

A Framework for Re-Engineering North Carolina's Workforce Delivery System

Today's environment requires North Carolina's workforce delivery system to change the way it provides services to its citizens and businesses. Four specific events over the last several years have led to this need to change.

- *North Carolina's economy is transitioning. The recession of 2008-09 in combination with the structural changes to the state's economy has resulted in high unemployment (the 5th highest in the country). Despite the high unemployment, some businesses are struggling to find skilled workers.*
- *The Department of Commerce and Employment Security Commission merged creating an opportunity to coordinate local workforce service delivery.*
- *The Commission on Workforce Development recognized the need to rethink service delivery and included in its 2012-14 Strategic Plan an objective to create a new framework for a more integrated one-stop delivery system.*
- *Governor McCrory has stated that customer service is a priority for all state services.*

The convergence of these four events requires North Carolina's Career Centers to operate in a new way by integrating workforce services. Integrated service delivery will better serve the state's citizens and businesses by responding to customer needs, not just program requirements. It will create a seamless delivery system and improve customer service. Integrated service delivery will assist people access the services they need to get back to work and help businesses connect with qualified workers. The North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions looks forward to continuing to work with local Workforce Development Boards, stakeholders, and partners to move our delivery system forward.

The following Strategic Framework for North Carolina's Career Centers will be implemented with the commitment and urgency that the economy demands and our customers deserve. This new approach to service delivery is characterized by:

- Integrated Career Center staffing
- An integrated customer pool
- An integrated customer flow
- Integrated technology

Integrated Services to Better Serve Customers

- North Carolina's Career Centers must move beyond mere partnership and co-location and transform to true integrated service delivery. While all Career Center partner programs are valued, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs and the Wagner-Peyser Employment Services program are the operational backbone of the Centers. Consequently, these programs will be the initial focus of a customer-focused, skill-based, integrated service strategy.
- An integrated customer flow will be developed and implemented that responds to customer need – not just to program requirements. Staff-assisted services will be emphasized and Center services will be continuously promoted and provided until the customer's goal has been achieved. This integrated flow will include three major functions that comprise the customer welcome, skill development, and employment activities.

- These customer flow functions will be fulfilled by integrated, cross-trained staff with functional leadership. The integrated, functional teams will include both Wagner-Peyser and WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funded employees and the focus will be on the assigned function – not just the requirements of a particular funding stream.
- Another very important functional team will provide services to employers that will both assist in the alignment of Center services with the needs of employers, as well as develop employment opportunities for Center jobseeker customers. This team may operate on a regional labor market basis, but will be a valuable asset to each Center in the area.
- All Career Center customers (when eligibility permits) will be enrolled in the performance pool of both the WIA Title I Adult program and Wagner-Peyser program during the first visit to a Career Center. All Trade Act customers will also be enrolled in the performance pool of the WIA Title I Dislocated Worker Program.
- The North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions will integrate its own staff and shift from a program silo organization to an integrated services organization. The Division expects that local Workforce Development Boards and Career Centers will adopt the same approach.

Create a Career Center Service Model that Values Both Skills and Jobs

- All Career Center customers, including Unemployment Insurance claimants, will be provided with the opportunity to know their skills, improve their skills, and get the best job possible with their skills. Every jobseeker that enters the Career Center will leave as a better job candidate because of the value-added services received.
- The Career Center customer flow will include a first-visit, standardized initial skills assessment, easy access to a wide range of skill development services, and the opportunity to improve employment opportunities through skill upgrading, skill validation, and credentialing.

Increase the Number of Career Center Customers Accessing Skill Development and Training Services

- North Carolina’s Career Centers will develop, continuously improve, and actively promote a wide range of skill development opportunities through multiple service delivery methods. All services in this robust “product box” will be available to all Center customers, embedded in an integrated customer flow, and easily accessed by eligible customers with the support of all Center staff. Local Workforce Boards are very strongly encouraged to invest and dedicate more of their valuable resources to pre-vocational skill improvement intensive services.

Implement Lean Processes and Streamline Service Delivery by Removing Bureaucratic Barriers and Waste

- In order to better serve customers, reserve staff time for value-added service delivery, and make integrated services a reality, the North Carolina Division of Workforce Solutions will

actively work to streamline requirements and alleviate bureaucratic barriers to support the delivery of customer-focused quality service. The Division will remove unneeded paperwork, reduce unnecessary documentation and reporting, change outdated policies that inhibit integrated and efficient service delivery and provide modern technology that will accommodate the integrated service delivery approach.

- The Division will focus its monitoring on quality service delivery and with “compliance” as a necessary responsibility, but not as an end in itself. Local Workforce Boards will be expected to respond to this continuous, state-level streamlining, by analyzing and streamlining their own policies, procedures, and practices.

Redesign and Re-Purpose Employer Services

- Services to employers must move beyond listing jobs and making referrals of job candidates. Local staff should closely align and coordinate with state and local economic development partners to ensure a system of workforce services that will help North Carolina employers reach their full potential. Local staff must be aware of the current business climate and the human resource needs of employers. Emphasis must be placed on assisting existing North Carolina employers with accessing workforce services; including matching employers with Career Center participants that have the skills they require and assisting them access available activities, such as work-based learning, pre-employment skill development, and apprenticeship programs.
- A renewed emphasis will be on developing sector strategies that target high-growth industries, such as green industries, healthcare, life sciences, emerging technology and advanced manufacturing.

Meet New Performance Expectations: Success Defined Through New Quality Service Metrics

- North Carolina must move beyond the WIA and Wagner-Peyser common measures that focus exclusively on silo and programmatic performance measures to value-added service delivery. In other words, we must adopt and achieve shared success metrics that value inputs and results– not just performance standards management.