

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 34-10
	DATE April 11, 2011

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE AGENCIES
ALL STATE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER SYSTEM LEADS
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

FROM: JANE OATES /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Release and Availability of Employment and Training Administration (ETA)
Occasional Paper: *Workforce System One-Stop Services for Public Assistance
and Other Low-Income Populations: Lessons Learned in Selected States*

1. Purpose. To announce the release and availability of an ETA Occasional Paper titled *Workforce System One-Stop Services for Public Assistance and Other Low income Populations: Lessons Learned in Selected States*.

2. Background. Under a grant from ETA, the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government (Rockefeller) undertook a field network research study of selected sites to examine how Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) clients are served by the Workforce Investment Act's (WIA) One-Stop Career Centers. The research sought to define the nature of the cooperative, administrative, operational and financial relationships between WIA and TANF programs.

3. Publications Description and Findings. This report contains a set of structured case studies of the relationship between WIA and TANF programs in Sacramento and Modesto Counties in California; Macon and Columbus Counties in Georgia; and the City of St. Louis and St. Louis County in Missouri. To inform this report, Rockefeller gathered and analyzed information on the experiences of key stakeholders in settings with a successful track record of serving TANF and other low-income populations through One-Stop Career Centers, where such experience is the result of local decisions rather than centralized state services or state-mandated program alignments. Rockefeller conducted interviews and on-site observations with key informants, including senior administrative and program management at the selected One-Stop Career Centers and the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), as well as contacts with the employment and social service agencies at the state and county levels. The study also included an analysis of administrative data on client caseloads, types of services, and performance indicators.

Following are some of the report's findings:

- Since the One-Stop Career Centers visited were located within areas of high poverty, the comparatively high prevalence of One-Stop Career Center services for low-income populations within these settings was more a function of the service environment in which they operated rather than the result of conscious targeting of services to TANF clients.
- While the study selected sites with a successful track record of serving TANF and other low-income populations through One-Stop Career Centers where such experience is a result of local decisions rather than state-mandated program alignment, the study found that state encouragement in local WIA/TANF coordination can be helpful. State workforce agencies allowed a high degree of flexibility in the development and implementation of policies and procedures to the local/county agencies, workforce boards, and One-Stop Career Centers.
- All of the areas where the One-Stop Career Centers in the study are located have a history of collaborative relationships that date to or predate the 1996 welfare reform that made new relationships easier to build.
- Effective community-based service providers can effectively serve TANF clients as these organizations are capable of helping these clients address their barriers to employment.
- Targeting entry-level jobs in growing fields of employment is key for TANF clients. The One-Stop Career Centers in the study actively identified growth industries with appropriate entry-level jobs.
- WIB vision and buy-in is crucial. One board chair believes their success is due to the tenure of the board members and the Career Center staff, a focus on shared resources, and including service providers and private sector stakeholder on the board to ensure that employment-related services are relevant to the local job market.
- Location and technology can be important aids for service coordination. Most of the One-Stop Career Centers in the study have TANF agency staff members collocated on-site, though some were only part-time. Some of the One-Stop Career Centers in the study have an easy referral system that tracks the individual and the services they received. Some of the state workforce and social services agencies do not have linked information technology, but the state allows counties the flexibility to link their own workforce and social service information technology systems. One state links their workforce and social services databases at the state level. Even though they are two separate databases, they are integrated and interactive.

The report discusses barriers and challenges to serving TANF clients in the One-Stop Career Centers. These include (a) characteristics of the TANF population; (b) the perceived “fit” of One-Stop Career Center services given those characteristics; (c) the competing cultures of workforce development and public assistance agencies; (d) the emphasis on performance reporting as a disincentive to focus on hard-to-serve clients; and (e) low employment demand from the weak economy.

4. Inquires. To view an abstract of this publication, as well as to download the full report, visit the ETA Occasional Paper Series Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.