

2.1 PROTOCOL FOR STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (WDB) STAFF

Note: Interviewers will request documents such as guidance, plans, etc. on site if they were not obtained previously.

Instructions to site visitors: Bullets below each question represent probes for important details; depending on how well you are doing on time, try to make sure respondents touch on each of these issues. Text in brackets [] should be tailored based on the state or local area. Sections in gray are the high priority sections for this respondent.

Introduction

Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is [NAME] and I work for [Mathematica Policy Research/Social Policy Research Associates]. I am part of an independent research team conducting a study of WIOA implementation on behalf of the U.S. Department of Labor. Thank you very much for agreeing to participate in this conversation.

The purpose of this three-year study is to help DOL understand how states are implementing changes to the core workforce programs authorized under Titles I and III of WIOA, as well as how those changes are influenced by integration with other partners such as adult education, vocational rehabilitation, and TANF. To help us better understand WIOA's implementation, we are conducting site visits to 14 states, including two local areas in each state, to learn about their experiences. The information you share will help us understand the range of experiences that states have had, including key successes and challenges.

We have about [duration] for our conversation. I want to let you know that all interview data will be reported in the aggregate and your name will never be mentioned in any report that we write, though we might use quotes from your interview to illustrate findings, without using your name.

I would also like to record our conversation so that I can listen to it later as I complete my notes, and I will not share the recording with anyone outside of the research team. Being part of this discussion is voluntary, and you may choose not to answer a question if you wish, or to pause the recording at any time. Do you have any objections to being part of this interview or to my recording our discussion?

Okay, I'm going to turn on the audio recorder now.

Respondent Background

1. [If not already known for each person participating in the interview]
 - a. What is your official title and role?

- b. What are your main responsibilities related to implementation of WIOA?

A. Governance and Planning

1. State Plan Development

1. Why did your state opt for a [combined/unified] state plan?
 - a. [If combined]: What other programs (or programs) did you include beyond the required ones? Why?
2. Were there programs you wanted to include and did not? If so, why not?
3. Describe your state's general planning process for developing its WIOA plan. What entity and staff members led the process?
 - a. How and to what extent were other entities involved?
4. Did this process differ from previous state plan development efforts?
 - a. Was the process longer than with previous plans?
 - b. Were certain partners more involved? Less involved?
 - c. How did any changes to the process from prior planning efforts improve the final plan?
 - d. What were you able to achieve that had not been possible before?
 - e. What did you lose, if anything?
5. What, if any, significant challenges were encountered? What worked well?
 - a. Did the plan timeline work with other required planning for core programs, state planning, etc.?
6. How useful has your WIOA state planning process been for:
 - a. Developing and following through on your state's workforce strategy?
 - b. Establishing, developing or improving your partnerships with other core WIOA partners?
 - c. Other required AJC partners?
7. What could be done to make the plan/ plan process more useful/strategic?
8. How do you plan to involve your partners in the plan revision?
 - a. How will this be different than their involvement in the initial plan?
9. Do you have any lessons to share related to the development of the combined/unified plan on what has worked well or has been challenging?
10. What aspects of USDOL's guidance on the purpose or process for state plan development were helpful?
 - a. What could have been more helpful?

- b. How should the guidance/requirements be revised?
 - c. What additional guidance is needed from USDOL for you to be able to carry out the required revision to the state plan?
11. Have there been changes in federal or state funding for the workforce system that have affected your plan or how the plan will be implemented?
- a. If there have been significant cuts to funding, how are you adjusting the system in response to these cuts?
 - b. What will be the impacts on infrastructure, programming, and service delivery?

2. State Workforce Development Board Role and Operations

1. How has the board's membership changed under WIOA?
 - a. Did you include additional representatives beyond the minimum?
 - b. If so, which additional programs/entities are represented?
 - c. What did/do new members bring to the table that wasn't part of the Board's priorities or deliberations before WIOA?
 - d. [If state has a consolidated state workforce agency (SWA) which houses multiple core programs]: Did your state opt to have just a single SWA representative on the board or are there multiple SWA representatives? Why did you opt for that?
2. Were there challenges in meeting WIOA's membership requirements? If so, which requirements?
 - a. The requirement that members cannot represent more than one category?
 - b. The requirement that non-business members must also have optimal decision-making authority?
 - c. The requirement that members have significant expertise and experience?
 - d. Other requirements?
3. Has the revised WDB membership under WIOA affected the operations of the board? For example, has the membership of an apprenticeship representative led the board to focus more on apprenticeships?
4. Has the role of the state board changed under WIOA? If so, how and why?
5. What has been the board's role in making WIOA's changes to the AJC system?
 - a. Developing the AJC certification criteria?
 - b. Developing procedures?
 - c. Developing local MOU/RSA/IFA policy?
 - d. Developing integrated services & customer-centered policies & procedures?
6. What has been the board's role in developing stronger partnerships with core and required partners?

- a. Was the board involved in developing policies related to coordination of services?
 - b. How was the state partner MOU revised under WIOA?
 - c. How does the new MOU differ from the last one developed under WIOA? E.g., more focus on continuous improvement? On coordinated services?
 - d. What was the process used to develop the MOU?
7. What has been the board's role in strengthening employer engagement across the system, including sector strategies, career pathways, and work-based learning?
 8. Is the board operating more strategically? Why or why not?
 9. Is the board operating more efficiently? Why or why not?
 10. Has the role of the chair changed?
 - a. Is there more or different training provided for board members as compared to the board under the last year of WIA?
 11. Has the role of various members of the board changed?
 - a. Core partners?
 - b. Employers?
 - c. TANF?
 - d. Other required partners on the board?
 - e. Other non-required partners on the board?
 12. Is there more (or different) training provided for board members as compared to the board under the last year of WIA? What kind of training?

3. Local Area Designations and Local Plan Development

1. Did the configuration of local areas in the state change under WIOA?
2. What challenges did local boards experience in developing local plans? What worked well?
3. Are any changes planned for the next local planning process?
 - a. Did you require any local plans to be revised after submission? What were the main kinds of revisions you requested?
4. What guidance did the state provide to local boards on the requirements for developing their local plans?
5. What kinds of TA, if any, did the state provide to local boards in developing local plans?

4. Regional Designations and Regional Plans

1. Were any regional planning initiatives already underway prior to WIOA?
 - a. How are you building on these initiatives? What is new or different?

2. Describe your state's process for designating regions. What were the key elements of that process?
 - a. What challenges and lessons learned came out of this process?
 - b. Did you base your regions on local economic development regions?
 - c. Did you consult with any partners regarding designation of the regions?
 - d. How do the regions overlap with existing local workforce areas?
3. Do you think the regional designations are appropriate? Why or why not?
 - a. Do you think they are useful for improving service delivery & employer engagement?
4. Have any of your local boards challenged your regional designations? If so, why?
5. How much did regional plan requirements differ from local plan requirements?
6. What challenges did local boards experience in developing regional plans? What worked well?
 - a. Were any regional plans required to be revised after submission?
7. What guidance did you provide to local boards on requirements for developing regional plans?
8. Did you provide any TA to local boards on regional plans?
9. Is there anything you plan to change related to the regional planning process for the next time?

5. Local Workforce Development Board Role and Focus

1. How has the organizational membership of local boards generally changed under WIOA?
 - a. Have there been changes in size of the boards?
 - b. Have there been changes in the involvement of employers on the board?
 - c. Have there been changes in the engagement and involvement of other types of representatives?
2. Did local boards have any challenges in meeting WIOA's membership requirements?
3. Has the revised LWDB membership affected the priorities of the boards? For example, have apprenticeship representatives pushed boards to focus more on apprenticeships?
4. What policies and guidance has the state provided to local areas on local board membership?
5. What additional guidance is needed from USDOL on local board membership?

6. Local Board Employer Engagement; Sector Strategies

1. What policies and actions has the state taken to support LWDB employer engagement?

2. What changes in the workforce system are you seeing as a result of these efforts?
3. What policies and strategies has your state adopted to increase the use of sector strategies in the workforce system?
 - a. Did your efforts in this area precede WIOA?
 - b. If yes, what new strategies or activities are being pursued under WIOA?
 - i. Involving new partners and collaborations?
 - ii. Expanding services and training features?
 - iii. Targeting different populations, such as youth, individuals with disabilities, limited English and/or basic skills?
4. Has the focus on developing and expanding sector strategies been at the state, local, or regional levels?
5. What funding sources are being used to develop and support local sector strategy programs and initiatives (e.g., local formula funds, WIOA state set-aside funds, Title II, III, or IV funding)?

B. AJC System

1. AJC System Certification

1. Has the number of AJCs in your state changed since the end of WIA?
 - a. How many comprehensive and how many affiliate centers are there in the state, and how have those numbers changed since WIOA?
 - b. What are the reasons for changes (e.g. resource sharing requirements or changes in requirements for each type of AJC)?
2. Describe the AJC certification criteria approved by the State Board. What are the key components related to:
 - i. Effectiveness?
 - ii. Physical and programmatic accessibility?
 - iii. Continuous improvement?
3. What is the required AJC certification process?
 - b. What are the steps local boards need to follow? Are there optional steps?
 - c. Do the steps differ for comprehensive vs. affiliate centers?
4. How often do you plan to review and revise the criteria and process? If more often than the requirement of every two years, why?
5. Did you have a certification process/certification criteria during the last years of WIA?
 - a. If so, how and why does your process under WIOA differ?

- b. If you did not have a process, how was the new process developed?
 - i. What did you base the criteria on?
 - ii. Who was involved in developing the process?
 - iii. Any challenges or promising practices related to the development of the process/criteria?
6. Where are local boards in the process of implementing this certification process?
7. What challenges have local boards encountered in the certification process? What do they report works well?
8. What changes have occurred as a result of this new certification process? Have any local boards developed additional criteria beyond the state criteria?
9. What guidance have you provided on AJC certification to local boards?
 - a. What successes or challenges have you experienced related to this guidance?
10. What TA have you provided on AJC certification?
 - a. What successes or challenges have you experienced related to this TA?
11. What additional guidance is needed from USDOL on AJC certification?

2. Infrastructure Funding and MOUs

1. Is TANF a required partner in all areas of the state?
 - a. If not, why?
2. Are there any non-federally required partners that you have mandated that your local boards include in their AJC partnerships?
 - a. If so, which ones? Why did you add those partners?
3. How did your state structure the MOU development process?
 - a. Did you require your local areas to develop the entire MOU at once? Or the non-resource sharing arrangements first?
 - b. Why did you choose this approach?
4. How did your MOU requirements (excluding resource sharing components) differ from those under WIA?
5. In addition to required infrastructure costs, what were the most common additional costs (career services and shared operating services/costs) local areas included in their One-Stop operating budgets?
 - a. Why did they include those components?
 - b. Were any required by the state? Which ones?
6. Did they generally negotiate umbrella budgets for the entire area or separate budgets for each AJC?

7. What were the most common methodologies local boards chose to use for determining their various types of costs?
 - a. Why did they choose these methods?
 - b. How well do these methods work?
8. How did local boards determine proportionate use and relative benefit for each partner?
 - a. Were there differences in how they did this for on-site partners versus virtual partners?
9. How did local boards determine how to value non-cash contributions?
10. How often are local boards reviewing their agreements (regarding value of non-cash contributions; proportionate use and relative benefit)?
 - a. Are there any challenges related to this review process?
11. What challenges came up in the process of developing local One-Stop operating budgets?
12. Has your state has taken any steps to facilitate negotiation of One-Stop operating budgets (e.g. state-level partner meetings to facilitate state participation)?
13. By when do your local areas need to have final IFAs in place?
 - a. Did all of your local areas achieve consensus on their IFAs?
 - i. If yes, why do you think your areas succeeded? If not, how many areas failed?
 - ii. Which required partner(s) did not agree? What were their objections?
14. Where are you in the process of carrying out the required SFM process?
 - a. Developing the infrastructure budget?
 - b. Developing cost methodologies?
 - c. Calculating caps?
 - d. Assessing aggregate infrastructure contributions?
 - e. Local partners renegotiating or adjusting shares?
15. What challenges have you faced in implementing the SFM?
 - a. Did the local partners agree to renegotiate their LFM or did you have to implement the final step of the SFM (i.e. governor adjusting proportionate shares)?
16. Have there been any changes to partner participation in AJCs because of WIOA's resource sharing requirements? If so, describe.
17. Have there been any changes in local board composition because of WIOA's resource sharing requirements? If so, describe.
18. What guidance and TA did you provide on your overall MOU requirements?
 - a. What did you require to be included in the MOU?

- b. How effective was this TA/guidance?
19. What guidance have you provided on resource sharing?
 - a. What challenges did you encounter developing this guidance?
 - b. What feedback have partners/locals provided on this guidance?
 20. What TA has been provided by the state on resource sharing?
 - a. What successes or challenges have been experienced related to this TA?
 21. What aspects of USDOL's guidance on resource sharing could have been more helpful?
 - a. What additional guidance is needed from USDOL?
 22. Have you made use of any of USDOL's TA resources or activities related to local partners developing MOUS or One-Stop operating budgets (including the sample RSA/MOU developed by DOL)?
 - a. Did you use other TA?
 23. How useful was USDOL's guidance on the SFM? What could have been clearer?

3. One-Stop Operator

1. How did procurement of One-Stop operators change in your local areas after WIOA?
2. What challenges did local boards face in carrying out this requirement?
 - a. Did any of your local boards opt not to competitively procure their operator?
 - b. Were there any issues with boards unnecessarily restricting competition (e.g., too little time for the bid; too little funding; restrictions on type/location of bidders).
3. How many procured the operator role separately from the Title IB programs?
4. How much funding did your boards allocate to the operator role? Is this sufficient?
5. How has the composition of local operators across your state changed? Do you think changes in what entity serves as the operator will affect AJC operations? How and why?
6. What guidance have you provided on the role of the operator? The AJC manager?
 - a. Did other state-level partners review/contribute to this guidance?
 - b. How did this guidance differ from what was required under WIA?
7. What guidance have you provided on operator competitive procurement?
 - a. Did you provide guidance specifically on procurement processes?
 - b. Did you provide guidance on firewalls (e.g. between board functions? Between service provider functions? Operator monitoring?).
 - c. What are the challenges/lessons learned related to your guidance?
8. What TA have you provided on operator procurement?

- a. What successes or challenges have you experienced related to this TA?
9. What aspects of USDOL's guidance on operator procurement could have been more helpful? What additional guidance is needed from USDOL?

4. Collocation at AJCs

1. How has partner collocation changed (or how is it changing) since WIOA?
2. Across your state, what partners are always or almost always collocated at comprehensive centers? At affiliate sites?
 - a. What do you think are the primary reasons for this?
3. Across your state, what partners are never or almost never collocated at comprehensive centers? At affiliate sites?
 - a. What do you think are the primary reasons for this?
4. What guidance has the state provided to local areas on collocation of partners at AJCs under WIOA?
 - a. Did that guidance change from what was provided under WIA?
 - b. Any challenges/lessons learned related to your guidance?
5. What TA has the state provided on collocation?
6. Is any additional guidance needed from USDOL on collocation?

C. Overall AJC Streamlining & Accessible Services

1. Accessibility

1. Have you implemented specific policies or actions to promote a more seamless, accessible and customer-focused workforce service delivery network? Please describe.
 - a. Has the state encouraged or required any changes to AJC customer intake processes? What changes did this involve at the state level?
 - b. Has the state encouraged or required a shared case management system? Which programs or partners can access the case management system?
 - c. Has the state encouraged/required functional staffing arrangements at AJCs? How common are such arrangements?
 - d. Can you describe any other new state policies and actions that promote a more seamless, accessible, and customer-focused workforce service delivery network?
2. To what extent has the state emphasized customer or human-centered design as a key method for making your state's One-Stop career center system more customer-focused?
 - a. If you have emphasized this design approach, what primary problems or goals did you want to address through this process?

- b. Please describe some of the promising practices in human or customer-centered design at the local level.
3. Please describe any state-wide efforts to improve the accessibility of One-Stops for individuals with disabilities (e.g. policies, additional funding, or training).

2. Co-enrollment

1. How often are customers co-enrolled in multiple core partner programs? Other required partners?
 - a. Do any new requirements particularly facilitate or impede co-enrollment?
2. Have any local areas experienced changes in co-enrollment rates since WIOA?
3. Has the state provided any TA or guidance on co-enrollment or referral processes?
 - a. Are you encouraging co-enrollment and if so, how?
 - b. How effective was this TA or guidance?
4. Does the state have any plans for additional guidance or TA?

3. Use of shared MIS

1. Do any core or required partners use the same management information system (MIS)? If so, what systems? (If not, skip to #5)
 - a. Which partners use them?
 - b. For what purposes?
 - i. Case management?
 - ii. Participant tracking?
 - iii. Performance reporting?
 - iv. Fiscal reporting?
2. Are there differences in how partners can use any of these common systems?
 - a. Can all partners view data? Are there specific fields that are restricted?
 - b. Can all partners enter data into the system? Are there specific fields that only some partners can enter?
 - c. Can all partners revise data? Are there specific fields that only some partners can modify?
3. How do you ensure that the data being entered into these systems by different partners is accurate?
4. How are you protecting the security of the data being entered and stored?
5. If not all programs use the same MIS, why not?
 - a. Are there any plans to add more partners to shared MIS?

- b. Which ones?
 - c. With what data entry or viewing privileges?
 - d. If there are no plans to add partners, why not?
6. How important is it for seamless services that partner programs use the same MIS?

D. Performance Accountability

1. ETPL Changes

1. What challenges did you face in implementing the new ETPL requirements?
 - a. Developing procedures for transitioning existing providers to the new requirements?
 - b. Adding new providers to the list, including apprenticeship programs?
 - c. Establishing procedures for allowing providers to maintain their eligibility for the list?
 - d. Assisting providers with collecting the required performance data?
2. Have these ETPL changes impacted the number of providers available?

2. Common Measures

1. Have you faced any challenges implementing the WIOA performance measures?
2. Which two approaches to measuring the effectiveness of employer services did you choose to implement?
 - a. Why did you opt for those two approaches?
 - b. What metrics are you using?
 - c. What challenges have you faced in implementing these measures?
 - d. Do you have thoughts on other measures that might better capture the effectiveness of serving employers?
3. Are you developing any state-specific measures that you will be reporting on? If so, which ones and why?

3. Reporting and Evaluation

1. What progress has your state made in complying with WIOA's new reporting requirements?
2. How challenging has it been to meet the WIOA's required reporting timelines?
 - a. What factors have made this process challenging (e.g., different reporting timeframes across core programs)?
 - b. How have you addressed these challenges?

3. Please describe your state's experience with using DOL's new common performance reporting system (WIPS).
 - a. What changes have you had to make at the state level to accommodate this new system?
4. To what extent can your state track individual customers' participation across more than one partner via a common identifier, especially across the core partners?
 - a. Which partners use this identifier?
 - b. What efforts are currently underway to expand capacity to be able to do this—especially across the core partner programs?
5. Have you faced any challenges in accessing/providing required partner data for reporting?
 - a. If so, which types of data and from which partners (UI, education)?
 - b. How have you resolved or attempted to resolve these challenges?
6. What are your state's plans and goals for evaluation?
 - a. How much capacity does your state have to carry out the required evaluation component of WIOA?
 - b. If you do not have the capacity to conduct these activities internally, have you had experience contracting with outside evaluators in the past? How did this experience shape your evaluation plans under WIOA?
7. What guidance have you provided to local areas on the required evaluation component?
8. Is there a need for additional guidance on the required evaluation component from USDOL?

E. Services for Job Seekers and Employers

1. Has WIOA changed your state's approach to providing services to businesses?
2. What guidance or TA has the state provided to local areas on serving employers?
3. Is there a need for additional guidance from USDOL on serving employers?
4. What strategies have you implemented to increase the use of work-based and job-driven training (such as OJT, apprenticeships, transitional training, internships)?
 - a. What work-based and job-driven training models are most commonly used in your state?
5. What guidance or TA has the state provided to local areas on increasing work-based and job-driven training?
6. Is there a need for additional guidance from USDOL on increasing work-based and job-driven training?
7. Please describe your state's efforts to increase the use of registered apprenticeship programs.

- a. Have there been any challenges related to including apprenticeships on the ETPL?
 - b. Are there regulations around apprenticeship that could or should be relaxed to improve the use of registered apprenticeship in your state/region?
8. What guidance or TA has the state provided to local areas on increasing registered apprenticeship?
9. Is there a need for additional guidance from USDOL on registered apprenticeship under WIOA?
10. Please describe your state's efforts to serve more customers with barriers, including disabled customers, customers with low basic skills, or other focus populations.
11. What guidance or TA has the state provided to local areas on improving services to customers with barriers?
12. What, if any, additional guidance is needed from USDOL on serving customers with barriers?

G. Overall Questions

1. Partnerships

1. How would you assess the strength of your state's relationships among core partners?
Required partners?
 - a. Has this changed because of WIOA?
 - b. If not, why do you think WIOA's focus on enhanced partnerships has not affected your partnerships?
2. Are there sufficient systems in place to ensure regular and effective communication between partners?
3. What have been the key challenges and successes, if any, related to increasing collaboration across partners?
 - a. Are there differences in the extent of collaboration with your core partners versus other required partners, such as UI, SCSEP, Veterans programs, and TANF?
4. Overall, how integrated are workforce services now?
 - a. Has this changed because of WIOA?
 - b. What examples can you give that show this more integrated service delivery?
5. [If respondent feels workforce system is *not* integrated]: Why do you think WIOA's focus on enhanced partnerships has not affected the integration of services?

2. Systems Change

1. Overall, do you think the workforce system here has changed as a result of WIOA?
 - a. If so, what are the major changes you can attribute to WIOA? E.g. employer engagement, partnerships, services more streamlined, data sharing.

2. Have there been any negative, unintended consequences of implementing the WIOA regulations?
 - a. Are there ways in which you feel the new regulations actually make it more difficult for you to achieve your goals?
3. [If respondent doesn't think WIOA has changed the system]: Do you feel systems had already begun to change prior to WIOA, or that efforts under WIOA have not yet been effective in changing the system?
4. What additional changes are planned or needed to transform your workforce system to meet the goals of WIOA?
 - a. What changes would you like to see to make the workforce system better overall?

3. Guidance and Technical Assistance

1. Of all the TA provided by DOL national and regional offices on WIOA implementation, which assistance has been most helpful?
 - a. Which TA formats and types of materials have been most useful to you?
2. Are you satisfied with the level of TA DOL has provided on WIOA implementation?
3. Have you accessed the ION site to obtain TA materials or guidance on specific issues? If so, which issues?
4. In what areas would you like to receive additional TA?

Wrap-up

1. How would you describe your overall progress to date with WIOA implementation?
 - a. Where do you still have plans to make significant changes?
2. Beyond what we've discussed today, are there other areas you would like to highlight?
3. Are there any other areas of WIOA implementation our study should explore?

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