procured.

Types of Centers
WIOA Section 121 (e)(2) states that the one-stop delivery system—
(A) at a minimum, shall make each of the programs, services, and activities described in paragraph one (1) accessible at not less than one physical center in each local area of the State; and
(B) may also make programs, services, and activities described in paragraph one (1) available—
(i) through a network of affiliated sites that can provide one or more of the programs, services, and activities to individuals; and
(ii) through a network of eligible one-stop partners—
(I) in which each partner provides one or more of the programs, services, and activities to such individuals and is accessible at an affiliated site that consists of a physical location or an electronically or technologically linked access point; and
(II) that assures individuals that information on the availability of the career services will be available regardless of where the individuals initially enter the statewide workforce development system, including information made available through an access point described in subclause (I);
(C) may have specialized centers to address special needs, such as the needs of dislocated workers, youth, or key industry sectors or clusters; and
(D) as applicable and practicable, shall make programs, services, and activities accessible to individuals through electronic means in a manner that improves efficiency, coordination, and quality in the delivery of one-stop partner services.

Comprehensive
- Accessible to the general public during regular business days, as well as physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities
- Portal site for electronic access
- Provider of basic and individualized career services, and training services
- Provider of business services
- Representation of core mandated partners (WIOA Titles I-IV)
- Additional related employment and training resources

Affiliate Center
- Accessible to the general public and physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities
- Portal site for electronic access
- Provider of basic career services
- Representation of one or more mandated partners
- Additional related employment and training resources
- Established working relationship as part of an integrated system of Arkansas Workforce Center sites

V. Checklist – System Requirements

The checklists below are to be used by sites and evaluators to help determine the extent to which system requirements are met and services and programs are present. Each application will vary in its responses based upon the level of certification being requested by the site and the agreements of the local partnership to best meet the needs of the locally-determined service delivery model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No – Provide Plan for Compliance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with AWDB Policies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ADA Accessibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of MIS for customer tracking</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memorandum of Understanding with Partners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arkansas Workforce Center and American Job Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brands Used Appropriately</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser Services are Co-Located</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Required Program/Partner Checklist

A. In the column named “On-Site”, indicate programs/partners that are currently located on-site.

B. In the column named “Off-Site Electronic Connection”, make a check mark for the programs/partners that are off-site but their basic career services are made available to customers through an electronic connection. Note: Not all customers will be able to use the electronic connection(s) without help from workforce system staff.

C. For programs/partners that are off-site but an agreement is in place to provide their basic career services in another manner, check the last column and attach a narrative explaining how this is accomplished (use a separate sheet).

D. If N/A, please explain in the far right column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Programs/Partners</th>
<th>On-Site (Average Hours/Week)</th>
<th>Off-Site Electronic Connection</th>
<th>Off-Site Basic Career Services Made Available in Another Manner</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WIOA Title I Adult Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIOA Title I Dislocated Worker</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIOA Title I Youth Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Required Programs/Partners</td>
<td>On-Site (Average Hours/Week)</td>
<td>Off-Site Electronic Connection</td>
<td>Off-Site Basic Career Services Made Available in Another Manner</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wagner-Peyser Title III</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adult Education and Family Literacy Title II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation – Arkansas Career Education, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vocational Rehabilitation – Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Services for the Blind</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title V – Older Americans Act/Senior Community Service Employment Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>Temporary Assistance for Needy Families</td>
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<tr>
<td>Career and Technical Education Programs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trade Adjustment Assistance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jobs for Veterans State Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Services Block Grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing &amp; Urban Development Employment and Training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment Compensation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Chance Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>Job Corps</td>
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<tr>
<td>YouthBuild</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Additional Partners (not mandated)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Programs/Partners</th>
<th>On-Site (Average Hours/Week)</th>
<th>Off-Site Electronic Connection</th>
<th>Off-Site Basic Career Services Made Available in Another Manner</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ticket to Work and Self-Sufficiency</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Business Administration</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SNAP Employment and Training</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
(Please add partners are appropriate) |                              |                               |                                                              |     |
## Career Services Checklists

In the column named “On-Site”, check the basic career, individualized career, and training services that are currently available on-site for all job seeking customers who come into the workforce center or affiliate site.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic Career Services</th>
<th>On-Site (Mark with X)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial assessment of skill levels (including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency), aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach, intake and orientation to the information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility determination</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor exchange services, including job search and placement assistance, career counseling, provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations, provision of information on nontraditional employment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including small employers, which may include providing information and referral to specialized business services not traditionally offered through the one-stop delivery system</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including programs and services within the one-stop delivery system and other workforce development programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including job vacancy listings in labor market areas; information on job skills necessary to obtain the jobs; and information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for such occupations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services and eligible providers of youth workforce investment activities, providers of adult education, providers of career and technical education activities at the postsecondary level, and career and technical education activities available to school dropouts, and providers of vocational rehabilitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, in formats that are usable by and understandable to one-stop center customers, regarding how the local area is performing on the local performance accountability measures and any additional performance information with respect to the one-stop delivery system in the local area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, in formats that are usable by &amp; understandable to one stop center customers, relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, including child care, child support, medical or child health assistance benefits under the supplemental nutrition assistance program, assistance through the earned income tax credit, assistance under State program for temporary assistance for needy families, and other supportive services and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Career Services</td>
<td>On-Site (Mark with X)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transportation provided through funds made available in the local area</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation to Arkansas Workforce Center Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualized Career Services</th>
<th>On-Site (Mark with X)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive and specialized evaluation to identify barriers to employment and employment goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Individualized Employment Plan (IEP)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Counseling</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Individual Counseling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career/ Vocational Planning</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short-Term Pre-employment/ Vocational Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Internships and work experiences</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Workforce preparation activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial literacy activities</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Out-of-Area Job Search and relocation assistance</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-up services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Business Services Checklist**

Check the business services that are available to employers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Services</th>
<th>On-Site (Mark with X)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Establish and develop relationships and networks with large and small employers and their intermediaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Business Services (not mandatory)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service Description</th>
<th>On-Site</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations, on employment-related issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized recruitment events and related services for employers including targeted job fairs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human resource consultation services, e.g., writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks; Developing performance evaluation and personnel policies; Creating orientation sessions for new workers; Honing job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance; Analyzing employee turnover; or Explaining labor laws to help employers comply with wage/hour and safety/health regulations;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of a registered apprenticeship program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listing of Job Orders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicant Referral</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employer Needs Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Insurance Access</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access to Facilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation Services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing and delivering innovative workforce investment services and strategies for area employers, e.g., career pathways, skills upgrading, skill standard development and certification for recognized postsecondary credential or other employer use, apprenticeship, and other effective initiatives for meeting the workforce investment needs of area employers and workers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance in managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities and with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing of business services offered to appropriate area employers, including small and mid-sized employers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting employers with accessing local, State, and Federal tax credits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certification Criteria

The Certification application is one step in the ongoing pursuit of growth, quality improvement, and performance excellence. Attainment of certification provides assurance to the public that the center has achieved a high standard and consistently maintains and improves upon that standard. The following quality standards are the criteria by which Arkansas’s local Workforce Development Board’s assess and certify One-Stop Centers and Affiliates Sites.

Each site is asked to work together with leadership and staff to develop responses to the following:
Rank on a scale of 1 to 5, where the site believes it is in its path toward meeting, or exceeding, the stated standard.

5 = achieved the standard and excelling  
4 = significantly meeting standard with some work yet to do  
3 = have some of the elements in place, some of the time  
2 = making progress but long way to go  
1 = no progress yet

These scores will be used by the Certification Team as benchmarks for the site and help point to both areas of excellence and those in need of improvement. Each local will develop a process to address any standards which are in need of improvement during this initial certification.

I. Provide clear evidence and examples of current status and future plans with strategies and timelines to reach these standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Functional and Programmatic Integration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is critical for Arkansas Workforce Centers and its partners to think and act as an integrated system. Arkansas Workforce Center partners ensure that client services are aligned to common goals and the customer experience is seamless – regardless of funding streams. Each customer is mutually regarded as a shared customer, with all staff and programs operating at the site having a vested stake in that customer’s success. Integration of programs is incorporated into planning, intake, assessment, registration, and service processes, information sharing, resource decisions, actions, results, and analyses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Functional and Programmatic integration.

☐ 5  ☐ 4  ☐ 3  ☐ 2  ☐ 1

Describe your site’s approach to integrated service delivery and the use of functional teams to deliver career services to all customers.

Include a detailed diagram of customer flow, services available, assessment and referrals, and describe how the MIS system is used to facilitate shared customer management across partner programs. Reference it as Appendix A.

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.
Performance Accountability

Results and outcomes for the public investment in Arkansas Workforce Centers are essential to the system's relevance. The effectiveness of Arkansas Workforce Centers for employers and jobseekers is evident in system performance and service delivery decisions are based on data. On an ongoing basis, customer data from one-stop partners and regional economic data is collected, analyzed, and shared with all workforce system staff and community stakeholders. Plans for improvement, enhancement, or adjustment are established and acted upon.

Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Performance Accountability.

☐ 5  ☐ 4  ☐ 3  ☐ 2  ☐ 1

Describe how you measure, analyze, review, and improve system performance through the use of data and information.

Describe how this data is shared with staff and stakeholders and what changes have resulted from use of data. How has data been used (examples) to improve services?

What methods are in place for staff to provide feedback? How do you incorporate staff feedback as part of continuous quality improvement? How are staff informed how their feedback was reviewed and any action taken from their feedback? What metrics are used to show improvement and success?

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

Service Provision, Universal Access, and Outreach

Improved availability, a welcoming atmosphere, inclusive settings, and high quality customer service benefit all customers. Arkansas Workforce Centers extend services and outreach not just to individuals who walk in the door, but also to those who have become disengaged in the labor force. Integrated, quality services are provided to all customers within the center and via technology through online or phone access. Principles of universal design are considered, which designs inclusive space and materials to be available to individuals regardless of their range of abilities, mobility, age, language, learning style, intelligence, or educational level.

Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Service Provision to all customers including Services, Access, and Outreach to populations with barriers.

☐ 5  ☐ 4  ☐ 3  ☐ 2  ☐ 1
Describe how the site works cooperatively with WIOA core partners to provide quality services to all customers. Describe your outreach to populations with barriers in the community and relationship with core program and community partners to effectively serve them.

Provide evidence that basic ADA requirements have been met, including processes to provide reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

Describe initiatives or strategies in developing universal access and provide tangible evidence of implementation or solution driven plan development. Address the following four specific areas of access:

1. Physical: Architectural or building
2. Information: all paper, printed or posted materials
3. Digital: software, web-based programs and alternatives to print
4. Communication: verbal, non-verbal access for services, phone and other

Describe your wireless internet infrastructure.

How are the needs of populations with barriers met through staff-assisted and other means?

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

## Customer Satisfaction

Performance and value are ultimately judged by customers – businesses and jobseekers. Customer-centered design relies upon satisfying customer needs, identifying shortcomings and responding accordingly on a timely and ongoing basis. Tools to obtain feedback are appropriate for each customer’s use and take into consideration factors including literacy levels, use of technology, disability, and language.

Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Customer Satisfaction.

☐ 5  ☐ 4  ☐ 3  ☐ 2  ☐ 1
Describe how the voice of the customer is heard and how your site incorporates both jobseeker and business customer feedback as part of continuous quality improvement? How are the voices of populations with barriers heard and brought to the table when designing services and facilities? How do you inform customers of how their feedback was reviewed and any action taken from their feedback? What metrics are used to show improvement and success?

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

Staff Competence and Staff Training Participation

Professional development is a key feature in order to ensure that staff are aware of the implications of recent evidence-based research and can implement the latest policies and procedures established at the local, State and Federal levels. Also of vital importance is the use of labor market information by staff to better inform customers’ career and training decision-making. The investment in staff development is substantial, ongoing, and focused on cross-training with partner programs, overall skill development, and use of labor market information. Every member of the one-stop staff has the ability and authority to meet customer needs, either directly or, where appropriate, by helping the customer make the right connections to the expertise he or she seeks. Participation in one-stop sponsored training is required.

Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Staff Competence and Staff Training Participation.

☐ 5  ☐ 4  ☐ 3  ☐ 2  ☐ 1

How are staff and leadership trained and cross-trained on an ongoing basis to stay current on programs and services? How is this tracked to ensure that all staff participate?

How do you actively engage staff of all programs – Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser, TANF, ABE, DVR, Perkins, etc. – in design of services, action planning and analysis of indicators and trends? How are all staff informed of progress towards site performance and goals?

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

Partnership

The one-stop system is built upon a foundation of partners linked together to deliver a comprehensive array of services and reach the shared outcomes of employment, education, skills gains, and earnings. All core and
required one-stop partners are present at the site and invested in the development and implementation of service delivery to connect customers to resources.

| Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Partnership. |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| ☐ 5                     | ☐ 4            | ☐ 3            | ☐ 2            | ☐ 1            |

Describe how the partnerships function at the site and the roles of each core partner from Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, Title II - Adult Basic Education, Title III - Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV - Vocational Rehabilitation.

Describe how the partnerships function at the site with other required partners from postsecondary Career and Technical Education (Perkins Act), CSBG, HUD, Job Corps, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Re-entry programs, SCSEP, TAA, TANF, UI, VETS, and YouthBuild.

Describe how the site is linked to other partners beyond the site to ensure alignment with community and regional strategies. Please give examples of how this functions and the results for customers.

Describe how leadership works together to set the vision and goals for the site and then implements service strategies to achieve shared objectives.

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

**Employer Engagement**

Business is one of our primary customers and one-stop partners work collaboratively to deliver value-added services and eliminate duplication. Business services staff from all one-stop partners have a comprehensive understanding of labor market conditions, economic development activities, skill needs of the workforce and are connected to regional and local business partnership activities and sector strategies. Employers’ human capital needs are communicated to and acted upon by the workforce system. Business services are coordinated to the maximum extent possible to limit duplication and streamline the employer experience.

| Check the box where you think the site is with regard to Employer Engagement. |
|-------------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| ☐ 5                     | ☐ 4            | ☐ 3            | ☐ 2            | ☐ 1            |
Describe how partners work to deliver seamless business services. How do business services staff use and share labor market information? What strategies are used to involve employers in identifying skill gaps and developing solutions to meet their workforce needs?

Describe how regional and local sector strategies are used to target services and resources to focus workforce efforts on investments and improve outcomes.

How are career pathways and training modalities such as industry-recognized credentials, apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and other work-based learning opportunities aligned with employers’ needs and marketed to support talent development?

Please list any best practices to highlight and share for continuous improvement.

| Justification and Qualifying Statements |
AGENDA ITEM 4: INFORMATIONAL: WIOA State Plan Revision

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: One of the functions of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, under Arkansas Annotated 15-4-3706(1), is to assist the Governor in “the development, implementation, and modification of the state workforce development plan.”

WIOA State Plans are separated into strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning. The strategic elements include economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These elements drive the required vision and goals for the State’s workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

The Strategic Planning Committee Chair is seeking committee members who will direct staff in updating and revising the following strategic elements of the Plan:

- Vision and Mission
- Goals (Strategic Plan)
- Assessment Process
- Apprenticeship

Each committee member will be asked to provide updates and/or progress reports at subsequent meetings of both the Strategic Committee and the Board.

The required Strategic Elements of the State Plan are included herein.
Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

2/18/2016

OMB Control Number 1205-0522
Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

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OVERVIEW

Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Governor of each State must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan to the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor that outlines a four-year strategy for the State's workforce development system. The publicly-funded workforce development system is a national network of Federal, State, regional, and local agencies and organizations that provide a range of employment, education, training, and related services and supports to help all job-seekers secure good jobs while providing businesses with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. States must have approved Unified or Combined State Plans in place to receive funding for core programs. WIOA reforms planning requirements, previously governed by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), to foster better alignment of Federal investments in job training, to integrate service delivery across programs and improve efficiency in service delivery, and to ensure that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. One of WIOA's principal areas of reform is to require States to plan across core programs and include this planning process in the Unified or Combined State Plans. This reform promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs within each State and fosters development of more comprehensive and integrated approaches, such as career pathways and sector strategies, for addressing the needs of businesses and workers. Successful implementation of many of these approaches called for within WIOA requires robust relationships across programs. WIOA requires States and local areas to enhance coordination and partnerships with local entities and supportive service agencies for strengthened service delivery, including through Unified or Combined State Plans.

Options for Submitting a State Plan

A State has two options for submitting a State Plan— a Unified State Plan or a Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for the core programs. The six core programs are—

- the Adult program (Title I of WIOA),
- the Dislocated Worker program (Title I),
- the Youth program (Title I),
- the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), and
- the Wagner-Peyser Act program (Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III),
- the Vocational Rehabilitation program (Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by Title IV).

Alternatively, a State may submit a Combined State Plan that meets the requirements described in this document and outlines a four-year strategy for WIOA's core programs plus one or more of the Combined State Plan partner programs. When a State includes a Combined State Plan partner program in its Combined State Plan, it need not submit a separate plan or application for that particular program. If included, Combined State Plan partner programs are subject to the "common planning elements" (Sections II-IV of this document) where specified, as well as the program-specific requirements for that program where such planning requirements exist separately for the program. The Combined State Plan partner programs are—
Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)

Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))

Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))

Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (Activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))

Jobs for Veterans State Grants Program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)

Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)

Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))

Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development

Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))

Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

How State Plan Requirements Are Organized.
The major content areas of the Unified or Combined State Plan include strategic and operational planning elements. WIOA separates the strategic and operational elements to facilitate cross-program strategic planning.

The Strategic Planning Elements section includes analyses of the State's economic conditions, workforce characteristics, and workforce development activities. These analyses drive the required vision and goals for the State's workforce development system and alignment strategies for workforce development programs to support economic growth.

The Operational Planning Elements section identifies the State's efforts to support the State's strategic vision and goals as identified in the Strategic Planning Elements section. This section ensures that the State has the necessary infrastructure, policies, and activities to meet its strategic goals, implement its alignment strategy, and support ongoing program development and coordination. Operational planning elements include:

- State Strategy Implementation,

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1 States that elect to include employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.) under a Combined State Plan would submit all other required elements of a complete CSBG State Plan directly to the Federal agency that administers the program. Similarly, States that elect to include employment and training activities carried by the Department of Housing and Urban Development that are included would submit all other required elements of a complete State Plan for those programs directly to the Federal agency that administers the program.
• State Operating Systems and Policies,
• Assurances,
• Program-Specific Requirements for the Core Programs, and
• Program-Specific Requirements for the Combined State Plan partner programs.
(These requirements are available in a separate supplemental document, Supplement to the Workforce and Innovation Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements. The Departments are not seeking comments on these particular requirements).

When responding to Unified or Combined State Plan requirements, States must identify specific strategies for coordinating programs and services for target populations. While discussion of and strategies for every target population are not expected, States must address as many as are applicable to their State’s population and look beyond strategies for the general population.

**Paperwork Reduction Act:** The Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (PRA) provides that an agency may not conduct, and no person is required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Public reporting burden for this information collection is estimated to be 86 hours per state; including time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Responding to this collection is required to obtain or retain the Federal grant benefit. In addition, responses to this information collection are public, and the agencies offer no assurances of confidentiality. Send comments regarding the burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Workforce Investment, and reference OMB control number 1205-0522 Note: Please do not return the completed plan to this address.

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² Target populations include individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in WIOA Sec. 3, as well as veterans, unemployed workers, and youth.
I. WIOA STATE PLAN TYPE

Unified or Combined State Plan. Select whether the State is submitting a Unified or Combined State Plan. At a minimum, a State must submit a Unified State Plan that covers the six core programs.

☐ Unified State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs.

☐ Combined State Plan. This plan includes the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Wagner-Peyser Act, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, and Vocational Rehabilitation programs, as well as one or more of the optional Combined State Plan partner programs identified below. Indicate which Combined State Plan partner program(s) the State is electing to include in the plan.

- Career and technical education programs authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006 (20 U.S.C. 2301 et seq.)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.)
- Employment and Training programs under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (programs authorized under section 6(d)(4) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(d)(4)))
- Work programs authorized under section 6(o) of the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008 (7 U.S.C. 2015(o))
- Trade Adjustment Assistance for Workers programs (activities authorized under chapter 2 of title II of the Trade Act of 1974 (19 U.S.C. 2271 et seq.))
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants program (programs authorized under 38, U.S.C. 4100 et. seq.)
- Unemployment Insurance programs (programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws in accordance with applicable Federal law)
- Senior Community Service Employment program (programs authorized under title V of the Older Americans Act of 1965 (42 U.S.C. 3056 et seq.))
- Employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Community Services Block Grant (Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant Act (42 U.S.C. 9901 et seq.))
- Reintegration of Ex-Offenders program\(^3\) (programs authorized under section 212 of the Second Chance Act of 2007 (42 U.S.C. 17532))

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\(^3\) The Reentry Employment Opportunities program (REO), formerly the Reintegration of Ex-Offenders Program (RExO), is referred to by its original name (RExO) in this document. This name change is a recent decision that was not incorporated into WIOA.
II. STRATEGIC ELEMENTS

The Unified or Combined State Plan must include a Strategic Planning Elements section that analyzes the State's current economic environment and identifies the State's overall vision for its workforce development system. The required elements in this section allow the State to develop data-driven goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce and to identify successful strategies for aligning workforce development programs to support economic growth. Unless otherwise noted, all Strategic Planning Elements apply to Combined State Plan partner programs included in the plan as well as to core programs.

(a) Economic, Workforce, and Workforce Development Activities Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions, economic development strategies, and labor market in which the State's workforce system and programs will operate.

(1) Economic and Workforce Analysis

(A) Economic Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the economic conditions and trends in the State, including sub-State regions and any specific economic areas identified by the State. This must include—

(i) Existing Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which there is existing demand.

(ii) Emerging Demand Industry Sectors and Occupations. Provide an analysis of the industries and occupations for which demand is emerging.

(iii) Employers' Employment Needs. With regard to the industry sectors and occupations identified in (A)(i) and (ii), provide an assessment of the employment needs of employers, including a description of the knowledge, skills, and abilities required, including credentials and licenses.

(B) Workforce Analysis. The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the current workforce, including individuals with barriers to employment, as defined in section 3 of WIOA. This population must include individuals with disabilities among other groups in the State and across regions identified by the State. This includes—

(i) Employment and Unemployment. Provide an analysis of current employment and unemployment data, including labor force participation rates, and trends in the State.

(ii) Labor Market Trends. Provide an analysis of key labor market trends, including across existing industries and occupations.

(iii) Education and Skill Levels of the Workforce. Provide an analysis of the educational and skill levels of the workforce.

(iv) Skill Gaps. Describe apparent 'skill gaps'.

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4 Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

5 Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth, and others that the State may identify.
(2) **Workforce Development, Education and Training Activities Analysis.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include an analysis of the workforce development activities, including education and training in the State, to address the education and skill needs of the workforce, as identified in (a)(1)(B)(iii) above, and the employment needs of employers, as identified in (a)(1)(A)(iii) above. This must include an analysis of—

(A) **The State’s Workforce Development Activities.** Provide an analysis of the State’s workforce development activities, including education and training activities of the core programs, Combined State Plan partner programs included in this plan, and required and optional one-stop delivery system partners.

(B) **The Strengths and Weaknesses of Workforce Development Activities.** Provide an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the workforce development activities identified in (A), directly above.

(C) **State Workforce Development Capacity.** Provide an analysis of the capacity of State entities to provide the workforce development activities identified in (A), above.

(b) **State Strategic Vision and Goals.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State’s strategic vision and goals for developing its workforce and meeting employer needs in order to support economic growth and economic self-sufficiency. This must include—

(1) **Vision.** Describe the State’s strategic vision for its workforce development system.

(2) **Goals.** Describe the goals for achieving this vision based on the analysis in (a) above of the State’s economic conditions, workforce, and workforce development activities. This must include—

(A) Goals for preparing an educated and skilled workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations.

(B) Goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

(3) **Performance Goals.** Using the table provided in Appendix 1, include the State’s expected levels of performance relating to the performance accountability measures based on primary indicators of performance described in section 116(b)(2)(A) of WIOA. (This Strategic Planning element only applies to core programs.)

(4) **Assessment.** Describe how the State will assess the overall effectiveness of the workforce development system in the State in relation to the strategic vision and goals stated above in

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6 Required one-stop partners: In addition to the core programs, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American programs, HUD Employment and Training programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans’ Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans’ Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs program, Senior Community Service Employment program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) (unless the Governor determines TANF will not be a required partner), Trade Adjustment Assistance programs, Unemployment Compensation programs, and YouthBuild.

7 Workforce development activities may include a wide variety of programs and partners, including educational institutions, faith- and community-based organizations, and human services.

8 Individuals with barriers to employment include displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals, or homeless children and youths; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers; eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers (as defined at section 167(i) of WIOA and Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 35-14); Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program; single parents (including single pregnant women); and long-term unemployed individuals.

9 Veterans, unemployed workers, and youth and any other populations identified by the State.
sections (b)(1), (2), and (3) and how it will use the results of this assessment and other feedback to make continuous or quality improvements.

(c) **State Strategy.** The Unified or Combined State Plan must include the State's strategies to achieve its strategic vision and goals. These strategies must take into account the State's economic, workforce, and workforce development, education and training activities and analysis provided in Section (a) above. Include discussion of specific strategies to address the needs of populations provided in Section (a).

1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7). "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23).

2) Describe the strategies the State will use to align the core programs, any Combined State Plan partner programs included in this Plan, required and optional one-stop partner programs, and any other resources available to the State to achieve fully integrated customer services consistent with the strategic vision and goals described above. Also describe strategies to strengthen workforce development activities in regard to weaknesses identified in section II(a)(2).
AGENDA ITEM 5: ACTION: WIOA Dashboard Presentation

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: One of the functions of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, under Arkansas Annotated 15-4-3706 (3), is to assist the Governor in “the development and continuous improvement of the state workforce development system.” This function has been assigned to the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee.

As such, this Committee has requested the development of a WIOA Dashboard that is designed to provide information whereby recommendations for improvement in the state’s workforce system can be made.

The attached WIOA Dashboard was presented to the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee at its April 9, 2019 meeting. This committee completed its review and recommends approval of the WIOA Dashboard by the State Board.
This chart presents the WIOA service mix that exists in each local area as keyed in the Management Information System.
This chart presents the Employment Services service mix that exists in the state as keyed in the Management Information System.
This chart presents the WIOA Title I Business Services service mix for New Engagement (non-repeat business) that exists in each local area as keyed in the Management Information System.
This chart presents the WIOA Title III, Employment Services, Business Services service mix that exists in the state as keyed in the Management Information System.
Repeat Employer Engagement per Arkansas LWDB
October 1 to December 31, 2019

This chart presents the WIOA Title I Business Services service mix for Repeat Employer Engagement that exists in each local area as keyed in the Management Information System.
Repeat Employer Engagement by Service
October 1 to December 31, 2019

- Available One-Stop Services
- Available Training Services
- Customized Labor Market Information
- FCIL Contact
- General Marketing Information
- Industry awareness campaigns
- Job Fairs
- Job Order Activities
- Job Seeker Outreach Activities
- Job Service Activities
- Joint partnership w/ schools & other educ programs
- Layoff Planning Assistance
- Linkages to Community Resources
- On-the-Job Training Opportunities
- Outreach to targeted groups
- Participate in community based strategic planning
- Partnerships to identify and address WF challenges

This chart presents the WIOA Title III, Employment Services, Business Services service mix for employers that have received services in prior quarters as keyed in the Management Information System.
Work Based Learning Offered by Employer
October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2019

This chart presents the WIOA Title I Business Services for Work Based Learning offered in each local area, as keyed in the Management Information System.
The area shaded grey represents the estimated minimum expenditure amount to avoid recapture (Recapture Minimum) based on the remaining life of the funds. The blue area estimates an amount that, if exceeded, would outpace current funding (Outspending Maximum). Ideally, the dark blue line (Total Expenditures) for each local area will lie in the blue area, below the level of expenditures that outpace funding and above the minimum pace to avoid recapture.

Local area lines that lie in the grey area may be at risk of recapture due to low-expenditures. North Central, Southeast, and Southwest.
The blue area estimates an amount that, if exceeded, would outpace current 2-year funding for administrative costs, which is limited to 10% on the local level (Maximum Admin in Year 2). Ideally, the dark orange line (Total Cumulative Admin) for each local area will lie in the blue area, below the level of expenditures that outpace funding.

Local area lines that lie outside the blue area may be at risk of exceeding their administrative limit at grant-end. **West Central**
Local areas must expend at least 20% of Youth funds on Work Experience. The area shaded green represents the minimum required expenditure amount to meet this requirement based on current funding levels.

Local area lines that lie within the greed area may be at risk of not meeting the 20% Work Experience rate. Eastern, North Central, Southeast, Southwest, and Western
Local areas must expend at least 75% of Youth funds on Out-of-School. The area shaded green represents the minimum required expenditure amount to meet this requirement based on current funding levels.

Local area lines that lie within the greed area may be at risk of not meeting the 75% Out-of-School rate. All local areas
Local areas may use up to 20% of combined Adult and Dislocated Worker funding for Incumbent Worker Training. No local areas are currently providing Incumbent Worker Training as of the time of this report.
The area shaded grey represents the estimated minimum expenditure amount to avoid recapture (Recapture Minimum) based on the remaining life of the funds. The blue area estimates an amount that, if exceeded, would outpace current funding (Outspending Maximum). Ideally, the dark blue line (Total Expenditures) for each local area will lie in the blue area, below the level of expenditures that outpace funding and above the minimum pace to avoid recapture.
The blue area estimates an amount that, if exceeded, would outpace current 2-year funding for administrative costs, which is limited to 10% on the local level (Maximum Admin in Year 2). Ideally, the dark orange line (Total Cumulative Admin) for each local area will lie in the blue area, below the level of expenditures that outpace funding.

Local area lines that lie outside the blue area may be at risk of exceeding their administrative limit at grant-end. Currently, no local areas are at risk.
AGENDA ITEM 6: ACTION: Workforce System Evaluation

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) requires each state to conduct evaluations and research projects on activities under WIOA core programs. Specifically, each state’s WIOA State Plan is required to include information related to evaluation and research projects to be conducted in order to meet this requirement. These evaluation and research projects must be designed to enhance the ongoing development of and continuous improvement of the state workforce system.

One of the functions of the Arkansas Workforce Development Board, under Arkansas Annotated 15-4-3706 (3), is to assist the Governor in “the development and continuous improvement of the state workforce development system.” This function has been assigned to the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee. Although the Governor, or the “state” is responsible for administering the evaluation, input from the Arkansas Workforce Development Board assist in that process and is required to be completed in conjunction with state and local workforce development boards.

The attached information was presented to the Program Performance and Evaluation Committee at its April 9, 2019 meeting. This committee completed its review and recommends approval of the Workforce System Evaluation Plan presented by Staff.
Evaluating Workforce Programs: A Guide to What Policymakers Need to Know to Structure Effective, User-Friendly Evaluations

by Kathy Krepcio, William Mabe, and Charyl Staci Yarbrough

This brief discusses the value and purpose of program evaluations, highlights different evaluation tools and techniques, and illustrates how policymakers and program managers can structure and implement evaluations of workforce development programs.

Introduction

With nearly 14 million Americans unemployed and growing competition from low-cost, high-skill workforces abroad, improving education, training, and employment outcomes for job seekers should be a top priority for policymakers, funders, and training providers. In an era of declining budgets, lawmakers and funding organizations are, more than ever, looking to allocate funds to workforce programs and practices that can provide evidence of effectiveness at a reasonable cost. Program evaluation is the means for assessing program effectiveness and it can benefit policymakers and funders in a number of important ways:

- Learning what works and what does not work for diverse groups of people;
- Understanding what the program has accomplished, why, and at what cost;
- Documenting effective practices for replication internally and elsewhere;
- Identifying barriers to success and program weaknesses;
- Getting evidence needed to take early corrective action; and
- Making multidimensional evidence-based information just as available as anecdotes and stories.

In an effort to foster the more widespread use of program evaluations, the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University has prepared this guide for a wide variety of public and nonprofit organizations that implement publicly and privately funded workforce development programs serving a diverse array of job seekers. The guide seeks to explain evaluation tools and techniques in a straightforward manner, debunk some evaluation myths, and demonstrate how policymakers and program managers can structure effective, user-friendly evaluations of workforce development programs that best fit their unique program needs.
What is Evaluation?

Evaluation is the systematic and objective process by which a researcher assesses the quality, effectiveness, or value of an “evaluand,” defined as the subject of evaluation, such as an organization, program, policy, or activity (rather than a person). It is important to consider each of the pieces of this definition:

- The process is systematic because it follows established rules of scientific inquiry.
- The process is objective in the sense that any neutral observer would arrive at the same conclusions about the program if she used the same methods as the evaluator. Moreover, because the evaluator, unlike program implementers, lacks any stake in the program, he or she can be thought of as the voice of program participants, attempting to provide a neutral assessment of how well the program meets the needs of those affected by it.

- A researcher may assess the quality of an evaluand by studying how the organization, program, policy, or activity operates.
- Effectiveness relates to whether the evaluand achieves the goal it seeks to achieve.
- A value assessment places the effectiveness of the evaluand in the context of its costs and refers to the extent to which the evaluand is cost effective.

What Evaluation is Not

Although the following activities are important and may be necessary for an evaluand to be successful, they are analytically distinct from evaluation.

- **Evaluation is not auditing.** Audits are related to evaluation because they are both implemented to support program implementation and organizational process. However, the core purpose and strategies for each are quite different. Audits are primarily intended to verify the accuracy and truthfulness of information. Evaluations provide insight on best practices for utilizing organizational capacity and determine if an evaluand’s efforts are yielding the intended results.

- **Evaluation is not a needs assessment.** A needs assessment is often necessary for any program or policy to be effective because it enables the designers to identify the goals that the policy or program should target. Needs assessment is, therefore, prior to evaluation.

- **Evaluation is not customer satisfaction.** Participants in programs or individuals affected by a policy may have opinions of the quality or effectiveness of the program or policy, and the evaluator should take this information into account when conducting an evaluation. However, a thorough program evaluation must consider far more than just the degree to which participants are satisfied with a program or policy, including whether the program or policy is effective at achieving its goals, the extent to which it is well run, etc.

- **Evaluation is not technical assistance.** The individuals who are implementing a program must have the knowledge and competence to implement the program successfully. The role of the evaluator is to assess how well these individuals implement the program. Although the recommendation sections of evaluation reports will necessarily convey information for technical assistance, the evaluator’s principal role is to convey this information, not to guide the implementation of the recommendations.
Evaluation Myths 101

There are many misconceptions about evaluation and these misconceptions often deter people who run programs or implement policies that might benefit from evaluation from engaging in it. There are four principal evaluation myths.

Myth #1. Evaluation is a Gotcha. Evaluation is not a search for what is wrong with a policy or program. Unfortunately, this myth has arisen because some evaluators have adopted a “gotcha” approach. Properly conducted, an evaluation is a partnership between program and evaluator in which the evaluator engages in a process of inquiry that helps the program identify what about it works well and what about it needs to be improved. Although the evaluator must necessarily look for aspects of the program that detract from its value, the spirit of this search is not rooted in an intent to “show up” the program, but rather to identify how it can best be implemented to the benefit of the program’s constituency.

Myth #2. Evaluation cannot establish the effectiveness of all programs. Some program implementers contend that their programs are highly contextual and for this reason their effects cannot be measured. Even if all of the disparate effects of an initiative cannot be measured, the core intended effects of any initiative should be clear and measurable. Vague or ill-conceived program goals will always be difficult to measure and evaluate. Poorly defined goals reflect on poor program development rather than on the utility of evaluation as a tool for assessing program effectiveness. In fact, one of the benefits of conducting an evaluation is that it can help a program clarify the outcomes it aims to achieve. Moreover, an evaluation that assesses goals and incorporates context can be put in place for any program that has a goal or set of goals that are clear and measurable.

Myth #3. Evaluation is just about numbers. While many evaluations do collect numerical data (for example, number of people placed in employment), they are not always just about the numbers. For example, a process evaluation can help uncover the context in which the program is operating and can help to shed light on how the program is working. At the other extreme, however, some evaluators believe that they do not need to know any details about the program, and that all they need to evaluate a program is the numeric program data. This approach to evaluation is misguided. An evaluation can only be effective and of benefit to program managers if the evaluator understands the context of the program, the population that the program is serving, and the goals that it aims to achieve. The evaluator cannot evaluate the quality of program implementation and overall program effectiveness without this qualitative data.

Myth #4. Evaluations must be complex to be successful. Although some evaluation methodologies are highly complex, involving experimental or quasi-experimental designs and cutting-edge statistical analysis techniques, many others are more straightforward and employ simpler techniques. The sophistication of the methods used depends on the nature of the program being evaluated and the goal of the evaluation. Depending on the program being evaluated, qualitative techniques may, for example, generate more useful information than the most sophisticated statistical models.
Why Should I Evaluate?

There are many reasons to conduct program evaluations of workforce programs. Although at the most basic level, a program may engage in evaluation because the funder — whether a foundation or government agency — requires it, the true value of evaluation lies in allowing the workforce program to establish how effective it has been at serving job seekers. By applying a systematic analytical process, evaluations can generate credible evidence of the effectiveness of a workforce program. By establishing a program’s net impact and overall effectiveness, evaluation can be vital to building a program’s sustainability.

As important, evaluation can play a critical role in helping to make workforce programs as effective as they can be. Evaluation can benefit workforce programs by:

- Learning what works and what does not work for diverse groups of program participants;
- Understanding what the program has accomplished, why, and at what cost;
- Documenting effective practices for replication internally and elsewhere;
- Identifying barriers to success and program weaknesses;
- Getting evidence needed to take early corrective action; and
- Making multidimensional evidence-based information just as available as anecdotes and stories.

In other words, systematic evaluations can help program staff to identify the components of their programs that are effective and working well, point out aspects of programs that detract from program success, and help to pinpoint barriers to program success. As important, an evaluation can uncover the barriers — programmatic, environmental, or participant-related — that may limit a program’s effectiveness. By generating all of this knowledge, evaluations give rise to recommendations for how policymakers and managers can improve their programs.

Types of Evaluations

Systematically conducted evaluations can generally be divided into two different categories: process evaluations designed to improve the implementation of programs and identify the factors that are contributing to a program’s success or failure, and outcome evaluations that seek to measure how effective the program is at achieving its objectives. These evaluations can make use of quantitative or qualitative data and are usually conducted on a one-time basis (for a designated period of time). Other types of evaluations that will not be discussed in this brief include performance monitoring (such as completing quarterly progress reports, reviewing program metrics such as number of participants served compared to targeted numerical goals, etc.) and cost-benefit studies (such as analyzing program financial data to address how much the program and/or its components cost, especially in relation to the benefits being produced by the program).

Process Evaluations

Process evaluations are generally established to understand what is happening in a program and how it is producing the results or outcomes it has been set up to achieve (for example, employment at wages above the minimum wage). As demonstrated in Table 1, a process evaluation can involve the collection of data through various modes, including focus groups with stakeholders or program participants, surveys of participants, interviews with key stakeholders and project staff, as well as participant observation.
Table 1. Overview of the Components of Process Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Names</th>
<th>▪ Process Evaluation, Implementation Evaluation, Formative Evaluation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers these Questions</td>
<td>▪ What is occurring in the program?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ How is the program being implemented and operated?</td>
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<td>▪ How is the program producing the results that it does?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Used to Collect Data or Information</td>
<td>▪ Conducting site visits</td>
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<td>▪ Collecting and analyzing program administrative data</td>
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<td>▪ Conducting focus groups with program participants</td>
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<td>▪ Interviewing key informants such as program participants, local delivery staff, program managers, key program partners</td>
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<td>▪ Conducting surveys (e.g., web, telephone, in-person) to gather information from program participants</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can Illuminate</td>
<td>▪ How the program is operating</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ Why program performance goals are/are not being met</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ What is required to make the program or practice work successfully</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ What is required of program managers and/or staff to successfully deliver services that results in realizing intended program outcomes</td>
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<td>▪ The cultural context in which the program works or does not work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>▪ The strengths of the original program model and/or program operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ The weaknesses of the original program model and/or program operations</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▪ The need for more, less, or the collection of different program data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Provide</td>
<td>▪ Meaningful and practical recommendations to improve and/or change the program model and/or operations and information to help correct program model shortfalls, especially if an intent is to replicate the model</td>
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In 2001, the New Jersey legislature allocated approximately $6 to $8 million a year from the state’s Unemployment Insurance trust fund to support the New Jersey Workplace Literacy Program, which established “literacy labs” at One-Stop Career Centers and affiliates throughout the state. The labs allow participants to access computers and a variety of multimedia technology tools designed to improve reading, math, communication, computer, and general workplace readiness skills. The labs’ ultimate goal is to assist participants to obtain, maintain, or advance within a job. However, shorter-term objectives include helping participants to increase their basic academic and workplace-related skills, achieve a recognized educational credential such as a GED, and/or enter an approved occupational training program following completion of literacy lab services.

In 2003, the State Employment and Training Commission contracted with the Heldrich Center to perform a process evaluation of the state’s literacy labs. The purpose of the evaluation was to identify both effective program practices as well as practices that needed to be improved to better serve literacy lab clients.

The Heldrich Center conducted site visits to literacy labs, administered structured interviews with program staff, and held focus groups with program participants. In addition, the Heldrich Center worked with nationally recognized experts in adult literacy and education to review the software and video tools used in the labs for self-directed study.

The evaluation found that there were a number of ways that the implementation of the literacy labs could be improved. A key issue was the difficulty of serving individuals with vastly different literacy needs. The New Jersey Labor Department’s policy was to allow everyone, at any literacy level, to receive instruction through a literacy lab, but the labs did not have sufficient staffing to support the diverse instructional needs of low-level English learners, on the one hand, and more advanced students, on the other. Adult literacy professionals who served on the expert panel convened for the study, and the scholarly literature in the field of adult literacy, agreed that individuals with different literacy needs require different types of services. The labs were under-staffed and so lab staff faced a trade-off between providing the intensive one-on-one instruction that lower-level English learners require and being available to support the self-directed study of high-level learners and GED students.

The Heldrich Center also learned that although the labs used assessment results to select software programs and other technology tools for participants to use, the labs did not use detailed assessment results to create varied and highly customized learning activities that are closely connected to participants’ job-specific goals. Best practice calls for a transparent and purposeful approach to developing curricula for individuals, which means that the rationale behind all learning activities should be clear to the learner and relate directly to the learner’s needs and goals. Through interviews, the Heldrich Center learned that one impediment that made it difficult for literacy lab staff to create highly customized plans of study for literacy lab participants was that many of the individual employment plans that had been developed by the clients’ One-Stop counselors were unclear, because they included neither specific, obtainable job goals nor action steps for achieving job goals.

Based on these and other findings, the Heldrich Center offered a series of recommendations to increase staffing at the literacy labs, improve the assessment process, and enhance coordination between One-Stop and literacy lab staff.
Outcomes-based Evaluations

Outcomes-based evaluations look at the impact and/or changes to program participants that the program’s services or other interventions are designed to effect. Outcomes-based evaluations critically depend on the program staff to do an effective job of collecting participant data, both on participant attributes, such as demographic characteristics, and dosage, including the quantity and intensity of the services that participants received. For an outcomes-based evaluation to be effective, evaluators must have access to administrative data and/or the diligent collection of follow-up data on participants after they complete the program.

There are four primary types of outcome evaluations. First are outcome evaluations that look at performance outcomes without a control or comparison group. So an evaluator, for example, might estimate the employment rate or average earnings, but would not compare these outcomes to those of similar individuals. Such outcome information can provide valuable information on program performance, but without something to compare the outcomes to, it is difficult to say whether the program being evaluated is effective.

To inject something comparative into the analysis, an evaluator might make comparisons over time. Did the average individual’s situation improve over some time period from before the program to after it? Over time comparisons provide incredibly valuable information. At the same time, however, a comparison over time alone is not sufficient to establish that a program has been effective. The reason is because many things besides the program are always going on in the world and some of these things affect the same outcomes that any training program seeks to influence. The economy, as it has done over the past three years, may have declined. As a result, the employment rate for program participants may be lower after program completion than it was before the program started, and this reduced employment rate may have nothing at all to do with the quality of the program but instead with the larger economic forces that are beyond the program’s control. It is easily possible that the employment rate declines would have been greater had the person not participated in training. If a researcher were to restrict over time comparisons to only those individuals who participated in the program, she may wrongly conclude that the program is ineffective when it may have actually been effective.

In order to avoid drawing incorrect conclusions about program effectiveness, it is therefore necessary to also make a second comparison, across individuals. Did the program participants fare better over time than similar people who did not participate in the program? There are two ways to establish this sort of comparison. The most well-known such strategy is an experimental design, whereby applicants to a program are randomly assigned either to participate in the program or to receive a separate set of services. Randomization in assignment is assumed to create two groups that are all but identical except for the fact that one group participates in the program, while the other does not. Experimental designs have been thought to yield the most accurate estimates of program effects for the participants studied. There may, however, be circumstances — as when it may be difficult to ensure that control group members do not receive treatment services, the program is a universal service program in which participants cannot be turned away, or when the program does not receive enough applicants to populate both a treatment and a comparison group — that may limit the ability to implement an experimental design. Experimental designs are also the most expensive evaluation designs to implement.

Similar to an experimental design, a quasi-experimental design compares program participants to a comparison
group of individuals who are similar to the participants. These designs use administrative data sources on individuals who have received services that are similar to the ones being offered by a particular workforce program as a comparison pool. Researchers then engage in probabilistic matching in order to select a subset of individuals from the comparison pool who are as similar as possible to program participants based on key characteristics, such as age, sex, race, income, work history, etc. Quasi-experimental designs can yield reliable estimates of program effects at a fraction of the cost of experimental designs. The potential weakness of a quasi-experimental design is that there may be unobservable attributes that make the members of the treatment group systematically different from members of the comparison group that cannot be controlled for using statistical methods.

As illustrated in Table 2, outcomes-based evaluation is fundamentally used to tell an organization whether its programs are having a positive effect on the people they are serving.

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**Outcome Evaluation of an Occupational Training Program**

A nonprofit organization enlisted the Heldrich Center to conduct a process and outcome evaluation of a program that it manages to prepare low-income residents of an urban area for careers in the construction industry. The program aims to achieve this goal by preparing its graduates for apprenticeships with a construction and building trades union. During the 10-week program, students receive intensive and highly targeted academic preparation in math, reading, and critical thinking; are introduced to the different building trades through hands-on work and site visits; and receive instruction in life skills. After completing the program, graduates apply for apprenticeships with the building trades. The program, which trains about 100 individuals a year, has developed strong ties to the building trades unions to ensure that its candidates are considered for employment.

To conduct the outcome evaluation, Heldrich Center researchers used a combination of program data on the services that participants received and the demographics of participants, state Unemployment Insurance wage record data, and Employment Services data. Heldrich Center researchers used the Employment Services data on individuals who completed different types of training programs in the same geographic area as the program to create a comparison group of individuals who were as similar as possible to program participants on key variables, including age, sex, race, and prior employment history. The researchers used probabilistic matching software to select the most similar individuals from the Employment Services data for the comparison group. By selecting only individuals who completed training programs and by matching on prior employment history, the evaluators were able to control for the motivation of participants. (Individuals who complete training are typically more highly motivated and thus more likely to do well in the labor market than individuals who do not complete training. By including only training completers in the comparison group, the researchers limited the confounding effects of differences in motivation.)

After the comparison group was created, the researchers compared the earnings growth from before training to after exit from training for the program participants and the comparison group members. The results showed that program participants witnessed significantly higher earnings growth than similar individuals who completed other types of training programs. The researchers attributed these results to the strong relationships that the program had built with the labor unions, which provide access to relatively high-wage jobs, and partly to the skill improvements that participants realized over the course of the program.
Table 2. Overview of the Components of Outcomes-based Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Other Names</th>
<th>Impact Evaluation, Summative Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answers this Question</td>
<td>Did the program have its intended effect(s) on the program participants?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods Used to Collect Data or Information</td>
<td>Collecting and analyzing individual and summary administrative records</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Administering and analyzing time-interval participant surveys (in-person, telephone, web)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Illuminate</td>
<td>The extent to which a particular service or strategy is reaching its objective (that is, changing a condition, changing a behavior)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whether there are changes in outcomes among program participants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Provide</td>
<td>Information about whether the program’s efforts have improved people’s general condition (for example, employment situation)</td>
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Key Outcomes for Workforce Program Evaluations

The ultimate goal of any workforce program is to help an individual find, keep, or get promoted in a job. In order to position the person to achieve this goal, there are a number of intermediate outcomes — sometimes referred to as outputs — that a program might hope to achieve, such as improving the person’s skill level in an occupation or improving the individual’s English language skills.

It is critical at the outset of any project to clearly identify both the ultimate and the intermediate outcomes that the program hopes to achieve. By engaging in this process, program staff can take their goals and translate them into measurable outcomes that can be tracked in order to monitor how well the program is achieving its objectives.

For job seekers, key employment outcomes can include whether the individual found employment, how long she retained the job, the amount that she earned on the job, whether the occupation in which she was hired was related to her training, and/or whether the job offers benefits. Key outcomes for incumbent workers include earnings, retention in the job, and whether the individual receives a promotion.

Intermediate outcomes can include skill gains, which can be different for various types of programs. Whereas an occupational training program might seek to measure gains in job-specific skills, a basic literacy program would look to measure whether the participants gained one or more literacy levels. As intermediate outcomes, programs can also measure whether participants earned a degree or an industry-recognized credential.

The exact outcomes that a program chooses to measure should reflect the goals that the program is trying to achieve but be balanced with the ease or difficulty of measuring that specific outcome.
Data Collection for Evaluation

In order for a workforce program to be evaluated, it is necessary for the program to systematically collect and electronically store data on each participant. For every program participant, program staff need to collect data on participant characteristics, the services that each participant receives, and all outcomes that the participant realized. For example:

- Participant characteristics include basic demographic information (age, race, sex, veteran status, disability status); education, literacy, and/or English as a Second Language level; employment status, earnings, and occupation at the time of enrollment in the program; and any attributes of program participants that might bear on how well they perform in the program, how they should be served, and how they are likely to fare after program completion.

- Services received include detailed information on the type of service (e.g., case management, occupational training, job search assistance, etc.) that an individual received; the frequency of the service received (number of hours per day, number of days per week, number of weeks); attendance; and other factors that might affect the client’s ability to achieve the outcomes the program hopes he will achieve.

- Outcomes for workforce programs can roughly be divided into three categories: skills gains; the attainment of a degree, industry-recognized credential, or other certificate; and employment outcomes, including employment, earnings, and retention in employment. Often, the evaluator will play a key role in collecting outcomes information.

The evaluator may identify additional intermediate outcomes that the program should measure to track its progress.

It is also important for any workforce program to coordinate with its funder at the start of the program to identify the specific data elements that it must collect to meet the funder’s reporting requirements. Unless a workforce program engages in systematic data collection and uses a reliable mechanism for tracking and storing individual-level data on participant characteristics, the services each participant received, and the outcomes of each participant, the program may not be able to be evaluated.

When Should I Evaluate?

Every workforce program should be established with an eye on evaluation from the outset. Programs should be set up so that it will be possible for an evaluator to assess the extent to which the programs are achieving their goals, the effectiveness of various components, and the aspects of the programs that may be impeding success without imposing on routine processes and overburdening personnel. Including evaluation as a component of program implementation from inception can help keep program managers focused on how to make their programs as effective as possible as well as substantially help programs achieve their goals.

Although the importance of evaluation throughout the life of a program is constant, the focus and best methods of evaluating each program change over time. Like products, programs too have life cycles beginning with conceptualization, then piloting, then widespread implementation, maturity, and possibly phase out or replication elsewhere. One of the most significant facts about program evaluation is that the evaluation requirements of programs change over their life cycles. The program life cycle is a critically important concept for anyone who wants to conduct a program.
evaluation because where a program is in its life significantly affects both the goals that the program manager can hope to accomplish through an evaluation and the type of evaluation that the program manager may want to conduct.

In the early stages of a program’s implementation, the needs are different than when the program has been in operation for a while. For example, at inception, a program cannot be evaluated but needs to be set up in such a way that the information that will be needed to perform an evaluation can be collected. Therefore, programs require different types of evaluations when they are at different stages in their life cycles. As explained earlier, evaluations can take many forms — from process evaluations designed to improve the implementation of programs and identify the factors that are contributing to their success or failure to outcomes-based evaluations that seek to establish how well the program is working.

Program Evaluation Versus Performance Measurement

Many public, as well as foundation-funded, workforce development programs are required to demonstrate the effectiveness of their programs in terms of certain performance measures. A performance measure is a numeric summary or description of how a program has functioned. The hope is that requiring programs to meet performance measures will make them more effective at delivering services. Performance measures for workforce programs can include output measures, such as the number of individuals served, or outcome measures, such as the percentage of program exiters who find employment.

Although performance measures can provide valuable information on how a program is functioning, they are different from and less informative than program evaluation. A workforce program can be said to be effective if it makes the people it serves better off than they would have been had they not participated. Program evaluation can answer this question by carefully comparing the outcomes of program participants with similar groups of non-participants. Performance measures typically capture short-run quantities, typically up to a year after program exit. The implicit theory behind performance measures is that they are an accurate proxy for how well program participants will do over the long run.

Unfortunately, research shows that short-run performance measures do not accurately predict how successful a program participant will be in the labor market over the long run. Although the performance measures in the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) — the forerunner to the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) — incorporated a dose of comparison by granting states the flexibility to adjust performance standards depending on the population served and economic conditions, performance measures are a blunt instrument when it comes to comparison. (WIA does not include these adjustments in its performance measures.) What performance measures cannot answer is, for example, whether an X percent employment rate is good for the types of people the program served and in the economy in which they had to find work. Whereas a carefully designed evaluation can answer this question, performance measures really cannot. Heckman, Heinrich, and Smith assessed the extent to which a variety of performance measures used under JTPA were related to participants’ long-term labor market success, as measured in experimental studies. They found that there was no relationship between how program participants fared on the short-term JTPA performance measures and how they were doing in the labor market 18 and 30 months after starting to receive JTPA services.

The bottom line is that to learn whether a program is effective, performance measures alone are inadequate and rigorous program evaluation is needed.
Lessons Learned from Past Evaluations of Workforce Programs

From evaluating dozens of workforce programs, the Heldrich Center has gleaned a number of lessons that program managers may find useful in implementing their programs. Although there are many different specific lessons that could benefit a variety of different programs depending on their focus, the Heldrich Center has identified the following four lessons as broadly applicable to a wide range of workforce programs.

Lesson #1. Participant Recruitment. Getting enough people to participate in the program often presents a significant challenge to new workforce programs. In an economy with a high rate of unemployment, one might assume that job seekers would flock through the doors of any program aiming to help them find a job. New programs, however, often face the challenge of getting the word out about the program and also in persuading potential participants that the program has a sound approach for helping them obtain employment. Developing partnerships and strong relationships with public workforce and nonprofit organizations that serve populations similar to the one that a workforce program serves before the program begins can help the program meet its recruitment targets.

Lesson #2. Business Engagement. Employers only hire the workers who have the skills they need. Therefore, it is vital that before a program begins accepting clients that it reach out to businesses and identify their specific skill needs. Programs that provide occupational skills training can seek feedback on their curriculum from employers to ensure that the skills they will be teaching participants are the skills that businesses say they need, and, as importantly, that the curriculum is thorough enough to enable students to learn these skills during the course of the program.

Lesson #3. Address Participants’ Multiple Barriers to Employment. Many participants face multiple barriers to becoming employed and/or advancing in their jobs. These barriers have been well documented in the workforce development literature and include a lack of basic math and English skills, limited proficiency in English, lack of transportation, mental health issues, a physical or cognitive disability, lack of child care, and a criminal record or outstanding warrants, among others. The workforce programs that are the most successful are the ones that seek to address the multiple barriers that can prevent the participants from getting or keeping a job. Programs that take a case management approach can tailor their services to the specific barriers that each of their clients faces.

Lesson #4. Relationships with Outside Agencies. As noted above, it is important to build relationships with outside agencies before a program begins. This is especially true if the program anticipates receiving funds of some sort, such as Individual Training Account funds from One-Stop Career Centers, from an outside organization. It is important for the program to learn the agency’s requirements for reporting on the progress of clients referred by that agency as well as the particulars of how that agency prefers to handle billing.

Purchasing Evaluation Services

Many program managers find locating and purchasing evaluation services to be difficult and challenging. An important, but often overlooked, factor is that an evaluator should be identified and begin working with program managers while they are designing the program and before they begin implementing it. In looking for an evaluator, program staff should identify evaluators who not only have established track records in evaluation but also have experience in evaluating related programs.
Finding the Ideal Evaluator

The ideal evaluator is one who has:

- **Education** in research and/or evaluation methods, through either formal training in evaluation or through graduate studies in the social sciences;

- **Experience** in conducting program evaluations as well as in-depth substantive knowledge related to the program, especially in the specific area of program focus; as a result of this experience, the ideal evaluator should have a good reputation for meeting expectations for quality, timeliness, and rigor;

- Extensive experience in using a **wide variety of evaluation methodologies** and does not try to “sell” the manager on one specific methodology; and

- **Commitment to building and maintaining a collaborative relationship** with the program manager.

As noted in Table 3, there are a number of sources for evaluation services, ranging from knowledgeable individual evaluators to small, medium, and large public and private firms and organizations. For programs that are brand new, the program manager may want to enlist the services of a local evaluator who will be able to meet face-to-face with program staff and engage in participant observation in order to get a better sense of how the program operates. Larger programs or more rigorous outcomes-based evaluations may require the services of larger firms or universities that possess the staffing, analytic, and data collection resources necessary to conduct the evaluation.

Budgeting for Evaluation

Some program managers planning for evaluation find it difficult to budget or cost out evaluation services. While the cost of an evaluation is highly dependent on the type of evaluation design (for example, process versus outcome, experimental versus quasi-experimental outcome evaluation designs), a good place to start is to assume a baseline of 10% for process and outcome evaluations. If the evaluator will conduct more specialized experimental and/or quasi-experimental evaluations, programs should budget between 10% and 20% of their overall program budget for evaluation services.

Working with an Evaluator

Workforce program personnel that are well prepared and ready for the evaluation can significantly ease the process of evaluation. The evaluator will develop an evaluation that lays out the purpose of the evaluation, the research questions, and what data will be collected and how it will be collected. As a first step in preparing to work with an evaluator, program staff should clearly specify program goals and strategies for accomplishing the goals. To inform the evaluation plan, program staff should work with evaluators to develop logic models2 that lay out their programs’ resources, inputs, outputs, and short- and long-term outcomes. By engaging in the process of developing a logic model, program staff can build a better blueprint for how the program will achieve its goals and the evaluator will develop a better understanding of how the program will operate.
### Table 3. Finding a Qualified Evaluator that is Right for You

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluator Sources</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>What to Look For</th>
<th>General Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Independent researchers</td>
<td>Independent college or university-based faculty and/or graduate student or private independent consultants with expertise in program evaluation and required quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodologies.</td>
<td>Individual(s) with the appropriate credentials, experience, and a reputable track record of conducting evaluation projects.</td>
<td>$ to $$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational institutions (college or university)</td>
<td>Postsecondary educational institutions, predominantly found in academic institutes and centers that possess expertise in program evaluation and required quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodologies. Larger universities may possess broad capacities in such areas as survey design and data collection, administrative data and secondary data analysis, and promising practices research.</td>
<td>University or college-based institutes or centers with proven experience in evaluation (including desired required evaluation methodologies) of employment and training, workforce development, and similar social service programs.</td>
<td>$ to $$$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private for-profit or not-for-profit firms with expertise in evaluation</td>
<td>Private for-profit or not-for-profit firms that specialize in program evaluation, or have a unit that possesses such expertise. Larger firms may offer broad capacities in such areas as survey design and data collection, administrative data analysis, secondary data analysis, and promising practice research.</td>
<td>Reputable organizations with proven experience in evaluation (including desired required evaluation methodologies) of employment and training, workforce development, and similar social service programs.</td>
<td>$$ to $$$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Legend:** $ = low, $$ = moderate, $$$ = high
Perhaps the most important single step that program staff can take to facilitate evaluation is to engage in systemic, ongoing collection of all the data that the evaluators need. A good evaluator should either provide technical assistance to program staff to facilitate data collection or partner with the program to gather needed data. Finally, the program can facilitate program evaluation by informing stakeholders about the evaluation and emphasize its importance to making the program as effective as possible.

All in all, it is reasonable for programs to have the following expectations about evaluators and the evaluations they conduct:

- A willingness to learn about the program to be evaluated;
- An interest in developing a collaborative partnership to learn about and evaluate the program;
- Regularly scheduled reports summarizing the findings of the evaluation and recommendations for future action;
- A final report that presents the final findings of the evaluation; and
- Regular communication with program staff about the progress of the evaluation and what has been learned, as well as any information that the program might incorporate to improve its operations.

**Conclusion**

While recognizing that resources for evaluations are (and will continue to be) limited given current federal and state fiscal constraints, there remains strong pressure from the general public and oversight bodies such as Congress and state legislatures, to demonstrate program effectiveness and impacts. This makes evaluation an important, if not a necessary, part of any program activity. In the workforce development field, engaging in more systematic evaluation of both public and privately funded employment and training programs provides a chance for program planners, policymakers, and managers to engage in high-level accountability activities that can show evidence as to the effectiveness of services for unemployed and dislocated workers as well as those seeking educational and career opportunities and advancement.

As noted earlier, while there have been difficulties and barriers to undertaking formal evaluation of workforce programs, there are ways to engage in evaluation activities that are relatively low cost, simple to implement, and that yield important, practical information that is relevant to improving program operations. While there are strong arguments for instituting rigorous experimental and quasi-experimental evaluation methods that go further than documenting and describing outcomes, these evaluations require adequate budgets and seasoned evaluators that may sometimes be beyond the fiscal and managerial capacities of many nonprofit agencies or small workforce programs. An appropriate and effective strategy may be to proceed in increments — starting out with process evaluations and more effective performance monitoring using these as platforms for more substantial evaluation efforts at a later date.

The call for more systematic analysis and stronger accountability in workforce program operations and outcomes is most likely going to continue to grow. As noted in this brief, evaluators can design and implement evaluations in a variety of ways and deploy a range of tools to support evaluation activities. A critical first step for program managers is to choose the methods and tools that work best for them, and that offer the greatest utility and usability to program operations.
Resources

Basic Resources About Program Evaluation

**American Evaluation Association**
http://www.eval.org/

The American Evaluation Association (AEA) is an international professional association of evaluators, focusing on the evaluation of programs, policies, products, and organizations. This Web site provides access to a public e-library of evaluators’ work, information on AEA conferences and presentations, an online career center providing job and résumé postings, and a search function to find evaluators by expertise or location as well as information on scholarly journals published by AEA.

**“Approaching an Evaluation: Ten Issues to Consider,” Brad Rose Consulting**
http://www.bradroseconsulting.com/Approaching_an_Evaluation.html

This webpage offers 10 key issues to consider when planning an evaluation, offering brief explanations for why certain criteria matter as well as questions that span the scope of an evaluation process from planning to use of findings.

**“Basic Guide to Program Evaluation (Including Outcomes Evaluation),” Free Management Library**
http://www.managementhelp.org/evaluatn/fnl_eval.htm

This document offers an overview of the main elements in planning and executing an evaluation process in either for-profit or nonprofit organizations, including an overview of basic elements, selecting methods, disseminating results, and pitfalls to avoid.

**“Chapter 4: How Do You Hire and Manage an Outside Evaluator?” U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_4_pmguide.html

This webpage, an excerpt from a more comprehensive guide to evaluation for program managers, discusses key issues to consider in finding and working with an outside evaluator for social service programs, including basic steps for finding the right evaluator and potential evaluation responsibilities for both the independent evaluator and program staff.

**“The Critical Need for Program Accountability and Evaluation,” Facilitation and Process**
http://facilitationprocess.com/the-critical-need-for-program-accountability-evaluation

This blog post discusses the importance of incorporating accountability and evaluation activities into nonprofit programming. The author discusses three key barriers that prevent the implementation and practical use of evaluation activities as well as highlights the importance of evaluation to nonprofit growth and management.

http://www2.ed.gov/offices/OUS/PES/primer1.html

This primer gives an in-depth overview of evaluation processes used by the federal government in evaluating educational programs, including descriptions of evaluation designs, recommended steps in planning an evaluation, and interpreting evaluation results.
“Evaluation Research,” Social Research Methods
http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/evaluation.php

This resource offers an online textbook discussing the broad range of topics involved in social research, discussing evaluation in detail. Topics of discussion include an overview of evaluation terminology and research designs, the interaction of project planning and project evaluation processes, and the impact approach and culture make in conducting an evaluation.

“Guidelines for Selection of Evaluators,” UNESCO

This document offers technical and qualification criteria recommended by the United National Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to select an evaluator, such as appropriate expertise and diversity of evaluation teams.

“Outcome Indicators Project,” the Urban Institute and the Center for What Works
http://www.urban.org/center/cnp/projects/outcomeindicators.cfm

The Outcome Indicators Project, a collaboration between the Urban Institute and the Center for What Works, is intended to provide a framework to monitor and improve the performance of nonprofit organizations and initiatives. The Web site offers resources specific to building a common outcome framework, outcome and performance indicators specific to 14 program areas, and generic outcomes that can be used across nonprofit programs.

“Selecting the Right Independent Grant Evaluator”

This resource provides guidance for professionals searching for an independent evaluator that is appropriately suited to conduct a project’s evaluation. It offers a general approach to locating an evaluator that meets the needs of the program, and the requirements of the grant funder, including general questions to frame the search, a list of potential interview questions, and indicators of competency to look for in potential candidates.

Resources About Logic Models


Resources About Evaluation Professionals

The American Evaluation Association has a useful reference, “Find an Evaluator” http://www.eval.org/find_an_evaluator/evaluator_search.asp
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Chapter 4: How Do You Hire and Manage an Outside Evaluator?
http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/opre/other_resrch/pm_guide_eval/reports/pmguide/chapter_4_pmguide.html

Juvenile Justice Evaluation Center, “Hiring and Working with an Evaluator”

Endnotes


2. A logic model is a planning tool that clarifies and graphically displays what the program intends to do and what it intends to accomplish. According to the W.K. Kellogg Foundation’s Logic Model Development Guide, the components of a logic model vary, but most often they articulate resources, activities, outputs, outcomes, and goals.


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About the Heldrich Center

The John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, based at the Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy at Rutgers University, is a dynamic research and policy center devoted to strengthening the nation’s workforce. It is one of the nation’s leading university-based centers dedicated to helping America’s workers and employers respond to a rapidly changing 21st Century economy. The Center’s motto — “Solutions at Work” — reflects its commitment to offering practical solutions, based on independent research and evaluation, that benefit employers, workers, job seekers, and the nation’s network of workforce development professionals. Evaluations conducted by Center researchers make use of a systematic process to estimate a workforce program’s value and/or identify which of its components contribute to and detract from the program’s value. All evaluations are designed and implemented to gain an understanding of the program to be evaluated and to producing information that can inform program and policy decisions. Heldrich Center evaluation work has included a range of quantitative/outcome and qualitative/process evaluations such an evaluation of postsecondary training providers and pre-apprenticeship programs, as well as various workforce program efforts to connect youth, dislocated workers, minority males, individuals with disabilities, and incumbent workers to employment opportunities. Learn more at http://www.heldrich.rutgers.edu

Did You Know?
You can use your smart phone to take a photograph of the barcode on the right and immediately visit the Heldrich Center Web site. All you need is a QR (or Quick Response) Reader, a smart phone, and an Internet connection. Learn more at: http://www.mobile-barcode.com/qr-code-software/
AGENDA ITEM 7: INFORMATIONAL: Local Workforce Development Board Presentations

INFORMATION/RATIONALE: Periodically the State Board requests that Local Board Representatives share information related to their local workforce activities. This information is designed to assist the State Board in conducting an on-going evaluation of the State’s Workforce System.

The staff of the Eastern Arkansas and the Little Rock Workforce Development Board will present information related to their respective Local Areas.