

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS

BACKGROUND

The New One-Stop Career Center Service Delivery Structure

The cornerstone of the new workforce investment system is the One-Stop Career Center service delivery structure aimed at integrating programs, services and governance structures. At these integrated local One-Stop Career Centers, all citizens can access high quality local information on available jobs, skill requirements, and training provider performance. While the Workforce Investment Act establishes certain minimum requirements for the structure of the local system, it allows local communities and states significant flexibility in the design and implementation of their One-Stop Career Center systems. The partners required by the law to be part of the One-Stop Career Centers are:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Activities
- Employment Service
- Adult Education
- Postsecondary Vocational Education
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- Welfare-to-Work
- Title V of the Older Americans Act
- Trade Adjustment Assistance
- NAFTA Transitional Adjustment Assistance
- Veterans Employment and Training Programs
- Community Services Block Grant
- Employment and training activities carried out by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Unemployment Insurance

Each One-Stop Career Center partner is required to serve on the local board and to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local board describing what services are to be provided at the One-Stop Career Center, how the costs of the services and the operating costs of the system will be funded, methods of referral of individuals

between the One-Stop operator and the One-Stop partners, the duration of the MOU, and the procedures for amending the MOU.

A One-Stop operator will be designated to manage the day-to-day functioning of the local One-Stop Career Center. One-Stop operators may be designated or certified through a competitive process or in accordance with an agreement reached between the local board and a consortium of entities that, at a minimum, includes three or more of the mandatory One-Stop partners. A wide range of organizations and entities -- such as postsecondary educational institutions, local Employment Service offices, community-based organizations, private for-profit entities, or government agencies -- are eligible to be designated or certified as One-Stop operators.

Each local area must have at least one physical "full service" center where customers can access services from each of the One-Stop partners. Additional service structures may include other full service centers or a network of affiliated sites, or a network of One-Stop partners that can consist of physical sites or electronic access points. Regardless of the design, all One-Stop Career Centers must be based on a "no wrong door" approach that assures customers access to information on all of the core services.

One Stop Career Center Services

Each One-Stop Career Center offers a wide spectrum of services ranging from self-service activities to intensive staff-assisted services. The Workforce Investment Act provides for a continuum of three levels of services that individuals are to progress through: core services; intensive services; and training, with the more extensive levels of services being provided only after the individual is unable to obtain employment with core services.

Another more fundamental shift in the new system is that individuals no longer will be encouraged to leave the system after landing a job, but will be encouraged to access information and services continuously throughout their lifetime as they move up the career ladder - not just in times of crisis.

Core Services

The Core Services required at each One-Stop Career Center are:

- Determination of eligibility of services
- Outreach, intake (which may include worker profiling), and orientation to the One-Stop Career Center

- Initial assessment
- Job search and placement assistance, and career counseling
- Provision of labor market information
- Provision of information on:
 - eligible training providers
 - local performance outcomes
 - activities at the One-Stop Career Center
 - filing claims for Unemployment Insurance
 - supportive services
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for Welfare-to-Work and financial aid assistance.
- Follow-up service

Intensive Services

Intensive services may be provided to adults and dislocated workers who are unemployed and are unable to obtain employment through core services, and who are employed, if the One-Stop operator determines that the individual is in need of more intensive services in order to obtain new employment or stay employed.

Required Intensive Services are:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of skill levels (i.e., diagnostic testing)
- Development of an individual employment plan
- Group counseling
- Individual counseling and career planning
- Case management
- Short-term prevocational services

Training Services

Individuals who have met the eligibility requirements for intensive services, and are unable to obtain or retain employment through intensive services may receive training services. Through One-Stop Career Centers, these individuals will be evaluated to determine whether or not they are in need of training and if they possess the

skills and qualifications needed to participate successfully in the training program in which they express an interest. Training services must be directly linked to occupations that are in demand in the local area, or in another area to which the individual receiving services is willing to relocate. As with intensive services, in areas where the local board and the Governor have determined that adult funds are limited, welfare recipients and other low-income individuals will receive priority in the use of such funds for training services.

One-Stop Career Centers will provide access to consumer information relating to training providers that can assist individuals in gaining relevant skills -- including information on the performance of such providers in placing graduates in employment. Through local boards, each state must maintain a list of eligible training providers that meet performance levels as set by the Governor, and adjusted upward, as appropriate, by local boards. Individuals may choose any provider from the list of approved providers, whether or not the provider is located in the local area where the individual resides.

With limited exceptions, training services will be provided through the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs). States and local boards determine the structure of the ITA system in their local areas. For example, an ITA could take a variety of forms such as a voucher, credit, debit card, or even a repository for training funds from other programs. The law does not prescribe a limit on the amount that may be provided to assist an individual in obtaining training, nor does it preclude a state or locality from establishing such limits.