

**American Job Center Operator's Committee Meeting  
Core Partners Convening – System Integration  
Monday, March 16, 2026**

**Attendees Present by Agency:**

Maritza Batista/UCNJ; Miguel Reyes/NJDOL-ES; Marlene Loff/UCNJ; Cathy Waters/ULOUC; Valerie Kerrigan/DVRS; Yunia Labaut/Workforce Advantage; Esther Phillip/DVRS; Reggie Smith/GUWUC; Shonda Laurel/Community Coordinated Childcare;

**DHS County Representatives Present**

Melissa Lespinasse, Assistant Director/UCDHS; **Jeffrey Jackson, Special Projects/UCDHS.**

**American Job Center Present**

Robert Croom, Director, Michelle Dixon

**Division of Social Services Present**

Rhonda McClain

---

**I. Welcome and Opening Remarks**

The meeting was called to order by **Melissa Lespinasse, Assistant Director, UCDHS**, who welcomed all partners and thanked them for attending the **Core Partners Convening focused on System Integration**. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the **Blueprint for a Fully Integrated and Coordinated American Job Center Workforce Development System** and begin collaborative discussions on implementation across partner agencies.

Melissa emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination among partners to ensure customers receive **seamless and effective workforce services** throughout the American Job Center network.

**II. Current Workforce System Landscape**

The group discussed the **current workforce system structure**, including challenges partners face when coordinating services across multiple agencies. A key concern identified was the **lack of integration between systems, programs, and intake processes**, which can create confusion for both staff and customers.

Participants noted that **frontline and triage staff** are often the first point of contact for clients and play a critical role in directing individuals to appropriate services. However, gaps in training and inconsistent procedures can create barriers to effective navigation of the system.

The discussion emphasized the importance of **standardized customer service practices**, improved staff training, and clear processes to ensure all clients receive consistent information and guidance regardless of the agency they initially approach.

### III. AJC Integration Blueprint

**Jeffrey Jackson** provided an overview of the **AJC Integration Blueprint**, which aims to build a more **coordinated and collaborative workforce development system**. The blueprint focuses on aligning services, strengthening inter-agency collaboration, and creating consistent procedures that support both staff and customers.

A major component of the blueprint is the development of **shared tools and systems** that allow agencies to track customer progress and services across programs. Participants discussed the potential benefits of improved integration, including more efficient service delivery and better outcomes for customers.

### IV. Customer-Centered Service Delivery Model

A significant portion of the meeting focused on the importance of implementing a **customer-centered service delivery model**.

Jeffrey emphasized that **front desk and intake staff play a critical role** in shaping the customer experience. Proper training is essential to ensure staff are prepared to respond with empathy, professionalism, and patience when interacting with clients, particularly those who may face communication barriers or intellectual disabilities.

The discussion highlighted the importance of:

- Active listening and empathy when assisting customers
- Proper communication and body language when interacting with individuals with disabilities
- Selecting and training staff who are well suited for frontline customer service roles

Participants also discussed challenges related to **large counselor caseloads**, which currently range from **50 to 300 clients per counselor**. These caseloads make it difficult to provide individualized attention to each customer, reinforcing the need for improved systems and collaboration.

### V. Implementation Roadmap Overview

The group reviewed a proposed **implementation roadmap** to support the development of a more integrated system. Key components of the roadmap include:

- Creation of a **Universal Intake Form**
- Development of a **Universal Orientation Process**
- Establishment of **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** across agencies
- Development of a **dashboard system** to track client progress
- Improved **data sharing and documentation protocols**

The discussion also addressed the need to develop a **centralized data management approach**, as current software systems used by different agencies do not communicate with one another effectively.

Jeffrey shared updates on ongoing efforts to develop a **new system and dashboards** that would allow agencies to better monitor client progress and track referrals between programs. The system may involve migration from **UC Works**, with plans to explore improved integration with other systems where possible.

## **VI. Partner Discussion and Feedback**

Partners engaged in a collaborative discussion about current challenges and opportunities for improvement within the workforce system.

Several themes emerged during the discussion:

### **Inter-Agency Collaboration**

Participants agreed that stronger coordination between agencies would significantly improve the customer experience. Shared workspaces, consistent communication, and clear referral pathways were discussed as possible strategies to improve collaboration.

### **Client Case Management**

Managing high-need clients remains a challenge. Some customers require significantly more support than others, which can place additional strain on counselors and case managers.

### **Referral Tracking and Follow-Up**

Participants highlighted the importance of developing systems that allow agencies to **track referrals and outcomes**. A universal referral process would allow staff to follow a client's progress across programs and ensure they receive appropriate follow-up services.

### **Data Management Challenges**

Current systems across agencies operate independently, making it difficult to capture a complete picture of a client's progress. Participants agreed that the development of a **centralized or "prime" system** where data is initially recorded would help streamline reporting and improve coordination.

### **AJC Certification Requirements**

The group also discussed the need to meet **AJC certification requirements**, noting that approximately

**75–80% of required standards are currently met.** Continued work on documentation, SOPs, and system improvements will be necessary to ensure full compliance and prevent outside entities from potentially assuming certain workforce functions.

## VII. Next Steps and Closing

To move the integration effort forward, several **action steps** were identified:

- **All Participants:** Review the proposed universal intake form and provide feedback for further refinement.
- **Jeffrey Jackson:** Draft descriptions and expectations for proposed sub-teams (intake systems, orientation, SOPs, data protocols, etc.) and circulate to the group.
- **All Participants:** Review and provide feedback on the sub-team descriptions and expectations.
- **All Participants:** Volunteer for relevant sub-teams and propose additional teams if needed.
- **Jeffrey Jackson:** Share information on sub-teams and gather further feedback via email.
- **Jeffrey Jackson:** Meet with the system/data team to continue development of the new system and establish an implementation timeline.
- **All Participants:** Begin drafting or updating Standard Operating Procedures related to intake, referrals, data sharing, and client documentation.
- **All Participants:** Review current processes to ensure all trainings, workshops, and client services are documented and reportable for certification purposes.
- **All Participants:** Gather input from triage/frontline staff regarding information needed for universal intake and referral forms.
- **All Participants:** Begin planning for development of a **universal referral process and universal orientation** as part of the integrated system.

Jeffrey will present the proposed **sub-teams and their roles** at the next meeting scheduled for April 20, 2026.