3.7 PROTOCOL FOR ONE STOP OPERATOR

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. Local Plan Development

1.   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 of these cuts on infrastructure, programming, and service delivery?

2. Regional Designations and Regional Plans

1.   How satisfied are you with your state-designated region under WIOA?

    a. Do you think it accurately reflects your regional labor market?

2.   Has being part of a region helped you to better engage with regional employers? With regional economic development entities?

3. Local Workforce Development Board Role

1.   [If operator was in place prior to WIOA]: How, if at all, have the role and approaches of the board changed under WIOA?

    a. Is it more strategic, more innovative, more focused on continuous improvement, more focused on improving service integration?

    b. Why has the role of the board changed?

        i.   New board mandates under WIOA?

        ii. Required changes in membership?

        iii. Some other reason?

B. AJC System

1. Infrastructure Funding and MOUs

1.   How does your MOU (excluding resource sharing components) differ from the last one you had under WIA?

2.   What was in your local One-Stop operating budget(s)?

    a. Other than IFAs, what did you include?

    b. Why did you include those components? [Make sure to get a copy or copies.]

3.   What process did the LWDB follow to negotiate the required MOU and One-Stop operating budget(s)?

    a. Did they negotiate umbrella budgets or separate budgets for each AJC?

4. What was the role of board staff in negotiating MOUs and budgets? How did this compare with the role played your organization?

5. What methodologies did the LWDB choose to use for determining their various types of costs?

   a. Why did the LWDB choose those methodologies?

   b. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these methodologies?

6. How did the LWDB determine proportionate use and relative benefit for each partner?

   a. Why did the LWDB choose these methods?

   b. How well do these methods work?

   c. Are there differences in their appropriateness for on-site vs. off-site partners?

7. What non-cash contributions do partners make?

   a. Why were they not able to contribute cash?

   b. How did the LWDB determine how to value non-cash contributions? How well did that work?

8. How has the WIOA RSA requirement affected partnerships (either positively or negatively)?

9. How often is the LWDB reviewing your agreement (for issues like value of non-cash contributions, proportionate use and relative benefit)?

   a. Are there any challenges related to this review process?

10. What challenges did you face in the process of developing your MOU and One-Stop operating budgets?

11. Has your state has taken any steps to facilitate negotiation of One-Stop operating budgets (e.g. meetings at the state level, with state partners, to facilitate their participation)?

12. What TA have you participated in on MOUs and resource sharing?

    a. How helpful was this TA?

    b. What could have been more helpful?

13. What additional guidance or technical assistance do you need from the state or USDOL on MOUs and resource sharing?

2. One-Stop Operator

1. Are you the operator for the entire local area?

   a. If not, what other entity/entities serve as operator?

2. Operators have different responsibilities in different areas; for your local area, what is your role as operator it relates to:

    a. Partner meetings?

    b. Cross-training sessions?

    c. Coordinating AJC operations & policies?

    d. Managing AJC facilities?

    e. Implementation of MOUs/RSAs?

3. Do you have any other significant roles in this local area?

4. How and why, if at all, has your role as operator changed with the implementation of WIOA?

5. What is the role of the AJC manager?

6. How and why has the AJC manager's role changed, if at all, with the implementation of WIOA?

7. How did you learn about the operator competition bid?

8. [If operator is new under WIOA]: How, if at all, do you think changes in what entity serves as the operator will affect AJC operations?

3. Collocation at AJCs

1. Across all the AJCs in the local area, what partners are always or almost always collocated at comprehensive centers? At affiliate sites?

    a. What do you think are the primary reasons for this?

2. Across all the AJCs in the local area, what partners are never or almost never collocated at comprehensive centers? At affiliate sites?

    a. What do you think are the primary reasons for this?

3. What partners are collocated at *this* AJC?

4. If any required partners that are active in the local area are not collocated at comprehensive AJC(s), are they providing access to services via training an onsite staff member or via a "direct linkage"?

5. Why did they opt for that approach and how is it being operationalized?

    a. What challenges and benefits have you experienced with each approach?

6. Has partner collocation at AJCs changed since WIOA implementation? If so, how and why?

7. What guidance have you received from the state on collocation of partners at AJCs under WIOA?

    a. Did that guidance change from what was provided under WIA? If so how?

    b. Is any additional guidance needed?

C. Overall AJC Streamlining & Accessible Services

1. Accessibility

1. How integrated and streamlined is service delivery in the local area?

2. Please describe any new state or local policies and actions that promote a more seamless, accessible and customer-focused workforce service delivery network?

3. Has the state or LWDB encouraged or required any changes to your AJC customer intake process? What changes did this involve?

4. To what extent has the state or LWDB emphasized customer or human-centered design as a key method for making your state's One-Stop career center system more customer-focused?

   a. What problems or goals do you plan to address through this approach?

   b. What challenges and benefits have you encountered in operationalizing it?

5. Please describe any state or local efforts to improve the accessibility of One-Stops for individuals with disabilities (e.g. policies, additional funding, or training).

2. Referral Process

1. How frequently are referrals are made between partner programs?

   a. Which partners are most likely to initiate referrals?

   b. Which partners are customers most frequently referred to?

2. How are referrals made to each agency?

   a. Do staff provide contact information for the program to a customer?

   b. Do staff connect directly with the program they are referring a customer to?

   c. Do staff submit a referral via shared MIS?

   d. Or, is there some other referral process?

3. Are referrals tracked? Is information shared about referred customers with the program the customer is being referred to?

4. What do you think is the most successful aspect of your referral process?

5. Is there anything about the referral process you would like to improve?

3. Co-enrollment

1. About how frequently are local customers are co-enrolled in partner programs? Which programs and for what reasons?

2. How, if at all, do co-enrollment processes differ from referral processes?

3. How, if at all, is information about co-enrolled customers shared with partner programs?

4. What is the most successful aspect(s) of local co-enrollment processes?

      a. What requirements particularly facilitate co-enrollment?

      b. Are there factors that impede co-enrollment?

5. Is there anything about local co-enrollment processes you would like to improve?

4. AJC Partner Meetings

1. Do you have regular AJC partner meetings? (If no, skip to cross-training)

2. Are these meetings for individual AJCs or only across the local area?

3. What partners attend regularly?

4. What level of staff attend these meetings? Program managers? Line staff? Both?

5. Who organizes and facilitates these meetings?

6. How often do they occur? For how long?

7. What topics are covered in these meetings?

5. Cross-training

1. Have you organized or participated in any cross-training sessions across different programs? (If not, skip to 9)

2. How often have these sessions occurred? At what locations?

3. Are these in-person or virtual?

4. How long did/do they last?

5. Who attends regularly? Are these local or state-wide trainings?

6. Who organizes/facilitates?

7. What is covered in these sessions? [try to get an agenda for the last 1-2 cross-training sessions.]

8. How helpful have these sessions been?

      a. Is there any way they could have been improved?

9. In what other ways—if any—do you share information on partner programs?

      a. How well do these other methods work?

6. Use of shared MIS

1. Do any core or required partners use the same management information system (MIS)? If so, what systems? (If not, skip to #5)

      a. Which partners use them?

      b. For what purposes?

            i. Case management?

            ii. Participant tracking?

          iii. Performance reporting?

          iv. Fiscal reporting?

2.   Are there differences in how partners can use any of these common systems?

    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.   If not all programs use the same MIS, why not?

    a. Are there any plans to add more partners to shared MIS?

    b. Which ones?

    c. With what data entry or viewing privileges?

    d. If there are no plans to add partners, why not?

    e. Have you developed any workarounds to allow partners to share data in the absence of a shared MIS?

6.   Has the state or LWDB encouraged, required, or led the development of a shared case management system?

7.   How important is it for seamless services that partner programs use the same MIS?

D. Performance Accountability

1. ETPL Changes

1.   How and why, if at all, have new ETPL requirements impacted the number of providers available for your local area?

2. Common Measures

1.   Have you faced any challenges implementing the WIOA common performance measures?

2.   Which challenges have you faced in measuring the effectiveness of employer services?

    a. Do you have thoughts on measures other than the ones being used that might better capture the effectiveness of serving employers?

3. Have you faced any challenges in implementing state-specific performance measures?

4. Are you developing any local measures that you and your local partners will be reporting on?

5. Have you faced any challenges in implementing local performance measures?

E. Services for Job Seekers and Employers

1. Has WIOA changed your approach to providing services to businesses? In what way?

2. Please describe your efforts to improve access and services to more barriered customers, including disabled customers and those with low basic skills.

3. Have you received any guidance or TA from the state on improving services to customers with barriers? How helpful was it?

4. What, if any, additional guidance should USDOL or your state should provide on serving customers with barriers?

G. Overall Questions

1. Partnerships

1. How would you assess relationships among core partners? Required partners? Other 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 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 changes reflect this more integrated service delivery? For example, are case managers of different programs meeting more often to discuss co-enrolled clients?

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. Have there been any negative, unintended consequences of implementing the WIOA regulations?

       a. Are there ways in which you feel the new regulations actually make it more difficult for you to achieve your goals?

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. What additional changes are planned or needed to transform your workforce system to meet the goals of WIOA?

       b. 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? If so, which issues?

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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