

NCWORKS CAREER CENTER RESOURCING GUIDE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide general guidance to Workforce Board Directors and Regional Operations Directors as they make resource decisions for NCWorks Career Centers. As funding for workforce training and employment programs decreases, it is crucial that local, collaborative teams make the most efficient and effective use of personnel, equipment (technology), and facilities.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) legislation establishes the requirement of workforce development partners sharing in the costs of the one-stop system. While implementation of cost-sharing procedures is not the work of this group, workforce boards and DWS must consider the most efficient and effective use of resources.

The Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) and the Workforce Development Directors Council worked together to establish eight lines of effort to improve career center operations. Career Center Resourcing represents one of those efforts for ensuring continuous improvement. This line of effort seeks to analyze existing resources and provide guidance on the utilization of future resources.

A baseline assessment of resources was conducted to determine the existing status of personnel, equipment, and facilities throughout the state. Information on WIOA Career Center operations was also requested from the other seven states – South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama - which comprise USDOL's Region 3.

ANALYSIS OF BASELINE RESULTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCANNING

A survey tool was used to collect data on existing resources in Career Centers during the December 2016-January 2017 time frame. A follow-up period over the next several months ensured a high response rate. At the conclusion of data collection, all but 9 certified Career Centers in the state participated. The responses came from small, medium, and large Centers. All workforce board areas and all prosperity zones were represented.

Based on the data collected, trends were identified in the areas of staffing, technology, and facilities:

Staffing

- Slightly less than half (47.1%) of Centers share staff with other (smaller) Centers
- Majority (96.5%) of Centers participate in Integrated Service Delivery (ISD)
- Welcome (95.3%) and Resource Center (91.8%) functions are the most integrated areas in Centers

Technology

- Most Centers lack the tools for staff to be mobile

- Many Centers don't have web cameras or tools for electronic meetings
- Centers have few resources for Assistive Technology

Facilities

- Over 15% of Centers are now located on college campus
- Location of Centers involve many factors, including proximity to population and industry

In addition to assessing the existing resources in Centers, information was requested from neighboring states concerning WIOA Career Center operations. Five of the eight partner states responded – South Carolina, Florida, Kentucky, Alabama, and Tennessee. Results from the states include the following findings:

- The number of Centers varies greatly; most have less than 30, but larger states have as many as 100 (including affiliate sites).
- States are at various phases of integration; some share a database among core partners, whereas other states are just starting to pilot ISD.
- Every state uses volunteers to help staff Centers, usually at reception or in the resource area.
- Most states do not have a baseline for technology in their Centers. Kentucky is equipping all comprehensive centers with video conferencing equipment.

GUIDANCE AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Workforce Development Board and Division of Workforce Solutions staff should continue to work together to ensure Career Centers have the resources needed to fully serve job-seeking and business customers in their local communities. The resources required to ensure the daily operation of Centers include staffing, technology, and facilities.

The Career Center Resourcing Line of Effort team recommends the following:

Staffing

- Encourage open discussions between Center Managers, Regional Operations Directors, and Workforce Board Directors on staffing levels needed in each Center. Consider Center by Center analysis of workload to justify staffing levels.
- Use a regional (local workforce board area or prosperity zone) approach to support under-resourced/under-staffed Centers. The regional approach is currently being used by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) program to serve veterans seeking employment, as well as assist employers with filling positions with qualified veterans. A regional strategy can also be used to cover fluctuations in the demand for services due to layoffs, mass recruitments, WARN Notice filings, certification of TAA petitions, business outreach, and general workload shifts.
- Use an integrated interview panel for filling Center positions to ensure the skills needed for a functional area/program are identified and addressed.
- Encourage cross-training and cross-utilization of staff to meet the needs of the Center and its customer base. Several areas to focus on for greater integration include business services/outreach and re-employment services.

- Have Center staff identify themselves as NCWorks staff when making introductions. This provides clarity for customers, as well as promotes unity among staff.
- Develop a volunteer program. Utilize volunteers to assist with less-intensive tasks in the Center, such as the resource area and reception desk. Guidelines and training should be developed to ensure the integrity of the volunteer program.

Technology

- Install Wi-Fi in all Centers for job-seeking and business customers.
- Provide access to more tools that allow staff members to be mobile as they conduct outreach to job-seeking and business customers. Consider adding laptops, jet packs, mobile printers, and mobile scanners for staff charged with outreach responsibilities through Tier 1 Centers.
- Provide web cameras and online meeting tools for each Career Center. Web cams and online meeting tools (such as Skype for Business or GoToMeeting) can be used by staff for trainings and meetings. Web cams can be utilized by job-seeking and business customers for interviews.
- Develop a replacement schedule for all computers in the Center. For example, employ a three year replacement schedule for staff and resource computers. This cycle ensures Centers will receive new equipment every three years.
- Equip Centers with Assistive Technology to better serve individuals with disabilities. Ensure each Center complies with at least one reasonable accommodation per category on the Assistive Technology Checklist within the NCWorks Career Center Certification Application. Additional information on assistive technology resources and services can be found through the North Carolina Assistive Technology Program (NCATP). See <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/vocational-rehabilitation-services/north-carolina-assistive-technology-program> for information on no-cost and fee-based services available through NCATP.

Facilities

- Develop a site selection process for considering the number of and locations for Career Centers. An example of this process is provided.
- Ensure all staff receive safety/security training so they know how to handle threats. Centers vary in their location and layout and, thus, have different security needs ranging from security cameras to security systems to security guards. Reach out to local police departments to see if they offer a free, on-site security assessment for businesses/organizations. Additionally, many law enforcement organizations offer free “Active Shooter Preparedness” or similar safety training for staff.
- Consider upgrading Center front doors to be equipped with an automated opening feature. This will allow easier access for persons with disabilities. While this recommendation may be costly, it should be considered during a lease renewal or a future site selection.
- Coordinate access to Centers located on community college campuses. Center hours and days of operation can be impacted by the college schedule, i.e. holidays, summer break, adverse weather. Make this a part of the discussion when selecting the college campus as the location for the Center.

In addition to staffing, technology, and facilities, the Career Center Resourcing LOE recommends local Workforce Board and regional Division of Workforce Solutions staff keep local elected officials informed. Through regular communication, such as in consortium meetings, local officials are able to stay abreast of funding allocations, success stories, and challenges for the workforce system.