

Oregon Employment Department  
**Strategic Plan**



*September 8, 2003*

# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

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# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

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## *Employment Department Business Process Re-engineering Plan*

The mission of The Oregon Employment Department is to

**Support Business and Promote Employment**

How we accomplish that mission:

- Support economic stability for Oregonians and communities during times of unemployment through the payment of unemployment benefits.
- Serve businesses by recruiting and referring the best qualified applicants to jobs, and provide resources to diverse job seekers in support of their employment needs.
- Develop and distribute quality workforce and economic information to promote informed decision making.
- Provide access to child care that is safe, high quality, and affordable.

### **Agency Values**

The Oregon Employment Department's most valuable asset is its employees - who are our primary resource in the delivery of customer service. In recognition of the value of our employees and our dedication to the customers the Department serves, we commit to the following:

#### **Service**

- Give high quality service to all customers – job seekers, claimants, businesses, and legislators; local, county, state and federal agencies, and co-workers.
- Provide timely and accurate information.
- Consistently apply laws and policies to ensure that customers receive fair and equal treatment.

#### **Collaboration**

- Obtain shared solutions promoting the greatest value.
- Honor and respect the talents and contributions of others.
- View problems as an opportunity to excel through collective talents, efforts, and abilities.

#### **Diversity**

- Reach across traditional boundaries, seeking input from diverse backgrounds.
- Appreciate and encourage diversity of backgrounds, situations, and perspectives in the workplace.
- Honor the dignity of all people.

#### **Honesty & Openness**

- Treat others with honesty, respect, and courtesy.
- Seek to create a stimulating, rewarding, and non-threatening work environment for employees, and to make every customer interaction a positive experience.
- Encourage a two-way information exchange among all employees, allowing for the views of others to ensure decisions are fact-based.

#### **Accountability & Trust**

- Build trust and integrity into all relationships.
- Be responsible for commitments and accountable for actions taken.
- Provide services with a pleasant, helpful attitude in a friendly, non-judgmental atmosphere.

#### **Growth**

- Promote a safe, healthy, and family-friendly work environment that encourages learning and mentoring.
- Keep current and creative in fields of expertise, actively seeking new ways of doing business.

### **New Director – New Directions**

In January 2002, Governor John Kitzhaber appointed Debbie Lincoln Director of the Oregon Employment Department. The Governor gave Ms. Lincoln three primary goals.

1. Become a stronger partner in the workforce development system. Remove barriers to partnerships.
2. Better integrate field and central office operations within the Department.
3. Build an increasingly successful relationship with the Child Care Commission.

In an e-mail to all staff, dated February 22, 2002, Director Lincoln listed four primary goals of the transition process established to address these directives:

1. Build an increased level of trust throughout the Department.
2. Identify and fix problems that are preventing us from achieving excellence in our programs and services.
3. Identify ways to accomplish the three primary goals that the Governor gave her when he appointed her to the position.
4. Identify activities that are going well and are already being successful.

All staff in the Department were asked to submit their suggestions regarding these goals. A transition team of staff and retirees reviewed these suggestions and turned them into a series of recommendations for specific actions. On April 25, 2002, the Transition Team presented this report to the agency Executive Team for approval. The implementation of the adopted suggestions began in May of 2002 and continues on an ongoing basis.

For the most part, the transition process addressed the needs of the Department at that time and in the near future. Staff input led to a major change in the agency's mission statement, putting more emphasis on support for employers.

### **New Governor**

In November 2002, voters elected Ted Kulongoski as Oregon's new Governor. When he took office in January 2003, he stated his primary goal was to help Oregon recover from the recession. To that end, he directed the state's workforce agencies to support employers in a more coordinated effort to meet their business needs and resolve employer related problems.

### **Federal Action**

In March 2003, the Bush administration revealed its plan for the reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). If passed by Congress, this legislation may affect implantation of the Wagner-Peyser Act. (a Federal law that created the national employment service system in 1933) and the way in which federal funds are distributed.

The Employment Department's budget analysts anticipate \$14 million less in Federal and State revenue to administer the agency's Employment Services (ES) programs and \$10 million less to administer the Unemployment Insurance (UI) program in the 2005-2007 biennium.

### **Better Technology – Special Funding – Staff Retirements**

Technological advances in telephone and Internet systems allow UI service delivery options that can improve customer service and reduce administrative costs. The agency currently has \$1.5 million in UI revenue that can be used to purchase new UI automation infrastructure. If these funds are not used by September 2004, they will be recaptured by the Federal government.

The Employment Department has Reed Act Funds available for the administration of its UI and ES programs. Use of these funds requires authorization from the legislature.

In the next 2-1/2 years 360 employees will be eligible to retire from the Employment Department.

### **Time to Think Ahead**

In light of the above facts, the Director and the Executive Team have decided that now is the time to develop strategies for the delivery of Employment Department services in the 2005-2007 biennium and beyond. The 2003-2005 biennium will be a transition period where elements of the vision will be incorporated into our service delivery as soon as possible. The following is that plan.

### **Executive Summary**

This plan outlines a new approach for administering the services provided by the Employment Department. Some of the proposed changes are significant. They will require some staff to relocate or change jobs. Some offices may close or relocate. Some positions may be reclassified. There will be substantial infrastructure costs in retooling. In the future, many of our current services will rely heavily on technology with less emphasis on face-to-face interactions with our clients.

This evolution to a new way of doing business will create a great deal of institutional challenges throughout the department. So: Why are we doing this? There are four primary answers.

**1. Labor exchange services.** We must refocus our ES program to meet the current economic challenges facing Oregon employers. In the Governor's State of the State speech (January 2003), workforce development was highlighted as a key part of his administration's strategy to help Oregon recover from the recession. In part, he said his "plan is to increase investments in business, infrastructure and workforce development." In a speech to the Oregon Community College Association (OCCA) he stated: "In particular, the state needs to be more actively involved in meeting with businesses; tracking areas of growth; matching workplace skills to workplace needs . . ." Since the Employment Department's mission is to "Support Business and Promote Employment," we must do more to assist the business community if we are going to meet the Governor's directive and fulfill our mission. Employer surveys consistently reveal the value of the services of the Employment Department and its responsive, professional staff. Employers also express a concern about the quality of the referrals they receive. Our goal is to send the "best qualified" applicants to employers. Our current ES processes and procedures must be updated and fine-tuned to meet this challenge.

**2. Partnerships.** Part of our effort to support business and promote employment involves increased partner relationships. It is critical that we recognize our role within the workforce development system – contributing to and supporting the one-stop system. Partnership relations will be based upon the concepts of collaboration and coordination. The Governor has stated . . . "We are too small of a state to have seven or eight different workforce strategies." At the national level, the WIA reauthorization bill drives collaboration among WIA adults, WIA dislocated workers and Wagner-Peyser (Employment Services) programs into one consolidated grant per state. The intent is to streamline program administration and to reduce current duplication and inefficiencies. Within the department, we feel that the best way we can meet the challenges facing employers is to work side-by-side with our partners. This is also true for our job seeker customers. Most job seekers need more than just a referral to become reemployed. They may need training, support services, tools, transportation, child care, relocation assistance, resume development, access to phones, faxes, or the Internet. Generally, no one agency can meet all these needs, but together we have the tools employers and job seekers need.

The degree to which this inter-agency cooperation and coordination is occurring throughout the state varies greatly. It is excellent in some communities, but weak in others. We must be poised and proactive to improve our partnerships in all areas of the state.

**3. Unemployment insurance.** We must take advantage of technology advancements in the administration of unemployment insurance.

The Oregon Employment Department has been on the technological cutting edge with respect to the delivery of UI program services. The UI system has evolved to permit administration of the program in a paperless environment and without the need for in-person contact with our customers. From the use of scanned weekly certifications for benefits to the use of the Internet, we are evolving to an environment where a customer can claim benefits without ever having to come into an office. Some offices have already implemented procedures that do not require claimants to report in person to file for benefits. The Eugene office is in the final stages of testing telephone initial claims and demonstrating that claims can be filed in a much shorter period of time and with better customer service in comparison to current processes. Adjudication occurs in regional centers, and the next logical step is to implement telephone claims and restructure the delivery of UI services into three regional centers.

In addition, there are Federal measures for the promptness, accuracy and quality of the unemployment insurance program. The agency promptly files claims and meets federal standards for payment of benefits. But the quality and timeliness of nonmonetary determinations do not meet desired achievement levels. Thirty percent of the initial and additional claims filed have issues that require investigation in order to determine eligibility. The department can improve in this area.

We currently have the federal revenue available to build the infrastructure necessary to implement the proposed UI service delivery concept. This may not be true in future biennia.

**4. Attrition.** The time is also right for reexamining our ES and UI procedures and practices in light of the large amount of attrition that will occur in the next two years due to staff retirements. Our strategic plan focuses on delivering the best service possible, but in an efficient and effective manner. Like all other government agencies, we have to face the challenge of carrying out our mission with less revenue and fewer staff. Vacancies due to retirement will reduce staffing levels on their own. However, if we do not increase the productivity of our processes and procedures, our customer service will suffer. We must keep what works well now, but to serve more clients with fewer resources, we must give our employees better tools (latest technologies), better skills (more training), and a better business plan (more efficient processes and procedures).

This plan outlines changes in the way we will do business throughout the state.

**5. Research.** As the Employment Department's strategic plan moves toward and through implementation, the Workforce and Economic Research Division will continue to provide "quality information" to customers in UI, ES, and other workforce agencies. Research's contributions in support of the UI plan will be to continue its efforts to provide relevant information and targeted training to staff in the UI program (e.g. adjudicators), and to meet any new information needs that come from UI staff.

The Research Division has a crucial role to play in implementing the Business & Employment Services Plan. It is committed to providing the highest quality and most relevant information possible to ES staff, to workforce partners, workforce boards, economic development and other policy-making entities, to businesses, and to job seekers. Research will expand the use of the Geographical Information System in support of ES and Partnership initiatives; it will expand the distribution of "core labor market information products" beyond our OED offices into those of partner agencies; and it will continue the commitment to having Research staff spread across this state, so that it is better able to meet the varying needs of different regions and communities of the state. Research will develop close electronic links between iMatchSkills and [www.QualityInfo.org](http://www.QualityInfo.org).

**6. Child Care.** The Child Care Division is committed to supporting the department's strategic plan. It will work to continue its successful integration within the department and its interface with Employment Services. CCD will continue efforts to educate employers about the benefit of Oregon's employer tax credits and family-friendly policies, provide training and assistance to OED employer representatives on marketing tax credits, and support working families by providing safe child care and public information about child care quality.

### **Plan Highlights**

The following re-engineering plan for the 2005-2007 biennium has two components: Unemployment Insurance and Business and Employment Services. The details of each proposal can be found in their relative sections. The highlights of each plan are as follows:

#### **Unemployment insurance**

- All initial claim processing and adjudication activities will be conducted in three UI centers.
- The UI centers will be located in Bend, Eugene and the Portland metropolitan area. Executive Team discussions relative to site selection were extensive and intense, and concluded with the decision to have three sites. This decision was made to achieve a balance among maximum efficiency, cost effectiveness, quality customer service, and staff displacement, based on the requirement that we must be good stewards of the public trust.
- Ultimately, all UI field positions involved in claims taking and adjudication will be located in the UI centers.
- We anticipate the need for fewer UI positions after the plan is fully implemented.
- No claims processing activities of any kind will be conducted in the field offices.
- No in-person services will be provided in the UI centers. All communications with claimants and employers will be done via telephone, fax, Internet or mail.
- While claimants will be encouraged to contact UI centers from home, there will be computers and telephones in field offices for the public to use in communicating with the UI centers.
- Claimants with special needs (disabilities, language barriers, etc.) will be assisted by field office ES staff in contacting the UI centers.
- All UI staff, including those in the new UI centers, will report to the Assistant Director for UI.
- Some CO staff will be moved to the UI centers. Each UI center will have at least one UI technician, one fraud investigator, one tax auditor and one quality control technician stationed on site.
- All unattached claimants will be required to register with ES as a condition of eligibility.
- Initially, we anticipate the majority of initial claims will be filed via the telephone option. Over time, the Internet option may overtake the telephone.



**The key deliverables for the UI plan include:**

- 1) The three UI centers will be brought online, one at a time, in the following order and timeline:  
Eugene – July 2004  
Metro – January 2005  
Bend – July 2005
- 2) Internet initial claim (IC) filing will be operational by November 2003.
- 3) Thirty-five percent of IC's will be filed by Internet by January 2005.
- 4) Computer links between iMatch Skills system and UI database will be operational by January 2004.

**Business & Employment Services component:**

- We will develop a stronger partnership with local and state representatives of the Economic & Community Development Department.
- The agency's goal is to co-locate field ES staff in one-stop centers.
- Co-location can be accomplished in four different ways: 1) Partners can move into our offices; 2) We can move our staff into a partner's office; 3) We and our partners could vacate our current offices and move into a new facility; or 4) We could locate in proximity of each other in a campus environment.
- We will move toward co-identity with partners, and we support the "Worksource Oregon" brand; but we also want to keep the OED identity as one of the partner agencies in the local workforce system.
- With regard to confidentiality we will:
  - o Develop a common release form/process.
  - o Establish the appropriate sharing of wage records.
  - o Establish a process to share applicant information.
  - o Establish a process to share job order information.
- We share the responsibility of job finding assistance (through both workshops and one-on-one assistance).
- We support our partners' role as the primary providers of vocational skills training, career counseling, case management, educational programs, and other supportive services and in contacts with employees.
- Our niche is to be a lead contact with employers and job seekers in the labor exchange function, and to provide quality labor market information (LMI).
- The primary Business & Employment Services function will be to provide employers and businesses with workforce solutions through finding qualified applicants and providing connections to other workforce services.
- Field office staff will provide Business & Employment Services only. Their only connection to UI will be in assisting claimants and employers in contacting the UI centers, and administering the UI work test.
- Job order taking and job seeker registration will be done via iMatchSkills.

- Employers and job seekers using our labor exchange services for the first time will be contacted in-person, by telephone, or via e-mail for the purpose of explaining services provided by the one-stop system.
- Account representatives will make in-person or telephone contact with all employers placing their first job order with the department.
- There will be account representatives for industry groups, occupational groups and individual employers where feasible. (This may not be possible in some of our smaller offices.)
- As appropriate, ES staff will verify each applicant's knowledge, skills and abilities at the time of screened referrals.
- Job finding assistance (classroom or one-on-one) will be offered to all job-ready applicants, and may be provided by partners, or through joint service delivery arrangements between OED & partners.
- The Assistant Director positions for Field and Employment Services will be replaced by one Assistant Director for Business and Employment Services (AD for B&ES).
- The regional managers and all ES field staff will report to the AD for B&ES, and will focus on services to businesses, partner relations and integration into one-stops.
- Some current central office ES technician positions will be re-deployed in the field.
- Current out-stationed Research, Tax and Child Care staff will remain in field offices.
- We support WorkSource Oregon as the state's workforce system identity and will encourage and support regional adoption of this brand.
- We do not anticipate a reduction in the number of ES positions at this time.

**Key deliverables for the Business & Employment Services component include:**

- 1) A strategy to co-locate ES offices with workforce partners will be developed by January 2004.
- 2) Account Representatives and Business Representatives will be established statewide by January 2004. These employees will share responsibility with our management team to create partnerships with representatives of their local businesses, economic development agency, Workforce Analysts, workforce partners, chambers of commerce, etc.
- 3) There will be an Oregon Employer Council (OEC) associated with every parent office/identified service area by January 2004.
- 4) ES Programs will develop a process and training for improving the quality of the department's job orders by January 2004. The goal will be to eliminate errors and misspellings, to articulate the business' needs so that those needs are easily understood by other staff and the public, and to create a review process before the job listing is publicly displayed.
- 5) ES Programs will develop a process and training for improving the quality of the department's enrollment for job seekers (an enhanced enrollment) by January 2004.

- 6) iMatchSkills will be tested, piloted and implemented statewide by early 2004.
- 7) By July 2005, 40% of referrals (currently 25%) will be agency selected (on job orders where employers have asked for screening).
- 8) Job finding assistance (classroom and one-on-one) will be offered to all job-ready applicants statewide by July 2004.
- 9) Confidentiality issues will be resolved by January 2004.
- 10) 75% of all field ES staff will be co-located in one-stop centers by July 2005.

**Strategic Plan Budget**

The move to UI centers is estimated to cost at a maximum \$5.6 million in the 2003-05 biennium. Funds will come from federal UI workload revenue and Reed Act funds appropriated for this purpose. This cost will be recovered in the 2005-07 from the efficiencies produced by the centers. Estimated costs for the B & ES plan will be developed in 2004.

# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

## *Unemployment Insurance Restructuring Plan*

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## A. Overview

- **Retirements** • Within the next 12 months, 374 Employment Department employees will reach the age of fifty-five. By 2004, 47 employees will have a minimum of 30 years of service (24 of whom will be 55 years of age). These individuals will be eligible to retire. Given the uncertainty of employees about the state of their pensions, we expect many of these people will exercise their options to retire.
- **Grants** • The Unemployment Insurance program depends on federal grants, which are expected to be reduced.
- **One-Stops** • The U.S. Department of Labor strongly recommends that state ES programs be located in one-stop settings. The option available to state unemployment insurance programs is either to become part of a one-stop setting or to develop alternative means of delivering unemployment insurance services.
- **Telephone Claims** • Every state except Louisiana and Delaware has committed to telephone initial claims.
- **Meeting Requirements** • The agency continues to struggle in its attempt to balance quality, timeliness, and efficiency in the filing and adjudication of unemployment insurance claims.

To address these issues, all unemployment insurance operations will be consolidated into three Centers by the start of the 2005-2007 biennium. The effect of this proposal is to gradually withdraw unemployment insurance from any physical presence in field offices. Sites have been determined in such a way as to balance demographics, geography, and existing staff. After extensive discussions by the Unemployment Insurance Workgroup convened to develop a proposal as to how unemployment insurance services would be provided in the 2005-2007 biennium and by the Executive Team, the following sites were chosen:

- Eugene
- Portland metro area
- Bend

Consolidation into Centers will take place for the following reasons:

- To improve customer service
- To plan for staff succession
- To address staff recruitment, training, and retention issues
- To implement Telephone Initial Claims
- To improve the quality of adjudications
- To save costs

## **B. Executive Summary**

The Unemployment Insurance Policy Council adopted principles designed to guide the program in order to bridge the gap between unemployment and reemployment and to support Oregon communities during an economic downturn. The council adopted six principles for unemployment insurance service delivery:

- Options for access
- Superior service
- Uncompromised integrity
- Commitment to staff
- Continuous improvement
- Promotion of service to Oregonians

At the Policy Council's direction, an unemployment insurance workgroup convened to make recommendations for improving the unemployment insurance program, starting in the 2005-2007 biennium. The workgroup analyzed options available that would meet the principles developed by the Policy Council. This involved reviewing what had occurred in the past as the program adapted to fiscal imperatives and technological change. What follows are the recommendations and decisions made by the agency's Executive Team in response to those recommendations.

The Assistant Director for Unemployment Insurance has authority for the unemployment insurance program in Oregon. Currently, responsibility for administering the program at the field office level lies with the Assistant Director for Field Operations. In this proposal, all responsibility for the administration and delivery of the unemployment insurance program, including field and central office activity, moves to the Assistant Director for Unemployment Insurance.

The organizational structure that exists today splits responsibilities among Regional Adjudication Centers (RAC) and Reporting Offices (including satellites of Reporting Offices). The RAC supervisor has responsibility for the work that occurs in Reporting Offices (RO) and their satellites. Supervisors and managers report through four regional managers to the Assistant Director for Field Operations.

Procedures vary between RACs as well as among the ROs and their satellites. The RAC supervisors have responsibility, but lack the authority, to ensure consistency of the unemployment insurance staff in the geographic area of the RAC. Procedures vary between RACs because there is no effective oversight of the entire program. Consistency within the program is weak because there is no effective direction and control to ensure efficiency and equity of service.

The workgroup recommended consolidating all unemployment insurance functions performed in field offices, RACs and ROs into unemployment insurance centers. All unemployment insurance services afforded to claimants will be provided in these centers. No unemployment insurance services will be offered at any other Employment Department office. Telephones and computers to connect claimants to unemployment insurance services will be available in Employment Department field offices.

Once implemented, an individual will be able to mail in an application to an unemployment insurance center, file by telephone, or file a claim by means of the Internet.

The functions of unemployment insurance Reporting Offices will be gradually consolidated with Regional Adjudication Centers during the interim. Some unemployment insurance presence will continue in field offices as unemployment insurance centers become operational. However, the department will gradually phase out unemployment insurance services in the field offices as customers recognize and use the newly implemented filing processes.

Field offices will assist customers in connecting with the unemployment insurance center for two categories of individuals. These are:

- Applicants who may have limited English proficiency (LEP)
- Applicants with disabilities.

### **C. Objective**

By July 1, 2005:

- Consolidate all field unemployment insurance operations into three unemployment insurance centers tentatively to be located as follows:
  - **Eugene** at a site to be determined
  - **Portland** at a site to be determined
  - **Bend** at the site of the current Bend field office
- Create a new position, Unemployment Insurance Operations Manager to have functional responsibility for the management and oversight of these three offices. This position will report to the Unemployment Insurance Assistant Director. This position performs for the unemployment insurance centers, the functions that are now the responsibility of Regional Managers reporting to the Assistant Director for Field Operations
- Create, within the UI Programs and Methods Section, technical positions to be located in each unemployment insurance center to provide training and technical support. These technicians will work side-by-side with Quality Control staff stationed in each center.
- Provide three options by which Oregonians, located anywhere in the United States, may file initial, additional, or reopened claims, and have their eligibility for unemployment insurance benefits determined:
  - **Telephone.** The majority of customers will file their claims by telephone. Testing of telephone initial claims is currently underway in the Interstate Unit in Salem and in the Eugene field office.
  - **Internet.** Oregonians will be able to file claims on-line. This option is currently under development. We expect that by 2005, 35% of claims will be filed using this option.
  - **Mail.** Forms will be available throughout the state. The individual will complete the form and mail it to one of the three unemployment insurance centers. Staff will forward forms daily that were dropped off at existing Employment Department offices to the nearest unemployment insurance center for processing.

- Develop procedures to ensure that individuals receiving benefits prudently seek work so that they may return to work at the earliest opportunity to a position that is consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and prior earnings. These procedures will set out criteria for the referral of unemployment insurance claimants to suitable work, informing claimants of eligibility expectations based upon the individual's prospects for work, and mechanics for providing feedback to the unemployment insurance centers.

#### **D. Background**

The Unemployment Insurance (UI) program administers public policy as set out in the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA), the Social Security Act, and Employment Department law and policy. Employers and claimants are the parties to this program. The goal of unemployment insurance is to sustain communities during periods of unemployment through the payment of benefits.

Employment Services (ES) provides a public labor exchange.

Defining the boundary of these two programs by consolidating unemployment insurance operations into separate unemployment insurance centers will permit a more effective allocation of limited resources. Consolidation will lead to services that are more efficient, consistent, timely, and accurate.

During the nineties, two agency projects contributed to the current state of doing business. The first was OBIS (Oregon Benefit Information System) and the second was the EDIN (Employment Department Information Network). These projects allowed staff in field offices to generate forms, letters, and procedures that were previously created by staff in the central office. This had the effect of "de-regulating" the process, leading to procedures that were inconsistent.

Beginning in July of 1999, the agency gradually moved adjudications into Regional Adjudication Centers. This change was designed to: (1) Improve the quality of work, since some adjudicators did not have a supervisor who was knowledgeable about unemployment insurance; (2) Improve consistency – all 26 (or so) offices were doing things slightly differently; (3) Even out workload among adjudicators.

The department established reporting offices at the same time. Further consolidation of unemployment insurance was thought unnecessary. Further, it was thought that removing all unemployment insurance from field offices would make it difficult to fund those offices solely through employer services programs.

The organizational structure that exists today splits responsibilities among Regional Adjudication Centers (RAC) and Reporting Offices (including satellites of Reporting Offices). The RAC supervisor has responsibility for the work that occurs in Reporting Offices (RO) and their satellites.

Coordination is the biggest issue between RACs and ROs today. Many RO offices have no unemployment insurance expertise (a problem that will grow over time as people retire), so they often call the RAC supervisor for guidance.

The department has not achieved the planned consistency among the RACs. Procedures vary between RACs as well as among the ROs and their satellites. Consistency within the program continues to be weak because there is no effective direction and control to ensure efficiency and equity of service. This plan proposes to resolve this problem through the creation of an Unemployment Insurance Operations Manager reporting directly to the Assistant Director for Unemployment Insurance.



Staff, during Transition discussions, expressed frustration with the current configuration. They suggested merging adjudicators with Reporting Offices, or the reverse. They also suggested out-stationing technicians. This proposal incorporates and expands upon those suggestions.

## **E. Current Performance**

Performance measures in unemployment insurance focus on the extent to which the program meets its mission of promptly paying benefits when due. Measures address three areas:

- Promptness;
- Quality;
- Accuracy.

These are federal measures applicable to all states and address critical areas of benefits, tax, and the appeals process.

For purposes of this project, the measures that affect the filing, adjudication, and payment of benefits include:

- Timely first payments: 87% of first payments must be made within 14 days of the end of the first payable week;
- Timely decisions: 80% of all decisions are to be issued in a timely manner;
- Nonmonetary Determination Quality: 75% of all decisions are expected to meet the quality criteria.

Oregon does not currently meet the performance measures for nonmonetary determination quality or timeliness. The state has not met quality standards since the fourth quarter of 1997.

Accuracy, consistency, quality, and timeliness are core expectations in the unemployment insurance program. State and Federal law, and Oregon Administrative Rules, limit efforts to simplify procedures.

Allocating resources to balance these objectives is difficult. Offices and supervisors may elect to give greater weight to one expectation at the expense of another (e.g., quality at the expense of timeliness; timeliness at the expense of quality). The effect has been an erosion of consistency and the development of local procedures resulting in inconsistent procedures across the state.

In 2002, the Employment Department received 599,282 requests to file new claims for benefits, to reactivate existing claims, or to seek benefits under one of the state or federal extensions. In 2002, there were 183,951 nonmonetary determinations. All of this was accomplished by 248.91 positions charging time to unemployment insurance in the Department's field offices.

## **F. Proposed Model**

### **1. The Proposal**

The unemployment insurance Service Restructuring Plan recommends gradually withdrawing the delivery of unemployment insurance services from field offices and consolidating these services into three unemployment insurance centers. Unemployment insurance centers will be operational by July 1, 2005. Unemployment insurance centers will be housed in their own facilities and will report through a proposed Manager of Unemployment Insurance Operations to the Unemployment Insurance Assistant Director. Unemployment insurance staff in field offices will be gradually phased out of field offices and into regional centers before this date.

Applications for unemployment insurance will be processed in one of three ways –telephone, Internet, or mail. No one seeking benefits will need to report in person to a local office. All contact will routinely occur by one of these methods. Local offices will not provide unemployment insurance face-to-face services. Assistance will be limited to assisting customers with contacting an unemployment insurance center or with filing by means of the Internet. Local office staff will, as appropriate, assist LEP customers in learning how to use the new telephone and computer filing systems. During mass layoffs, quarter change, or with the implementation of new programs (Extended Benefits, or other state or federal extensions) staff from the unemployment insurance centers will be available to assist those who have questions or wish to file for benefits.

The concept of the unemployment insurance center will consolidate Reporting Offices and Regional Adjudication Centers.

Procedures will be designed to ensure that individuals receiving benefits seek work prudently with the goal of returning to work at the earliest opportunity. These procedures will also ensure that individuals receiving benefits obtain employment in work that is consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and prior earnings.

## **2. Genesis of Concept**

Recommendation Number U-2 of the unemployment insurance Transition Team suggested the following: “Consolidate unemployment insurance activities by moving unemployment insurance out of the Reporting Offices and into the Regional Adjudication Centers.” The Executive Team chose to consider the suggestion as part of a larger review of unemployment insurance service delivery. Numerous other suggestions recommended developing an alternative model for the delivery of unemployment insurance services based on problems that existed in coordinating the work of Reporting Offices and Regional Adjudication Centers.

The mission of the UI Policy Council is to help shape the vision and future of unemployment insurance services in Oregon and ensure the Employment Department’s unemployment insurance policies are sound, conform to law, are consistently applied, and promote the department’s mission. The council consists of fourteen members with representation from field office and central office staff, management and bargaining unit staff.

The Unemployment Insurance Policy Council adopted principles designed to guide the program in order to bridge the gap between unemployment and reemployment and to support Oregon communities. The committee adopted six principles for unemployment insurance service delivery:

- Options for access
- Superior service
- Uncompromised integrity
- Commitment to staff
- Continuous improvement
- Promotion of services to Oregonians

The Unemployment Insurance Policy Council appointed the UI workgroup and charged the group to arrive at a vision of what the unemployment insurance system should look like by 2005.

The UI workgroup consisted of four field office managers, an employment supervisor, the Manager of Unemployment Insurance Programs and Methods, the Assistant Director for

Unemployment Insurance, one unemployment insurance technician and the retired former manager of Unemployment Insurance Programs and Methods. The group brought to their task 200 years of experience in the unemployment insurance program. Five members of the group were front line managers and supervisors. Five members of the group worked as technicians and contributed an understanding of the program and all of its linkages. Every member of the group had front line experience as a claims taker and adjudicator. Several members of the group also worked in employment services.

In order to focus its efforts, the group broke down its task into six components:

- Remembrances of Things Past, which consisted of a review of how the delivery of unemployment insurance services has adapted in response to workload, law changes, budgets, and technology.
- The Way We Are Now, which involved a review of how the department delivers unemployment insurance services today.
- Great Expectations, which discussed the telephone initial claims pilot projects underway in Eugene and the Interstate Liable Unit in Salem.
- Brave New World, which involved discussions of the future delivery of unemployment insurance services given the past experience of the agency, technology available today, and changes that may occur during the coming biennium.
- On The Road, which involved setting out the interim steps the program will need to take in order to achieve the vision of the program in 2005.
- The Shape of Things to Come, which involved setting out the short term and incremental steps that could occur during the next several months.

During the next 12 months, 374 Employment Department employees will reach the age of fifty-five. By 2004, 47 employees will have a minimum of 30 years of service. These individuals will be eligible to retire. Given the uncertainty of employees about the state of their pensions, we expect many of these people will exercise their options to retire.

The U.S. Department of Labor strongly recommends providing ES programs in one-stop settings. The option available to state unemployment insurance programs is either to become part of a one-stop setting or to develop alternative means of delivering unemployment insurance services.

### **3. Process Description**

Field office procedures routinely require applicants for benefits to file without meeting a staff person face-to-face. Most contact already occurs over the telephone. Individuals who come into a field office obtain information from employees in that office by telephone. The group concluded that the telephone would be the primary method by which an individual would file an initial, additional, or reopened claim. The group made this conclusion based upon how the program has developed and adapted to technology over the past fifteen years.

Nationwide, telephone initial claims have become the primary means of filing for benefits. Only Delaware and Louisiana do not have plans in place to shift away from in-person filing. Many states are now shifting to using the Internet to file claims. Oregon is developing an Internet option, which we expect will absorb as many as 35% of the initial claims filed.

The Eugene field office and the Interstate Liable Unit in Salem are testing the use of the telephone to file initial, additional, and reopened claims. Eugene is a pilot office, and we expect

that the concept of the unemployment insurance center will roll out to other sites, driven by the lessons learned in Eugene.

#### **4. Site Locations**

The Unemployment Insurance Workgroup proposed consolidating all unemployment insurance operations into unemployment insurance centers by the start of the 2005 biennium. The effect of this proposal is to withdraw unemployment insurance from any presence in field offices. Reporting Offices and Regional Adjudication Centers will be consolidated into three sites:

- Eugene
- The Portland metro area
- Bend

The group selected these sites to provide (1) redundancy in case of interruptions in service due to weather or other disaster and (2) service to a demographically diverse state.

The staffing and workload section on page 23 identifies how the workgroup would align current offices under this proposal.

The unemployment insurance workgroup proposed this consolidation for the following reasons:

- To improve customer service
- To plan for staff succession
- To address staff recruitment, training, and retention issues
- To implement Telephone Initial Claims
- To improve the quality of adjudications
- To save costs

#### **5. How It Will Work: From the Perspective of the Applicant**

Currently, an unemployed worker is advised that applications are available from various sources in the community and over the Internet. They are also advised that they can file an unemployment insurance claim by calling a local telephone number.

Very little will change for customers committed to a paper process. After completing their applications they will mail them to an unemployment insurance center.

For applicants comfortable with the Internet, an on-line application will be available. Filing by means of the Internet reduces dramatically any human involvement in the process. We expect that use of this option will occur to the same extent that people use on-line banking services.

The workgroup discussed extensively the ramifications that such a change would have on applicants and on employees. The state of Nevada has had call centers for three years. They trained their field office staff to point customers to the Resource Room where they could use the phone or computer to contact the call center to file claims. Customers who were uncomfortable using the phone or the computer were shown how to make the call and how to file using the

computer. Although there was initial resistance, customers now accept that if they go into a field office they do so to use the phone or computer for unemployment insurance, but for nothing else related to unemployment insurance. Areas outside of Carson City, Reno, and Las Vegas, Nevada resemble many rural parts of Oregon. Because of this similarity, the workgroup concluded that there would be resistance to this change, but that the resistance would be short-lived.

We expect that the majority of applicants will elect to file by telephone. When an individual picks up the phone, the call will be directed to the unemployment insurance center in the region. The applicant will provide certain information using the telephone keypad. A customer service representative will take the additional information needed to activate or reactivate a claim.

If an issue exists, the file will be routed to an adjudicator for resolution of any issues affecting the payment of benefits. The manner in which issues are currently investigated and resolved in the adjudication process will not change.

Employment Department policy requires that individuals receiving benefits prudently seek work that is consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and prior earnings at the earliest opportunity. Most applicants for benefits will be required to register for work at a field office or online through iMatchSkills. The requirement to make use of ES resources and services will be a condition of receiving benefits.

We anticipate a transition period after July 1, 2005 during which an unemployment insurance presence in field offices will be necessary.

#### **6. How It Will Work: From the Perspective of the Employment Department**

Unemployment insurance staff currently report to a field office manager, who in turn reports to a regional manager, who reports to the Assistant Director for Field Operations. Under this proposal, unemployment insurance staff will report to the Manager of the Unemployment Insurance Center, who will report to the Manager of Unemployment Insurance Operations, a position that will report to the Assistant Director for Unemployment Insurance.

Each unemployment insurance center will consist of a manager, claims taker supervisors, and adjudication supervisors. Support staff will be included as necessary. The estimated span of control for a claims taker supervisor will be 1:15. The span of control for an adjudication supervisor will be 1:10.

In the past, the delivery of unemployment insurance programs has been made more difficult by a separation between those responsible for administering the program and those responsible for providing direct customer service. If these two parties were at cross purposes, the program did not function efficiently. This proposal seeks to remedy that situation by making those responsible for delivering service to the customer directly accountable to those in charge of administering the UI program.

#### **7. Disaster Recovery**

Three sites provide backup in case a disaster shuts down one of the centers. Disaster plans for the dispersal of workload will be developed for each center.

The Portland site is the largest single site and provides a worst case scenario for the dispersal of its workload. Each site will have a built-in excess capacity factor of 20%. In the case of a disaster, the agency would make use of this space to handle incoming phone calls. In addition, the following procedures would be used:

- Internet: Internet initial and additional claims will be able to absorb any amount of increased workload.

- Paper initial claims will still be available as an alternative to both the telephone and the Internet.
- Space in other Employment Department offices could be used as necessary. By 2005, we expect Internet claims to be capable of handling a significant and increasing percentage of claims filed and that this option would absorb a significant amount of the disaster-related workload.
- Calls could be routed to the other centers.

### **8. Staffing**

Using data from July of 2001 through August of 2002, there were 238 FTE charging time to unemployment insurance, broken out as follows: 13.89 positions were charged to unemployment insurance supervision; 87 FTE charged to adjudication; and 137.2 FTE charged to the balance of unemployment insurance. This was time charged by staff in field offices and Field Operations. The work team estimates a minimum of 21 managers and supervisors are needed to meet the span-of-control issues. Many of these would not be new positions, but would include those moved from existing RACs and ROs into the unemployment insurance centers.

Each unemployment insurance center will have technicians assigned to it. These positions will provide training and technical support, and will monitor program quality on an ongoing basis.

The department will allocate existing workload among field offices to the proposed unemployment insurance centers as reflected in the chart on page 13. The workload data are for the year 2002.

### **G. Staffing Estimates for Unemployment Insurance Centers**

Using preliminary data from the Eugene pilot, it is estimated that, given 2002 workload, the agency could handle the filing of all initial claims, additional claims, interstate liable and agent claims, and extensions with **110** FTE working in the unemployment insurance centers. The department used 137 staff during calendar year 2002 for initial claims. This represents a **20%** reduction in the number of staff currently handling this body of work.

### **H. Criteria For Site Locations**

The workgroup considered the following questions and issues regarding the siting of unemployment insurance centers:

- What will be the ongoing costs of operating the unemployment insurance centers?
- Does the proposed site have an adequate recruitment catchment basin?
- Will the site location make sense ten to fifteen years from now?
- What will be the relocation/job displacement impact?
- To what extent does the selection of this site affect non-unemployment insurance operations?
- What are the set-up costs for the site and are they within available resources?
- Do we own the site?
- Does the site meet the benchmark for rural siting?
- Is the site within a reasonable commuting distance for the employees who will staff it?
- Is it on public transit?

### **I. Site Recommendations**

One site will be located east of the Cascades in Bend. The Bend Center will handle all workload for offices east of the Cascades.

A second site will be located in the Eugene area. This site will handle all workload from Albany south, including the coastal offices from Newport south to Brookings. Eugene is a logical site because it has an excellent recruiting base and is currently the site for a telephone initial claim pilot. There is not sufficient space in the present office to house the additional staff that would be necessary to handle the unemployment insurance workload. A site located at the north end of Eugene at the Beltline/I-5 junction would be close enough to permit employees from Albany to commute who would be displaced with the closure of that RAC.

The third site will be located in the Portland metro area. This unemployment insurance center will include Salem, the north coast, and the Portland metro area. This region has 58% of the initial claims workload and a similar proportion of the nonmonetary determination workload.

### **J. ES/Unemployment Insurance Coordination**

The department will design procedures to ensure that individuals receiving benefits prudently seek work that is consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities, and prior earnings at the earliest opportunity.

In general terms, most claimants who are not job attached will be required to register for work as a condition of receiving benefits. Such registration will occur much as it does today. However, the department will need to develop procedures to ensure claimants contact an ES office for registration and other services as may be necessary.

### **K. Claimant Reemployment, Worker Profiling, and Trade Act**

The agency remains committed to assisting unemployment insurance claimants in their return to suitable work. Claimant Reemployment, Worker Profiling, and Trade Act programs will remain in field offices. Building on the successful work of other states, we anticipate providing meaningful assistance to claimants in the various programs available designed to speed their return to work. New ways of doing business will require new ways of working together for the common goal of providing "resources to diverse job seekers in support of their employment needs."

### **L. Staffing and Workload Table**

This table uses initial and additional claims data for 2002 and identifies the projected staff needed for three unemployment insurance centers.

Unemployment Insurance Center #1 will be located in Eugene and will incorporate the unemployment insurance workload for the following offices: Albany, Newport, Lincoln City, Eugene, Roseburg, Grants Pass, Medford, Ashland, Coos Bay, Gold Beach, and Brookings.

Unemployment Insurance Center #2 will be located in the Portland area and will incorporate the unemployment insurance workload for the following offices: Gresham, Downtown Portland, North Portland, Astoria, McMinnville, Oregon City, Tillamook, Salem, Woodburn, Hillsboro, St. Helens, Beaverton, and the Interstate Unit.

Unemployment Insurance Center #3 will be located in Bend and will incorporate the unemployment insurance workload for the following offices: The Dalles, Klamath Falls, Bend, Redmond, Madras, Prineville, Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Freewater, Ontario, Burns, Baker City, John Day, La Grande, and Enterprise.

We based staffing requirements on the assumption of one unemployment insurance center manager and a supervisory ratio of 1:10 for adjudicators, 1:15 for BES staff, and 1:25 for support staff. The following table provides an estimate of the staffing needs for the three unemployment insurance centers.

Unemployment Insurance Center		2002 ICACIB-1	Claims	Adj Staff	Mgs/Supv	Fraud Tax Techs ISL	Admin Supt	Estimated Total Center Staffing
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>163584</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>85</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>361970</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>161</b>
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>93136</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>State Wide</b>		<b>618690</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>285</b>

ICACIB-1 = Initial claims, additional claims and Interstate Benefits-1 claims

Adj = Adjudicators

ISL = Information Services Liaison

Claims-processing staffing for the three unemployment insurance centers was determined from our experience during the pilot of telephone initial claims over the last several months in the Eugene and Interstate offices. From this pilot, we have recorded the amount of time on average spent each day by the claims taker in the various aspects of the job. Below is a listing of the various activities used to determine how much time on average out of an eight hour day a claims taker is available to take claim calls:

- Non telephone work duties (i.e. photocopying, mailing documents to claimants/employers, faxing, completion of federal claim forms, etc.);
- Meetings;
- E-mails;
- Timesheets, other admin. duties;
- Breaks;
- Time between calls;
- Vacancy/leave factor of 17.89%

The time actually spent on these activities allowed us to calculate the optimum number of claims taking staff in an unemployment insurance center. Actual time on the phone does vary and can reach as high as six hours on a high work load day such as Monday and Tuesday.

After determining which of the current field offices will feed into each unemployment insurance center, we applied the time available to file initial claims and respond to claim inquiries from the calculation above against the actual unemployment insurance claims workload for each feeder office for calendar year 2002. We chose 2002 because to date that year has been the highest on record and we wanted to determine staffing on a worst case scenario.

In this interim, and as soon as feasible, when a vacancy occurs in a RAC or RO not designated as a unemployment insurance center, the vacant position and its associated workload will be transferred to the appropriate UI Center site.

### **M. Alignment to Mission and Values**

The mission of unemployment insurance is to support communities by promptly paying benefits when due to eligible workers unemployed through no fault of their own.

The program also provides partial wage replacement for workers who lose their jobs. In order to receive benefits, the person must be eligible, and the goal is to promptly pay those benefits to eligible workers when due.



The mission requires the agency administering the program to meet three requirements:

- Timeliness (“ . . . to promptly pay benefits . . .”)
- Quality (“ . . . to eligible workers unemployed through no fault . . .”)
- Consistency (“ . . . when due . . .”).

The creation of three unemployment insurance centers consolidates the supervisory, technical support, and technological structures into one system. This allows the Unemployment Insurance Assistant Director to balance resources in order to meet program quality and promptness performance standards. The agency is also in a position to ensure that benefits are filed in a manner that provides individuals a number of options.

## **N. Cost/Resource Analysis**

### **1. Staffing**

A new position description will be required for staff taking new telephone claims. Staff turnover is a problem with the current system and this staff turnover translates into issues affecting timeliness and accuracy. Other states have developed recruiting procedures unique to telephone initial claims. This area will require further development.

### **2. Site Costs**

Three unemployment insurance centers will require a total of 46,933 square feet of space. Site costs are estimated at \$9,574,332 over a ten-year period.

### **3. Cost/Benefit Analysis**

#### **a. Efficiency**

Initial claims can be filed more efficiently when employees work from a script that contains built-in checks and balances. This process will ensure that the claim is accurately filed. Work can be scheduled in a more efficient manner, and the length of time it takes an individual to file a claim will be uniform across the state.

#### **b. Accuracy and Consistency**

Staff will use identical procedures in taking claims. This will result in a major benefit to the program: providing more accurate and consistent claims.

#### **c. Timeliness**

Consolidation of unemployment insurance into three unemployment insurance centers will permit greater control over workload. Uniform procedures and closer supervision will result in more timely nonmonetary determinations.

#### **d. Quality**

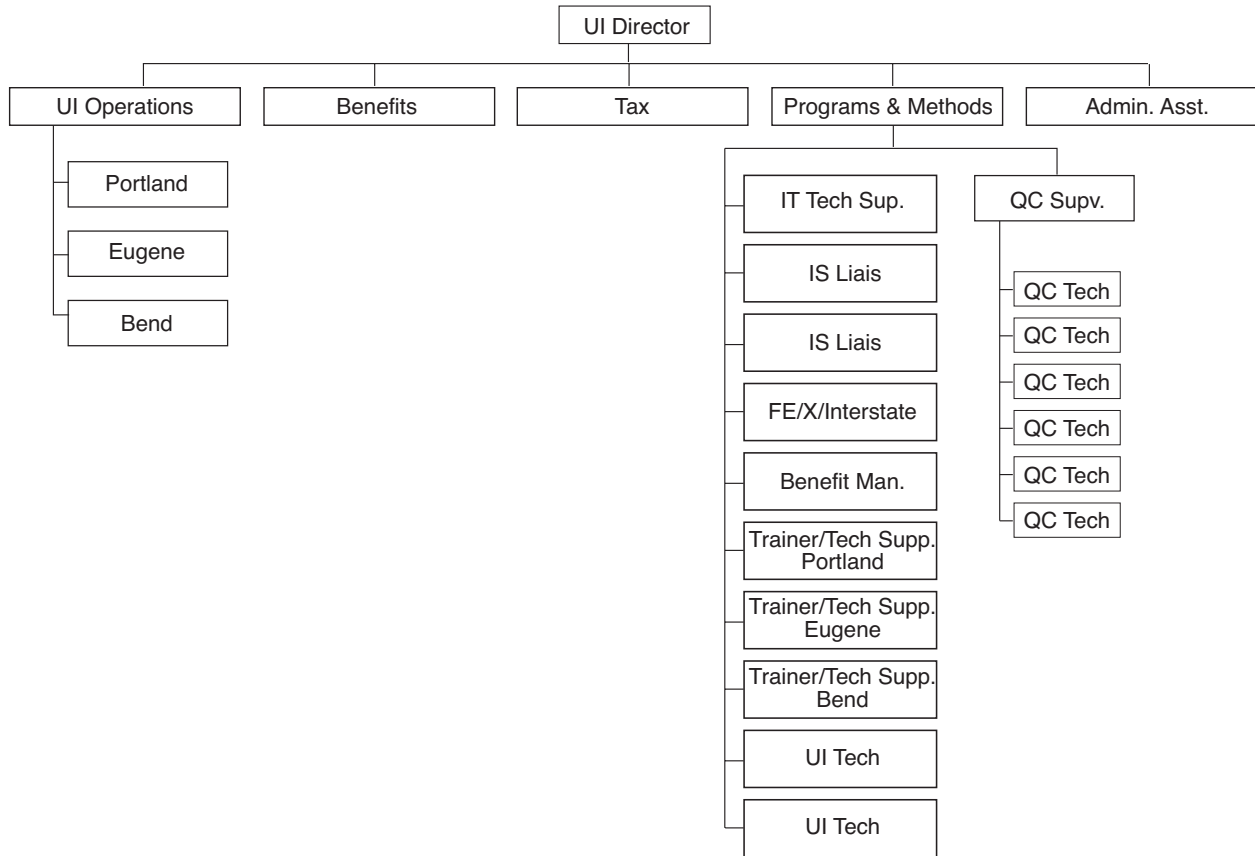
Adjudicators working for supervisors, who report directly through a chain of command to the Assistant Director for Unemployment Insurance, will result in the improvement of the quality of the determinations issued. There will be more training, technical support, and review of work, all of which will benefit those most affected by the decisions we make – employers and claimants.

## **O. Implementation Plan**

1. Create a new position, Unemployment Insurance Operations, which will report to the Unemployment Insurance Assistant Director. This person will coordinate the restructuring of unemployment insurance service delivery in field offices (e.g., site locations, personnel issues).

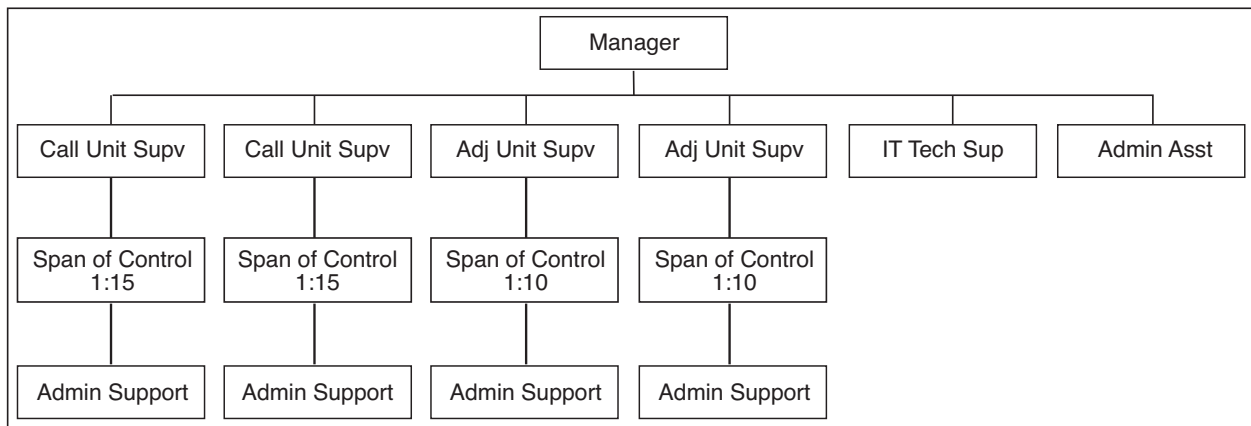
2. Formally designate the sites that will become unemployment insurance centers.
3. Discourage face-to-face contact for unemployment insurance services.
4. Remove unemployment insurance from satellite offices.
5. Transfer unemployment insurance functions to another office, which effectively reduces the number of Reporting Offices.
6. As vacancies occur, transfer positions to the Regional Adjudication Center that will eventually become an unemployment insurance center.
7. As vacancies occur in RACs, reduce or consolidate RACs to match the proposed configuration of the unemployment insurance center.
8. Design unemployment insurance-only applications for benefits.
9. Develop specialized training for managers, supervisors and staff.
10. Programs and Methods Section staff begin development methods to most efficiently file initial and additional claims by telephone and to work with ES to establish process by which claimants may be registered for work.
11. Using Eugene as a model, begin drafting new position descriptions for the unemployment insurance center positions.
12. Continue development of an Internet Initial Claim with a goal of having 35% of all initial claims filed over the internet by 2005.
13. Begin filling technician vacancies to create a Technical Support Unit within the Programs and Methods Section. Experiment with having the positions out stationed. Specifically, Eugene could be a site for an out stationed technician since we propose that this site become an unemployment insurance center.
14. Create a workgroup to assist Workforce Programs Section to access unemployment insurance data in order to facilitate ES registration of claimants.
15. Create a workgroup charged with the responsibility to develop standards of service criteria related to work test and eligibility-related barriers.

## P. Proposed Unemployment Insurance Organization Structure



Note: This chart is for purpose of illustration only. Actual staffing may vary.

## Q. Unemployment Insurance Center Organization Chart



Note: This organization chart is for purposes of illustration only. Actual staffing and numbers of staff may/will vary from one center to another.

# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

## *Business and Employment Service Plan*

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## **1 Overview**

A free labor exchange service was established in Portland in 1913 and offices were opened in Marshfield and Eugene five years later. In 1933 the federal government established a national system, the Employment Service (ES). Today there are 27 full service ES offices and 21 satellite offices administered by the Oregon Employment Department. Additionally we have numerous staff out stationed in one-stop centers, partner facilities and community locations.

ES activities have developed over the years but the heart of the system remains the connection of employers with job openings to qualified applicants who are seeking work. This duality of customers, employers and job seekers, has been embedded in the ES system. However, over the past seventy years the emphasis to serve the employer as the primary customer has diminished. Formal requirements, labor needs, leadership philosophies, technology, the need to serve specialized job seeker populations, funding levels and economic needs of local areas, states and the nation, have all contributed to changes in ES activities.

A recent evolution has been the establishment of a formal “one-stop system” to deliver many of the workforce development services, including ES activities. Partnerships with other service providers and community organizations have long been routine for the Employment Department at the state and local levels. Since 1995, we have been an essential part of the state’s one-stop system.

In 1998 the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) formalized many of the evolving efforts, procedures, and arrangements. WIA also addressed certain aspects of ES – requiring our federal labor exchange activities be done in a prescribed manner.

Incorporated within WIA and very clearly within the Employment Department’s ongoing evaluation of services, is a growing realization that we can and should do more to meet the needs of our business customer. Increasing demands on the Department’s limited, and diminishing, resources make this difficult in the present environment.

Funding multiple ES programs is a major concern. National funds (Wagner-Peyser Act) have not increased, even for inflation, in the past twelve years. State funds (SEDAF – Supplemental Employment Department Administration Funds) are subject to the changing state economic health and pressures. Other sources are quite limited.

However, it is increasingly important to develop and deliver services that are meaningful to our multiple customers. We must think strategically and act immediately.

The Business and Employment Services Plan, which follows, builds upon the strengths within the ES system and the Employment Department. It maximizes opportunities to work with workforce development partners. It recognizes the importance of resource management, excellent service delivery, and the absolute need to meet customer needs. The plan is based on the concepts of business services, account representatives, coordination and collaboration with partners through the use of well trained staff, and modern technology.

## **2 Executive Summary**

During the last year, the Employment Department has done extensive “self-evaluation.” This began with the identification of over 3,000 suggestions in the Transition Process but has also included dialogs with partners (forums and other settings), discussions at ES Policy Council meetings and a comprehensive inventory of ES activities in all offices in November and December; and culminated with the ES Model

Planning Team that came together in early January (2003) to discuss services and come up with an “ideal” ES system. This plan is the formal outcome of that process, along with additional incorporation of partners’ ideas and comments. The time is opportune for the Employment Department to establish a dynamic plan for the future that encompasses the delivery of our services – including many, if not most, of the various programs that we administer such as Wagner-Peyser/SEDAF (ES), Unemployment Insurance, Veterans’ services, and Trade Act.

The workforce development system is comprised of different programs and partners, many of whom have a common objective. Generally speaking, that objective includes assisting businesses and job seekers in ultimately meeting their mutual employment needs. By working together with the partners, complementary services can be provided to meet mutual needs. The current economy and political dynamics emphasize the importance of working together.

The model used for employment services, and service delivery to businesses and job seekers, links to the ES model office workgroup activity and to the best practices identified in the survey of the field offices. For the proposed model to be successful, the department will need to:

- 1) Focus on the needs of business and enable employees to develop strong responsive working relationships with local businesses;
- 2) Develop and invest in training for staff that enhances their abilities to market the agency’s services and understand and satisfy the needs of local businesses;
- 3) Solve confidentiality and information sharing issues among the partners; and
- 4) Support adequate staffing levels to enact the model and/or eliminate services.

Overall, the following areas are essential parts of our “ES model”:

• **Partners/Community Involvement**

We will enter into Memoranda of Understandings (MOU) and cost agreements with partners to ensure training, equipment, facilities, furnishings, and utilities or other resources are shared. Marketing will be a shared responsibility with partners. Department staff must know about and understand the programs and services each local partner provides and partners will be trained to know Employment Department programs and procedures.

While many of the partnership aspects require individualized negotiation and arrangements with the partners, we are committed to the following principles to ensure our mutual success:

- Collaborating in the development of service delivery strategies and processes, considering the opportunities within the workforce development system.
- Coordinating with our partners in all aspects of our work – we must consider their perspectives, recognize mutual needs and objectives, and design a service delivery approach that works best for the customer.
- Co-locating with partners where possible. As one of the major partners, with established facilities and locations, we have something significant to offer the one-stop system. While leases and owned buildings are factors that may well determine ultimate decisions we should also look to the partnership for their needs and potential answers.
- Confidentiality issues will be resolved. We will (re)evaluate our approach to confidentiality. The broad issue of confidentiality is arguably the primary concern from a partnership perspective. Other issues are important, but solving confidentiality issues will create a more collaborative working partnership.

#### • **Business Customer**

The Department must focus on the needs of businesses by developing stronger working relationships with them. The department should be an active member in local Chambers of Commerce, Rotaries, or whatever forum local businesses meet. We will implement the account representative/industry expert concept; dedicated staff will be given the time to establish working relationships with local businesses and learn about their individual needs.

#### • **Job Listing Process**

All job listings will be reviewed for clarity. Employers will be advised of recruitment, screening and referral options upon submission of a job order. All job listings for which the employer has asked for screened applicants, will be matched and appropriate referrals made before being placed in open status in accordance with the employer's desired option. This allows the identification of qualified applicants that the department has in its data bank. Procedures will need to be created for staff to follow-up with job listings that businesses place with the department.

Appropriate service delivery to employers, and job seekers referred to employers, will be monitored to ensure that increased accountability is built into the state and local office process.

#### • **Job Seeker**

Quality enrollments must contain enough information about the knowledge, skills, education, licenses, work experience, and abilities of job seekers so a quality match can occur. Job seekers will be advised that their best opportunity for a job referral is to respond quickly to job referral letters. A match against all open job listings will be performed for both ES and UI job seekers at the time they are enrolled to determine if they are among the best qualified applicants to be referred to employers with job openings.

#### • **Marketing**

Each office will have a marketing plan that includes partner involvement. All department staff will be knowledgeable about OED and one-stop programs and services. Staff will be responsible for marketing the Department and workforce system on an ongoing basis. Department staff will be involved in employment and training activities in the local community. High quality brochures, and or other materials, detailing core and enhanced services must be available for employers and job seekers.

#### • **Job and Career Centers**

Standard features will include computers, fax, copiers, résumé paper, phones, diskettes and software. Access to bilingual staff and appropriate signage must exist to assist the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) customer. Partners will be equal shareholders in the centers. Business resource equipment and materials must be available for business customers' use.

#### • **Well-Trained Staff**

The need to provide all staff with continued training will be recognized. Employees will receive timely initial and refresher training on an ongoing basis. ES Programs staff will design program training and materials for classroom and for peer training. Self directed training will be available on-line for new employees. A peer trainer will be identified in each office and trained to provide consistent information on ES programs and procedures to local staff.

### **3 Objective**

The Business and Employment Services Plan provides the outline and guidance, along with specific outcomes, key deliverable concepts, and dates of expected accomplishments, which will ensure a needed service delivery approach and responsible use of resources within the workforce development system. The plan establishes a vision and groundwork for further discussions and decisions that will enable us to provide more effective services to our business and job seeker customers while working as a good partner with other organizations.

The Employment Department is a major partner within the state's workforce development system. The plan recognizes the legal mandates upon the Department, primarily requirements related to program funding. However, it is also critical to provide quality services to customers and administer resources in a responsible and effective manner. The Department can best do so by working directly with other workforce providers in a partnership mode.

The Employment Service system is a primary connection between businesses and job seekers. The Employment Department:

- Helps employers find qualified workers,
- Provides services, resources, and referrals that assist businesses in meeting employment and training needs,
- Helps job ready workers find suitable work based upon their skills, training and experience,
- Works with other economic and workforce providers to facilitate the delivery of services, and
- Provides services to targeted populations such as military veterans, migrant farmworkers, and unemployment insurance claimants.

The objective of the Business and Employment Services Plan is to build a dynamic and effective service delivery system that is based upon existing operations and experiences. It is not an attempt to create new models or to minimize what is currently being done. Our current service delivery system needs enhancement, focus, and prioritization.

By December 31, 2003 implementation plans will be developed that address the following:

- Improved marketing, staff training, job listing service, applicant registration, job seeker services, business services and partnership activity as articulated by this plan.
- Expanded involvement in the one-stop system.
- Confidence gains by business and industry groups.
- Expanded communications, responsibilities, roles, and responsiveness for the Department with workforce investment boards.
- Improved relationships with workforce partners.
- A continuous improvement process applying to all aspects of our work.

#### **4 Process Background**

The Business and Employment Services Plan was based on:

- ES Policy Council identification, discussion and consensus on elements within a preferred service delivery strategy;
- ES service delivery inventory by ES Programs, Field Services, and agency staff personally surveying and identifying placement activities in every office;
- ES Model Planning Team discussion of services provided and design of an ideal ES system;
- Several partnership forums (two all day sessions, the first addressing Employer Information Sharing and the second Technology Needs) that were attended by over 50 participants;
- Several "Core Service" workgroups – one consisting of state-wide partners and another with sessions in each Region 2 county (Multnomah, Washington, Tillamook) where service delivery and one-stop issues were addressed;
- Discussions with the state's one-stop coordinator; and
- Direct input from offices viewed as having desirable relationships with partners, including Astoria, Albany, Eugene, Ontario, La Grande, and Salem;



## **5 Current Model**

The current model of ES operations and partnership activities varies – while the basic operations in our 48 sites are constant, the approaches and specific details of service delivery are quite different. Labor market conditions, local needs, varying partnership relationships, staff strengths, and management philosophies all contribute to the varying ES practices. The current practices in the department's field offices are described below. The ES Model office visits and survey results were used to identify the current business practices.

The following definitions are used when statements are made quantifying the number of offices that follow a business practice:

- Vast majority is used when 90% to 100% of the offices provide the service.
- Strong majority is used when 70% to 89% of the offices provide the service.
- Majority is used when 51% to 69% of the offices provide the service.

The following are common characteristics of most of the Department's offices. (It should be noted geographic region and/or size of the office did not necessarily influence how the work was done.)

### **Job Listings**

- The strong majority of employers submit a job listing by phone. The second most common method is by fax. Some Internet submission occurs and is on the rise.
- Account Representatives and Employer Relations Representatives take some of the job listings.
- A vast majority have no set limits on which job listings are matched.
- A strong majority ask the employer if the job listing is for a newly created position (for JOBS Plus purposes).
- A vast majority review the job listing quality - the supervisor, lead person, or other ES staff perform the review.
- Job listing specialists take the majority of job orders in large offices; in other offices that responsibility is spread among the ES Staff.

### **Business Customer**

- Most common method of collecting employer feedback is through the Employer Survey.

### **Match**

- A vast majority perform a match at the time the order is taken.
- A strong majority contact the matched customer first by phone and then by a Work-In-Progress (WIP) letter.
- Match is performed by a variety of people including job listing specialists, account representatives, industry specialists, and other ES staff.
- A strong majority perform an applicant match at the time of enrollment by ES staff or special programs staff.
- Most offices perform a match on claimants at the eight week mark using the Employment Duration (EDUR) list.

### **Enrollment**

- The vast majority of customers come into the office to submit their Enrollment for Services form (form 2001). Their work history is keyed into the Oregon Job Selection System (OJSS).
- Missing and/or additional information for enrollment is captured at the time the form 2001 is submitted in-person; phone and mail are secondary methods for collecting information.
- Job seekers are partially enrolled without a 2001 when needed for a quick referral.
- Occupational coding is determined by work experience, education, transferable skills, interests, and specific employer.
- A vast majority include the following information in the OJSS summary: key words, educational information, language skills, license information, and working titles.

### **Job Seeker**

- All offices have access to bi-lingual staff in the office, or through parent offices, partners, and the AT&T Language Line.
- A vast majority of offices have staff that are trained to identify and assess job seeker needs and barriers and make referrals to a wide variety of partner, government and non-profit organizations as appropriate.
- A vast majority of offices determine union/employer attachment when the 2001 is submitted and/or keyed.
- In a vast majority of offices the claimants' OJSS records are updated immediately.
- A majority of offices provide assessment of other service needs.
- A vast majority of offices use the EDUR list to identify claimants who become unattached.

### **Job Referral**

- Most job seekers access job referrals by coming into the office and secondarily by phone – they are “matching” themselves to job listings.
- A vast majority of job seekers are screened for referrals by interview using the OJSS record, which includes: the applicant display, work history, applicant summary, and sometimes the wage record.
- When a job seeker is a good candidate with strong qualifications for a job but lacks some of the job listing requirements the employer is contacted for consideration by the vast majority of offices.
- Referral history is sometimes reviewed when referring a job seeker and may affect the decision to refer.

### **Marketing**

- Customers are informed of the availability of bi-lingual services by staff, signs, brochures and posters in the field office. Offices also use a phone menu with information in Spanish, plus radio spots, and posters placed in the community where LEP customers may frequent.
- A vast majority of offices provide orientation information in-person on a one-on-one basis. A handout form is used secondarily and a third option is sharing information in group settings.
- There is no consistent method of orienting ES-only customers around the state.
- Some of the orientation information is provided some of the time, but not all information is consistently provided all the time. Information is provided in many cases at the request of the ES-only customer.
- Offices are using all of the methods of marketing to the business customer on a consistent basis.
- JOBS Plus is marketed using a wide variety of methods.
- Less than half of the offices provide Claimant Reemployment Orientations to all claimants.

### **Job & Career Center**

- The lobby and resource rooms are primarily integrated into one large area with soft boundaries. Some resource rooms are separate, which makes monitoring more difficult, but allows customers more privacy to construct resumes.
- A vast majority of offices are open from 8am to 5 pm Monday - Friday with reduced staffing during the lunch hour.
- Some, usually larger, offices have scheduled staff for specific time periods, and many have shared resource rooms, which are staffed primarily by partner staff. Most offices do not regularly staff the resource rooms but rely on front counter staff to perform this function.
- A vast majority of offices have a multitude of office tools and supplies for customer use.
- A vast majority of offices have Winway Resume, Career Information Systems and limited Internet access. A majority have Mavis Beacon, nearly half have customer e-mail access.
- A vast majority of offices use the Language Line when needed, and staff are trained to use it and are given written language line instructions.
- Workshops are primarily provided by partners or contracted staff on a regular basis.
- A vast majority of offices provide a full range of applications and services (i.e., application for ES, application for UI, Job Search Assistance, résumé assistance, Career Information Systems and assistance with state job applications). About half of the offices made applications for partner services available to customers.

## **Partners**

- A strong majority of on-site and off-site partners provide assessment, case management, job readiness counseling, training plans development, job development and supportive services.
- A strong majority of offices provide staff with partner training. The two main methods are one-on-one and informal training.
- A vast majority of offices are using email, phone, in-person, and fax machines to share program information with partners.
- A majority of offices dual enroll some customers with partners; the most commonly listed “dual enrolled” customer is the dislocated worker.
- Customers are most often referred to partners by phone call or by making an appointment. In areas where partners are co-located, the customer is often sent to partners for referral.
- The vast majority of parent offices have shared business agreements, memoranda of understanding, cost sharing agreements and operational plans with their partners.
- A majority of offices have been or are in the process of being approved for certification as a One-Stop by the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB.)
- A vast majority of partners are well informed about the process to refer job seekers to the Employment Department.

Partnerships, in particular, varied from office to office and workforce region to region. The nature of the workforce system, especially here in Oregon, is one of variety – in part driven by federal regulations, state policies, and local choices. For the purposes of developing this strategic plan we have drawn upon examples where optimal partnerships are found. This includes areas such as Region 3 (Marion, Polk, Yamhill), Region 4 (Linn, Benton, Lincoln), and Region 5 (Lane). Those areas are marked by their degree of co-location and collaboration in virtually all aspects of workforce development. Optimal partnership relations are also demonstrated at the state level, especially between the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (DCCWD) and the Employment Department. Employment Department partnerships are increasingly being developed with the Department of Community and Economic Development and the Governor’s Office.

## **6 Proposed Model**

The essence of this Business and Employment Services Plan is two-fold – a greater responsiveness to the needs of the business community and a fundamental recognition that it is essential to work with other service providers in the workforce development system in a true partnership mode. Service to customers, businesses, and individuals is fundamental in all aspects of our work but the means to accomplish this service delivery is through partnerships. Partnerships require on-going discussion, understanding and negotiations, usually informal. Healthy partnerships are dynamic in nature and while there are expected outcomes within this plan it is recognized the actual results and timing may vary, depending on the uniqueness of each partner relationship and any variable factors. The proposed model for ES activities and partnership relations in the Business and Employment Services Plan builds upon all of the steps mentioned in the Process Background section of this plan.

From the partnership perspective the overarching concepts of Collaboration and Coordination are our goal and our mandate as we work towards our mission to support business and promote employment. Collaboration and coordination present opportunities in virtually all of what we do. But it is also important to qualify the most important areas – where it is indeed critical and/or opportune. The following are areas with the highest priority:

- Co-location: being situated with our partners wherever and whenever possible.
- Co-identity: identifying ourselves by what we have to provide rather than the agency we work for.

- Confidentiality resolution: we must continue to provide responsible oversight of a “customer’s information” but also recognize there are valid customer and partner needs that require a new approach to confidentiality.
- Consolidation: we must make changes in our service delivery systems. While there are a variety of issues involved in this element we will look at the approaches taken in other states and learn from their successes and failures.

The following concepts and details regarding partnerships are important at each local level as well as from a state perspective. Partnership is primarily the process by which we best achieve our mission. Partnership should also be an objective in itself and considered in all aspects of our work.

Co-location: The model office of the future may not be an office at all. We can be located in several places: in our own facility, outstationed in a partner facility, or located with partners at a mutual facility. Currently, many of our greatest successes can be identified in those areas where we are co-located – where we and partners are truly together. As the system evolves we must think strategically and that may well mean moving from an office location that does not meet our needs. We must be forward thinkers and realize many aspects of the ES and UI systems are outdated. We must also realize the challenge and the opportunity with the implementation of UI Centers – without UI resources supporting our existing field office structure we must adapt, but with the newly available space we have options including inviting partners to our location. But we must also realize it may well be necessary to move out of an office if we can no longer fiscally support it. Joining partners elsewhere may be prudent and appropriate from both service delivery and fiscal responsibility perspectives.

There are limited specific examples of co-location in this plan – those specifics are best developed at the local level with local partners who recognize unique circumstances and conditions. It is critical that we consider co-location as we redesign our offices, negotiate leases, and formulate any facility changes.

Co-identity is critical to partnership development in many respects. Branding is a theme within the Governor’s economic development strategy. The Employment Department has long been identified for its labor exchange, labor market information, and unemployment insurance roles. However, our role within the workforce development system is reflected with the adoption of the WORKSOURCE OREGON brand. It is important to realize customers do not care who provides the service...they just want the benefits; we need to identify ourselves by the service we provide rather than the agency we work for. Our identity within the one-stop system should be based upon what we do rather than who we work for.

This plan does not recommend total integration or merger under another local brand identity. It is vital that at some levels, particularly with the legislature and workforce boards, the Department be recognized for its resources, services, and achievements.

Confidentiality has long been an issue with partners. Customer information is commonly requested by partners. The Department’s position on confidentiality has changed with the evolution of the workforce

development system. Our goal is to share appropriate information with partners to the greatest extent possible. The fact that we serve over 75 percent of the individuals and 95 percent of the employers within the workforce system when coupled with our UI wage records means we have a great deal of valuable information.

Our partners need and want customer information for a variety of reasons. We must balance needs of customers and partners with the concerns about legal requirements, liabilities, and possible identity theft to move forward. The Department must think and act as a workforce partner rather than only the Employment Department.

We will explore the need to develop immediate policy changes and statutory language for the 2005 legislative session. The development and implementation of a new agency release form and process has the potential to address many partner requests; we will continue to work with partners to develop processes to do more.

During the next biennium, the Department will conduct a thorough review of UI wage record uses, needs, authorities, and policies. The value of these wage records, even at the aggregate level, and the emphasis the Department of Labor is putting on the use of the wage records for evaluations and provide incentives to develop solutions.

In summary we will resolve the following confidentiality issues:

- UI Wage Records – who can use the information and what uses are appropriate.
- Applicant information sharing – individual data and/or service record information, what can be done to share information for a common intake system or mutually needed information.
- Consent/Release – development and implementation of a commonly accepted process and form that will work for all partners at all levels.
- Job listing access – evaluation of the current pilots and decisions on how much access to OJSS/iMatchSkills we provide to our partners.

Consolidation is an area that is challenging to address. The Department of Labor champions the concept of integration within the one-stop system. That vision is not endorsed in this plan, at least to the extent taken in several other states where structural organizational changes were made at a state level and ES activities minimized. But the issue of duplication of services – is real and needs to be addressed.

The Employment Department's niche in the workforce system encompasses three areas: business services, labor exchange, and labor market information. We are the lead agency in labor exchange and labor market information, and fill an important role in business services teams.

- We have excellent contacts - ES currently serves nearly 20,000 employers a year. (UI works with virtually all of the state's 100,000 employers.) Supporting business is fundamental to our mission and we will continue to be a key partner with the entire workforce system in this area.

- We are the primary provider for labor exchange activities for the workforce development system - We can take on more responsibility for listing job orders and screening and referring job seekers from our partners, freeing other resources for intensive and training services.
- We provide the labor market information for the workforce development system - The Employment Department is the officially designated workforce information agency and it is recognized for high quality labor market and economic information. Our centrally developed information and the work of our Workforce Analysts and Economists are resources for partners and workforce boards.

We will continue to be a lead contact for businesses in the areas of employee recruitment, selection of job referrals/candidates, job listings, and labor market information. We will be a part of the Governor's regional workforce response teams which provide a single point of contact for business.

## **7 Guiding Principles**

### Business Customer

- With workforce partners we will explore Business and Account Representative concepts: Business Representatives are individuals within the local workforce development system who make direct contact with businesses to facilitate the delivery of services by workforce partners; Account Representatives are Employment Department and partner staff who are the single point of contact with a business for employment and hiring needs.
- Business input will be sought; we will listen to business needs and provide solutions.
- Strong relationships, especially with the economic development community and Oregon Employer Councils, will be developed and maintained.
- The OED will be key members of the teams which coordinate workforce service delivery for the business community.
- Employers will be connected to quality labor market information for business planning and development.

### Partners/Community

- We will share training, equipment, facilities, furnishings and utilities with partners through MOU and cost agreements in all offices.
- Partner and hosted workers will receive training and have at least rudimentary knowledge of Employment Department special program requirements to provide effective referrals.
- Offices will hold regular meetings with special program staff and partners to explain Employment Department programs to staff.
- Partners can encourage their job ready customers to enroll with the Employment Department. Enrollment forms, brochures and workshop time schedules will be available at partner locations.

### Job Listing Process

- The process for employers to place their job listings with OED will be improved.
- Staff will use a structured process to match job orders and job seekers based upon job requirements to refine their match to find and to refer the "best qualified" applicants.
- A database documenting employer business needs will be developed to create job listings.
- A standard process for job listing follow-up with employers will be established.
- The quality assurance process for job listings will be improved.
- Tours of local business by office staff will be scheduled to gain better information about employers and their job openings.

### Job Seeker

- Customers will have direct interaction with Employment Department staff when they enroll for Employment Department services to orient job seekers to all available services and resources.
- A quality enrollment will contain sufficient information about the job seeker's knowledge, education, skills, licenses, abilities, work experience, working condition preferences and employer preferences that will allow staff to match the best qualified job seeker with employer openings. Missing information will be solicited from the job seeker.
- Options and access for job seekers to enroll will be enhanced (i.e., enrollment available 24/7, internet enrollment, forms/computer enrollment available at partners locations, phone and in-person).
- A match against all open job listings will be performed for both ES & UI job seekers at the time of new enrollment.
- Enrollments will be routinely monitored for quality assurance.
- Work registration information will be updated on a routine and regular basis (i.e., contact information, work history, summary and skill codes).
- ES services will be provided on a priority basis for targeted populations, based on the concept of referring the most qualified individual.
- Job seeker customers will be surveyed done on a periodic basis. An ongoing customer feedback tool will be available.

### Marketing

- Marketing will be a collaborative effort with local workforce partners.
- Staff and partners will be involved in community activities, committees and subcommittees to promote workforce services.
- Staff will have strong involvement in their community as representatives of the Employment Department and WORKSOURCE Oregon.
- Television and radio spots will be used to inform the public of our services and those of the workforce development system.
- High quality brochures and handouts detailing core and enhanced services for employers and job seekers will be developed and disseminated.
- All OED staff will be responsible for marketing the department on an ongoing basis.
- Our presence will be more visible within the community through involvement with Oregon Employer Councils (OEC).
- Enrollment forms and employer brochures will be available at job fairs & business exhibitions.

### Job & Career Center (JCC)

- JCC is the area within an Employment Department office where resources are accessible to the public.
- Job seekers will be made aware of all resources available in the JCC.
- LEP customers will have easy access to bi-lingual staff and appropriate signage.
- Computers will be easy to use with written directions and staff assistance as needed.
- Job finding assistance will be available to the job seeker upon request.
- Standard resources will be available in all JCCs – including fax, copiers, résumé paper, phones, diskettes and software.
- Internet and resource room access to computer training tutorials will be available in each JCC.
- A sufficient number of adjustable disability workstations will be available in each JCC.
- Equipment and resource materials will be shared with partners where we are co-located.
- JCC staff affiliation (OED or Partner) will be transparent to the job seeker using the JCC.
- Basic computer skills training and keyboarding/10-key testing will be available.
- Appropriate business resource equipment and materials will be available for use by business customers or partners.
- Interview space and meeting rooms will be available for employer use.

### **Well-Trained Staff**

The foundation or platform for building this Business and Employment Services Plan is well trained staff:

- Staff training will be recognized as ongoing and important. Staff will receive timely initial and refresher training on a regular basis.
- Staff will be evaluated in the performance appraisal process on their ability to apply their training .
- Peer trainers in each office will be identified and trained.
- ES Programs Technicians will use peer trainers to provide consistent information on programs to staff.
- ES Programs will design program training and training materials for peer trainers and classroom training.

### **8 Alignment To Mission and Values**

The mission of the agency is to "Support Business and Promote Employment".

The objectives of this Business and Employment Services Plan are to better serve business, industry, and job seekers through effective partnerships and quality and consistent services.

- We will serve business by recruiting and referring the best qualified applicants to jobs, and providing resources to diverse job seekers in support of their employment needs.
- Supporting our business, industry and job seeking customers will support economic stability for Oregonians and communities.

The values of the agency are "Service, Collaboration, Diversity, Honesty and Openness, Accountability and Trust, and Growth."

- We will better serve all customers, partners and communities. We will provide consistent service.
- We will collaborate with all stakeholders (staff, partners, business, and communities).
- We will be honest and open throughout the planning process and will continue on after the plan is implemented.
- Accountability and trust are goals. An objective of this plan is to build business, partner, and industry trust, which, as a by-product, will pave the way for more job seeker opportunities.
- Improvement in our services should help stimulate business and industrial growth for Oregonians.

### **9 Cost / Benefit Analysis**

Because the Business and Employment Services Plan is based on concepts rather than specifics, it is not possible at this time to provide an accurate estimate of the cost of implementation. Individual plans from local offices and regions will drive costs and benefits. However, we will build upon certain principles and planning considerations. This includes the following:

#### **Principles Related to Resources:**

- crafting options and solutions must be done with local workforce partners.
- all appropriate and necessary steps will be shared with the legislature and the Governor.
- we will be responsive and responsible to legislative action at the national and state levels.

#### **Planning Considerations:**

- different funding options must be recognized and considered.
- opportunities are often tied to existing leases, owned facilities, and the ability to develop options with partners.
- many opportunities and needs are tied directly to implementation of the UI Plan.
- Reed Act funds offer possible solutions but need to be balanced by other important considerations.
- WIA Reauthorization discussions, with possible substantial changes in funding, services, and organization may impact various aspects of the Business and Employment Services Plan.



### Resources - Staffing:

- This plan envisions improved customer service for our business and job seeking customers. Areas such as account representatives, staff training, and business service activities will need additional resources. Efficiencies garnered elsewhere will be applied to these needs.
- Current classifications for the BES and Management series will need to be assessed once the plan is fully implemented.

### Site Costs:

- Costs for implementation of One-Stops will vary. Some locations are already in place and adequate. Many offices will have space available for partners when positions transfer to UI Centers. Many sites will require moving to co-locations and establishing Job and Career Center resource rooms. The Job and Career Center costs for space will need to be identified. Agreements will need to be developed to share furnishings, equipment and utilities.
- The costs for phone systems and computers may be shared, providing for potential savings.

### Benefits :

This plan was developed with quality customer service as the major consideration.

- More outcomes, reduced duplication, better customer satisfaction, effective integrated systems, ease of referral to other services, faster business transactions.

### Indirect Benefits:

- Stronger relationships with customers and citizens, more effective customer support, enhanced agency reputation, better service, more satisfied users, cost reduction, reduced redundancy.

## **10 Implementation Plan**

Implementation plans will be developed locally or regionally by field office staff working with partners, business, and other stakeholders. However, the Department can begin working on broad statewide activities: (bulleted items are "key deliverables"):

1. Some pieces of the plan can be implemented immediately; some offices are currently performing pieces of the plan.
  - To better serve Oregon employers the BES Strategic Plan calls for the use of Account Representatives and Business Representatives. Business Representatives provide initial, direct and broad contact with the business community on behalf of the workforce system. Those filling this role may well be OED Field Office managers, regional Workforce Response Team members, or other staff, including that of our partners.
  - Account Representatives are staff, primarily but not exclusively OED employees, who provide a single point of contact for businesses with employment needs. They typically focus on the labor exchange needs of the employer.
  - An Oregon Employer Council will be established in every office or service area of the state by January 2004. These councils should work in coordination with the local, or regional, workforce investment boards.
2. Training to quality standards can begin immediately. Enhanced and complete enrollments for job seekers, well-written job listings and staff dedicated to learning and understanding the needs of local businesses are keys to success. The ES Programs unit is already training to many of the concepts essential to this key need.
  - ES Programs will develop a process and training for improving the quality of the department's job orders by January 2004. The goal will be to eliminate errors and misspellings, articulate the business' needs so that those needs are easily understood by other staff and the public, and create a review process before the job listing is publicly displayed.

- By July 2005, 40% of referrals (currently 25%) will be agency selected (on the job orders where employers have asked for screening).
- ES Programs will develop a process and training for improving the quality of the department's enrollment for job seekers (an enhanced enrollment) by January 2004.

3. Review current office locations and structure.

- A strategy for co-location opportunities with workforce partners is expected to be developed by January 2004.
- 75 per cent of all field ES staff is expected to be co-located in one-stop centers by July 2005.

4. Resources and policies will be developed to support the Business and Employment Services Plan.

- iMatchSkills will be tested, piloted, and implemented statewide by January 2004.
- Confidentiality issues (wage records use/access, sharing applicant information, common release/cost process, and job listing access) will be fully addressed and resolved, internally and with partners, by January 2004.
- WORKSOURCE Oregon logo will be adopted by OED field offices by early 2004.

# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

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## *Communications & Marketing Plan (Strategic Plan Rollout)*

## **Purpose**

This document serves as a Communications overview and plan to coincide with the rollout of the Oregon Employment Department's (OED) Strategic Plan (SP). This plan will address itself to the needs of four audiences: customers, staff, partners, and stakeholders. In each section we will discuss the Current Situation, Coming Changes, Potential Risks, Mitigation of Risk & Strategies.

## **Overview**

The Employment Department's Strategic Plan calls for a radical shift in the way of delivering service. The department will create three regional unemployment insurance centers for the delivery of unemployment insurance, then realign local field offices to deliver only employer services. This strategy carries with it significant risk without effective communication to various stakeholder groups. Experiences with similar shifts in other states bear witness to the confusion and ill will that can be associated with this type of move. A gradual shift and proper staging of the change is essential no matter the communications strategy. On the positive side, this change allows us the opportunity to market the statewide workforce brand of WorkSourceOregon more broadly and as a way to ease the transition.

## **Customers**

### ***Unemployment Insurance (UI)***

#### *Current Situation*

UI Claimants are probably the most likely affected by the SP. Service delivery currently exists in person, by telephone, and by Internet.

#### *Coming Change*

UI Claimants will do all business with the department either by phone, Internet, or mail. There will be no in-person UI service, except to assist claimants in using the technology to contact a UI Center or assist with language or disability challenges.

#### *Potential Risks*

Based on the experience of other states, claimants could be confused over where to get service, and could continue to demand UI services at the local field offices. This could result in a bad public image as well as stakeholder ire. Customers could fail to file for eligible benefits as a result.

#### *Mitigation of Risks/Strategies*

UI Claimants need direct and indirect communication prior to the change to UI Centers. Because they are a known audience group, we can use the **mail** system to communicate changes. This could include **check messages** as well as **inserts** into UI checks. We could also use field office signage and on hold messages to inform claimants.

Non-claimants could be informed through web marketing messages on WorkingInOregon, by radio ads in their local area as well as targeted newspaper stories in the markets where a UI Center is coming.

Another strategy is to lessen the need for forced change by encouraging claimants to change their own way of receiving service by using the Online Internet Claims System.

Timeframe – begin 3 months before the UI Center opens.

## **Employer Services (ES)**

### *Current Situation*

Employers and job seekers are served currently by in person or phone contact, or over the Internet.

### *Coming Change*

Some ES offices may be reconfigured or relocated in their communities.

### *Potential Risks*

This could cause employers or job seekers to feel underserved.

### *Mitigation of Risks/Strategies*

This is a low risk item. In conjunction with other marketing we emphasize the role of OED in recruiting services and iMatchSkills. The agency's ongoing marketing efforts will help provide information to ES customers about locations and services. The department will continue to seek local input on marketing efforts to make our communications as appropriate as possible.

## **Staff**

### *Current Situation*

Staff in field offices do a combination of UI and ES work. Adjudication is spread into several different offices.

### *Coming Change*

Staff will be segregated into UI and ES only. UI staff may be relocated to UI Centers in other cities. Changing the size of ES offices may result in relocation with partners.

### *Potential Risks*

Staff morale could go down significantly, especially if efforts at reorganization are perceived as "heavy handed" or are not accomplished smoothly. This could also affect customer service and public opinion.

### *Mitigation of Risks/Strategies*

Complete sharing of information, and gathering feedback on a regular basis will help staff feel more comfortable with the plan. Openness, and accommodation where appropriate is also a key. The UI Center video may help alleviate stress of the unknown and fears of reduced customer service in UI Centers. Further training and communication over the Intranet with web/video products may help out-stationed staff with coming changes.

## **Partners**

### *Current Situation*

We have a variety of relationships with partners. We are co-located with partners in some cases, and in others we work closely with partners while in separate locations. Still other situations have little or no working relationship between OED and partners.

### *Coming Change*

Reductions in local office staff will afford opportunity and necessity for more co-location. This will force better working relationships with partners and the forming of new relationships. The plan calls for OED to be a "lead" contact. This could result in resentment by partners.

### *Potential Risks*

Partners could "dig" in their heels and not cooperate. Partners could begin to create their own strategies that leave OED "out of the mix."

### *Mitigation of Risks/Strategies*

Provide one-on-one marketing of the plan with partners, showing the opportunities for increased efficiency and service. This situation also opens up an opportunity to co-brand with statewide workforce brand: WorkSource Oregon. Communications is developing an assistance package for regions which wish to adopt the WorkSource Oregon Brand.

### **Stakeholders/Overseers**

#### *Current Situation*

Stakeholders and overseers include the Executive Branch and the Legislature. These entities oversee the department's budget and overall direction.

#### *Coming Change*

Possible overall staff reduction and relocation of physical buildings, plus changes in service delivery model.

#### *Potential Risks*

Staff reductions could be seen as detrimental to areas economically depressed. Some constituents could complain about service level. Changes in offices could be seen as wasteful.

### *Mitigation of Risks/Strategies*

Communication beforehand to lawmakers in districts where offices will close or relocate will ensure service delivery continues unabated. Also important: prior communication to DAS about planned changes in offices. We should have reasons ready to share on the positives of the plan (better, more consistent service by phone, more cost effective, concentration on ES services by field offices, partnering)

### **Ideas** – some local, some statewide

- Signage in offices: "its coming"
- Check Message
- Insert in check
- On hold messages
- Web marketing messages
- Local newspaper stories with quotes from local manager
- Radio ads in local markets prior/after change
- Streaming video of call center video on website

# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

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## *Framework for the Facilities Implementation Plan*

Business Services will support the implementation of the agency's Strategic Plan by fulfilling facility needs.

**Facility Strategy**

UI Centers:

Business Services will work with the UI Implementation Team to determine the space requirements for the UI Centers; work with DAS Facilities and UI Site Selection Committee(s) to search for and select appropriate UI center sites; and partner with the selected Landlord(s) / Developer(s), DAS Facilities, Information Technologies (IT) and the UI Implementation Team to develop and deliver the UI Centers according to the timelines identified in the Strategic Plan.

ES Offices:

Business Services will work with ES Management and Field Office Managers throughout the state to restructure existing space to meet future requirements. Restructuring will include reconfiguring existing office space; subleasing excess capacity to workforce or community partners; working with DAS Facilities to negotiate lease reductions with landlords; not renewing specific leases and relocating staff to other ES or Partner offices; and (potentially) divesting specific owned facilities.

**Key Components of Facility Strategy**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>1. UI Site Selection Process:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify Space Needs – Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• Define Site Search Areas – Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• Develop Exhibit A for DAS Hot Sheet</li> <li>• Letter of Justification for Site Search</li> <li>• Hot Sheet Posted by DAS – Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• Review and Rank Sites – Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• Select Site – Eugene, Metro</li> </ul>   | <p><u>Timeline</u></p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>09/03</p> <p>10/03</p> <p>10/03</p>   |
| <p>2. UI Facility Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop UI Office Config. – Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• DAS Lease Development Process - Eugene</li> <li>• DAS Lease Development Process – Metro</li> <li>• Review Strategic Plan with Emergency Board</li> <li>• Sign Leases for Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• Facility Buildout – Eugene</li> <li>• Facility Buildout – Metro</li> <li>• Order Furniture – Eugene, Metro</li> <li>• Install Furniture – Eugene</li> <li>• Install Furniture – Metro</li> <li>• Move Staff – Eugene</li> <li>• Move Staff – Metro</li> <li>• Develop UI Office Configuration – Bend</li> <li>• Order Furniture – Bend</li> <li>• Reconfigure / Buildout UI Office – Bend</li> <li>• Install Furniture – Bend</li> <li>• Move Staff – Bend</li> </ul> | <p><u>Timeline</u></p> <p>07/03 - 10/03</p> <p>11/03 - 12/03</p> <p>11/03 - 01/04</p> <p>11/03</p> <p>12/03 – 01/04</p> <p>01/04 - 06/04</p> <p>02/04 - 11/04</p> <p>01/04</p> <p>05/04 - 06/04</p> <p>10/04 - 11/04</p> <p>07/04 - 01/05</p> <p>11/04 - 06/05</p> <p>06/04 - 01/05</p> <p>12/04</p> <p>02/05 - 05/05</p> <p>05/05</p> <p>06/05 – 07/05</p> |



3. ES Service Delivery Model:

• Bend ES Site Selection Process	08/03 - 12/03
• Bend ES DAS / Lease Process	01/04 - 06/04
• Bend ES Facility Development	07/04 - 05/05
• Develop Cost Sharing Policy / Procedures	08/03 - 11/03
• Review Initial ES Service Delivery Plans	08/03 - 09/03
• Work with Field Offices on Excess Capacity	09/03 - 12/03
• Review Final ES Service Delivery Plans	12/03 - 01/04
• Incorporate ES Plans into Strategic Facilities Plan	12/03 - 06/04
• Implement Cost Sharing Agreements as req'd	01/04 - 06/05
• Work with DAS to Renegotiate Leases as req'd	01/04 - 06/05
• Reconfigure Offices / Move Staff as req'd	01/04 - 06/05
• Divest Owned Offices as req'd	01/04 - 06/05

Timeline

Key components of the Facility Strategy are detailed on the spreadsheet of Milestone Timelines for Business Services.

Milestone Timelines for Business Services Support of OED Strategic Plan - DRAFT (08/28/03)																		
Activity	2003						2004						2005					
	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Jun	Jul	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	May	Jun	July	
1. UI Site Selection Process:																		
Identify Space Needs - Eugene, Metro	█																	
Define Site Search Areas - Eugene, Metro	█																	
Develop Exhibit A for Hot Sheet		█																
Letter of Justification for Site Search			█															
Hot Sheet Posted by DAS - Eugene, Metro				█														
Review and Rank Sites - Eugene, Metro					█													
Select Site - Eugene, Metro						█												
2. UI Facility Development:																		
Develop UI Office Config - Eugene, Metro	█	█	█	█	█	█												
DAS / Lease Process - Eugene							█	█	█	█	█	█						
DAS / Lease Process - Metro													█	█	█	█	█	█
Facility Buildout - Eugene																		
Facility Buildout - Metro																		
Order Furniture - Eugene and Metro																		
Install Furniture - Eugene																		
Install Furniture - Metro																		
Move Staff - Eugene																		
Move Staff - Metro																		
Develop UI Office Configuration - Bend																		
Order Furniture - Bend																		
Reconfigure Office / Buildout - Bend																		
Install Furniture - Bend																		
Move Staff - Bend																		
3. ES Service Delivery Model:																		
Bend ES Site Selection Process																		
Bend ES DAS / Lease Process																		
Bend ES Facility Development																		
Develop Cost Sharing Policy / Procedures																		
Review Initial ES Service Delivery Plans																		
Work with Field Offices on Excess Capacity																		
Review Final ES Service Delivery Plans																		
Incorp. ES Plans into Strategic Facilities Plan																		
Implement Cost Sharing Agreements																		
Work with DAS to renegot. Leases as req'd																		
Reconfigure Offices / Move Staff as req'd																		
Divest Owned Offices as req'd																		

# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

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## *A Framework for the IT Implementation Plan*

The ITS section will contribute to the implementation of the agency's Strategic Plan by delivering the technical infrastructure and support necessary to meet business requirements. This document is intended to serve as a framework for detailed IT implementation plans which will be completed prior to November 2003, including detailed planning, timelines and cost estimates. Appendices A and B will contain these planning details, and will be continuously updated as the plans are refined.

### **Infrastructure Strategy**

#### *UI Centers:*

The general strategy will be to initiate the set up of each UI Center six months prior to its scheduled "go-live" date. A common approach will be used for each of the Eugene area, Metro and Bend UI Centers. It is anticipated that DAS Enterprise Network Services (ENS), Employment Dept staff and a telecommunications vendor will form an implementation team to deliver the UI Center infrastructure. The assumption is that the call handling equipment and applications will be fundamentally the same for each UI Center, other than sizing to allow for variations in staffing numbers. Appendix A outlines the anticipated steps required for building the infrastructure for each UI Center.

#### *ES Offices:*

Employment Services will be increasingly housed in co-located environments with partners. This implies some sharing of technical resources, such as networks and telephone systems. The expectation is that future Memoranda of Understanding with partners will include references to shared technology resources, including responsibilities for maintenance and support. Therefore, it is important that ITS be included in the review of each Resource Sharing Agreement (RSA) before it is finalized. An additional expectation is that some new investment in core technology components may be required initially, such as lobby and training PCs, multi-channel routers, and large capacity telephone switches.

### **Application Development Strategy**

#### *UI:*

Internet Initial Claims – To be operational prior to UI Center start-up.

Adjudicator Workflow / Imaging – Functional requirements, architecture and development plans not defined. Expected to be an early component of UI Center operations.

Modifications to the Telephone Initial Claims "Pop" screens – To be operational after IIC and prior to UI Center start-up.

#### *ES:*

iMatchSkills – To be incrementally phased in for our staff during the last quarter of 2003. A release to the public is anticipated to occur in early 2004.

### **Technical Support Strategy**

All environments presume the existence of a single point of contact (eg HelpDesk) as first contact support sought. This anticipates the existence of a full-service technical support center to provide telephone support for all UI, ES, and Central Office staff, as well as the rest of the agency.

#### *UI Centers:*

Desktop support - While the first point of contact will be the Helpdesk, it is anticipated that each UI Center will have at least one individual that is dedicated to providing on-site technical support for desktop systems.

Server/Telecom support – It is anticipated that remote management of servers and telecom equipment will provide sufficient support. On-site visits for significant issues will be coordinated by the central network and desktop support groups.

#### *ES Offices:*

Desktop support – It is anticipated that day-to-day technical support can be provided via HelpDesk, and remote management services.

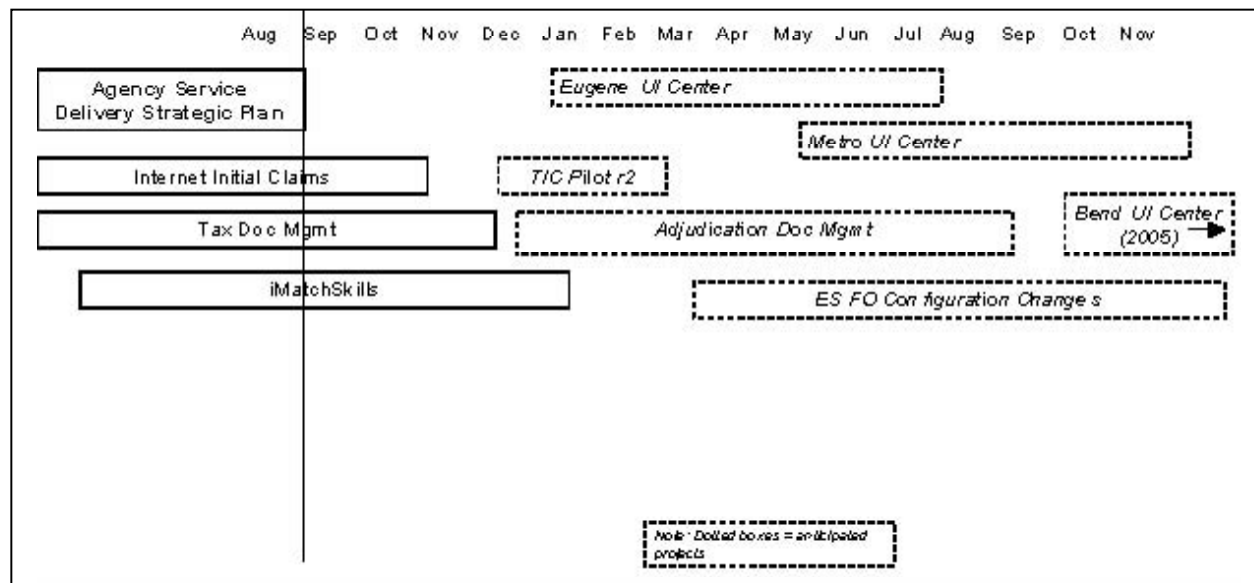
Regional Support Model – It is anticipated that routine on-site visits will be provided on a regional basis. Regional technical support may potentially be co-located in the three UI Centers.

Server / Telecom support - It is anticipated that remote management of servers and telecom equipment will provide sufficient support. On-site visits for significant issues will be coordinated by the central network and desktop support groups.

### Appendix A UI Center Technical Infrastructure WorkPlan

1. Site Preparations
  - Network cabling
  - Telephone installations
  - Server Room setup
  - Testing and Verification
2. Telephony Equipment Installations
  - IVR Equipment
  - Genisys Equipment
  - Symposium Equipment
  - Line capacity
  - Testing and Verification
3. Business Solution Application Installations
  - IVR Scripts
  - Genisys Call Routing Rules
  - Interfacing Applications
  - Testing and Verification
4. System Testing
  - Functionality
  - Capacity

### Appendix B Milestone Timelines for IT Implementation of Agency Strategic Plan



# Oregon Employment Department Strategic Plan

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## *Questions & Answers*

**The following questions and answers outline personnel scenarios we anticipate as the new Strategic Plan is implemented and the manner in which we will fill positions in the UI centers. It also includes material pertinent to the UI, B&ES and Implementation Plans.**

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<u>Topic</u>	<u>Question #'s</u>
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**Strategic Plan  
Q & A's**

1) **Q:** There will be about 110 total BES positions in the 3 UI centers. How will the agency decide which BES positions will be transferred to the UI centers and how will these positions be filled?

**A:** We will first use the volunteer BES transfer list. If more BES staff volunteer than are needed we will use a competitive process. The qualified staff selected and their position will be transferred to a UI center.

2) **Q:** The Eugene UI Center needs 31 BES staff, Metro 65 and Bend 14. What will happen if fewer than that number volunteer for those sites?

**A:** All those who volunteer, and are qualified, will be selected without the need for interviews. Then the normal recruitment and interview process will be used to fill the remaining vacancies.

NOTE: We have to ensure that the three UI centers have the appropriate number of bilingual staff.

3) **Q:** Will Bend and Eugene UI BES staff have to compete for the BES positions in the UI centers in their area?

**A:** Yes, if there are more candidates competing than there are positions in the UI center, all BES staff, regardless of which office they currently work in, will get an equal chance at being selected.

4) **Q:** When will the selection of BES staff for the UI centers occur?

**A:** Selection of Eugene UI center BES staff will begin during the first quarter of 2004. As Eugene is the first UI center to be opened, staff for that center will be selected first. During the summer of 2004, staff for the Portland Metro and Bend UI centers will be selected. The chart below outlines the UI Center BES hiring process as it is currently planned:

	<b>Eugene</b>	
February 2004 Interviews	March 2004 Selections	June 2004 – February 2005 31 BES Staff transferred to UI Center Incrementally
	<b>Portland Metro</b>	
August 2004 Interviews	September 2004 Selections	December 2004 – June 2005 65 BES Staff transferred to UI Center Incrementally
	<b>Bend</b>	
August 2004 Interviews	September 2004 Selections	June 2005 All (14) BES Staff transferred to Bend UI Center

5) **Q:** I'm a BES in Office X. My office's UI work will go to the Eugene UI center. However, I want to work in the Metro UI center, not Eugene. What should I do?

**A:** You have 2 choices:

a) Put your name on the transfer list for only the Metro UI center.

b) Put your name on the transfer list for both the Eugene and Metro centers. If selected for Eugene, you would leave your name on the transfer list for Metro.

NOTE: The agency will only pay for one move.

6) **Q:** I am a BES in a local office performing both ES and UI functions. Will my classification change if I only work in ES or only work in UI?

**A:** No.



- 7) **Q:** Will there still be a need for 2 levels of BES?  
**A:** Yes. The current classification for the BES 1 and 2 describe the body of work in both the UI and ES programs. When UI work is transferred to the UI centers BES staff will still need to have basic knowledge and understanding of the both the UI and ES programs.
- 8) **Q:** Will all current RAC adjudicator positions be transferred to the UI centers?  
**A:** Yes.
- 9) **Q:** When will adjudicators have to declare their intention to transfer to a UI center?  
**A:** Adjudicators in the Eugene UI area will have to declare by March 1, 2004. Those in Metro and Bend regions will have until September 1, 2004.
- 10) **Q:** An adjudicator assigned to Bend wants to work in the Metro UI center. Will they have that option?  
**A:** Adjudicators will be asked to indicate their preference for which UI center they want to work in. We will try to accommodate those preferences as much as possible.
- 11) **Q:** If an adjudicator does not live within commuting distance of one of the UI centers and cannot move could they telecommute?  
**A:** No – all the advantages of co-locating the adjustors in a UI center (workload distribution, coordination with IC, supervision, training, imaging, peer support, etc.) are lost if an adjudicator works from home.
- 12) **Q:** Will adjudicators be allowed to demote to a BES if they do not want to work in a UI center?  
**A:** Yes.
- 13) **Q:** Will current outstationed adjudicators (Roseburg, Coos Bay, Hermiston and Ontario) be allowed to demote into a BES position in the office they are currently working in?  
**A:** Yes.
- 14) **Q:** How will administrative support staff for the UI centers be selected?  
**A:** A total of 10 administrative support staff will be needed in the 3 UI centers. Interested employees will be asked to put their name on the voluntary transfer list. (This is the same process and time line that will be used to select the BES staff).
- Note: We have targeted 11/1/03 to have position descriptions and classifications for the administrative support positions for the UI centers and the field B&ES offices.
- 15) **Q:** There will be a total of 19 PEM-B supervisory positions in the 3 UI centers. Where will the agency get these positions and how will they be filled?  
**A:** The current UI supervisors in the field offices and their positions will be transferred to the UI Centers.
- 16) **Q:** If one or more of the UI PEM-B incumbents chooses not to transfer with their position, how will the vacancy be filled?  
**A:** We will then use a competitive process using the volunteer PEM-B transfer list to find a qualified supervisor.
- 17) **Q:** Will management staff, slated to be transferred to a UI center or another B&ES office, be allowed to demote to a BES position if they do not want to accept the transfer?  
**A:** Yes, if the manager/supervisor held regular status in the classified service before moving into management and meets all the qualifications of the BES position. If the manager did not hold regular status in the classified service prior to moving into management, he/she will need to apply and compete for available job openings.  
(Note: Red circling would not occur in this situation)

**18) Q:** How will the agency select the Operation Manager and 3 Site Managers for the new UI centers?

**A:** We plan to use an internal agency competitive process, open to all qualified department employees.

**19) Q:** As we transition to the UI Centers the field offices will lose their UI staff, causing total staffing allocations to be reduced. How will these reductions be accomplished in the individual offices to meet their ES staffing allocation?

**A:** In 4 ways: 1) Attrition, through retirements and normal turnover. 2) Voluntary transfers to one of the UI Centers or another office/section. 3) Involuntary transfers. 4) Resignation if no other options are found. (Note: if resignation cannot be avoided we will use all of our agency's job finding resources to help the employee find a position in another agency or in the private sector.)

**20) Q:** What criteria/process will be used to determine the ES staff who will be involuntarily transferred if an office is over staffed? Will seniority be a consideration?

**Example:**

Office X has 5 ES staff and 2 UI staff = 7 staff total. No attrition occurs prior to the UI centers coming on line and no staff apply to work in a UI center. Office X staffing allocation is reduced to 5 ES staff, but 7 staff remain on board.

**Problem:**

Which 5 staff stay and which 2 will be involuntarily transferred to another office that is understaffed?

**A.** Seniority will be a consideration. We will first look at the business needs of the offices, e.g., LVER/ DVOP position requirements and the bilingual needs for the office's customers. After assuring the business needs of the office are met, involuntary transfer decisions will be made based on inverse seniority. That is the individuals with the least seniority and their positions will be reassigned to another ES office.

**Example:**

In the above scenario, let's assume the following: one position is a LVER, and the employee is the only category 1 veteran in the office. That employee will not be transferred. The customer base for the office needs 2 bilingual employees, and the office currently has 3 bilingual staff. The 2 bilingual employees with the most seniority will not be transferred. Of the remaining 4 employees, the 2 who have the fewest service credits will be reassigned to ES offices that are understaffed.

**21) Q:** If my office is overstaffed after losing its UI staff, how soon will I know if I am one of the employees who will be potentially involuntarily transferred?

**A:** By October 1, 2004. All of the current BES staff who will transfer to the three UI centers will have been identified by then.

**22) Q:** Will I get a choice of offices if I am to be involuntarily transferred?

**A:** Yes, provided there are 2 or more offices that are understaffed (see question 24).

**23) Q:** When will the employees in overstaffed offices, who are to be involuntarily transferred, get to choose the office they want to work in?

**A:** November 2004.

**24) Q:** Will seniority be used in determining the order in which the involuntarily transferred employees get to pick the office they want to work in?

**A:** Yes. These employees' seniority will be arranged in service credit order on a statewide basis. The employee with the most seniority on this list will get to choose first. The employee with the least seniority will choose last. Employees may choose to transfer to any office, in any region, that is understaffed.

**25) Q:** Will the seniority of seasonals rate equally with permanents?

**A:** Yes. Our plan is to request DAS to convert all seasonal positions to permanent (with the exception of seasonal positions in Tax).

**26) Q:** When will the seasonal staff be converted to permanent?

**A:** Our goal is by June 2005. Conversion of seasonal positions will require partnership with the DAS Human Resource Services and Budget & Management Divisions. We may have resolution earlier but have targeted the end of the biennium as a maximum time line.

**27) Q:** If a satellite office is more than 50 miles from its parent office, will it stand alone in comparing staff seniority for the purpose of involuntary transfers of ES staff?

**A:** Yes. For example, St. Helens is a satellite of Astoria. The two offices are more than 50 miles apart. If Astoria should end up overstaffed, the employee with the least seniority in Astoria will be transferred even if there is a person in St. Helens with fewer service credits.

Note: The parent/satellite office configurations will change as the plan is implemented. However, the involuntary transfer of BES staff will be based on the parent/satellite office structure as of July 1, 2003.

**28) Q:** If I am involuntarily transferred to an under-staffed ES office, when will I have to report to the new office?

**A:** Eugene region (\*), the transfers will occur between 12/1/04 and 3/1/05.

Metro region (\*\*), the transfers will occur between 2/1/05 and 7/1/05.

Bend region (\*\*\*), the transfers will all occur on 8/1/05.

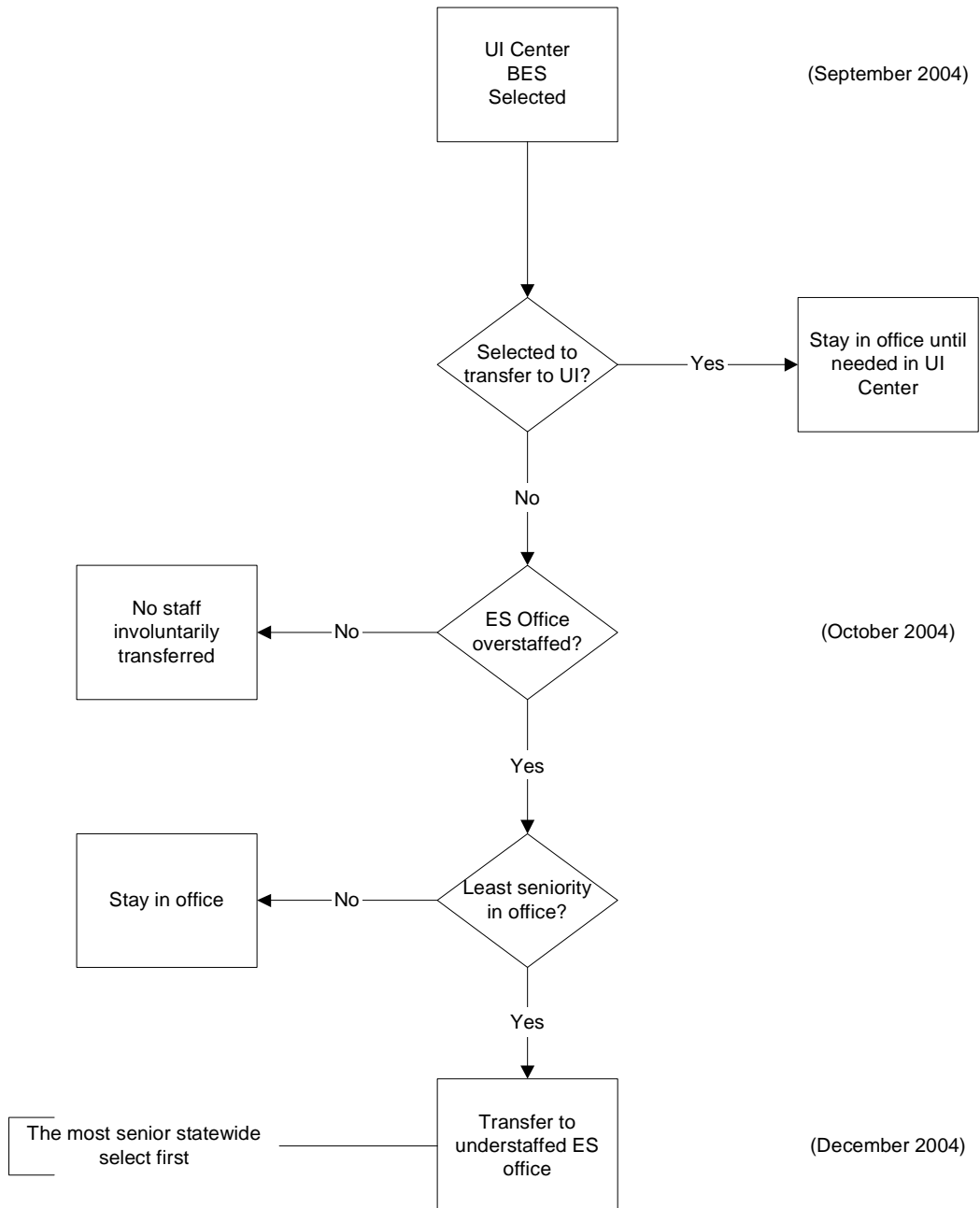
\* Albany, Newport, Lincoln City, Eugene, Roseburg, Grants Pass, Medford, Ashland, Coos Bay, Gold Beach, Brookings

\*\* Gresham, Downtown Portland, North Portland, Astoria, St. Helens, McMinnville, Oregon City, Beaverton, Hillsboro, Salem, Woodburn

\*\*\* The Dalles, Klamath Falls, Bend, Redmond, Madras, Prineville, Pendleton, Hermiston, Milton-Freewater, Ontario, Burns, Baker City, John Day, LaGrande, Enterprise

\* See Q & A's 21 through 28

## Transfer Process & Timelines



- 29) Q:** Will half-time LVER's be exempt from involuntary transfers?  
**A:** Yes, however, if there is another category 1 veteran working in the office who has more seniority, that employee will be offered the opportunity to assume the duties of the LVER position.
- 30) Q:** Will employees in contract positions be exempt from the seniority based involuntary transfer process?  
**A:** No.
- 31) Q:** If someone is forced to resign because they cannot accept an involuntary transfer, will they be eligible for UI and dislocated worker training?  
**A:** Each claim is adjudicated based on the specific facts of that claim. However, generally speaking, if a worker resigns rather than accept a transfer, and the transfer would require the worker to relocate, the separation would be deemed a 'voluntary quit' (VQ) with good cause, which would allow the payment of benefits. This person would also be eligible for dislocated worker training from the local WIA provider.
- 32) Q:** None of the 3 UI centers are within commuting distance of my residence. If I choose to move, will the agency pay for my relocation expenses?  
**A:** Yes, provided you meet the criteria contained in DAS State Policy 40.055.10, "Employee Relocation Allowance". This policy states: "The new official work station must be at least 50 miles farther than the former residence was from the old work station. For example, if the old work station was 3 miles from the former residence, the new work station must be at least 53 miles...for the employee to be eligible for moving allowances."
- 33) Q:** If I am selected to work in a UI center off a volunteer transfer list, will the agency pay my moving expenses if I meet the DAS criteria for relocation allowances?  
**A:** Yes. For the implementation of the strategic plan these moves are considered for the benefit of the agency to facilitate the initial staffing of the UI centers. (Note: this is different from the agency's normal policy where voluntary transfers are usually considered for the benefit of the employee and moving expenses are not paid).
- 34) Q:** I now commute 15 miles (one way) to work. The nearest UI center is 40 miles from my home. Will the agency pay my additional commuting expense?  
**A:** No. There is no provision in DAS policy or the collective bargaining agreement to pay for this expense.
- 35) Q:** The DAS policy only allows for 200 miles of mileage reimbursement for house hunting. Will OED be more liberal?  
**A:** The Director will consider exception requests where the policy allows.
- 36) Q:** After the plan is implemented, will the field have regional managers?  
**A:** Yes – we do not see their role diminishing in any way. They will remain vital in coordinating service delivery between offices and with partners. And they will continue to be the bridge/communication link between central office policy makers and the field office service delivery.
- 37) Q:** I am a field manager/supervisor. When will the management structure for the field B&ES offices, and the classifications for these positions, be determined? Could my salary be reduced?  
**A:** We hope to have these decisions made by November 2003. We will review classifications to determine if adjustments are necessary. If you are re-classed down, you will be "red circled".
- 38) Q:** The Strategic Plan shows there will be fewer UI staff needed after it is fully implemented. Will this include management staff?  
**A:** Yes. We anticipate having 10 fewer UI management staff.

**39) Q:** How will the agency handle vacant positions between now and when the plan is implemented?

**A:** We have already begun to review vacancies to determine if they should be filled, transferred, or held vacant. When we decide to fill a vacancy that could be affected by the strategic plan, the announcement and job offer condition will explain that the job/position may change and be relocated. We will look first to fill positions from within the agency. We will also consider filling the position as a limited duration (LD) if that will give the current employee more options to remain employed as the strategic plan is implemented.

**40) Q:** If an LD position is not needed as a home for a permanent employee after the strategic plan is fully implemented, will the incumbent be converted to a permanent?

**A:** Yes, provided the position is not needed as part of the agency's plan to reduce UI positions.

**41) Q:** What hiring considerations will be given to current employees as the agency fills vacant positions during the implementation of the strategic plan?

**A:** We intend to use agency promotion, transfer and reemployment lists first. If we cannot find qualified candidates using these options we would then use other recruitment lists available to the agency.

**42) Q:** How are the positions not part of Field Operations affected by this plan?

**A:** The plan calls for some central office technician positions to be located in the UI centers and field offices. Some Tax Auditors, Fraud Investigators, and Quality Control staff will be assigned to each of the UI centers. Research and Child Care Division staff that now work in the field will remain in the field.

**43) Q:** What will be the career development opportunities once the strategic plan is implemented?

**A:** There will still be the same career development opportunities that exist now within the UI and ES programs as well as across programs. However, with a higher number and wider variety of positions (BES, adjudicator, investigator, UI technician, tax auditor or tax status examiner, lead workers and supervisors) in a UI Center, there will actually be more opportunities for advancement within the center than that of a typical field office today.

**44) Q:** Will per diem be provided during developmental assignments?

**A:** Per diem will be considered within specific guidelines on a case-by-case basis. Managers will be encouraged to explore any barriers that may preclude an employee from taking advantage of developmental and training opportunities. While per diem may be a solution in one case, other action may better address barriers in another case (i.e., providing training on site, use of technology for meetings, trainings, and distance learning).

**45) Q:** Why will the UI centers be more efficient and provide better customer service than the RAC's/RO's?

**A:**

- 1) All claimants will speak with a claims taker when they file their Initial Claim. This will result in a better Benefit Rights Interview (BRI).
- 2) Adjudicators and claims takers will be supervised by the same manager. This will significantly improve the coordination between the IC and adjudication processes.
- 3) Technicians will be located on site to review work and provide just in time training.
- 4) We will be able to file IC's with 30% fewer claims takers.
- 5) The UI centers will have document imaging to improve document work flow.
- 6) All UI staff will report to one assistant director. This will help improve the consistency of UI administration on a statewide basis.
- 7) The UI center managers, supervisors, and staff will be UI experts. They will not have to divide their time and focus between ES and UI.
- 8) The UI centers will have state-of-the-art phone systems.
- 9) The economies of scale of having all adjudicators located in three offices instead of 8 will help reduce the stress of this challenging job.

10) Since the RAC's were formed the agency has not been able to meet the Federal Desired Levels of Achievement (DLA's) for quality and timeliness in the adjudication process. This is NOT the fault of our adjudicators. Quite the contrary, it is a business model that has not worked.

**46) Q:** We have heard that the conversion to call centers in the state of Washington was chaotic. We also understand that their claimants still complain that it is very difficult to get through to a call center by phone. Will we have a similar transition experience? Will our customer service deteriorate?

**A:** We are one of only 16 states that have not completely converted to call centers. We have many negative and positive models to learn from. Washington is a model of what not to do. We are currently piloting telephone IC's in Eugene. It is going very well to date, and the claimant feedback is confirming that fact. They still have the option to use a paper form and file by mail, and soon they will have the option to file using the internet. We will bring our centers on line one at a time; the first one will not be opened until we are convinced the success of the Eugene pilot can be replicated on a larger scale. We will not "go live" until we are certain that we have a telephone system that will handle the volume of calls that we will receive. We will not "go live" until all UI center staff are fully trained. We will conduct an intensive education campaign for our claimants to help them to learn the new way to file for benefits.

**47) Q:** Will services be available 24/7 in the UI centers?

**A:** The continued claims process already is, either by IVR or internet. Initial claims will be processed by phone during the normal 8am – 5pm hours. When we start filing IC's over the internet that service will be available 24/7.

**48) Q:** How will technical support be provided at the UI centers?

**A:** Each UI center will have at least one individual that is dedicated to providing on-site technical support. These positions will report to the Network, Telecommunications and Desktop Support unit within the Information Technology Services (ITS) section. These positions will be recruited initially as agency-only opportunities with the expectation that existing ISLs and other agency staff will apply. Recruitment is expected to occur in January 2004.

**49) Q:** Why were Eugene, Bend and Portland selected as the sites for the UI centers?

**A:** There were ten criteria (they are listed on page 12 of the UI plan) used to determine in which parts of the state we would locate the centers. All regions of the state were considered. The sites chosen rated the highest compared to the selected criteria.

**50) Q:** When will we know where the UI Centers in Eugene, Portland and Bend will be located?

**A:** The Bend UI Center will be located in our current field office. We should know where the sites will be located in Eugene and the Portland Metro area by mid-October 2003.

Dan Hall, Manager of Business Services has developed a "hot sheet", a mini request-for-proposal. He has submitted the hot sheets for both areas to the Department of Administrative Services (DAS) and the search for buildings has begun. When Dan receives a list of potential sites back from DAS, we will visit the sites and rank them. A short list of up to two or three of the strongest sites will be identified for each area from which the final site will be selected. Staff from the affected offices will be included in this selection process.

**51) Q:** Why is the Eugene UI Center coming on line first, with Metro second and Bend third?

**A:** The UI Implementation team determined that it is in the best interest of our customers, the Department and the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan that Eugene comes on line first for the following reasons:

- Eugene is, and should continue to be, the cornerstone and test site for the implementation of telephone initial claims. Because of the variety of issues that have arisen and been resolved by the staff of the Eugene office, Eugene should continue on course to test and work out implementation bugs before rolling this new service delivery mechanism to another area.

- Portland Metro would be implemented next. Many of the siting decisions and leasing of the building will occur simultaneously with the Eugene center. The target date for obtaining a Metro site has not been set but is planned for early 2004 to facilitate decisions by staff on moving their personal residence to an area near the UI Center. Portland will not be brought on line however, until we are certain all systems are operating as intended in Eugene.
- Bend will be set up last to facilitate the location of a suitable site for ES operations.
- The UI Implementation Team is targeting July 1, 2005 as the final date to have all offices and UI staff consolidated in the UI Centers.

**52) Q:** I'm concerned about irate claimants coming into field offices, asking questions and demanding answers that ES staff will not be able to resolve. How will this situation be handled with no UI staff in the office?

**A:** This situation may occur during the transition period. In time, however, claimants will learn that the field offices do not have the ability to process claims - that the resolutions to their issues rests in the UI centers. Until then, field office staff will have to do all they can to explain the new procedures for claiming benefits and inform claimants how, and who, to contact in the UI centers to resolve issues. Many field offices and central office staff are successfully addressing customer concerns now via telephone and e-mail. If a claimant becomes unreasonable or threatening it becomes managements' job to deal with them at that point.

**53) Q:** Will BES staff just work the phones all day long in the UI centers?

**A:** No – there will be a variety of work to perform other than just answering phones. We have prepared a video tape showing how a Eugene call center claims taker files IC's. Hopefully, interested staff will visit Eugene in person to see first hand the nature of the work.

**54) Q:** If I decide to work in a UI center and I find I do not like the nature of this new job, will I be able to transfer to another position within the department?

**A:** We understand that some may discover that they do not prefer this new way of doing business. For those who decide they do not want to work in this new environment the agency will make an effort to transition them to a more suitable position. Employees will start this process by putting their name on the agency transfer list.

**55) Q:** Will field offices have the computer capability to file IC's, AC's or CC's after the UI centers become operational?

**A:** No – they will only have the ability to view the status of a claim. They will not have the ability to perform any UI function.

**56) Q:** Is the agency going to explore organizing car/van pools for the UI centers? What about child care? Will the UI centers have "flex" schedules?

**A:** Yes, we will explore helping employees organize car/vanpools. We also are committed to assisting staff in locating child care. "Flex" schedules will be an option in the UI centers.

**57) Q:** Will there be a training center in each of the UI centers?

**A:** Yes – each site will have a training lab with PC's and telephones. UI technicians will be stationed in each center also.

**58) Q:** How was the number of staff needed for each UI Center determined?

**A:** BES staffing for the three UI Centers was determined from our experience during the pilot of telephone initial claims over the last several months in the Eugene and Interstate offices. From this pilot, we have recorded the amount of time on average spent each day by the BES claims taker in the various aspects of the job. Below is a listing of the various activities used to determine how much time on average out of an eight hour day a BES is available to take claim calls:



- Non telephone work duties (i.e. photocopying, mailing documents to claimants/ employers, faxing, completion of federal claim forms, etc.);
- Meetings;
- E-mails;
- Timesheets, other admin. duties;
- Breaks;
- Time between calls;
- Vacancy/leave factor of 17.89%

Note: It is the time actually spent on these activities that allowed us to calculate the optimum number of claims taking staff in a UI center. Actual time on the phone does vary and can reach as high as six hours on a high work load day such as Monday and Tuesday.

This calculation provided the number of BES required to handle the 2002 UI workload using the new telephone process.

Adjudication staffing was determined on the actual number of adjudicators for each RAC feeding into the UI Center that handled the calendar year 2002 adjudication workload for that RAC. All current adjudication positions are being moved into the UI Centers.

**59) Q:** Why is there a 15:1 management to staff ratio with IC/CC supervisors and not 10:1 like adjudication supervisors?

**A:** The optimum management to staff ratio for the UI Centers was discussed at great length by the UI Planning Team and the UI Policy Council. Because the work of the UI BES in the UI Centers will be more automated than the current paper intensive processes, we determined that a supervisor could adequately train, provide technical guidance and review the work of 15 staff to maintain smooth operations. This is also consistent with experience in other states UI call centers. Due to the highly technical nature of UI adjudication and the need for regular, detailed review of the adjudicator's work to facilitate meeting the federal performance standards, we determined that this body of work would be better supervised with a supervisor to staff ratio of 10:1.

**60) Q:** How will "rapid response" for mass layoffs be handled after the plan is implemented?

**A:** UI claims can be filed more efficiently, even in mass, over the telephone at the UI centers. However, when necessary to further streamline the processing of claims, staff from the UI centers will be dispatched to the local business site to work with field office ES staff and partners to provide the UI and job finding assistance that we do now.

**61) Q:** This plan feels like the "Invisible Claimant II". Is it?

**A:** No – we are replacing face to face service with person to person interaction. We want to be able to talk with all claimants who file IC's to insure that they receive a complete and understandable BRI. We want all claimants to be told about our ES services. We will require all unattached claimants to enroll in ES, either by visiting a field office or by use of iMatch. Claimant placement will remain a priority for the future as it has been in the past.

**62) Q:** What about claimant reemployment and worker profiling?

**A:** These will remain field office ES activities. Claimant reemployment activities will remain in the field offices and continue to be a priority for the Department. Staff involved in JOBS Plus, Worker Profiling and the Federal Claimant Reemployment Programs will work closely together to provide appropriate and timely services to claimants. Claimant Reemployment staff will coordinate and collaborate with partner, veteran and MSFW staff to increase service and training options for claimants.

**63) Q:** How will claimant reemployment/worker profiling connect with iMatch?

**A:** There is really no change to claimant reemployment/worker profiling procedures when we transition to iMatch. The only difference is that EPRO and EDUR lists are contained in iMatch and claimants can be deleted individually as the lists are worked. Claimant reemployment or worker profiling scheduling letters can be issued directly from iMatch.

An “enhanced enrollment” consists of obtaining complete enrollment information (into iMatch), introduction to reemployment services, providing individualized labor market information and conducting a match on current job opportunities. These activities will still occur after the implementation of iMatch.

**64) Q:** Will the “UI connection” be built in as part of the first iMatch system design?

**A:** Yes, the UI connection is built in the iMatchSkills System for the initial release.

Several useful features have been incorporated into iMatch that will serve to maintain the connection between ES and UI. Specific UI eligibility requirements for days/shifts/hours (F/T, P/T, both), rate of pay, primary occupation (minimum of one SOC code) and location will be included in the iMatch enrollment and cannot be changed by claimants while they are drawing benefits. A claim indicator will be displayed from OBIS and a search can be done by claim status (for JOBS Plus referrals). iMatch enrollments will remain active as long as the UI claimant is claiming benefits. Improved and easier to use customer letters are available in iMatch. From iMatch, staff will be able to work the EPRO and EDUR lists for Claimant Reemployment, Worker Profiling and JOBS Plus activities.

With the implementation of iMatch, enough information will be transferred from OBIS to establish a basic enrollment. However, additional work history, skills, education and training, driver’s licenses and occupational information will be needed to effectively match UI claimant to current suitable work opportunities.

**65) Q:** How will the claimant work test work connect with iMatch?

**A:** The UI Work Test can be broadly defined as occurring whenever ES staff attempts to refer a UI claimant to suitable work or when a claimant is offered suitable work. In both cases, we are testing the claimant’s willingness to work and his/her attachment to the labor force. Under iMatch, ES Staff will continue to match and attempt to refer claimants to suitable work. In addition, when ES staff becomes aware of “able, available & actively seeking” (AAA) issues they will notify a UI Center. When conducting employer follow up on job listings, staff will become aware of claimants refusing suitable work. Procedures will need to be followed to assure that the appropriate UI Center is notified of the potential issue. The UI and ES Policy Councils will review the existing definition of “work test” and agree on a common definition. Once agreement is reached, ES and UI Program staff will develop the necessary procedures.

**66) Q:** How will the Trade Act and Training Unemployment Insurance (TUI) be administered when UI is removed from the field?

**A:** We do not know at this time, but Employment Service Programs has started planning meetings with the Trade Act Coordinators, TUI, UI, and field staff. The discussions revolve around what Trade Act and TUI service delivery will look like when UI is removed from the local offices. Specifically, how do we ensure connections with each participant’s benefit information, tap into UI staff technical expertise, redesign forms and business processes, etc.? Recommendations from these meetings will be forwarded to the UI and B&ES implementation teams and to the Policy Councils for review and discussion. From there, the recommendations will go to the Executive Team for final approval.

**67) Q:** What is the process for development of local office implementation plans?

**A:** Local plans are due to the Field Ops team by Dec. 31, 2003.

Field Operations will review and make recommendations to the Executive Team which will approve the local plans by January 31, 2004. All local plans will include, at a minimum, a strategy for co-location with workforce partners to include facility options, an outline of ES operations to include identification of account and business representatives and processes for their OECs, a summary of how they will provide services to targeted groups such as claimants, veterans and MSFW's, and staffing assumptions and plans.

**68) Q:** What are the expectations for partner involvement in the implementation of the B&ES Plan?

**A:** Many aspects of the B&ES Plan will entail direct involvement of partners. We cannot act on our own on issues and opportunities such as co-location and co-identification. The principles of collaboration and coordination fundamentally require working with partners. Partners should be engaged to assist in the development of those aspects of the Local Implementation Plans and involved in continuing involvement in service delivery, business strategies, and virtually all aspects of our involvement in the workforce development system. Employer Councils (OEC) and local/regional workforce investment boards (WIB's) should be apprised of the Implementation Plans and the objectives of the Department's Strategic Plan. Final full execution of the B&ES Plan itself relies upon the efforts of our partners, our staff, and our success in working with all parties.

**69) Q:** When will we know which field offices will remain open or be closed?

**A:** The plan does not envision removing ES services from any community where we now have a presence. It does envision us co-locating with partners. Partners may join us at our facility, or we may move to their office. Co-location plans for each of our field offices will be included in the local implementation plans and should be completed by January 1, 2004.

**70) Q:** How will the ES staffing level in each office be determined after the UI staff move to the UI centers?

**A:** As stated earlier, the plan calls for having as many ES staff in the field as we do now. However, the allocation of those positions may move between offices. We will have to determine the best resource allocation around the state. That could mean closing some offices, opening others, as well as co-locating with partners.

**71) Q:** Will co-locating with partners make us look more like a social service agency and less like an agency that supports business?

**A:** WIA title 1-b providers, Community Colleges, Economic Development agencies and many other partners are not social service providers. There is an increased desire by many of our partners to be more attuned to the needs of the business community and by working together we can provide those services.

**72) Q:** Why do we have to charge partners "rent" when they co-locate in one of our offices? Doesn't that make partnering harder?

**A:** The technical answer is that OMB Bulletin A-87 says we have to, however creative solutions are available for resource sharing without the need for cash payments. A policy on cost sharing and training on this subject is being developed to aid managers in maximizing these creative solutions.

**73) Q:** Will employers still be able to use our field office facilities for their recruitment efforts?

**A:** Yes – the plan envisions employers using our facilities even more than they do now.

**74) Q:** Will there be changes in our veteran services programs, i.e. DVOP and LVER?

**A:** No. Veterans' Program staff will carry on their work in the field offices and continue to ensure that veterans are provided the range of labor exchange services needed to meet their employment and training needs.

**75) Q:** Will our significant MSFW office designations change?

**A:** Significant MSFW office designation is governed by Federal regulations. It is based on the percentage of MSFW customers registered in an office and on the presence of MSFW's in the service area of the office. Therefore, any changes to our significant office designations would be due to changes in seasonal agricultural activity in a service area and not due to changes in how we do business.

Migrant and seasonal farm workers will continue to have mandated access to and will continue to receive employment services from department staff, whether services are delivered in OED owned offices or other locations where OED staff are co-located. Co-location of partners in our offices or of OED staff in other locations is expected to increase access by MSFW job seekers to the full array of workforce services. Staff serving MSFWs, including MSFW outreach staff, will also explore stronger links to partner services and other OED special programs staff, strengthening options for employment by MSFW customers.

**76) Q:** The Strategic Plan calls for the resolution of confidentiality issues by January 2004. What is the Department's intention on sharing confidential information with partners?

**A:** The Department recognizes the importance of sharing customer information with workforce partners, however, it is also acknowledged there are limitations due to legal and program considerations, and there are privacy expectations from a customer's viewpoint. The Strategic Plan calls for the following areas to be addressed with our partners:

- UI Wage Record Sharing: We anticipate being able to freely share any aggregate information with partners with minimal administrative considerations. We will share individual wage record data when the appropriate release authority has been obtained from the customer and necessary administrative steps are taken;
- Applicant Information Sharing: An appropriate release from the customer will enable substantially more "common intake" or updating of an individual's address and sharing of service records. However, additional needs and options will be considered;
- Consent/Release Form and Process: The Department's (new) 1826 form/process has answered many partner needs and contributes to at least some of the resolution for Wage Records and Applicant Information sharing with partners. Additional needs and broader application will be developed and considered in the next six months;
- Job Order Access: Four "pilot offices" have been testing this concept and we are preparing to evaluate and consider further expansion. While it is a bit too early to conclude all findings, there has been success and it is anticipated more partners will have the ability to work on our job orders (especially if those are partners working in our offices under nominal "functional supervision" by our management staff). The formal review of the pilots will occur in July and August and we anticipate being able to establish any resulting policy direction by September. In addition to the four confidentiality issues mentioned in the BES Strategic Plan, two additional opportunities will also be addressed:
  - Partner access to iMatchSkills
  - Sharing Employer Information for marketing, visitation, and business strategy purposes

The Department is committed to resolving these issues in a way that satisfies our partners' desires, our customers' expectations and our own business needs.

**77) Q:** What does the Strategic Plan envision ED's role in serving our business customer in collaboration with our partners?

**A:** In full context, the plan calls for the Department to “work, collaboratively with our partners”. This corresponds with the Governor’s desire for regional response teams to better serve employers’ needs. However, it does not mean we are the only contact and we are sensitive to the use of the term “primary”. With this consideration, we are altering the term and the revised plan will use “lead” instead of primary. We will further clarify our intent by saying we will work to be “a lead contact for business services, such as employee recruitment, selection of job referrals / candidates, job listings, and labor market information while also acting as a liaison to the business community for other employment training needs.” This remains a natural niche for the Department – we currently provide labor exchange services to nearly 20,000 Oregon employers each year and our unemployment insurance services touch nearly 100,000 businesses in the state. When we work with businesses, we must realize we can, and should, assist our partners in acting as a liaison for other workforce development services and not just those relating to job listings, UI claims and Employer Councils.

**78) Q:** How will we ensure the matching and referral process identifies the best qualified applicants?

**A:** Matching the “best qualified” on job orders where the employer requests screened applicants is an important aspect of the Strategic Plan and reflects the Department’s formally stated mission. To accomplish it, job orders need to be written clearly and identify the skills and experience the employer is seeking in job applicants. When the job listing is taken, the order should be matched to find the best qualified applicants in the Department’s data base. In order to be able to identify and refer only the best qualified candidates that match the employer’s needs, the enrollment information for job seekers should contain sufficient information about the applicant’s knowledge, skills, education, licenses, abilities, work experience, and working condition preferences. Currently, the majority of our referrals are applicant selected, that is, job seekers find an order in our system and request a referral. When the Strategic Plan is fully implemented, we expect to increase the percentage of our referrals that are agency selected for job orders where screened applicants are requested.

**79) Q:** What is iMatchSkills?

**A:** iMatchSkills is the Department’s Internet based delivery system to provide employment services to our customers. The new system will replace the current mainframe based OJSS system, while maintaining all the OJSS functionality.

**80) Q:** What system aids will be available to support the user(s) of iMatchSkills?

**A:** The system will be intuitive so the user will require little assistance. If they need additional guidance, the following aids will be available:

- System Tour
- Help System
- Pop-up windows
- Drop-down windows
- Contact Us
- Profile Status
- Mouse or Keyboard movement
- Free text boxes

**81) Q:** I have concerns about skills-based matching. Will it work?

**A:** The Department has long struggled to identify the best way to connect job seekers and employers. Implementing Skills gives everyone (job seekers, employers, and workforce partners) a common language. Job skills are transferable and cut across all occupations and industries.

Skills-based matching is really not much different than what we now use in OJSS. The iMatchSkills System is being built to incorporate all the functionality of OJSS with some major improvements.

In terms of skills, what OJSS does not capture very well is the transferability of skills from one occupation or industry to another. The iMatchSkills matching process will be more inclusive.

In addition to skills, iMatch will also improve the capture and retrieval of license, certification, education, and occupational data. Combining this information with skills points to an improved matching system.

**82) Q:** What are some advantages to the Department using an Internet based system?

**A:** Using an Internet based system offers several advantages to staff and customers.

- Increased remote access to provide and/or receive services
- Facilitates customer access to information 24 hours/day, 7 days/week
- Allows users to choose and/or market the level of interaction and service they require (self, staff assisted or full)
- Increases access to and sharing of pertinent placement, resource and labor market information
- Promotes user choice through self-enrollment process
- Improves the quality of the match process through skill identification
- Captures specific job skills, education, licenses and certifications
- Captures transferable skills over a range of occupations and in industries
- Shifts staff resources from data entry to providing enhanced core customer services
- Redefines "customer satisfaction" based on service level choices
- Maximizes global customer access