

2.5 PROTOCOL FOR STATE TITLE III STAFF

Instructions to site visitors: Bullets below each question represent probes for important details; depending on how well you are doing on time, try to make sure respondents touch on each of these issues. Text in brackets [] should be tailored based on the state or local area. Sections in gray are the high priority sections for this respondent.

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is [NAME] and I work for [Mathematica Policy Research/Social Policy Research Associates]. I am part of an independent research team conducting a study of WIOA implementation on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this conversation.

The purpose of this three-year study is to help DOL understand how states are implementing changes to the core workforce programs authorized under Titles I and III of WIOA, as well as how those changes are influenced by integration with other partners such as adult education, vocational rehabilitation, and TANF. To help us better understand WIOA's implementation, we are conducting site visits to 14 states, including two local areas in each state, to learn about their experiences. The information you share will help us understand the range of experiences that states have had, including key successes and challenges.

We have about [duration] for our conversation. I want to let you know that all interview data will be reported in the aggregate and your name will never be mentioned in any report that we write, though we might use quotes from your interview to illustrate findings, without using your name.

I would also like to record our conversation so that I can listen to it later as I complete my notes, and I will not share the recording with anyone outside of the research team. Being part of this discussion is voluntary, and you may choose not to answer a question if you wish, or to pause the recording at any time. Do you have any objections to being part of this interview or to my recording our discussion?

Okay, I'm going to turn on the audio recorder now.

Respondent Background

1. [If not already known for each person participating in the interview]
 - a. What is your official title and role?
 - b. What are your main responsibilities related to implementation of WIOA?

A. Governance and Planning

1. State Plan Development

1. Describe your state's general planning process for developing its WIOA plan. What entity and staff members led the process?
 - a. How and to what extent were other entities involved?
2. Did this process differ from previous state plan development efforts?
 - a. Was the process longer than with previous plans?
 - b. Were certain partners more involved? Less involved?
 - c. How did any changes to the process from prior planning efforts improve the final plan?
 - d. What were you able to achieve that had not been possible before?
 - e. What did you lose, if anything?
3. What, if any, significant challenges or promising practices were encountered?
 - a. Did the plan timeline work with other required planning for core programs, state planning, etc.?
4. How useful has your WIOA state planning process been for:
 - a. Developing and following through on your state's workforce strategy?
 - b. Establishing, developing or improving your partnerships with other core WIOA partners?
 - c. Establishing, developing or improving your partnership with other required AJC partners?
5. Do you have any lessons to share related to the development of the combined/unified plan on what has worked well or has been challenging?
6. Have there been changes in federal or state funding for the workforce system that have affected your plan or how the plan will be implemented?
 - a. If there have been significant cuts to funding, how are you adjusting the system in response to these cuts?
 - b. What will be the impacts on infrastructure, programming, and service delivery?

2. State Workforce Development Board Role and Operations

1. [If Title I and III are in same agency] How is Title III/Employment Services represented on the State Board? How does this impact policy for ES programs and staff?
2. Has the role of the state board changed under WIOA? If so, how and why?
3. What has been the board's role in making WIOA's changes to the AJC system?
 - a. Developing the AJC certification criteria?

- b. Developing procedures?
 - c. Developing local MOU/RSA/IFA policy?
 - d. Developing integrated services & customer-centered policies & procedures?
4. What has been the board's role in developing stronger partnerships with core and required partners?
 - a. Was the board involved in developing policies related to coordination of services?
 - b. How was the state partner MOU revised under WIOA?
 - c. How does the new MOU differ from the last one developed under WIOA? E.g., more focus on continuous improvement? On coordinated services?
 - d. What was the process used to develop the MOU?
5. What has been the board's role in strengthening employer engagement across the system, including sector strategies, career pathways, and work-based learning?
6. Is the board operating more strategically? Why or why not?
7. Is the board operating more efficiently? Why or why not?
8. Has the role of the chair changed?
9. Has the role of various members of the board changed?
 - a. Core partners?
 - b. Employers?
 - c. TANF?
 - d. Other required partners on the board?
 - e. Other non-required partners on the board?
10. Is there more (or different training) provided for board members as compared to the board under the last year of WIA? What kind of training?

3. Local Area Designations and Local Plan Development

1. What challenges did your local staff experience in developing local plans? What worked well?
2. Are any changes planned for the next local planning process?

4. Regional Designations and Regional Plans

1. Do you think the regional designations are appropriate? Why or why not?
 - a. Do you think they are useful for improving service delivery & employer engagement?

6. Local Board Employer Engagement; Sector Strategies

1. What policies and actions has the state taken to support employer engagement?

2. What changes in the workforce system (particularly at local and regional level) are you seeing as a result of these efforts?
3. What policies and strategies has your state adopted to increase the use of sector strategies in the workforce system?
 - a. Did your efforts in this area precede WIOA?
 - b. If yes, what new strategies or activities are being pursued under WIOA:
 - i. Involving new partners and collaborations?
 - ii. Expanding services and training features?
 - iii. Targeting different populations, such as youth, individuals with disabilities, limited English and/or basic skills?
4. Has the focus on developing and expanding sector strategies been at the state, local, or regional levels?
5. What funding sources are being used to develop and support your sector strategy programs and initiatives (e.g., local formula funds, WIOA state set-aside funds, Title II, III, or IV funding)?

B. AJC System

2. Infrastructure Funding and MOUs

1. In addition to required infrastructure costs, what were the most common additional costs (career services and shared operating/service costs) your agency's programs in local areas included in their One-Stop operating budgets?
 - a. Why did they include those components?
 - b. Were any required by the state? Which ones?
2. What challenges came up for your agency's programs in local areas in the process of developing local One-Stop operating budgets?
3. Have you taken any steps to facilitate negotiation of One-Stop operating budgets for your local agencies (e.g. state-level partner meetings to facilitate state participation)?
4. Were there any local areas in which consensus on IFAs was not achieved because your local agency did not agree? What were their objections and how, if at all, were you involved in addressing them?
5. Have there been any changes to partner participation in AJCs because of WIOA's resource sharing requirements? If so, describe.
6. Have there been any changes in your program's local representation on boards because of WIOA's resource sharing requirements? If so, describe.
7. What TA has been provided by the state on resource sharing?
 - a. What successes or challenges have been experienced related to this TA?

8. What aspects of USDOL's guidance on resource sharing could have been more helpful?
 - a. What additional guidance is needed from USDOL?
9. Have you made use of any of USDOL's TA resources or activities related to local partners developing MOUs or One-Stop operating budgets (including the sample RSA/MOU developed by DOL)?
 - a. Did you use other TA?

3. *One-Stop Operator*

1. How did procurement of One-Stop operators change in your local areas after WIOA?
2. What challenges did local boards face in carrying out this requirement?
 - a. Did any local boards opt not to competitively procure their operator?
 - b. Were there any issues with boards unnecessarily restricting competition (e.g., too little time for the bid; too little funding; restrictions on type/location of bidders).
3. How did you contribute, if at all, to any state-level guidance on the role of the operator?
 - a. How did this guidance differ from what was required under WIA?

4. *Collocation at AJCs*

1. Has your program's collocation at AJCs changed since WIOA implementation? If so, how and why?
3. What guidance has the state provided to local areas on collocation of partners at AJCs under WIOA?
 - a. Did that guidance change from what was provided under WIA?
 - b. Any challenges/lessons learned related to your guidance?
4. What TA has the state provided on collocation?
5. Is any additional guidance needed from USDOL on collocation?

C. Overall AJC Streamlining & Accessible Services

1. *Accessibility*

1. Please describe any new state policies and actions that promote a more seamless, accessible, and customer-focused workforce service delivery network.
 - a. Has the state encouraged or required any changes to AJC customer intake processes? What changes did this involve at the state level?
 - b. Has the state encouraged or required a shared case management system? Which programs or partners can access the case management system?
 - c. Has the state encouraged/required functional staffing arrangements at AJCs? How common are such arrangements?

- d. Can you describe any other new state policies and actions that promote a more seamless, accessible, and customer-focused workforce service delivery network?
2. To what extent has the state emphasized customer or human-centered design as a key method for making your state's One-Stop career center system more customer-focused?
 - a. If you have emphasized this design approach, what primary problems or goals did you want to address through this process?
 - b. Please describe some of the promising practices in human or customer-centered design at the local level.
3. Please describe any state-wide efforts to improve the accessibility of One-Stops for individuals with disabilities (e.g. policies, additional funding, or training).

2. *Co-enrollment*

1. How often are your program's customers co-enrolled in other core partner programs? Other required partners?
 - a. Do any new requirements particularly facilitate or impede co-enrollment?
2. Have any local areas experienced changes in co-enrollment rates since WIOA?
3. Has the state provided any TA or guidance on co-enrollment or referral processes?
 - a. Are you encouraging co-enrollment and if so, how?
 - b. How effective was this TA or guidance?
4. Does the state have any plans for additional guidance or TA?

3. *Use of shared MIS*

1. Which management information system (MIS) does your program use? For what purposes?

- i. Case management?
- ii. Participant tracking?
- iii. Performance reporting?
- iv. Fiscal reporting?

2. Can other partners use this system too? If so:

- a. Can all partners view data? Are there specific fields that are restricted?
- b. Can all partners enter data into the system? Are there specific fields that only some partners can enter?
- c. Can all partners revise data? Are there specific fields than only some partners can modify?

3. How do you ensure that the data being entered into these systems by different partners is accurate?

4. How are you protecting the security of the data being entered and stored?
5. Do you have access to other MISs that are used by other partners in the One-Stop? How do you use those systems, and what are the challenges with accessing partner systems?
6. How important is it for seamless services that partner programs use the same MIS?

D. Performance Accountability

2. Common Measures

1. Have you faced any challenges implementing the WIOA performance measures?
2. Which two approaches to measuring the effectiveness of employer services did you choose to implement?
 - a. Why did you opt for those two approaches?
 - b. What metrics are you using?
 - c. What challenges have you faced in implementing these measures?
 - d. Do you have thoughts on other measures that might better capture the effectiveness of serving employers?
3. Are you developing any state-specific measures that you will be reporting on? If so, which ones and why?

3. Reporting and Evaluation

1. To what extent can your state track individual customers' participation across more than one partner via a common identifier, especially across the core partners?
 - a. Which partners use this identifier?
 - b. What efforts are currently underway to expand capacity to be able to do this—especially across the core partner programs?
2. Have you faced any challenges in accessing/providing required partner data for reporting?
 - a. If so, which types of data and from which partners?
 - b. How have you resolved or attempted to resolve these challenges?
3. What are your state's plans and goals for evaluation?
 - a. How much capacity does your state have to carry out the required evaluation component of WIOA?
 - b. If you do not have the capacity to conduct these activities internally, have you had experience contracting with outside evaluators in the past? How did this experience shape your evaluation plans under WIOA?

E. Services for Job Seekers and Employers

1. Has WIOA changed your state's approach to providing services to businesses?
2. What strategies have you implemented to increase the use of work-based and job-driven training (such as OJT, apprenticeships, transitional training, internships)?
 - a. What work-based and job-driven training models are most commonly used in your state?
3. Please describe your state's efforts to serve more customers with barriers, including disabled customers, customers with low basic skills, or other focus populations.

G. Overall Questions

1. Partnerships

1. How would you assess the strength of your state's relationships among core partners?
Required partners?
 - a. Has this changed because of WIOA?
 - b. If not, why do you think WIOA's focus on enhanced partnerships has not affected your partnerships?
2. Are there sufficient systems in place to ensure regular and effective communication between partners?
3. What have been the key challenges and successes, if any, related to increasing collaboration across partners?
 - a. Are there differences in the extent of collaboration with your core partners versus other required partners, such as UI, SCSEP, Veterans programs, and TANF?
4. Overall, how integrated are workforce services now?
 - a. Has this changed because of WIOA?
 - b. What examples can you give that show this more integrated service delivery?
5. [If respondent feels workforce system is *not* integrated]: Why do you think WIOA's focus on enhanced partnerships has not affected the integration of services?

2. Systems Change

1. Overall, do you think the workforce system here has changed as a result of WIOA?
 - a. If so, what are the major changes you can attribute to WIOA? E.g. employer engagement, partnerships, services more streamlined, data sharing, others?
 - b. If not, do you feel systems had already begun to change prior to WIOA, or that efforts under WIOA have not yet been effective in changing the system?
2. [If respondent doesn't think WIOA has changed the system]: Do you feel systems had already begun to change prior to WIOA, or that efforts under WIOA have not yet been effective in changing the system?

3. What additional changes are planned or needed to transform your workforce system to meet the goals of WIOA?
 - a. What changes would you like to see to make the workforce system better overall?

3. Guidance and Technical Assistance

1. Of the TA provided by DOL national and regional offices on WIOA implementation, which assistance has been most helpful?
 - a. Which TA formats and types of materials have been most useful for you?
2. Are you satisfied with the level of TA DOL has provided on WIOA implementation?
3. Have you accessed the ION site to obtain TA materials or guidance on specific issues?
 - a. Which topics have you sought out guidance on?
4. In what areas would you like to receive additional TA?

Wrap-up

1. How would you describe your overall progress to date with WIOA implementation?
 - a. Where do you still have plans to make significant changes?
2. Beyond what we've discussed today, are there other areas you would like to highlight?
3. Are there any other areas of WIOA implementation our study should explore?

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