



Highlights of [GAO-03-884T](#), a testimony before the Subcommittee on Employment, Safety and Training, Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions, United States Senate

## Why GAO Did This Study

This testimony highlights findings from today's report on strategies that exemplary one-stop centers have implemented to strengthen and integrate services for customers and to build a solid one-stop infrastructure. It also shares findings and recommendations from GAO's past work on challenges that states and localities have experienced as they implement the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which may be helpful as WIA is reauthorized.

## What GAO Recommends

Because little is known about whether promising one-stop service delivery approaches are meeting customers' needs, GAO has recommended that the Secretary of Labor collaborate with other federal agencies to develop a research agenda that examines the impacts of these promising approaches on one-stop customer satisfaction and outcomes. In addition, GAO has recommended that the Secretary take steps to alleviate problems pertaining to the WIA performance measurement system, WIA allocation formulas and one-stop infrastructure funding, and the process for certifying eligible training providers. Finally, GAO has suggested that Labor provide clearer guidance and greater opportunities for one-stop administrators to share promising practices in one-stop service delivery and management.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-884T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-884T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Sigurd Nilsen, (202) 512-7215, [nilsens@gao.gov](mailto:nilsens@gao.gov).

# WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

## Exemplary One-Stops Devised Strategies to Strengthen Services, but Challenges Remain for Reauthorization

### What GAO Found

The workforce development system envisioned under WIA represents a fundamental shift from prior systems, and barely 3 years have passed since it was fully implemented. States and localities have found ways to use the flexibility in WIA to develop creative new approaches to providing services through their one-stop systems. In particular, a group of 14 one-stops, identified as exemplary by government officials and workforce development experts, developed promising strategies in several key areas. To streamline services for job seekers, they ensured that job seekers could readily access needed services, made sure that staff were knowledgeable about all of the one-stop services available, or consolidated case management and intake procedures. To engage and serve employers, the centers dedicated specialized staff to work with employers or industries, tailored services to meet specific employers' needs, or worked with employers through intermediaries. To build a solid one-stop infrastructure, the centers found innovative ways to develop and strengthen program partnerships and to raise additional funds beyond those provided under WIA.

GAO's work on WIA implementation over the past 3 years has identified a number of issues that should be considered during WIA reauthorization. First, the performance measurement system is flawed—the need to meet certain performance measures may be causing one-stops to deny services to some clients who may most need them; there is no measure that assesses overall one-stop performance; and the outcome data are outdated by the time they are available and are not useful in day-to-day program management. Second, funding issues continue to plague officials. The funding formula used to allocate funds to states and local areas does not reflect current program design and often causes unwarranted fluctuations in funding levels from year to year. In addition, WIA provided no separate funding source to support one-stop infrastructure, and developing equitable cost sharing agreements has not always been successful. Third, many training providers consider the current process for certifying their eligibility to be overly burdensome, resulting in reduced training options for job seekers as providers have declined to serve WIA-funded clients. Finally, state officials have told GAO that they need more help from the U.S. Department of Labor in the form of clearer guidance and greater opportunities to share promising practices in managing and providing services through their one-stop centers.