

INSTRUMENT 5

STATE ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

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Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today. As you know, Mathematica Policy Research—along with its partners Social Policy Research Associates, Capitol Research Corporation, and the George Washington University—is conducting the *Institutional Analysis of American Job Centers*, or AJCs, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). The study’s purpose is to provide information that policymakers and administrators can use to accurately describe the full range of institutional features that shape AJCs’ day-to-day operations and customer experiences.

As part of this national study, members of the study team are visiting 40 AJCs from around the country, including <AJCs/locations in [state]>. We will be speaking with a variety of AJC staff and local workforce investment board (LWIB) staff, and conducting a network analysis survey of each AJC’s partners.

In addition to these site visits, we are interviewing state workforce agency administrators, including yourself, from each state in which there is a participating AJC. During this meeting, we hope to learn about state-level priorities, policies, and activities that will contribute to our understanding of the AJC system in your state and how it operates.

The sole purpose of this interview is to collect information to use to increase and deepen understanding of the AJC system; it is not a monitoring effort. Everything that you say will be kept strictly private within the study team. The study report will include a list of the AJCs and their LWIBs and states included in the study, as well as a description of the method by which AJCs and states were selected to participate in the study. All interview data, however, will be reported in the aggregate and, in our reports, we will not otherwise identify a specific person, AJC, partner agency, or state unless we are highlighting a promising practice.

This discussion should take about 60 minutes. Do you have any questions before we begin? Do you consent to participating in this discussion?

[The research team will not ask all questions of all respondents. For example, some questions pertain only to the work of certain partner agencies (such as the state agencies responsible for administering the programs funded by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Employment Services, and so on). Protocols will also be customized before interviews, based on each respondent’s job duties and knowledge.]

Public burden statement. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to take 1 hour per respondent, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to [mailing address for DOL Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration Management]. The OMB control number for this project is <OMB control number>; expiration date <date>.

I. State agency priorities related to AJC system

1. Please describe any statewide workforce development priorities or initiatives that affect the way that AJCs are structured or deliver services. *What is the goal of these initiatives or priorities? What effect will these initiatives or priorities likely have on AJCs? Has the state implemented any initiatives or changed practices or policies designed specifically to enhance center administration and operations?*
2. What are your agency's overall goals and priorities for the AJC system?

II. Administrative structure, partnerships, and staffing

1. What guidance does your agency provide to [LWIBs and their] AJCs about the administrative structure and operations of the AJCs in your state? *For example, does your agency provide any guidance about the procurement of AJC operators?*
2. What guidance has the state provided to [LWIBs and their] AJCs regarding the requirements for comprehensive centers? *Does the state certify AJCs? If so, based on what criteria?*
3. In addition to your agency or division, what other state-level entities are involved in setting policy or overseeing AJCs (Trade Adjustment Assistance, ES, Vocational Rehabilitation, Unemployment Insurance (UI), and veterans staff)? *How does your agency coordinate with these partners on AJC-related issues at the state level? How does the state-level organizational structure of these agencies facilitate or impede coordination between partners?*
4. What additional partners, if any, has your state designated as mandatory AJC partners (beyond those designated in the WIOA legislation)? *What was the reason for this designation?*
5. What guidance does your agency provide to [LWIBs and their] AJCs on coordination with AJC partners? *For example, have you provided guidance on required memorandums of understanding (MOUs) or cost-sharing agreements?*
6. What is the role of state-run programs, such as ES, in operating the AJCs when the AJC is located in a state-owned building, as opposed to one that is not owned by the state?
7. Has your agency sought to improve communication and coordination between different program staff and partner staff within AJCs and at the local level in specific ways? *If so, in what ways? Have you developed specific initiatives or procedures to foster communication and coordination?*
8. Does your agency have any policies regarding AJC staffing structure and deployment of staff at AJCs? *Does your agency have any policies regarding whether any staff from different programs are colocated at AJCs? Does your agency have any policies regarding the staffing of comprehensive versus satellite or affiliate centers?*

9. Has the state implemented functional alignment for adult or dislocated workers at AJCs? *If not, why not? Which other programs, if any, are affected? How has this policy been working? Have there been any challenges? How have these challenges been addressed?*
10. What role does your staff play at AJCs? *Do they ever serve as AJC managers? Why or why not (for example, does this depend on whether the agency is the owner or leaseholder of the AJC space)?*

III. Management and performance

1. Are there any efforts in your state to monitor or assess the overall performance of the AJC? *If so, what types of performance information, if any, are collected about AJCs as a whole—across partners and programs? What happens when an AJC performs poorly on these measures or fails to meet performance goals?*
2. What management information system(s) do you use to monitor and manage AJC performance information/data? *To what extent do different partners or programs use this system or these systems, or do they use their own program- or partner-specific ones? How, if at all, do multiple systems interface?*
3. What types of reports are produced to help monitor AJC performance? *What information do they provide?*
4. What, if any, performance data would you like to be collected that are not currently?

IV. Funding and resource-sharing

1. What sources of funds does your agency use to support AJC infrastructure, management and administration, and service delivery (such as WIOA formula funding, Wagner-Peyser, UI, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, federal competitive grants, state or local funds or grants, or foundation grants or funds from other private entities)? *What is the relative share of each of these sources of funding?*
2. To what extent does your agency dictate how [LWIBs and their] AJCs should use these funds? *For example, policies—explicit or implicit—on using funds to provide core or universal, intensive, and training services?*
3. What guidance does your agency provide regarding cost-sharing for AJC operations among AJC partners? *For example, are [LWIBs and their] AJCs required or prohibited to share the costs of certain activities?*
4. What is your agency's role in setting up and/or administering cost-sharing agreements? *Does this vary depending on whether your agency is the owner or leaseholder of the AJC space?*
5. Has your agency experienced any significant changes in funding in the past three years that have affected AJC operations? *What has been the effect on AJCs?*

V. Service delivery

1. Does your agency have any policies regarding the location (such as a stand-alone building, storefront, and so on), layout, or other physical characteristics of AJCs? *About AJC hours of operation? About whether there is dedicated space for employer activities?*
2. Does your agency provide guidance regarding how AJC services should be marketed? *Does the state have a brand that is displayed on marketing materials for its AJCs? If not, does the state encourage individual AJCs to develop and market as their own brand? To what extent do AJCs have flexibility in designing outreach materials and other strategies?*
3. What guidance does your agency provide regarding services delivered through AJCs? *Do you provide guidance about pathways for customers participating in certain programs or with partners? Center intake and enrollment or eligibility?*
4. What tools and resources developed by your agency at the state level are available to AJC customers? *What electronic tools and resources do you require AJC staff to use or to encourage customers to use? For example, is there an online interface that customers can log into for resources? Does the system customize for each customer?*
5. What guidance does your agency provide to [LWIBs and their] AJCs about how to provide services? *Core or universal services? Assessments? Workshops? Intensive services? Case management or counseling? Placement services? Supportive services? Training? Follow-up services? Services to employers?*
6. What, if any, technical assistance does the state provide to [LWIBs and their] AJCs?