June 2003

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and Partnerships, but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed

GAO

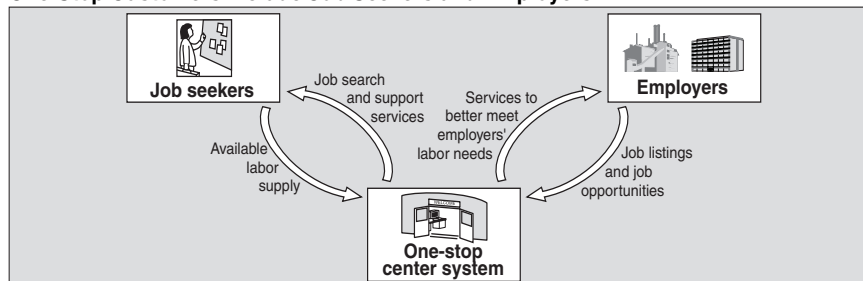Accountability ★ Integrity ★ Reliability

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Why GAO Did This Study

To create a more comprehensive workforce investment system, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 requires states and localities to coordinate most federally funded employment and training services into a single system, called the one-stop center system. This report examines how selected one-stop centers have used the law's flexibility to implement their own vision of WIA and provides information on promising practices for (1) streamlining services for job seekers, (2) engaging the employer community, (3) building a solid one-stop infrastructure by strengthening partnerships across programs and raising additional funds. In addition, it provides information on the actions the Department of Labor is taking to collect and share information about what is working well for job seeker and employer customers in one-stop centers.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of Labor collaborate with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development to develop a research agenda that examines the impact of various approaches to one-stop program integration on outcomes, such as job placement and retention, and jobseeker and employer satisfaction. GAO also recommends that the Secretary conduct a systematic evaluation of the promising practices Web site and ensure that it is effective.

www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-03-725.

To view the full report, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Dianne Blank at (202) 512-5654 or blankd@gao.gov.

What GAO Found

Of the 14 one-stop centers in GAO's study that were identified as exemplary by government officials and workforce development experts, all had implemented a range of promising practices to streamline services for jobseekers, engage the employer community, and built a solid one-stop infrastructure. The one-stop centers GAO visited streamlined services for job seekers by ensuring access to needed services, educating program staff about all of the one-stop services available to job seekers, and consolidating case management and intake procedures. In addition, all of the one-stop centers GAO visited used at least one of the following three methods to engage employers—dedicating specialized staff to work with employers or industries, working with employers through intermediaries, such as Chambers of Commerce or economic development entities, or tailoring services to meet specific employers' needs. To provide the infrastructure to support better services for job seekers and employers, many of the one-stops GAO visited found innovative ways to strengthen program partnerships and to raise additional funds beyond those provided under WIA. Center operators fostered the development of strong program partnerships by encouraging partner collaboration through functional work teams and joint projects, and they raised additional funds through fee-based services, grants, and contributions from partners and state or local governments.

While Labor currently tracks outcome data--such as job placement, job seeker satisfaction and employer satisfaction--and funds several studies to evaluate workforce development programs and service delivery models, little is known about the impact of various one-stop service delivery approaches on these and other outcomes. Labor's studies largely take a program-by-program approach rather than focusing on the impact on job seekers of various one-stop integrated service delivery approaches, such as sharing customer intake forms across programs, or on employers, such as dedicating staff to focus on engaging and serving employers. Further, Labor's efforts to collaborate with other federal agencies to assess the effects of different strategies to integrate job seeker services or to serve employers through the one-stop system have been limited. While Labor has developed a promising practices Web site to facilitate such information sharing, it is unclear how well the site currently meets this objective.

One-Stop Customers Include Job Seekers and Employers

Source: GAO illustration. Clip art source: Art Explosion.

United States General Accounting Office

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Abbreviations

ATA	Area Transit Authority
ETA	Employment and Training
GED	General Educational Development
HHS	Department of Health and Human Services
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
ITA	Individual Training Accounts
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
WIA	Workforce Investment Act

United States General Accounting Office
Washington, D.C. 20548

June 18, 2003

The Honorable John A. Boehner
Chairman
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives

The Honorable Howard P. McKeon
Chairman
Subcommittee on 21st Century Competitiveness
Committee on Education and the Workforce
House of Representatives

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy
Ranking Minority Member
Committee on Health, Education,
  Labor and Pensions
United States Senate

The Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in 1998 to begin
unifying a fragmented employment and training system and to better serve
job seekers and employers. To create a more comprehensive workforce
investment system, WIA requires states and localities to bring together over
$15 billion of federally funded employment and training services into a
single system, called the one-stop center system. Four separate federal
agencies—the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services (HHS),
Education, and Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—fund about
17 categories of programs that are required to provide services through the
one-stop system. Labor takes a lead role in this new system and is
responsible for assessing the effectiveness of Labor-funded programs and
for providing guidance to states and localities as programs deliver their
services through the one-stop system.

WIA is designed to give states and localities flexibility in deciding how to implement the one-stop system, allowing local one-stops to try new approaches and tailor their systems to the needs of local job seeker and employer customers. Labor encourages states and localities to create a customer-focused one-stop system that uses innovative approaches to help job seekers find and maintain employment and help employers find skilled workers. In past reports, we identified key areas critical to successfully providing services to job seekers and employers, such as providing job seeker services that are tailored and seamlessly delivered and serving employers in ways that minimize wasted time and reduce frustration.[1] As the Congress moves toward reauthorization of WIA, you wanted to know how some of the nation's 1,972 one-stop centers have built on these concepts and used their flexibility to streamline and integrate services for job seekers, involve the private sector, and coordinate operations and service delivery across employment and training programs.

As requested, this report examines how some one-stop centers have used the law's flexibility to implement their own vision of WIA and provides information on promising practices for (1) streamlining services for job seekers, (2) engaging the employer community, and (3) building a solid one-stop infrastructure by strengthening partnerships across programs and raising additional funds. In addition, we are providing information on the actions the Department of Labor is taking to collect and share information about what is working well for job seeker and employer customers in one-stop centers.

Our report is based on in-depth site visits to 14 one-stop centers from across the nation that government officials and workforce experts identified as exemplary and on interviews with Labor Department officials. Because no systemwide data exists by which to judge the success of various one-stop approaches, we selected our sites based on information about promising practices in one-stop centers and information about the potential impact of those practices. We asked the following officials or experts to identify exemplary one-stop centers: Labor headquarters and regional officials; HHS, Education, and HUD headquarters offices; and workforce development experts. We restricted the request for exemplary

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[1]U.S. General Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: Coordination of TANF Services Through One-stops Has Increased Despite Challenges*, GAO-02-739T (Washington D.C.: May 16, 2002) and *Workforce Investment Act: Implementation Status and the Integration of TANF Services*, GAO/T-HEHS-00-145 (Washington, D.C.: June 29, 2000).

one-stops to a single site in each of the three key areas—serving job seekers, engaging employers, and operating the one-stop center. The officials and experts provided us with specific information on each site's innovations and the potential impact of each promising practice. After officials and experts identified approximately 50 one-stop centers across the three areas, we winnowed down the list of one-stops by considering the number of times a site was recommended and each site's characteristics, including its location and the size of its service area. Figure 1 shows the locations of the 14 sites we visited. The 14 one-stop centers represented a geographic and a demographic mix, ranging from rural to urban centers. (See app. I for information on each one-stop site.) Some of the sites, such as Kansas City, Missouri, represented a mix of urban, suburban, and rural customers. The one-stops we visited varied in the average number of customers they served—from 500 to 42,500 each month. The sites also represented a mix of one-stop operators—those responsible for administering the one-stop centers—including nonprofit organizations, consortia of one-stop partners, and local government entities. We conducted our work between August 2002 and June 2003 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

Figure 1: GAO Site Visits to One-Stop Centers

South County
Employment Center
Salt Lake City, UT

Arapahoe/
Douglas Works!
Aurora, CO

Anoka County
Workforce Center
Blaine, MN

Kenosha County
Job Center
Kenosha, WI

The Job Center
Dayton, OH

Erie Team
PA CareerLink
Erie, PA

The Work Place
Boston, MA

Cumberland
County One-Stop
Vineland, NJ

Pike County
JobSight Center
Pikeville, KY

CONNECT!
Sunnyvale, CA

Job Link
Santa Rosa, CA

Central Texas
Workforce
Killeen, TX

Full
Employment
Council
Kansas City, MO

WorkForce
Essentials, Inc.
Clarksville, TN

Source: GAO site visits.

Results in Brief

The one-stop centers we visited embraced the customer-focused provisions of WIA by streamlining one-stop services for job seekers. All of the centers used at least one of three different strategies to build a streamlined one-stop system—ensuring that job seekers could readily access needed services, educating program staff about all of the one-stop services available to job seekers, and consolidating case management and intake procedures. Thirteen of the 14 one-stop centers we visited took special care to ensure that job seekers could readily access needed services. For example, officials in Erie, Pennsylvania, positioned a staff person at the entrance to the one-stop to help job seekers entering the center find needed services and to ensure that exiting job seekers had received the services they sought. To educate program staff on all one-stop services, almost all of the one-stop centers we visited used cross-training sessions to help staff understand the range of services available at the one-stop. For example, in Pikeville, Kentucky, regularly scheduled cross-training workshops educated staff about the one-stop's diverse array of services, such as adult education classes and services for the disabled, so that they could better ensure that job seekers received the tools they needed to become successfully employed. Finally, 10 of the 14 one-stops we visited streamlined services for job seekers by consolidating intake procedures or case management across multiple programs. For example, in Blaine, Minnesota, job seekers received comprehensive services from a team of caseworkers who collaborated to meet all job seekers' needs.

To engage employers and provide them needed services, all of the one-stop centers we visited used at least one of three different strategies—dedicating specialized staff to work with employers or industries; working with employers through intermediaries, such as Chambers of Commerce or economic development entities; or tailoring services to meet specific employers' needs. All of the centers dedicated specialized staff to work with employers or industries. For example, the Killeen, Texas, one-stop center dedicated specialized staff to work with employers to identify job openings and to act as a central point of contact so that employers were not burdened with multiple calls from each of the one-stop programs. In Santa Rosa, the specialized staff for employers were dedicated to specific industries in order to better address local labor shortages. When the tourism industry had a labor shortage, for example, a staff person was in place who used his or her existing relationships with tourism employers to more effectively match job seekers with job-specific training. In addition to employer-focused staff, many of the one-stops worked with employers through intermediaries, such as the Chambers of Commerce or economic

development entities, to expand the number of employer customers and provide these employers with one-stop services. For example, the one-stop staff in Clarksville, Tennessee, worked with Chamber members to provide math training in order to improve the pool of entry-level employees for the banking industry. In addition, almost all of the one-stops we visited went beyond providing basic services to employers by tailoring services to meet individual employers' unique labor needs, including specialized recruiting and applicant pre-screening, customized training opportunities, and assessments using employer specifications. The Pikeville, Kentucky, one-stop offered a range of tailored services to employers that were instrumental in attracting a major cabinet manufacturer to the area and helping this company hire over 105 employees.

To provide the infrastructure to support better services for job seekers and employers, many of the one-stops we visited found innovative ways to develop and strengthen program partnerships and to raise additional funds beyond those provided under WIA. Center operators fostered the development of strong program partnerships by encouraging communication and collaboration among partners, which enabled them to pursue common one-stop goals and to support the development of a shared one-stop identity. For example, in Blaine, Minnesota, partners at the one-stop center participated in a joint project to apply for a local one-stop implementation grant from the state of Minnesota. Blaine one-stop managers told us that the planning process involved in applying for the grant allowed partners to develop a better understanding of one another's services and enabled them to identify common functions and thereby reduce service duplication. Several one-stop managers reported that such collaboration among partners was facilitated by the co-location of programs in one building, which one-stops encouraged by offering attractive physical space and flexible rental agreements. Many one-stops also supported a strong infrastructure by raising funds through fee-based services, grants, and contributions from partners and state or local governments. The centers used the additional funds to improve operations and to provide additional services. For example, managers at the one-stop in Kansas City, Missouri, told us that their full-time grant writer was able to generate two-thirds of the center's entire operating budget through competitive grants available from the federal government as well as from private foundations. This money allowed the center to expand its services, including a new internship program in high-tech industries for at-risk youth.

While Labor currently tracks outcome data—such as job placement, job seeker satisfaction and employer satisfaction—and funds several studies to evaluate workforce development programs and service delivery models, little is known about the impact of various one-stop service delivery approaches on these and other outcomes. Labor's studies largely take a program-by-program approach rather than focusing on the impact on job seekers of various one-stop integrated service delivery approaches, such as sharing customer intake forms across programs, or on employers, such as dedicating staff to focus on engaging and serving employers. Further, Labor's efforts to collaborate with other federal agencies to assess the effects of different strategies to integrate job seeker services or to serve employers through the one-stop system have been limited. In addition, one-stop administrators do not have enough opportunities to share existing information about how to improve and integrate services for job seeker and employer customers. While Labor has developed a promising practices Web site to facilitate such information sharing, it is unclear how well the site currently meets this objective.

In order to better understand and disseminate information on how well different approaches to program integration are meeting the needs of one-stop job seekers and employers, we recommend that the Secretary of Labor collaborate with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development to develop a research agenda that examines the impact of various approaches to program integration on job seeker and employer satisfaction and outcomes, such as job placement and retention. We also recommend that the Secretary conduct a systematic evaluation of the promising practices Web site and ensure that it is effective. In its written comments, Labor generally agreed with our findings and recommendations.

Background

The Workforce Investment Act created a new, comprehensive workforce investment system designed to change the way employment and training services are delivered. When WIA was enacted in 1998, it replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) with three new programs—Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth—that allow for a broader range of services, including job search assistance, assessment, and training for eligible individuals.[2] In addition to establishing three new programs, WIA requires

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[2]While WIA was enacted in 1998, Labor did not require states to implement major provisions of WIA until July 1, 2000.

that a number of employment-related services be provided through a one-stop system, designed to make accessing employment and training services easier for job seeker customers. WIA also requires that the one-stop system engage the employer customer by helping employers identify and recruit skilled workers. While WIA allows states and localities flexibility in implementing these requirements, the law emphasizes that the one-stop system should be a customer-focused and comprehensive system that increases the employment, retention, and earnings of participants.

The major hallmark of WIA is the consolidation of services through the one-stop center system. About 17 categories of programs, totaling over $15 billion from four separate federal agencies, are required to provide services through the system. (See table 1.)

Table 1: WIA's Mandatory Programs, Their Related Federal Agencies, and Fiscal Year 2003 Program Appropriations

Federal agency	Mandatory program	Fiscal Year 2003 appropriations
Department of Labor	WIA Adult	$898,778,000
	WIA Dislocated Worker	1,461,145,495
	WIA Youth	994,458,728
	Employment Service (Wagner-Peyser)	756,783,723
	Trade adjustment assistance programs	972,000,000
	Veterans' employment and training programs	167,199,097
	Unemployment Insurance	2,634,253,000
	Job Corps	1,522,240,700
	Welfare-to-Work grant-funded programs	0
	Senior Community Service Employment Program	442,306,200
	Employment and training for migrant and seasonal farm workers	77,330,066
	Employment and training for Native Americans	55,636,000
Department of Education	Vocational Rehabilitation Program	2,506,948,000
	Adult Education and Literacy	571,262,500
	Vocational Education (Perkins Act)	1,513,170,925
Department of Health and Human Services	Community Services Block Grant	645,762,085
Department of Housing and Urban Development	HUD-administered employment and training	65,000,000
Total		**$15,284,274,519**

Source: GAO-03-589 and Labor.

WIA allows flexibility in the way these mandatory partners provide services through the one-stop system, allowing co-location, electronic linkages, or referrals to off-site partner programs. While WIA requires these mandatory partners to participate, WIA did not provide additional funds to operate one-stop systems and support one-stop partnerships. As a result, mandatory partners are expected to share the costs of developing and operating one-stop centers. However, several of the programs have limitations in the way the funds may be used, giving rise to one-stop funding challenges.[3]

Beyond the mandatory partners, one-stop centers have the flexibility to include other partners in the one-stop system. Labor suggests that these additional, or optional partners, may help one-stop systems better meet specific state and local workforce development needs. These optional partners may include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)[4] or local private organizations, for example. States have the option of mandating particular optional partners to participate in their one-stop systems. For example, in 2001, 28 states had formal agreements between TANF and WIA to involve TANF in the one-stop system.[5] In addition, localities may partner with other programs to meet the specific needs of the community.

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[3]Several of the mandatory one-stop partner programs are subject to restrictions on the use of their funds, such as which populations they may serve and limits on the amount of allowable administrative spending. See U.S. General Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: Better Guidance Needed to Address Concerns Over New Requirements*, GAO-02-72 (Washington D.C.: Oct. 4, 2001).

[4]TANF provides low-income families with income support and employment-related assistance.

[5]For more information on TANF participation in one-stop centers, see GAO-02-739T.

One-stop centers serve two customers—job seekers and employers (see fig. 2). In serving job seekers, one-stop centers are encouraged to develop strategies to achieve a streamlined set of services. In past reports, we identified key areas critical to successfully integrating services under WIA, such as ensuring that job seekers have ready access to employment and program information, reducing job seekers' confusion by providing them with a streamlined path from one program to another, providing job seeker services that are tailored and seamless, and helping job seekers identify and obtain needed program services without the burden of completing multiple intake and assessment procedures.[6] One-Stop centers provide job seekers with job search and support services, while the job seekers act as an available labor pool for the one-stops' employer customers. In serving employers, one-stops have the flexibility under WIA to provide a variety of tailored services, including hiring, assessments and training services that meet the specific needs of each employer.[7] The degree to which the one-stop system engages and provides services to employers is left to the discretion of state and local officials. However, Labor suggests that employer involvement is critical for one-stop officials to better understand what skills are needed, what jobs are available, and what career fields are expanding.

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[6]For more information, see GAO-02-739T and GAO/T-HEHS-00-145.

[7]WIA has a general requirement for local boards to promote the participation of private sector employers in the workforce investment system and specifically requires that employers and the private sector community represent a majority of the state and local workforce investment boards' memberships and that the chairperson of each board be elected from those members.

Figure 2: One-Stop Customers Include Job Seekers and Employers
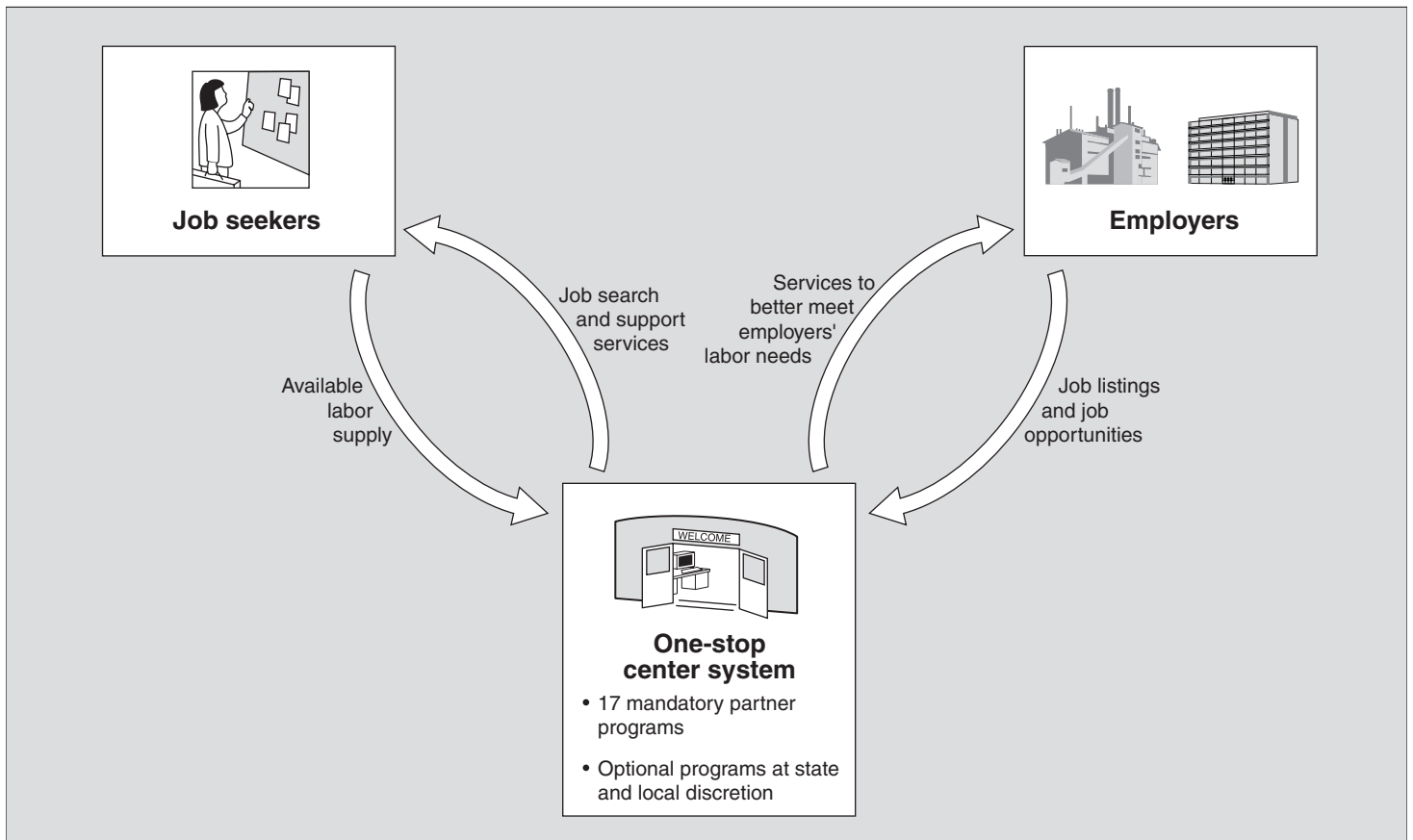
Source: GAO illustration. Clip art source: Art Explosion.

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of the WIA programs, WIA requires that states and localities track performance and Labor holds states accountable for their performance. The measures gauge outcomes in the areas of job placement, employment retention, and earnings change, as well as skill attainment and customer satisfaction.[8] In addition to the WIA programs, most of the 17 employment and training programs have their

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[8]For more information, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Workforce Investment Act: Improvements Needed in Performance Measures to Provide a More Accurate Picture of WIA's Effectiveness*, GAO-02-275 (Washington D.C.: Feb. 1, 2002).

own performance measures. There are no overall one-stop performance measures.
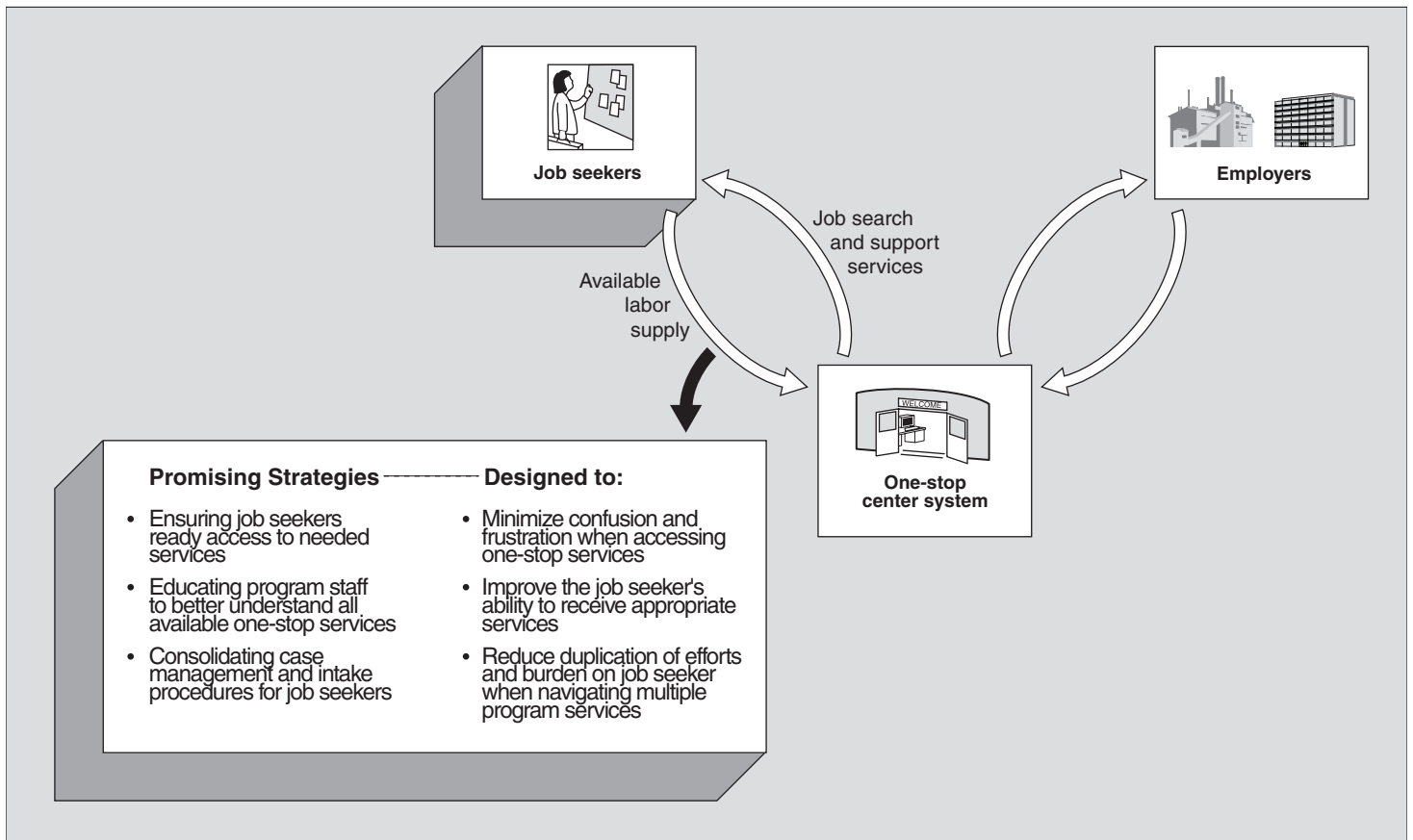
One-Stops Used Strategies to Streamline Services for Job Seekers

The one-stop centers we visited embraced the customer-focused provisions of WIA by streamlining one-stop services for job seekers. All 14 one-stop centers we visited used at least one of three different strategies to build a streamlined one-stop system—ensuring job seekers could readily access needed services, educating program staff about all of the one-stop services available to job seekers, and consolidating case management and intake procedures (see fig. 3). To ensure that job seekers could readily access needed services, one-stops we visited allocated staff to help job seekers navigate the one-stop system, expanded services for one-stop customers, and provided support to customers with transportation barriers. Ensuring access is designed to minimize confusion for job seekers as they navigate one-stop services. To educate program staff about one-stop services, centers used cross-training sessions in which partners informed one another about the range of services available at the one-stop. Finally, centers sought to reduce the duplication of effort across programs and the burden on job seekers navigating programs by consolidating case management and intake procedures across multiple programs through joint service plans for customers and shared computer networks.

Figure 3: Promising Strategies in Streamlining and Integrating Services for Job Seeker Customers

Job seekers

Employers

Job search and support services

Available labor supply

One-stop center system

Promising Strategies ——— Designed to:

- Ensuring job seekers ready access to needed services
- Educating program staff to better understand all available one-stop services
- Consolidating case management and intake procedures for job seekers

- Minimize confusion and frustration when accessing one-stop services
- Improve the job seeker's ability to receive appropriate services
- Reduce duplication of efforts and burden on job seeker when navigating multiple program services

Source: GAO illustration. Clip art source: Art Explosion.

One-Stop Staff Ensured Job Seeker Access to Needed One-Stop Services

Nearly all of the one-stop centers we visited implemented specific strategies to ensure that job seekers had access to needed services. We previously reported that the range of services provided by multiple programs in the one-stop center caused confusion for job seekers. To minimize confusion, nearly all of the sites we visited looked for ways to ensure job seekers would have ready access to program information and a clear path from one program to another within the one-stop system. For example, when one-stop center staff in Killeen, Texas, and Clarksville, Tennessee, referred job seekers to another partner, the staff personally introduced the job seeker to the referred program staff to prevent job seekers from getting lost between programs. Similarly, officials in Erie,

Pennsylvania, positioned a staff person at the entrance to the one-stop to help job seekers entering the center find needed services and to assist exiting job seekers if they did not receive the services they sought. (See app. II for more examples from each of the sites we visited.)

In addition to improving access to one-stop center services on-site, some of the one-stops we visited found ways to serve job seekers who may have been unable to come into the one-stop center for services. For example, in Boston, Massachusetts, the one-stop placed staff in off-site locations, including family courts, correctional facilities, and welfare offices to give job seekers ready access to employment and program information. Specifically, Boston one-stop staff worked with an offender re-entry program that conducted job fairs inside the county prison to facilitate incarcerated offenders' transition back into the workplace.

One-stops also improved job seeker access to services by expanding partnerships to include optional service providers—those beyond the 17 program partners mandated by WIA. These optional partners ranged from federally funded programs, such as TANF, to community-based organizations providing services tailored to meet the needs of local job seekers. The one-stop in Dayton, Ohio, was particularly proactive in forming optional partnerships to meet job seekers' service needs. At the time of our visit, the Dayton one-stop had over 30 optional partners on-site, including the Montgomery County Combined Health District, which operated a health clinic on-site; Clothes that Work!, which provides free business attire to low-income women; and an alternative high school. The most common optional partner at the one-stops we visited was the TANF program—which was an on-site partner at 13 of the 14 sites. One-stop managers in Clarksville told us that co-location with the Tennessee Department of Human Services, which administers TANF, benefited all job seekers because the department helped to fund various services, including computer classes, soft skills classes, and parenting classes that could be provided to those not eligible for TANF. Additionally, Killeen, Texas, one-stop staff told us that co-location with TANF helped welfare recipients address barriers to employment by facilitating easier access to other services, such as housing assistance and employment and training programs.

Many one-stop centers, such as in Killeen, Texas, and Vineland, New Jersey, ensured access to one-stop services by addressing customers' transportation challenges. Staff in Killeen partnered with the libraries in rural areas to provide computer access to one-stop resume writing and job

search services and an on-line TANF orientation. In Kansas City, Missouri, the one-stop management decided to locate the one-stop center next to the bus company, the Area Transit Authority (ATA). This strategic decision meant that all bus routes passed by the one-stop center, thus ensuring that customers with transportation challenges could access one-stop center services. Additionally, the ATA partnered with the one-stop to create an Urban Employment Network program to assist job seekers with transportation to and from work. The ATA provided bus service 7 days a week from 5:00 in the morning until midnight and set up a van service to operate during off-peak hours.

One-Stops Ensured That All Program Staff Understood the Range of Services Available for Job Seekers

To help ensure that job seekers receive services tailored to meet their needs, nine of the one-stops we visited focused on educating all one-stop staff about the range of services available through the one-stop.[9] In earlier work, we identified challenges for job seekers in receiving the right set of services to meet their needs.[10] One-stop officials at the centers we visited reported that staff who were cross-trained could better assess the particular needs of job seekers, including identifying barriers to getting a job, and were able to provide job seekers with more appropriate referrals.[11] Cross-training activities ranged from conducting monthly educational workshops to offering shadow programs through which staff could become familiar with other programs' rules and operations. Officials in Salt Lake City, Utah, reported that cross–training improved staff understanding of programs outside their area of expertise and enhanced their ability to make referrals. The Pikeville, Kentucky, one-stop supported cross-training workshops in which one-stop staff from different partner programs educated each other about the range of services they could provide. After learning about the other programs, Pikeville staff collaboratively designed a service delivery flow chart that effectively routed job seekers to the appropriate service providers, providing a clear entry point and a clear path from one program to another. In addition, the Vocational Rehabilitation

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[9]While WIA requires that specific programs provide services within the one-stop system, WIA does not require that one-stop staff are cross-trained to understand the array of one-stop services.

[10]GAO-02-739T and GAO/T-HEHS-00-145.

[11]Officials from some of the sites we visited told us that they believe the best service delivery approach included one-stop staff that specialized in their own program area but were also cross-trained in the services and basic eligibility requirements of other programs in the one-stop system.

staff at the Pikeville one-stop told us that cross-training enabled other program staff to more accurately identify hidden disabilities and to better refer disabled customers to the appropriate services.

In the one-stop centers we visited, cross-training occurred among the majority of on-site co-located partners as well as between some of the on-site and off-site one-stop programs. One-stop managers in Dayton, Ohio, told us that cross-training staff resulted in increased referrals to service providers that had previously been unknown, such as to smaller programs within the one-stop or to local neighborhood programs that could better meet the specific needs of particular job seekers. Specifically, Dayton managers also reported that cross-training one-stop staff dramatically improved referrals to the Child Support program,[12] thereby enhancing efforts to establish paternity, a requirement for determining eligibility for TANF.

One-Stop Centers Streamlined Services for Job Seekers through Consolidated Intake Procedures and Case Management

To provide streamlined service delivery, 10 of the 14 one-stops we visited consolidated their intake processes or case management systems, reducing the need for job seekers to go through multiple intake processes. This consolidation took many forms, including having case workers from different programs work as a team to develop service plans for customers and having a shared computer network across programs. As a result, case workers reduced the duplication of effort across programs and job seekers were not burdened with completing multiple intake and assessment procedures. For example, the Youth Opportunity Program and Workforce WIA Youth program staff at the one-stop in Kansas City, Missouri, shared intake and enrollment forms to streamline the delivery of services to youth. In Blaine, Minnesota, job seekers were originally served by multiple service providers, meeting independently with each provider for each program service received. Caseworkers from the various one-stop programs in Blaine met regularly to collaborate in developing and implementing joint service plans for customers who were co-enrolled in multiple programs. As a result, the number of caseworkers involved had been reduced significantly, and job seekers received a more efficient and tailored package of services. To efficiently coordinate multiple services for one-stop customers in Erie, Pennsylvania, the staff used a networked computer

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[12]The Child Support Enforcement and Paternity Establishment Program collects support from noncustodial parents and helps establish paternity for TANF families.
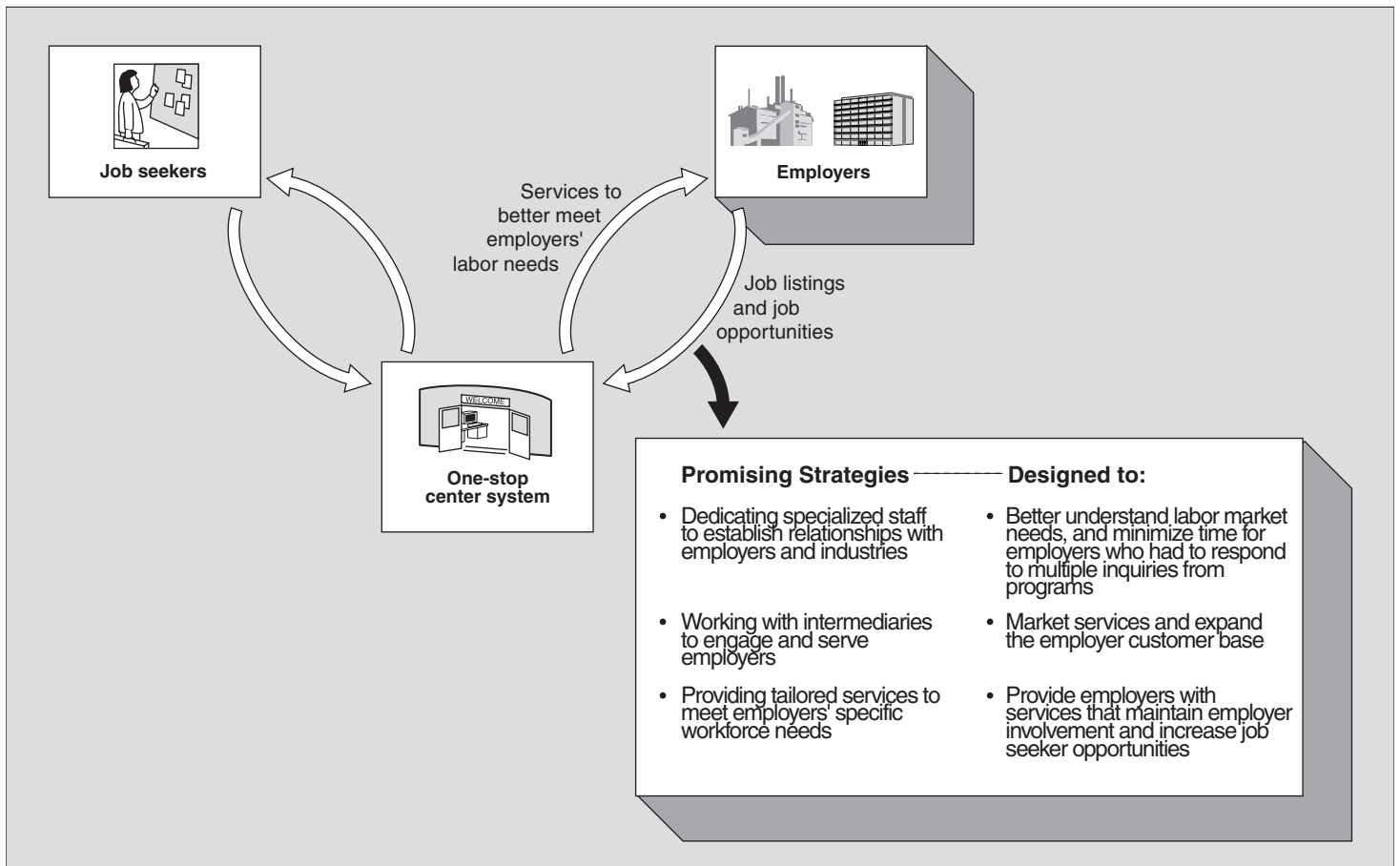
system with a shared case management program, so that all one-stop program staff could share access to a customer's service plan and case file.

One-Stops Developed Strategies to Engage and Provide Services to Employers in the One-Stop System

All of the one-stops we visited implemented at least one of three different approaches to engage and provide services to employers—dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers or industries, working with employers through intermediaries, and providing tailored services to meet employers' specific workforce needs (see fig.4). All of the one-stops dedicated staff to establish relationships with employers, minimizing the burden on employers who previously may have been contacted by multiple one-stop programs. A few of these one-stops also had employer-focused staff work with specific industries in order to respond better to local labor shortages. Many of the one-stops also worked with employers through intermediaries, such as the Chambers of Commerce or economic development entities, in order to market one-stop services and expand their base of employer customers. Finally, most one-stops went beyond providing basic services to employers by tailoring services to meet individual employers' needs, such as specialized recruiting and applicant pre-screening, customized training opportunities, and assessments using employer specifications. Tailored services were used to maintain employer involvement and increase employment opportunities for job seekers.

Figure 4: Promising Strategies for Engaging Employers

Job seekers

Employers

Services to better meet employers' labor needs

Job listings and job opportunities

One-stop center system

Promising Strategies ———— **Designed to:**

- Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers and industries
- Better understand labor market needs, and minimize time for employers who had to respond to multiple inquiries from programs

- Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers
- Market services and expand the employer customer base

- Providing tailored services to meet employers' specific workforce needs
- Provide employers with services that maintain employer involvement and increase job seeker opportunities

Source: GAO illustration. Clip art source: Art Explosion.

One-Stops Dedicated Specialized Staff to Establish Relationships with Employers and Industries

To help employers access the workforce development system, all of the one-stops we visited dedicated specialized staff to establish relationships with employers. One-stop officials told us that engaging employers was critical to successfully connecting job seekers with available jobs. Specialized staff outreached to individual employers and served as employers' primary point of contact for accessing one-stop services. For example, the one-stop in Killeen, Texas, dedicated specialized staff to serve not only as the central point of contact for receiving calls and requests from employers but also as the primary tool for identifying job openings available through employers in the community. A one-stop manager in

Killeen told us that in the past, staff from each partner agency would outreach to employers to find jobs for their own job seekers. Now they have eliminated the duplication of effort and burden on employers by designating specialized staff to conduct employer outreach for all one-stop programs.

In addition to working with individual employers, staff at some of the one-stops we visited also worked with industry clusters, or groups of related employers, to more efficiently meet local labor demands—particularly for industries with labor shortages. One-stop managers at these sites told us that having staff work with industry clusters helped them better respond to labor shortages because it enabled staff to develop a strong understanding of the employment and training needs of those industries. These one-stops were better prepared to match job seekers with appropriate training opportunities, enabling those job seekers to become part of a qualified labor pool for these industries. For example, the one-stop in Santa Rosa, California, assigned staff to work with employers in local high-demand industries, including health care, high tech, and tourism. These staff established relationships with employers from these industries, assessed their specific workforce needs, and shared this information with one-stop case workers. Specifically, when Santa Rosa's tourism industry was in need of more skilled workers, the one-stop worked with the local community college to ensure there were certification courses in hotel management and the culinary arts, for exam. The one-stop in Aurora, Colorado, also dedicated staff to work with specific industries. For example, in response to a nursing shortage of 1,600 nurses in the Denver metro area, staff from the Aurora one-stop assisted in the creation of a healthcare recruitment center designed to provide job placement assistance and access to health-care training.

One-Stops Worked with Intermediaries to Engage and Serve Employers

In addition to dedicating specialized staff, all of the one-stops we visited worked with intermediaries to engage and serve employers. Intermediaries, such as local Chambers of Commerce or economic development entities, served as liaisons between employers and the one-stop system, helping one-stops to engage employers while connecting employers with one-stop services. For example, the one-stop staff in Clarksville, Tennessee, worked with Chamber of Commerce members to help banks in the community that were having difficulties finding entry-level employees with the necessary math skills. To help connect job seekers with available job openings at local banks, the one-stop developed a training opportunity for job seekers that was funded by Chamber members and was targeted to the specific skills needed for employment in the banking community.[13] Similarly, staff at the one-stop in Kenosha, Wisconsin, were in frequent contact with the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, a community development corporation, to identify and address hiring and training needs of the local manufacturing industry. This partnership not only helped employers access human resources assistance—such as recruitment, networking, and marketing—but it also assisted employers with assessment and training of new and existing employees. Specialized staff at most of the one-stops we visited also worked with local economic development entities to serve employers or recruit new businesses to the area. For example, the staff at the Erie, Pennsylvania, one-stop worked with a range of local economic development organizations[14] to develop an outreach program that assessed the workforce needs of employers, linked employers with appropriate services, and developed incentive packages to attract new businesses to the community.

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[13]The one-stop in Kansas City, Missouri, provides another example of how specialized staff at the one-stop worked with the local Chambers of Commerce to better connect employers with job seekers, specifically disabled job seekers. While staff at the Kansas City one-stop identified job seekers with disabilities, the Chamber worked with local employers to educate them about hiring disabled workers and integrating them into the workplace.

[14]Erie CareerLink worked with numerous economic development entities, such as the Erie County Executive, Economic Development Corporation of Erie County, and Northwest Pennsylvania Industrial Resource Center, which are agencies and organizations dedicated to promoting the local economy by attracting new employers to the region and by providing support for local employers.

One-Stops Provided Services Tailored to Meet Employers' Specific Workforce Needs

In addition to dedicating specialized staff to engage employers and working with intermediaries, all of the one-stops we visited tailored their services to meet employers' specific workforce needs by offering an array of job placement and training assistance designed for each employer. These services included specialized recruiting, pre-screening, and customized training programs. For example, when one of the nation's largest cabinet manufacturers was considering opening a new facility in the eastern Kentucky area, the one-stop in Pikeville, Kentucky, offered a tailored set of services to attract the employer to the area. The services included assisting the company with pre-screening and interviewing applicants and establishing an on-the-job training package that used WIA funding to offset up to 50 percent of each new hire's wages during the 90-day training period. According to a company representative, the incentive package offered by the one-stop was the primary reason the company chose to build a new facility in eastern Kentucky instead of another location. Once the company arrived, the Pikeville one-stop administered the application and assessment process for job applicants and held a 3-day job fair, resulting in the company hiring 105 people through the one-stop and planning to hire an additional 350 employees.

To help industries address labor shortages and strengthen local businesses, several of the one-stops we visited actively developed and marketed training opportunities for current and potential new employees, helping to keep jobs in the community and promote local economic growth. For example, Pikeville, Kentucky, encountered a labor shortage in the local coal mining industry. Because of the high cost of training for inexperienced miners, many companies considered hiring experienced coal miners from foreign countries. To help companies save on training costs and hire workers from the local area—one of historically high unemployment—the Pikeville one-stop created an on-the-job training program using WIA funds, which paid for half of new miners' salaries during their training period. The co-owner of a local mining company, who hired 15 percent of his workforce through the one-stop, told us that, without the assistance of the one-stop, he would not have been able to hire as many miners. Because he saved money on training costs, the co-owner said he was also able to promote his experienced workers to more advanced positions and provide better benefits, such as health insurance, for all his employees.

Tailored services were used not only to attract new employers, but to retain employers in the one-stop system and train new workers for employers struggling to find job-ready staff. For example, for over 9 years, the Clarksville, Tennessee, one-stop has provided tailored hiring services,

including drug-testing and pre-screening of applicants, for a nearby manufacturing company. As a result, the company has hired over 75 people through the one-stop. One-stops also provided customized workshops and classes to help employers train new and current workers. When a local nursing home expressed concern about hiring non-English-speaking workers, the one-stop in Blaine, Minnesota, created a job-specific English as a Second Language course that was taught on-site at the nursing home by one-stop staff.

Many of the one-stops we visited also provided employers with tailored business support services and educational resources. One-stop managers told us that these services helped the one-stops attract and retain employer involvement in the one-stop system and enhanced employers' ability to maintain a skilled workforce. For example, some one-stops we visited allowed employers to use office space in the one-stop for interviewing job applicants. A few of the one-stop centers had specific business centers on-site, such as the Business Resource Center in Killeen, Texas. The center served entrepreneurs and over 400 small businesses by providing information about starting a small business, such as tax information, economic development information, marketing resources, and business workshops. Similarly, the Sunnyvale, California, one-stop addressed the specific needs of customers seeking entrepreneurial opportunities by co-locating with a patent and trademark library that is electronically linked to the national trademark office. Finally, several one-stops offered employers help with accessing business tax credits. For example, when the employer services staff at the one-stop in Vineland, New Jersey, realized the application process for tax credits was cumbersome for employers, they began automatically completing the required paperwork for employers so that the employers could more readily apply for the tax credit incentives.[15]

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[15]Officials at the Vineland one-stop told us that tax credits serve as an incentive for businesses to participate in certain federal workforce programs such as the Empowerment Zone, Welfare-to-Work, and Education Opportunity Programs.
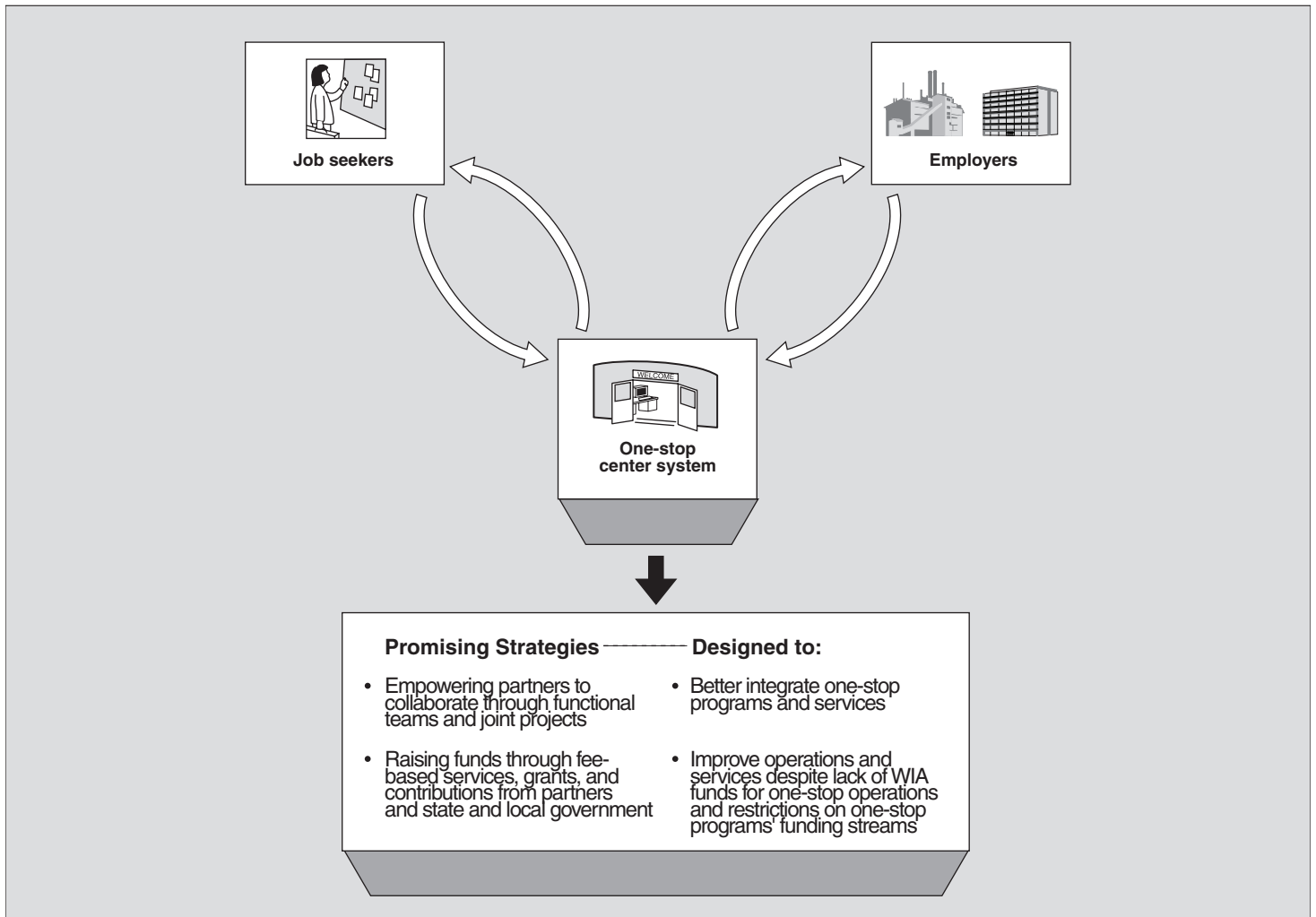
One-Stop Centers Built a Solid Infrastructure by Strengthening Program Partnerships and Raising Additional Funds

To build the solid infrastructure needed to support better services for job seekers and employers, many of the one-stops we visited developed and strengthened program partnerships and raised funds beyond those provided under WIA. Center operators fostered the development of strong program partnerships by encouraging communication and collaboration among partners through functional teams and joint projects. As shown in figure 5, this collaboration allowed one-stop partners to better integrate their respective programs and services. Many one-stops also worked toward improving one-stop operations and services by raising additional funds through fee-based services, grants, and contributions from partners and state or local government. The revenue raised through these activities helped one-stops improve operations and services despite the lack of WIA funding for one-stop operations and restrictions on the ways in which one-stop programs can spend their funds.

Figure 5: Promising Strategies for Improving the One-Stop Center Infrastructure

Job seekers

Employers

One-stop center system

Promising Strategies ———— **Designed to:**

- Empowering partners to collaborate through functional teams and joint projects

- Raising funds through fee-based services, grants, and contributions from partners and state and local government

- Better integrate one-stop programs and services

- Improve operations and services despite lack of WIA funds for one-stop operations and restrictions on one-stop programs' funding streams

Source: GAO illustration. Clip art source: Art Explosion.

One-Stop Centers Promoted Strong Partnerships by Facilitating Communication and Collaboration among Partner Programs

In order to build a cohesive, well-functioning one-stop infrastructure, 9 of the 14 one-stop centers we visited gave partners the opportunity to collaborate through functional teams and joint projects. One-stop managers told us that collaboration through teams and joint projects allowed partners to better integrate their respective programs and services, as well as pursue common one-stop goals and share in one-stop decision

making. For example, partners at the Erie, Pennsylvania, one-stop center were organized into four functional teams—a career resource center team, a job seeker services team, an employer services team, and an operations team—which together operated the one-stop center. As a result of the functional team meetings, partners reported that they worked together to solve problems and develop innovative strategies to improve services in their respective functional area. For instance, to improve intake and referral processes, the Erie job seeker services team created a color-coded intake form shared by multiple partners. Certain customers, such as veterans and dislocated workers, received intake forms that were a different color from those of other customers, so that staff could easily identify the different customer groups and direct each toward the services that best met their needs. Similarly, in Salt Lake City, Utah, partners created a committee to address issues of common concern, such as cross-program referrals, cross-training of partner staff, and employer involvement. Staff from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Salt Lake City told us that this committee helped to increase referrals to their program by producing flow charts of the service delivery systems of various partner programs to identify points at which referrals and staff collaboration should occur.

In addition to fostering integration across programs, one-stop managers said that the joint decision making done through functional teams facilitated the development of a shared one-stop identity. Pikeville, Kentucky, one-stop managers told us that shared decision-making was instrumental in developing a common one-stop identity and in ensuring partners' support for the one-stop system. The process of creating a shared one-stop identity in Pikeville was also supported by the adoption of a common logo, nametags, and business cards, and was reinforced by a comprehensive marketing campaign, which gave partners a common message to rally behind. Pikeville one-stop managers told us that, as a result of this shared one-stop identity, partner staff no longer focused exclusively on serving their individual program customers; rather, staff developed a "can-do" attitude of meeting the needs of all one-stop customers. In addition, managers told us that because of their shared one-stop identity, partners were more willing to contribute resources to one another and to the center as a whole. For instance, in order to streamline services for job seekers, the Adult Basic Education Program administered skills assessments to all one-stop customers, regardless of which program they were enrolled in.

One-stop managers at several of the sites we visited told us that the co-location of partner programs in one building facilitated communication and collaboration. For this reason, one-stop managers at several of the centers we visited reported that they fostered co-location by offering attractive physical space and flexible rental agreements.[16] For example, in Pikeville, Kentucky, the local community college donated free space to the one-stop on its conveniently located campus, making it easier to convince partners to relocate there. Partners were also eager to relocate to the Pikeville one-stop because they recognized the benefits of co-location for their customers. For instance, staff from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program said that co-location at the one-stop increased their customers' access to employers and employment services. Pikeville managers also told us that co-location at the community college made it easier for partners to share information and made them more visible to students likely to need employment services in the near future. In addition, because co-location sometimes presents a challenge to partners with limited resources, several centers offered flexible rental agreements to make it easier for partners to co-locate. For example, the Kansas City, Missouri, one-stop enabled the Adult Basic Education Program to co-locate by allowing it to contribute instructors and General Educational Development (GED) classes instead of paying rent. Partners in some locations, including Dayton, Ohio, and Kenosha, Wisconsin, donated space to enable other partners to be on-site.

Several one-stops where all partners were not co-located found ways to create strong linkages with off-site partners. For example, in addition to regular meetings between on-site and off-site staff, the one-stop in Aurora, Colorado, had a staff person designated to act as a liaison and facilitate communication between on-site and off-site partners. When an on-site partner specializing in senior services raised concerns about the lack of employment opportunities for its customers, the liaison set up a meeting with Vocational Rehabilitation, an off-site partner, to enable both parties to begin exchanging referrals to jobs and services.

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[16]In fostering co-location of partner programs, the one-stops we visited were following a trend toward increased co-location at one-stop centers nationwide. We found that the number of states with co-located mandatory and optional programs increased appreciably between 2000 and 2001. We considered a mandatory program to be co-located in a state if more than 50 percent of the state's one-stops had the program on-site. For more information, see GAO-02-696.

One-Stop Centers Raised Additional Funds to Improve One-Stop Operations and Expand Services for Customers

Managers at all but two of the one-stops we visited said that they were using the flexibility under WIA to creatively increase one-stop funds through fee-based services, grants, or contributions from partner programs and state or local governments. Managers said these additional funds allowed them to cover operational costs and expand services in spite of the lack of WIA funding to support one-stop infrastructure and restrictions on the use of program funds. For example, one-stop operators in Clarksville, Tennessee, reported that they raised $750,000 in fiscal year 2002 through a combination of business consulting, drug testing, and drivers' education services. Using this money, the center was able to purchase a new voicemail and computer network system, which facilitated communication among staff and streamlined center operations.[17] Similarly, in Sunnyvale, California, one-stop managers said they raised $20,000 through downsizing and training services for employers, and used this money to expand the one-stop's training services.

Centers have also been proactive about applying for grants from public and private sources. For example, the one-stop center in Kansas City, Missouri, had a full-time staff person dedicated to researching and applying for grants. The one-stop generated two-thirds of its entire program year 2002 operating budget of $21 million through competitive grants available from the federal government as well as from private foundations. This money allowed the center to expand its services, such as through an internship program in high-tech industries for at-risk youth. One-stop centers also raised additional funds by soliciting contributions from local or state government and from partner agencies. For instance, Boston one-stop managers reported that the state of Massachusetts matched the one-stop's Wagner-Peyser funds dollar for dollar, which enabled the center to fund its resource room and library. In addition, the Dayton, Ohio, one-stop received $1 million annually from the county to pay for shared one-stop staff salaries and to provide services to job seekers who do not qualify for services under any other funding stream. Dayton one-stop partners also contributed financial and in-kind resources to the center on an as-needed basis.

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[17]While several centers had adopted fee-based services as a method of raising funds, it is important to note that managers of at least one center said they chose not to charge for services because they felt this might deter some employers or job seekers from accessing needed services.

In addition to raising money through grants, managers at the one-stop in Santa Rosa, California, told us that they made more efficient use of existing funds by having staff use a funding source determination worksheet to maximize training funds from various sources. The worksheet is continually updated to show how much funding is available through each program, allowing caseworkers to choose the most economical source for eligible customers' Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)[18] based on the amount of money available through each funding stream and the date it is scheduled to expire.

Little Is Known about the Impact of Strategies to Improve One-Stop Services and Management

While Labor currently tracks outcome data—such as job placement, job seeker satisfaction, and employer satisfaction—and funds several studies to evaluate workforce development programs and service delivery models, little is known about the impact of various one-stop service delivery approaches on these and other outcomes. Labor's studies largely take a program-by-program approach rather than focusing on the impact on job seekers of various one-stop integrated service delivery approaches, such as sharing customer intake forms across programs, or on employers, such as dedicating staff to focus on engaging and serving employers. Further, Labor's efforts to collaborate with other federal agencies to assess the effects of different strategies to integrate job seeker services or to serve employers through the one-stop system have been limited. In addition, one-stop administrators do not have enough opportunities to share existing information about how to improve and integrate services for job seeker and employer customers. While Labor has developed a promising practices Web site to facilitate such information sharing, it is unclear how well the site currently meets this objective.

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[18]Individual Training Accounts are training vouchers that participants can use to procure the training of their choice, so long as the training program is on a state's eligible training provider list.

While Labor Currently Has Several Impact and Process Evaluations Underway, the Scope of These Studies Is Limited

Labor currently tracks performance measures under the three WIA programs using 17 separate outcome measures, including job placement and job seeker and employer customer satisfaction, designed to gauge the success of WIA funded services.[19] However, managers at a few of the one-stop centers we visited told us that customer satisfaction data, for example, could not be linked to specific services or strategies, so one-stop managers could not use the data to improve services for their job seeker and employer customers. While outcome measures are an important component of program management in that they assess whether a participant is achieving an intended outcome-such as obtaining employment—they cannot measure whether the outcome is a direct result of program participation.[20] Other influences, such as the state of the local economy, may affect an individual's ability to find a job as much or more than participation in an employment and training program. Many researchers consider impact evaluations to be the best method for determining the effectiveness of a program—that is, whether the program itself rather than other factors leads to participant outcomes.

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[19]WIA's measures are only tracked for those customers who receive staff-assisted core, intensive or training services using WIA funding. They are not tracked for those who receive self-service core services. For more information, see GAO-02-275.

[20]For more information, see U.S. General Accounting Office, *Food Stamp Employment and Training Program: Better Data Needed to Understand Who Is Served and What the Program Achieves*, GAO-03-388 (Washington D.C.: Mar. 12, 2003).

While Labor is currently supporting a large number of impact and process evaluations[21] of various workforce development programs and initiatives, none of these studies include an evaluation of the impact of different integrated service delivery approaches on outcomes, such as job placement or retention, or job seeker and employer satisfaction (see table 2). Examples of integrated service delivery initiatives that we observed at one-stops and that Labor could evaluate include cross-training one-stop staff, sharing customer intake across programs, and consolidating case management for customers enrolled in multiple programs. While these integrated service delivery approaches were common at the one-stops we visited, little is currently known about their impact on one-stop customer outcomes and satisfaction. In addition, there is a lack of information about which approaches to serving employers are most effective, such as dedicating staff to engage and serve employers or tailoring services for employers by offering customized training or pre-screening job applicants, for example. Employment and Training Administration (ETA)[22] officials provided us with information on their current research, such as the Microanalysis of the One-Stop—a process evaluation that Labor has initiated to analyze how job seekers and employers access the array of available one-stop services. While this study offers an analysis of the implementation and operation of integrated service delivery, it does not measure the impact of this integration on one-stop customers' satisfaction or outcomes. In addition, the impact evaluations that Labor is currently undertaking typically take a program-by-program approach and do not measure the effectiveness of integrated services. For instance, Labor's evaluation comparing the impact of various approaches to implementing

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[21]Impact evaluations measure a program's effect on participant outcomes, such as job placement and retention, by isolating the program effect from the effects of other factors. Process evaluations, on the other hand, offer an analysis of the processes involved in program implementation. To isolate a program's effect, impact evaluations often divide participants into two groups: those who receive program services and a similar group who do not (the control or comparison group). Some impact evaluations assign participants randomly to one group or the other, which increases the likelihood that the two groups are roughly equivalent on all characteristics that could affect outcomes. When participants are randomly assigned, the comparison group is called a control group. Aspects of program implementation that process evaluations typically assess include the extent to which a program is reaching the appropriate target population, whether a program's delivery of services is consistent with its design specifications, and the amount of resources being spent on the program.

[22]ETA is an agency within the U.S. Department of Labor that oversees WIA and provides job training, employment, labor market information, and income maintenance services primarily through state and local workforce development systems.

Individual Training Accounts only includes WIA program participants, and its evaluation of self-directed job search in a one-stop environment focuses only on UI recipients.

Table 2: Selected Studies Supported by ETA

Title	Description of study	Expected release date
Center for Employment Training (CET) Replication Impact Study	Impact evaluation that examines the post-program impacts on employment, earnings, and arrests among youth who participated at CET replication sites. Includes control group.	Mid-2003, with a follow-up report in late 2004
Connecting UI Remote Services to One-Stop Services Demonstration Project	Process evaluation that examines how best to strengthen the connection between UI and one-stop services.	Information not available
Employment Retention and Career Advancement Evaluation	A joint study with HHS, Labor is contributing funds for an impact, process and cost-benefit analysis of the role of one-stops in job retention and advancement. Includes control groups.	Fall 2007
Evaluation of Self-Directed Labor Exchange Services in a One-Stop Environment	Impact evaluation that examines the impact, efficiency and effectiveness of self-directed labor exchange services on UI recipients' earnings and job search behavior. Includes comparison group.	Summer 2005
Evaluation of the Individual Training Account Experiment	Impact evaluation to determine the effectiveness of three progressively more intensive job search assistance approaches. The most intensive approach includes a training component. Includes control group.	Late 2003
Evaluation of the School-to-Work Out-of-School Youth Demonstration and Job Corps Model Centers	A joint study with Education, Labor contributed funds for a process evaluation of the implementation of school-to-work strategies at Job Corps Model Centers and other programs serving out-of-school youth.	Released 2000
Evaluation of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (planned)	Impact evaluation to measure the impacts of the Trade Adjustment Assistance Program on participants' employment, earnings, and receipt of fringe benefits. Includes comparison group.	Interim reports 2005/2007, final 2008
Evaluation of WIA Implementation	Process evaluation to assess the early experience of states implementing WIA, including those states that opted to implement before July 1, 2000.	Interim report published, final 2004
Growing America Through Entrepreneurship (GATE) Demonstration Project	Process, impact and cost-benefit analysis to measure the effectiveness of combining a variety of small business initiatives into one program offered through the one-stop system. Study is in collaboration with the Small Business Administration. Includes control group.	Information not available
H1-B High Skills Training Grant Evaluation	Process and impact evaluation to determine the near and long-term impacts of the H1-B Technical Skills training initiative, including impacts on society, employers, participants, and the government sector. Impact evaluation includes control group.	Interim report released, impact study report late 2006

Title	Description of study	Expected release date
Center for Employment Training (CET) Replication Impact Study	Impact evaluation that examines the post-program impacts on employment, earnings, and arrests among youth who participated at CET replication sites. Includes control group.	Mid-2003, with a follow-up report in late 2004
Connecting UI Remote Services to One-Stop Services Demonstration Project	Process evaluation that examines how best to strengthen the connection between UI and one-stop services.	Information not available
Low-Wage Worker Retention and Advancement Demonstration Projects	Process evaluation to assess the effectiveness of new strategies for improving low-wage workers' employment status, retention rate, wage gain, career advancement, public assistance usage, and other elements.	Oregon in late 2004; California in late 2005
Microanalysis of the One-Stop	Process evaluation that analyzes how individuals flow through one-stops and the extent to which they access the array of available services.	Information not available
National Job Corps Study	Impact evaluation to evaluate the impact of the Job Corps program on student employment outcomes. Includes control group.	Released 2001
Worker Profiling and Reemployment Service Significant Improvement Demonstrations	Process evaluation to identify promising strategies for improving reemployment services administered to unemployed individuals through state worker profiling and reemployment service systems.	Released 2002
Youth Opportunity Areas Demonstration Evaluation	Impact and process evaluation to measure the effectiveness of the Youth Opportunity Area Demonstration. Impact evaluation includes comparison group.	Late 2005
Quantum Opportunities Program (QOP) Replication	Impact evaluation to assess whether the QOP program has a positive effect on high school graduation rates, enrollment in postsecondary education, employment, and earnings. Includes control group.	Interim report released 2003, final report 2005

Source: ETA, 2003.

Note: GAO identified approximately 40 studies supported by ETA of workforce development programs and initiatives. This table is indicative of studies that ETA is supporting; we excluded studies that were similar to studies listed here or that did not assess programs involved in the one-stop system. For more information about these and other studies that ETA is supporting, see the ETA Five-Year Strategic Plan for Pilots, Demonstrations, Research, and Evaluations July 2000-June 2005 (http://wdr.doleta.gov/opr/fulltext/document.asp?docn=6162.)

ETA officials told us that a major barrier they face to conducting a broader array of impact studies is their limited research budget—$35 million for demonstration grants and $9 million for evaluations in fiscal year 2003. In a few cases, Labor has sought to address these funding limitations by collaborating with other federal agencies to fund studies. For example, Labor is helping HHS fund the $26 million Employment, Retention and Advancement Study, an evaluation assessing strategies to promote employment retention and advancement among welfare recipients and low-wage workers. Labor is also collaborating with the Department of Education on a process evaluation examining the implementation of

school-to-work programs at selected Job Corps centers. Such collaboration not only enables Labor to address funding limitations, but it also has the potential to facilitate evaluations of service delivery approaches that span multiple programs overseen by different agencies. However, in spite of these benefits, Labor is currently engaging in only a limited number of such collaborations. Moreover, none of these collaborative studies are specifically directed towards evaluating the impact of one-stop services or integrated service delivery approaches.

One-Stop Administrators Do Not Have Enough Opportunities to Share Information about Promising Strategies in Serving One-Stop Customers

While Labor has developed several mechanisms for providing guidance and allowing local one-stop administrators to share information on how to move beyond the basic requirements of WIA toward improving and integrating one-stop services, these efforts have been limited. Labor's primary mechanisms for disseminating information about promising practices at one-stop centers are a Web site, forums, and conferences.

The promising practices Web site, which is funded by Labor and is operated by Northern Illinois University's Center for Governmental Studies, represents a promising step toward building a mechanism to support information sharing among one-stop administrators. However, neither ETA nor the Web site's administrators have conducted a customer satisfaction survey or user evaluation of the site, so little is known about how well the site currently meets its objective to promote information sharing about promising practices. Much of the information available on the Web site comes from submissions by one-stop centers or research organizations, yet Web site administrators told us that these submissions have not been screened to ensure that their content is useful. Furthermore, relevant literature stresses that information presented through Web sites should be accessible, useful, and well organized. When we attempted to use the Web site, we found that useful information on the site was difficult to access. In order to find information about promising practices through the site, one must conduct a search by key word, which often did not yield satisfactory results. Search results were organized alphabetically, not by relevance, and some of the results addressed the search topic only marginally. In addition, search results included a disorganized mixture of external documents, links to other Web sites, and submissions. For instance, a search under the keywords "service integration" yielded six results, including two links to external Web sites, two external documents, and two promising practices submissions. Of these six results, two did not directly address promising practices in the area of service integration.

In addition to the Web site, Labor hosts regular regional meetings and cosponsors several national conferences to promote information dissemination and networking opportunities for state and local grantees and stakeholders. Labor also hosted several forums during WIA implementation to allow information exchanges to occur between the department and state and local one-stop administrators. While these conferences and forums provide a venue for one-stop managers to talk with one another about what is and is not working at their centers, participation is limited to those who can physically take part.

Conclusions

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 are learning how to use the flexibility afforded by WIA to develop systems that work for their local areas and that implement WIA's vision of a customer-focused system. The one-stop centers we visited are coordinating with the 17 mandatory partners, and often multiple optional partners, to create a one-stop system that strives to streamline services for job seekers and make employers a significant part of the one-stop system. While the one-stops we visited ranged in terms of their location—from urban to suburban to rural—we saw numerous examples of one-stops streamlining services for job seekers, developing business-related services to meet the needs of employers, and supporting a one-stop infrastructure that provides the full range of assistance needed by job seekers and employers to serve local workforce needs.

While these strategies show promise for improving services to job seekers and employers alike, there is no clear understanding of whether these integrated service delivery approaches are actually increasing job seeker and employer satisfaction or outcomes, such as job placement and retention. Labor's current research efforts focus within individual programs and have yet to take into account that customers are now served by a one-stop system where multiple programs from four federal agencies provide services. Moreover, few efforts have been made to share information on promising practices. It is unclear whether one effort, a promising practices Web site supported by Labor, is effective in meeting its objective to promote information sharing about promising practices. Without the right research or information sharing tools, it is difficult to know which one-stop practices are, in fact, successful and how the system might be improved in the long run.

Recommendations for Executive Action

In order to better understand and disseminate information on how well different approaches to program integration are meeting the needs of one-stop job seekers and employers, we recommend that the Secretary of Labor

- collaborate with the Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development to develop a research agenda that examines the impacts of various approaches to program integration on job seeker and employer satisfaction and outcomes, such as job placement and retention and

- conduct a systematic evaluation of the promising practices Web site and ensure that it is effective.

Agency Comments

We provided a draft of this report to Labor for comment. Labor agreed with our recommendations and expressed appreciation for our acknowledgment of the progress made by local one-stop centers. However, Labor suggested we recognize other research activities undertaken by ETA and its efforts to share promising practices. We have incorporated Labor's comments in our report, as appropriate. A copy of Labor's response is in appendix III.

Specifically, Labor agrees with our recommendation that better information is needed to assess the impact of integrated services on customer outcomes and satisfaction, but noted that it collects performance information that includes job seeker and employer customer satisfaction data. In addition, Labor told us it is working on implementing common performance measures for the one-stop system. As we noted in the report, outcome measures are an important part of program management, but alone, do not allow for an understanding of whether the outcome is a direct result of program participation. We continue to stress the need for more impact studies in order to understand whether integrated services are making a difference.

Labor agrees with our recommendation that Labor conduct a systematic evaluation of the Web site to ensure that it is effective. Labor told us that it is undertaking a strategic review of its Web sites, including the promising practices site that is intended to identify ways to improve customer access to information. Labor also said that it is engaged in other activities to effectively share information about what is working well in one-stop centers. For example, ETA hosts regular regional meetings for state
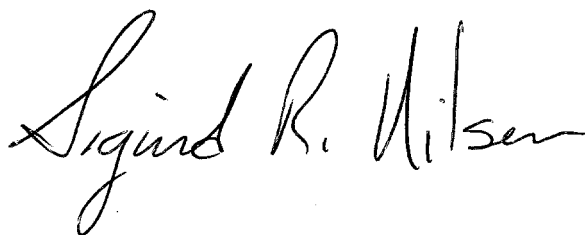
administrators and funds a number of efforts that produce, recognize, and share promising practices within the workforce system.

We are sending copies of this report to the Secretary of Labor, appropriate congressional committees, and other interested parties. In addition, the report will be available at no charge on GAO's Web site at http://www.gao.gov.

Please contact me on (202) 512-7215 if you or your staff have any questions about this report. Other major contributors to this report are listed in appendix IV.

Sigurd R. Nilsen
Director, Education, Workforce
 and Income Security Issues

Characteristics of the 14 One-Stop Centers GAO Visited

GAO one-stop center site visits	Name of one-stop center	Operator	Geographic location	Major industries	Estimated monthly customer flow
Aurora, CO	Arapahoe/Douglas Works!	Arapahoe/Douglas Works! (local government consortium)	Suburb of Denver	Retail, construction, accommodation & food services	6,000
Blaine, MN	Anoka County Workforce Center	Partner consortium	Suburb of Minneapolis	Manufacturing, retail, healthcare	5,100
Boston, MA	The Work Place	Partnership between Jewish Vocational Service (nonprofit) and the City of Boston	Located in downtown Boston	Healthcare, finance & insurance, professional & technical services	800
Clarksville, TN	Workforce Essentials, Inc.	Workforce Essentials, Inc. (nonprofit)	Close to Nashville, otherwise rural	Manufacturing, retail, healthcare	4,600
Dayton, OH	The Job Center	Consortium of partners, led by an independent director	Urban city	Manufacturing, retail, healthcare	42,500
Erie, PA	Erie Team PA CareerLink	Partner consortium, led by Greater Erie Community Action Committee (nonprofit)	Small urban metropolitan area	Manufacturing, healthcare, retail	2,800
Kansas City, MO	Full Employment Council	Full Employment Council (nonprofit)	Covering rural, urban, and suburban areas	Healthcare, retail, manufacturing	4,500
Kenosha, WI	Kenosha County Job Center	Kenosha County	Mixed urban and rural county located on Lake Michigan	Manufacturing, retail, healthcare	4,000
Killeen, TX	Central Texas Workforce	Central Texas Workforce Center	Suburban, rural area. Fort Hood is nearby.	Healthcare, retail, manufacturing	11,000
Pikeville, KY	Pike County JobSight Center	Eastern Kentucky Concentrated Employment Program (nonprofit)	Located in rural Appalachia in eastern Kentucky	Retail, mining, healthcare	500
Salt Lake City, UT	South County Employment Center	Utah Department of Workforce Services	Located in Salt Lake City	Retail, manufacturing	24,500

(Continued From Previous Page)

GAO one-stop center site visits	Name of one-stop center	Operator	Geographic location	Major industries	Estimated monthly customer flow
Santa Rosa, CA	Job Link	Partner consortium	Largely rural	Manufacturing, retail, healthcare	Not available
Sunnyvale, CA	Connect!	NOVA (North Valley Job Training Consortium), 6 - county consortium with city of Sunnyvale as lead member	Urban and suburban, located in the heart of Silicon Valley	Manufacturing, professional & technical services	2,500
Vineland, NJ	Cumberland County One-Stop	Cumberland County Office of Employment & Training	A mix of urban, suburban, and rural communities in southwestern New Jersey	Manufacturing, retail, healthcare	Not available

Sources: U.S. Census county Business Patterns, U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, and GAO site visits, 2003.

Promising Practices from Site Visits

While sites were identified as exemplary based on their promising practices in one of three key areas—serving job seekers, engaging employers, and operating the one-stop center—we found that all 14 of the one-stops we visited exhibited numerous promising practices in multiple areas. The selection of promising practices described below represents some of the strongest or most unique examples from each site.

Aurora, Colorado
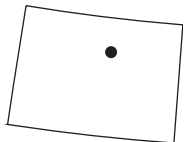
Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Colorado Workforce Center
14980 E. Alameda Drive
Aurora, CO 80012

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers -** Arapahoe/Douglas Works! works closely with local Chambers of Commerce and economic development entities to conduct outreach to employers. Each year Arapahoe/Douglas Works! and the local Chamber hold an employer recognition awards event, which not only markets the one-stop system to business, but also encourages workplace innovation by honoring three employers with awards for work-life balance, community partnerships, and outstanding youth employer.

- **Dedicating specialized staff to address local industry needs -** Because of a local nursing labor shortage, the one-stop dedicated specialized staff to establish an on-site healthcare recruitment center to help job seekers find training opportunities in the healthcare field.

- **Promoting partner collaboration -** In addition to regular meetings between on-site and off-site staff, the one-stop has a staff person designated to act as a liaison and facilitate communication between on-site and off-site partners.

- **Developing optional partnerships to expand services -** Arapahoe/Douglas Works! partners with the Department of Corrections to provide transition services for juvenile offenders.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services -** Arapahoe/Douglas Works! raised about $620,000 through contracts with local schools to provide workforce development services for at-risk high school students. The one-stop also raised about $80,000 through an on-site learning lab for students at risk of dropping out of school.

Blaine, Minnesota

Anoka County Workforce Center
1201 89th Avenue NE
Blaine, MN 55434

- **Ensuring partner staff understand the range of services** –Staff periodically participate in center-wide meetings where they make presentations to one another about their program's services and role at the center. In addition, partners lead workshops on how to better serve their particular customer base. Officials reported that cross-training results in increased referrals across partner programs.

- **Streamlining services through consolidated case management** - The caseworkers from the various one-stop programs meet regularly to collaborate in developing and implementing joint service plans for customers who are co-enrolled in multiple programs.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs** - The one-stop developed an English-as-a-Second-Language course tailored to the needs of a local nursing home. The course was taught on-site at the nursing home by one-stop staff.

- **Promoting partner collaboration** - Partners collaborate in functional teams to manage the one-stop. Collaboration among partners was enhanced when they jointly applied for a One-Stop Implementation grant from the state of Minnesota. Because of the strong sense of cooperation among them, partners pooled their resources when possible to ensure the continued funding of services.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services** - An H1-B grant and a grant from the McKnight Foundation enabled the center to expand services for customers. The grants enabled the center to implement a training program in healthcare-related fields and develop a social services and car donation program for people who do not qualify for any other program.

Boston, Massachusetts

The Work Place
99 Chauncy Street
Boston, MA 02111

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services** - Because the majority of the Work Place's partners are located off-site, the one-stop placed staff in off-site locations, including family courts, correctional facilities, and welfare offices to give job seekers ready access to employment-related services.

- **Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers** - The Work Place has staff dedicated to recruiting, engaging, and maintaining employer involvement. The Work Place has focused on measuring employer satisfaction and soliciting employer feedback to guide them in improving their employer services. The center has established employer focus groups to identify the services employers used and their satisfaction with those services.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs** - The Work Place screens applicants and provides referrals to the Marriott Hotel's Pathways to Independence program, a nationwide job readiness program for people with multiple barriers to employment. About 75 percent of program graduates over the past 5 years were recruited through The Work Place.

- **Developing optional partnerships to expand services** - The Work Place has developed an optional partnership with the Suffolk County House of Corrections to provide community reintegration services for prisoners prior to their release. One of the programs is an offender re-entry program that conducts job fairs inside the county jail to facilitate incarcerated offenders' transition back into the workplace.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services** - The state of Massachusetts matches the Boston one-stop's Wagner-Peyser funds dollar for dollar, which enables the center to fund its resource room and library.

Clarksville, Tennessee
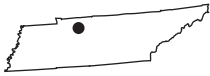
WorkForce Essentials, Inc.
110 Main Street
Clarksville, TN 37040

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services** - The Clarksville one-stop provides a clear path for job seekers to follow between one-stop services. When job seekers are referred to another partner program, staff personally walk them over to the referred program staff to prevent them from getting lost between programs.

- **Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers** - WorkForce Essentials, Inc., dedicates staff to conduct employer outreach in order to provide employer services and identify employment opportunities for job seekers. One-stop operators said that outreach to employers has helped engender employer trust in the organization and the job seekers it serves.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers** - The Clarksville one-stop staff worked with Chamber of Commerce members to provide math training in order to improve the pool of entry-level employees for the local banking industry. This helped connect job seekers with available job openings at local banks.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs** - The one-stop provided tailored hiring services, including drug testing and pre-screening of applicants, for a manufacturing company, resulting in the company hiring over 75 people through the one-stop.

- **Developing optional partnerships to expand services-** Managers in Clarksville told us that co-location with the Tennessee Department of Human Services, which administers TANF, benefits all job seekers because the department helps fund various services, including computer classes, soft skills classes, and parenting classes that can be provided to those not eligible for TANF.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services** - WorkForce Essentials, Inc., raised $750,000 in fiscal year 2002 through drivers' education courses, drug testing, recruitment, and skills assessment services. This money was used to pay salaries and to purchase voicemail and a computer network system. In addition, the one-stop received a

$2.8 million H-1B Technical Skills Training Grant from DOL, through which it has provided high-skills training to over 900 workers so far.

Dayton, Ohio

The Job Center
111 S. Edwin C. Moses Boulevard
Dayton, OH 45422

- **Streamlining services through consolidated case management -** Caseworkers from various programs, including TANF, Medicaid, Food Stamps, and WIA share caseloads and coordinate their service plans for job seekers.

- **Ensuring partner staff understand the range of services -** One-stop managers reported that cross-training on-site and off-site partners dramatically improves referrals to the Child Support Program, thereby enhancing efforts to establish paternity, a requirement for determining eligibility for TANF. Additionally, they indicated that their cross-trained staff referred job seekers to service providers that had previously been unknown, such as to smaller programs within the one-stop or local neighborhood programs.

- **Promoting partner collaboration and co-location -** Partners collaboratively operate the one-stop through four councils. All partners are asked to participate and all have equal voice in decision-making. Additionally, partners contributed space and other resources to help other partners co-locate. The Center is housed in a former shopping mall, which offers plenty of flexible space to allow all partners to co-locate.

- **Developing optional partnerships to expand services -** At the time of our visit, the Dayton one-stop had over 30 optional partners on-site, including the Montgomery County Combined Health District, which operates a health clinic on-site; and Clothes that Work! which provides free business attire to low-income women; and an alternative high school.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services -** The one-stop receives $1 million annually from the county to pay for shared one-stop staff salaries and to provide services to job seekers who do not qualify for services under any other funding stream. Dayton one-stop partners also

contribute financial and in-kind resources to the center on an as-needed basis.

Erie, Pennsylvania
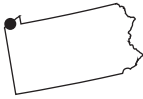
Pennsylvania CareerLink
1309 French Street
Erie, PA 16501

- **Streamlining services through consolidated case management -** To efficiently coordinate multiple services for one-stop customers, Erie one-stop staff use a networked computer system with a shared case management program, so that they can share access to a customer's service plan and case file.

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services -** The one-stop positions a staff person at the doors to the center to help job seekers entering the center find needed services and to ensure that exiting job seekers received the services they sought.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers -** CareerLink staff collaborated with numerous local economic development entities to develop an outreach program that assesses the workforce needs of employers and links employers with appropriate services.

- **Promoting partner collaboration -** The one-stop staff is organized into four functional teams that meet weekly to work on common goals and develop new strategies. These teams have developed innovative strategies to improve service delivery, including the creation of a resource guide for caseworkers and a color-coded intake form.

- **Strengthening relationships among partners -** Staff at CareerLink participate in frequent team-building activities, such as social events and recognition ceremonies, to promote a positive, integrated working environment.

Kansas City, Missouri

Full Employment Council
1740 Paseo
Kansas City, MO 64108

- **Streamlining services through consolidated intake procedures -** Youth Opportunity and the WIA Youth program staff share intake and enrollment forms to streamline the delivery of services to youth. This process alleviates the burden of multiple intake and assessment forms when registering participants.

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services -** The one-stop management decided to locate the one-stop center next to the bus company, the Area Transit Authority, (ATA). This strategic decision meant that all bus routes passed by the one-stop center, ensuring that customers with transportation problems could access one-stop services. Additionally, the ATA partners with the one-stop to create an Urban Employment Network program to assist job seekers with transportation to and from work, 7 days a week from 5:00 in the morning until midnight and has set up a van service to operate during off-peak hours.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers** - The Full Employment Council uses the Chamber of Commerce as an intermediary with employers. The chamber has a workforce issues division that does outreach to educate employers about recruitment and retention strategies and services offered at the one-stop center. While staff at the Kansas City one-stop assist job seekers with disabilities, the Chamber works with local employers to educate them about hiring disabled workers and integrating them into the workplace.

- **Promoting partner co-location -** The one-stop enabled the Adult Basic Education program to co-locate by allowing it to contribute instructors and GED classes instead of paying rent.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services -** The Kansas City one-stop has a staff person specifically designated to researching grant opportunities and writing grant applications. Through pursuing grant opportunities, the center has been able to raise about $14 million, which represents two-thirds of its total budget in program year 2002. These additional funds enable the one-stop staff to address local workforce concerns and provide services, such as internship opportunities in high-tech industries for at-risk youth.

Kenosha, Wisconsin

Kenosha County Job Center
8600 Sheridan Road
Kenosha, WI 53143

- **Streamlining services through consolidated and case management -** Case files for economic support, case management, job placement, and childcare services are shared on a networked computer system that staff from these four programs can access. Staff from these programs collectively develop an action plan for their customers and share an electronic calendar for scheduling customers' appointments and workshops.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers -** The one-stop collaborates with local community colleges and the Kenosha Area Business Alliance, an economic development association, to identify labor and skills shortages in local industry. These partnerships have not only helped employers with human resources assistance--such as recruitment, networking, and marketing--but they have also assisted employers with assessment and training of new and existing employees. For example, the one-stop's relationship with a local community college led to the development of a Certified Nursing Assistant course taught in Spanish.

- **Promoting partner collaboration -** Regular functional team meetings allow partners to share ideas, work together to solve problems, and develop strategies to improve services. For example, through functional teams, partners were able to establish an on-site childcare center.

- **Promoting partner co-location -** Goodwill Industries, a one-stop partner, pays rent for smaller partners that cannot afford to pay rent on their own to expand services for job seekers.

Killeen, Texas

Central Texas Workforce Center
300 Cheyenne
Killeen, TX 76541

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services** - To serve customers with transportation challenges, staff in Killeen partner with the libraries in rural areas to provide computer access to one-stop resume writing and job search services. They also provide an on-line TANF orientation, so that customers can access it remotely. Additionally, when one-stop center staff refer job seekers to one of their many partners, the staff personally introduce the job seeker to the referred program staff to prevent job seekers from getting lost between programs.

- **Developing optional partnerships to expand services** - The one-stop improved job seeker access to services by forming relationships with optional partners such as TANF. One-stop staff told us that co-location with TANF services helps welfare recipients address barriers to employment by facilitating easier access to services, such as housing assistance and employment and training programs.

- **Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers** - The one-stop has specialized staff serving not only as the central contact for receiving calls and requests from employers but also as the primary source for identifying job openings available through employers in the community.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs** - In collaboration with local community colleges and the Chamber of Commerce, the one-stop created a Business Resource Center that offers services specifically for entrepreneurs and new businesses, including tax assistance and workshops on starting or improving a business.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services** - The one-stop has applied for multiple transportation grants to improve access to jobs for rural job seekers. In addition, the one-stop raised $309,000 in fiscal year 2001 by renting out space to local businesses and by providing services to employers.

Pikeville, Kentucky

Pike County JobSight Center
120 South Riverfill Drive
Pikeville, KY 41501

- **Ensuring partner staff understand the range of services -** Cross-training workshops taught by partner staff educate staff about the one-stop's diverse array of services. Although partners specialize in a particular area of expertise, cross-training has improved referrals and enabled staff to better ensure that job seekers get the tools they need to become successfully employed.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs -** When eastern Kentucky encountered a labor shortage in the coal mining industry, the one-stop recruited a large pool of local applicants and created an on-the-job training program using WIA funds, which paid for half of new miners' salaries during their training period.

- **Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers -** Specific JobSight staff are dedicated to employer outreach and customizing services. These staff were able to help attract a large cabinet manufacturer to the area by offering a customized service package, including prescreening and assessment, on the job training, and a 3-day job fair.

- **Promoting partner collaboration -** When the one-stop was created, partners participated in intensive workshops and collaboratively designed a service delivery plan to reduce service duplication. In addition, partners collaboratively designed a common intake form and a service delivery flow chart.

- **Creating a shared one-stop identity -** One-stop managers told us that shared decision making was instrumental in developing a common one-stop identity and in ensuring partners' support for the one-stop system. The process of creating a shared one-stop identity in Pikeville was also supported by the adoption of a common logo and nametags, and was reinforced by a comprehensive marketing campaign.

- **Promoting partner co-location -** The local community college donated free space to the one-stop on its conveniently located campus, making it desirable for partners to relocate there.

Salt Lake City, Utah
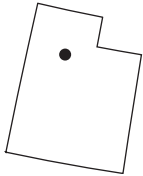
South County Employment Center
5735 S. Redwood Road
Taylorsville, UT 84123

- **Streamlining services through consolidated case management -** The caseworkers at the Salt Lake City one-stop are divided into four teams that share case management of customers. The Job Connection Team is stationed at the front desk and helps customers by doing quick assessments, referrals, UI profiling, and assisting with computer access. Caseworkers from the three Employment Teams specialize in a particular program and all caseworkers meet once a month to discuss program requirements and how to streamline services for co-enrolled customers.

- **Ensuring partner staff understand the range of services -** Department of Workforce Services and Vocational Rehabilitation caseworkers participate in frequent cross-training sessions, so they are capable of assisting co-enrolled customers. One-stop managers reported that cross–training has improved staff understanding of programs outside their area of expertise and enhanced their ability to make referrals. There is also a shadow program in which staff members shadow one another for a few hours to learn about one another's jobs and the programs they administer.

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services -** The one-stop established a Web-based job search program on which job seekers can post resumes and look for jobs. This Web site reduces customer flow, saves money, and makes it more convenient for people to look for jobs from their homes or offices.

- **Dedicated specialized staff to establish relationships with employers –** Employers have a separate one-stop center where they can conduct interviews, access labor market information, attend seminars, and use computers. The center has specialized employer outreach and business services staff that act as liaisons to employers, organize job fairs, and assist with job placements.

- **Promoting partner collaboration -** Partners created a "MOUse" committee to address Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) issues, including referrals, information systems, employer involvement, cross-training, and service accessibility. Staff from the Vocational

Rehabilitation Program in Salt Lake City told us that this committee helped to increase referrals to their program by producing flow charts of the service delivery systems of various partner programs to identify points at which referrals and staff collaboration should occur.

Santa Rosa, California

Sonoma County Job Link One-Stop Center
2245 Challenger Way
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

- **Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with industries -** In Santa Rosa, staff are dedicated to specific industries in order to better address local labor shortages.   When Santa Rosa's tourism industry was in need of more skilled workers, the one-stop worked with the local community college to ensure that job seekers were connected to certification courses in hotel management and the culinary arts. Also, the one-stop center has a Small Business Development Center, funded by the Small Business Administration, that provides consulting services to small businesses.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers -** The one-stop focuses heavily on using existing partnerships with intermediaries, such as the Economic Development Board, to market their services to employers and to utilize information gathered from employer surveys. Managers told us this partnership has helped caseworkers better understand particular industries and job market fluctuations.

- **Developing optional partnerships to expand services -** The one-stop is collaborating with CalWORKS, the state TANF program, which allows them to provide additional services, such as the employer account representatives. These representatives work with employers, the Workforce Investment Board, and caseworkers to gather and disseminate information about the labor market, particularly high-demand industries.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services -** Santa Rosa has been better equipped to receive national grants and grants from the state of California by collaborating with three other Workforce Investment Boards in the area. In addition, this collaboration has improved local labor market information and sharing of promising practices.

- **Improving one-stop operations -** Partner staff use a Funding Source Determination Worksheet to ensure that customers' services are paid for by the most appropriate grant or by a variety of funding streams to maximize funding in the long run. The funding sheet helps alleviate some cost burden on partners with tighter training budgets.

Sunnyvale, California

Connect!
420 S. Pastoria Avenue
Sunnyvale, CA 94086

- **Dedicating specialized staff to establish relationships with employers** - Connect! has dedicated staff to providing a variety of services (both free and fee-based) to meet business needs, including staffing services, such as prescreening of job applicants and on-site recruiting; transition/outplacement services to help downsizing businesses assist displaced workers; educational resources; and training, such as technical training for small business IT workers.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs -** The one-stop is co-located with a patent and trademark library that is electronically linked to the national trademark office to assist customers seeking entrepreneurial opportunities.

- **Gathering labor market information on local industries -** Connect! conducted Labor Market Information Plus (LMI+) studies of local industries to gather information on current workforce issues and challenges and predict future labor market trends.

- **Raising additional funds to expand services -** One-stop managers raised $20,000 through fee-based downsizing and training services for employers and used this money to expand the one-stop's business services.

- **Improving one-stop operations -** In order to improve its operations, Connect! conducted an assessment (Voice of the Customer Initiative) to better understand customer expectations and needs. As a result, the one-stop reorganized its operations, redefined relationships with partners, developed a new outcome budget structure, and created specialized one-stop centers for businesses, job seekers, and youth.

Vineland, New Jersey

Cumberland County One-stop
415 Landis Avenue
Vineland, NJ 08360

- **Ensuring job seekers' access to services** - By addressing customers' transportation challenges, the Cumberland County One-Stop enhanced access to training and employment opportunities for rural customers. The one-stop now provides transportation to employment sites that are difficult for customers to access, such as the Atlantic City casino industry.

- **Ensuring partner staff understand the range of services** - Program staff attend monthly meetings to educate one another about various program rules, which improves referrals and eligibility determination for customers. For example, all program staff attended training on how to assess customers' eligibility for the TANF program.

- **Tailoring services to meet employers' specific workforce needs** - When employer services staff realized the application process for tax credits was cumbersome for employers, they completed the required paperwork themselves so that employers could receive the tax credit incentives.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers** - The Cumberland County One-Stop negotiated an agreement with the local Empowerment Zone Office, requiring that new businesses use the one-stop center for recruitment before using their own private resources. This arrangement allows the one-stop to stay informed of employer needs and potential opportunities for job seekers.

- **Working with intermediaries to engage and serve employers** - The Vineland one-stop belongs to the three Chambers of Commerce in the area and attends many of their events. Business services staff make presentations about the one-stop's services at professional conferences, chamber meetings, and other local events.

Comments from the Department of Labor

U.S. Department of Labor   Assistant Secretary for
                                 Employment and Training
                                 Washington, D.C. 20210

JUN 1 1 2003

Mr. Sigurd R. Nilsen
Director
Education, Workforce and
Income Security Issues
U.S. General Accounting Office
441 G Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Nilsen:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft report entitled, <u>Workforce
Investment Act: One-Stop Centers Implemented Strategies to Strengthen Services and
Partnerships but More Research and Information Sharing is Needed</u> (GAO-03-725).

We appreciate the work of the General Accounting Office (GAO) on this report and the
acknowledgement of the progress made to date by local One-Stop Career Centers in
providing integrated services to customers, engaging the business community and
building a solid One-Stop infrastructure. We agree that it is impressive that the
Workforce Investment System has been able to integrate services in the One-Stops in
local communities in the past three years. We also agree with your recommendations.
However, we believe that other activities undertaken by the Employment and Training
Administration (ETA) in support of these three areas have not been recognized in your
report and should have been. Because of this, the recommendations appear starker
than they should as they are not mitigated by the efforts and activities of the system to
find better information through research, gauge the results of One-Stop Career Centers
through performance measurement and customer satisfaction surveys, or share
promising practices through other avenues.

Our specific comments are provided below:

Now on p. 29.

Page 27 – "Labor's studies largely take a program-by-program approach…" ETA is
proposing several cross-program evaluations in its multi-year evaluation strategy,
subject to evaluation funding levels. In addition, ETA is proposing evaluations of
services to target groups such as services to Limited English Proficient (LEP) customers
regardless of what "program" provides the services, again subject to evaluation funding
levels. As you know, OMB and Congress have been very interested in evaluations of

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Now on p. 32.

specific programs consistent with the separate funding streams in the current legislation. Our response is not to discontinue program evaluation but to expand our evaluation strategy to encompass evaluations across the One-Stop system and across target groups.

Page 28 – "little is currently known about ... customer outcomes and satisfaction." ETA agrees that we need better information to assess the impact of integrated services on customer outcomes and satisfaction. However, for the past three years, as required by WIA, we have collected performance information including customer satisfaction data from jobseekers and employers who use the One-Stop delivery system. Although this does not provide details regarding the impact of the One-Stop model, it does provide good overall information on the results of the One-Stop experience and the satisfaction of our customers. The report ignores the fact that these data exist in all local workforce investment areas. The report should be changed to reflect the existence of these data.

Page 31 – "When we attempted to use the Web site, we found that useful information on the site was difficult to access." We have undertaken a strategic review of our Web sites. The promising practices Web site, and its holdings and functionality, are a part of this review which will be completed this summer. Among other things, this review is intended to identify and implement ways to improve customer access to Web site information.

Page 32 – "While these conferences and forums provide a venue for One-Stop managers to talk with one another...they do not take place frequently and participation is limited to those who can physically take part." ETA hosts regular regional meetings for state administrators and funds (or has funded) a number of efforts that produce, recognize and share promising practices with the workforce investment system. The report leaves the wrong impression that little effort and few activities have been undertaken by ETA to identify and share promising practices. While we agree with the recommendation, we believe this misleading impression should be corrected.

Page 32 - "While these strategies show promise...there is no clear understanding of whether these integrated service delivery approaches are actually increasing job seeker and employer satisfaction or outcomes...." WIA is an outcomes-based system. ETA recognizes that we need additional data and research to determine whether the integrated service delivery is more effective and responsive to the needs of our customers. However, the report should recognize all of the activities and efforts which have been undertaken to measure both customer satisfaction and program outcomes, as well as our plan to implement common performance measures.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment. If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact me at (202) 693-2700 or Grace Kilbane at (202) 693-3980.

Sincerely,

Emily Stover DeRocco

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