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ABSTRACT

As workforce development and school-to-work transition are moved onto the national agenda, so are public officials pressed to cut the federal deficit and budget. Consequently, the National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (NOICC) and other federal education and labor programs have faced rescissions." Legislative proposals reauthorizing education and labor programs emphasized the importance of providing customers with occupational and labor market information and career development assistance, longtime central concerns of NOICC. That their importance has been recognized is a tribute to NOICC's success, but not necessarily to its survival. Current legislative proposals recognize the need for comprehensive labor market information, but they do not recognize the need for NOICCs or SOICCs. In this fiscal climate NOICC/SOICC must make the case for their survival. Some suggestions for making the case include a focus on end results of the NOICC/SOICC Network which include: a new career planning computer system; career development and information delivery system components; career development programs; training programs; and career information. Possible takeovers and mergers are discussed briefly. (JBJ)

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An Invitation To Remember and To Celebrate: NOICC/SOICC Network at 18

REALITY BITES

For many weeks preceding this 18th annual SOICC Conference, I have wondered what tidings I would be able to bring you concerning the state of the NOICC/SOICC Network and its future. In the past year, the importance of our mission was reinforced as the public, the Congress, and the Administration moved workforce development and the school-to-work transition onto the national agenda. It was exciting to find heightened demand for our information systems and career development resources.

But the same outside forces that called attention to the need for a new workforce investment system also pressed public officials to cut the federal deficit and budget. Washington has been awash in proposals to eliminate and consolidate programs, cut spending, and pare government agencies.

By early spring, NOICC and other federal education and labor programs were facing "rescissions." While the Washington Post grappled with the spelling and meaning of that term, NOICC staff grappled with the prospect of a 50 percent cut in funding for this program year. With relief, we learned late in July that agreement had been reached; our funding would be reduced by a much smaller amount, to \$9.7 million for this year.

May brought other troublesome "maybes," among them "may" (as opposed to "shall") language in legislative proposals for block grants. On the one hand, we were heartened that proposals reauthorizing education and labor programs emphasized the importance of providing customers with occupational and labor market information and career development assistance. These have been the central concerns of our Network for nearly two decades, and we have developed many resources to address these needs. That their importance has been recognized is a tribute to our success — but not necessarily a ticket to our survival.

LEGISLATION AND LABOR MARKET INFORMATION

Overhead #1 -- Legislation

Three bills all feature labor market information as an important element:

S. 180 (Kennedy): Locates the responsibility for developing and maintaining an LMI system with the Department of Labor, including data development, dissemination, technical assistance, and research and demonstration.

Presented by Juliette N. Lester, Executive Director, National Occupational Information Coordinating Committee at the 18th Annual SOICC Conference in Tucson, Arizona on Friday, August, 11, 1995.

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S. 143 (Kassebaum): Establishes a Federal Workforce Development Partnership and Governing Board. The Governing Board oversees the development, maintenance, and improvement of a nationwide integrated labor market information system. The system is to be administered through a formal Federal-state structure. At the state level, the Governor is to establish an interagency process to oversee the statewide LMI system; in addition a single State agency or entity within the State is responsible for management of the LMI system. At least some career development type activities appear to be folded into the National Center for Research in Education and Workforce Development, which is charged with developing new models for career guidance, career information, and counseling services.

H.R. 1617 (CAREERS Act) (McKeon/Goodling): Calls for ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated system of LMI which will provide locally based information (as well as national). The Secretary of Labor oversees the development, maintenance, and improvement of the system. Governors are to designate a single State agency to manage and oversee the statewide LMI system. The designated agency in turn is to actively seek the participation by possible stakeholders in the system.

Overhead #2 – Quote from House Report on CAREERS Act

Yes, current proposals recognize the need for comprehensive labor market information in workforce development strategies. But — much to our dismay — they do not recognize the need for NOICC and the SOICCs. Even though we are an extremely lean (I hope not mean) operation, we may be among the casualties of the campaign to curb federal spending. In proposed House appropriations for FY 1996, the NOICC/SOICC Network was "zeroed out." While the Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to meet, our future is uncertain.

My dilemma about what to say today reminded me of a story Helen Thomas reported in her book, *Dateline: White House*, about former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's extensive and detailed briefings for the White House press corps. "It was the best show in town," she wrote, "and Kissinger would put on a virtuoso performance, a professor lecturing to freshmen students. . . . Once he opened his remarks by saying, 'I hardly know where to begin.'" To which Helen Thomas quickly responded, "Begin at the end."

END RESULTS (TO DATE)

With that advice in mind, let me begin with the end results (to date) of some long-standing efforts of the NOICC/SOICC Network.

I want to emphasize that these accomplishments are indeed the result of a strong state and federal partnership, in which NOICC and the SOICCs both have important roles. NOICC has depended on the SOICCs to deliver for the Network, both literally and figuratively, and they have — working with NOICC on national priorities and reaching customers at the state and local level. NOICC and the SOICCs, in turn, depend on their member agencies, professional associations, private vendors, and others to collaborate in reaching customers. The value of this collaboration is readily apparent in what the Network has achieved.

This short speech is not a litany of our many accomplishments, but an invitation to remember and celebrate them. They are evident (warts and all) in every aspect of this conference — its planning, its diverse participants, the presentations, and the products, many of which are being discussed and displayed here. If you think about it, this conference is an icon for a Windows 95 look at the state of the NOICC/SOICC Network and our achievements.

Our pre-conference workshops, for example, included training for state staff on our brand new occupational and labor market information data base and our Micro-OIS, a computerized delivery system for planners. The concept of a core data base, now called the OLMID, that would serve two major information delivery systems was developed years ago. With today's technology, the original concept of the OLMID can now be realized.

Overhead #3 -- NOICC Annual Report, p. 6

The new OLMID will make it easier for state system developers to update and enhance different kinds of delivery media, such as state career information delivery systems, or CIDS, and the micro-OIS for planners. All nine of the states currently establishing one-stop career shops are planning to implement the OLMID, and most will also install their state CIDS and the new micro-OIS in 1995.

Overhead #4 -- Career Development Components

Career development and information are also prominent on our conference agenda. These are long-standing concerns of our Network. Shortly after NOICC was created, the Labor Department sought our help in fostering the implementation of state career information delivery systems. We also took over the responsibility for the Employment and Training Administration's Improved Career Decision-Making Program (ICDM). Since then, with extra funds from the Defense Department, ICDM training has helped thousands of counselors learn to use occupational information in career counseling. In PY 1993 alone, SOICCs offered more than 100 workshops for more than 2500 participants.

Overhead #4A - Career Development Programs

NOICC and the SOICCs have recognized the value of integrating and relating career information products to reach more customers more effectively. Almost a decade ago, we launched a major national/state collaboration with the counseling profession to develop guidelines and competencies for strengthening comprehensive career development programs. That provided a framework states could use to build career development into the schools' curricula. Today, the National Career Development Guidelines have been adopted in more than 40 states. The competencies in the Guidelines (related to self-knowledge, educational and occupational exploration, and career planning) have been incorporated into Career Information Delivery Systems and have provided the basis for the Get a Life Portfolio, a personal career planning guide. Counselors can use the

Portfolio to guide individuals through the career development process and document their progress. This portfolio, designed for students, has recently been modified for use with adults facing career transitions, called the Life Work Portfolio; another version of the portfolio is specifically designed for participants in school-to-work transition programs and tech prep.

Overhead #4B -- Training

ICDM and other counselor training programs and materials for individuals now have been linked to the Guidelines. NOICC established in 1991 a Career Development Training Institute to "train personnel in assisting students to understand themselves in the context of their career development, to be aware of the world of work, to understand the linkage between academic skills and work-related skills, and to make effective career decisions". While the focus of the CDTI is training, the specific target is the institutional capacity of individual States to delivery career development training to the persons who need it. An estimated 23,000 persons participated in NOICC/SOICC career development training programs over the year ending in June 1994.

Overhead #4C -- Career Information

WHO BENEFITS?

Whom do we help with all of these systems and products?

Overhead #5 -- Letter from China

For a start, I offer the following letter, which arrived at NOICC in the midst of May's mayhem. When this letter arrived, we felt comforted we could "make a good hand" for someone's program and grateful that somebody out there was indeed "longing for our replication." If the translation produced amusement, it also invited introspection about "What are we doing" and "How do we make it?"

Our basic mission is to help the helpers -- the professional and technical staff who put together state and local information systems, who design career development and training programs, who help counselors and teachers, employment personnel and job trainers serve their clients better. Through them, ultimately, we serve individuals -- students and adults, in-school youth and out of school youth -- who need good occupational and labor market information to make tough choices about education and employment.

How do we accomplish all of these things with tiny professional and support staffs and a budget of only a few million dollars to support more than 50 SOICCs and NOICC?

We do it by taking our mandate to coordinate and collaborate very seriously. When your resources are lean, you lean on your Network for support and assistance. And the stronger the Network, the more you can accomplish.

Consider the people who are in this room and the groups they represent. Individually and collectively, you illustrate the competence and the commitment the members of this Network bring to our mission. I commend you and thank you all for your many contributions. I am convinced this Network, so ably launched under NOICC's first executive director, Russell Flanders, is eloquent (if sometimes outspoken) testimony to our success.

A LESSON PLAN

What have we learned about the process of collaboration from this experience? Others might choose different factors, but I want to focus on a few lessons that I consider essential:

Overhead #6 -- Building Collaboration

1. **Bring all stakeholders to the table.** NOICC and the SOICCs routinely invite broad participation and shared ownership. We have tried to be responsive to ideas and advice from formal and informal review and resource groups, consortia, and professional meetings. This has enabled us to identify data gaps and needs and avoid duplication. The degree to which the National Career Development Guidelines, for example, have been accepted and used depends, to a large extent, on the participation of the major professional associations in their development and their dissemination.
2. **Identify and address the needs of stakeholders and their customers.** This is essential if they are going to invest their time and resources in a committee effort. A very recent example is our newly released curriculum to train paraprofessionals to assist in delivering career development services.
3. **Build on successful state or local models** to avoid costly duplication of effort. The national prototypes for the micro-OIS, for example, and our individual career planning portfolios grew out of successful state models that were adapted and enhanced for wider use.
4. **Develop integrated and related products** by refining and building on existing resources and linking new products and training to them. This is both efficient and effective, as we have learned from our NOICC experience in career development.
5. **Work with the private sector.** Everyone has benefited from our collaboration with vendors in developing state CIDS. The vendors brought a market perspective and technical expertise in tailoring systems to consumers' needs. NOICC and the SOICCs focused on the content and quality of the information base and training for users. This working partnership has grown stronger over the years. As a result, this summer CIDS developers were invited to meet with state

and federal officials at a national symposium on one-stop career centers. The vendors had an opportunity to learn about these initiatives and how they might play a role in them, and the public officials had a chance to learn about available resources and how they might be tailored to suit one-stop center needs. A similar symposium might also be helpful for the School-to-Work Transition staff.

6. **Provide incentive funds or seed money**, often requiring a match to spread the cost of development among stakeholders. SOICCs have an impressive record of leveraging small federal investments. Pooled resources and expertise enable us to accomplish more than we could alone.

7. **Offer professional development and capacity building** through training. NOICC, working with the SOICCs, has been able to develop state training teams and thus reach more customers. We have also targeted training to specific needs and groups including, for example, our industry/occupational projections conferences and technical training. We have used new technology such as computerized tutorials and satellite teleconferences to reach appropriate audiences more effectively.

CHALLENGE AND CHARGE

We can be proud of what we have done thus far, but there is much more to do. What we have learned will be useful as we turn to new challenges looming on the horizon.

If we are not a formal and federally funded Network, part of our challenge must be to pursue ways of integrating our products, processes, and systems into the new initiatives for workforce development. Our resources and experience are too valuable to lose.

As public services in employment and education shrink, citizens must depend increasingly on their own resources to negotiate successfully in a turbulent labor market. They will need information and career development assistance even more if they are to make sensible choices in this strange new world of work. It is ironic and sad that our Network may be abolished at the very time its resources are most needed.

The magic elixir of the moment is streamlining and consolidation, but this may result in isolating data producers from potential users and reducing opportunities for collaboration among them. You who are members of the SOICC, state agency staff, or leaders in professional or private sector organizations can help insure that the SOICC's role is maintained under new block grants and that networks already in place can continue to promote the development of useful and reliable state occupational and career information resources.

In the past, NOICC and the SOICCs have been threatened with the possibility of mergers and takeovers, not all of them friendly. And we have always had suitors in the wings hoping to acquire us. Or usurp our niche.

To those who would do so now, I ask, why not take advantage of a network that does not need reinventing and that has much to contribute to current needs and goals? To conclude, let me make the case for the NOICC/SOICC network as follows.

Overhead #7 -- Making the Case

After all, we already are lean, customer-centered and service-oriented. We have a clearly focused mission and strategies for achieving it. We have small staffs and a tight budget. NOICC "outsources" national development projects and support services to the SOICCs and to others.

At least 80 percent of NOICC's funds are used to support state operations. We have published almost no regulations for states, instead, NOICC and SOICCs are partners in the Network. In fact, I believe one of our major strengths is the strong federal/state partnership we have forged, one that has been very productive and responsive to the needs we were created to address. Thus, I say to our current suitors, "Don't reinvent us, let us live." We are not longing to be replicated.

Three bills related to Labor Market Information:

S. 180 (Kennedy) - Locates the responsibility for developing and maintaining an LMI system with the Department of Labor

S. 143 (Kassebaum): Establishes a Federal Workforce Development Partnership and Governing Board. The Governing Board oversees the development, maintenance, and improvement of a nationwide integrate labor market information system. At the state level, the Governor is to establish an interagency process to oversee the statewide LMI system. A National Center for Research in Education and Workforce Development is charged with developing new models for career guidance, career information, and counseling services.

H.R. 1617 (CAREERS Act) (McKeon/Goodling): Calls for ensuring a comprehensive and coordinated system of LMI which will provide locally based information (as well as national). The Secretary of Labor oversees and Governors designate a single state agency to oversee the statewide LMI system.

Quote from House Report on the CAREERS Act:
House Report 104-152

"The NOICC/SOICC currently continues to be very much focused on the State and local customer...it focuses on delivery and technical support, including training...."

"The Committee assumes that the initiatives in establishing a comprehensive system of LMI under the CAREERS Act will build upon... the work of the NOICC/SOICC Network...."

Career Development Applications for Individuals

State Career Tabloid

State Career Information Delivery Systems

Career Guides, Special Reports

Databases

State/National LMI Databases

State OLMID
The Occupational and Labor Market Information Database

State Education and Training Databases

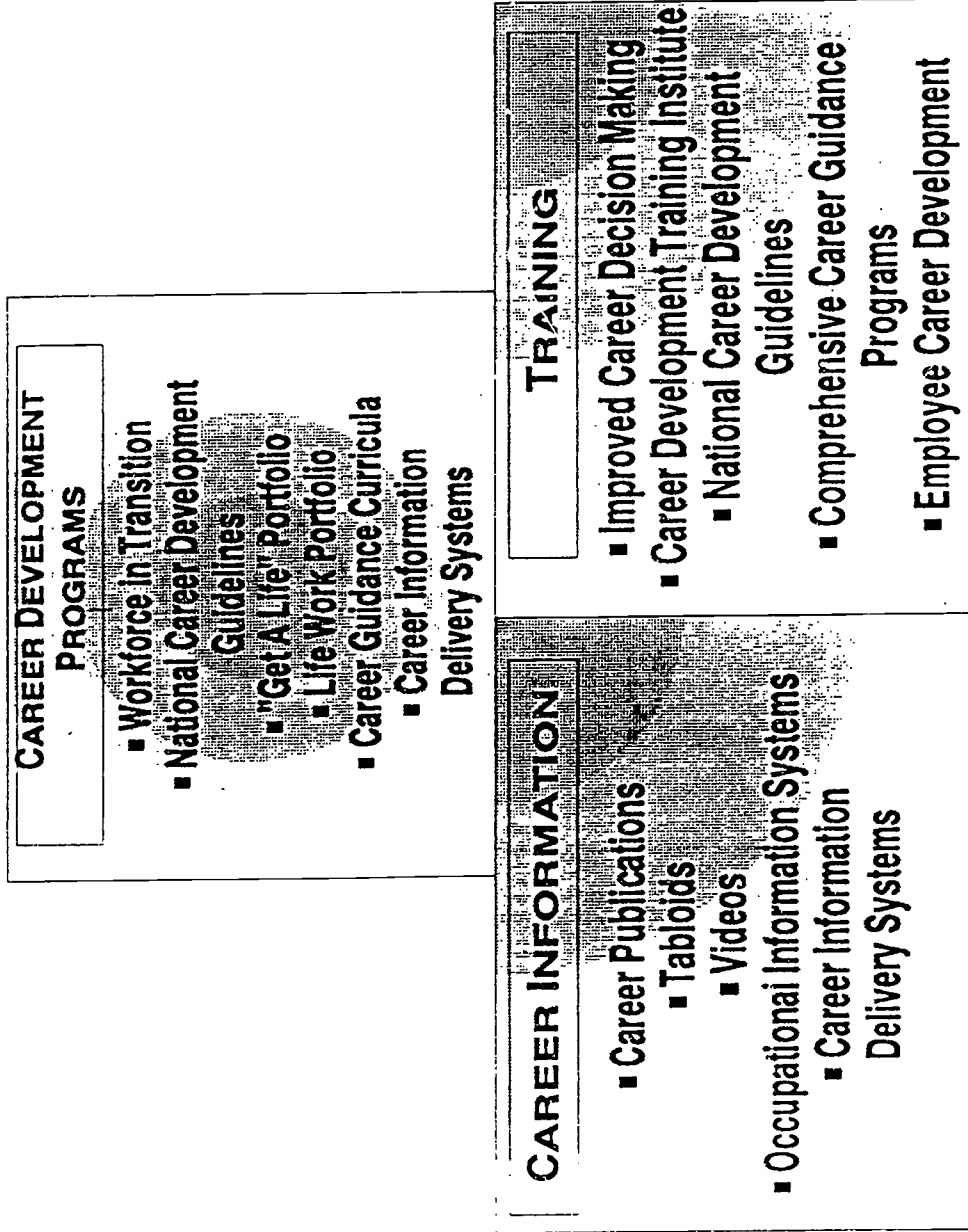
Planning Applications for Training Programs

Economic Development & Employer Planning System

Micro-Occupational Information System

State Training Inventory, Civilian Training Inventory, Special Reports

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS



NOICC

Overhead #4

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

- Workforce in Transition
- National Career Development Guidelines
- "Get A Life" Portfolio
- Life Work Portfolio
- Career Guidance Curricula
- Career Information Delivery Systems

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

TRAINING

- Improved Career Decision Making
- Career Development Training Institute
 - National Career Development Guidelines
- Comprehensive Career Guidance Programs
- Employee Career Development

CAREER DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS

CAREER INFORMATION

- Career Publications
 - Tabloids
 - Videos
- Occupational Information Systems
- Career Information Delivery Systems

Dear Sir:

We are stuffs of psychology department in Peking University. Because we are making a program about management of personnel matters, we need lots of information in this field.

We had found out initial message about your organization, this makes a good hand for our program. Now, in order to do a short work in our subject, we need detailed information about your organization. Such as "What are you doing?", "How do you make it?", the range of your research field, and so on.

Please extend a helping hand to us for your program. We are longing for your replication.

Thanks a lot.

NOICC

Overhead #5

BUILDING COLLABORATION: WHAT WORKS

A Lesson Plan

NOICC

- 1 Bring all stakeholders to the table**
- 2 Address needs of stakeholders and customers**
- 3 Build on successful state or local models**
- 4 Integrate and build upon products**
- 5 Work with the private sector**
- 6 Provide incentive funds**
- 7 Offer professional development and capacity building**

NOICC

Overhead #6

NOICC/SOICC Network Making the Case

- A lean, customer-centered and service-oriented organization
- A focused mission and strategic plans
- Small staffs and a tight budget
- "Outsourcing" of national development projects and support services to SOICCs
- At least 80% of NOICC's funds for support of state operations
- Few regulations, working as partners with SOICCs
- Meaningful Federal/State partnership

Don't reinvent us, let us live