

2.7 PROTOCOL FOR STATE PARTNER STAFF/TANF

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, and whether TANF or other partner respondent. 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?
2. Briefly describe your agency and department/division.

- a. What is your department/division's role in the agency? In WIOA implementation? How is TANF administratively organized/structured in this state (e.g., state office, field offices, contracted service providers)?
- b. Do any of your agency's other divisions/department play a significant role in WIOA implementation? Which ones? What role do they play?
- c. Have there been any major changes in administrative structure, responsibilities, or funding for your agency? If so, what changes and why did they come about?
- a. Do you have local or regional staff? How does your agency supervise/monitor the implementation of WIOA at the local and regional levels?
- b. How well do the TANF agency service areas match up with WIOA regions? With the geographic areas that define the local workforce areas in your state?
 - i. If different, is that a challenge—especially as it relates to the implementation of WIOA? Describe.

A. Governance and Planning

1. State Workforce Development Board Role and Operations

1. Is TANF a required partner under WIOA? Was it a required partner prior to WIOA?
2. Is TANF represented on the state workforce board or any committees affiliated with the board? *[If no, skip to question 6]*
 - a. If yes, who is the representative on the board? On the committee(s)?
 - i. If the TANF representative serves on a committee, which one(s)?
 - b. If yes, what policies has the TANF representative been involved in developing?
 - i. Overall WIOA implementation policies?
 - ii. Policies and procedures related to TANF's involvement with the state's workforce system?
3. When did TANF first become represented on the board/the committee? Was it prior to WIOA?
 - a. Has the role or functioning of the state board or its committees changed significantly under WIOA? If so, how and why?
 - i. Is the board more strategic? More streamlined? More innovative?
 - ii. How have those changes affected WIOA implementation?
4. Has TANF's representation on the state board affected the priorities or deliberations of the state board? The state's workforce system as a whole? If so, describe.
 - a. Have there been more discussions about how to best serve low income individuals and families, especially those on TANF or other public assistance?
5. Overall, how much of a focus does the board have on the TANF system?

6. *[If TANF is not represented on the state board or any state board committees]* Does the TANF agency have any interaction with state board staff or the state board? If yes, describe.
7. How would you characterize your agency's relationship with the state-level WIOA core partner agencies (the Title I agency, VR, ES, and AEFLA/ABE)?
 - a. Is there strong communication between the TANF agency and these agencies?
 - b. How regularly do staff from the TANF agency coordinate and collaborate with staff from these agencies?

2. State Plan Development

1. Were you or any other staff members from the TANF system involved in the development of the WIOA state plan? *[If no, skip to Question 3]*
 - a. If yes, what role did this involvement entail?
 - i. Drafting sections of the plan?
 - ii. Providing data to support plan development?
 - iii. Reviewing sections of the plan?
 - b. Do you know why your state opted to include TANF in the plan?
2. Were you involved in the process of modifying the WIOA state plan? If so, describe? If not, why?
3. *[If TANF was not involved in the state plan]* Why do you think your state opted not to involve the TANF program in the WIOA state plan?
4. How useful is the WIOA state plan in guiding the state's workforce system and TANF's role in it? In establishing, developing or improving partnerships with WIOA partners? If so, which ones?
 - a. What, if anything, could be done to make the WIOA state plan (or the planning process) more useful/strategic?
5. Are you knowledgeable about the guidance provided by US DOL on the development and modification of WIOA state plans? If so, what aspects of that guidance were helpful? Is there any additional guidance that should be provided?

B. AJC System

1. Infrastructure Funding and MOUs

1. Was the TANF agency involved in the negotiations and development of state or local AJC partner MOUs and AJC cost-sharing agreements? *[If no, skip to the next section on Collocation at AJCs]*
 - a. If yes, can you describe TANF's role in those negotiations?
 - b. Did any negotiations take place at the state level? If yes, describe.

2. Were there any state-level activities that took place to facilitate the development/agreement on of One-Stop operating budgets/IFAs (e.g. through state-level partner meetings or MOUs)? Describe.
3. Did the TANF agency or any other AJC partners fail to agree on cost-sharing or infrastructure funding agreements in any local area? If so, what happened?
 - a. Did the partners eventually agree or was the state funding mechanism triggered?
 - b. [If SFM was triggered]: What was the SFM process like for TANF partners in the affected local area(s)? What was it like for your staff at the state level?
4. Overall, how difficult was it to implement WIOA's cost-sharing/IFA and MOU requirements?
 - a. What challenges did you encounter?
 - b. What worked well?
5. How have WIOA's cost-sharing/IFA and MOU requirements affected partnerships (either positively or negatively)?
 - a. Are you aware of any changes to the TANF program's participation in AJCs/local boards because of WIOA's resource sharing requirements? If so, describe.

2. Collocation at AJCs

3. How typical is it for TANF staff to be collocated at comprehensive AJCs? At affiliate AJCs?
 - a. If collocation differs by local area/AJC, explain.
 - b. If TANF staff are NOT typically collocated, why is that?
4. For TANF programs that do not have staff collocated at comprehensive AJCs, how do they provide customers with direct access as required by WIOA?
 - a. By training collocated partner staff to provide information to customers about their services; OR
 - b. By providing a "direct linkage" via technology to provide "meaningful information and services"?
 - i. How is this direct linkage via technology operationalized?
 - ii. How easy or difficult was it for TANF programs to meet this requirement?
5. Why did they choose this approach to providing direct access?
 - a. Is there any additional guidance needed?
6. Has collocation of TANF staff at AJCs changed as a result of WIOA? If so, why? How?
 - a. Are there any plans to increase or decrease collocation of TANF staff at the comprehensive AJCs where none are currently collocated? Explain.

C. Overall AJC Streamlining & Accessible Services

1. *Co-enrollment*

1. What programs are TANF participants co-enrolled in? Which are the most common, and why?
2. Do any new WIOA requirements particularly facilitate or impede co-enrollment by TANF participants in other AJC partner programs (particularly the Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, VR, ES, or AEFLA programs?)?
3. Are you encouraging co-enrollment and if so, how? [Skip the following probes if the state is not encouraging co-enrollment between TANF and other WIOA core programs or AJC partners]
 - a. [If not already known from pre-visit call] Has your state provided any TA or guidance on increasing co-enrollment? [Get copies of any relevant state guidance or tools.]
 - b. What challenges have you encountered in your efforts to increase co-enrollment? What has worked well?
 - c. Does the state have any plans for additional guidance or TA related to increasing co-enrollment? Describe.

2. *Use of shared MIS*

1. What management information system(s) (MIS) does TANF use? How long has the current version of each of these systems been in place?
 - a. For what purposes is each MIS used?
2. Does TANF share this MIS with any other partners?
 - a. If yes, which ones?
 - i. Are there differences in how partners use common systems, and in who can view or enter data?
 - ii. Are there any plans to add more partners to the shared MIS? If so, which ones?
 - b. If partners are not sharing, why not?
 - i. How does NOT using the same MIS impede WIOA's goal of integrated, streamlined services?
3. If not all AJC partners use the same MIS, is data shared across systems (or is the state working on such data sharing)? If yes, how? Which partners share data?
4. How does data sharing help to achieve WIOA's goal of integrated, streamlined services?

D. Services for Job Seekers and Employers

1. Employer Services

1. What is your state's overall approach for the TANF program to engage with employers/businesses?
 - a. Has WIOA changed this approach? How? Why?
2. Has your state provided guidance or TA to TANF staff on engaging with or providing services to employers/businesses? Describe.
3. How integrated are business services among TANF and other AJC partners in the state? Which partners collaborate the most with the TANF program?
4. Is there a shared MIS/customer relationship management (CRM) database for capturing data on business services?
 - a. Which partners use this system? How helpful is this system for partner coordination?
5. Has collaboration around employer/business services or business engagement improved under WIOA? If yes, why?
 - a. What challenges has the state encountered regarding integrated/streamlined business services? What has worked well?

2. Career Pathways/Sector Strategies

1. Does the state have any career pathway or sector focused initiatives/efforts? If so, describe.
 - a. Is the TANF program involved in these initiatives? What other AJC partners are also involved?
 - b. Are these primarily state, regional, or local-level efforts?
 - c. How are these initiatives being funded? Is any TANF funding being used?
 - d. Who are the main targets of these initiatives (adult versus youth; individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, individuals with low basic skills)?
 - e. What are the main targeted industries/occupations?
2. Did the state's career pathway/sector efforts precede WIOA?
 - a. If yes, has WIOA's implementation affected these efforts? If so, how?
3. What challenges has the state encountered in its efforts to develop and/or sustain career pathways or sector initiatives? What has worked well?

3. Registered Apprenticeship

1. What is the TANF program's involvement in the state's efforts to increase the number of apprentices? [*If none, skip to the next section.*]
 - a. Are many TANF participants registered in apprenticeships? If not, why not?

2. What challenges has your state and the TANF program faced in increasing the number of registered apprenticeships?
 - a. In what ways is the state trying to deal with these challenges?
3. Has WIOA helped to increase the number of TANF participants in registered apprenticeships? If so why?

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 between core partners versus other required partners, such as your program?
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. Do you think the role of TANF in the state's workforce system has changed because of WIOA? How so?
3. [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?
4. Have there been any negative, unintended consequences of implementing WIOA?

- a. Are there ways in which you feel the new law makes it more difficult to provide effective, integrated workforce services? If so, how and why?
5. Have there been positive, unexpected benefits from implementing WIOA?
6. 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?