

Section XXII. TECHNOLOGY AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

One of the operational areas upon which the American Job Center, across all its sites, needs to improve significantly is the infusion of computer technology, from tapping online platforms and resources to incorporating digital transactions and data archiving into its processes. By developing technology-supported services, communications, and coordination with partners, the Center would significantly raise the efficiency of its overall operation and customer and partner engagement, set higher standards of accountability and effectiveness, and establish better alignment with general business practices.

Managers require "close" to real-time program data in order to effectively manage a highly complex workforce system. Legislative requirements for tracking client encounters from the point of intake on to one-year post service requires a system that can follow clients through their varied stages of services while participating in on-site and off-site programs.

Current Status

By many measures, the American Job Center operation has been slow in adopting computer and online technologies in its processes. Transactions are still primarily paper-heavy, but the Center recognizes the critical importance of upgrading its approach. At present, the extent of computer access includes the following:

- There is wireless access to the internet at both sites and staff have adequate computer stations with proper software and applications.
- The AOSOS system is the main database used to store customers' data and case management notes, generate reports and performance data (yet the latter cannot be done expeditiously). This system is not shared across the entire workforce system.
- At both Centers, the Union County American Job Center has set up a television in the waiting area through which upcoming American Job Center events are constantly streamed.
- All Orientations have been updated and presented via computer projections through PowerPoint slides.
- Each site has a computerized lab for trainees' self-paced learning modules in its Link program.
- The American Job Center staff has been effectively using the Career Connections and the County's Job Connections websites.
- Employment Services use a system for robo-call and robo-emails to reach out to registered individuals.

Strategic Directions

In order to enhance its online presence with an eye to increase the efficiency of its services, training, and overall operation, the following strategies will be adopted and given the highest priority.

S-30. Significantly improve the American Job Center's online presence. (Aligned with Goal 3- Broaden Use of Technology)

Among tasks supporting this strategy:

- Expand the American Job Centers website to include detailed descriptions of all services, posting of key documents and forms, linking to front-line staff and key managers, a welcome video, a mini web-based orientation, and key resources.
- Work to develop an online portal (an online American Job Center portal) for training and employment.
- Set up sites in social media to better connect customers to upcoming events—in compliance with new Union County policies—and participate more actively in making announcements through Union County social media platforms. This will be administered by newly assigned staff for public communications.
- Set up an American Job Center *public service email for general questions to be shared by both Employment Services and the County and assign a staff member to monitor it, respond promptly, and make referrals as appropriate.*
- Publish resource manual online, in HTML and PDF, and list email addresses of staff, in addition to phone numbers.
- Involve staff in training about online resources and trends in computer-enabled customer service (as mentioned under Section XIX).
- Take advantage of affordable online survey platforms to gather customer feedback in real time following the provision of services and training.
- Expand the robo-email outreach to all individuals who interface with the American Job Center as another step toward positioning the American Job Center to become a leading training and employment resource in the community.

S31. Determine how to incorporate online technology and a computer-enabled management information system across key nodes in the American Job Center operational processes, starting with intake and triage, aiming to increase access to services and upgrade communications with customers, enhance the recruitment and referral system, and facilitate more reliable data reporting and archiving. (Aligned with Goal 3- Broaden Use of Technology)

- Work toward digitizing the full intake process, working with the State on ways to link entry data with AOSOS or whichever system will be in place.

- Prepare to shift over time to a paperless operation, by starting to digitize/optically scan all customers' supporting documents, linking them to the database in use, and archiving them in accordance with HIPPA rules.

Progress Update

1. System-wide Cloud-based Client Management Software

The American Job Service has begun the process of procuring a cloud-based client management system that will connect the entire Union County Workforce Network include: AJC Career Coaches, AJC Managers, and AJC Partner Organizations.

Cloud-base software being considered will allow our system to:

- Deliver on the intent of WIOA with a fully integrated, multi-program platform that includes; human-centered case management, a labor exchange, and business services and analytics platform for state, regional and local workforce development.
- Help move people from public assistance to financial stability with a single platform to manage participants, programs, service providers, employers and more. Track everything from job club to subsidized employment and work experience.
- Help our partners exceed training performance goals by connecting staff with service providers providing a 360° view of the student along the training journey.
- Empower workforce development agencies with a collaborative, real-time approach to case management, training, and business services.
- Provide the ability to track and report on participation in WIOA, TANF, SNAP, Wagner Peyser and more.
- Simplify the Eligibility process and go paperless.

The system includes features to enable instant, secure collaboration both within your agency as well as external partners.

2. Evidence-based Data Evaluation

[Capturing here again what was stated earlier in the document verbatim, as it is relevant in this section as well. New specific strategies will be established and pursued to ensure the adoption of data-supported, evidence-based practices.]

Over decades of redefining exactly what success looks like in job training, we now aspire to look even closer at how we define system effectiveness. Going back to the 60's Labor programs measured number served and dollars spend along target population tracts. While these programs strived to have program completers and employment attainment, numerical data was not a primary focus. Come the 70's, and '80s and labor began setting real-time completion and placement goals across target population tracts. This was a big step and at the time thought to be a major breakthrough, and so it was. In the last 20 years, we have introduced qualitative measures placing even more consideration

toward examining which program strategies yielded best qualitative outcomes, including; increase in earnings, retention in employment, and the attainment of industry-recognized credentials to name a few.

Union County now wishes to raise criteria for measuring success up to a few more notches. We will begin to adopt/promote job training approaches that are based on evidence of effectiveness and to continue to expand the evidence base for what works. We need to know what works for whom: adults, youth, dislocated workers, reentry job seekers, and so on.

To achieve this goal, we will begin to develop specific strategies within our workforce plan that will:

- Expand analysis of long-term impacts of training approaches that have strong short-term impacts and appear to be the most job-driven including attainment of industry certificates.
- Disaggregate subgroup impacts to better understand how promising approaches can help particular groups of workers.
- Expand analysis of program components to examine the effect of key components and untangle what strategies are most effective.
- Replicate and evaluate promising models and approaches in different settings to provide more useful information about how communities and agencies can adopt or adapt proven strategies;
- Measure and evaluate outcomes of employer engagement and public/private training partnerships