

Guide to Improving One-Stops through Benchmarked Critical Success Factors

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I. Introduction

■ Background

The purpose of this guide is to help state and local policy makers improve their One-Stop systems through the application of critical success factors. The critical success factors were initially identified as a result of a benchmarking study of 20 One-Stops around the country. They have been updated as a result of more recent case studies and analyses of best practices. The guide includes a description of a “good” One-Stop, considerations for policy makers who want to implement the criteria, and a self-assessment tool for local One-Stop operators and partners.

Defining One-Stop center success is a matter of customer and stakeholder perceptions and local control. Early attempts to develop One-Stop criteria were geared toward ensuring minimum consistency across multiple sites; e.g., sites must offer a standard customer orientation, utilize a certain set of assessment tools, have specified resources in the resource room, and so forth. The minimum criteria approach was an early phase of assessment aimed at certifying whether a site met the definition of being a One-Stop center.

Influenced by private sector quality initiatives, several states and local workforce boards pushed to establish criteria that defined quality, not just compliance. Assessment of One-Stop success in leading edge workforce areas moved to an on-going dialogue between workforce investment board (WIB) and operator that addressed local priorities and context rather than uniformity, and promoted the principles of continuous improvement rather than meeting minimum standards as evidence of success. Without exception, however, the criteria that defined success were developed by a consensus of stakeholders (often policy makers and providers) rather than derived from a research base.

This guide is grounded in the *Benchmarking One-Stop Centers: Understanding Keys to Success* study, the first attempt to define success factors using a research base instead of consensus or case studies. This study drew considerable interest from all levels of the workforce development industry.¹ CSW led the study, in cooperation with Leaders in Excellence, on behalf of four workforce boards in Illinois with funding from the Illinois Department of Employment Security.

While several types of benchmarking can be undertaken, benchmarking is not to be confused with “best practices.” Best practice case studies are *vertical*

¹ The full study may be downloaded from the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce website at www.skilledwork.org

research projects that examine in depth a practice or set of practices at a given locale. Benchmarking, on the other hand, looks at pre-identified factors across several sites. It is *horizontal* research that compares a wide variety of practices related to a single factor of success.

The specific goals of the Benchmarking study were to:

- Identify and explore critical success factors of One-Stop centers;
- Examine other service centers to understand how they serve customers and manage operations;
- Define appropriate expectations for the One-Stops in meeting critical success factors;
- Establish a benchmarking process that other boards and One-Stop quality.

This guide builds on that last goal and refines the study's list of *critical success factors* for One-Stop centers by integrating the factors with other One-Stop experiences.

A similar effort was completed in June 2003 by the General Accounting Office (GAO).² Although the GAO study approached the task as promising practices, it identified characteristics across One-Stops that neatly supported the Critical Success Factors identified in the Benchmarking report.

Understanding of One-Stop center success continues to evolve as more information is gathered from experience with chartering processes, mystery shopping initiatives, balanced scorecard initiatives, and revised state and local definitions of success. These learnings have been incorporated into a new generation of critical success factors, as detailed in this report.

Assumptions

- ***Benchmarking One-Stop Centers*** is the foundation piece for defining critical success factors. The original success factors have been amplified with criteria extracted from case studies and commonalities among criteria developed at the state and local level through stakeholder consensus.
- **The indicators for success are affected by the political, social, and market factors of the area where the One-Stop is located.** While all the critical success factors are essential, the indicators can be sorted into those that are basic and those that are supplemental, or "good to have." There are some indicators that are key to success regardless of

² The GAO study "Workforce Investment Act: One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and Partnerships, but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed", GAO 03-725, June 18, 2003 may be found at www.gao.gov.

the environment (such as regular staff development), and others that are indicators only under certain conditions (e.g., offering services on a fee basis).

- **Targeting is important.** One-Stops can only be “all things to all people” for a prescribed set of core services. Segmenting markets and identifying niches is standard private sector practice that One-Stops should emulate. Identifying and meeting the needs of key industry clusters will help One-Stops become more relevant to communities than broad, but shallow, service strategies. Targets will differ from one state and local area to the next, which only points to the importance of *local* definitions of success.

Resources

The following resources were used to revise the critical success factors originally identified in the Benchmarking study:

- Social Policy Research Associates’ “Overview of State Certification/Chartering Criteria for One-Stops,” (final matrices of September 30, 1996 for twelve states and final narrative of January 30, 1997).
- Certification or chartering criteria used by various states and local workforce boards.
- Two case studies done by Public Sector Labor Management Committee, Feb. 2002.
- Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities’ “Employment and Community Services Standards Manual;” July 2003-June 2004.
- John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University case studies.
- NGA Center For Best Practices survey of state chartering criteria, April, 2003.
- General Accounting Office (GAO) report of June, 2003, “One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and Partnerships, but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed”

Analysis Process

The descriptions and criteria contained in the above documents were compared with the original critical success factors identified in the Benchmarking report to identify commonalities and gaps. New factors and indicators were created or old indicators reworded as common themes were

identified from these sources. The range of resources includes Baldrige and non-Baldrige-based formats; single level and multi-level certifications; state and local designs; and case study, consensus, and research-based analyses.

■ Using this Document

This guidebook is divided into six chapters. While all stakeholders can benefit from the full document, Chapter III is specifically targeted to policymakers and Chapter IV is a self-assessment tool targeted to One-Stop partners. Appendix A identifies quality resources that are available to policymakers and partners in thinking about One-Stop center quality. There is a separate document that provides a comparison between the Critical Success Factors and revised indicators with quality criteria identified by other national studies and national, state, and local certification systems that may be accessed at www.skilledwork.org.

State and local workforce investment boards should use this document to frame local discussions of One-Stop quality. The critical success factors outline the characteristics of One-Stops that are considered to be industry leaders. Policymakers and providers may benchmark their own behavior against the leaders' characteristics and indicators using the self-assessment tool, and discuss how each factor applies within their own policy and labor market environment. Further, the critical success factors and indicators can be used to set improvement targets based on where the One-Stop is in its developmental process. The end result should be customized criteria within a common vision of excellence. Application recommendations are in Chapter VI.

Important Considerations

The self-assessment tool is not meant to be used to rank, grade, or score One-Stop centers. It is a continuous improvement tool intended to assist local entities in their pursuit of quality.

No connection has been made to outcomes. Individual federal program measures of performance – often the only formal indicators available in many areas – apply to single funding streams which measure outcomes for the small percentage of total One-Stop users they enroll. Some states include program specific measures from multiple programs in their evaluation of One-Stop success, yet those still don't quantify the overall success of the joint venture. The most effective center-wide outcome measures should be locally defined, taking into account local economies, community priorities, unique partnerships, data sharing agreements, and baseline starting points. **In this guide, the critical success factor is that center-wide performance is measured. It does not dictate what the center-wide measures are.** Validation of the critical success factors and indicators against agreed-upon measures of success is an important step yet to be taken.

II. What Does a “Good” One-Stop Look Like?

“Good” Must Be Locally Defined

The Workforce Investment Act outlines the basic principles for One-Stops, but a basic principle of the Act is state and local flexibility to define, within the parameters of the legislation, the right set of services, service design, and service standards that fit the local context. Thus all of the Act’s descriptions either remain at the theoretical level or focus on the administrative details of how to confirm compliance with the law. Since so much of an effective One-Stop is about finding the right blend of collaboration, given the local situation, it is impossible to define a model One-Stop at a national level.

However, we can look at some leaders in the workforce development industry to identify common characteristics or behaviors that cut across leading edge One-Stops and indicate greater potential for success. Identifying these characteristics will help states and local areas carry out their responsibilities for defining quality in a state or local context. These characteristics and behaviors may be termed *critical success factors*.

A Good One-Stop Satisfies Employers

A key element of a One-Stop must be a dedication to satisfying employers. While this may seem obvious, it is difficult to maintain a focus on the employer customer when job seekers are walking into the center every day demanding attention. Additionally, nearly all the partners in the One-Stop are measured by their federal funding sources on how well they serve job seekers, not employers. It requires a concerted effort to dedicate time and resources to meeting employer needs, and to implementing state and/or local measurement systems to determine how well you are doing.

Good One-Stops know how well they are satisfying employers *as a joint venture*. They know, because they measure it across all programs in the center. While federal and state requirements often force partners to collect data to see how a particular funding source satisfies employers, good One-Stops are interested in how all partners *collectively* satisfy employers. Is there any benefit gained from the One-Stop integration of programs and services, or does it look to the employer like business as usual with nothing but a change in brochures?

There are many ways to capture employer satisfaction at the center level. Options we have seen successful One-Stops employ:

- ★ Provide all staff with a couple brief questions to ask an employer at the end of every phone interaction.
- ★ Survey employers in person; equip business services team representatives (or anyone who meets personally with employers) with a short survey that can be done verbally, with the opportunity to explore responses in greater depth.
- ★ Consolidate the employer satisfaction requirements of individual partner program measures into one satisfaction tool that is used by all programs.
- ★ Tag One-Stop awareness and satisfaction questions onto some other entity's survey tool (like a chamber of commerce).

Regardless of the method selected, a One-Stop will define the tools and the process, collect data to create a baseline against which improvements can be gauged, set improvement goals, and have a formal process for reviewing results and acting on the implications.

To satisfy employers, the One-Stop has to actively listen to what employers need and want. Good One-Stops *plan* on getting input from employers; it doesn't happen by accident or only on an "as needed" basis.

There are many ways a One-Stop can listen to employers. The best of the best use multiple methods. A One-Stop can:

- ★ Facilitate regularly scheduled focus groups, using questions designed to elicit input on service or delivery needs. Related methods may include industry summits or employer conferences.
- ★ Use another organization, such as an economic development group, to be the "ears" for the One-Stop, and collect regular, agreed upon input.
- ★ Implement a business calling program with a set "script" that might combine needs analysis, relationship building, and satisfaction elements in one personal contact.
- ★ Reach out to employers who do not currently use the One-Stop to find out what services or delivery mechanisms are lacking. This might be done through presentations at Rotary, Chamber, Lyon's Club, or other civic organizations.

Regardless of the ways used, a good One-Stop knows in advance what kind of information it needs, identifies the avenues for getting the information, synthesizes and analyzes the input, and turns the analysis into specific action to add services or change delivery techniques.

Supplemental Considerations

The above points describe a “good One-Stop.” Supplemental considerations for *exceptional* One-Stops include:

- **Customer behavior (e.g., repeat usage) is tracked as an indicator of satisfaction.** Usage doesn’t just mean tracking repeat job orders. An employer who isn’t hiring has no need to place job orders. “Usage” should be defined more broadly to include workshop attendance, requests for labor market information, use of an employer resource room, borrowing videos on issues like working with individuals with disabilities, or seeking assistance in assessing and training incumbent workers. If an employer who is not hiring is *not* taking advantage of other services, it may be because there are no other services of value. The One-Stop should be seeking to develop those services that will attract consistent usage of the system.
- **Employer satisfaction is measured for both processes (services) and outcomes.** Processes may include telephone wait time, the ease of placing internet job orders, length of time required to get referrals on a job order, and so forth.
- **Employer satisfaction data is disaggregated by size and/or industry type.** The excellent One-Stop wants to know whether it is satisfying large employers but not small ones; if it is satisfying manufacturing employers but not health care employers. Being able to disaggregate satisfaction data assists the One-Stop in making targeted improvements rather than guessing at what factors are affecting satisfaction scores.

■ A Good One-Stop Manages Employer Services

Good One-Stops don’t think of business services as a menu item. They consider it to be a key function and they *manage* it to ensure success. The industry leaders work hard at managing the process so they can control delivery and satisfaction.

Good One-Stops make employer services a clear priority in the One-Stop with dedicated staff time and resources supporting them. Making employer or business services a priority implies defining what those services are. Taking the occasional job order by phone on a catch-as-catch-can basis in between talking to job seekers doesn’t constitute dedicated staff time. Even job fairs are often done more for the job seeker’s benefit than the employer’s benefit, and may not qualify as a true business service. A good One-Stop doesn’t decide whether or not it has time to devote to business services. It *makes* time and doesn’t sacrifice business services to other activities just because unemployment goes up or program funds are cut.

One-Stops demonstrate commitment to business services in multiple ways. A One-Stop can:

- ★ Identify staff who devote 100% of their working hours to business services. This is the surest method to making such services a priority. With 100% commitment, there is no danger that the business services staff will get bogged down in working with job seekers and let their business service hours slide.
- ★ Broaden staff exposure to the business community and its needs by doubling the number of staff who provide business services, but dedicating only 50% of each person's time. This has advantages for staff development and allows for "understudies" to be created who can step in when another team member is away or leaves employment.
- ★ Ensure advancement of business services by dedicating a pre-determined amount of team member time – say 80% – to direct employer interaction and budgeting the remaining 20% of the time to development of new services, research, interaction with job seeker service teams to share knowledge, creating partnership with employer groups such as chamber and trade associations, and so forth.
- ★ Budget resource beyond staff time. Resources may be needed for cell phones, laptop computers, mileage, membership fees, and other costs associated with on-site employer interactions. A good business services team member should rarely be in the office except when he/she is researching LMI for an account, making appointments, developing new services, or otherwise enhancing their interactions with employers.

One-Stops that manage employer services well do so in an integrated way. Employers served by these One-Stops perceive the system as having a single business services unit with which they can connect with a single phone call. In the Benchmarking study, all regions where employer services were considered successful operated with unified account representative systems. The account representatives may be organized in various ways, including mixes of geographic and industry specialists. The site from which they operate appears irrelevant, typically because most employer contacts are made either at the firm's offices or by telephone or electronic communication. Account representatives are sometimes located centrally and other times at One-Stop centers. One region chose to drive business services from the workforce board level. The staff were selected and hired by the board and report directly to the board. One business strategist was assigned to each One-Stop in the region and worked full time out of that office. A key staff person at the board level convened the strategists on a regular basis to convey board goals and priorities. Since the region had multiple operators for its many One-Stops, driving employer services through the board staff achieves consistency that might not otherwise be possible, and minimizes competition among the sites for employer customers.

In another community, the board required a focus on employer services but gave no further direction to the competitively procured operator about how that was to be accomplished. The operator used the opportunity to create its own business services division, with its own budget and dedicated staff. Under strong leadership from a former private sector entrepreneur, the division coordinates traditional “no fee” services with “for fee” services that address employer needs not otherwise possible within the constraints of the system.

In yet another region, several partners banded together to form a collaborative to manage One-Stop business services. Staff from several partner agencies work in unison under a single team manager.

Regardless of the management locus, business customer satisfaction with services appeared to be consistently stronger when a single, unified team worked cohesively to provide that service, rather than when several organizations provided their own services to employers in isolation. Whether done by employees of a single service provider, such as the workforce board or a single agency, or done by an integrated team involving staff from several partners, the key business rule is that a single account representative is authorized to work with the employer on behalf of the entire One-Stop center or system.

A One-Stop can:

- ★ Assign account representatives on the basis of geography. In a multi-county area, each account representative may be assigned one or more counties for which he/she is responsible. An advantage to this approach is that the representative can develop relationships with stakeholders that impact all industries in the local jurisdiction, including elected officials and chambers that represent multiple sectors.
- ★ Assign account representatives on the basis of industry sectors. One account representative may cover all biomed, health care, and environmental employers, regardless of location in the region. Another may focus on durable goods manufacturing and logistics. The advantage of this approach is that account representatives become more knowledgeable about specific industries and are better able to develop sector-based approaches to workforce development.
- ★ Assign staff from different partner agencies by sector. For example, a TANF partner may accept responsibility for working with the hospitality sector because more of their job seekers are placed in that industry than others.

Assigning account representative by geography or sector does not give anyone ownership of that locale or industry. All team members are still part of the same team, and they share information and support each other to the maximum extent possible.

Good One-Stops don't try to be everything to everyone; there aren't enough resources to go around. They target their efforts to specific community goals. Relationships are developed with employers who are economy-critical, rather than just employers who are easiest to serve. Account representatives use community audit information and direction from the WIB to make their target selections. The staff research the trends in the target sectors so they can talk intelligently with employers about their needs. They ask questions – and they listen. Staff are able to identify themes in what they hear from employers in key industries and use that to make service decisions in the One-Stop.

A One-Stop can:

- ★ Invest in memberships in trade associations and subscriptions to trade publications to keep business team members aware of current events and trends.
- ★ Develop a common tool for team members to use when they contact employers to solicit information that will give them key data about an industry in a format that allows information to be aggregated and analyzed.
- ★ Expect business team members to spend a required number of hours per year in developmental activities that will enhance their knowledge of an industry. This may even include job shadowing a number of occupations within an industry.
- ★ Annually re-evaluate their targeted sectors in partnership with the WIB. What economic events may have occurred that impact the business team's focus and priorities?

Relationship building is important to sales, as any private sector firm will tell you. A One-Stop may not be selling services for a fee, but it is marketing itself in an environment that includes temporary agencies, headhunters, and private internet job boards. It is because it does not have to sell to stay alive that the One-Stop can provide value to employers by playing a brokering role. Quality One-Stops have a passion for meeting employer needs, including finding other private and public sector providers who can do what the One-Stop can't.

Job seekers come and go, but employers are potentially on-going customers for life. By nurturing relationships, spending time with employers even when they aren't hiring, and finding ways to meet employer needs that are outside the One-Stop's realm of expertise, the business team ensures that the One-Stop becomes the employer's *first choice* rather than *last resort* when there is a workforce need.

A One-Stop can:

- ★ Host after-hours receptions for employers at the One-Stop.
- ★ Require account representatives to call on key employers in person a requisite number of times per year.
- ★ Leave something of value to the employer with every contact – be it targeted labor market data, an interesting quote, a list of relevant websites, or a pen or mousepad emblazoned with the One-Stop brand name and phone number.
- ★ Create e-mail newsletters that are about issues of interest to employers, such as industry or economic trends, upcoming events like industry summits, initiatives in the community beyond the One-Stop, and so forth. Employers don't want to read about job seeker successes, program performance standards, or be sold to in a newsletter. A relationship is built by providing value to the employer.

Supplemental Considerations

The above points describe a “good One-Stop.” Supplemental considerations for *exceptional* One-Stops include:

- **Niche markets served by One-Stop centers are identified/maintained.** A One-Stop must carefully consider its unique environment. In a large city with many competing providers, the One-Stop niche may be working with employers and job seekers on the first rung of a career ladder. This does not mean the One-Stop has no other role to play. For example, in the health care industry, the One-Stop may find its niche in recruiting and training licensed practical nurses (LPNs) and helping them develop career advancement plans that will lead to becoming a registered nurse (RN). A postsecondary institution with whom the One-Stop partners may occupy the niche of preparing RNs and working with hospitals to create human resource policies that foster pursuit of the RN license.
- **Data reflecting contacts, delivery of employer services, and outcomes is tracked, shared, and used to improve services and results.** The simple notations permitted in some automated job matching systems are usually inadequate for the job. With quality databases, partners in an excellent One-Stop are enabled and encouraged to read or add to the data, with the expectation that shared information will improve customer service and reduce duplicated efforts. The tracking systems cover such items as company name, address, phone and fax numbers, contact person name and e-mail address, federal identification number, standard industrial code, contact history including contact type, subject, date, location, name of contactor, case notes, and projected date of next contact; WARN data including date of notice,

number of affected workers, targeted lay-off date, Trade Adjustment Assistance/NAFTA eligibility, and willingness to participate in various school-to-work activities or work-based learning activities. One region that is heavily focused on fee-based services uses its database to track contracts for services, payments, and delivery of scheduled services.

■ A Good One-Stop Delivers Quality Services to Employers

As stated before, quality is what the customer says it is. A One-Stop that designs and delivers its business services to meet customer requirements is much more likely to be successful than one that creates a generic menu written in indelible ink, and then tells employers what they can get and how they can get it. In a statewide survey of employers in one midwestern state, nearly half (48%) of employer respondents said they had never been asked for input about the types of services offered. When asked what would be the one most important thing the One-Stop system could do for them, the answers included “Know what we are looking for by knowing our business,” “More communication with business,” “Proactive steps taken to identify needs,” “Provide a product that meets expectations and has value over other options,” “Provide prompt responses to our expressed needs,” and “Understand the needs of an industry on an individual basis.”

Attitudes are critical. Employers don’t want to hear excuses (e.g., “we can’t do that because we have no money; it is against our regulations; state policy won’t let us; we don’t have enough staff; what you want isn’t one of our current services and it would take us six months to go through the process of developing it”). Good One-Stops never say “we can’t”; they say “we’ll find a way.” That way may require brokering to other public intermediaries or finding another partner or provider who can address the needs. It may require using other intermediaries to fill an employer request immediately, while it pursues a slower process to develop a new capacity within the One-Stop itself.

A One-Stop in the Benchmarking study used private sector partners from the community to fill gaps for services for which it did not possess expertise. It brokered services to others while maintaining its position as a focal point for developing responses to employer needs. The staff hired for the business services unit came mostly from the private sector. They discovered that existing system staff did not possess the kind of entrepreneurial mindset and attitudes needed to be successful in working with employers. Attitude is as important, if not more important, than expertise.

A One-Stop can:

- ★ Create a team to create new services or new ways of delivering services in response to business needs.
- ★ Develop partnerships with small business administration assistance centers, local colleges, private training providers and recruiters, temporary agencies, and others. The business team members should know everything these other intermediaries can do. They should have personal contacts they can call upon for quick response.
- ★ Utilize a needs analysis tool in personal interactions with employers, then assemble a team made up of people both in and outside the One-Stop to create a response to the analysis.
- ★ Practice responding to employer needs. Use the private sector members of the board to propose scenarios, and then assess how the business team members respond.
- ★ Select business team members based on demonstrated entrepreneurial attitude and creativity. Evaluate them based not only on what they deliver, but how well they broker and bring in other intermediaries.
- ★ Ensure employer satisfaction tools ask for ratings of satisfaction with response time and staff attitudes.

The above description of a good One-Stop applies anywhere. In many cases, it may be appropriate for a One-Stop to develop fee-based services. A wide range of “no fee” services is possible in regions where allocations of federal program funds are sufficiently large to meet demand. Boards and operator staff in these regions express a preference for delivering the maximum variety of services possible without charging fees, although they admit they may be driven to fees in the future if funding becomes an issue. In the Benchmarking study, one workforce board felt there was enough to be done to improve the quality of existing services without expending time and energy on the development of “for fee” services. Another area that already had quality services simply didn’t think there was any reason to pursue fee-based services, except as a last resort.

One area that has aggressively pursued fee-based services has done so for several reasons. First and foremost is meeting employer needs that were not being met in the community. As such, the services enhance the range of options available to employers to increase their productivity. It is an economic development strategy. Secondly, the effort establishes credibility with the employers. Since the operator can offer services for a fee and broker or subcontract for what they cannot deliver themselves, they never have to

say “no” or “we can’t do that” to an employer. Further, employers tend to value more highly what they pay for.

A market analysis is required before developing fee-based services. Are there gaps in the kinds of services available to employers in the community? Do employers need those services badly enough that they are willing to pay to have their needs met? Are they willing to pay enough to cover the cost of the activity? Who else might be providing such services now? Is there any added value the One-Stop could provide to the service that would make it competitive with existing providers? Are the board and the cognizant state agencies comfortable with the One-Stop pursuing fee-based activities? Does the One-Stop have a means to receive and account for fees paid by employers? How will revenues in excess of cost be used? How will potential losses be covered?

■ A Good One-Stop Satisfies Job Seekers

Individual partner programs often measure satisfaction of their own participants. It may be a requirement of their federal funding source to satisfy a performance measure. It may be because a local fund manager wants to know how his/her program’s particular set of services satisfies clientele so that improvements can be made. One-Stop staff may balk at inflicting yet another survey on customers, particularly when response rates can be low and the cost high.

However, the “joint” part of the joint venture is mostly the up-front, core services; the services that are provided before a program enrollment decision is ever made. The One-Stop can focus on quick, on-site feedback that addresses only the core services, and leave program-specific satisfaction to the individual programs.

Satisfaction tools can serve two purposes. The first, of course, is to determine satisfaction with what has already been delivered. The second is to seek input from customers on what *should* be offered. In a survey of job seekers in one state, 73% of the respondents said they expected help in assessing their skills and understanding what jobs they were qualified for. Sixty percent thought someone should tell them what skills they need to improve in order to qualify for a better job, and 50% expected skills training. It would be easy to simply dismiss such input due to lack of sufficient staff resources to assess three-quarters of the job seekers who come to the center, but there are other ways to learn from and work with this input. A major problem in many centers is that customers have no idea what to expect. There is no service menu posted, and it is not clear what services can be accessed at what point. A private sector practice is that customers first get an explanation of what they are going to get; then those services are provided to them; then

satisfaction levels are assessed to see if they got what they were told they would get in a timely and satisfying way. If customers see skills assessment in your brochures and then can't find it when they get there, they are likely to be unhappy. If they understand that skills assessment is available if they are unable to find work in a reasonable period of time or have certain barriers, *and* they request such assessment, *and* they know an appointment will be necessary, then their expectations can be adjusted.

Good One-Stops use multiple means of measuring center-wide satisfaction and listening to the customer.

- ★ A One-Stop can measure satisfaction with core services, staff attitudes, and the facility with limited burden. Every staff person who works one-on-one with customers should have a succinct set of questions to pose to the job seeker at the end of their time together. This method ensures the highest rate of response. While a customer may not be totally honest in responding face-to-face, if this is just one of several ways satisfaction is measured, it still can add substantial information to the full picture.
- ★ Some One-Stops use an opinion meter. Standalone meters are positioned in one or more places in the facility. Job seekers voluntarily answer a small set of questions – perhaps 3 – and the meter tallies them. One office reported minimal use of the meters. Usage may vary depending on location in the office and how and when customers are encouraged to use it.
- ★ Opinion cards can be provided all over the office with multiple drop-off boxes. Staff can hand customers cards at the end of each personal interaction. One office reduces the burden on both customers and staff by doing this on a sample basis. The cards and boxes are used one week out of every month. During that week, there is a general “blitz” to get job seeker feedback.
- ★ Focus groups are a tremendous addition to the multiple methods of measuring satisfaction. The focus group session can combine use of a written survey (which can be longer than one used daily in the office) with a facilitator posing pre-developed questions designed to dig deeper into why participants may have responded the way they did.
- ★ Several states and One-Stops around the country are using mystery shoppers to look at the One-Stop through customers' eyes. The U.S. Department of Labor recently funded a pilot that used mystery shoppers familiar with the One-Stop system and what it provides, as well as shoppers who were completely unaware of the system's existence. A key learning that came out of the pilot is that it is important to identify and define beforehand what aspects of the service and facility you want shoppers to explore, and agree on how those service features will be rated. Board members' family members could be inexpensive mystery shoppers, and provide interesting feedback to the entity responsible for overseeing One-Stop quality.

Regardless of the methods used, good One-Stops *act* on the input. Too often, customer satisfaction results sit on a shelf.

A good One-Stop has a process for regularly analyzing customer feedback and input from multiple sources on at least a quarterly basis, and creating recommendations and assignments to implement those recommendations. If 73% of the customers expect a skills assessment, a computerized, self-serve skill assessment should be made available and prominently advertised. If customers expect or need someone to interpret the assessment for them, the assessment should end with an opportunity to make an appointment with a counselor. If there are no counselors at the One-Stop, the customer should be able to print the assessment and be given a list of places in the community – both no-fee and those that charge a fee – where the assessment can be taken for consultation. In other words, a good One-Stop finds ways to meet customers' expectations.

All good One-Stops measure customer satisfaction at the center level and design their services and delivery strategies in consultation with the job seekers. *Exceptional* One-Stops may also:

- **Measure satisfaction for both processes (services) and outcomes.** They want to know not only that they met a customer expectation effectively, but that they did it quickly and professionally. When asked on a survey what was the factor most likely to make them unhappy with One-Stop services, only 15% of job seeker respondents said not getting a job referral, while 60% said rude or unhelpful staff. A state agency noted in looking across satisfaction results and comparing them to outcome results that a One-Stop that had one of the lowest placement rates in the state had one of the highest customer satisfaction rates. Customers are pleased by *good service* and staff who *ask for their input and listen* even if they don't find a job. Process counts!
- **Exceptional One-Stops gather enough demographic data** in their customer satisfaction tools to enable them to disaggregate findings by different customer groups. Is the One-Stop satisfying the unemployed, but not the employed? Is it satisfying high school dropouts, but not college graduates? Are non-English speaking customers less likely to be satisfied than those who are fluent in English? Disaggregating the data can allow the One-Stop to target changes in operations for specific demographic groups.
- **An exceptional One-Stop also compares its levels of satisfaction with that of other public and private providers.** A survey or focus group question may be "have you ever used a temporary agency? A private employment agency? If so, how did their services compare to ours?" One state's job seeker survey revealed that 55% of respondents had

used a temporary agency to find work, and 14% had used outplacement firms.

■ A Good One-Stop Manages Job Seeker Services

It may be self-evident to say that job seeker services have to be managed, but One-Stops often manage *program* services rather than *job seeker* services. They may assume that all job seekers are Wagner-Peyser customers until otherwise proven eligible. In a good One-Stop, partners work together to ensure customer flow is efficiently designed and organized. They assume all job seekers are their potential customers until otherwise proven ineligible, so they have a vested interest in ensuring that all customers are served well. That's a major philosophical and attitudinal difference.

As described in the Benchmarking report, organizing the staff to manage job seeker services as a center rather than as individual programs can be done in different ways:

- ★ In the specialist approach, staff have unique service positions within the One-Stop. There may be staff who are fully dedicated to working the resource area, those who are consistently counselors or intake specialists, or those who specialize in a program such as WIA youth services. The specialist approach is the least integrated and least ideal, but it may be necessary when state policies inhibit multi-agency cost allocation. Sometimes, the One-Stop can only be as good as the state allows it to be.
- ★ When permissible, the generalist approach offers distinct advantages. The generalist follows a job seeker from resource room, to assessment, to enrollment in one or more programs, to follow-through. The customer has a single contact and a one-on-one relationship is developed. Advantages include a more seamless delivery from the customer's perspective, less staff burn-out, and reduced customer loss as they move from one referral point to another within the building.
- ★ A team approach can take the form of a functional team or case management team. A functional team is comprised of staff from multiple One-Stop partners who work on teams based on a specific services component. The most common is the business services team, but there are also resource room teams, job search teams, etc. The case management team approach is patterned after medical care, where a team of experts is assembled to meet the holistic needs of the patient. Several staff of different agencies with different functions in the One-Stop may meet regularly to assess a customer's case. Because the approach is fairly labor intensive, it works best in offices with smaller numbers of customers.

Part of managing job seeker services well is reducing bottlenecks and having contingency plans for periods of high traffic. Good One-Stops don't need a waiting area. The facility design fosters movement and ease of self-access, and there is always *something* constructive that a job seeker can be doing. Reading brochures while in the waiting area does not constitute constructive activity. Customers who have to do something bureaucratic, like filling out forms, should be directed to round work tables in the resource room, or to a classroom that is out of the general traffic flow, or sent to a kiosk or individual work station. The objective is not to let other job seekers walk in and immediately be faced with a line-up of other job seekers in a barren space, either unoccupied or doing routine paperwork. A facility that *looks* active is more likely to *be* active. An open, attractive, and professional center starts satisfying customers the minute they walk in the door.

A good One-Stop:

- ★ Looks inviting and organized because there are no lines and no waiting area. While playing a continuous loop orientation video in a reception area is better than nothing, better yet is to have a separate room designated as a "theater" where customers are sent for the express purpose of seeing the video. The video is not just an entertaining stop-gap measure used to cover the fact that what people are really doing is waiting; it has a purpose in overall client service design.
- ★ Tracks patterns of customer usage and makes staffing decisions accordingly to reduce any waiting times. If most people show up on Monday morning, the center uses flex time to open earlier on Mondays and increases the number of staff who are present (perhaps by drawing in staff from lesser used satellite locations, ensuring partners use that time for itinerant presence, or reassigning staff within the center from counseling to working the resource room).
- ★ Tracks local economic events and plans accordingly. If a large lay-off took place on Friday, the One-Stop center gears up for Monday morning. If the event is known about beforehand, the One-Stop makes plans to go on-site to deliver orientations, provide Internet access to register for work on laptop computers, and answer questions about unemployment. If the work-site itself isn't available, the One-Stop makes arrangements with a local organization to use their facility to expedite customer flow in order to keep crowds from forming lines in the One-Stop center. A key to effective customer flow that many One-Stops have discovered is moving Unemployment Insurance out of the building. As noted in the Benchmarking report, removing claims filing from the One-Stop is the biggest single lever of change in service focus and community image. UI drives a bureaucratic client flow, complete with ropes, lines, number systems, and waiting chairs. Contrary to frequently expressed fears, removing UI does not cause a drastic reduction in the number of customers. They still come in to register and look for work. Plus, a new clientele is attracted once the unemployment office stigma is dispelled.

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- ★ Conducts process mapping of its client flow. Process mapping outlines how customers move through the One-Stop services, where and how decisions are made, who makes them, and what the options are for the next step. Staff review the maps together to identify potential bottlenecks, service gaps, inefficient decision making points, duplication of effort, and steps that add no value to the customer. Common questions to be asked include:
 - Does the process promote errors or rework?
 - Are there unnecessary (non-value-added) steps?
 - Can activities be combined?
 - Should some processes be automated?
 - Can the number of decisions required be reduced without hurting the customer?
 - Could activities run parallel rather than in a series?
 - Is there a more effective means of transferring information or materials?
 - Are there places where roles and responsibilities are unclear?
 - ★ Uses well-constructed web sites, virtual resource rooms, and telephone systems to increase services available from customers' homes. This not only increases convenience for the job seeker, but reduces crowding and potential waiting at the center.

You cannot effectively manage what you don't measure. Managing job seeker services requires data on customer interactions, delivery of services, and outcomes.

There is more than one way to collect job seeker data. How it is done is not as important as doing it.

- ★ Many One-Stops have invested in swipe card systems. Job seekers are registered in a tracking database using minimal identifying information. Each time they use a service, their card is swiped. Managers can identify how many people use the resource room, and which resource room materials they used, allowing the One-Stop to invest more heavily in resources that are most popular. The system is also handy for tracking referrals between partners. That information can be used to correct a perceived lack of referrals, or to highlight the need for a certain partner to spend more time on-site if referrals are heavy.
- ★ One-Stops that can't afford swipe card systems have used paper systems. In one center, a resource room staffer carries a tally sheet around to note what resources customers are using and what kinds of questions they ask.
- ★ Some One-Stops use a sampling process where they may keep detailed paper records on service usage for one day a week, one week a quarter, or some other sampling basis.

■ A Good One-Stop Delivers Quality Services to Job Seekers

The resource room is the heart of the One-Stop. The Benchmarking study found that good One-Stops have well-equipped resource rooms that use customer-oriented, dedicated staff on a full time basis. There should be no barriers to use of the resources. This means:

- The resource room is in front where customers come in, not off to the side, in the back, behind the receptionist desk, or up the stairs. It is large enough that it can accommodate a peak load of users and customers can move around it easily.
- The resources are all in one place rather than spread throughout the building. Job seekers do not have to move from place to place to access everything and risk missing some resources all together.
- Internal signage is professional and easy to understand. There is clear and prominent signage for the job board, career videos, periodicals, area maps, fax/phone/and copier area, computers that are set up for work registration and that link to multiple job websites, computers that are set up for self assessments or tutorials, resume guides, workshop sign-up, and so forth. Customers may be greeted with a map that shows the physical layout of the various resources. The map may even be color-coded to match colors in signage and wall coverings to help customer negotiate the room more easily.
- Orientations are frequent, optional and encouraged, but no one is required to sit through one before being allowed to access the resources.
- Accommodations for individuals with disabilities are present in the form of workstations that are wheelchair accessible, large screen monitors, voice-to-print software, and so forth.

A One-Stop that has a large and well-stocked resource room will have little trouble with lines or wait times. There is always something of value that a job seeker can be doing.

Resource room staff must be well trained, knowledgeable about all the resources in the room, knowledgeable about all the programs and services in the center, and attuned to customer behaviors that may indicate a need for special attention or referral. As the heart of the One-Stop, this is the place where the highest caliber staff should be placed, not just convenient volunteers or program participants who staff it so the paid staff can do other work.

The One-Stop cannot be everything to everybody, so it needs lots of connections with other community services to ensure customers can access a comprehensive range of training and education services, and information about and referral to sources of related assistance.

One-Stops can be very creative in how they address a customer's holistic needs:

- ★ In one region, the One-Stop has a linkage with a local community clothes closet. The clothes closet provides attire suitable for interviewing to the One-Stop, which has a separate room for customers to “shop” and borrow what they need. This same center also obtains donations from local merchants to keep a cabinet of emergency supplies that includes baby formula and diapers, food, and personal hygiene items.
- ★ Many One-Stops have childcare areas where young children can be kept occupied while their parents use the facility's services. Toys are often donated or picked up by staff at garage sales. The area is staffed and may include career information geared to young children.
- ★ Yet another region partnered with a transportation entity, which actually became a partner on-site. Job seekers could find work and find a way to get to the job without leaving the building.
- ★ Centers that are unable to provide extended hours have partnered with libraries or community colleges to offer basic resource room services in the evenings or on weekends.

■ A Good One-Stop Designs and Manages the Center as a Business

Leadership

As in any business venture, leadership and management matter. Good One-Stops have a champion who cares about making the center work. Many times success has come from long-term relationships among the partners or with community leaders that allowed staff to focus on the customer instead of on protecting turf. There really is no adequate substitute for leadership. It cannot be legislated or created through policy. Regions that are not getting the quality or speed of One-Stop development they want should look to the board, operator, and partners first to determine whether the vision and the will is there to support a high performance operation. If leadership is not there, some changes may be in order.

Local workforce boards play a crucial leadership role. They can promote high quality through:

- ★ Using a collaborative approach to creating a vision for the system to inspire and achieve buy-in.
- ★ Collecting and interpreting workforce intelligence data that provides strategic direction and focus for the partners.
- ★ Chartering sites using a quality-based framework such as Baldrige, and not allowing sites to operate or use the brand name if they cannot achieve quality operations.
- ★ Requiring One-Stops to develop business plans that steer partners toward thinking about their markets, operational requirements, and management issues for the center as a whole rather than just their individual agencies and programs.
- ★ Maintaining an on-going quality dialogue with the operator that keeps the board's vision and expectations in the forefront. Good boards have a committee and/or staff liaison in regular contact with the operator.
- ★ Selecting an operator with leadership ability and entrepreneurial qualities. If the current operator entity or consortium cannot provide the level of leadership required, the board will either define a new consortium or competitively procure the leadership it needs.
- ★ Creating a board/operator agreement that includes obligations on both sides and spells out the roles each needs the other to play. A board's commitment to the operator may include:
 - Staff development
 - Technical assistance
 - Marketing of the brand name
 - Creating connections in the employer community
 - Centralized purchasing, if it is more efficient and cost-effective
 - Paying for a neutral manager who has no program responsibilities and can focus on the work of the center
 - Building new partnerships and relationships in the community
 - Grant writing to seek funds that expand One-Stop services and sustain the center
 - Working with state and federal agencies to remove barriers to integration.
- ★ Fostering a Memorandum of Understanding process that focuses on customers and their needs rather than on agencies and money.

The leadership of the One-Stop operator and partners is also critical to success. While long-standing and deep relationships are helpful, strong friendships do not necessarily translate into strong leadership if all the

partners are equally comfortable with the status quo. They must be equally interested in and committed to creating a high quality center.

Good One-Stop operators and partners demonstrate leadership by:

- ★ Involving frontline staff in visioning and planning.
- ★ Keeping the vision alive.
- ★ Conducting regular team meetings for making strategic decisions.
- ★ Having a tolerance for risk.
- ★ Empowering staff to create and implement new ideas.
- ★ Looking for ways to make things work rather than excuses for why they can't.
- ★ Modeling positive attitudes, collaboration, and customer focus for staff.
- ★ Learning from failure rather than laying blame.
- ★ Developing community relationships and using them to enhance One-Stop services.
- ★ Working in a positive manner with employee unions.
- ★ Creating new partnerships to bring more resources to bear on customer services.
- ★ Promoting the good of the One-Stop and the customer over the good of the agency and the program.

Good One-Stops enjoy strong board and operator leadership. *Exceptional* One-Stops benefit from local elected official support as well. Local elected officials can supply political clout to get things done, commit local tax dollars to sustaining the One-Stop, mediate turf issues, engage the One-Stop in economic development initiatives, link the center to community resources, and promote use of the system among constituents.

Management

Management of the One-Stop is closely related to leadership, although they are not the same thing. There are great leaders who cannot manage, and great managers who cannot lead. While the leader describes the destination and clears the path for getting there, good managers develop the map, find the best road, gauge the conditions, track progress, and keep looking for better paths.

Managers at good One-Stops:

- ★ Invest in and use management tools such as swipe card systems, integrated databases, or paper reporting systems; make mid-course corrections based on analysis of the data available.

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- ★ Plan for and invest in staff development. Individual agencies usually provide some level of training for their staff, often focusing on developing knowledge or skills that are very specific to the task at hand or understanding of the rules of their funding source. In a good One-Stop, managers:
 - Assess staff skills and assign staff accordingly. They don't assume that everyone has the right skills for the job. Business services team members need very different skills and aptitudes than case managers. Case managers need very different skills and aptitudes than trainers. Staff need to be assigned to functional teams and positions based on skills sets, not their content knowledge. Many One-Stops are finding that they can't reasonably use existing staff as business services team members because the right mind-set does not exist. They hire private sector people with pre-existing connections, experience, and aptitudes.
 - Place high caliber staff in business-critical functions. Many One-Stops are finding that the greeter and resource room staffing functions are business-critical. The success of the venture depends on how well they assist and move customers. Short-changing these functions does not make good business sense.
 - Invest in staff development across all programs. A functional team comprised of staff from a variety of agencies cannot have some trained and others not due to individual partner policies and budgets. Thinking creatively, some hire a trainer using funds from one program (a fixed cost regardless of the number of trainees) and then allow staff from other programs to participate. In a One-Stop that needed Microsoft Office training for all staff, the local community college agreed to provide the training with their instructors as part of their fair share of center costs. Good One-Stops have individual staff development plans and ensure the plans are carried out.
 - Provide meaningful cross-training. In too many centers, cross-training consists of a one-time event where staff of each agency take turns talking about their rules, policies, eligibility requirements, and service menus. In the best One-Stops, cross-training is on-going. Methods of accomplishing cross-training include job shadowing, pretending to be an applicant and being guided through the process, and internships where a staff person might actually work in another program area for several days.
 - Promote continuous improvement. Good centers perform annual self-assessments, seek third party evaluations, challenge staff to find better ways of doing things, and use data to determine whether changes have made an impact.
 - Seek new partners that can expand delivery capacity. They may find they need a partnership with the literacy council, food pantry, Small Business Administration, library, transportation authority, temporary agencies, rehabilitation facilities, mental health clinics, Hispanic league, or other organizations that can address the One-Stop's unique customer base.

While the above describes a good One-Stop, *exceptional* One-Stops:

- **Have a neutral center manager that works for the One-Stop, rather than a single program.** Managing a program detracts from focusing on the needs of the One-Stop, can lead to conflict of interest, and can cost the manager credibility with partner staff. In some cases, the board may provide the funds for a neutral manager. In other situations, the partners all contribute resources toward hiring a neutral person. The partners determine the job description, interview prospects, and make the hiring decision. In one model, the neutral manager works *for* the One-Stop's management team and carries out duties at their direction. In another model, the hired manager is expected to establish the direction and provide the leadership needed to advance the One-Stop.
- **Recruit partners based on the value they add, rather than because they are mandated.** Not every partner belongs in the One-Stop. It may actually be preferable to have a partner accessible only through technology – if its physical presence would affect the image of the center, reintroduce lines or waiting chairs, or negatively impact existing partnerships among staff. If a partner is not willing to share in the vision and is not committed to the success of the One-Stop, it has no business being there until further development takes place to align its goals with the center's.
- **Utilize technology to maximize effective service delivery.** In one region, the TANF provider was a desirable partner, but unable to physically collocate in the center. Webcams have been planned at both the One-Stop and the TANF site. Customers will be able to meet with TANF workers in real time without having to travel to another site.

Business Planning

The best One-Stops manage using a *business plan* to define what work needs to be accomplished, how it should be done, and who is responsible. The business plan is a comprehensive tool that can be used to push thinking about One-Stops as joint ventures and not merely agency collocations into common facilities. The business plan reinforces the role of the One-Stop within an overall regional workforce development plan. Good One-Stops review and update their business plan on a regular basis. Common elements of a business plan include:

- Defining the Business
- Products and Services
- Marketing Plan
- Management and Organizational Structure

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- Operational Plan
 - Measuring Success
 - Financial Plan
 - Continuous Improvement Plan

A survey of One-Stop operators around the country who have been required to develop business plans found that most discovered it to be a useful tool for everyday management. Their comments included:

- “The business plan should be your operational guide to management structure, service flow, and measured outcomes. The plan should resolve any disputes over agency responsibilities and service structure.”
- “The plan is the reference book for doing business throughout the year. The plan is looked at monthly by the One-Stop operator consortium to see if the goals established are being met. Also, to see if the partners are following through on their individual commitments for system support.”
- “It is a good reference point to measure where we have come from and a guide of where we plan to head. The mission and vision process add value to our operation and bring together a focus.”
- “We refer to it on a regular basis to keep our direction. We share it with staff and new partners.”

Exceptional One-Stops include financial strategies in their business plan that go beyond cost sharing among the partners to pay for existing costs. The financial plan outlines how the center will secure funds to sustain and grow services to meet community needs. Revenue generation approaches may include securing new partners, developing proposals to obtain grants, and fee-for-service strategies.

Measurement

Measurement is key to good management. However, the Benchmarking study found that none of the One-Stops examined had yet implemented center-wide or system measures that were meaningful beyond some basic customer satisfaction measures. The reason was not for lack of will, but for lack of data tools and agreement as to what constitutes meaningful measures on a center-wide level.

There is widespread interest in center-wide performance measures, particularly among private sector board members, but such measures have been difficult to produce. A General Accounting Office (GAO) report dated February, 2002 entitled “Improvements Needed in Performance Measures to Provide a More Accurate Picture of WIA’s Effectiveness” noted that “no



measures exist to assess how well the overall One-Stop systems are working.” The GAO observed that performance measures for different programs cannot be combined to obtain an overall view due to differences in definitions, and that it is difficult to even get an unduplicated count of job seekers using the One-Stops. GAO reiterated this finding in their June, 2003 report, “One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and Partnerships, but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed,” when they commented “... no system-wide data exists by which to judge the success of various One-Stop approaches... There are no overall One-Stop performance measures.”

Several states have struggled with One-Stop measurement, but very few have made any substantial progress. Even those that have implemented center-wide measures do not include every one of the mandated partner programs in the database.

Many progressive boards have moved to a *balanced scorecard* approach that includes “soft” indicators of success in addition to number counts and client outcomes. The scorecard indicators are linked to the board’s strategic objectives for the region and its system. An example of a balanced scorecard from Lake County, Illinois follows:

<u>Indicators that the One-Stop is Meeting the Economic needs of the COMMUNITY:</u>	<u>Indicators that the One-Stop is satisfying CUSTOMERS:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Fill rate of non-managerial job openings for new employer customers in three key industry sectors: health, manufacturing, technology.◆ Percent of target youth who have career plans for jobs in the three target industries.◆ Number and percent of job seekers enrolled in training through any partner resource that prepares them for occupations in the target industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Satisfaction of employers contacted by business teams in the three key sectors:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Satisfaction with single point of contact● Satisfaction with ease and simplicity of access● Satisfaction with ability to meet identified needs● Satisfaction with staff understanding of business needs● Satisfaction with referrals to other sources● Would they use the Job Center again● Were they made aware of Job Center services at time of initial contact◆ Satisfaction of the emerging workforce for youth in the target group:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Satisfaction with career planning assistance● Satisfaction with their case manager relationship

Indicators that the One-Stop is Meeting the Economic needs of the COMMUNITY:

Indicators that the One-Stop is satisfying CUSTOMERS:

- Satisfaction with networking opportunities
- Satisfaction with the training they receive beyond a high school diploma or GED.
- ◆ Satisfaction of job seekers who are enrolled in training for occupations in the key sectors
- ◆ Annual job seeker focus group at each One-Stop

Indicators that the One-Stop is LEARNING AND GROWING:

Indicators that the One-Stop is improving its internal BUSINESS PROCESSES and becoming more EFFICIENT:

- ◆ Staff satisfaction
- ◆ Annual center-wide meeting
- ◆ Non-duplicated count of staff who participated in training of any kind and the number of staff certifications awarded
- ◆ Design and implementation of a center-specific certified One-Stop worker designation.

- ◆ Development of key service offerings through a joint business plan among the partners that identifies how, when, and what services will be developed to satisfy the needs of the target employers. The plan will result in:
 - 72 initial employer presentations.
 - Of the 72, twenty-four employers will receive follow-up.
 - Of those 24, twelve employers that had not used the One-Stop before will utilize a Job Center service.
- ◆ Bring in at least one new non-mandatory partner that fits a perceived gap in services.

The workforce board for Michigan Works! Centers in Jackson, Lenawee, and Hillsdale Counties identified measures for employer services, job seeker services, and community awareness:

➤ **Employer Services**

- ◆ Employer satisfaction
- ◆ Employer usage
- ◆ Repeat Employer usage

➤ **Job Seeker Services**

- ◆ Customer Satisfaction 1 (collected at the time services are rendered)
- ◆ Customer Satisfaction 2 (conducted three months following receipt of services)

- ◆ Average wage and benefits at placement (disaggregated by program and degree)
- ◆ Job Seeker Usage 1 (number of first-time job seekers using the One-Stop compared to previous year)
- ◆ Job Seeker Usage 2 (number of first-time job seekers categorized by program)
- **Community Awareness**
 - ◆ Community awareness of One-Stop services (random sample survey)

Philadelphia's One-Stop measures include:

Outcomes for Employer Customers

- ◆ Employer satisfaction
- ◆ Repeat usage rate
- ◆ Market share

Outcomes for Individual Customers

- ◆ Entered employer rate
- ◆ Individual customer satisfaction
- ◆ Increased earnings
- ◆ Training-related placements
- ◆ Market share

Financial Viability

- ◆ Diverse core funding
- ◆ External fundraising
- ◆ Fee-for-service activities
- ◆ Cost per customer

Internal Controls

- ◆ Material audit findings
- ◆ Spending variation
- ◆ Customer/staff ratio
- ◆ Staff training/development

Marketing

Good One-Stops have a clear brand identity that the public knows and associates with quality. The brand name is particularly important when it can only be used by One-Stops that the board determines have met defined standards of excellence. When the name becomes meaningful, it also becomes desirable, and there is more motivation for partners to want to be part of the venture. Useful brand names are non-bureaucratic, short and convey what the center does. Examples are Career Link, Job Link, Work Source, WorkOne, and Michigan Works! Changing names when a One-Stop becomes a high performance, comprehensive center conveys to the public that this is no longer the unemployment office. To be of value, the brand name needs to be protected by a style guide in terms of color, font, usage, placement, and so forth in addition to being protected by its association with a quality operation. Investments have to be made in marketing the brand identity so the public becomes familiar with it. Memoranda of Understanding with partners should spell out how and when partners are expected to operate under the center brand, rather than their own.

In one region, the operator offers “logo wear” clothing to staff. The logo wear not only markets the name, but allows customers to distinguish the staff from other customers and ensures a professional appearance.

One state forbids the use of any name other than the One-Stop brand name on the building. In another, the partner agency names are permitted along with the brand, but they have to be smaller than the One-Stop name.

Some areas use marketing give-aways such as pens, mousepads, or coasters.

Protocols are needed for how staff answer phones in the One-Stop so that the brand name is always first.

One-Stop staff might have two business cards: one with the center’s brand name for working with employers or “universal” job seekers, and another with their own agency name when working with enrolled participants or when working out of another office.

An **exceptional One-Stop** will not only develop, protect, and market a brand name for generic marketing to the general public, but will also develop marketing materials that are geared toward specific service targets. There may be marketing strategies developed specific to employers in the health care industry; there may be strategies that target employers who are downsizing. Marketing to job seekers will be different depending on whether the One-Stop is trying to attract people who are working, but at low wages, or trying to attract a particular ethnic group.

III. Critical Success Factors and Indicators (Summary)

All eleven of the critical success factors are central to success, regardless of state or local policy context. The specific indicators, however, may vary among environments. Indicators shown in italics are those that are basic and essential, and applicable to most or all One-Stops. Other indicators are “supplemental;” they are good to have, but not necessarily central to success.

Critical Success Factors for Employers

Critical Success Factor 1: Satisfy Employers

Core Indicators

- Employer satisfaction is measured at the center level, not the program level.
- Service design and delivery strategies are developed in conjunction with employers.

Supplemental Indicators

- Customer behavior (e.g., repeat usage) is tracked as an indicator of satisfaction.
- Employer satisfaction is measured for both processes (services) and outcomes.
- Employer satisfaction data is disaggregated by size and/or industry type.

Critical Success Factor 2: Manage Employer Services

Core Indicators

- Employer services are a clear priority in a One-Stop, with dedicated staff time and resources supporting them.
- Employer services are managed as a single function using account representatives or similar approach.
- Employer services staff are focused on and knowledgeable about industries and employers important to the local economy.
- One-on-one relationships with employers are developed and nurtured.

Supplemental Indicators

- Niche market(s) served by One-Stop centers are identified/maintained.
- Data reflecting contacts, delivery of employer services, and outcomes is tracked, shared, and used to improve services and results.

Critical Success Factor 3: Deliver Quality Services to Employers

Core Indicators

- Services are designed around customers' requirements, rather than generic in nature.
- A "never say no" attitude is prevalent among employer services staff (i.e., the staff find ways to address an employer's needs either by developing new services or finding another partner or provider in the community who can address the needs).
- Other public intermediaries are perceived by the One-Stop as partners, not competitors.
- A sense of urgency and commitment to work in "real-time" is evident.

Supplemental Indicators

- Fee-for-service activities that meet specific employer needs are offered when appropriate for the local market and environment within which the One-Stop operates.

Critical Success Factors for Job Seekers

Critical Success Factor 4: Satisfy Job Seekers

Core Indicators

- Customer satisfaction is measured at the center level, not the program level.
- Service design and delivery strategies are developed in consultation with job seekers.

Supplemental Indicators

- Customer satisfaction is measured for both processes (services) and outcomes.
- Variations in levels of satisfaction among different customer groups are tracked, examined, and acted upon.

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- The center's customer satisfaction level is compared with that of other public and private providers.

Critical Success Factor 5: Manage Job Seeker Services

Core Indicators

- The center manages job seeker services as an integrated function or functions.
- The One-Stop center appears inviting, organized, and professional.
- Customer flow is efficient, enabling customers to get their needs met quickly.
- Peak loads are well-managed (strategies are in place).
- There are few physical barriers.
- Data reflecting customer interactions, delivery of services, and outcomes is tracked, shared, and used to improve services and results.

Critical Success Factor 6: Deliver Quality Services to Job Seekers

Core Indicators

- The resource room is the focal point for services and activity.
- Customers can access a comprehensive menu of training and education services and information about, and referral to, sources of related assistance (e.g., housing, transportation).

Critical Success Factors in One-Stop Design and Management

Critical Success Factor 7: Provide Leadership

Core Indicators

- The workforce investment board exhibits strong leadership.
- The One-Stop operator exhibits strong leadership.

Supplemental Indicators

- Local elected officials demonstrate support of the One-Stop system.

Critical Success Factor 8: Manage the Center and Staff

Core Indicators

- Front line staff and partners are involved in visioning and planning with the One-Stop manager.
- Regular staff development occurs.
- Investments are made in management tools.
- Continuous quality improvement processes are in place.
- Partnerships enhance services and delivery capacity, enabling the One-Stop to better meet customer needs.

Supplemental Indicators

- The center manager is neutral; i.e., he/she works for the One-Stop, rather than for a single program.
- Partners are recruited based on the value they add, or developed to maximize their effectiveness.
- Technology is used effectively to deliver and manage services.

Critical Success Factor 9: Develop a Business Plan

Core Indicators

- A center-wide business plan guides day-to-day operations and decision-making.
- The business plan is reviewed and updated regularly.

Supplemental Indicators

- Financial strategies are developed for sustaining and growing services to meet community needs.

Critical Success Factor 10: Measure Progress and Outcomes

Core Indicators

- Center-wide measures are used in center and program management, supported by integrated information systems to which multiple program partners have access.

Supplemental Indicators

- The center benchmarks its performance against that of other One-Stops and providers.

Critical Success Factor 11: Market the One-Stop

Core Indicators

- Clear brand identity exists or is under development.

Supplemental Indicators

- The One-Stop identifies and strategically pursues service niches.

IV. Policymakers' Guide to Using Critical Success Factors in Improving One-Stops

Introduction

Considerable materials have been produced over the years that address One-Stop quality. There have been guidebooks, self-assessments, case studies, survey results, and, of course, the Benchmarking report. This guidebook differs from the others in that:

- It is based on the Critical Success Factors identified in the Benchmarking study, and revised through analysis of other state and local quality criteria.
- It presents options and considerations for policymakers as they develop their own criteria, rather than assuming that one size fits all.

While the primary purpose of the guide is to assist state and local boards in the improvement of One-Stop centers and systems, a secondary purpose is to provide guidance for developing criteria that can be used in certification or chartering of centers. As used in the workforce development industry, a charter is an agreement between the WIB and One-Stop operator and affiliated sites that:

- Outlines roles and responsibilities of each party.
- Transfers certain privileges or authorities to the operator or affiliate as a result of meeting quality criteria outlined by the board.

The charter agreement is similar to the board/operator agreement, except that it goes a step further and requires that specified criteria for excellence be met. Additionally, the *process* of chartering is just as important in quality management as the charter itself. The process:

- Involves the WIB, the partners, and the community in establishing expectations of quality and clearly defines those expectations in the form of **criteria**.
- Frames a **quality dialogue** between the WIB and partner/affiliate that goes beyond a simple reporting of numbers and standards.
- Opens the door for **new providers and partnerships** to enter the delivery system since the focus is on meeting criteria rather than on who the providers are.
- Requires applicants to develop **business plans** that outline their business objectives, business practices, and operational plans.

Chartering has been used in the One-Stop career center environment for many years, although states and boards that use it are still in the minority. A

few states have mandated that workforce investment boards charter the One-Stops in their respective areas, notably North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Indiana. Other boards have independently taken it upon themselves to charter One-Stops in order to improve the quality of operations and clearly communicate their expectations.

How This Guide is Organized

The guide provides policy considerations for core indicators; i.e., those indicators of success that are important in any context. The supplemental indicators identified in the previous section are those indicators that are of a higher level, and which may be contextual depending on local conditions. Ordinarily, you would not expect any supplemental indicators in a One-Stop that had not yet demonstrated core indicators.

The guide sets forth:

- The 11 critical success factors for One-Stops; e.g., satisfy employers.
- For each of the 11 success factors, the core indicators of that factor; e.g., employer satisfaction is measured at the center level, not the program level.
- For each core indicator, the kinds of questions policymakers need to consider when establishing their specific quality criteria; e.g., what is meant by center-level?
- A suggestion of what an excellent center may look like; e.g., employer satisfaction is assessed in multiple ways, which may include surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.

If a state or local board has already established quality criteria, it may find that existing criteria fit very well within these success factors and no additional action is needed. Or, the board may choose to expand or supplement existing criteria using the recommendations here. The matrix included on the www.skilledwork.org website of national organization, state, and locally developed criteria compared to the critical success factors clearly shows the alignment of the various definitions of success around the country, and how other boards have built detail around universal indicators.

If a state or local board has not yet defined quality criteria, this tool will help guide you through the process. Ideally, state and local boards should consider these issues *together*, with the state providing overall vision and direction and removal of state legislative and policy barriers, and the local boards designing specific, locally-relevant criteria within the broad policy direction provided by the state.

Critical Success Factors and Core Indicators

Critical Success Factor 1: Satisfy Employers

CORE INDICATOR 1. EMPLOYER SATISFACTION IS MEASURED AT THE CENTER LEVEL, NOT THE PROGRAM LEVEL.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What is meant by center-level? Does it include any activity by any partners who participate at any time in the One-Stop, or only the activity of the programs that are on-site full time? (For example, if Job Corps comes once a month to recruit youth, are the employers with whom they work outside of the One-Stop environment included in satisfaction measures?)
2. Will satisfaction only address activity that happens in personal interactions, or does it include services like web-based interactions? If web-based, are those services within the control of the One-Stop (e.g., many employers will only access the system through the internet to place a job order, but the job order system is designed and managed by the state, not the One-Stop).
3. Will you include soft measures such as focus group results, or only hard measures, such as surveys? What will those soft measures look like?
4. What are the components of satisfaction that will be measured (e.g., response time, staff attitudes, staff knowledge, quality of referrals, speed of referrals, follow-up to referrals, quality of customized training, etc.). How do those components relate to what employers have described as the satisfaction elements that are most important to them?
5. How will you accommodate a variety of options for managing employer services? For example, if employer services in a local area are contracted to an entity outside the One-Stop or centrally managed by the WIB, how does that impact quality assessment considerations for the One-Stop as it relates to satisfying employers?
6. What are the points at which satisfaction will be measured? Annually or more frequently? At time of contact, within a certain number of days of service delivery, or at completion of services? What constitutes completion of services?
7. Will all employers' satisfaction be measured? A random sample? Only for employers in targeted industries? Only for employers who received specific services?

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8. Who will conduct measurements of satisfaction? How will they be financed? Is the proposed measurement feasible and affordable, or do other methods need to be found?

In an excellent center:

- All mandatory partners use the same employer satisfaction tools, so results reflect the collective performance of the One-Stop rather than any individual program
- Employer satisfaction is assessed in multiple ways, which may include surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.
- A process is in place for regularly analyzing the results and acting on the analysis. Partners are involved in the analysis and action decisions.

CORE INDICATOR 2. SERVICE DESIGN AND DELIVERY STRATEGIES ARE DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH EMPLOYERS.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What is the expectation for consulting with employers? Is contact with employers on the WIB enough, or does the One-Stop need more?
2. Are multiple methods of consulting with employers expected? For example, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, surveys, etc. If so, how many employers and how often?
3. Is there an expectation that consultation with employers includes those who do not currently use the One-Stop? Does it include all employers, or just those most likely to use One-Stop services?
4. How will you determine whether there is a link between what employers say they need and what the One-Stop offers? What evidence are you looking for?
5. If the WIB is the source of consultation with employers based on local decisions regarding management of employer services, how does that impact the certification criteria for One-Stops?

In an excellent center:

- The center's menu of employer services is based on what employers say they need.
- Services are delivered in ways that employers say works best for them.
- The One-Stop actively seeks out employer input into design and delivery through multiple means, which may include focus groups, one-on-one interviewing, and surveys.

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- Information gathered to measure employer satisfaction is used in design and delivery strategies.
 - Input is sought from employers in a variety of industries, from employers of a variety of sizes, and with a variety of types and levels of occupations.
 - Input is sought from employers who do not currently use the One-Stop.

Critical Success Factor 2: Manage Employer Services

Core Indicator 1. Employer services are a clear priority in the center with dedicated staff time and resources supporting them.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What exactly is an “employer service” so that dedicated staff know what falls within the umbrella of their dedicated time?
2. What is dedicated staff time? Does it have to be full time dedication, or can there be a larger number of people, each with a certain amount of dedicated hours?
3. How much dedicated time and resources is enough? Will it be determined based on a proportion of all center staff, or percentage of all number of hours worked by any partner in the center, or percentage of funds allocated to any partner who spends any time in the center?
4. Do the dedicated staff have to be located in the One-Stop? Do they have to be specific to the One-Stop, or can they work for multiple centers or operators (and thus not be full time for any one center)?

In an excellent center:

- There are business services staff whose primary responsibility is meeting the needs of business.
- Funds are identified in the One-Stop budget to support business services, not only in terms of staff time, but also in postage, travel, database support, etc. There is a rationale for the amount of time or staff that is dedicated to business services compared to job seeker services.
- When resources are reduced, business services is not considered an expendable luxury. If at all, business services’ budget is reduced only in proportion to reductions in job seeker services.

Core Indicator 2. Employer services are managed as a single function using account representatives or a similar approach.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What does it mean to be “managed as a single function?” Is there one person designated as manager or team leader for the team? What level of management authority does that person need to have to say it is managed as a single function?
2. If one partner volunteers to provide all the employer services staff, the service will be managed as a single function, but only include staff from one partner. Is that acceptable, as long as it is a single function?
3. If other partners are required to participate on the team for it to be considered a quality team, what level of participation is expected? From how many partners? What if they don’t have the resources to participate?
4. If partners participate on a business services team while they are in the One-Stop, but also maintain employer service functions apart from the team back in their home office, is that acceptable? If the operator cannot control what partners do back at their home offices, resulting in management as a ‘multi-function,’ will that have any impact on whether the One-Stop can get certified?
5. For the approach to be considered a single function, do the team members have to use identical business cards and stationary?

In an excellent center:

- A business services team exists that is made up of dedicated staff from any partner that works with employers.
- There is one manager or team leader who oversees the business services function, regardless of how many partner agencies participate on the team or in the One-Stop. The manager can make assignments and deploy staff as needed to meet employers’ needs. The manager can expect staff to develop certain skills and can remove staff who do not have those skills from the team.
- The functional team is organized using an account representative approach. The team members have geographic and/or industry specialties, and they are the primary contact point for employers in that industry or geography.

Core Indicator 3. Employer services staff are focused on and knowledgeable about industries and employers important to the local economy.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Whose responsibility is it to identify economy-critical industries and employers? If it is the WIB's responsibility, how will that impact the certification decision for the One-Stop if the WIB has not done its job?
2. What evidence will you look for that demonstrates that an analysis substantiates the industries and employers selected for focus?
3. What do you expect staff to know and understand about specific industries or specific employers? How do you anticipate they will collect data to add to that knowledge?

In an excellent center:

- Business services staff keep up-to-date on the economic trends that affect their region and industries, including the broad picture, not just their geographic or industry specialties.
- Staff don't scatter their efforts. They pay the most attention to employers in the industries that are most critical to maintaining and growing the local economy. This decision is based on labor market data.
- Staff work with economic developers to share information and insights, and align industry targets.
- Business services staff add to the One-Stop center's general wealth of knowledge by summarizing and sharing key issues they learn about from data, reading, and personal contacts.

Core Indicator 4. One-on-one relationships with employers are developed and nurtured.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Does one-on-one imply one person assigned to one employer, or can there be a team of two or more assigned to an employer that collectively develop a relationship?
2. How should relationships be nurtured? Is there an expectation for a certain number of contacts with an employer in a given time period? Can the contacts be by phone or e-mail? How many, if any, have to be in-person?
3. Is there a back-up plan for when the person who has built the relationship with the employer is not available?

In an excellent center:

- Business services staff spend more time at employers' places of work than they do at the One-Stop.
- Visits and relationships are maintained even when an employer has no job openings. There are other services the One-Stop can provide.
- Employers know their account representative by name, and business team members know their accounts by name.

Critical Success Factor 3: Deliver Quality Services to Employers

Core Indicator 1. Services are designed around customers' requirements, rather than generic in nature.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What is the difference between a generic and a customized service?
2. How far can the One-Stop go in developing customized services before it becomes cost prohibitive?
3. How are customer requirements defined? Is there a format or protocol?

See: "Service design and delivery strategies are developed in consultation with employers."

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Core employer services are a starting point, not the end point, of service design.
- Staff use a prescribed format and protocol for eliciting information from employers about their design requirements.
- Staff have a process for turning design requirements into service delivery mechanisms.

See: "Service design and delivery strategies are developed in consultation with employers."

Core Indicator 2. A "never say no" attitude is prevalent among employer services staff (i.e., the staff find ways to address an employer's needs either by developing new services or finding another partner or provider in the community who can address the needs).

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What would a "never say no" attitude look like in reality? What behavior would lead an employer to agree that the staff express this attitude?
2. Are there any state or local policies among any of the partners that could potentially impact this attitude being evident (e.g., prohibitions

against staff bringing in a for-profit private sector partner from the community)? Is it really a policy issue, or is it a staff interpretation issue? If it is a real issue, how can the policy be changed?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Staff see themselves in a broker role. The idea is to meet employers' needs, not to be the sole source of services.
- Staff approach an employer believing they are there to meet the employer's needs, not to "sell" their own services.
- Even if a One-Stop provides a certain service – like job matching – staff will encourage an employer to use other, non-One-Stop services if another entity can meet the employer's needs better than the One-Stop can. For example, if staff know that their database of job seekers is unlikely to generate sufficient matches for an employer seeking a highly specialized set of skills, they may refer the employer to specialty job boards on the internet.

Core Indicator 3. Other public intermediaries are perceived by the One-Stop as partners, not competitors.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Who are the other public intermediaries? Which ones are appropriate for the One-Stop to partner with, considering the local priorities and customer base? (Other public intermediaries may include schools, public assistance offices, economic development entities, etc.).
2. What level of partnership is possible? How do other intermediaries perceive the One-Stop? As a partner or a competitor? If the One-Stop is perceived as a competitor, why is that so?
3. Who should take responsibility for developing new partnerships in the community? What are the roles of the board versus the One-Stop?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- The roles of the board and the One-Stop are clearly spelled out in a board/operator agreement.
- Staff take time to identify, learn about, and develop personal relationships with other public intermediaries.
- Staff not only develop partnerships between the One-Stop and other intermediaries, but also foster partnerships among the intermediaries themselves.

Core Indicator 4. A sense of urgency and commitment to work in “real time” is evident.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What would a sense of urgency and commitment look like in reality? What behavior would lead an employer to agree that the staff express this commitment?
2. Are there any state or local policies among any of the partners that could potentially impact fast service (e.g., a requirement that un-empowered staff run everything that is not generic through a hierarchy of decision making)? Is it really a policy issue, or is it a staff interpretation issue? If it is a real issue, how can the policy be changed?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Staff are empowered to make decisions on the spot (within broad parameters) in order to meet a customer’s needs.
- Staff don’t tell an employer in a hurry that his/her job order has to be held for 48 hours before it gets openly posted.
- Staff will “go the extra mile” to satisfy their customers. This may include working on a weekend or in the evening to get the job done.
- Staff have the tools they need while in an employer’s place of business to fulfill the sense of urgency (e.g., cell phones, laptops loaded with appropriate tools, information at their fingertips).

Critical Success Factor 4: Satisfy Job Seekers

Core Indicator 1. Customer satisfaction is measured at the One-Stop level, not the program level.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What is meant by “center-level?” Does it include any activity by any partners who participate at any time in the One-Stop, or only the activity of the programs that are on-site full time? (For example, if vocational rehabilitation comes once a week to serve individuals with disabilities, are the participants with whom they work outside of the One-Stop environment included in satisfaction measures?)
2. Will satisfaction only address activity that happens in personal interactions, or does it include services like web-based interactions? If web-based, are those services within the control of the One-Stop (e.g., many job seekers will only access the system through the internet, but

the job matching system is designed and managed by the state, not the One-Stop).

3. Will you include soft measures such as focus group results, or only hard measures, such as surveys? What will those soft measures look like?
4. What are the components of satisfaction that will be measured (e.g., staff attitudes, staff knowledge, accuracy of information provided about the job, speed of service in the One-Stop, quality of resource room materials, etc)? How do those components relate to what job seekers have described as the satisfaction elements that are most important to them?
5. How will you accommodate a variety of options for managing job seeker services? For example, if intensive services in a local area are contracted to an entity outside the One-Stop, how does that impact quality assessment considerations for the One-Stop as it relates to satisfying job seekers?
6. What are the points at which satisfaction will be measured? Annually or more frequently? At time of contact, within a certain number of days of service delivery, or at completion of services? What constitutes completion of services?
7. Will all job seekers' satisfaction be measured? A random sample? Only for job seekers in targeted demographic groups? Only for job seekers who received specific services, such as a resume workshop?
8. Who will conduct measurements of satisfaction? How will it be financed? Is the proposed measurement feasible and affordable, or do other methods need to be found?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- All mandatory partners use the same job seeker satisfaction tools, so results reflect the collective performance of the One-Stop, rather than any individual program. The common process may only be for a certain set of services, such as core services, while partners continue to use their own tools for individuals who enroll in their programs for more intensive services.
- Job seeker satisfaction is assessed in multiple ways, which may include surveys, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews.
- A process is in place for regularly analyzing the results and acting on the analysis. Partners are involved in the analysis and action decisions.

Core Indicator 2. Service design and delivery strategies are developed in consultation with job seekers.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What is the expectation for consulting with job seekers?
2. Are multiple methods of consulting with job seekers expected? For example, focus groups, one-on-one interviews, surveys, etc.? If so, how many job seekers and how often?
3. Is there an expectation that consultation with job seekers includes those who do not currently use the One-Stop? Does it include all job seekers, or just those most likely to use One-Stop services?
4. How will you determine whether there is a link between what job seekers say they need and what the One-Stop offers? What evidence are you looking for?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- The One-Stop's menu of job seeker services is based on what job seekers say they need.
- Services are delivered in ways that job seekers say works best for them, and there may be a variety of delivery methods to satisfy different delivery preferences.
- The One-Stop actively seeks out job seeker input into design and delivery through multiple means, which may include focus groups, one-on-one interviewing, and surveys.
- Information gathered to measure job seeker satisfaction is used in design and delivery strategies.
- Input is sought from job seekers in a variety of ethnic groups, employment status, educational backgrounds, age levels, and occupational backgrounds.
- Input is sought from job seekers who do not currently use the One-Stop.

Critical Success Factor 5: Manage Job Seeker Services

Core Indicator 1. The One-Stop manages job seeker services as an integrated function or functions.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What are the identifiable functions in serving job seekers that must be managed (e.g., self-service, intake, assessment, case management,

training, follow-up)? Should each function be managed independently, or managed collectively as “job seeker services?”

2. Who actually manages the function? Can the function manager manage across multiple program staff? If not, why not? Are there state or local policies that prohibit functional management, or is it a matter of staff perception? If the issue is real, what can be done to change the policy?
3. How should the functional manager be accountable for performance? How do you determine whether an individual function is managed well?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Key functions have been identified and there are “process champions” or managers for business critical functions.
- Each function is managed as a whole for the One-Stop. While a manager may have to manage across the rules of various programs, the overall function is still considered a single process.
- The role of the functional manager has been defined. The functional manager provides day-to-day supervision of all staff who perform the function, even though formal supervision (hiring, firing, appraisal) may be done by an agency supervisor of record. The formal supervisor confers with the functional manager in writing performance appraisals.

Core Indicator 2. The One-Stop appears inviting, organized, and professional.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What should be the standards for an inviting and professional appearance? What are the implications for internal signage, furniture, flooring, wall coverings, wall hangings, lighting, layout, visibility of staff personal items, and staff dress code? How will you define these standards in a way that staff can translate into action?
2. Are there individual partner agency policies that may conflict with raising One-Stop standards? If so, how can those policies be changed?
3. Is there an expectation for a facility manager or facility committee? Who is accountable for problems with the appearance of the One-Stop?
4. If funding is required to upgrade the One-Stop to meet professional standards, where will the funding come from? What should be the responsibility of each partner in enhancing the appearance of the One-Stop?

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5. Is the building itself an issue? Is the site not amenable to upgrading? If so, what will be required to identify a better facility and gain support and funding for the move? What are the “specs” needed for the new facility? How will the location for the new facility be determined in a customer-focused way?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- The appearance compares favorably with other public venues, such as libraries and with private sector sites. Customers cannot come in and immediately identify the center as a “government unemployment office.” The appearance of the One-Stop is such that any staff or board member would be happy to refer one of his or her family members.
- The space appears clean and open as customers gaze across it.
- A facility team comprised of staff from all partners sets agreed upon standards that everyone buys into. The team develops its own internal policing so that managers don’t have to.
- Staff are distinguishable from the customers by name tags. The facility team may also set standards for staff attire and rules of behavior, which may include: no cell phones while in the building; no eating in public view; no chewing gum while talking to customers; all customers greeted by name, if known.

Core Indicator 3. Customer flow is efficient, enabling customers to get their needs met quickly: peak loads are well managed and there are few physical barriers.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. How accessible is the facility? Is the One-Stop not just ADA compliant, but also ADA friendly? What standards should be set beyond the minimum required for accessibility and user-friendliness for all customers?
2. What should be the expectations for “wait times?” How might customers be occupied through a variety of options to minimize or eliminate wait times?
3. Are contingency plans in place for when customer numbers peak? What should be the trigger points for setting a contingency plan in place?
4. Where are the potential bottlenecks? (e.g., only one person has the authority to approve training plans and a large local lay-off will cause many people to be seeking training in a short time period). How can

bottlenecks be eliminated? What expectations might be described for eliminating bottlenecks?

5. How can expectations be set for enabling customers to get their needs met quickly without making a perverse incentive to get customers out the door before all their needs have been addressed? Are there state or local policies or measurements that motivate staff to short-change customers (e.g., counseling sessions can't last longer than 10 minutes, or customers may use the computer for only 20 minutes, etc.). If such policies exist and they conflict with good customer service, how can those policies be changed?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Customers can flow freely through public areas without having to get permission from staff people to utilize various self-service options.
- Contingency plans are in place, not only for when customer loads peak, but also for when various staff are sick or on vacation.
- There is no staff person who is the single repository of knowledge for a given program or service; everyone has a "back up."
- Process mapping has been used to identify potential bottlenecks, and decision-making processes are changed to reduce the problem.
- Customers do not have any down time. If they have to wait for an appointment or for a workshop to start, there is always something for them to do and someone to guide them in doing it. Any necessary wait times are tracked for frequency and length; staff try options to reduce wait times and measure again to see if their strategies have been effective.
- Efficiency is not equated with hurrying customers.

Core Indicator 4. Data reflecting customer interactions, delivery of services, and outcomes is tracked, shared, and used to improve services and results.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What kind of data systems are in place that can track customers across all programs? Can center-wide data be generated so that it can be managed?
2. What is the minimal data that should be tracked to enable the One-Stop to manage against objectives? If there is no unified tracking system, are there state or local policies among the partners that would prohibit implementing such a system? How can those policies be changed?

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3. What should be the expectation for review and action on the data? What continuous improvement strategies and plans should be evident?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Unduplicated counts of total center customers are possible, as well as unduplicated counts of which services customers use and how often they use them.
- Outcomes are compared to service strategies. For example, are people who receive orientations more likely to return? Are people who participate in interviewing workshops more likely to get a job than those who don't?
- A management team convenes at regular intervals to review the data and discuss the implications for service delivery. Changes in the service mix or service sequence are made and results are measured again.
- Meeting performance standards is never good enough. Staff continually use data to improve over prior performance

Critical Success Factor 6: Deliver Quality Services to Job Seekers

Core Indicator 1. The resource room is the focal point for services and activity.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Are there state minimums for resource room content, staffing, and activity? To what degree can a local WIB "raise the bar" by adding to the state minimums?
2. Does the facility lend itself to a prominent, up-front, easy-to-access resource room where all self-serve resources are gathered so that customers can readily find and access all services? If not, are there barriers to changing the facility? If so, what steps need to be taken to find a new facility? What "specs" should there be for the resource room in the ideal facility?
3. What should be the expectations for obtaining customer input on resource room content, services, and layout?
4. Is there value to using a mystery shopper to explore the resource room (and the rest of the One-Stop!) to provide feedback on its utility and accessibility?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- The resource room is the heart of the One-Stop. It is the first thing the customer sees when he/she walks in the door, and the customer is repeatedly reintroduced to it during his/her service period.
- The customer can access all “self serve” resources in a single area, without having to roam through the center.
- All services and materials of the resource room are clearly marked and easy to use. Resources are available in multiple media, in more than one language, and in ways accessible to individuals with disabilities.
- Arrangements are made with local schools to take students on field trips to the resource room so they learn to view the One-Stop as a resource for their career planning.
- The resource room is staffed at all times with sufficient personnel to provide attention as needed to customers. Contingency plans are in place to shift staff to the resource room when usage is heavy.
- Resource room staff are highly knowledgeable of all the materials in the room.

Core Indicator 2. Customers can access a comprehensive menu of training and education services and information about, and referral to, sources of related assistance (e.g., housing, transportation).

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What are the minimums for a “comprehensive menu?” What public and private training and education services should be included that are not part of the One-Stop system?
2. How should customers be able to view or access the menu? Should it exist in multiple formats? What format or formats should be used?
3. Should there be minimum expectations for a referral mechanism to sources of assistance both in and out of the One-Stop? What are the minimums?
4. Should there be minimum expectations for resource mapping to identify community resources?
5. What level of knowledge should staff have about the comprehensive menu? Which staff need that knowledge, and how can it be attained?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Resource mapping has been done to identify education, training, and supportive service resources in the region, and surrounding regions, in

recognition of the fact that people live and work without regard to artificial workforce area boundaries.

- The resource inventory is organized at a minimum by county, but wherever possible by city or town.
- Geographic mapping has been done so both customers and staff can visualize at a glance where certain resources are physically located in relationship to the One-Stop, or in relationship to where they live.
- Staff compare the physical location of resources to the density of where customers live, work, or conduct business to determine if there are gaps or barriers in accessibility. Physical locations are also plotted along public transportation routes.
- Resource inventories are available on an interactive website that allows customers and staff to search for a resource by type and location.
- Resource inventories include access information; i.e., the process and requirements for eligibility
- Resources available within the One-Stop itself are prominently posted as a menu, perhaps as a menu board. The resources are not identified by funding stream or agency name, but by what the service actually *is* in a way that customers would recognize and find meaningful.
- Formal referral mechanisms are in place both internally and externally to ensure customers do not “fall through the cracks” in moving from one resource to another.

Critical Success Factor 7: Provide Leadership

Core Indicator 1. The workforce investment board exhibits strong leadership.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What should be the expectations for the WIB to demonstrate leadership with regards to the One-Stop? What would be evidence of that leadership?
2. What should be the expectations for the WIB to demonstrate leadership in working with local elected officials, particularly with regards to establishing criteria and certifying One-Stop centers?
3. How should the board model “high quality” itself? What are the characteristics of a high quality board?
4. How does the board evidence leadership without crossing over into operations?

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5. How do you clearly separate the roles of the WIB and the One-Stop operator and partners? What should be the minimum content of a board/operator agreement?
 6. Will the board certify or charter One-Stops for excellence? If so, how will the criteria be established? What are the expectations for including the partners in setting the criteria? How will the actual application and review processes be handled? Will satellite or branch offices also be certified or chartered? How will their service minimums differ from that of the comprehensive One-Stop?
 7. What is the board's authority for corrective action – up to and including closure – for One-Stops that do not meet or maintain quality expectations? Is there a date by which all centers must be certified or chartered?
 8. How will high quality One-Stops be designated as such to the public? Through a brand name? Through a “star” system? A certificate on the wall? How will it be marketed?
 9. What are the state and local board roles for overseeing the quality of the One-Stop? How are those roles defined?
 10. What center-wide and/or system-wide performance measures will be established? How will those measures be linked to the board's strategic goals for the region? What will be the incentives for exceeding expected performance? Will there be any sanctions for poor performance? How will incentives and sanctions apply across the center and all partners?
 11. Are there any state policies that limit the authority or oversight ability of the WIB to promote high quality? If so, how can those barriers be removed, or perceived barriers overcome?
 12. How should the state address the issue of boards that fail to attain high quality themselves? How can the state and local boards work collaboratively to define high quality boards and outline the applicable incentives and sanctions?

In an excellent One-Stop, the workforce investment board:

- Uses a collaborative approach to creating a vision for the system to inspire and to achieve buy-in.
- Collects and interprets workforce intelligence data that provides strategic direction and focus for the partners.
- Charters or certifies sites using a quality-based framework such as Baldrige, and doesn't allow sites to operate or use the “brand name” if they cannot achieve quality operations.

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- Requires One-Stop centers to develop business plans that steer partners toward thinking about their markets, operational requirements, and management issues for the center as a whole rather than just their individual agencies and programs.
 - Creates a balanced dashboard of center-wide performance measures that are linked to the board's strategic direction.
 - Maintains an on-going quality dialogue with the operator that keeps the board's vision and expectations in the forefront. Good boards have a committee and/or staff liaison in regular contact with the operator.
 - Selects an operator with leadership ability and entrepreneurial qualities. If the current operator entity or consortium cannot provide the level of leadership required, the board will either define a new consortium or competitively procure the leadership it needs.
 - Creates a board/operator agreement that includes obligations on both sides and spells out the roles each needs the other to play
 - Fosters a Memorandum of Understanding process that focuses on customers and their needs, rather than on agencies and money.

Core Indicator 2. The One-Stop operator exhibits strong leadership.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What are the characteristics of strong operator leadership? What would be evidence of that leadership?
2. How should the operator be expected to model leadership for the other partners?
3. How do you clearly define the role of the operator, separate from that of the partners? How do you define accountability of the operator and that of the individual partners?
4. What does "staff empowerment" look like in reality? Are there any state or local policies that negatively impact staff empowerment? If so, how can those barriers be removed?

In an excellent One-Stop, the operator:

- Involves frontline staff in visioning and planning.
- Keeps the vision alive.
- Conducts regular team meetings for making strategic decisions.
- Has a tolerance for risk.
- Empowers staff to create and implement new ideas.

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- Looks for ways to make things work, rather than excuses for why they can't.
 - Models positive attitudes, collaboration, and customer focus for staff.
 - Learns from failure rather than laying blame.
 - Develops community relationships and uses them to enhance One-Stop services.
 - Works in a positive manner with employee unions.
 - Creates new partnerships to bring more resources to bear on customer services.
 - Promotes the good of the One-Stop and the customer over the good of the agency and the program.

Critical Success Factor 8: Manage the One-Stop

Core Indicator 1. Front line staff and partners are involved in visioning and planning.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What are the minimum expectations for frontline staff and partner involvement? Who are the frontline staff? Are they only staff at a certain level and above? Does it include clerical workers? Does it include only staff who work full time in the One-Stop, or also those who are itinerant? Who are the partners? Does that mean only the managers of partner resources, or also their staff? Does it mean only those partners who are on site full time, or all partners who sign an MOU, regardless of time on-site?
2. Are there barriers to frontline staff participation (e.g., prohibitions against certain agency staff participating on committees or spending a certain number of hours away from their desks during the week? If so, how can those barriers be overcome?
3. What are the expectations for employee union involvement in visioning and planning? Does involvement of frontline staff address that issue, or is more formal representation required?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- All frontline staff at all levels are involved in some capacity. They serve on work committees, participate in visioning exercises, are invited to review and comment on drafts, and are challenged to identify gaps and propose ways to fill the gaps.
- Time is made during the work week for any staff person who wants to participate to serve on a planning committee.

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- Partners are asked to participate, including their frontline staff, regardless of whether those staff are on-site at the One-Stop or not, to promote ownership of the One-Stop.

Core Indicator 2. Regular staff development occurs.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Are there any state or local policy barriers that limit staff development (e.g., prohibitions against cross training, limits on how many hours a year any staff person can participate in training, limits on the kind of training that can be offered to certain levels of staff, etc.)? If so, how can those barriers be minimized?
2. Are there any financial limitations placed on staff development? For example, one or more partners have no budget for training? How can that be addressed? How will a staff development budget be created?
3. How will staff development needs be identified? Individually, or only as a center-wide aggregate?
4. Will there be individual staff training plans related to individual staff skill assessments, or only collective training to meet center-wide developmental needs?
5. What staff will be included in what kinds of training? Do the training needs of full-time staff differ from that of itinerant staff? What about partner staff who work with, but not at, the One-Stop?
6. What should be the expectations for regular staff development? How regular? Will staff have an expectation for an annual number of hours spent in some developmental activity?
7. What kinds of activities are considered to be staff development? Only formal training? Conference attendance? Job shadowing? Attending community events such as Chamber breakfasts? How can the information individual staff pick up at conferences and other events attended by a small number of people be communicated with all staff?
8. What are the skills that every staff person needs? What are the skills that are needed only by staff in certain functions (e.g., counseling)? Will there be some recognition for staff who attain certain skills or reach mastery level?
9. How can staff development be used to create career ladders within the One-Stop system?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Skills required for working in the One-Stop are identified for the center as a whole and by function, in collaboration with staff and partners.
- Skill assessments are done for individual staff and for the center as a whole against the identified desired skills.
- Individual staff development plans are devised. Staff are expected to engage in developmental activities a certain number of hours per year.
- A center-wide staff development plan is created.
- A center-wide staff development budget is created. All partners contribute to the budget. Contributions may be in-kind, such as offering to provide training to other staff.
- The staff development plan is reviewed regularly to ensure it is being carried out and determine if updates are needed.
- Staff do not have to limit themselves only to developmental activities relevant to their current jobs. They may attend training to prepare themselves for other jobs in the One-Stop consistent with their career goals (e.g., a frontline staff person who wants to become a manager would be permitted to attend management training).
- Staff who attain mastery level of certain skills are recognized, financially if possible.

Core Indicator 3. Investments are made in management tools.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What data needs to be collected and managed consistent with the goals, objectives, and performance measures of the One-Stop? What kind of reports need to be generated?
2. What are the options for data collection and management? What tools are available? What are the pros and cons of each option? Who else is using the various options who can provide input on pros and cons?
3. How do the various options connect with existing program-specific management tools?
4. What will be the budget for management tools? How will partners contribute to the investments in management tools? What benefit will partners derive from the management information?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Investments are made in management tools that can provide the kind of data and reports needed to manage the One-Stop effectively against its goals, objectives, and performance measures.

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- There is a process in place to review and act upon management information.
 - Management tools are sufficiently flexible that they can be easily changed when performance measures or goals change.
 - Not all management tools have to be high-tech. The One-Stop also pursues low-tech options as long as they meet the data management needs.
 - The One-Stop consults with other leading One-Stops around the country to learn about tools used elsewhere.

Core Indicator 4. Continuous quality improvement processes are in place.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. What is meant by “continuous quality improvement?” How will the state and local boards communicate continuous improvement concepts and expectations to operators and partners?
2. How will the state and local boards model continuous quality improvement in their own operations?
3. What is the content of a continuous quality improvement plan? How does it fit into an overall business plan?
4. How can the continuous improvement plan be implemented? How can it be determined that the continuous quality improvement processes are in place?
5. How can the impact of continuous improvement processes be evaluated to determine the degree of improvements?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Staff understand the concept of continuous improvement and view it *as a way of doing business*, not as an “add on.”
- There is a role for all staff in continuous quality improvement. Performance appraisals take continuous improvement demonstrations into consideration.
- There is a defined plan in place for analyzing key processes on a regular basis. “Regular” is defined. Who is expected to review which processes is defined.
- Implementation plans are developed to operationalize improvement strategies. Data is collected to determine whether a strategy actually resulted in improvement.

Core Indicator 5. Partnerships enhance services and delivery capacity, enabling the One-Stop to better meet customer needs.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Which partnerships should be cultivated that go beyond the mandatory One-Stop partners?
2. What should be the roles of the state, the local board, and the One-Stop operator in cultivating these new relationships?
3. Are there any state or local policies that may limit partnership (e.g., partnerships with private for-profit organizations)? If so, how can these barriers be minimized?
4. What is the evidence that a partnership exists? Is a referral relationship enough, or do you expect something more?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- State-level MOUs set the stage for local level partnerships.
- The One-Stop identifies business and job seeker service gaps that could be filled through partnerships.
- Partners are identified and pursued based on their ability to help meet the needs of the One-Stop's employer and job seeker customers, and the strategic goals of the community.
- Formal partnership agreements are developed between partners that address the mechanisms for referrals, data sharing, and cost sharing to meet customer needs. Partnership agreements are regularly reviewed to determine if they need to be updated or renewed, particularly if there have been any changes in key people who were party to old agreements.

Critical Success Factor 9: Develop a Business Plan

Core Indicator 1. A center-wide business plan guides day-to-day operations and decision-making.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. Will a business plan be required only of comprehensive One-Stops, or also of satellite sites? Will satellites submit their plans independently, or are they part of a comprehensive One-Stop's overall plan?
2. What will be the minimum content requirements of the business plan? How will the state and/or local board communicate plan expectations to potential applicants?

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3. Who will the plan be submitted to? How will the plan be reviewed and who will be involved?
 4. How will a determination be made as to whether a business plan is approved or not? Who makes that decision and how is it communicated? What are the state and local board roles in the review and approval process?
 5. Will a feedback report be returned to the applicant? Who will be responsible for development of the feedback report?
 6. What kind of assistance will be available to One-Stops prior to business plan submittal? What kind of assistance will be available to One-Stops whose plan was not approved?
 7. What are the expectations for on-going use of the business plan at the One-Stop level? How does the plan figure into the local board's oversight of the One-Stop?
 8. Will the business planning process be used to expand the field of potential players in the system? That is, can an entity that is not currently an operator submit a plan and be awarded One-Stop operator status?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- A business plan is developed regardless of whether a state or local board requires it.
- Frontline staff and all partners are involved in business plan development.
- Progress on implementation of the business plan is the basis for regular dialogue with the local board regarding One-Stop quality.

Core Indicator 2. The business plan is reviewed and updated regularly.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. How often should the plan be updated?
2. Are there trigger points that flag the need to update the plan? For example, a major new funding source is identified, the economy changes dramatically, or a new partner enters the One-Stop.
3. Should there be a point at which an update is not enough; i.e., operators should be expected to submit an entirely new plan?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- The business plan is a flexible, living document that guides day-to-day operations and is regularly reviewed for continued relevance.

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- Staff don't wait for a state or local board to demand a business plan update. They update the plan when they identify it needs to be done. At a minimum, the plan is reviewed and updated annually. The plan is completely re-done if a new partner comes into the One-Stop. This is partly because the business now looks different, but also partly because the new partner may need to be involved in creating the plan to know and accept where they fit into it.
 - All frontline staff have a copy of the business plan. Management regularly updates the staff on the progress of implementation of the business plan.

Critical Success Factor 10: Measure Progress and Outcomes

Core Indicator 1. Center-wide measures are used in One-Stop and program management, supported by integrated information systems to which multiple program partners have access.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. How will center-wide measures be used to support the vision and mission?
2. Who will be involved in development of the measures? How will buy-in be achieved?
3. Will a balanced dashboard approach be used? If so, what will be the dashboard design? What are the categories around which measures will be organized? How will you balance considerations of customer focus, efficiency, operations, and outcomes?
4. How will the measures be used to encourage continuous improvement, rather than just meeting a specified level of performance? How will they promote a quality-based dialogue between the board and operator?
5. Will performance affect resource allocation?
6. How will the priorities implied by the measures be communicated to all staff?
7. How regularly will the measures be reviewed and updated to ensure continued relevance, and reflect any change in priorities?
8. Is it financially feasible and cost effective to collect the data needed for the measures? If not feasible, are there proxy measures that could be used to stand in?

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9. Are there any state or local policies that may interfere with data collection for certain measures? If so, how can those policies be changed?
 10. Are the selected measures easily understandable to the partners and the general public?
 11. Do the selected measures include both leading and lagging indicators?
 12. Are the measures sufficiently informative that the operator can actually use the information to manage the One-Stop better?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- Center-wide measures are developed regardless of whether the state or local board requires them.
- Measures are collaboratively developed in a partnership of the state and local board and the One-Stop partners. The partners should see the indicators as a valuable tool to help them manage continuous improvement, rather than as an unfunded mandate that carries the threat of sanctions for perceived failure.
- Center measures are few in number. Any staff person can tell you what they are.
- Measures provide trend information that allows a One-Stop to gauge its progress over time.
- The measures are used by management not only to observe whether the system is on course, but also as a means of communication. The indicators clarify policy direction and priorities, and allow employees to direct their energy toward desired results
- Performance indicators help management make tactical choices that keeps the center on course to achieving the vision.
- All partner and frontline staff know what the current status is on attainment of the measures.
- The measures help formulate thinking about evaluation beyond silo federal performance standards.
- The measures allow One-Stops to benchmark themselves against other areas by sharing measurement tools and approaches.

Critical Success Factor 11: Market the One-Stop

Core Indicator 1. Clear brand identity exists or is under development.

Considerations for policymakers:

1. How will a brand identity be established? Who should be involved in selecting the identity? What should be the roles of state and local boards?
2. How will it be determined who will get to use the brand name, and how will it be used?
3. Will there be a style guide that outlines the parameters for how the identity is used?
4. Should there be mandates on how the name is used at the local level? How are partner identities considered?
5. How will the identity be marketed? Who will do the marketing? Will there be policy parameters on marketing?
6. Are there any state or local policies that would impact how a brand name is developed and used? If so, how can those policies be changed?

In an excellent One-Stop:

- The center must be certified or chartered for excellence before being allowed to use the brand name to protect how the public associates the name with quality.
- A style guide exists for use of the brand name and/or logo.
- The brand name is the most prominent name on the facility. If any partner names are used at all, they are much smaller.
- Partner agreements spell out how the brand name will and won't be used, and when by partners.
- The brand name carries through to internal signage, business cards, stationary, and staff name tags.
- There is a marketing budget to market the brand name. All partners contribute to the marketing budget. Their contributions may be in kind; e.g., "piggy back marketing" where partners market the One-Stop at the same time they are marketing their own programs.
- There is a marketing team responsible for providing development and oversight of marketing strategies. The team includes members from multiple partners.
- The roles of the board and the One-Stop in marketing the brand name are clearly defined.

V. Self-Assessment Tool

The self-assessment tool that follows is based on the critical success factors and core indicators described in preceding sections. Partners are asked to rate themselves as poor, fair, good, or excellent, and provide a rationale for their assessment. They are also asked to identify one thing they could do that would move them towards the picture of an excellent One-Stop that is described for each core indicator. The description of excellence is repeated from the policymakers' guide so that the self-assessment piece can stand alone.

The primary reason for One-Stops to assess themselves against the core indicators of critical success factors is to make improvements to their centers. A secondary consideration is to prepare One-Stops for future certification or chartering processes that may be implemented by their respective state or local boards. When a One-Stop has achieved what the partners consider to be good or better rating on the core indicators, they may want to go back to the supplemental indicators to determine if they can assess themselves one step further along the continuum of excellence.

Many states and local boards already have certification or chartering processes. In those situations, One-Stops may use this self-assessment as a supplement to see how they fair against the industry leaders, and to spark new discussions about quality in the One-Stop.

In conducting the self-assessment, partners should:

- Ensure all partners are included in the discussion and assessment.
- Ensure frontline staff participate in the assessment. This should not be dictated by management.
- Include one or more board members and a job seeker and employer customer or two who can give you honest feedback about whether you have met the criteria.
- Talk about your own definitions of quality. What does a high performance One-Stop look like to you?
- Of all the core indicators where you rate yourselves as anything less than good, prioritize which ones you will work on first. Don't prioritize them by how easy they are to do; prioritize them by how important they are to your overall success.
- Don't look for excuses about why you can't rate your One-Stop as excellent. Look for strategies about how you can get there.

Critical Success Factor 6: Deliver Quality Services to Job Seekers	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Core Indicator 1. Customers can access a comprehensive menu of training and education services and information about, and referral to, sources of related assistance (e.g., housing, transportation).</p> <p>In an excellent center:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Resource mapping has been done to identify education, training, and supportive service resources in the region and surrounding regions in recognition of the fact that people live and work without regard to artificial workforce area boundaries. ➤ Geographic mapping has been done so both customers and staff can visualize at a glance where certain resources are physically located in relationship to the One-Stop or in relationship to where they live. ➤ Staff compare the physical location of resources to the density of where customers live, work, or conduct business to determine if there are gaps or barriers in accessibility. Physical locations are also plotted along public transportation routes. ➤ Resource inventories are available on an interactive website that allows customers and staff to search for a resource by type and location. ➤ Resource inventories include access information; i.e., the process and requirements for eligibility. ➤ Resources available within the One-Stop itself are prominently posted as a menu, perhaps as a menu board. The resources are not identified by funding stream or agency name, but by what the service actually <i>is</i> in a way that customers can recognize and find meaningful. ➤ Formal referral mechanisms are in place both internally and externally to ensure customers do not “fall through the cracks” in moving from one resource to another. 				

Critical Success Factor 6: Deliver Quality Services to Job Seekers	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Rationale – why did you rate yourselves as you did?				
Continuous improvement – what is one thing you can do to move towards excellence?				

OVERALL RATING ON JOB SEEKER SERVICES:	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent

One-Stop Design and Management

Critical Success Factor 7: Provide Leadership	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Core Indicator 1. The workforce investment board exhibits strong leadership.</p> <p>In an excellent One-Stop, the workforce investment board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Uses a collaborative approach to creating a vision for the system to inspire and to achieve buy-in. ➤ Collects and interprets workforce intelligence data that provides strategic direction and focus for the partners. ➤ Charters or certifies sites using a quality-based framework such as Baldrige, and doesn't allow sites to operate or use the brand name if they cannot achieve quality operations. ➤ Requires One-Stops to develop business plans that steer partners toward thinking about their markets, operational requirements, and management issues for the center as a whole rather than just their individual agencies and programs. ➤ Creates a balanced dashboard of center-wide performance measures that are linked to the board's strategic direction. ➤ Maintains an on-going quality dialogue with the operator that keeps the board's vision and expectations in the forefront. Good boards have a committee and/or staff liaison in regular contact with the operator. ➤ Selects an operator with leadership ability and entrepreneurial qualities. If the current operator entity or consortium cannot provide the level of leadership required, the board will either define a new consortium or competitively procure the leadership it needs. ➤ Creates a board/operator agreement that includes obligations on both sides and spells out the roles each needs the other to play. ➤ Fosters a Memorandum of Understanding process that focuses on customers and their needs rather than on agencies and money. 				

Critical Success Factor 7: Provide Leadership	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learns from failure rather than laying blame. ➤ Develops community relationships and uses them to enhance One-Stop services. ➤ Works in a positive manner with employee unions. ➤ Creates new partnerships to bring more resources to bear on customer services. ➤ Promotes the good of the One-Stop and the customer over the good of the agency and the program. <p>Rationale – why did you rate yourselves as you did?</p> <p>Continuous improvement – what is one thing you can do to move towards excellence?</p>				

Critical Success Factor 8: Manage the Center	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Core Indicator 1. Frontline staff and partners are involved in visioning and planning.</p> <p>In an excellent One-Stop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All frontline staff at all levels are involved in some capacity. They serve on work committees, participate in visioning exercises, are invited to review and comment on drafts, and are challenged to identify gaps and propose ways to fill those gaps. 				

Critical Success Factor 8: Manage the Center	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>➤ Time is made during the work week for any staff person who wants to participate to serve on a planning committee.</p> <p>➤ Partners are asked to participate, including their frontline staff, regardless of whether those staff are on-site at the One-Stop or not, to promote ownership of the One-Stop.</p> <p>Rationale – why did you rate yourselves as you did?</p> <p>Continuous improvement – what is one thing you can do to move towards excellence?</p>				
<p>Core Indicator 2. Regular staff development occurs.</p> <p>In an excellent One-Stop:</p> <p>➤ Skills required for working in the One-Stop are identified for the center as a whole and by function, in collaboration with staff and partners.</p> <p>➤ Skill assessments are done for individual staff and for the One-Stop as a whole against the identified desired skills.</p> <p>➤ Individual staff development plans are developed. Staff are expected to engage in developmental activities a certain number of hours per year.</p> <p>➤ A center-wide staff development plan is created, including a budget. All partners contribute to the budget. Contributions may be in-kind, such as offering to provide training to other staff.</p> <p>➤ The staff development plan is reviewed regularly to ensure it is being carried out and determine if updates are needed.</p> <p>➤ Staff do not have to limit themselves only to developmental activities relevant to their current jobs. They may go to training to prepare themselves for</p>				

Critical Success Factor 10: Measure Progress and Outcomes	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Core Indicator 1. Center-wide measures are used in One-Stop and program management, supported by integrated information systems to which multiple program partners have access.</p> <p>In an excellent One-Stop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Center-wide measures are developed regardless of whether the state or local board requires them. ➤ Measures are collaboratively developed in a partnership of the state and local board and the One-Stop partners. The partners should see the indicators as a valuable tool to help them manage continuous improvement, rather than as an unfunded mandate that carries the threat of sanctions for perceived failure. ➤ Center measures are few in number, easily identified by staff. ➤ Measures provide trend information that allows a One-Stop to gauge its progress over time. ➤ The measures are used by management not only to observe whether the system is on course, but also as a means of communication. The indicators clarify policy direction and priorities, and allow employees to direct their energy toward desired results ➤ Performance indicators help management make tactical choices that keeps the One-Stop on course to achieving the vision. ➤ All partner and frontline staff know what the current status is on attainment of the measures. ➤ The measures help formulate thinking about evaluation beyond silo federal performance standards. ➤ The measures allow One-Stops to benchmark themselves against other areas by sharing measurement tools and approaches. 				

Critical Success Factor 10: Measure Progress and Outcomes	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Rationale – why did you rate yourselves as you did?				
Continuous improvement – what is one thing you can do to move towards excellence?				

Critical Success Factor 11: Market the One-Stop	We rate ourselves as:			
	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<p>Core Indicator 1. Clear brand identity exists or is under development.</p> <p>In an excellent One-Stop:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The One-Stop must be certified or chartered for excellence before being allowed to use the brand name to protect how the public associates the name with quality. ➤ A style guide exists for use of the brand name and/or logo. ➤ The brand name is the most prominent name on the facility. If any partner names are used, they are much smaller. ➤ Partner agreements spell out how the brand name will be used. ➤ The brand name carries through to internal signage, business cards, stationary, and staff name tags. ➤ There is a marketing budget to market the brand name. All partners contribute to the marketing budget. Their contributions may be “in kind;” for example, “piggy-back marketing where partners market the One-Stop at the same time they are marketing their own programs. 				

VI. Application

Implementation Options and Decision Points

There are numerous decisions that must be made within a field of implementation options. Before designing criteria and creating policy, state and local boards have many decisions to make. Answering these questions up-front sets the stage. It may be easier for people to concentrate on developing criteria if they first agree on the “rules of the game” in which the criteria will be applied.

1. Who will be the driver of the process? Who owns the franchise? Options include:
 - The state
 - The local boards
 - Local governments
 - A collaboration between the above
2. What should be the state’s level of involvement? Options include:
 - State expects credentialing; vision and criteria are up to locals.
 - State sets vision – locals interpret and develop criteria.
 - State sets minimum criteria; local boards make additions.
3. What framing will be used for the quality criteria? Options include:
 - Baldrige (Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. See www.quality.nist.gov)
 - Mixture of Baldrige and other frames.
 - Adoption of other existing frameworks such as CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities. See www.carf.org)
 - Unique state or locally developed frameworks.
4. How many levels of quality are possible? Options include:
 - Just one; a One-Stop either meets the criteria or it doesn’t.
 - Multiple levels are available to which a One-Stop may strive.
5. How will satellite sites be handled? Options include:
 - Satellite sites apply individually for certification or quality recognition.
 - Satellites must be linked to comprehensive sites; comprehensive One-Stops are evaluated in part by how they establish and ensure quality in their branch locations.

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6. Who is eligible to apply for high quality status?
 - The process is non-competitive and limited to current players.
 - The process is non-competitive and open to any entity or consortium of entities that feels it can meet the criteria.
 - The process is competitive; only a set number of sites can be awarded high quality status.
 - A mixture of the above; some sites may be evaluated on a non-competitive basis and others on a competitive basis, even within the same workforce area.
 7. What are the consequences for not meeting criteria?
 - Mandatory technical assistance.
 - Loss of use of the brand name.
 - Loss of use of certain resources.
 - Closure of the site.
 8. What is the process by which an entity or consortium of entities applies for high quality status?
 - A business plan where there is both desktop review of the plan plus on-site observation.
 - A simple application where the evaluation itself is done completely through on-site observation and review of existing administrative records.
 - A response to an RFP in a competitive situation.

Lessons Learned from Others

If you are just now embarking on defining criteria for One-Stop quality, lessons learned from others who have engaged in this process may prove valuable. If you have already engaged in the process of establishing and implementing criteria, the lessons learned may be used for reflection to determine whether the process needs to be revisited and revamped.

Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) surveyed local boards and One-Stop operators around the country on behalf of the Chicago Workforce Board to learn how they perceived the process of developing and using quality criteria (specifically in the context of certification or chartering), and what they would recommend to others. Additionally, CSW interviewed private sector franchisors and franchisees who live in a world where well-defined criteria are key to staying in business. There are striking similarities between the One-Stop certification/chartering process and private sector franchising. The findings included:

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- **The involvement of top leadership is important.** The process cannot be assigned to just staff. Private sector businesses indicated that top leadership involvement from the corporate level is critical, and that during site visits and training sessions, the president and key executives are visible and vocal. WIB respondents to the survey emphasized the importance of board member participation.
 - **The board, board staff, and partners must work together** to develop the criteria. This requires time, energy, and consensus building. Additionally, input should be sought from employer and job seeker customers. This is no different than what private sector firms do when developing quality standards. The widely used International Organization for Standardization (ISO) standards are developed on the consensus principle. The views of all interests are taken into account: manufacturers, vendors and users, consumer groups, testing laboratories, governments, engineers, and research organizations. Government is not the only sector that must acknowledge a wide array of stakeholders!
 - **Criteria should be revisited and revised** on a regular basis. Establishing criteria is not a one-time event. Sixty-seven percent (67%) of WIB respondents to the survey indicated that they “raised the bar” for One-Stops to retain a charter. Again, this is parallel to private sector experience. ISO standards require periodic revision. Factors that can render a standard out of date include technological evolution, new methods and materials, and new quality requirements.
 - **Support must be provided to the field** (new owners/new operators). The private sector reports that supporting new franchisees is essential, and various positions have been created to lend the support and oversight needed to make the franchisee successful. Some of the WIBs who created strong chartering processes have assigned staff to exactly the same charge.
 - **Intermittent quality assessments must be done during the charter or certification period.** One corporation established a compliance officer position to make sure quality standards are adhered to. One WIB indicated that they contract with an independent CPA to monitor for quality improvement and adherence to the criteria.
 - **Consequences must be enforced if criteria are not met.** Franchising is a collaborative model where both parties have a vested interest in success. To protect the brand name, however, the franchise rights may be taken away if quality standards are not maintained. Similarly, boards must be in a position to act if a One-Stop fails to meet quality criteria. Due to the nature of One-Stops and the political environment, however, boards are rarely in a position to close an office. The

consequences they impose for failure to meet or maintain criteria range from mandated technical assistance, to loss of the brand name, to competitive procurement of a new operator.

- **The process should include preparing a feedback report** to the One-Stop operator. Operators almost unanimously found the feedback report useful in helping them target where to invest the most energy in making improvements.

None of these steps may be taken lightly. There is a significant investment of time and resources needed to:

- Facilitate local consensus building around defining criteria.
- Conduct training for local partners on the final criteria to ensure understanding.
- Develop a process by which operators (existing or aspiring) can apply for certification status. The process should take the form of a business plan framework to which the applicant responds. The process must include dates, eligibility status to apply, a description of the review procedures, consequences for failure to attain and maintain certification status, and the duration of the certification/chartering period.
- Develop a process for reviewing applications and conducting on-site reviews.
- Develop a self-assessment tool that is customized to the state or local area's unique criteria.
- Develop a scoring tool for making certification decisions.
- Identify and train a review team.
- Conduct reviews.
- Develop feedback reports to the applicants.
- Plan for on-going, regularly scheduled quality dialogues between the board and operator(s) to review the status of the business plan and continuous improvement practices.
- Develop a long-term schedule for revisiting and revising the criteria and conducting re-certification processes.

There is no magic bullet or precise formula for creating a good One-Stop. One-Stops are "good" within their local context, and only if their customers and stakeholders say they are. Creating quality systems requires a tremendous investment of time and energy, and is a never-ending process. The results, however, are well worth the effort.

Appendix A: One-Stop Quality Resources

The following are resources that may be of benefit to state and local boards and One-Stop partners:

1. "Benchmarking One-Stop Centers: Understanding Keys to Success;" April 2002. Prepared by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce in partnership with Leaders in Excellence for four Illinois workforce boards. Describes the original critical success factors identified in a study of 20 One-Stops around the country. Available at www.skilledwork.org.
2. The Workforce Excellence Network website at www.workforce-network.net. The site includes a "Promising Practices Portal," a technical assistance provider resource bank, a list of performance excellence resources, a description of National Workforce Development Customer Service Awards, a state quality award map, and "leadership links."
3. The *Simply Better!* line of books published by the Workforce Excellence Network that included a guidebook for conducting self-assessments and workbooks for each of the seven Baldrige categories of organizational behavior. The books are not available electronically at this time. They were widely distributed through the workforce system, however, and hard copies are likely to be found with a little exploring.
4. "Strengths and Challenges of the Chartering Concept;" an analysis prepared for the Chicago Workforce Board by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce, October 18, 2002. Includes the results of a survey of WIBs and One-Stop operators regarding their quality chartering experiences. Available through the CSW website at www.skilledwork.org
5. "Overview of State Certification/Chartering Criteria for One-Stop Career Centers;" January 30, 1997; an old but still interesting survey of state practices by Social Policy Research Associates, 200 Middlefield Road, Suite 100, Menlo Park, CA.
6. "Workforce Investment Act: One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and Partnerships, but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed;" GAO-03-725, June 18, 2003. GAO's study of promising practices at 14 sites around the country. Available at www.gao.gov.
7. Chartering criteria for the North Carolina JobLink Career Center system; available at www.ncjoblink.com

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8. "One-Stop Innovations: Leading Change Under the WIA One-Stop System;" promising One-Stop practices described for 13 sites by location. Available from the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, www.heldrich.rutgers.edu
 9. "Employment and Community Services Standards Manual" July 2003-June 2004. Outlines criteria needed for One-Stop Career Center certification by CARF. Available from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities, Inc., www.carf.org
 10. "Best Practices in One-Stop Career Centers;" two case studies done by the Public Sector Labor Management Committee; available at <http://www.workingforamerica.org/documents/bestpracticesonestop.htm>