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# **Workforce System One-Stop Services for Public Assistance and Other Low-Income Populations**

## **Lessons Learned in Selected States**

*By David J. Wright and Lisa M. Montiel*

**A Report to the U.S. Department of Labor,  
Employment and Training Administration  
U.S. DOL # MI-17623-08-60**

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Arm of the State University  
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# Contents

- Introduction . . . . . 1**
- I. Overview Of WIA, One-Stop Career Centers,  
and TANF Workforce Services . . . . . 5**
- II. Case Study Sites. . . . . 8**
  - A. California . . . . . 8**
    - i. Sacramento. . . . . 10
      - a. Client Flow . . . . . 11
      - b. Services On-Site . . . . . 12
      - c. Services for External Referral. . . . . 12
      - d. Partners . . . . . 12
      - e. TANF Resources . . . . . 13
      - f. Agency Communication and Reporting. . . . . 14
      - g. Business Perception . . . . . 14
    - ii. Modesto . . . . . 15
      - a. Client Flow . . . . . 16
      - b. Agency Communication and Reporting. . . . . 17
      - c. Services On-Site . . . . . 17
      - d. Services for External Referral. . . . . 18
      - e. Partners . . . . . 18
      - f. Business Perception . . . . . 20
  - B. Georgia. . . . . 20**
    - i. Columbus . . . . . 23
      - a. Client Flow . . . . . 24
      - b. Services On-Site . . . . . 25
      - c. Services for External Referral. . . . . 26
      - d. Agency Communication and Reporting. . . . . 26
      - e. Partners . . . . . 26
      - f. Business Perceptions. . . . . 28
    - ii. Macon. . . . . 29
      - a. Client Flow . . . . . 30
      - b. Services On-Site . . . . . 30
      - c. Services for External Referral. . . . . 31
      - d. Partners . . . . . 31
      - e. Agency Communication and Reporting. . . . . 32
      - f. Business Perceptions. . . . . 34
  - C. Missouri . . . . . 35**
    - i. City of St. Louis . . . . . 38
      - a. Client Flow . . . . . 39

**Workforce  
System One-Stop  
Services for  
Public Assistance  
and Other  
Low-Income  
Populations**

**Lessons Learned in  
Selected States**

April 2010

- b. Case Management . . . . . 39
- c. Services On-Site . . . . . 40
- d. Partners . . . . . 40
- e. Agency Communication and Reporting. . . . . 41
- f. TANF Resources . . . . . 41
- g. Business Perceptions. . . . . 42
- ii. St. Louis County . . . . . 43
  - a. Client Flow . . . . . 44
  - b. Services On-Site . . . . . 45
  - c. Partners . . . . . 46
  - d. Agency Communication and Reporting. . . . . 46
  - e. Business Perception . . . . . 47
- III. Notable Barriers and Challenges . . . . . 48**
  - A. Population Characteristics . . . . . 48
  - B. Fit of One-Stop Services . . . . . 48
  - C. Competing Cultures . . . . . 49
  - D. Performance Reporting. . . . . 49
  - E. Economic Weakness/Low Demand  
for Employees . . . . . 50
- IV. Take Aways. . . . . 51**
  - A. Demographics Matter . . . . . 51
  - B. State Encouragement in Local WIA/TANF  
Coordination Can Be Helpful . . . . . 51
  - C. A History of Local Relationships Can Make  
New Ones Easier to Build . . . . . 53
  - D. Effective, Community-Based Contractors  
Can Translate to Effective Services . . . . . 53
  - E. Targeting Entry-Level Jobs in Growing  
Fields of Employment Is Key . . . . . 54
  - F. Board Vision and Buy-In Is Crucial  
Internally and Externally. . . . . 55
  - G. Location and Technology Can Be  
Important Aids for Service Coordination . . . . . 55
- Appendix A: Individuals Interviewed for  
Field Case Studies . . . . . 57**
- Endnotes. . . . . 60**

## Tables

Table 1. WIA Activities/Services Utilized at Hillsdale Career Center, 2008-2009 . . . . .	13
Table 2. Education Level of WIA Clients at Modesto Career Center, 2008-2009 . . . . .	19
Table 3. Reasons for Exit From WIA Services at Modesto Career Center, 2008-2009 . . . . .	20
Table 4. Age of Columbus Career Center Adults After Departure From WIA, 2004-2008 . . . . .	27
Table 5. Education Level of Columbus Career Center Adults After Departure From WIA, 2004-2008 . . . . .	28
Table 6. Employment Status of Columbus Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	28
Table 7. Average Quarterly Wages of Columbus Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	28
Table 8. Employment Status and Average Quarterly Wages of Columbus Career Center TANF/ Low-Income Youth After Leaving WIA Youth Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	28
Table 9. Age of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	33
Table 10. Employment Status and Average Quarterly Wages of Macon Career Center TANF/ Low-Income Youth After Leaving WIA Youth Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	33
Table 11. Employment Status of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	34
Table 12. Average Quarterly Wages of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	34
Table 13. Education Level of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008 . . . . .	34
Table 14. Age of TANF Clients Served at the SLATE Career Center . . . . .	38
Table 15. Educational Attainment of TANF Clients Served at the SLATE One-Stop Career Center . . . . .	38

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#### **Introduction**

In 1996, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program which, among other provisions, imposed time limits on receipt of cash assistance and strengthened mandates for clients to work or engage in work-related activities. TANF gives states considerable flexibility in determining program eligibility and grant size, but it emphasizes placement of cash assistance recipients in work and work-related activities, such as job search, work experience programs, and training. Education and training are allowable activities, but within limits. Most states have adopted a work-first or "labor force attachment" philosophy for their TANF programs. Reauthorization of TANF through the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 has generally had the effect of tightening work requirements, underscoring this work-first philosophy.

In 1998, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) consolidated multiple employment-related public programs into a unified system through which comprehensive labor market information, job training, and job-finding assistance could be provided in "One-Stop" service centers. WIA also mandates a sequencing of services that preserves and prioritizes the use of training resources; where funds are insufficient to serve all citizens, public assistance recipients and other low-income citizens have priority for services.

WIA and TANF share areas of commonality in their purposes, services, and participants. However, TANF is a permitted but not federally mandated partner in the WIA One-Stop Career Center system. Nor are there federal requirements that TANF workforce services take place within or through the WIA One-Stop Career Center system. The shape of WIA/TANF relationships is consequently a matter of state and local discretion.

TANF's relationship to WIA and One-Stop Career Centers varies greatly across and within states, depending on state/local program goals, management styles, traditions, needs, and cultures. But research on intersections of TANF and Workforce Investment Act services is limited. Recent studies have highlighted the need for better relations between workforce and welfare agencies, and have called for additional research on the subject.

With research support from the Employment and Training Administration, the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government has undertaken a study of exemplary practices in serving TANF and other low-income populations through WIA One-Stop Career Centers. The Institute gathered and analyzed information on the experiences of key stakeholders in settings with a successful track record of serving TANF and other low-income populations through One-Stop Career Centers, where such experience is the result of local decisions rather than centralized state services or state-mandated program alignments. These environments include: (1) county-administered TANF with One-Stop Career Centers, or (2) settings with state-administered but decentralized TANF, where effort results from local coordination between local office of state agency and local One-Stop Career Centers rather than from state-level policy and programmatic decision to consolidate/integrate/align TANF and WIA.

Purposefully selected sites in three states were researched, with information gathered through on-site observation and interviews with key informants, including senior administrative and program management at the selected One-Stop Career Centers, the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), as well as contacts with the employment and social service agencies at the state and county levels. The study also included an analysis of administrative data on caseloads, types of services, and performance indicators.

The Rockefeller Institute team analyzed recent research reports on WIA One-Stop Career Centers, TANF implementation, and service integration to establish a list of states and local areas studied to-date. In addition to Employment and Training Administration (ETA) officials, the Institute team consulted with experts at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation), the National Association of State Workforce Agencies, the American Public Human Services Association, the National Governor's Association, the National Conference of State Legislatures, and the National Association of Counties.

Institute researchers, in consultation with ETA staff, determined to look for areas located in states with decentralized control of WIA and welfare system within the states. Rockefeller staff employed information gathered from consultation with experts, published sources, and from USDHHS and from the ETA to identify states with low levels of state centralized control.

Selection of sites was also to be based on consideration of a number of demographic, geographic, economic, and administrative factors. To obtain a clearer picture of the Workforce Investment Areas' demographics, Institute staff examined county level data from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) on unemployment rates, poverty rates, and rates of educational achievement, with an interest in identifying urban settings with high frequencies of unemployment, people living below the



poverty level, and people over the age of 25 without a high school diploma. Selection criteria also turned in part on whether the Workforce Investment Area is located in a county that has a population of at least 100,000 and contained a U.S. Census defined “urban area.”

Rockefeller Institute staff utilized the most recent data from U.S. Department of Labor’s Federal Research and Evaluation Database (FRED) to identify Workforce Investment Areas that serve a high proportion of welfare clients. According to data from FRED, in 2007 the national average of WIA adults who entered employment and were TANF recipients was 9.5 percent. The national average of WIA adults who entered employment and received welfare other than TANF was also 9.5 percent. Therefore, the team focused site selection on WIA areas that had over 9.5 percent of the adult population served receiving TANF and given the interest in areas that are exemplary, an above national average (74 percent) criterion of adults entering employment rate.

Believing that the administrative data collected by the ADARE project (Administrative Data Research and Evaluation Alliance) would be a valuable resource for this study, the team concentrated on Workforce Investment Areas within the nine states included in the ADARE alliance. Eliminating states with high levels of state control over the WIA and/or TANF systems, and those Workforce Investment Areas that do not meet the demographic and performance criteria described above, the team narrowed down to three states that were most suitable for site selection: California, Georgia, and Missouri.

Several logistical factors were also considered. To facilitate access to the One-Stop Career Centers, the team looked for sites accessible to a major airport. In addition, to maximize our ability to conduct as many on-site interviews as possible, we looked for settings that also offered adjacent Workforce Investment Areas (within a two-hour drive) that were also of interest to this study.

The team also sought to take into account average earnings of TANF clients placed in employment through WIA One-Stop Career Centers, along with the share and rate of TANF clients among adults who entered employment. The Ad Hoc Analysis feature of FRED was used to create crosstabs of TANF and Adult Average Earnings Change. However, at the level of the Local Workforce Areas, most of the cells of the crosstab contain five or fewer customers, so the data are suppressed. Unable to look at only TANF customers in FRED, the team instead looked at average earnings for all customers of the Local Workforce Areas. Along with placement rates and average wages, the team in consultation with ETA staff also took cost of living into consideration, using a comparison of average “fair market rents” for the nation and for particular sites as a benchmark when also considering such comparisons for average wages.

This process of data analysis and consultation led to the selection of six study sites as leading candidates for field research,

two each in California, Georgia, and Missouri. Topics covered during the field interviews include the history of the Career Centers serving low-income/TANF populations, the implementation of serving TANF clients, and lessons learned from focusing on TANF populations. As part of the field study, Rockefeller Institute staff also toured the Career Center facilities.

## I. Overview of WIA, One-Stop Career Centers, and TANF Workforce Services

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 eliminated the Aid for Families with Dependent Children open-ended entitlement and replaced it with a block grant for states to provide Temporary Assistance to Needy Families; time-limited cash assistance for needy families, with work requirements for most recipients. States are permitted to use their TANF funding in any manner reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of TANF. These purposes are: to provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes; to reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; to prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. States have broad flexibility to determine eligibility, method of assistance, and benefit levels. Federal TANF dollars and state dollars that count toward the maintenance of effort must be spent on families that include a child or expectant mother and cannot be provided to families who have already received assistance under the programs for a cumulative total of 60 months. States can set time limits shorter than five years if they so choose.

In response to PRWORA, states have generally implemented work-first systems that rely heavily on processes as signals, work support services, and unsubsidized employment. State welfare systems have added a new focus on the work and independence goals of the federal TANF block grant in their policies, institutions, spending patterns, and administrative practices. The importance of work is communicated through new requirements at the “front door” of welfare systems, such as requirements to register with workforce development or labor bureaucracies; to attend orientations that highlight work and independence goals; to contact employers or otherwise search for work, sometimes before assistance is provided; and to comply with other requirements, such as child support enforcement. Rather than conducting initial assessments of employability and service needs, most states require most applicants to seek work immediately. States offer intensive services to those who fail to find work. The importance of work is thus signaled by pushing most adults into the labor market ... and then using the market to sort out which cases are problematic and which are not.<sup>1</sup>

One of the most widely used strategies for changing the purposes and signals of welfare has been to give employment bureaucracies greater control over program operations. Employment bureaucracies have the expertise, the data resources, and the institutional missions, or so it is argued, for getting people jobs, assessing skills, providing job readiness training, working with employers, setting up work experience opportunities, and finding and overseeing local job service contractors: In short, the functions needed to move people into the workforce. Close

connections between employment bureaucracies and welfare agencies also change the institutional character of welfare. By locating welfare offices in job centers, states can signal that people can and should get a job and that welfare is part of a service system for job seekers, rather than a single program unto itself. The overall situation now is one in which employment, labor, or workforce development agencies are deeply involved in the effort to find jobs for TANF-eligible families.<sup>2</sup>

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is based on seven guiding principles to be adopted by state and local workforce development systems:<sup>3</sup>

- *Streamlined services.* Integrating multiple employment and training programs at the “street level” through the One-Stop Career Center delivery system to simplify and expand access to services for job seekers and employers.
- *Individual empowerment.* Empowering individuals to obtain the services and skills they need to enhance their employment opportunities through Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), which enable eligible participants to choose the qualified training program that best meets their needs. The development of “consumer reports,” containing information for each training provider, allows individuals to make informed training choices.
- *Universal access.* Granting access to every individual through the One-Stop Career Center delivery system to core employment-related services. Customers can obtain job search assistance as well as labor market information about job vacancies, the skills needed for occupations in demand, wages paid, and other relevant employment trends in the local, regional, and national economy.
- *Increased accountability.* Holding states, localities, and training providers accountable for their performance.
- *A strengthened role for the local private sector.* Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are business-led “boards of directors” for the local areas.
- *Enhanced state and local flexibility.* Giving states and localities the flexibility to build on existing reforms to implement innovative and comprehensive workforce investment systems. Through such mechanisms as unified planning, waivers, and Work-Flex, states and their local partners have the flexibility to tailor delivery systems to meet the particular needs of individual communities.
- *Improved youth programs.* Linking youth programs more closely to local labor market needs and the community as a whole, and providing a strong connection between academic and occupational learning. In addition, traditional employment and training services are augmented by an array of youth development activities.

WIA institutionalized One-Stop Career Centers as the cornerstones of the local workforce delivery system. One-Stop Career Centers were to be the “front-end” of the local workforce system, with partners required to contribute a portion of their funds to support the One-Stop Career Centers’ infrastructures. WIA also established a sequencing of job seekers’ services from core to intensive to training services. WIA provided for universal eligibility; structured to provide core services to all participants in the labor market. Training funds, however, are reserved for low-income individuals if there are insufficient funds to serve all customers.

State and local reforms post TANF and WIA can be characterized broadly as structural and procedural. Structural changes include changes in the agencies administering human service programs, an increase in the number and types of service providers, and blending of funding streams. Procedural changes include changes in client-related processes, such as collocation of multiple programs in “One-Stop” offices, common client intake, assessment, and case management processes, integration of staff from multiple agencies into teams, and integration of client data in shared information systems. The goal of these changes, either explicitly or implicitly, is to create a more comprehensive and responsive system.

Collocation with other program managers, staff, and service providers improves formal and informal communications, facilitates client-related processes by simplifying access to programs and services, and creates bonds between staff from different organizations. Working together helps staff understand how different programs contribute to larger community goals. One of the advantages of collocation is the ease with which staff from multiple agencies can work together. In many locations, managers have taken the opportunity to move beyond collocation to create multidisciplinary teams. Staff members from multiple programs and agencies meet regularly to review cases and develop common case plans. The benefits of collocation and service integration include better communication, both formal and informal; improved staff morale; a greater appreciation of the role of each program in achieving goals and helping families; the ability to more easily target multiple resources on community needs; and better results for clients.<sup>4</sup>

The ability to fund services inherent in the TANF statute and regulations gives local managers the flexibility to combine TANF and other funds in order to simplify administration and to provide services that might otherwise be unavailable if each funding stream had to be segregated. The U. S. General Accounting Office (since renamed the Government Accountability Office), in a 2002 study of the level of coordination between Workforce Investment Act and TANF programs, reported that “Many state and local officials hailed the flexibility in both the WIA and TANF programs as an important step in helping them to design their service delivery systems and to coordinate services where appropriate.”<sup>5</sup>

## II. Case Study Sites

### A. California

The Welfare to Work Division of the California Department of Social Services (DSS) provides oversight of CalWORKs, California's version of the TANF program. CalWORKs serves all 58 counties in the state and is operated locally by county welfare departments that determine eligibility of applicants and provide the financial assistance for needy families.

Established in 1939, the California Employment Development Department's mission is to provide an economic line of defense against the effects of unemployment, one of which is through administration of the Workforce Investment Act. Services for adults and laid-off workers are provided through local One-Stop Career Centers including training and education, employer assistance, and employment services.

A State Workforce Investment Board is appointed by the governor to assist in designing a statewide plan and establishing appropriate program policy. The WIB consists of representatives from businesses, labor organizations, educational institutions, and community organizations. There are 49 Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) that are designated by the governor based on geographic location, population, and commonality of labor market areas. Each LWIA appoints a local WIB to develop and submit a localized plan to the state, appoint local One-Stop Career Center operators, and select eligible organizations to provide services. State planners have identified six industry clusters of particular importance to the current and future performance of California's economy — biosciences (pharmaceutical firms, medical laboratory research, and biomedical instrument manufacturing), computers and semiconductors, information technology, telecommunications (communication services and equipment manufacturing), aerospace, and agriculture.<sup>6</sup>

As of 2006, there were 131 CalWORKS programs/staff colocated within a total of 162 comprehensive One-Stop Career Centers. Workforce Investment activities are under California's Employment Development Department (EDD). While CalWORKs is not a mandatory partner in the One-Stop Career Center system, it is a strongly encouraged, voluntary partner. With the passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act in 1996, DSS required TANF/CalWORKs to partner with Welfare-to-Work stakeholders in their local written plans.

The general procedure for a work-eligible TANF recipient is that once the individual has applied for cash assistance, they are referred to a Welfare-to-Work orientation operated by the county Health and Human Services Agency. At the orientation, the TANF applicant is informed of their rights and responsibilities for work participation, including their right to child care subsidies and work-related transportation assistance. Participants are given a Welfare-to-Work Handbook that describes the program's

activities, services, and rules. After the orientation, the TANF applicant is referred to a three-week job search club and then has an additional three weeks to find a job. It is at this point that the county Health and Human Services Agency will refer the individual to a One-Stop Career Center for assistance in their job search. If they still have no job after six weeks, they have a Welfare-to-Work assessment. The assessment includes an employment specialist and a skills test. If they are still not able to become employed, they may be placed in subsidized employment.

Staff members in California's DSS acknowledge that One-Stop Career Centers might not want to serve TANF clients since they are more intensive cases. This recognition led to development and implementation of a new Learning Labs initiative, where emphasis is placed on assessing and training all work-ready applicants for jobs that are available in the region. Learning Labs refer to a service integration model, through which the Local Workforce Investment Area, the local Job Service, the California Workforce Investment Board, and the state Employment Development Department all work together to move individual clients from intake at the One-Stop Career Center to assessments, and then employability status in a skill relevant to the local economy. Learning Labs have a common pool of coenrolled customers, a common set of services available to all customers, shared staffing, and common performance measures. They are called Learning Labs because California officials hope through the experience to learn what the outcomes and effects are of a service integration model, in varied settings. Design and development of the effort began in 2006, growing out of activities to address the need for improved coordination of the local workforce systems. By 2008, Learning Labs were active in 12 Local Workforce Investment Areas, including Sacramento. The state's role is to issue integrated service delivery policy that is specific enough to offer meaningful guidance yet broad enough to permit the Local Workforce Areas to plan and implement their own locally tailored strategies for integrated service delivery. These service approaches are tested in the Learning Labs.

State-level structures and policy also affect local information-sharing that undergirds workforce services for TANF populations in One-Stop Career Center settings. EDD's software is called SMARTware and DSS uses CalWin. The DSS and EDD databases are not linked at the state level. In fact, DSS's own internal databases are not linked. However, the state agencies allow the counties a degree of flexibility if they want to integrate at the county level. County DSS managers are often members of the WIA boards in California.

In addition to interviews with state departmental officials, the project team conducted site visits to four local areas in California. These included the Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA)/Sacramento Works main office, Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center operated by Sacramento Works,

Stanislaus County Community Services Agency/StanWORKS in Modesto, and Modesto One-Stop Career Center operated by Alliance WorkNet.

### i. Sacramento

Sacramento County boasts a population of 1,424,415 with a labor force of 693,400 and an unemployment rate of 12.3 percent.<sup>7</sup> As of the first quarter of 2009, the mean annual wage for the county was \$47,587.<sup>8</sup> The 2008 Occupational Employment Statistics survey estimates the largest areas of employment to be office and administrative support; sales and related fields; food preparation and serving; and education, training, and library occupations. The California Employment Development Department projects the largest gain in employment through 2016 is expected to occur in the government sector with the addition of over 45,000 jobs, followed by professional and business services (23,300); education, health care, and social assistance (22,000); and leisure and hospitality (18,700).<sup>9</sup>

In Sacramento County, the Department of Economic Development has attempted to target and attract industries and businesses that would contribute to the diversification and stabilization of the local economy. The ultimate goal involves encouraging a mix of large and small businesses with a significant numbers of jobs and substantial public revenues. SETA – a joint-powers agency of the city and county of Sacramento – and Sacramento Works, Inc. – the local 41-member Workforce Investment Board charged with providing policy, planning, and oversight for local workforce development initiatives – have identified Critical Occupational Clusters for 2009-10.<sup>10</sup> Included are nine occupational clusters: administrative and support services; architecture and engineering construction; health care and support services; human services; information technology; installation, maintenance, and repair (occupations involved in restoring machinery equipment); tourism and hospitality; and transportation and production (manufacturing and/or production of

goods, as well as the manufacturing of industrial machinery, recycling, and green energy manufacturing efforts). Sacramento Works has One-Stop Career Centers with specific staff devoted to assisting individuals interested in health care careers.

Sacramento Works is the operator of twelve One-Stop Career Centers within the city/county consortium WIB. Sacramento city and county joined to form SETA, which functions as the local WIB. All, but one, of the twelve one-stops are full service, comprehensive Career Centers. In their local WIA plan, SETA reports that TANF case loads are highly concentrated in downtown, South Sacramento, Oak Park, Meadowview, North Sacramento, and Rancho Cordova. The Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center was identified as a location serving a high number of TANF clients.



**Sacramento Works Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center**



The information in the U.S. Department of Labor's Federal Research and Evaluation Database (FRED) describes the Sacramento County WIB serving an average of 31.6 percent TANF clients in 2007. This is significantly higher than the national average of 9.5 percent. The adults entering employment rate of those served within the Sacramento County WIB is 79.4 percent — also higher than the national average. Unemployment, poverty, and education measures in Sacramento County are close to the national averages, but are much higher in the city of Sacramento, where the One-Stop Career Centers we would study are located. Within the city of Sacramento, the unemployment rate is 8.6 percent, the proportion of adults over the age of 25 without a high school diploma is 19.5 percent, and the poverty rate is 15.4 percent.

TANF clients differ from other customers served at One-Stop Career Centers in Sacramento in several respects. At the Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center where Rockefeller Institute staff conducted a site visit, TANF customers are more likely to be young and have less education. Almost three-quarters of TANF clients who used WIA services are under the age of 35, compared to 44 percent of the total customers. Over 18 percent of TANF clients who left the WIA program have less than a high school education versus 12.6 percent of all customers who left the WIA program. Almost 23 percent of all clients who left the WIA program have some college, but only 15.7 of TANF clients leaving the WIA system have some college.

#### **a. Client Flow**

Once an individual has applied for cash assistance at a county Department of Human Assistance (DHA) office and they have attended a Welfare-to-Work orientation, they are referred to a One-Stop Career Center to attend a job club or to conduct a job search. Over 20 percent of the clients at Sacramento Works' Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center are TANF recipients. If an individual walks in to a One-Stop Career Center and is found to be in need of TANF services, they are referred to a DHA office to apply for TANF. At the One-Stop Career Center, an employment specialist assesses new customers' employment skills utilizing various measurement tools such as WorkKeys, Quick Guide Skill Review (measure of reading and math levels), and Job Readiness Assessment. If a TANF recipient is determined to be ready for employment, they may receive on-the-job training opportunities and/or TANF Emergency Contingency Fund (ECF) subsidized employment. If the TANF recipient is not job ready, they attend a job club to learn soft or personal skills and have opportunities to enter adult education programs, technical training, computer skills classes, job coaching, and résumé preparation assistance.



**Resource Room at Sacramento Works Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center**



**Workshop at Sacramento Works Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center**



**Clothes Closet at Sacramento Works Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center**

#### **b. Services On-Site**

Anyone, including TANF recipients, coming into a Sacramento Works One-Stop Career Center can review job announcements; get assistance with preparing a résumé; complete a course for a typing certificate; self-directed software tutorials/training; and have access to computers, telephones, faxes, copiers, and reference materials. Sacramento Works offers apprenticeship opportunities, career assessments, case management services, job coaching/career counseling, and referrals to other service organizations. Workshops are available on dressing professionally (there is an on-site clothes closet at the Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center), time management, record expungement, typing skills, financial literacy, and soft skills. The only on-site service that is only for TANF recipients is subsidized employment/on-the-job training.

There are, however, certain WIA services at the One-Stop Career Center that TANF clients use more often than the total population being served (see Table 1 on the next page). Among the intensive WIA services, TANF clients at Hillsdale are more likely than the total served population to participate in work/entry employment experiences and short term prevocational skills.

#### **c. Services for External Referral**

All customers may receive referrals for other services that are not provided on-site. Most of these referrals are provided by representatives of the organizations that are located on-site at the One-Stop Career Centers. Customers are referred to their local school districts for GED classes, English as a Second Language classes, and other vocational programs. Sacramento Works refers

customers to area community colleges for those wanting to acquire a certificate in certain vocational training. Eligible youth are referred to the Sacramento Job Corps Center for job corps service.

#### **d. Partners**

When welfare reform began, there was a lot of planning involved in Sacramento County with the resulting system being a collaborative one. Sacramento Works One-Stop Career Centers partner with Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (which administers welfare programs), Sacramento County Department of Health and Human Services, State Departments of Rehabilitation and Employment Development, the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency, the Sacramento County

**Table 1. WIA Activities/Services Utilized at Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center, 2008-2009**

WIA Activities/Services	TANF	TOTAL
Followup Services Counseling (core)	0.9%	2.0%
Staff Assisted Workshops/Job Clubs (core)	46.3%	36.4%
Other Core Services (core)	100.0%	99.8%
Case Management for Participants (intensive)	52.8%	99.8%
Comprehensive Assessments (intensive)	26.9%	28.5%
Development of Individual Work Plan (intensive)	100.0%	99.2%
Group Counseling (intensive)	0.0%	4.0%
Work/Entry Employment Experience (intensive)	4.6%	0.2%
Individual Counseling and Career Planning (intensive)	4.6%	2.4%
Short Term Prevocational Skills (intensive)	23.1%	16.4%
Other Intensive Services (intensive)	61.1%	69.6%
Non-WIA Funded Intensive	28.7%	10.9%
Co-Enrolled Intensive Svcs	0.0%	6.9%
Occupational Skills Training (training)	5.6%	8.9%
On-The-Job Training (training)	0.9%	0.4%
Skill Upgrading and Retraining (training)	0.0%	0.2%
Non-WIA Funded Training Services	0.9%	3.0%
Supportive Services	1.9%	6.7%

*Note: Categories of activities/services were defined by SETA.*

Office of Education, five school districts, Los Rios Community College District, local Chambers of Commerce, community-based organizations, and economic development organizations. Staff members from partnering agencies are usually colocated at each of the Career Centers. The Employment Development Department (EDD) and Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance (DHA) staff members are colocated at five of the One-Stop Career Centers, including Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center, which we visited. In addition to SETA, DHA, and EDD, other partners colocated at the Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center include:

- Business Information Center
- Voluntary Legal Services of California
- American Association of Retired Persons
- Department of Health and Human Services
- Mayor’s Commission on Health
- Grant Joint Unified School District
- Greater Sacramento Urban League
- Counselors to America’s Small Business
- Small Business Administration
- Federal Technology Center
- Small Business Development Center
- Opening Doors
- San Juan Unified School District

**e. TANF Resources**

The local welfare and employment agencies do not compete against each other for funds; but instead they share funds for common goals. In the past few years, SETA received almost \$1 million in CalWORKs (California’s TANF program) funding from the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance for job readiness classes for welfare recipients. SETA also coordinates its Community Services Block Grant funded antipoverty services with the One-Stop Career Center services.

**f. Agency Communication and Reporting**

Many policies and procedures are developed at the One-Stop level – a “bottom up” approach. What began as colocation of DHA and SETA staff now operates more like integration (though DHA staff members are still DHA staff and SETA staff are still SETA staff). Though staff members reported to us that the initial merging was difficult, now a visitor cannot differentiate which staff is with which agency because they all work together at the One-Stop Career Centers.

Both DHA and EDD staff have access to the other’s database so referrals and follow-up are facilitated. SETA provides reports to DHA using data matches so that DHA can report the hours spent on activities for CalWORKs participation rates. As part of the Learning Lab’s Integrated Service Delivery Plan, EDD’s SMARTware application filled out for a customer applying for WIA services was streamlined to a one-page document, the follow-up process to determine eligibility was eliminated, and case management was replaced with job coaching.

Other collaborations between SETA and DHA include providing free tax preparation for CalWORKs families, and consultations on funding proposals, funding recommendations, performance evaluations, and plans.

**g. Business Perception**

Leadership of the WIB reports that much of the success in Sacramento Works is to be attributed to the organization’s workers who are described as having clear goals, being caring individuals, and doing whatever it takes to assist customers. The WIB chair describes a collaborative spirit among the stakeholders for the common goal of assisting people become self-sufficient. The One-Stop Career Center operator’s leadership focuses on “helping people find more than a job.” They emphasize that they want their customers to be able to improve and advance in their employment through education, vocational training, and/or promotion opportunities. The WIB board is active in conducting employer outreach and focus groups to find out where the jobs are. Board members use their position in the business world to do outreach for Sacramento Works. Even in the current economic environment, perhaps especially when times are so tight, it is more efficient for an employer to call Sacramento Works to fill job vacancies rather than cull through thousands of résumés. The customers going through Sacramento Works One-Stop Career Center are trained so they have an advantage over an applicant not going through the One-Stop Career Center system. And the business gets a trained employee. In the end, as WIB officials emphasize in their outreach to employers, businesses using the One-Stop Career Center system save money.

Sacramento Works staff members report an increase in the number of people coming into their One-Stop Career Centers who are receiving cash assistance. Overall, the 12 Sacramento Works One-Stop Career Centers had a 9 percent increase in the number

of customers served from 2007/2008 to 2008/2009. Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center had a 41 percent increase over that same period. However, with the implementation of the Learning Lab service integration model in Sacramento, WIA service delivery changed from 2007 to 2009 so that staff-assisted, intensive services and training are offered to all customers. As a result, the number of people who received intensive services at all 12 Sacramento Works One-Stop Career Centers rose from 913 in 2007/2008 to 17,451 in 2008/2009 – an increase of 1,811 percent. Just within the Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center, 88 customers were enrolled in WIA in 2007/2008 compared to 2,640 customers in 2008/2009.

## ii. Modesto

Modesto, California, is located in Stanislaus County, which had a population of 508,322 in 2008.<sup>11</sup> The state reported that in fall, 2009 the labor force for the county was 245,900, with an unemployment rate of 15.8 percent.<sup>12</sup> The mean annual wage for Stanislaus County is reported at \$40,566 for the first quarter of 2009.<sup>13</sup> Quite similar to Sacramento County, Stanislaus County's highest occupational fields are found in office and administrative support; sales and related fields; transportation and material moving; and food preparation and serving. Through 2016, the state projects an estimated 10,800 new jobs with the majority to occur in education, health care, and social assistance (3,900); professional and business services (1,600); and manufacturing (1,500).<sup>14</sup>

Stanislaus County supports a primarily agriculture-based economy with agriculture and agribusinesses making up a significant portion of its economic base. Nestled in the heart of the Great Central Valley, the rural agriculture-rich location has created a very vibrant agribusiness sector featuring food processing, agricultural-based manufacturing, and the like. The county and the Stanislaus Economic Development and Workforce Alliance – which oversees both economic development and workforce training activities in the Stanislaus River Valley, and in which all nine incorporated cities participate – have identified several target industry clusters for anticipated expansion, including: logistics, including supply chain management; entrepreneurship; regional tourism; health services; and biotech/agricultural biotech. Stanislaus County is part of the

ten-county California Partnership for San Joaquin Valley (CPSJV). This partnership is funded through the governor's office to assist in developing a demand-driven workforce investment system. The high-wage, high-growth industry clusters CPSJV is targeting are: logistics and distribution, manufacturing, agribusiness, renewable energy, and health care.

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Federal Research and Evaluation Database, in 2007, 12.5 percent of the clients



**StanWORKS Office**

served in the Stanislaus County Local Workforce Investment Area were TANF clients. The local WIA has a 77.1 percent rate of clients entering employment. The county exhibits a higher than national average rate of unemployment and poverty. Particularly significant is the 26.2 percent of adults over the age of 25 within the county that do not have a high school diploma, compared to the 15.4 percent national average. The largest urban area in Stanislaus County is Modesto. Similar to the county trend, Modesto characteristics include higher than national average levels of unemployment and poverty, and a significantly higher percent of adults without a high school diploma.



*Alliance WorkNet Modesto One-Stop Career Center*

Before TANF was authorized, there was a program in Stanislaus County called “Greater Avenues for Independence” (GAIN) that provided employment-related services to low-income individuals. With the authorization of TANF, the Stanislaus County Department of Employment and Training was created and many GAIN staff members were folded into this new organization. In 2002, the Stanislaus County Workforce Investment Board merged with the Stanislaus County Economic Development Corporation Board to create the Stanislaus Economic Development and Workforce Alliance. Stanislaus County Department of Employment and Training was a component of this alliance and in 2006 was renamed “Alliance WorkNet.” Alliance WorkNet is now a nonprofit and operates the One-Stop Career Centers in Modesto. It is still

guided by the Stanislaus Economic Development and Workforce Alliance Board.

Employment-related services are organized at the county level, as has been the case for decades. There is only one full service comprehensive One-Stop Career Center location in Modesto that is operated by the Alliance WorkNet. The Modesto One-Stop Career Center is located in the Employment Development Department facility where Alliance WorkNet staff share space and meet regularly with EDD staff. Alliance WorkNet also has a Career Resource Center in the StanWORKS office in the Community Services Agency facility (StanWORKS is the county’s welfare-to-work program). Both facilities were visited as part of this study. Plans were then under development to open another One-Stop Career Center in neighboring Patterson to better serve the local welfare-to-work population.

#### **a. Client Flow**

Individuals apply for TANF at a Community Service Agency (CSA) office, and then, if they are work-eligible, their case manager registers them for StanWORKS. If the individual is job-ready, they begin job search activities and are informed of the services (including WIA intensive services) available at the Modesto



**EDD and Alliance WorkNet at Modesto One-Stop Career Center**



**Resource Room at Modesto One-Stop Career Center**

One-Stop Career Center. The TANF client may conduct their job searches at the Career Resource Center in the StanWORKS building or at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center. If the TANF client is not job-ready, their case manager will either send them to a job club (a class to teach individuals how to search and apply for a job, how to write a résumé, and skills for interviewing), assist them in entering training/education activities, or place them in an unpaid “community services program” where they can gain work experience and possibly become an employee.

All of the WIA intensive training in that area takes place at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center, including that for TANF clients. However, the reality is that given the work-first philosophy emphasized since the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act and its reauthorization, key informants report that WIA training is almost never offered to TANF clients in Modesto. CSA provides most of the supplemental employment-related services to TANF clients such as day care assistance. There are no job clubs for TANF clients at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center. Job clubs are only offered at the StanWORKS facility. Alliance WorkNet staff at the Resource Center or staff providing Welfare-to-Work services at the StanWORKS facility may refer customers to the Modesto One-Stop Career Center if they need vocational training, if they are work ready, or they need on-the-job training. However, CSA has more of an emphasis on placing clients in subsidized employment. Most customers at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center arrive on their own volition.

#### **b. Agency Communication and Reporting**

Key informants describe a “heavy hand from above” (government, county CEO, and WIA board) for the social services and employment entities to cooperate for the common good. At the initial Welfare-to-Work orientation session, there is an Alliance WorkNet staff member present to inform participants of the employment resources available to them through Alliance WorkNet. Alliance WorkNet and CSA have access to each other’s customer eligibility database but report this does not permit active integration for case management purposes.

#### **c. Services On-Site**

The Alliance WorkNet Career Resource Center at the StanWORKS facility provides TANF clients access to computers, printers, FAX machines, copy machines, and telephones. TANF

clients can work on their résumé with staff member assistance and the software *Résumé Builder*, access employment Web sites, CalJobs (California's Internet system for linking employer job listings and job seeker résumés), register for JobMatch, view recruitment announcements from local employers, obtain information about vocational training opportunities, become certified in typing, and register for job preparation workshops.

Services for all customers, including TANF clients, at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center include a resource room with access to computers with job listings including CalJobs, register for JobMatch, access to fax machines, copy machines, printers, and telephones, résumé assistance, online job applications, workshops for résumé writing and interviewing skills, WorkKeys (job skills assessment) and Work Readiness certificates, typing tests and certifications, and intensive training. Customers can receive WIA intensive services at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center. These services include one-on-one assistance, career counseling, skill and aptitude tests, development of an individual employment plan, vocational training, and customized job searches. Customers can also apply for Unemployment Insurance in the same facility.



*Workshop at Modesto One-Stop Career Center*

**d. Services for External Referral**

Any customer, including TANF clients, at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center can receive a referral to community service providers and educational institutions for vocational training, GED classes, substance abuse issues, mental health services, and domestic violence prevention. Staff often refer customers to the Community Services Agency for further assistance in finding providers.

**e. Partners**

Among the partners of the Alliance WorkNet is the Stanislaus County Community Services Agency (CSA), which administers the TANF program and provides county social services. CSA contracts out for some services to organizations such as the Central Valley Opportunity Council,

Arbor, and Alliance WorkNet. Together, the Alliance WorkNet and the Community Services Agency operate Job Clubs at StanWORKS. These are four-week classes on job search techniques, including completing an application, creating and managing a résumé, how to seek out job opportunities, competitive interview techniques, and one-on-one coaching and job referrals. With the reauthorization of TANF, CSA is moving to a family resource center model in order to develop services within neighborhoods. The current neighborhood-based services offered by the family resource centers are focused on getting TANF clients to reconnect with CSA and/or Alliance WorkNet and to stay involved



in employment-related activities. Alliance WorkNet trains family resource center staff on how to keep clients in their job activities. In addition to CSA, Alliance WorkNet partners include:

- California Employment Development Department
- California Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Modesto City School District
- Stanislaus County Office of Education
- Yosemite Community College District
- Center for Senior Employment
- Central Valley Opportunity Center (CVOC)
- CVOC Home Energy & Winterization Assistance Programs
- Community Casa in Riverbank
- Disability Resources Agency for Independant Living
- Stanislaus Literacy Center
- Housing Authority of Stanislaus County

Some of these partners have representatives on-site as needed, but most provide services at a location separate from the Modesto One-Stop Career Center.

Even though the Modesto One-Stop Career Center does not serve many TANF clients, most individuals they serve are poor and in need. In 2008-2009, only 6 percent of the clients who received and left WIA intensive service were TANF recipients, yet 25 percent were receiving Food Stamps and over 70 percent were classified as “low-income.” In other words, there are four times as many poor (measured as those receiving food stamps) as those receiving intensive services and more than ten times the proportion classified as low-income. Eighty-four percent of the total customers that register for WIA services at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center are unemployed. However, only 35 percent of the low-income customers registering at the One-Stop Career Center are unemployed/underemployed. Low-income One-Stop Career Center clients tend to be less educated with 16.1 percent having less than a high school education versus 13.3 percent of the total One-Stop Career Center population served (see Table 2 below).

In general, when individuals exited from intensive WIA training services, it was because they had entered into unsubsidized employment. But the data provided by Alliance WorkNet indicate

there are other reasons why low-income clients departed the WIA training. Over 40 percent left because they had attained an education degree and almost one-fourth left because they were involved in other

**Table 2. Education Level of WIA Clients at Modesto One-Stop Career Center, 2008-2009**

Education	Low Income	TOTAL
Less Than High School	16.1%	13.3%
At Least High School Diploma	83.9%	86.7%

non-WIA training related activities. Table 3 below lists the reasons that clients left the WIA program at the Modesto One-Stop Career Center.

**Table 3. Reasons for Exit From WIA Services at Modesto One-Stop Career Center, 2008-2009**

Reasons for Exit	Low Income	TOTAL*
Entered Unsubsidized Employment	0.0%	73.3%
Training Related	22.1%	22.7%
Entered Military Service	0.0%	0.0%
Entered Qualified Apprenticeship Program	0.0%	9.7%
Entered Post-Secondary Education	0.0%	1.3%
Entered Advanced Training	1.0%	2.9%
Attained Recognized Certificate/Diploma/Degree	43.3%	40.6%
Attained High School Diploma/GED	0.0%	0.0%
Exits Excluded from Performance	7.4%	5.5%
Other Exits	26.3%	83.4%

*Source: Categories are defined and data provided as is by Alliance WorkNet.  
\* Totals may be more than 100% due to overlap of categories.*

**f. Business Perception**

Alliance WorkNet is guided by the Stanislaus Economic Development and Workforce Alliance Board, and it has a close relationship with the Economic Development agency. Local officials report intensive strategizing to make sure new businesses have the trained workforce they need. Alliance WorkNet also works with existing businesses that need worker skills upgraded in order to expand their businesses.

From a policy standpoint, the leadership of the Stanislaus County WIB wants Alliance WorkNet to help those who want to work but some key informants believe that many TANF clients of CSA do not want to work. The WIB does not want Alliance WorkNet to spend resources and time on customers with lots of barriers. It was reported in our interviews that substance abuse problems are high in this area and WIB officials note these are people that must overcome the substance abuse issues before the One-Stop Career Center system can help them. The area has a high demand for unskilled labor and the WIB uses a “demand driven” model, meaning that they prepare people for jobs that local businesses can provide.

Work Keys is described as a major tool in reducing the time the Modesto One-Stop Career Center spends filling positions. The WIB is hopeful that having Work Keys in the K-12 schools will help with the high percentage of students not completing high school. The leadership of WIB feels it is best to steer these students towards vocational education using the One-Stop Career Center system.

California is currently investigating ways to utilize American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds to increase subsidized employment opportunities. Officials report that the counties have the capacity to expand existing services and hope to be able to use the stimulus funds to do so. State officials emphasize the importance of the “work first” philosophy especially given the current economy, yet difficulties still exist in trying to overcome the stigma some employers attach to employing a “welfare client.”

**B. Georgia**

Georgia’s governor designated the Georgia Department of Labor as the state agency responsible for implementation of the Workforce Investment Act. The governor also appointed the State

Workforce Investment Board to help plan and develop Georgia's overall workforce system. The State Board is composed of a private sector majority with a business sector chair, and various representatives of workforce development, government, youth, labor, and human services organizations. Its mission is to bring business, labor, education, and the public sector together to develop strategies and support efforts to best meet the needs of the state's workforce and employers, thereby enhancing Georgia's competitiveness in the global economy.

In Georgia, there are 12 labor service delivery regions and 20 local service delivery areas. In each of the 20 areas there is a local Workforce Investment Board, appointed by local elected officials. Local Workforce Boards are made up of a private sector (business) majority, various human services agency representatives, parents, and other workforce-related customers and interested parties. These Boards are responsible for designing local One-Stop Workforce Systems that are employer-led and demand-driven.

Each workforce area has at least one "official" comprehensive One-Stop Career Center where various human services organizations assist employers and job seekers with their workforce needs. In Georgia, there are over 45 comprehensive WIA One-Stop Career Centers, and the Georgia Department of Labor operates 53 electronically connected local Career Centers.

The Career Centers are intended to provide individuals seeking employment with access to all the latest employment tools as well as unemployment insurance benefits assistance. Employers can find assistance in recruiting new employees through a job listing network, applicant screening, and space in the centers to conduct testing and employment interviews.

WIA requires the participation of certain partners in local workforce systems, but many systems have expanded to include a host of other organizations meeting workforce-related needs in the community. In addition to the comprehensive Career Center sites, many Georgia communities have additional locations for customers to access workforce services, often called "satellites," which may include libraries, technical colleges, welfare offices, and community-based organizations.

Georgia's TANF program is administered at the state level by the Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services. Local services are delivered through a network of county Division of Family and Children Services staff in collaboration with other local public and private agencies. A range of job placement, job preparation, and support services are available in each county office, but may vary in scope depending on local resources. All services provided are in keeping with the stated goal of reducing dependency by helping Georgia families leave the cash assistance rolls as soon as possible and by diverting applicants toward employment so they will have no need for public assistance.

After the enactment of WIA, the Georgia Department of Labor (GDOL) turned its regional offices into Career Centers. The Career Centers provide typical regional functions of state labor departments, such as Unemployment Insurance, job search, and employer assistance with labor requirements. These centers are still government offices, but some were designated by their local WIA boards as “One-Stops” where some WIA functions occur, though the One-Stop’s administration is separate from that of the colocated Department of Labor. Typically in these settings, the “front door” – customer intake – is shared, but from there, operations separate. Presently, GDOL operates 33 of the 47 One-Stop Career Centers in the state, including both Macon and Columbus Career Centers. In practice, the self-directed WIA core services are operated by the GDOL and the WIA intensive services are conducted by or contracted out by the entity serving as the One-Stop provider.

Statewide, the reported number of individuals receiving TANF benefits in Georgia is low. In fact, the average monthly number of TANF recipients in Georgia for 2008 was much lower, at 38,490 people, compared to the 50-state average of 74,996 monthly.<sup>15</sup> Georgia is one of the seven states that have a TANF lifetime limit lower than the federal guidelines (48 versus 60 months). The politically conservative tenor of the state and the views even of human service advocates have aligned to underscore the undesirability of public assistance dependency. The previous Commissioner of the Georgia human services agency, now that state’s Labor Commissioner, felt that welfare was not good enough for anyone and pushed his department to get all TANF recipients employed.

GoodWorks Intensive Services was a strategic initiative in Georgia to transition hard-to-employ TANF recipients into jobs, and it served over 6,100 TANF recipients from 2001 to 2007. While the program continues to be highlighted in promotional material, it offered active services to only 105 clients statewide as of fall 2009. Through GoodWorks, TANF funds were used to contract with the GDOL to conduct vocational rehabilitation assessments, on-the-job training at subsidized employment sites, and intensive support and follow-up through a “Personal Advisor” and a “Job Coach.” The GDOL usually contracted out these services to their partner service providers. The GDOL reports that from 2000 to February 2009, 58 percent of those individuals enrolled were placed in unsubsidized employment and, since March 2005, 88 percent of clients placed had retained employment for at least 30 days.

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) provides training internally in soft skills, such as work ethic, interviewing, and the like. But according to officials interviewed, the agency contracts out for job development services and typically pays service providers on the basis of contractual performance. Key informants reveal that in Georgia, WIA intensive services tend to be

reserved for those clients with work experience and who already have a skill set. Most TANF customers do not have work experience and/or skills, and DFCS staff report their belief that the Career Centers cannot provide the services the TANF clients need to become employed.

Georgia officials cited Georgia Work\$ (GW\$) as another program to assist low-income individuals become employed. It is a GDOL initiative for individuals on unemployment insurance. The individual receives workplace training while still collecting unemployment and, in turn, the employer receives a trial test of the individual as an employee. At the end of six weeks, the program participant receives certification for the training and consideration in being hired for a position with the employer. While in GW\$, the individual not only continues to receive Unemployment Insurance benefits, they may also receive a stipend for child care and transportation costs associated with the training.

### **i. Columbus**

The 2008 estimated population of Muscogee County stood at 186,984 with a median household income of \$41,095 (2007). The county labor force is 85,621, of which 77,790 are employed, with a 9.1 percent unemployment rate.<sup>16</sup> The largest number of workers in Muscogee County are found in the occupations of health care and social assistance; retail trade; accommodation and food services; education services; and manufacturing.<sup>17</sup> Growing industry gains for the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Investment Area, as projected through 2016 by the Georgia Department of Labor, are found in services, education, health services, and leisure and hospitality.<sup>18</sup>

Columbus, Georgia's largest employers are found at Fort Benning, the county school district, a credit card processor, an insurance company, and a regional health care system. The reported targeted industries for the area include aerospace, automotive, defense, headquarters and back office, and manufacturing.

The proportion of TANF clients to others served by the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Investment Area is more than twice the national average. Yet, it has a higher than national rate of clients served who enter employment. Muscogee County, within the Lower Chattahoochee WIA, has rates of unemployment and adults without a high school diploma that are only slightly higher than average. The county does, however, have a particular challenge of poverty, measured at 16.9 percent compared to the 13.3 percent national average. The city of Columbus is the largest urban area within Muscogee County and the Lower Chattahoochee WIA. The city characteristics follow the same trend as the county in unemployment, poverty, and educational attainment.

The poverty rate for Columbus is 15.6 percent, yet there are only about 125 TANF recipients in Muscogee County mandated to seek employment.<sup>19</sup> A better indicator of the scale of low-income individuals is probably the number of food stamp recipients. In Muscogee County there are 28,529 individuals receiving food

stamps. In the past, the region had a vibrant textile industry. However, many of the textile businesses (Fieldcrest, Russell) began closing. As a result, the area has experienced an increase in the need for job retraining services to accommodate the displaced workers.



**Columbus Career Center**

The Columbus Career Center, operated by the Georgia Department of Labor, contains the only comprehensive One-Stop site within the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Area. The local Workforce Investment Board is staffed and supported administratively by the Job Training Division of the Columbus Consolidated Government. Staff members from the city's Job Training Division work alongside staff members of the state's Department of Labor at the Career Center. The Columbus One-Stop, located within the Columbus Career Center, also has one part-time staff member from the Muscogee Division of Family and Children's Services located there to assist in initial client assessment, intake, referral, and outreach. Of note for this workforce area is the effects of the growth of nearby Ft. Benning military base. Keeping with the federal Green Jobs initiative, the Career Center staff are also focusing on

bringing in "green job" businesses and utilizing the GW\$ program to focus on training for these jobs.

**a. Client Flow**

Individuals apply for TANF at a separate location — the Muscogee County Division of Family and Children Services. However, if a TANF eligible individual should come into a Career Center, a DFCS staff member is available on-site. DCFS handles their own separate contracts for employability services for TANF clients; generally, with community-based organizations that do not use the Career Centers to assist clients in their employment-related activities. However, DCFS does refer clients to the Career Center to conduct job searches if they have work experience and marketable skills.

Most of the TANF/low-income clients served at the Columbus Career Center and One-Stop arrive there on their own, without referral. From 2004-2008, the average rate of Career Center clients who were receiving TANF was 15.7 percent. Over 85 percent of clients registered at the Career Center are low-income. Upon entering, all customers check-in at a reception desk and can utilize the computers in the front area for job-searches or résumé writing. There are staff members in the computer area to assist customers with computer programs and printing. There is a small Kiddie Corner in the computer area for customers who have children with them.

If the customer needs more than a self-service job search, the receptionist has them fill out an informational form and the customer is scheduled to meet with an employment specialist who



**Intake at Columbus Career Center**

registers the customer with the Career Center and assesses them for job skills and work experience. If needed, they are referred to the WIA intensive services unit on-site at the Career Center for job training. This unit works with long-term unemployed and hard-to-employ individuals. When the GoodWorks program was fully operational in Columbus, such individuals would attend workshops that led to an intensive job search plan. However, the GoodWorks program in Muscogee County only had the capacity to serve about eight individuals in 2007-2008. Now, the Division of Family and Children Services contracts with outside service providers for job training and education services.

Individuals receiving WIA intensive services are provided an in-depth assessment by a Career Center employment specialist, assistance with their job search, development of an individual "Customer Service Plan," individual counseling/career development, case management for training if needed, and referrals to other providers.

Common occupations for those in the WIA intensive services are customer service, computer-related jobs, health care, and green jobs. However, as discussed above, since the reduction in GoodWorks capacity, Muscogee County DFCS rather than the Career Center is the entity that contracts for TANF clients' job-training services, with providers like Spexcel and American Works.

Through a program called OASIS (Orientation, Ability and Service Identification Seminar), individuals in need of a Vocational Rehabilitation assessment due to mental health or substance abuse barriers to employment attend workshops twice a week

that includes an orientation to the Career Center services and resources. At the end of the workshops, a detailed assessment of the individual's skills and job readiness is conducted by GDOL and Vocational Rehabilitation staff. Job-ready individuals then conduct an assisted job search. Those individuals needing additional services or supports are referred to appropriate service agencies.

#### **b. Services On-Site**

The DFCS staff on-site conduct eligibility determination for the welfare-to-work program, provide information and applications for food stamps, and other relevant work programs for low-income/TANF clients. All customers of the Career Center may obtain employment information, career counseling, explore training and education opportunities, conduct job searches, get



**Resource Room at the One-Stop in the Columbus Career Center**

assistance with job placement, attend workshops, and get referrals for remedial and adult literacy and public assistance services. Workshops are provided at the Career Center on job application skills, interviewing skills, résumé preparation, personal finance management, and training/education goals. The Career Center also offers the CAPS test (Career Ability Placement Survey) and O\*Net (occupational network) assessment on a weekly basis. Other on-site services include Veterans Workforce programs, outreach programs for disabled veterans, unemployment insurance filings, vocational rehabilitation services, senior programs, outreach and admissions for Job Corps youth, and career transition services for youth leaving the Job Corps program.

**c. Services for External Referral**

Career Center customers are referred to other service providers for occupational skills training/retraining, adult education and literacy activities, senior programs, postsecondary education, work experience programs, and education programs for nursing professions.

**d. Agency Communication and Reporting**

When an individual applies for TANF, the person is directed to register at the Columbus Career Center for an employment search and/or job-readiness assessment. DFCS staff sends an alert or referral to the GDOL through the Georgia Workforce System – the state DOL Web-enabled database that integrates customer information so that Unemployment Insurance, Employment Service, and WIA staff can identify all services provided to a particular customer. WIA intensive services unit is in regular communication with the local DFCS staff, mainly through the part-time representative located on-site, and provides quarterly reports.

**e. Partners**

The One-Stop has various partners that are represented, at least on a part-time schedule, at the Columbus Career Center. Customers may meet with any of these representatives at the Career Center if they need to obtain information on their services. One-Stop partners colocated at the Columbus Career Center include:

- City of Columbus Job Training Division provides WIA Title 1 services.
- Georgia Department of Labor provides Wagner-Peyser Act services, Veterans Workforce programs, disabled veterans outreach programs, and state unemployment compensation.
- Muscogee County Division of Family and Children Services operates the TANF program, food stamps, and relevant work programs.



**On-site Partner at the One-Stop in the Columbus Career Center**



- Georgia Department of Rehabilitation Services provides vocational rehabilitation services.
- AARP operates senior programs.
- Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education
- Enrichment Services Program, Inc. [a Community Action Agency] provides employment and training activities under the Community Services Block Grant Act.
- Dynamic Educational Systems, Inc. (DESI) conducts outreach and admissions for Job Corps youth and career transition services for youth leaving the Job Corps program.
- Muscogee County School District operates WIA adult education and literacy activities.
- Columbus Housing Authority provides relevant employment and training activities carried out by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Columbus State University assists individuals wanting to enter postsecondary education.
- Columbus Technical College provides postsecondary educational activities.
- Chattahoochee Valley Community College provides postsecondary educational activities.
- First Step Health Agency operates programs to certify health care professions.
- Goodwill Industries of the Southern Rivers operates a work experience program for individuals 19-21 years of age that have been classified by the Workforce Investment Act as having special needs.
- Step One Health Agency operates education programs for nursing professions.

The age characteristics of TANF/low-income clients in this Workforce Area are similar to those of the total population served. As Table 4 shows, about 6 percent of clients are 19-21 years old, about 66 percent are 22-34 years old, and about 27 percent are 35-54 years old.

TANF/Low-income clients are slightly more likely to have not graduated from high school than the total population. As Table 5 on the next page shows, over one-quarter of the total population served, low-income or not, did not finish high school; half of them have a high school diploma and about one-fifth have some college.

The employment status of TANF/low-income clients after they leave the WIA program is similar to that of the total population.

**Table 4. Age of Columbus Career Center Adults After Departure From WIA, 2004-2008**

Age	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
14-18 Years Old	0.0%	0.0%
19-21 Years Old	6.0%	5.8%
22-34 Years Old	66.4%	66.2%
35-54 Years Old	26.8%	27.3%
55+ Years Old	0.8%	0.7%

**Table 5. Education Level of Columbus Career Center Adults After Departure From WIA, 2004-2008**

Education	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
Less Than High School	28.8%	27.3%
High School Diploma	50.4%	50.2%
Some College	20.8%	22.2%
Bachelor's or More	0.0%	0.3%

**Table 6. Employment Status of Columbus Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008**

After Leaving WIA, Employed at:	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
First Quarter	74.8%	75.1%
Second Quarter	70.8%	71.7%
Third Quarter	68.0%	68.9%
Fourth Quarter	68.4%	69.3%

**Table 7. Average Quarterly Wages of Columbus Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008**

After Leaving WIA, Average Wages at:	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
First Quarter	\$4,024	\$4,261
Second Quarter	\$4,288	\$4,459
Third Quarter	\$4,263	\$4,517
Fourth Quarter	\$4,484	\$4,638

Table 6 shows the employment status of the two groups at the first through fourth quarters after leaving the WIA program.

Although TANF/low-income individuals who left the WIA program earned an average \$237 less than the total average at the first quarter, by the fourth quarter, they only earned \$157 less (see Table 7).

Key informants report that within the last five years, the local WIA board made a conscious, though informal, decision to focus WIA adult services on the higher skilled, higher educated individuals due to the pressures of WIA performance measures. The Board realizes that the WIA services should be targeted to those most in need, but the WIA funds are attached to performance measures which they must meet in order to continue receiving funds.

The Board also decided that a good way to assist low-income families is to focus WIA youth funds on older youth since they are often the only employed/employable individuals in the household. The Columbus Career Center's youth program has been operable for

years and has gained a positive reputation. When the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 summer youth funds were awarded, other WIBs approached the Columbus WIB for advice on how to set up their programs. Over 94 percent of the low-income individuals in the WIA youth program are high school students and an additional 4.4 percent are high school graduates. As Table 8 below shows, 50-60 percent of youth that were in WIA Youth program in the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Investment Area became employed with wages that steadily increased from \$2,342 in the first quarter after leaving the WIA Youth program to \$2,783 in the fourth quarter.

**f. Business Perceptions**

Informants describe large employers leaving the area recently. In 2007, numerous businesses in the textile industry closed (Fieldcrest, Swift, Russell) leaving many individuals unemployed. The Columbus Career Center works with new and existing businesses to retrain the laid-off workforce to be suitable for their businesses' needs. The Career Center works closely with large employers such as KIA, Aflac, and NCR that want to

be able to utilize the workforce, but they also do not want to change the rules/requirement for hiring (drivers license, background check, drug testing) that may preclude some individuals.

**Table 8. Employment Status and Average Quarterly Wages of Columbus Career Center TANF/Low-Income Youth After Leaving WIA Youth Program, 2004-2008**

	Employed	Average Wages for Quarter
First Quarter	53.7%	\$2,342
Second Quarter	56.1%	\$2,528
Third Quarter	60.7%	\$2,601
Fourth Quarter	56.9%	\$2,783

## ii. Macon

Bibb County has a population of 155,216 (2008 estimate) with a labor force of 74,077 and median household income of \$36,954 (2007). The number of employed in the county is 66,636 and the unemployment rate is 10.0 percent.<sup>20</sup> The major industries in Bibb County with the largest number of employees are found in the fields of health care and social assistance; retail trade; education services; accommodation and food services; and finance and insurance.<sup>21</sup> The Georgia Department of Labor projects the largest industry employment gains in the Macon-Bibb Workforce Investment Area to occur in services-providing; education and health services; professional and business services; and manufacturing.<sup>22</sup>

Macon touts having a diversified economy that can support a wide variety of industry sectors, with a labor force, education and training support, communication and transportation networks, location and quality of life that attracts and sustains all types of companies. Specific industry sectors that have been identified as areas of expected job growth in Macon are: aerospace, shared services (data, knowledge, and call centers), distribution centers, automotive (parts/component assembly and metal fabrication), and food products manufacturing.

The Macon-Bibb Workforce Investment Area has one of the highest rates of clients entering employment in our sample (80.1 percent versus the national average of 74.0 percent). The Workforce Area serves a high proportion of TANF clients – 13.9 percent of customers served are TANF clients compared to the 9.5 percent national average. Bibb County itself ranks much higher than the national average in unemployment (10.5 percent), poverty (20.9 percent), and share of people over the age of 25 without a high school diploma (21.4 percent). Macon is the largest urban area within the local Workforce Investment Area. Macon's characteristics are similar to those of the county with 12.3 percent unemployed, 29.1 percent living below poverty level, and 25.9 percent of those over 25 years of age with no high school diploma.

The poverty rate for Macon is 33 percent, yet as of fall 2009, there were fewer than 50 TANF recipients Bibb County mandated to seek employment. Over 29,000 individuals in Bibb County received food stamps in 2007.<sup>23</sup> Clearly, this is an area with many low-income individuals who are not receiving TANF.

Before the Workforce Investment Act, there was a Council of Community Services in Macon that coordinated the services of local providers to assist low-income individuals with their needs, including employment-related services. The Macon-Bibb WIA Board assumed similar responsibilities as the Council of Community Services, benefiting from being able to tap into a pre-existing collaborative culture among the local service providers facilitating partnerships for the WIA structure.

The Georgia Department of Labor operates the Macon Career Center, which contains the only comprehensive One-Stop location



**Macon Career Center**

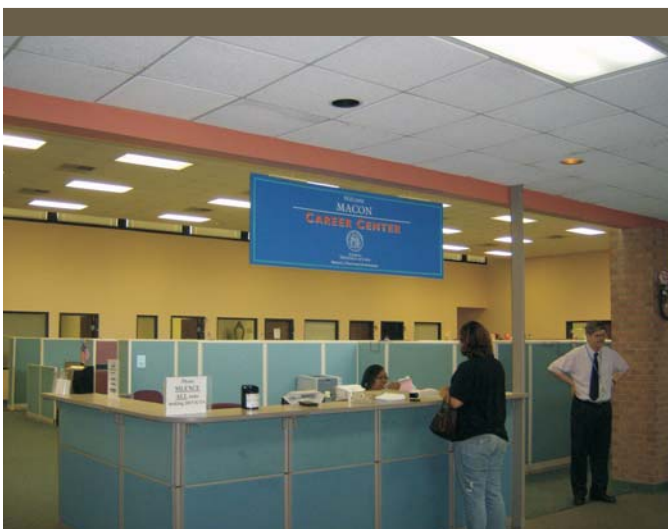
within Bibb County. The Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (MOWD) is the administrative entity for the local Workforce Investment Board and the operator of the One-Stop within the Career Center. DOL provides WIA core services, the MOWD provides WIA intensive services, and the Division of Rehabilitative Services provides vocational rehabilitation.

**a. Client Flow**

As in Columbus, individuals wanting to apply for TANF must do so at the county office of the Division of Family and Children Services. It is there that individuals are assessed for work readiness. DFCS contracts out to community-based organizations for welfare-to-work activities. TANF clients typically arrive at the Macon Career Center of their own accord rather

than as result of a referral, according to local officials.

Upon entering the Macon Career Center, any customer can sign up to meet with an employment specialist, conduct a self-serve job search using the computer room, utilize the resource room, and attend workshops on résumé development, interviewing techniques, and career planning. These are considered WIA core services and are provided by employees of the state's Department of Labor. The MWOD provides WIA intensive services including outreach/recruitment, initial assessment, referrals, orientation, job search assistance, job placement assistance, and follow-up services for WIA. Eligible individuals, including low-income individuals, may receive intensive services such as comprehensive assessments including TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education); O\*NET Interest Profiler and the O\*NET Work Importance Locator; development of an Individual Employment Plan; case management of the educational, financial, and other needs of the customer; individualized job search assistance; adult education and/or literacy, and referrals to other education and training providers. There are three full-time MWOD staff members who provide the WIA intensive services.



**Intake at Macon Career Center**

**b. Services On-Site**

The GDOL provides the Web site, JobTV, internet access, and software for outreach and recruitment; Unemployment Insurance information; basic skills assessment at intake; ori-

entation; maintains the Job Information System for self-directed job search on the computer; career counseling; and case management for veterans. GDOL's Vocational



**Resource Room at the One-Stop in the Macon Career Center**

Rehabilitation Program provides on-site intake for referred clients, initial and comprehensive assessments, and referrals (such as to Goodwill Industries).

The MOWD provides the more intensive services for low-income and displaced workers. Services include one-on-one job coaching, job search assistance, skills testing and assessments, case management, adult education and literacy, prevocational services (preparing an application, interview skills, résumé preparation and supported employment assistance), and referrals to other providers.

#### **c. Services for External Referral**

Career Center customers are referred to other service providers for occupational skills training/retraining and prevocational programs, such as the Mercer University Educational Opportunity Center and the Macon Housing Authority's life skills W.I.N.G.S. Program (Women Initiating New Goals for Success). Customers may also be referred out to external providers of social services and postsecondary education.

#### **d. Partners**

Service partners with at least a part-time representative on-site include:

- Central Georgia Technical College
- Georgia Technical College
- Experience Works
- Olde Management Group (Job Corp)
- River Edge Behavioral Health Center
- Easter Seals Community Services
- Economic Opportunity Council
- Meals on Wheels
- Macon Housing Authority

Other partners with the One-Stop Career Center that are off-site include:

- Mercer University Educational Opportunity Center provides for prevocational services
- Macon Housing Authority – specifically its life skills W.I.N.G.S. Program
- American Professional Institute
- Endurance 4U Health Care and Training School
- Georgia College and State University in Macon

- Goodwill Industries of Middle Georgia & the Central Savannah Regional Area (CSRA)
- Macon Electrical Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC)
- Macon State College
- Southeastern Carpenters Training Trust Macon Training Center
- Wesleyan College

**e. Agency Communication and Reporting**

The Local WIA plan states that all qualified customers for GoodWorks are referred to the Mayor's Office for Workforce Development, as they are the GoodWorks administrator. However, local officials report that TANF clients typically are not referred to the Macon Career Center but instead receive needed employment-related services from DFCS either directly or from an agency contractor. The Bibb County DFCS contracts with a local nonprofit, the Macon Bibb County Economic Opportunity Council (EOC), for the TANF Work Experience Training Program, Welfare to Work transportation, case management and assessment, and the Parent-Aide Program whereby EOC hires and trains TANF clients to work with other TANF recipients to assist them in self-sufficiency activities. Local DCFS officials state that formal job training is not really compatible with new TANF requirements, which require the recipient to be in an active job search. WIA intensive services, which local officials equate with job training, are perceived as being in a practical sense unavailable for active TANF clients on cash assistance.

Local officials from the workforce agencies perceive these matters somewhat differently. Customers do arrive at the Macon Career Center for services on their own, and anyone who comes to the Center may be assessed and potentially deemed eligible for WIA intensive services. Macon Career Center staff report that of 5,000 people who walk in to the center, approximately 600 are referred on for WIA intensive services. The 2007-2008 Local WIA plan states that it is Board policy to put a priority on providing intensive services to adults with incomes at or below 100 percent poverty level and customers receiving TANF. Labor Department staff members attend the local DFCS orientation meetings held for TANF clients, in order to explain what services, including the Career Center, the GDOL provides. They maintain that rather than avail themselves of what is offered at the Career Center, the county DFCS office sends their TANF clients to a technical school across the street from the DFCS office so that the TANF client can first get their GED and then DFCS staff help them do a job search themselves. In 2007-2008, only eight individuals were referred to the GoodWorks program; all completed the program successfully. Notwithstanding the low TANF rolls and lack of systematic referrals, the Macon Career Center reports it is still

providing services to low-income individuals through WIA programs.

According to administrative data from the Georgia Department of Labor, 7.2 percent of clients served at the Macon Career Center are TANF recipients but 42 percent of all clients served are low-income. Over 99 percent of all clients are unemployed when they register for WIA services at the Macon Career Center. The majority of clients served are between the ages of 22-34 though, as Table 9 below shows, a higher share of TANF/low-income clients are between the ages of 19 and 21 than that of the total population served.

**Table 9. Age of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008**

Age	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
14-18 Years Old	0.0%	1.0%
19-21 Years Old	13.8%	11.9%
22-34 Years Old	61.8%	65.5%
35-54 Years Old	22.8%	23.5%
55+ Years Old	1.6%	1.4%

In Macon, there is a focus on fully utilizing the WIA Youth program as a way to help low-income families as a whole. Often, the youth are the only employed individuals in the household. Key informants also noted that by focusing on instilling good work ethics in the youth, and encouraging them to finish high school and even college, the cycle of welfare could be broken. According to Georgia Department of Labor administrative data,

13.8 percent of the youth in the Macon Career Center’s WIA Youth program receive TANF and 99.6 percent are low-income (they must be low-income to be eligible for program).

Between 40 and 45 percent of the youth are employed upon leaving the WIA Youth program. Table 10 shows the percent of youth exiters employed and their average wages for the 1st through 4th quarters after leaving the program.

**Table 10. Employment Status and Average Quarterly Wages of Macon Career Center TANF/Low-Income Youth After Leaving WIA Youth Program, 2004-2008**

	Employed	Average Wages for Quarter
First Quarter	41.8%	\$1,327
Second Quarter	44.8%	\$1,331
Third Quarter	41.8%	\$1,506
Fourth Quarter	39.4%	\$1,406

Staff at the Macon Career Center highlighted the benefit of new Georgia Work\$ (GW\$) regulations, which allow employers in the program to train GW\$ participants even if there is not a bona fide job opening. The trainee still receives their unemployment benefits plus \$50 for participating in GW\$, and gains work experience while engaged with the employer. The Mayor’s Office of

Workforce Development, as the WIA administrator, operates a similar program for work experience using recently received federal funds under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

The primary occupations that WIA customers receive training for are nursing/medical, truck driving, administrative, and computers. After leaving the WIA training program, adult customers (not dislocated workers) had average annual earnings in 2007 of \$21,546 or \$10.36/hr.

TANF/low-income individuals are less likely than other participants to be employed upon leaving the WIA program. Nonetheless, as Table 11 (on the next page) shows, a sizable percentage of low-income exiters – 77.2 percent – are employed at the first quarter and over 68 percent are still employed at the fourth

**Table 11. Employment Status of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008**

After Leaving WIA, Employed at:	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
First Quarter	77.2%	82.3%
Second Quarter	75.6%	80.2%
Third Quarter	73.2%	79.2%
Fourth Quarter	68.3%	72.0%

**Table 12. Average Quarterly Wages of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008**

After Leaving WIA, Average Wages at:	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
First Quarter	\$4,841	\$5,359
Second Quarter	\$4,787	\$5,489
Third Quarter	\$4,535	\$5,504
Fourth Quarter	\$4,715	\$5,744

**Table 13. Education Level of Macon Career Center Adults After Leaving WIA Adult Program, 2004-2008**

Education	TANF/Low Income	TOTAL
Less Than High School	13.8%	14.3%
High School Diploma	51.2%	51.9%
Some College	33.3%	32.4%
Bachelor's or More	1.6%	1.4%

quarter after receiving services through the WIA program.

In addition to being somewhat less likely than others to be employed upon leaving WIA, TANF/low-income clients tend to have lower initial wages as well. Table 12 compares the average wages for TANF/low-income individuals and for all others upon exit from WIA services. At the first quarter, TANF/low-income individuals received an average of \$4,841 for the quarter, but the average for all individuals was about \$500 more.

These differences in employment status and initial wages between TANF/low-income and others upon exit from the WIA program do not appear to be explained by differences in educational attainment. As Table 13 shows, the educational achievement level of TANF/low-income clients is virtually the same as that for the overall population of Career Center clients.

The administrative data do not show the barriers that TANF/low-income clients face in acquiring employment and staying employed, such as safe, reliable, and affordable child care as well as means of transportation. Nor do the data reflect differences in prior work histories, criminal records, or other barriers to employment, or stigma that some employers may attach to receipt of public assistance.

#### **f. Business Perceptions**

Key informants indicate that over time, the WIA Board for Macon has become less impacted by politics and more influenced by input from the private sector. Yet, achieving acceptance from private industry has not been a goal easily won. Even though the WIA Board's Executive Committee is composed of private sector members, key informants advise that many employers in the region nonetheless view the Career Center as a government program. As described to the study team in interviews, the Board must work hard to get the private sector to not view the Career Center's services as a "welfare program."

### **C. Missouri**

The Missouri Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development, is responsible for oversight of the state's Workforce Investment Act activities. The Division provides services for businesses and job seekers through the Missouri One-Stop Career Centers and [MissouriCareerSource.com](http://MissouriCareerSource.com). The Division works with a number of strategic partners to "skill-up" Missouri's workforce for today's business and industry needs.



Through its comprehensive Web site — [WorkSmart Missouri](#) — partner agencies have collaborated to provide Missouri citizens with workforce solutions that support a more dynamic economy, foster profitable businesses, and provide careers opportunities.<sup>24</sup>

The mission of the Missouri Workforce Investment Board is to provide policy guidance and leadership to advance an integrated, demand-driven workforce and economic development system. The state's workforce economy is organized into 14 unique regions, each represented by a local Workforce Investment Board.

The Missouri Department of Economic Development identifies eight "industry clusters" for targeting. The clusters are based on research provided by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center, as well as on existing initiatives, industry strength, and future growth potential.<sup>25</sup> Identified as key clusters are: agribusiness, automotive, defense/homeland security, energy, finance, information technology, life sciences, and transportation logistics.

Missouri One-Stop Career Centers are located throughout the state to provide quality talent development services to the citizens and employers of Missouri through the coordination of a variety of partner agencies. These agencies include federal and state agencies, local workforce regions, and agencies that provide information and resources to make the system function.

The TANF program in the state of Missouri is administered through the Family Support Division (FSD) of the Missouri Department of Social Services. The TANF program in Missouri is called Temporary Assistance. In order to provide a comprehensive service delivery system, the Family Support Division maintains an office in each of the 114 counties of the state and in the city of St. Louis. These county offices are responsible for decisions made regarding claims or applications for benefits or services under the scope of the FSD programs.

In 2003, the governor of Missouri issued an Executive Order that put all employment-related services for TANF clients within the Division of Workforce Development. From that point forward, Career Assistance Program (CAP) staff became housed in many of the Missouri One-Stop Career Centers. Funds for TANF employment-related services are transferred from Missouri's Department of Social Services, Family Support Division to Missouri's Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development (DWD), where it is disbursed to the respective Workforce Investment Areas. Most Workforce Investment Boards subcontract with community-based organizations to operate the Career Assistance Program.

Missouri established the "Immediate Engagement Process Guidelines" in 2008. The guidelines outline the respective roles of FSD and DWD in serving TANF clients. FSD is responsible for completing an initial assessment form that identifies TANF applicants who are subject to "immediate engagement" with a One-Stop Career Center; meaning, they have no barriers to

employment-related activities. The applicant then has ten days to present themselves to a One-Stop Career Center. FSD electronically refers clients to DWD so their record is ready at any One-Stop Career Center they go to. The individual's application for TANF cash benefits is not processed until they have had a Career Assistance Program (CAP) assessment and an Individual Employment Plan completed at a One-Stop Career Center. This initial CAP visit includes an orientation to CAP, being entered into allowable work activities for TANF (unsubsidized employment, job search assistance, job readiness, high school-teens, occupational/vocational education training), and receiving transportation reimbursement expenses.

The referral process for TANF eligible individuals is electronic. When the customer applies for Temporary Assistance with FSD, they are referred for the work component electronically from FSD's mainframe system (known as Family Assistance Management Information System, or FAMIS) to DWD's database system (known as Toolbox). FAMIS and ToolBox "talk" with each other each night. The systems are integrated but separate. Only relevant information of a client's employment needs/information is shared with DWD. At the end of each month, DWD sends a file to FSD containing information on all the services provided and hours of participation for TANF clients, which FSD uses for its own reporting requirements to comply with federal monitoring of work participation levels. In turn, FSD sends DWD a file each month containing latest information on case closings and openings and data on work participation levels provided to the federal government. DWD staff have had an interest in gaining fuller access to FSD information for the clients they serve, but FSD has maintained data access narrowly tailored to DWD's responsibilities, with the information systems otherwise separate.

Staff members in both FSD and DWD describe relationships between the agencies as cooperative. The FSD staff on-site in the One-Stop Career Centers do double-duty as a sort of liaison with DWD. FSD shares the view that employment-related services are best provided by the One-Stop Career Centers.

With the issuance of the Executive Order, we found the pre-existing approaches in the local WIA work plans ratified, rather than new concerted efforts undertaken to specifically focus on low-income populations. Low-income individuals, including TANF recipients, had been part of the Career Centers' client populations before the Executive Order. Even though "immediate engagement" formalized the process of handling TANF clients' services, the procedures involved were already in use in many areas including St. Louis city and county.

The St. Louis region of Missouri encompasses the largest populated area in the state; the highest per-capita income, well above national levels; and educational attainment that exceed the U.S. average. However, the area is expected to grow at about half the rate as the rest of the country over the next five years.<sup>26</sup>

The 2008 population estimates are 354,361 for the city of St. Louis, and 991,830 for St. Louis county. August 2009 statistics reveal that the city has a labor force of 155,415, of which 137,505 are employed, and an unemployment rate of 11.5 percent. St. Louis County has a labor force of 519,209 with 469,431 of those employed, and an unemployment rate of 9.6 percent.<sup>27</sup> According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 Census, the median household income for Missouri in 1999 was \$37,934. In the city of St. Louis, the median household income was \$27,156, and \$50,532 in St. Louis County.

In February 2009, the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment Career Center reported the following targeted industries as key clusters for the city of St. Louis: advanced manufacturing, construction, health care/social assistance, transportation, warehousing, accommodation/food service, retail services, financial services, and information technology/telecommunications.

The identified regional clusters for St. Louis county include plant and life sciences, information technology, green and renewal energy, and transportation/logistics. The county hopes to increase entrepreneurship, which will accelerate these clusters, and strengthen the economic diversity by assisting a variety of enterprises, which may help moderate the future economic swings of the county.

Site visits were conducted at the St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) One-Stop Career Center in the city of St. Louis and North Oaks One-Stop Career Center serving the county of St. Louis. SLATE and North Oaks manage and administer the employment-related services for TANF clients, but they do not directly operate or deliver such services; that is the domain of community-based organizations (i.e., MERS/Goodwill), which operate those programs. The One-Stop Career Centers' mostly relate with the Family Support Division at the local level. Little communication between FSD and DWD is in evidence, apart from FSD referring TANF clients to the One-Stop Career Centers to do the employment aspect for TANF and the monthly information sent electronically from DWD to FSD regarding services and hours for TANF participation rates. Service coordination for TANF clients is facilitated through the linked client data systems of FSD and DWD.

Both SLATE and North Oaks have FSD staff on-site to conduct TANF intake at the One-Stop Career Centers, so individuals do not have to go to a separate location for their CAP assessment. People can receive the same TANF services at the One-Stop Career Centers that they would if they went to one of the FSD locations, but they also receive the employment component. They can apply for cash assistance, apply for food stamps, receive child care subsidies, receive transportation assistance, search job listings, complete their GED, receive assistance writing a résumé, take a class on work ethics, and receive assistance on interviewing skills.

**i. City of St. Louis**

The city of St. Louis is considered by the state to be a service area separate from St. Louis county. According to data from FRED, 84.9 percent of WIA adults within the St. Louis City Workforce Investment Area entered employment in 2007. This is the highest rate of all Workforce Areas in this study. Of the adults the Workforce Area serves, 18.5 percent are TANF recipients, compared to the national average of 9.5 percent. The average earnings change for all customers served in the St. Louis City Workforce Area is \$2,585 compared to the national average of \$3,786. In 2007,<sup>28</sup> the city had a poverty rate of 24.7 percent and an unemployment rate of 12 percent, compared to the national average poverty rate of 13.3 percent and an unemployment rate of 4.2 percent. The low-income population in the St. Louis area is described by FSD staff as mainly young (in their 20s) and low-skilled. According to 2008 data on the age distribution of the TANF clients served by the One-Stop Career Center in St. Louis, shown in Table 14, the majority – 56 percent – are between the ages of 18 and 29.

**Table 14. Age of TANF Clients Served at the SLATE One-Stop Career Center**

Age	Percent of Total
0-17 Years Old	17%
18-29 Years Old	56%
30-39 Years Old	18%
40-49 Years Old	7%
50+ Years Old	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 15. Educational Attainment of TANF Clients Served at the SLATE One-Stop Career Center**

Education	Percent of Total
Less Than High School	31.5%
High School Graduate	37.8%
Some College	10.5%
To-Year College Graduate	4.2%
Four Year College Graduate	1.6%
Unknown	14.3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 15 reports the educational attainment levels of the TANF clients served in 2008 by the One-Stop Career Center in St. Louis. Almost one-third have less than a high school education.

The St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) Career Center is the only comprehensive One-Stop within the central city of St. Louis. There is one other Career Center location in the city that is an affiliate site. SLATE Missouri Career Center was honored as Organization of the Year by the ACCESS Center at its Third Annual Black History Month Celebration on February 26, 2009. The local WIB is administered by the city of St. Louis. The WIB encourages the dual enrollment of WIA job seekers and welfare recipients from the Career Assistance Program (work component of TANF) whenever possible. Representative(s) from the Family Services Division are colocated at the One-Stop Career Center and the affiliate site to assist in the welfare to work component.

The local WIB for years has had the goal of placing low-income clients in jobs with hourly wages that are realistic to support a household (\$9.45/\$9.55). Before the 2003 Executive Order, the Family Support Division collaborated with the Division of Workforce Development in the “Futures” program in St. Louis City whereby low-income individuals were trained for future jobs through the One-Stop Career Centers. The WIB chair described how he became involved with the WIA system when he was in human resources at the Marriott and assisted in the



**St. Louis Agency on Training and Employment (SLATE) One-Stop Career Center**

“Pathways to Independence” program where welfare recipients were trained for jobs in the hospitality field.

**a. Client Flow**

TANF eligible individuals either walk in to the SLATE One-Stop Career Center to apply for Temporary Assistance (TA) or they apply for TA at a separate Family Support Division location and are instructed to go to the SLATE One-Stop Career Center. During the TA intake, FSD staff complete an initial assessment form that identifies those applicants subject to “immediate engagement.” The work-eligible clients are given information on the Career Assistance Program including CAP locations and compliance requirements. FSD then electronically refers the client to the DWD system.

The TA applicant has ten days to comply with registering for CAP. If they do not comply within the time frame, a notice is sent to them giving them ten more days. Ultimately, if compliance is not met within thirty days, FSD cancels the individual’s TA application. There are safeguards built into this system to protect the low-income family, such as only one parent of a two-parent household has to comply with CAP registration in order to have the TA application approved. Only the individual is sanctioned for noncompliance, not the family.

When the TA applicant arrives to register for CAP, the first thing that happens at the One-Stop Career Center is a CAP assessment and an Individual Employment Plan is drawn up. This is a very important step to complete at the TA applicant’s initial visit since staff report that many don’t return for their follow-up. Immediate Engagement guidelines outline that following an orientation to CAP, the One-Stop Career Center’s CAP provider enters applicants into allowable work activities such as unsubsidized employment, job search assistance, job readiness, and occupational/vocational education training, screens for domestic violence, and pays transportation reimbursement expenses the client has for employment.

Key informants report that the policy of “Immediate Engagement” has increased the number of TA applicants coming in to the One-Stop Career Center, at least initially. However, since Missouri has no family sanction, just a \$25 individual sanction, it is felt that incentives are not very strong for the TA clients to continue showing up to the One-Stop Career Center for employment-related services.

**b. Case Management**

At the One-Stop Career Center, the on-site Career Assistance Program staff members handle the case management of TANF clients’ employment-related needs. The CAP provider is a subcontractor with a formal agreement to provide the CAP services. The WIB chair of SLATE explained that it took years of trying to get rid of subcontractors that performed poorly or that were just in it for the money. He emphasizes that SLATE now has good

subcontractors that speaks to the success of TANF clients acquiring employment.

**c. Services On-Site**

Anyone walking in to the One-Stop Career Center may use the Resource Room, report for Unemployment Insurance, or meet with One-Stop Career Center staff regarding WIA services. If the person is job-ready, One-Stop Career Center staff can assist them with job development and job searches. For individuals who are not job-ready, One-Stop Career Center staff or their partners provide assistance with skills training, ESL classes, GED lab, job development, or other workshops. Services that are provided on-site, including those provided by partners are:

- WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services
- WIA Title I Youth Services
- Welfare-to-Work
- Wagner Peyser Services
- Programs authorized under the Trade Adjustment and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
- Veteran Services
- Native American Programs
- Services that can be provided to in- and out-of-school youth through adult basic education, literacy, community education, career and vocational education, alternative education, guidance and social work services, and other specialized ventures
- Vocational rehabilitation programs
- Postsecondary vocational education activities under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act
- Unemployment Insurance
- Employment opportunities for noncustodial parents
- Employment and training opportunities for disabled persons

**d. Partners**

The service partners include community-based organizations with contracts, and without, that go out into the community and establish relationships with businesses for jobs. The service partners of SLATE One-Stop Career Center include:

- City of St. Louis
- Missouri Division of Workforce Development
- The American Indian Council
- St. Louis Public Schools
- Missouri Division of Vocational Rehabilitation

- St. Louis Community College
- Division of Employment Security
- Family Support Division
- Child Support Enforcement
- Independence Center/MERS/Goodwill

**e. Agency Communication and Reporting**

SLATE and the Family Support Division relate primarily at the local level. The Family Support Division handles the intake and processing of cash assistance, food stamps, or other supports and the One-Stop Career Center staff handle the employment needs of clients. The state has contracts with community-based organizations like MERS/Goodwill and Better Family Life, to provide case management of TANF clients in the One-Stop Career Centers. Formal or informal collaborations for employment services tend to involve the One-Stop Career Center, local businesses, and the service contractors, not FSD.

TANF-eligible individuals are referred by FSD electronically to DWD through their integrated databases so that when a TANF client comes into the SLATE One-Stop Career Center, staff already has their information. SLATE sends monthly files to FSD on the services provided and the hours of employment-related activities that TANF clients undertook.

**f. TANF Resources**

MERS/Goodwill is the main subcontractor providing CAP services. The One-Stop Career Center director, WIB chair, FSD, and DWD staff all speak very highly of this organization. MERS/Goodwill has been involved with providing services to low-income individuals for a long time and has many ties to the community and businesses. MERS/Goodwill staff are formally trained to the needs of low-income clients, and because they only provide services to TA clients, they are able to provide the individualized client attention and intensive follow-up needed for this population.

SLATE and FSD report that MERS/Goodwill are able to handle the hard-to-employ clients who have substance abuse, or mental health issues because they are well-trained and they are a well-established organization that has many connections to other community organizations that can provide the needed services. FSD depends on the CAP provider to determine the need for a client to have outside services and readily makes the necessary referrals.

As an example of how well the community-based service providers in the One-Stop Career Centers are able to handle the needs of the TANF population, FSD staff describe a grant they have with a service provider to deal with sanctioned clients. The grant, "Successful Work Incentives for TANF" or SWIFT, supports the Area Resources for Community and Human Services'

(ARCHS) transitional jobs model that helps St. Louis city and county TANF recipients remove the barriers that have led to their benefits being sanctioned by the state. ARCHS partners create action plans for the sanctioned individuals and then track their progress towards job training and placement including home and work visits. FSD reports that 122 people were removed from TANF sanction lists in 2008 through this effort.

Transportation is an issue for some TANF clients since many of the job opportunities are in the suburbs/outskirts of the city, but the clients live in the downtown area. The One-Stop Career Center can provide bus passes, but the bus does not always operate late enough for employees to use it. Also the One-Stop Career Center has reported problems assisting clients with child care since often the client's child care provider that they have to go to in order use their subsidy is not close to their work or home. Staff report that taking the children to child care and getting to work all by using the bus does not usually work. In the past, the state contracted with a faith-based organization to provide a van transport for employees at a UPS facility but the funding ran out and, due to insurance restrictions, the organization could not transport children to day care.

Within the SLATE One-Stop Career Center, displaced workers receive more individualized assistance than most other adult clients. The One-Stop Career Center has a pilot initiative for the displaced professional worker whereby the individual meets with an employment specialist on a one-to-one basis in a location different from other One-Stop Career Center clients. These clients are described by staff as professionals that do not want to go where the low/no skill low-income people go for One-Stop Career Center services. They are individuals who have never been unemployed and are having a hard time understanding how One-Stop Career Centers can help them. Staff are hoping that through the pilot initiative, they will be able to attract and assist more of this skilled population. FSD describes their encounters with this new type of client who have never had to apply for assistance before as "hostile" because they do not realize that in order to receive TANF cash assistance, they cannot have assets such as a home.

In the last few years, three car plants have closed in the St. Louis area. Those displaced workers tend to be educated and skilled. For lack of employment opportunities, many displaced workers are taking lower-paying, lower-skilled jobs leaving fewer employment opportunities for the low-skilled workers.

#### ***g. Business Perceptions***

SLATE and their community-based organization service providers have relationships with businesses that provide employment for the lower-skilled worker (janitorial, health care, hospitality, service industry, and the like). SLATE comes to the businesses, provides space for interviews and training, and even opens affiliate sites closer to the business or potential employees if needed. Key informants report that SLATE is viewed by



businesses as the place to go for assistance with their workforce needs.

The WIB identifies “key clusters” of employment for the workforce training services that are delivered. For federal and state funding, they try to align the key clusters with the president’s and governor’s targeted industry clusters, but the WIB also has to focus on the needs of the city’s employment base. From the WIBs’ perspective, TANF clients are not treated as a separate group; they are part of the customer base and the Board works toward goals to get people jobs, including TANF clients. Five of SLATE’s Key Clusters that the WIB identified for particular attention in focusing employment are relevant to the low-income/TANF population: manufacturing, construction, health care, transportation, and warehousing.

## ii. St. Louis County

In 2007, St. Louis County had an unemployment rate of 6 percent and a poverty rate of 8.9 percent. The St. Louis County WIA, separate from the central city of St. Louis, serves almost twice the national rate of TANF clients (18.6 percent vs. 9.5 percent), with a rate of clients entering employment that is higher than the national average.

The North Oaks Career Center is the only comprehensive One-Stop within St. Louis County region workforce area, though there are three other affiliate locations in the county. The St. Louis County Department of Human Services, which oversees the county’s workforce development, is located in the same building as the One-Stop Career Center, though the North Oaks One-Stop Career Center is operated by the St. Louis Community College. The WIB encourages the dual enrollment of WIA job seekers and welfare recipients from the Career Assistance Program (work component of TANF) whenever possible. Representative(s) from the Family Services Division are colocated at the One-Stop Career Center to assist in the welfare-to-work component.

Low-income populations have been served at the North Oaks One-Stop Career Center since its inception in 2000. As was the case with the SLATE center, the governor’s Executive Order that put the work requirement of TANF within the Division of Workforce Development responsibilities led to Career Assistance Program staff being located in North Oaks One-Stop Career Center. The North Oaks WIB chair describes the One-Stop Career Center as operating on a “comprehensive customer service” approach, so that all the services a low-income client would need should be found in one location. The issuance of the governor’s Executive Order served to underscore, rather than significantly change, the local WIA work plan since the focus had previously



**North Oaks One-Stop Career Center**

been to place low-income clients in jobs with real living wages (\$9.45/\$9.55).

**a. Client Flow**

At the One-Stop Career Center, the on-site Career Assistance Program staff handles the case management of TANF clients' employment-related needs. Like the city's One-Stop Career Center arrangement, the CAP provider is a subcontractor with a formal agreement to provide the CAP services. At both SLATE and North Oaks One-Stop Career Centers, MERS/Goodwill is the main subcontractor providing CAP services.

At North Oaks One-Stop Career Center, FSD staff members are on-site to conduct TANF intake, so individuals do not have to go to a separate location for their CAP assessment. People can receive the same TANF services at the One-Stop Career Centers that they would if they went to one of the FSD locations, but they also receive the employment component. The initial CAP visit includes an orientation to CAP, being entered into allowable work activities for TANF (unsubsidized employment, job search assistance, job readiness, high school-teens, occupational/vocational education training), and receiving transportation reimbursement expenses.



**Staff Assisting Customers at North Oaks One-Stop Career Center**

MERS/Goodwill reports that after the initial CAP assessment with a TANF client, they often have difficulty getting the client to come in for the six month and one year follow-ups. MERS/Goodwill will send staff out to the clients' homes and talk to them about coming into the One-Stop Career Center for their follow-up. One-Stop Career Center staff members describe MERS/Goodwill as an organization very capable of tracking people down; a challenging activity, because there are difficulties finding and contacting the clients since many do not have phones and move a lot among temporary housing arrangements. At the North Oaks location, MERS/Goodwill created a staff position – Work Participation Specialist – to follow-up on individual's progress in their work activities beyond the initial CAP assessment. Before, 10-15 percent of TANF clients would return after their initial assessment. With a Work Participation Specialist, 55-60 percent are returning to the One-Stop Career Center and are involved in work-related activities.

In the early years of the North Oaks One-Stop Career Center, the One-Stop had a demonstration grant from the governor's office to conduct mental health evaluations of individuals during intake to identify clients in need of more intensive services. Although the program was a success – they even got an award for it – it was not funded again. For the TA applicants, MERS/Goodwill provides the needed screening and referral

suggestions for the individuals needing supportive services for substance abuse, mental health issues, domestic violence, and legal issues. The organization has experience working with this population and has the contacts to be able to refer people to other providers.

**b. Services On-Site**

North Oaks One-Stop Career Center provides the following services on-site:

- Adult Education & Literacy/GED
- WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services
- WIA Title I Rapid Response Services
- WIA National Emergency Grant Services
- WIA Title I Youth Services
- Temporary Assistance/Career Assistance Program
- Trade Adjustment Assistance Program (assist workers who become totally or partially unemployed as a result of increased imports)
- Work Incentive Program
- Wagner Peyser Services (DWD provides)
- Veteran Services (DWD provides)
- Ex-Offender Services
- Parent's Fair Share Program (assists parents with increasing their ability to meet their child's emotional and financial needs by helping the parents to become self-sufficient; DWD provides)
- Unemployment Insurance
- YouthBuild Program



**Resource Room at North Oaks One-Stop Career Center**

- Temporary Assistance and child support assistance
- Senior Community Service Employment Program
- Energy Assistance

At the North Oaks One-Stop Career Center, TANF recipients can apply for cash assistance, apply for food stamps, receive child care subsidies, receive transportation assistance, search job listings, complete their GED, receive assistance writing a résumé, take a class on work ethics, and receive assistance on interviewing skills. MERS/Goodwill is the main subcontractor providing CAP services to TANF recipients.

Key informants involved in the administration and operation of the Missouri One-Stop

Career Centers report that there is a greater need for on-site supportive services (mental health, domestic violence, legal, substance abuse) for the TANF/low-income population, or at least training to identify individuals in need of supportive services. In fact, the North Oaks director and the St. Louis County human services director feel that CAP staff and the DWD staff are able to potentially handle training for initial screenings of mental health and substance abuse barriers, but there is no funding for them to do so. It is difficult to get this population to even show up to the One-Stop Career Center for the first time, so having services colocated could present a meaningful benefit to the clients. A different view is held by state social services staff, however, who feel this is their responsibility and the clients would need to have assessments and services through their offices, not the One-Stop Career Centers.

**c. Partners**

As the operator of the One-Stop Career Center, the St. Louis Community College provides WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker Services, WIA Title I Rapid Response Services, and WIA National Emergency Grant Services. In addition to the Family Support Division providing Temporary Assistance and child support assistance on-site, numerous partner agencies/organizations provide services at the One-Stop Career Center. MERS/Goodwill manages the Career Assistance Program and provides employment and training services for individuals receiving Temporary Assistance. Better Family Life provides job readiness training, job coaching, job placement, financial literacy, parenting classes, computer education and retention services, GED preparation, parenting classes, and financial literacy. Missouri's Department of Labor & Industrial Relations operates the Unemployment Insurance Program. The Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis operates the WIA Title I Youth Services at the One-Stop Career Center. Staff from the Housing Authority of St. Louis County operate the YouthBuild Program, the St. Louis Public Schools provide Adult Education and Literacy/GED classes, AARP administers the Senior Community Service Employment Program, and the Community Action Agency of St. Louis County manages the Energy Assistance program.

**d. Agency Communication and Reporting**

It was reported during our interviews that the relationship between FSD and DWD within the St. Louis County workforce area is principally a fiscal one, with FSD passing the money and responsibility of the employment aspect of TANF to the One-Stop Career Centers. One-Stop Career Center management expressed the concern that the North Oaks location serves the largest TANF population in the state, yet for unknown reasons, receives the least amount per customer from FSD. However, the One-Stop Career Center's relationship with the CAP provider is described as cooperative and positive.

According to key informants in Missouri, relationships between the One-Stop Career Centers' and the Family Support Division are built and maintained mainly at the local level. There is little communication at the state level between FSD and DWD apart from FSD referring TANF clients to the One-Stop Career Centers to do the employment aspect for TANF and the monthly information sent electronically from DWD to FSD regarding services and hours for TANF participation rates. Service coordination for TANF clients is facilitated through the linked client data systems of FSD and DWD and the "Immediate Engagement Process Guidelines" that outline the respective roles of FSD and CAP in serving TANF clients.

**e. Business Perception**

North Oaks One-Stop Career Center has relationships with businesses that provide employment for the lower-skilled worker (janitorial, health care, hospitality, service industry, etc.). The One-Stop Career Center has staff members who go to the businesses, provides space for interviews and training, and opens affiliate sites if needed. When a Chrysler plant opened in St. Louis, the North Oaks One-Stop Career Center set up a location close to the plant so that Chrysler could interview a large number of people.

Major employers in the area are The Boeing Company; Emerson Electric; Monsanto; Schnuck's Markets, Inc.; SSM Health Care System; St. John's Mercy Health Care; and United Parcel Service. The recent closings of two Chrysler plants have resulted in thousands of unemployed workers.

In the past year, the St. Louis area has had three car plants and numerous banks close. The Family Support Division has seen an increase in a new type of client — displaced workers coming in for assistance who have never had to request assistance before. These individuals tend to be educated, skilled workers and are willing to take lower-paying, lower-skilled jobs that TANF clients would have taken before. This has made it harder for the TANF clients to get employment in the current economy when they are competing with higher-skilled/educated workers.

### III. Notable Barriers and Challenges

Key informants reported that a number of barriers and challenges stood in the way of providing services to TANF clients through the One-Stop Career Center system. These include (a) characteristics of the TANF population; (b) the perceived “fit” of One-Stop Career Center services given those characteristics; (c) the competing cultures of workforce development and public assistance agencies; (d) the emphasis on performance reporting as a disincentive to focus on hard-to-serve clients; and (e) low employment demand from the weak economy.

#### A. Population Characteristics

Some of the challenges arise from characteristics of the welfare population itself. Welfare officials indicate that One-Stop Career Centers might not want to serve TANF clients since they tend to be the more intensive cases. For example, at the Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center in Sacramento, TANF customers are more likely to be young, less skilled, and have less education.

Workforce officials report that there is a greater need for on-site supportive services (mental health, domestic violence, legal, substance abuse) for the TANF/low-income population at the One-Stop Career Centers, or at least training to identify individuals in need of supportive services. However, welfare staff report that it is their responsibility through their offices, not the workforce agency’s, to provide supportive services and assessments.

#### B. Fit of One-Stop Career Center Services

Some of our informants in the welfare agencies believe that the One-Stop Career Centers are more for those clients with work experience and who already have a skill set, and since most of their TANF customers do not have work experience and/or skills, the One-Stop Career Centers cannot provide the services the TANF clients need to become employed. Often, welfare agency staff state they are the best equipped to provide employment-related services to TANF clients.

Underlying a number of other issues is the “work first” philosophy of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. Eligible TANF clients must be placed in work activities quickly, but One-Stop Career Center officials feel these customers need a lot of assistance before they can participate in work-related activities. Welfare agency officials state that job training is not really an acceptable activity under new TANF rules, which require the recipient to be in an active job search. WIA intensive services therefore are perceived as unavailable for active TANF clients on cash assistance, even though TANF/low-income populations are supposed to be priority recipients of limited resources for intensive services under WIA. Once individuals have exhausted their TANF benefits though, the One-Stop Career Centers do provide WIA intensive services to them as low-income individuals.

### C. Competing Cultures

We found that differences in the mission and culture of the social service/welfare agencies and those of the workforce agencies often outweighed the similarities. The goal of the welfare agencies, to overly simplify, is to assist individuals reach self-sufficiency through employment as quickly as possible. The goal of the workforce agencies, to overly generalize, is to assist individuals in becoming employable by providing employment and training services. Workforce agency informants may perceive that welfare agency staff are sometimes protective of their clients to the point of making them dependent on social service programs. Welfare agency staff, meanwhile, report trepidation at sending their clients through a workforce system that is not prepared to address their needs and barriers, and offers intensive services that may not be suitable for many TANF clients who are low-skilled and low-educated.

The relationship at the state and local level of the welfare agency with the workforce agency varied. In the field sites in Missouri, these interagency relationships were described as mainly fiscal, though TANF individuals are referred to the One-Stop Career Centers for employment services. In the field sites in Georgia, the relationships in practice differ markedly from formal arrangements described on paper, with publicized programs being small and winding down, and the majority of the TANF/low-income clients served at the One-Stop Career Centers being walk-in customers. There were only a few instances where we found true collocation of workforce and welfare agency services. Instead, individuals usually apply for TANF at a separate location and are then referred to a One-Stop Career Center for assistance with employment assistance. The databases tracking the TANF and WIA clients are linked in a few cases, but still remain separate data systems. This presents a challenge to workforce agency staff who want to be able to access information on the services their clients receive from the welfare agency (or their subcontractors), in order to better serve them.

There is also the challenge of marketing the One-Stop Career Center to the TANF/low-income population as a resource. After the enactment of WIA, the Georgia Department of Labor turned its regional offices into Career Centers. However, there is nothing that identifies the locations we visited as a One-Stop or a Career Center. The signage only identifies the facilities as Department of Labor buildings. The One-Stop Career Centers are viewed by many as where someone goes to file for unemployment insurance, not as a place with free employment-related services.

### D. Performance Reporting

Though workforce boards are cognizant that their services should be targeted to those most in need, some WIA boards have decided (informally) to focus WIA services on the higher-skilled, higher-educated individuals since they are the most likely to be successful in obtaining employment and therefore the workforce

area's performance measures will be higher. Informants report that workforce boards may not want to spend resources and time on TANF clients who have a lot of barriers to employment.

Some key informants on local workforce boards hold the view that many TANF clients do not want to work and the resources and time of the One-Stop Career Centers should not be spent on customers with a lot of barriers to employment. Even in the cases where an individual must report to a One-Stop Career Center to register for a job search before receiving TANF cash assistance, staff report that many never return for their six month and one year follow-ups. Some WIB contacts feel that barriers such as substance abuse need to be handled by the welfare agency before the workforce agency can assist them. Local WIA boards would rather focus their resources on the higher-skilled, higher-educated individuals due to the pressures of WIA performance measures.

#### **E. Economic Weakness/Low Demand for Employees**

We found that, while the number of individuals receiving TANF cash assistance for the areas may be low, most individuals served by the One-Stop Career Centers are poor and in need. A better indicator of the effect of the worsening economy on jobs is the increase in the number of individuals served at the One-Stop Career Centers that receive Food Stamps. For example, as of fall 2009 in Bibb County, Georgia, there were fewer than 50 TANF recipients mandated to seek employment. However, over 29,000 individuals in Bibb County received food stamps in 2007.

The current economic downturn has made it even more difficult for low-income, low-skill individuals to obtain employment. With the closing of banks, factories, car plants, and other large businesses in the cities we visited, many displaced workers who are skilled and/or educated are taking lower-pay, lower-skilled jobs, leaving fewer employment opportunities for the low-skilled workers. While the One-Stop Career Centers do work closely with large employers, the employers do not want to change the rules/requirement for hiring (drivers license, background check, drug testing) that may preclude some low-income individuals. The stigma of "the welfare client" is an issue that the workforce agencies feel challenged to overcome with potential employers of TANF clients. Workforce agency officials state that the One-Stop Career Centers must work hard to get the private sector to not view their services as a "welfare program."



## IV. Take Aways

### A. Demographics Matter

We specifically chose One-Stop Career Centers that were located within areas of high poverty and we found that as a general matter, the comparatively high prevalence of One-Stop Career Center services for low-income populations in these settings was more a function of the service environment in which they operated rather than the result of conscious targeting. To put the matter directly: TANF clients are part of the One-Stop Career Center's customer base and the goal of the Career Centers is to provide universal services for anyone who needs employment assistance. In some cases, TANF resources do go to the One-Stop Career Centers to provide TANF clients with employment-related services on a contractual basis. Even when TANF funds are not provided to the One-Stop Career Centers for this purpose, however, the One-Stop Career Centers serve TANF and low-income recipients as a function of their presence in the service area, and because they are for anyone who needs to utilize their services. Eighty-five percent of the clients registered at the Columbus Career Center in Georgia are low-income, for example, as are 70 percent of Modesto One-Stop Career Center's clients. Over 20 percent of Sacramento Works Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center's clients are TANF recipients, as are almost 19 percent of customers at the St. Louis County One-Stop Career Center.

### B. State Encouragement in Local WIA/TANF Coordination Can Be Helpful

State workforce agencies allowed a high degree of flexibility in the development and implementation of policies and procedures to the local/county agencies, workforce boards, and One-Stop Career Centers. Since the One-Stop Career Centers and TANF operate at the local level, the relationships among the associated agencies are also local. Work participation orientation for a TANF client operated by the local TANF agency also has a WIA representative in attendance. In Modesto, the One-Stop Career Center operator (Alliance WorkNet) and the TANF agency (Community Services Agency) operate the Job Clubs for TANF clients together. In Missouri, local agencies have used their flexibility in operating the WIA and Welfare-to-Work programs to subcontract the services to an established, experienced community-based organization (MERS/Goodwill). In California, the state agencies allow the counties the ability to integrate the WIA and TANF databases if they so desire.

At the inception of the WIA system, Georgia's Department of Labor and Department of Human Resources each had a liaison from the other agency working within their office to coordinate services. This type of arrangement has survived at the local level in the form of the "Special Assistance Unit" at the Career Centers that has staff from both DHR and DOL to assess TANF customers.

The state of Georgia's Unified WIA Plan encourages, but does not mandate, local workforce areas to partner with TANF agencies. The Macon-Bibb Workforce Investment Area local WIA plan does not include the Bibb County Department of Family and Children Services as a partner. In fact, it became apparent during our site visit that there is limited coordination between the Bibb County DFCS and the Macon One-Stop Career Center. In the Lower Chattahoochee Workforce Investment Area (Columbus), the Muscogee County Department of Family and Children Services is listed as a discretionary partner in the local WIA plan. There is much better coordination of local TANF and WIA services in Columbus than in Macon. This coordination is encouraged by the Department of Labor by having a DFCS staff member on site at the Columbus Career Center.

GoodWorks was a collaboration among the Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Family and Children Services (which administers TANF and Food Stamps services), the Department of Labor Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation, local WIBs, and community-based organizations. Through the initiative, hard-to-employ TANF recipients were transitioned into jobs through vocational rehabilitation assessments, on-the-job training at subsidized employment sites, intensive support, and follow-up. However, GoodWorks only served about 100 individuals statewide in 2009.

California's Strategic Plan for WIA and the Wagner-Peyser Act mentions the TANF program (CalWORKS) as an optional partner that participates in most of the One-Stop Career Centers. Key informants describe the state's encouragement for WIA/TANF collaboration as one that began when the One-Stop Career Center system was being built in 1995. In Sacramento, county TANF staff members are colocated at five of the one-stops, including Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center, which we visited. The welfare and employment agencies in Sacramento are described as collaborative agencies working toward common goals. In Modesto, the county TANF administrators do not coordinate with the WIA system as much as they did in the past. The Community Services Agency utilizes the Career Resource Room in their operation of the welfare-to-work program, but does not refer many clients to the One-Stop Career Center since they often have too many barriers to employment. Instead, the CSA tends to place these clients in subsidized employment.

Missouri is different from California and Georgia in that the state agencies have guidelines in how a TANF client's work requirement is coordinated with the One-Stop Career Center system. The workforce agency has the responsibility for the TANF client's employment-related needs through the "Career Assistance Program." Therefore, the only real coordination the state workforce agency has with the state TANF agency is the transfer of funds for the employment-related services and documentation of work participation. The state TANF agency is a partner listed in both St. Louis City and St. Louis County WIA plans.

### **C. A History of Local Relationships Can Make New Ones Easier to Build**

All of the areas where the One-Stop Career Centers in our study are located have a history of collaborative relationships that date to or predate the 1996 welfare reform. It was these local relationships among public and private social service and employment agencies that served as the foundation of the One-Stop Career Centers' relationships now.

SETA describes a purposeful planning process in Sacramento County to deal with the employment aspect of welfare reform from the very beginning with the resulting collaborative agency relationships continuing to present day. In Modesto, the county's "Greater Avenues for Independence" program that provided employment related services to low-income individuals predates welfare reform. GAIN became transformed into what is now the One-Stop Career Center operator.

The Council of Community Services in Macon coordinated the services of local providers to assist low-income individuals with their employment-related needs predated WIA. The Council became transformed into what is now the One-Stop Career Center operator.

In St. Louis, while "immediate engagement" formalized the process of handling TANF clients' services, they are procedures that were already in use in St. Louis city and county. For example, before "immediate engagement," the Family Support Division collaborated with the Division of Workforce Development in St. Louis City "Futures" program that trained low-income individuals in future jobs through the One-Stop Career Centers.

### **D. Effective, Community-Based Contractors Can Translate to Effective Services**

The WIB chair of SLATE explained that it took years of trying to get rid of subcontractors that performed poorly or that were just in it for the money. He emphasizes that SLATE now has good subcontractors that speaks to the success of TANF clients acquiring employment. In the view of Missouri officials, probably the most important lesson to take from their experience is the benefit coming from their reliance on community-based organizations (CBOs) to provide contracted services to TANF clients on-site at the One-Stop Career Centers. These CBOs are well-established organizations with many connections to other community organizations, businesses, and educational institutions. The CAP providers are well-tuned to the job market trends and provide services and training accordingly. The CBO subcontractors in the St. Louis area are, in general, allowed a great deal of flexibility in assisting TANF clients whether it be for transportation, child care, or work-related activities.

The CBOs are able to provide intensive client attention. The TANF population has more barriers to employment than other One-Stop Career Center populations. These barriers include low education levels, low skill level, lack of transportation, housing,

child care location not close to home or work location, mental health issues, and substance abuse.

The CBOs are reported to be very effective in providing intensive follow-up services for the TANF population, even those in sanctioned status. One example is the Successful Work Incentives for TANF (SWIFT) FSD grant program with the Area Resources for Community and Human Services to deal with TANF-sanctioned clients through home visits, creating individual action plans, and tracking the progress of the recipient towards job training and placement. This program has helped the state remove 122 people from TANF sanction lists in 2009, according to local sources. The use of community groups in an “Immediate Engagement” strategy has had similarly positive effects in Missouri, according to local officials there. At the North Oaks location, MERS/Goodwill reports that they have seen three times more people coming in for an assessment than they had before this initiative. One-Stop Career Center staff strive to find stronger incentives to encourage TANF clients to continue to participate in program activities and toward independence.

#### **E. Targeting Entry-Level Jobs in Growing Fields of Employment Is Key**

We found that the One-Stop Career Centers are active in identifying areas of employment appropriate for entry-level jobs that are needed in their respective regions. The Sacramento Employment and Training Agency and WIA Board members conduct outreach to businesses to find out what types of employees they need/may need and adjust the training they offer accordingly. SETA’s survey of business trends has kept them abreast of the critical occupational clusters, many of which are relevant for low-skilled workers. Informants report that Sacramento Works One-Stop Career Center customers have an advantage over other applicants because they are trained for jobs that are known to be available.

With many of the large textile industries closing the Columbus One-Stop Career Center has focused their efforts on retraining workers for new jobs and establishing relationships with businesses in the services industry, health services, and hospitality. The staff are also focusing on bringing in “green job” businesses and utilizing the Georgia Work\$ program to focus on training for these jobs. The Career Center staff utilize their relationships with businesses, other community organizations, state programs such as Georgia Work\$, and federal programs such as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

In St. Louis, the city and the county Workforce Investment Boards have had to deal with thousands of unemployed resulting from the closing of three car plants. In addition to re-training for these displaced workers, both the city and county One-Stop Career Centers focus on basic work skills to quickly train clients in transportation, warehousing, food service, retail service, and telecommunications. They also focus on education and training to fill job openings in the growing health care field.

## **F. Board Vision and Buy-In Is Crucial Internally and Externally**

At the local level, the Columbus WIB chair believes their success is due to the tenure of the board members and the Career Center staff, a focus on shared resources, and including service providers and private sector stakeholders on the WIB. The director of the Macon Office of Workforce Development stressed the importance of partnering with other public and private entities in order to leverage resources and stretch the dollars. Key stakeholders in both Macon and Columbus Career Centers expressed the importance of focusing on older youth (18-24 years) as a way to help low-income families.

The relationships that the Career Center and CAP provider have with local businesses and education institutions allows them to provide employment-related services that are relevant to the local job market. Both SLATE and North Oaks One-Stop Career Center have close relationships with the local business community and are regularly informed of new businesses coming to the area.

## **G. Location and Technology Can Be Important Aids for Service Coordination**

In California, the state workforce and social service agencies do not have linked information technology. In fact, the state social service agency does not even link its own regional databases due to the large size and complexity of the system. Nonetheless, the state allows counties the flexibility to link their own workforce and social service information technology (IT) systems if they wish. In Sacramento, both agencies' staff members have access to each other's database, but in Modesto they do not. The workforce and social service databases in Missouri are linked at the state level. They are two separate databases, but they are integrated and interactive. Georgia's IT systems for workforce and social services are not linked.

Most of the One-Stop Career Centers in this study have TANF agency staff members colocated on-site, though some were only part-time. At the Hillsdale One-Stop Career Center in Sacramento, a county welfare staff member is available to handle case management of CalWORKS participants. Individuals cannot, however, apply for cash assistance at the One-Stop Career Center. In the Columbus Career Center in Georgia, there is a part-time staff member from the county welfare office on site to assist with initial client assessment, intake, referral, and outreach. Both the city and county One-Stop Career Centers in St. Louis have welfare staff on-site. The community-based organizations that operate the welfare-to-work program (CAP) are on-site as well. In the city, the welfare staff members handle the intake and processing of cash assistance, food stamps, or other supports. At the county Career Center location, the welfare staff members only assist in the welfare-to-work component that the community-based organizations operate.

Some of the One-Stop Career Centers in the study have an easy referral system that tracks the individual and the services they are receiving. In Sacramento, both the workforce and the welfare staff have access to the other's database so referrals and follow-up is facilitated. In both of the Missouri locations and in the Columbus, Georgia, location in our study, the welfare agency refers TANF clients to the Career Centers electronically. When the client does register at a Career Center, an alert is sent by the workforce staff at the Career Center to the welfare agency letting them know their client has registered for work activities.

Georgia Department of Labor officials report that colocating partners within the Career Centers is very important to their success in doing their job and in the success of their customers in becoming employed. At the inception of the WIA system, the Department of Labor and the Department of Human Resources (DHR) began working together in earnest. They each had a liaison from the other agency working within their office. Various staff members, including key leaders, have worked in both agencies and have thus facilitated an understanding between the agencies. There is a "Special Assistance Unit" that has staff from both DHR and DOL to assess TANF customers. GDOL staff members were trained on how to be more sensitive to TANF customers and how to effectively work with this population.

In testimony, GDOL Commissioner Michael Thurmond states "Considerable education and training investments were made to encourage GDOL employees to embrace the holistic philosophy of integrated service delivery."<sup>29</sup> Training includes an online GDOL Learning Center that allows Career Center employees 24/7 access to self-directed training and immediate training as the need arises.

The One-Stop Career Center directors feel that TANF clients who use One-Stop Career Centers, compared with those receiving services elsewhere, are more successful because all of their needs can be handled in one place. Most people do not want to go to numerous offices/agencies.

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## Appendix A: Individuals Interviewed for Field Case Studies

### California

#### California Department of Social Services, Welfare-to-Work Division

- Charr Lee Metsker, deputy director
- Marc Wilson, bureau chief, Employment Bureau
- Damien Ladd, Employment Bureau
- Geoffrey Miller, analyst, Employment Bureau
- Teri Ellen, Employment Bureau
- Jessica Lee, analyst, Employment Bureau

#### Sacramento Works/SETA

- Kathy Kossick, executive director, SETA
- Robin Purdy, deputy director of workforce development, SETA/Sacramento Works
- Mark Ingram, WIB chair
- Christine Welch, workforce development manager (tour)

#### Alliance WorkNet

- Jeff Rowe, director
- Bruce Merchant, family services supervisor
- Adolph Lopez, manager
- Richard Hagerty, WIB chair
- Paul Van Konynenburg WIB board member, previous chair
- Christine Applegate, director, Stanislaus County Community Services Agency
- Kathy Harwell, assistant director, Stanislaus County Community Services Agency

### Georgia

#### Georgia Department of Human Resources, Division of Family and Children Services

- Donna Gunter, state director for TANF
- Marjorie Almand, director of Bibb County DFCS
- Martha Blue, deputy director of Bibb County DFCS
- Vernadine Mabry, director of Muscogee County DFCS
- Georgia Department of Labor

- Linda T. Johnson, assistant commissioner of Career Development Services
- Lynn Sanders, Career Development Services
- Nancy Meeden, Career Development Services
- Karen Simmons, financial manager
- Roberta Morrison, ETA consultant
- Ava Jordan, employment and training consultant, Workforce Development

#### **Macon Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (WIA Administrator)**

- Barbara Yancey, administrator
- Betty Toussaint, adult/dislocated coordinator
- Joyce Liggins, career development facilitator (on-site WIA staff at Career Center)
- Lamar Geddis, WIB chair

#### **Macon Career Center/GDOL**

- Robert Thompson, manager
- Mike Eorio, DOL services specialist
- Fran Jones, assistant Career Center manager
- Lillie Smith, Career Center supervisor
- Joyce Liggins, Career Development facilitator

#### **Columbus Career Center/GDOL**

- Howard Pendelton, WIA director
- Chester Randolph, WIB chair
- Cil DeHart, DOL Services Specialist
- James Shipp, program specialist
- Ave Montgomery, president, Spexcell

### **Missouri**

#### **Missouri Department of Social Services, Family Support Division**

- Sandra Nelson, regional manager for St. Louis County
- Pat Wilbur, St. Louis County manager

#### **Missouri Department of Economic Development, Division of Workforce Development**

- Julie Gibson, director
- Mark Bauer, assistant director



- Gilbert Hake, deputy program administrator
- Susan Peterson, Self-Sufficiency Programs manager

#### **SLATE**

- Michael Holmes, executive director
- Mary Bell, TANF liaison
- Jeff Serocke, WIB chair

#### **North Oaks One-Stop Career Center**

- Gene Gorden, executive director
- Marilyn Robinson, director of human services for St. Louis County
- Fredrick Douglas, WIB chair
- Beneva Brooks, vice president of Workforce Programs, MERS/Goodwill

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