2.6 PROTOCOL FOR STATE UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE 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. What was your/your agency's role in the development of the state plan?

2. Which entities did you work with on the plan and what was the general process for developing the plan?

3. How did the process for WIOA differ from previous state plan development efforts?

    a. Was the process longer than with previous plans?

    b. Was your agency or other 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?

4. 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.?

5. 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?

6. 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?

2. State Workforce Development Board Role and Operations

1. Is your agency represented on the state board?

    a. [If yes]: Has your role changed since WIOA?

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, particularly with UI?

    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?

B. AJC System

2. Infrastructure Funding and MOUs

1. Does your agency contribute to the cost of operating the One-Stop centers?

2. How did you negotiate your agency's share of One-Stop operating budgets at the local level? What components did your share include?

    a. Why did you include those components?

    b. Were any required by the state? Which ones?

3. Were there any local areas in which consensus on IFAs was not achieved because your local agency did not agree? What were the sticking points?

4. Have there been any changes in your program's local representation on boards because of WIOA's resource sharing requirements? If so, describe.

5. What TA has been provided by the state on resource sharing?

    a. What successes or challenges have been experienced related to this TA?

6. What aspects of USDOL's guidance on resource sharing could have been more helpful?

    a. What additional guidance is needed from USDOL?

7. 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?

C. Overall AJC Streamlining & Accessible Services

1. Accessibility

1. Are UI customers generally using AJCs to access information about the program?

    a. Why or why not?

    b. What challenges do they face getting the help they need through the AJC system?

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. How does this impact the UI customer experience at AJCs?

2. Co-enrollment

1. How often are UI customers co-enrolled in core partner programs? Other required partners?

    a. Have any changes as a result of WIOA affected 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

1. ETPL Changes

1. What challenges do you anticipate in providing performance data for the new ETPL requirements?

2. Common Measures

1. Have you faced any challenges related to supplying data for the WIOA performance measures?

    a.   What challenges have you faced?

    b.   Related to which measures?

3. Reporting and Evaluation

1. To what extent can your state track individual customers' participation across more than one partner via a common identifier?

    a.   What 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 providing required partner data for reporting?

    a.   If so, which types of data and to which partners?

    b.   How have you resolved or attempted to resolve these challenges?

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?