

Working It Out:

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT



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COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

DECEMBER 2006

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Supported by Lumina Foundation for Education



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Introduction

NOT SINCE THE DEPRESSION, when the unemployed flocked to community colleges for training, have community colleges been more squarely in the workforce development spotlight than now. Long recognized for providing affordable access to students seeking associate's degrees or transfer to four-year postsecondary institutions, community colleges have received less attention as providers of occupational skills training for disadvantaged job-seekers or dislocated workers. So little

attention, in fact, that some refer to the divisions in which most colleges do this work as the “shadow college.” But colleges train huge numbers of workers and job-seekers in both credit and non-credit classes and short-term and long-term certificate programs. One recent study estimated that about 2.3 million workers enroll each year in non-credit, job-related programs offered by colleges across the country, and, in one year alone (1999–2000), colleges awarded more than 181,000 certificates (Kasper 2003).

For a variety of reasons, community colleges suddenly find themselves very much out of the shadows and at the “top of the workforce policy agenda,” according to Julian L. Alssid, executive director of the Workforce Strategy Center. First, the United States is facing an economic crisis. The rapid pace of technological change in the global economy drives job growth in occupations requiring an associate’s degree or a postsecondary certificate. These jobs are growing far faster than the job market as a whole, while the educational attainment of the American workforce lags behind. Without a strong vocational education sector and with four-year institutions focused on a relatively small fraction of those seeking postsecondary education, community colleges have emerged as the institution most suitable for training America’s workforce.

*Who is going to anchor the transition?
We are! Not four-year colleges. Who has
the potential to educate the American
workforce? We do!*

Jess Carreon, Chancellor, Dallas County Community College District,
October 2004

Second, current labor market policy focuses more on local or regional efforts to attract and retain employers, create good jobs, and educate the workforce to meet changing requirements than on national interventions. Across the nation, more than 1,100 community colleges are well positioned to play a significant role in their

communities’ economic and workforce development. Third, recent research has shown that long-term occupational skills training, the kind community colleges routinely provide, leads to better outcomes for students than short-term training or quick job placement. Investment in human capital through on-the-job-training or occupational skills training leads to greater sustained income gains and stronger attachment to the labor force than does short-term training or job-search assistance (Barnow 2004; King 2004; Martinson and Strawn 2002).

The federal interest in strengthening the role of community colleges in providing high-quality training to meet changing labor market demands has led to some recent initiatives and funding programs. The Community-Based Job Training Grants program, for example, devotes \$250 million to help colleges train 100,000 workers in the skills most needed by local employers. This program builds upon its predecessor, the High-Growth Job Training Initiative run by the U.S. Department of Labor. Since its inception in 2002, this program has distributed more than \$163 million to 87 partnerships among community colleges, workforce agencies, and employers nationwide. In addition, the Department’s WIRED Initiative, which focuses on regions rather than local communities, maintains the community college as the focal point. Similar initiatives under way at the U.S. Department of Education—particularly in the Office of Vocational and Adult Education (e.g., Career Pathways for Adults) and a path-breaking joint initiative of both the Education and Labor Departments, the Strategic Partnerships for a Competitive Workforce—seek to promote and strengthen the role of community colleges in preparing tomorrow’s workforce.

Community colleges are considered essential partners in these programs. As national attention has turned to community colleges as the “engines of workforce development,” the colleges’ participation in the nation’s federal employment and training system, established by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, has become crucial.

STUDY GOALS AND METHODS

The purpose of this project is twofold: to stimulate the thinking of community colleges about how they can better use WIA to further their goals and how WIA can better use community colleges to improve the quality and effectiveness of its programs. We began this two-year project by interviewing federal policy makers and representatives of stakeholder groups over a period of six months (a list of these respondents appears in the Appendix). We asked respondents to identify key challenges that colleges face in working with WIA, their ideas about how to best tackle those challenges, and examples of colleges that exemplify innovative and effective models of participation in WIA. During this six-month period, we also conducted a literature review and a search for existing data that could help us estimate the extent and types of college participation in WIA nationally.

To select colleges for study, we used stakeholder nominations to compile information on about 60 community colleges nominated by at least three stakeholders. About 30 of these colleges were contacted for more information, and the list was subsequently narrowed to the following 12 sites:

Alamo Community College District (ACCD)	San Antonio, Texas
Community College of Denver (CCD)	Denver, Colorado
Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)	Cleveland, Ohio
Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC)	Appleton, Wisconsin
Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC)	Louisville, Kentucky
Macomb Community College (MCC)	Warren, Michigan
New Hampshire Community Technical College (NHCTC)	Portsmouth, New Hampshire
Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA)	Annandale, Virginia
Pima Community College (Pima)	Tucson, Arizona
Portland Community College (PCC)	Portland, Oregon
Tacoma Community College (TCC)	Tacoma, Washington

We visited these colleges in early 2005. During the visits, we interviewed state administrators; representatives from the colleges, the local One-Stops, and Local Workforce Investment Boards; economic development

partners; business partners; staff of community-based organizations; and others whose viewpoints on the relationship between the college and WIA were important. Respondents were asked to describe challenges they had faced in working out the relationship between colleges and WIA and strategies they had used to overcome these challenges. This material makes up the bulk of this report.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Chapter 1 of the report presents a brief overview of WIA, followed by a summary of what is known about colleges' participation in WIA nationally, addressing the following questions:

- How many community colleges provide training to WIA participants?
- How many WIA-funded students enroll in community colleges?
- How much WIA-funded training do colleges provide that does not involve Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers?
- How many community colleges operate One-Stops?

During site visits, we identified a series of challenges encountered by the colleges in their efforts to participate in WIA, as well as a number of solutions to these challenges. Not every college faced—or resolved—every challenge, and there is some overlap among the solutions—i.e., a solution can be applicable to more than one challenge. We selected ten challenges most common to the colleges in our site visit sample. These are described in Chapter 2 along with examples of “solutions” to each challenge. Chapter 3 summarizes our findings, notes additional challenges that cannot be resolved by the colleges alone, and concludes with a set of recommendations that, if implemented, might boost community college participation in WIA.

THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998

Enacted in 1998, the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which had provided funding to states to meet the employment and training needs of eligible job-seekers since the early 1980s. The JTPA system had been heavily criticized for being fragmented, inefficient, and confusing for its “customers” seeking training or job search assistance. The intent of WIA was to “consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States,” as stated in the law. WIA was designed to decentralize decision making and to make employment and training services more streamlined, transparent, and accessible; more performance-driven and accountable; more customer-focused; and more influenced by the needs of local businesses and the private sector.

Initially considered, perhaps unfairly, a “work-first” program modeled on the welfare-to-work programs of the late 1980s and early 1990s, WIA established a sequence of services. All eligible job-seekers receive “core services” such as job search assistance, career counseling, and labor market information. Those unable to find a job without more help can be referred to “intensive services” that include assessment, development of employment plans, and case management. Clients can also be referred to training services, which may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, customized training, job-readiness training, and adult education. Local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) determine the amount of funding that goes to training versus core and intensive services. Local areas are required to give priority to low-income people for intensive and training services. WIA services are funded separately for youth, dislocated workers, and disadvantaged adults.

The intention of making customer choice drive the delivery of training service is captured in the mechanism of an Individual Training Account (ITA) voucher

provided to those referred to training. Earlier, under JTPA, training vendors typically received a contract from the local JTPA entity and provided training to groups or classes. With the advent of WIA, ITAs are intended to empower individuals to seek a training provider of their choice and use their voucher to pay for it. ITAs were designed to stimulate competition among providers and thereby improve the quality of the training they offered (D’Amico et al. 2001; GAO 2001).

To help choose a training provider, clients are supposed to review online data on the performance of local vendors in training and placing former students. To remain eligible to provide WIA-funded training, providers must supply program completion rates, the percentage of program completers who are employed, and wages at placement in employment for all persons enrolled in the program, not just WIA participants. For the latter, providers are required to report on retention, wages six months after placement, and the percentage of students receiving a certificate or a degree. Providers are now responsible for assembling data on a total of seven core performance criteria (four for WIA-funded participants and three for all students).

COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

Community colleges can participate in WIA in several ways. Their primary role is to provide occupational skills training leading to employer-recognized certificates or short-term training to upgrade skills. Under some conditions, colleges can offer contract training to groups of job-seekers, bypassing ITAs as payment. Colleges can also offer job-readiness training, career counseling, and case management, and they can compete to become One-Stop operators or join with other organizations to run One-Stops. Local WIBs can or sometimes are required to invite college presidents or other administrators to serve on the board. Finally, associations representing a state’s community colleges often participate on state WIBs.

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE

Like many reports dealing with legislation and the organizations involved in its implementation, this report is replete with acronyms. Acronyms are a useful kind of shorthand, but they can also be confusing. To head off confusion, below we provide a brief glossary of acronyms frequently used here.

1. CBO—Community-based organization. A private, not-for-profit organization offering adult education, literacy instruction, or other social services within neighborhoods.
2. DOL—U.S. Department of Labor. The department that administers federal labor laws and workforce development programs.
3. ETPL—Eligible Training Provider List. A list of state-approved organizations permitted to offer training to clients with WIA Individual Training Account vouchers.
4. FY—Fiscal year. The period of time covered by an annual budget.
5. ITA—Individual Training Account. A voucher used by eligible WIA clients to “purchase” training services from a provider of their choice.
6. JTPA—Job Training Partnership Act. Federal legislation, preceding the Workforce Investment Act, to provide training and other services to youth and adults facing serious barriers to employment.
7. PY—Program year. The annual period of time in which a program operates. This does not always coincide with the fiscal year or calendar year.
8. TANF—Temporary Assistance to Needy Families. Created by the federal Welfare Reform Act of 1996, a welfare program for low-income or unemployed parents.
9. WIA—Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Federal legislation designed to coordinate and streamline all components of the U.S. workforce development system serving youth ages 14–21, adults, and dislocated workers.
10. WIB—Workforce Investment Board. At the state level, a strategic policy planning and governing body for WIA; at the local level, a body providing oversight for area organizations participating in WIA.

Four in ten colleges have strong relationships with WIA; about three in ten have polite but distant relationships; and three in ten have terrible relationships.

Larry Warford, League for Innovation in the Community College

From the earliest days of WIA implementation, community college involvement in WIA has been problematic. In a letter to the Employment and Training Administration, George R. Boggs, President and CEO of the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), wrote:

Since its passage in 1998 and subsequent implementation, AACC members have had varied experiences with WIA. Some community colleges participate fully on their local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), are operators or active partners in One-Stop centers, and receive substantial numbers of training referrals. However, many other institutions, either by choice or circumstance, have not been active participants in the WIA system. Some institutions report that little has changed administratively since the JTPA, other than the names of the entities involved.

Much anecdotal evidence suggests that many community colleges refused to participate in WIA, citing burdensome requirements to be listed on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) and too little funding allocated to training. A few studies support these observations, finding that less training occurred under WIA than under JTPA

and that colleges provide less training than they did under JTPA (Wandner and Javar 2003). Under JTPA, community colleges provided 76 percent of all JTPA-funded training, while under WIA, they provide about one-third of the training (GAO 2005). Further, proportionately fewer dollars are reportedly spent on training under WIA than under JTPA (Shaw and Rab 2003; D'Amico 2003).

But except for a few statistics such as these, the debate about community colleges and their relationship to WIA has been more rhetorical than empirical and more political than useful. The purpose of this report is to provide information about the types and prevalence of community college participation in WIA and to identify barriers that limit colleges' participation. Most importantly, the report also tells the stories of colleges that have overcome those barriers, making WIA an integral part of their workforce development activity and fulfilling their role as WIA training providers of choice.

CHAPTER 1

Community College Participation in WIA: What the Numbers Say

HOW MANY COMMUNITY COLLEGES PROVIDE TRAINING TO WIA PARTICIPANTS? A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) survey of community colleges reports that the percentage of colleges participating in WIA varies by the funding stream. According to colleges' reports, only 27 percent participated in WIA programs for youth; 62 percent participated in Adult Education programs; and 63 percent participated in Dislocated Worker programs (GAO 2004, p. 30). These estimates, however,

do not tell the whole story because a college may report participating in WIA even if its number of WIA-funded programs or Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) is very low. For example, it is not uncommon for colleges to serve fewer than 10 students with ITAs per year. Another indicator of college participation is the number of programs that colleges get approved for inclusion on their state's list of WIA training providers.

Getting programs approved for the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) was perhaps the single greatest obstacle to college involvement, at least in the early days of WIA (Social Policy Research Associates [SPRA] 2004). To be included on the ETPL, college programs must report a range of performance measures for each course in which WIA participants have enrolled, and the performance data must include outcomes not just on the WIA participants but on all students enrolled in that course. Performance data include completion rates and labor market outcomes after students leave the course, including employment and retention data.

Most colleges do not collect these data, and most states have applied for waivers to exempt them from doing so. Colleges still characterize the ETPL as burdensome, at best. A GAO survey of local WIBS found that "local boards in California, Indiana, Massachusetts, and Michigan noted that some providers, community colleges in particular, are reluctant to participate in the ETPL" (GAO 2005, p. 28). In fact, little is known about how many colleges list their programs on the ETPL and how much variation exists across the states.

No single data source lists colleges, or any provider for that matter, on ETPLs. However, this information is provided online by state agencies, primarily for use by WIA "customers" searching for training providers near their homes. Although analyzing all states' ETPL websites was beyond the scope of this report, sampling states

and then investigating the number of their colleges and programs listed on the ETPL permits a reasonable estimate. ETPL information is updated regularly, so the data presented here are based on searches conducted from February through May 2005.

The sample for this study consists of the seven states with the largest enrollments in community colleges, along with states in which site visits were conducted. These seven states account for about half of all enrollments in community colleges as of 2003. With the addition of the site visit states, the sample included 17 states,¹ representing almost 71 percent of the total community college enrollment in the nation.

More generally, many vendors—especially community colleges, an important source for low-cost, high-quality training—have openly expressed their dislike of the ETP application process and have announced their intention to refrain from applying for eligibility. To the extent they do so, consequences for customer choice could be devastating.

From a report by Social Policy Research Associates prepared as part of the National Evaluation of the Implementation of WIA, June 2004, pp. 1–14

The data shown in Table 1 were derived from a count of all listed colleges and their programs, using each state's web-based ETPL. The table also displays the percentage of community colleges on the ETPL, the average number of programs per college within that state, the lowest number of programs at a single college in that state, and the greatest number of programs at a single college in that state.

¹ In descending order of community college enrollment, the 17 states are California, Texas, Florida, Illinois, New York, Washington, North Carolina, Michigan, Ohio, Arizona, Virginia, Wisconsin, Alabama, Oregon, Colorado, Kentucky, and New Hampshire.

TABLE 1. Number and percentage of community colleges with programs on the ETPL: 2005

State	Total number of colleges	Number of colleges on ETPL	Percentage of colleges on ETPL	Average number of programs per college	Minimum number of programs per college	Maximum number of programs per college
Alabama	31	30	96.8	42	4	148
Arizona	20	19	95.0	27	5	72
California	108	49	45.4	27	1	103
Colorado	15	15	100.0	24	4	60
Florida	27	27	100.0	72	25	185
Illinois	48	46	95.8	52	2	177
Kentucky	24	21	87.5	40	1	146
Michigan	30	28	93.3	39	1	156
North Carolina	59	59	100.0	97	6	242
New Hampshire	4	4	100.0	29	5	57
New York	35	27	77.1	63	1	274
Ohio	34	29	85.3	44	2	191
Oregon	17	17	100.0	37	6	101
Texas	67	56	83.6	39	2	246
Virginia	24	24	100.0	50	3	100+
Washington	31	31	100.0	39	11	78
Wisconsin	16	16	100.0	79	42	128
Total (17 states)	590	498	84.4	50	1	274

SOURCE: Based upon a search of each state's ETPL, conducted February 2005 through May 2005.

In 2005, more than 84 percent of community colleges in the sample listed programs on the ETPL. In eight states, all colleges were listed on the ETPL, and, in most of the other states, more than 80 percent of colleges were listed. The exception is California, where less than half of the state's colleges were listed on the ETPL.²

The number of programs at each community college listed on the ETPL varied dramatically. Some colleges obtained approval for only one program, while others obtained approval for more than 200 programs. In some states, such as Virginia, the ETPL did not list individual courses for certain colleges, but rather offered a blanket approval of all "college courses" at the institution (this did not apply to every college in Virginia, however).

² One reason for this situation, as suggested by site visits conducted by GAO, is that California community colleges "are operating at full capacity and do not need WIA dollars or participants, and, therefore, are not interested in getting on the ETPL" (GAO 2005, p. 28).

HOW MANY WIA-FUNDED STUDENTS ENROLL IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES?

Having a program approved for the ETPL, of course, does not necessarily mean that WIA participants will enroll. It just means that WIA participants *can* enroll. The national data warehouse for information about WIA participants is the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD), funded by the U.S. Department of Labor. WIASRD is a valuable source of information about WIA, but it has several limitations, some of which have important implications for learning more about community college involvement in WIA.

For example, outcome data in WIASRD are reported only for clients who exit a WIA-funded service or program, rather than for all who *participate in* or *complete* WIA programs. Moreover, local areas vary in how they define "exiters," as well as how they calculate outcomes, despite considerable effort to standardize these defini-

tions. WIASRD also does not distinguish between types of training providers, so there is no way to know how much training is provided by community colleges and/or by proprietary schools or other institutions.

Data from WIASRD, summarized in Table 2, indicate that approximately 109,868 “disadvantaged adults” exited WIA services in program year (PY) 2000, compared with 225,683 in PY 2004.³ Similarly, 99,941 dislocated workers were served in PY 2000, increasing to 178,446 in PY 2003.⁴ Overall, the number of individuals using WIA-funded services grew during this period because local areas were implementing WIA.

Despite DOL’s clarifications, many colleges during this period still complained that WIA was a “work-first”

program, that local One-Stops viewed training as a last resort, and that very few WIA-funded individuals actually enrolled in their college. To some extent, this view is supported by the trend data presented in Table 2. While more than half of all exiters received training, this percentage actually declined between PY 2000 and PY 2004. The data show that the percentage of disadvantaged adult exiters who received training decreased slightly between PY 2000 and PY 2004 (from 49.4 to 48.5 percent), as did the percentage of dislocated workers who received training (from 60.0 to 53.3 percent). The percentage receiving occupational skills training (which colleges typically provide) changed little over this period.

Another way to estimate how much WIA training is provided by community colleges is to look at how frequently ITAs are used (most One-Stops use them to pay for occupational skills training). The use of ITAs, a new practice introduced by WIA, increased during this period, from about 21 to 27 percent for adults and from 22 to 36 percent for dislocated workers (Table 2). However, a better measure is the number of ITAs redeemed at local educational institutions, some of which are community colleges. A study of 16 local areas in PY 2001 found that almost half (49 percent) of those who received training through ITAs did so at “educational institutions,” of which about one-third were community colleges (Berkeley Policy Associates [BPA] 2003). The study found enormous variation, however, in the percentage of ITAs issued by One-Stops to community colleges, ranging “from 2 percent to 93 percent of all ITAs, depending upon the site” (BPA 2003, pp. 8–9).

BPA’s estimate that one-third of WIA participants received training at community colleges in 2001 is consistent with the proportion cited in a recent GAO survey of local WIBs. On the whole, WIBs responding to the survey (73 percent) “reported that 37 percent of the ITAs issued in PY 2003 were used at proprietary schools and 35 percent were used at community colleges. The remainder were used at various providers, including

TABLE 2. Number and percentage of adult and dislocated workers who received WIA services: Trends since implementation

	Adults		Dislocated workers	
	4/1/04 to PY 2000	4/1/04 to 3/31/05	4/1/04 to PY 2000	4/1/04 to 3/31/05
Total exiters	109,868	225,683	99,491	178,446
Types of services received (% of total)				
Core	17.5	21.4	10.4	14.3
Intensive	33.1	30.0	29.6	32.4
Training	49.4	48.5	60.0	53.3
Basic skills	6.64	4.8	5.3	3.0
On-the-job	9.8	11.2	6.5	7.3
Occupational, other	87.5	88.6	92.3	92.3
Number of ITAs established				
	21.4	26.6	22.3	35.9

SOURCE: Social Policy Research Associates 2004; Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data Datebook, February 2006.

3 Although WIA was enacted in 1998, most states did not begin to implement it until 2000–01, accounting for the relatively low numbers of people served that year.

4 The number of those who participated in WIA during both years is higher than the number who exited. Counting exiters rather than participants eliminates duplicate counts and therefore provides a more accurate estimate of the actual number of individuals served.

4-year colleges, public vocational and technical schools, and community based organizations” (GAO 2005).

Based on the data discussed above, the number of WIA participants who receive training at community colleges can be estimated by multiplying the estimate of the proportion (one-third) by the total number of WIA exiters who receive training, and then multiplying that number by the estimated percentage of those who receive training at community colleges. As shown in Table 3, on average, community colleges serve only 50 to 60 WIA participants per year.⁵

TABLE 3. Percentage and number of WIA participants who received training and who received training at community colleges: PY 2004

	Total exiters	Percentage/ number receiving training	Percentage/ number receiving training at community colleges
Adults	225,683	48.5/109,456	.33/36,120
Dislocated workers	178,446	53.3/95,111	.33/31,386
Total	404,129	50.6/204,567	14.8/67,506

SOURCE: Derived from Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data, PY 2004.

HOW MUCH WIA-FUNDED TRAINING DO COLLEGES PROVIDE THAT DOES NOT INVOLVE ITAS?

While ITAS are the main method by which training is purchased for WIA clients, some training occurs without ITAS. Local boards can purchase training without ITAS, for example, if “the activity is on-the-job training or customized training; if a local board determines that an insufficient number of eligible providers exist in the area (such as in a rural area); or if a training provider has a

demonstrated effectiveness in serving a special population that faces multiple barriers to employment” (GAO 2005, p. 10). Community colleges sometimes deliver occupational skills training under this scenario. Another non-ITA source for WIA training funds is through the governors’ discretionary funds, which can reserve up to 15 percent of the state’s allocation to fund statewide activities, such as the Career Readiness Certificate program in Virginia. Although a large percentage of colleges offer contract training, it is not known how much of this training involves WIA funding.

One unpublished study found a low ratio of ITAS to the number of individuals receiving training under WIA. In PY 2000, only 41 percent of adults enrolled in training and only 35 percent of dislocated workers enrolled in training received ITAS (Leigh 2004, p. 19).

HOW MANY COMMUNITY COLLEGES OPERATE ONE-STOPS?

Under WIA, the more than 600 local workforce areas in the United States are required to develop a “One-Stop” delivery system offering an array of federally funded employment programs (including three separate WIA funding streams for dislocated workers, disadvantaged adults including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families – or TANF – recipients, and youth) at one location. The One-Stop system was designed to streamline services and ensure accessibility for those needing them, and there are currently almost 2,000 One-Stops, linked with an extensive network of satellite offices (SPRA 2004). Using a consortium of partners is a common approach to operating a One-Stop. In a 2003 study of WIA, GAO visited 14 One-Stops, of which half were operated by consortia of partners (GAO 2003). Public agencies, particularly economic development and employment security agencies, also often operate One-Stops, and a given local area may have several One-Stops, each with a different operator.

The number and percentage of community colleges operating a One-Stop varies widely by state. For example, in

⁵ The total number of exiters receiving training at community colleges = 424,000 × .50 × .35 = 74,200.

North Carolina, 20 percent of One-Stops (JobLink Career Centers) are operated by community colleges, second only to the 44 percent of One-Stops operated by the Economic Security Commission. In Massachusetts, on the other hand, only one One-Stop (out of 32) is operated by a community college. Sometimes it is difficult to judge the reach of community colleges as operators of One-Stops. For example, of the 20 workforce areas in Ohio, only one has a community college as its One-Stop operator, but that workforce area (Local Area # 7) covers 47 out of 88 counties in Ohio.

The number of community colleges operating One-Stops can also vary over time. According to a Rockefeller

Institute report prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor, when WIA was first implemented in Florida, One-Stops in 10 of the 24 local areas were operated by community colleges. By February 2005, however, only three Centers were operated by community colleges, “because a state oversight agency suggested that operating a One-Stop Career Center and providing training services might be a conflict of interest” (Barnow and King 2005, p. 34).

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT COMMUNITY COLLEGE PARTICIPATION IN WIA?

The evidence presented here suggests a picture more complex than the rhetoric of recent years would indicate. The vast majority of the country’s 1,100 colleges

have programs on their state ETPL, with an average of more than 50 programs listed per college. And yet, on average, community colleges serve only about 50–60 WIA participants a year. A significant percentage of community colleges operate One-Stops, and even more participate as partners in the operation of One-Stops.

The fact that wide variation exists both within and across states in the type and level of college participation should not be surprising, however, because the WIA

legislation was designed to offer a fair amount of regional control. Variations in interpretation of the law, in state and local requirements,

and, perhaps, in the extent to which community colleges were active in workforce development prior to WIA have led to great differences in the level of community college participation.

Most importantly, however, the evidence shows that college participation in WIA has changed over time. The number of colleges listing their programs on the ETPL has increased, as has the number of programs listed. This information suggests that community colleges are finding ways to cope with the cumbersome rules and regulations of WIA to gain access to WIA funding and WIA decision makers. The next section of this report presents the stories of 12 of those colleges—colleges that have found ways to work it out with WIA.

In Michigan, colleges are not even allowed on WIBs because their presence is seen as a conflict of interest.

Larry Warford, League for Innovation in the Community College, 2004

CHAPTER 2

Ten Challenges, Twelve Colleges, and Many Solutions

COMMUNITY COLLEGES WANT TO participate in WIA. Their less-than-enthusiastic reaction to the ETPL, the ITAS, and other features of WIA is not due to a lack of interest in workforce development, but rather to perceived or real barriers to effective participation in this vast and complicated employment and training system. We identified ten major challenges the colleges confront in working with the WIA system. This chapter presents these ten challenges and offers examples of solutions for each challenge.

Of course, not all of these colleges succeeded in overcoming every challenge; the colleges would be the first to admit that they still struggle to get it right. Each story, however, describes steps colleges took, strategies they tried, and, above all, problem-solving approaches they used to strengthen their participation in the WIA system. What became clear in collecting and analyzing this information is that colleges clearly do not have complete

control over their ability to become full participants in WIA. Some colleges have the will, the resources, and the ideas to do so, but are thwarted by circumstances outside their control. Some of these circumstances, including some barriers to effective relationships between colleges and WIA that can only be removed through actions by state or federal decision makers, are discussed in the concluding chapter.

TEN CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY COLLEGES WORKING WITH THE WIA

1. Getting on the Eligible Training Provider List.
2. Supplementing Individual Training Account vouchers when they do not cover costs.
3. Providing training within a “work-first” framework.
4. Adopting demand-driven models of workforce development.
5. Integrating workforce development activities into the community college mainstream.
6. Developing state policies that enhance cooperation between WIA and colleges at the local level.
7. Avoiding unhelpful competition among colleges for WIA dollars or clients.
8. Providing job-readiness and other such soft-skills training.
9. Educating One-Stop staff and employers about the workforce development capabilities of community colleges.
10. Promoting collaboration—and avoiding duplication of services—among community colleges and other workforce development organizations.

Challenge 1

GETTING ON THE ELIGIBLE TRAINING PROVIDER LIST

THE TOP COMPLAINT colleges have about WIA concerns the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL), WIA's most important accountability mechanism. Although states have some control over specific requirements for getting their programs listed on the ETPL, performance data are always required. This requirement is intended to give WIA clients the opportunity to choose an approved provider based on the provider's past performance in training and placing people in jobs.

Virtually all colleges eventually manage to get one or more programs listed on the ETPL. But most still find the process arduous at best. College staff maintain that the level of accountability in WIA and embodied in the ETPL is inappropriate for colleges already known for their high-quality programs, and they push to have the whole institution considered for eligibility, rather than just individual programs. In addition, college staff also object to the requirement for supplying data on WIA's 17 core performance measures, and they find completion and employment rates particularly difficult to obtain.

Further, WIA requires data on all students enrolled in the program, not just those with WIA funding, even if the number of WIA students is very small. Besides being cumbersome, this requirement often causes college program performance to appear poor. Most programs involve a sequence of courses leading to a certificate. Many students, however, not necessarily WIA participants, take only one course in the sequence and then leave the program for a variety of reasons. Counting these students as "failures to complete," colleges argue, is unfair.

In one approach to meeting the reporting requirements, Colorado built upon an existing statewide data system that captures WIA performance measures. Although this approach is ideal, not all states have data systems that can be readily adapted to meet WIA requirements, and community colleges alone cannot make it happen. In the absence of such systems, some colleges have tried to find other ways to reduce the burden of getting programs on the list. Oregon, for example, was able to devise a solution that involved redefining the meaning of "eligible program."

Solutions

Create a statewide data system that captures WIA performance measures.

Colorado has a tradition of sharing data across state agencies, a history of cooperation that was key to designing a data-sharing agreement when WIA was enacted. Sharing the burden of collecting and reporting data ensures that the state has the necessary data for the ETPL reporting requirements. For individual colleges, the system helps them accurately monitor programs and outcomes for students with ITAS and meet all WIA requirements.

To develop a WIA reporting system, representatives of the Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) Division of Employment and Training met with the Colorado Community College System (CCCS), the organization overseeing all community colleges. They created a memorandum of understanding that outlined the process for sharing and reporting data. After a year of devoting considerable time to reviewing and cleaning data, comparing data sources, and refining the data definitions, staff describe the current system as “smooth.”

The Division of Employment and Training sends Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage data to CCCS, including information on all workers and information required by WIA, such as wage and type of job. The community colleges combine the wage data with their own information on enrollment rates, program completion rates, outcomes, and so on to create the ETPL-required reports. Then, the colleges send aggregate data on *all* of their students to CCCS, and CCCS matches individual student records to the UI data. Finally, CCCS provides ETPL reports to both the state and the colleges. Only community colleges and universities participate in the data-sharing system; private proprietary schools are excluded.

Representatives from the CDLE’s Division of Employment and Training, CCCS, and regional WIBS continue to meet regularly to ensure that all data-sharing procedures are operating as intended. The result is a system that works very well, according to state Workforce Systems supervisor Nina Holland. Without such a system, she believes that Colorado’s community colleges may not have participated as fully in WIA as they currently do.

Redefine the meaning of “eligible program.”

When Oregon’s ETPL was set up, Oregon’s 17 community colleges were less than enthusiastic about the requirements for having their programs listed. Some took steps to get a few courses approved, but others seemed reluctant to do even that. Nan Poppe, president of Portland Community College’s Extended Campus, summed up the collective reaction to the ETPL: “There is no doubt that the rules and regulations of WIA conflict with the bureaucracy of community colleges.”

“That was unacceptable,” according to the commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development and Community Colleges. In a state where community colleges are considered the training providers of choice, having few courses available to WIA participants was nothing short of a disaster. The solution was simple but effective: redefine the term “eligible program” to reduce the burden on colleges to get every course approved. The Department of Workforce Development and Community Colleges now defines “eligible program” to include clusters of courses that students take in pursuit of an academic or vocational degree or certificate. Any cluster that leads to an Employment Skills Training Certificate is treated as a program and can be listed on the ETPL. “The solution isn’t perfect, but it’s workable,” says Nan Poppe.

Challenge 2

SUPPLEMENTING INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNT VOUCHERS WHEN THEY DO NOT COVER COSTS

TO OBTAIN TRAINING, WIA participants receive an ITA voucher, which is used to “purchase” training from a provider of their choice. ITAS typically are capped by the WIB or the One-Stop at a level insufficient to cover colleges’ administrative and capacity-building costs, much less the support services many clients need to succeed. Colleges sometimes also find the accompanying rules and regulations too burdensome to make it worthwhile to accept them. ITAS make up a tiny fraction of total college revenues, and colleges sometimes decide that they are a losing proposition financially. To make matters worse, colleges are expected to “partner” with One-Stops, which means contributing to the One-Stop’s overhead costs. Colleges are reluctant to spend scarce funds in this way and therefore often fail to become active One-Stop partners.

Several community colleges have found additional sources of funds to supplement ITAS enough to make their participation feasible. Cuyahoga Community College addresses this challenge by treating WIA funds as just one resource among many for pursuing its workforce development activities, and Northern Virginia Community College raises additional funds to supplement ITAS.

Solutions

Co-mingle WIA funds with other resources to meet client and community needs.

Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) is one of the largest community colleges in Ohio, with more than 55,000 students enrolled in credit and non-credit courses. The college's workforce development budget is \$15–20 million, and the funding that Tri-C receives through ITAS is just a small part of the whole. Administrators at Tri-C felt that, because of WIA's many requirements, accepting the ITAS would result in "the tail wagging the dog," according to the former director of the Workforce and Economic Development Division (WEDD), Susan Muha. The challenge was to fit WIA into the larger mission of workforce development at Tri-C.

Tri-C does not limit ITAS to non-credit classes. More than half of WIA-funded students attend classes for credit, while the remainder attend courses at WEDD. According to Robert Paponetti, vice president of WEDD, "WIA is a significant part of the mission" at WEDD because the Division's mission is well aligned with the goals of WIA. For example, like WIA, WEDD seeks to respond to the needs of local business and industry by providing training programs to students regardless of their skill level or career goals. "We do soup-to-nuts training," says Paponetti, offering programs designed for those who have never been employed, as well as programs for highly skilled, well-educated dislocated workers.

WEDD does not view WIA as a separate funding stream, but rather as one resource among many available to the college to pursue its workforce development objectives. When designing new programs or revising existing ones, WEDD uses its overarching goals for workforce development as the guiding principle, rather than tailoring its program to fit different funding sources. For example, WEDD combines WIA funds with other funds to develop new courses, such as a work readiness program for students in the Certified Nursing Assistant

and Foundations of Manufacturing programs, leveraging funds from both WIA and local business partners to develop these programs.

Further, Tri-C does not believe that receiving ITAS should be the end, or even the most important part, of its participation in WIA. Sitting on the local WIBS, providing input to the governor's policy board, and generally being "at the table" for all new workforce development initiatives, whether at the state or local level, is a vital part of Tri-C's participation. Donna Alvarado, president of the Governor's Workforce Board, agrees, saying that it is important for community colleges to attend WIB meetings and offer their unique perspectives on linking education, economic development, and workforce development.

Raise funds to supplement ITA vouchers.

Virginia's formula for distributing funds to local workforce investment areas does not favor the northern Virginia region, an area just outside Washington, D.C. that has more than 1.5 million residents and thousands of businesses in three counties and four cities. Because northern Virginia has a regional unemployment rate of less than 2 percent, it receives fewer WIA dollars than other regions with smaller populations and more unemployed adults. Despite the fact that northern Virginia has a high employment rate, many workers are underemployed and cannot afford the region's high cost of living. Moreover, northern Virginia lacks trained workers in a number of high-growth industries, such as healthcare and information technology.

To supplement the funds it receives from the state, the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB) has developed an innovative approach to support workforce development activities in its area. NVWIB has established a non-profit agency, the SkillSource Group, Inc., to generate new resources (monetary and in-kind support) to address needs not met by WIA. Recognizing that many businesses perceive WIA as a welfare pro-

gram, NVWIB also hoped that a nonprofit organization not subject to WIA requirements would attract more support from businesses.

With encouragement from the state and a board of directors in place, SkillSource began operations in January 2003. Since then, its staff and executive director David Hunn, who is also the executive director of NVWIB, have been actively pursuing corporate support, incentive grants, and seed money. These funds support initiatives such as the following:

- Workplace Essential Skills, a program designed to improve work readiness skills and retention rates among low-income adult job-seekers.
- OneSource, customized employment services at the One-Stops for persons with disabilities.
- Employment Access through Partnerships and Community Collaboration, an initiative supported by the U.S. Department of Labor to strengthen and build relationships among the region's workforce system, area businesses, and community and faith-based organizations.

Some additional funds come from the students themselves. SkillSource created a pilot loan program with Sallie Mae, one of the nation's largest student loan providers, to make intensive, short-term training programs more affordable for adults interested in moving into careers in healthcare and information technology. Recognizing that ITAS and federal aid do not cover all the financial needs and employment interests of adults in the region, the partners established the Northern Virginia Career Skills Loan program to provide direct loans to individuals to cover costs for non-credit tuition, books, supplies, and living expenses during the training period (about four to six months). Sallie Mae provides the loan, from \$1,000 to \$7,000, and NVWIB has placed non-federal funds into escrow to cover loan defaults.

Individuals can apply for the loan online, through an authorized training provider in northern Virginia, such as Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA), or through a One-Stop. By 2005, NOVA was the largest beneficiary of the loan program, because it offers the most courses in the target industry areas. NVWIB hopes to expand the loan program by increased marketing through the One-Stops, NOVA, and other training providers.

Get employers to help cover costs.

In December 1997, the governor of Kentucky called Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC), the University of Louisville, and the city of Louisville to an emergency meeting with United Parcel Service (UPS). Facing a shortage of skilled workers, UPS was threatening to pull its airline headquarters out of Louisville unless it could be assured that an adequately trained workforce would be available. Those at the meeting were given 30 days to create a benefits package that would complement UPS salaries and provide enough incentive for individuals to seek and retain employment with UPS.

The benefits package devised by the group was a tuition-free college program—Metropolitan College—for UPS package handlers. The program, which began in

August 1998, requires students to work four hours a night at UPS. UPS pays their salary and 50 percent of their tuition at either JCTC or the University of Louisville; the remaining tuition is covered by any state or federal grants that students receive and by the state.

UPS is the primary recruiter for the program, but referrals also come from the region's One-Stops, JCTC, and the University of Louisville. Those wishing to participate in the program first must be hired by UPS as a part-time package handler and then must enroll in either JCTC or the University of Louisville. Once enrolled, students receive a two-day orientation from the CREW Career Center, a One-Stop specifically designed to meet the needs of students. Because students work at night and sleep and attend classes during the

day, the two colleges have arranged special class schedules.

Metropolitan College has been a success for both students and the partners. The program has significantly reduced the employee turnover rate at UPS: before the program started, UPS was hiring approximately 200–300 employees a week; today, it hires approximately 30 employees a week. The program also serves as a feeder into both JCTC and the University of Louisville. Due to the success of the program, the colleges now have a workforce development template that can be applied to other target industries. Creating Metropolitan College taught them how to meet the needs of businesses, structure an effective benefits package, develop flexible programming, and establish procedures to keep a partnership running.

Challenge 3

PROVIDING TRAINING WITHIN A “WORK-FIRST” FRAMEWORK

ALTHOUGH THE PERCEPTION of WIA is beginning to change, thanks in part to clarification from the U.S. Department of Labor, WIA is still widely perceived as a customer-focused, “work-first” program designed to place clients in jobs as quickly as possible. Many One-Stop staff and WIB members still see WIA as a sequence of services in which training is the last resort when earlier services fail to result in a job placement. Consequently, WIBs, on average, allocate only between one-third and one-half of their funding to training and the rest to core and intensive services. ITAS are typically capped at an amount that precludes long-term training. As training providers, colleges worry that too little funding is reserved for ITAS and other training.

WIA clients who do receive ITAS often choose proprietary schools over community colleges for a variety of reasons. Community college courses take longer than training offered by other provid-

ers and than most UI benefits last. WIA participants, particularly disadvantaged adults without UI benefits, typically cannot afford to spend a long time in school to get training. The college semester schedule may not correspond with mass layoffs or suit a job-seeker who cannot wait months to start training. And courses may not be well aligned with the needs of the local labor market. Although proprietary schools can be more expensive and offer lower-quality training, they often are in a better position to offer short-term, open-entry, and open-exit courses that appeal to WIA participants.

To better serve WIA clients, some colleges have found ways to offer the short-term programs their clients need, while allowing these clients to continue their education once their WIA-supported training ends. Portland Community College (PCC), Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC), and New Hampshire Community Technical College (NHCTC) are examples.

Solutions

Offer short-term programs and a path to higher education.

Both community colleges in Portland, PCC and MHCC, are major players in WIA. Together the colleges run three out of the five local One-Stops and provide the lion's share of training.

Much of this training uses traditional ITAS that fund individuals' coursework at the colleges, but a substantial amount, serving about 250 WIA participants yearly, is offered through their nationally recognized Career Pathways program.

Heralded as one of the most promising approaches for providing WIA participants and other disadvantaged populations with access to community college training and education, variations of the Pathways model are now in place in community colleges across the country. "I believe Career Pathways models are changing the way colleges provide training, because Career Pathways makes postsecondary education possible for people with low skills," says Cam Preus-Braly, commissioner of the Department of Workforce Development and Community Colleges.

The Career Pathways program enables colleges to respond to the needs of the working poor, dislocated workers, adult learners, and others who cannot afford to attend college full time or who lack the prerequisite skills to take college-level courses. The program is offered in 13 entry-level occupations, and for participants with limited English skills, there are six ESL vocational career pathways. PCC and MHCC Career Pathways staff work with academic faculty to compress or "chunk" the curriculum for the pathways into smaller pieces, allowing participants to complete their training in three to six months. Training selections change each year, as determined by continuous assessments of the labor market and employer needs. WIA participants earn certificates for high-demand occupations such as lab assistant, entry-level pharmacy clerk, phlebotomist, and machine manufacturing technician.

PCC and MHCC designed Pathways not only to accommodate those who want to earn a certificate and get a good job within a few months, but also to encourage WIA participants to enroll in the college and aim higher. Ultimately, Pathways is about "building a ramp" into the main college so that students will pursue a two-year degree or even transfer to a four-year institution. Pathways is not just a path to a certificate, but also a gateway to a degree.

Both colleges also accept ITAS from WIA participants who are not interested in Pathways. According to career specialists working at the colleges' One-Stops, as many adults, dislocated workers, and TANF recipients as possible are encouraged to choose a career pathway. Mimi Maduro, director of Dislocated Worker Programs and the Career Pathways program, estimates that more than 80 percent of Career Pathways WIA-funded students complete training, receive a certificate, and find employment in the occupation for which they were trained.

Pathways is supported by co-mingling funds from WIA, TANF, Perkins, and other workforce education funding sources. Crucial to Pathways' success is that PCC and MHCC have competed for and obtained major funding programs, such as the Dislocated Worker program. This allows the colleges to leverage WIA and other funds to sustain the Pathways program, serving as high-quality, responsive training providers for WIA and strengthening their workforce development efforts. According to the One-Stop director for PCC, Pamela Murray, "Community colleges should be one of the driving forces for workforce education."

Enable students to complete training in stages, with support from employers after ITA support ends.

WIA clients often cannot spend two years or more to complete a training program. At New Hampshire Community Technical College (NHCTC), participants can complete a two-year biotechnology program in stages. Since 1994, 241 students have graduated from

Challenge 3

the program and entered the workforce or a four-year university program.

Located in southeastern New Hampshire, the New Hampshire Biotechnology Education and Training (NH BET) Center is located in the Pease International Tradeport, an industrial park housing many businesses that partner with the college. In the early 1990s, when New Hampshire workforce and economic development agencies targeted the biotechnology sector, NHCTC took on the challenge of developing the state's only biotechnology training program. State and local recruitment efforts to build a biotechnology industry cluster paid off when Celltech Biologics (now Lonza Biologics) moved to the Pease campus in 1994.

Collaborating with industry representatives, Dr. Sonia Wallman, director of the NH BET Center, designed a program to address the need for technicians. Dr. Wallman created a lab and classroom facility to mirror a vertically integrated biotechnology company. Besides assisting with the design, equipment, and curriculum, industry representatives were invited to help teach classes during

the first few years. Their active participation helped to refine the curriculum and keep the teachers up to date on what industry needed from its workers. Instructors continue to work with industry representatives to ensure that their curriculum remains current.

Depending on background, experience, and available time, individuals can enter one of four training strands: biotechnology associate degree in science (two years); biotechnology diploma (one year); biotechnology academic certificate (two semesters); or biotechnology certificate (one semester). All four strands of the biotechnology program have been approved for the ETPL, and WIA clients enroll in the biotechnology program every year. Most WIA clients complete the biotechnology certificate or academic certificate. The strands are "nested" so that those who complete a certificate program can begin work and have their employer pay for them to complete an associate's or more advanced degree. Although the program was not designed specifically for WIA clients, the strands make the program more feasible for people who need to complete training quickly and move into the workforce.

Create a liaison between the college and the One-Stop.

Washington State's workforce training policies have long made training a priority as a strategy for both improving opportunities for WIA clients and promoting economic growth. For this reason, about 50 percent of WIA funding is spent on training, a higher proportion than the national average (GAO 2005). But for Tacoma Community College (TCC), with its strong workforce development mission, WIA training dollars remain scarce, and, to make matters worse, TCC found that

some students they referred to the One-Stop never returned to TCC for training. Further, TCC competes with four other colleges in the Tacoma region for the few students who obtain WIA funding.

TCC tried a variety of approaches to increase the number of WIA students enrolling in the college, but few worked as well as the strategy of hiring a career guidance counselor who had worked for both the college and the One-Stop and who understood

both worlds well. Shortly after she began working as a liaison between the two, relations between the college and One-Stop improved, and the number of WIA clients enrolling and succeeding at the college increased dramatically. The key, according to college staff, was that the liaison was deeply familiar with the college culture and workforce development systems and could bridge the two worlds. She understood the system from the inside.

Challenge 4

ADOPTING DEMAND-DRIVEN MODELS OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

ALTHOUGH DEMAND-DRIVEN workforce development strategies are in vogue, neither colleges nor One-Stops are organized optimally to respond to shifting employer needs. These two institutions each have their own ingrained practices and missions that can prevent them from adapting to the demand-driven workforce development model—and from cooperating with each other.

WIA focuses more on “customer choice” than on identifying high-growth/high-wage sectors and directing WIA clients to them. One-Stops try to accommodate their clients’ career goals and let them make informed choices, but if the choice is a dead-end job in a dead-end industry, they may not try to change clients’ minds. And although WIBS require substantial employer representation, they can have trouble recruiting larger, more influential businesses, so that employers in high-growth/high-wage sectors typically do not attend WIB meetings.

Businesses represented on WIBS are often those looking for low-skill/low-wage workers.

Colleges prefer to offer training to groups of students (i.e., in classes). One-Stop staff resist recruiting groups of clients for a particular training program, arguing reasonably that WIA participants often cannot afford to wait a few weeks or months until enough students are available to begin a course. Moreover, colleges often need a full year to develop a new course, hire an instructor, purchase equipment, obtain accreditation for credit classes, and get the course listed in the schedule. This pace simply does not work when employers need a trained workforce within a few weeks or months.

Colleges such as Pima Community College and Fox Valley Technical College have found ways to streamline, restructure, or otherwise modify their procedures to become more flexible and responsive to the local labor market.

Solutions

Streamline the process for creating and approving curriculum.

Educational programs that are responsive to local labor market needs require short timelines and quick approval of new curricula. Like other academic institutions, Pima Community College (Pima) was hamstrung by lengthy approval processes. Local industries frequently used proprietary schools, which were able to develop and approve new programs quickly, for their contract training and workforce development needs. A change in policy, with a streamlined curriculum approval process, was required if Pima was going to continue to meet the needs of the community.

At Pima, the Community Campus has developed a streamlined system for getting new curricula approved rapidly. While the traditional approval process for academic programs remains unchanged, in 1998, the college developed and implemented a new approval process for workforce development programs. Now, once a curriculum is written, it can be approved within 48 hours.

The process of curriculum development and approval can begin in many ways—either through requests from local industry, through input received from the county, or through an environmental scan conducted by the college research staff. Once the need for a new course or program is identified, Pima taps resources such as the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC), the U.S. Department of Labor, or a consortium of similar institutions for samples of curricula. Similar curricula often have been generated for clients within one of the other Pima centers. These resources permit the rapid development of new curricula.

Rather than taking 71 days for approval, the approval process now takes two days. On the first day, the College Curriculum Services Office provides a technical

review of the curriculum; corrections by the curriculum specialist are made as needed; and then the curriculum goes to the Business and Industry Training division dean or other relevant division director for approval. Then rapid-response approval is sought from the campus chief academic officer and the assistant vice chancellor for educational services. On the second day, ccsso adds the course to the course bank, class schedule, and course catalog. It is also listed in an annual report to the Board of Governors. Including all new courses in the annual report meets all Board requirements.

According to the college, the process is rigorous and follows strict, consistent guidelines. Workforce courses are developed in accordance with state regulations and in partnership with business and industry. The quick turnaround ensures that the courses meet immediate needs in the community.

Create a partnership to meet the demand for high-skill/high-wage workers.

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (FVWDB)—the local WIB—located in east central Wisconsin, serves seven counties. Living in a mix of rural and urban communities, the population has education levels slightly lower than the state average. The region is growing, but traditional industries are in decline. Long dominated by paper mills and manufacturing, the regional economy now has a greater need for workers in the service sectors; the healthcare sector in the Fox Valley region faces critical labor shortages.

Nurses are in high demand, but Fox Valley Technical College's (FVTC) nursing programs have long waiting lists, and most dislocated workers cannot wait up to three years to start a training program. The college would have liked to accept more students, but financial constraints forced them to control the size of the program. These conflicts were resolved through a partnership of FVTC, Moraine Park Technical College (MPTC),

and FVWDB. Together, they developed a practical nursing program specifically for dislocated workers.

The WIB contracts with the colleges to operate the program. The funding covers the salary of two lab and clinical nursing instructors (one from each college). The board also pays tuition and fees for clients through ITAS. FVTC provides classrooms, lab space, and equipment. MPTC provides theoretical nursing instruction, available via distance learning (Internet) and giving students more flexibility in meeting course requirements.

The practical nursing program takes three semesters to complete and leads to a certificate. The program schedule helps the graduates find jobs because they finish the program and look for jobs several months later than the college's other nursing students and therefore are not

competing with them. An added benefit for graduates is that the program is designed to articulate with the associate's degree nursing program. Once students successfully complete the practical nursing program, they can go directly to work or continue their education.

Although it uses the same instructors and lab facilities, the program is separate from the college's "regular" nursing programs, allowing eligible dislocated workers to enroll in a program specifically designed for them, without a long wait. The region benefits from having higher numbers of nursing graduates ready for work. Over the past few years, FVTC has graduated 45 practical nursing students; the new practical nursing program, which began in the fall of 2005, plans to graduate an additional 18 students per year.

Create a curriculum to respond to new needs.

Rural regions are hit hard when a plant closes, and it can take collaboration among agencies and sectors to recover. Two small cities in southeast Alabama, with the support of their district representatives in the state legislature, joined forces with the Lurleen B. Wallace Community College and the regional Office of Economic Development to create new, high-quality jobs by recruiting a call center to the area. To attract such an employer, the region needed a trained workforce.

Call centers were a new type of business for that region, and the college led the effort to build a program to train workers quickly. While their partners were recruiting the call center company, college staff

traveled to meet with training managers at call centers in nearby Florida. These meetings resulted in a list of the customer service skills needed by call center workers, and this list became the basis for a new curriculum. The curriculum included customer service skills and introductory modules for keyboarding, operation systems, software applications, and the Internet.

With a draft curriculum and the commitment of the college leadership, Tonitta Sauls, assistant dean of workforce development, requested that the program be approved and placed on the ETPL. In two weeks, the state fulfilled this request, and, within four months from the first discussions about the

program, the college opened its doors to its first students.

The local Career Center (One-Stop) staff began to recruit WIA clients for the intensive five-week course. Although the program was open to all students, 95 percent were WIA clients. Within seven months, 122 participants were ready for hiring. The college continued to involve employers and invited them to conduct interviews on campus. As a result of this regional response, more call centers have come to the area, and they now employ approximately 500 people in the region. Opal Smith, director of the Southern Alabama Skills Consortium, said of this effort, "If something needs to be done, you can find a way to do it."

Challenge 5

INTEGRATING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES INTO THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAINSTREAM

COLLEGES OFTEN RELEGATE their workforce development activities, including those funded by WIA, to a separate division isolated from the mainstream college. Some call these divisions the “shadow college” or “silos.” This arrangement generally benefits neither the workforce development nor the academic mission of colleges, particularly if there is poor communication between the academic and workforce divisions of the college.

Often there is little or no communication between these two divisions, even when there is clear overlap in services, courses, staff, and resources. For example, WIA activities are typically housed in the workforce development division of colleges. Isolated there, WIA clients rarely venture out of the shadow college into the larger college campus. This also makes it more difficult for colleges to leverage WIA funding for broader initiatives.

Several colleges, such as Alamo Community College District and Cuyahoga Community College, have found ways to integrate or improve articulation between workforce development and academic education.

Solutions

Involve leadership, faculty, and staff in creating a training infrastructure.

In the early 1990s, several factories in San Antonio, Texas, closed, dislocating thousands of workers. While job creation was still outpacing job loss in the region, many dislocated workers did not have the skills needed for the new high-tech jobs. The community realized that jobs were not the problem; instead, it was the absence of a training infrastructure. The Alamo Community College District (ACCD) had been criticized for not being more responsive to the needs of business. Because this was a secondary focus of the District's colleges, their workforce development capacity was not quite up to the task of meeting the demands of the labor market.

Before 1996, ACCD's Southwest Campus offered credit and vocational programs to a dwindling population of students. The former chancellor of ACCD, Dr. Robert Ramsey, hired Dr. Frederico Zaragoza, who had a strong background in workforce development, to revive the campus by strengthening its workforce development offerings.

Around that same time, nearby Kelly Airforce Base closed, dislocating hundreds of workers. Dr. Zaragoza saw the base closure as an opportunity to turn the Southwest Campus into a specialty campus for workforce development. To do this, he approached the WIB, Alamo WorkSource, which was developing the One-Stop system. Dr. Zaragoza suggested, and Alamo WorkSource agreed, that the first One-Stop would be established at the Southwest Campus.

Dr. Zaragoza also set out to create a workforce development culture at the Southwest Campus by working with department chairs to create a vision for the campus and bring programs up to industry standards by relying on key staff to serve as models. For example, the department head assigned to work with Kelly Airforce Base was open to a new approach to doing business. According to Dr. Zaragoza, "Instead of being entrenched, he embraced it. And because he embraced it, so did his faculty."

Today, Southwest Campus, now part of ACCD's St. Philip's College, remains dedicated to workforce development, serving approximately 3,000 students each semester. They receive classroom instruction and hands-on training in high-skill/high-wage careers in allied construction trades, drafting and design, repair and manufacturing, and multimodal transportation. The success of the Southwest Campus has not gone unnoticed. Dr. Angie Runnels, president of the community college, said that it was impossible not to be impressed by Southwest's good results and ability to keep businesses "coming back for more." The rest of the community college district also has recognized Southwest's success. Similar workforce development programs have been adopted by other district colleges, and they are collaborating on multiple projects. Dr. Zaragoza, now vice chancellor for workforce development, points out that the Southwest Campus is helping ACCD overcome organizational tensions between the workforce and academic sides of the college.

Reach out to the academic side of the college.

In the field of workforce development, Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C) is recognized as a national leader because of its involvement in national initiatives, use of innovative approaches, and close partnership between its workforce development division and the One-Stop. College leaders have been visibly supportive of this work, but despite this support, the workforce division has had to work hard to connect with the academic side of the college. WIA participants, for example, found it difficult crossing from the Workforce and Economic Development Division (WEDD) to the academic side of the college.

WEDD has undertaken a series of related efforts to strengthen its relationship with the academic side of the college. For example, WEDD takes every opportunity to broadcast the message that the workforce development division can be a point of entry for WIA participants and other vocational students into the academic side of the

Challenge 5

college. WEDD students often begin by taking fast-track courses at WEDD to learn new job skills, begin new jobs, and then attend the college at night to obtain a degree. WEDD distributes an ongoing report showing the number of students who first enter the college through workforce development and then go on to take credit and degree program courses. This report is shared regularly in faculty meetings throughout the campus and with the Board of Regents. WEDD staff feel that it helps the academic side of the college see the link between workforce development and postsecondary degrees.

In addition, WEDD actively encourages students to return to the college to take credit-based courses toward a degree or certificate after they have returned to work or

completed WEDD training. Tri-C has negotiated tuition reimbursement arrangements with several local employers so that students can attain degrees while remaining employed. Tri-C also includes career development in many of its certificate courses. For example, students in the nursing certificate course learn about Tri-C courses in the healthcare field and are encouraged to meet with instructors. Any training program at WEDD can be a springboard to a degree program, and this is a message that Tri-C tries to drive home to students every day. Instructors at WEDD often work as adjunct faculty on the main college campus, enabling them to share information about the workforce development division and how it relates to the college's transfer function.

Challenge 6

DEVELOPING STATE POLICIES THAT ENHANCE COOPERATION BETWEEN WIA AND COLLEGES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

ALTHOUGH STATE POLICIES ON WIA tend to be more similar than different, they vary in how they influence the interaction between colleges and the One-Stops and WIBS at the local level. States' influence on the WIA-college relationship depends on which agency oversees WIA funding, the extent to which community colleges have a voice in state workforce development policies, how much data sharing occurs, the role played by state agencies for employment services, and the level of support for collaboration that exists among state agencies.

Kentucky and Virginia are two states where state-level initiatives and coordination have helped put community colleges at the heart of their workforce development efforts.

Use the state legislative process to promote coordination and streamline the delivery of workforce development services.

In the 1990s, Kentucky's economy was faltering, and the state turned its attention to the education and training system to see what could be done to respond to these economic conditions. The news was not good. Nearly half of Kentucky's 2.3 million workers were functioning below the ninth-grade level in reading and/or math. Enrollment in the states' higher education institutions was low.

According to Keith Bird, chancellor of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, businesses were dissatisfied with the training options available in the state, complaining that community colleges were unresponsive to their needs. Community colleges, part of the university system, were allowed only to award two-year degrees. Businesses interested in shorter certificate programs had to work with the technical colleges, part of the K–12 education system. To make matters worse, the community colleges and technical colleges rarely coordinated their activities, which resulted in duplicated programs and a workforce development system that was confusing for businesses and students. The state postsecondary education structure also made it difficult for community colleges to respond quickly to demands for new training because it took more than a year to get new curricula approved.

With pressure from businesses and with state leaders spearheading the effort, Kentucky began to make some changes. Passed in 1997, the Postsecondary Education Improvement Act (House Bill 1) combined 13 community colleges and 15 technical colleges into 16 college districts to form the Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS). House Bill 1 also created the Council on Postsecondary Education, which now houses both KCTCS and adult education. In addition, the

reform package explicitly outlined a series of workforce development goals for postsecondary education.

The changes made by House Bill 1 are strengthening the workforce development system by encouraging collaboration among state and local government agencies and emphasizing the importance of postsecondary education for economic and workforce development in Kentucky. Duplication between the community and technical colleges was significantly reduced, and the workforce development system was simplified for businesses and students. By more closely aligning adult education with postsecondary education, the bill also strengthened the connections among adult education, postsecondary education, career training, and lifelong learning. These changes put the state's community colleges in a better position to work with their local One-Stops, WIBS, and WIA-eligible students.

Create a work-readiness credential at the state level and put community colleges in charge of it.

The workforce development system in Virginia is fragmented, with more than 20 workforce development programs housed in 10 agencies overseen by three state departments. Local workforce development organizations and businesses often struggle to navigate this complex system.

When Governor Mark Warner took office in 2002, he set out to streamline and improve the accountability of Virginia's workforce development system. He succeeded in creating a portable credential, the Career Readiness Certificate (CRC), in 2004. The CRC is awarded to individuals who test well on WorkKeys assessments of three skills required across multiple industries and occupations (reading, applied math, and locating information). Individuals can receive one of three certificates—bronze, silver, or gold—corresponding to their skill level. The assessments also identify areas in which further training is needed. The number of CRCs awarded is tracked by

an online, searchable database, the Skills Bank, which gives employers a sense of the labor force's skill levels in a particular area and is especially useful for businesses considering a move or expansion.

Because the Virginia Community College System used the WorkKeys assessments before the CRC, it was asked to manage the initiative, develop the local process for obtaining the CRC, and assist with marketing. As part of the agreement, local community colleges are required to establish memoranda of understanding with local WIBs, One-Stops, and other organizations that meet guidelines to administer the assessments and, if needed, to refer test-takers to qualified training providers. Community colleges also are required to work with their local WIB

to determine if test-takers are WIA-eligible. If so, the WIB covers the cost of testing and any subsequent training provided.

Besides encouraging collaboration among community colleges and other workforce development organizations, the CRC promotes communication among the state's community colleges and businesses. Because most states face the same workforce development issues as Virginia, state administrators are encouraging other states to implement the CRC. They have formed a CRC Consortium with Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, North Carolina, Tennessee, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia to design a system that will be fully recognized by all members.

Encourage community colleges to operate One-Stops.

In a deliberate effort to integrate the disjointed pieces of Oregon's workforce development system, the state Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development was established in 1999 as the agency overseeing all state workforce development policy and programs. State goals for workforce development stress the importance of a cohesive, integrated workforce development policy. The state promotes colleges' participation by encouraging them first to become One-Stop operators and, second, to invite One-Stops to compete to control specific funding streams.

Through this process, One-Stops can become the grantees for one or more of the WIA programs, such as those for dislocated workers, adults, or youth, as well as for TANF employment and training funds. Portland Community College (PCC) and Mt. Hood Community College (MHCC) operate three of the five area One-Stops between them. For years, they have competed for and obtained both WIA and TANF funding, which allows them to run their workforce development programs, most notably Career Pathways. In 2005, PCC's One-Stops were the grantees for

dislocated workers funds (\$4 million in 2005), and the MHCC One-Stop was the recipient of TANF employment and training funds (\$8 million in 2005). After receiving these funds, the two colleges subcontracted with each other so that, together, they can serve both of these populations. As grantees for an entire funding stream, or sometimes two, the colleges have more control over how funds are spent, giving them the flexibility to operate their innovative programs.

Challenge 7

AVOIDING UNHELPFUL COMPETITION AMONG COLLEGES FOR WIA DOLLARS OR CLIENTS

COLLEGE JURISDICTIONS DO NOT always align geographically with WIA jurisdictions. Sometimes just one WIB or One-Stop serves an area that includes the catchment areas for several colleges. In these situations, colleges sometimes compete with each other for WIA funding or ITAS. Conversely, sometimes one college serves an area covered by several WIBS or One-Stops. In those cases, colleges can be stretched in several directions as they try to work with several WIBS with different policies, reporting requirements, and goals. Each situation creates its own kinds of challenges.

Several community colleges or districts have found ways to cooperate and avoid these problems. Among them are Jefferson Community and Technical College and Tacoma Community College and the four other colleges serving Tacoma.

Solutions

Join forces to provide better services.

For years, Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC) competed for WIA-funded students with Jefferson County Public Schools Adult Education (JCPSAE), the local recipient of WIA adult education dollars. Because community colleges in Kentucky were allowed to serve students without a high school diploma or GED credential, JCTC enrolled some students who would have been better served by JCPSAE. Although JCTC had a record of success with many underprepared students, it was less effective with students who had lower literacy levels. Many were coming to college, paying tuition, and failing.

When the new JCTC president, Dr. Tony Newberry, was appointed, the director of JCPSAE, Julie Scoskie, immediately asked if he would be interested in collaborating rather than competing. Aware that JCTC had an unsatisfactory track record with students who had lower literacy levels, he agreed. In 2002, the two institutions agreed to relocate some adult education staff to JCTC's campuses and to refer JCTC students scoring below a designated level on the college's assessments to adult education. To ensure a seamless transition from JCPSAE to JCTC, the adult education classes have been structured similarly to the college courses. The two institutions also have aligned their assessments and curriculum, and they share staff development, equipment, and educational materials. As of 2005, JCTC and JCPSAE had more than 500 students each semester who were dually enrolled. According to Dr. Newberry, it has been a "win-win situation for both institutions, but, more importantly, for the customer."

Share a seat on the local WIB.

Five community and technical colleges, but just one One-Stop, serve Tacoma, Washington, and its surrounding area. On the face of it, this situation might appear advantageous for job-seekers. The One-Stop could be a single point of entry for WIA clients who can then choose a training provider from a wide selection of colleges. In reality, this situation created problems in Tacoma. From the early days of JTPA, the five colleges in the region competed for scarce job training dollars, employers, and potential students. "It gets dicey when you have five colleges in the same area competing. But if we could just get better at this, there was plenty of work to do," says Michelle Johnson, president of Pierce College and a longtime leader in workforce development policy in the Tacoma area.

But the relationships among the workforce training community and the highly competitive colleges in Tacoma have changed dramatically. "I have seen a huge change in how the colleges relate to each other. We have come very far. They are working together very well now. They understand the need for a trained workforce. They even share curriculum and collaborate. Boy, that's refreshing!" says Susan Suess of the Pierce County Economic Development Board.

This change occurred when Tacoma was preparing for the transition from JTPA to WIA. Planners took advantage of the transition to reassess the control of federal job training dollars. They hired a consultant who recommended changing how colleges are represented on the WIB. Now, the college presidents take turns representing colleges on the WIB, ensuring that the WIB is less "TCC-centric" and that colleges learn to speak with one voice. The new push toward demand-driven workforce development solutions, which puts colleges front and center in local discussions about how to train workers for high-growth/ high-skills jobs, has helped unify the colleges around a common mission.

Provide district-wide leadership and coordination.

The Alamo Community College District (ACCD) in San Antonio, Texas, includes four separately accredited community colleges, each with its own distinctive character. Before the creation of a district-level leadership position for workforce development, there was little coordination among the colleges' training programs. Each college worked directly with the WIB, One-Stops, and businesses. Each set its own program standards and costs, including those for programs

on the ETPL. Businesses and students had difficulty determining which college to approach for training, and competition among the colleges made the situation even more complicated.

To address these issues, Dr. Frederico Zaragoza, vice chancellor for professional, technical, and workforce education, has begun to establish a district-wide infrastructure for workforce development. By 2005, he had accomplished the following:

- Mandated that district colleges have program costs approved by his office.
- Aligned program standards among the colleges.
- Established one point of contact for businesses and the WIB.
- Joined the local WIB as the ACCD representative.
- Invited other community colleges with model workforce development programs to make presentations to ACCD's administrators and faculty.

Challenge 8

PROVIDING JOB-READINESS TRAINING AND OTHER SUCH SOFT-SKILLS TRAINING

WIA PARTICIPANTS OFTEN NEED job-readiness, or “soft-skills,” training at least as much as they need occupational skills. Employers demand it, and colleges want to offer it. But WIA funding often will not reimburse colleges for providing such training. Although One-Stops often provide short-term job-readiness training to clients, colleges argue that WIA clients need more intensive instruction in how to become good employees. They also say that if colleges are to be held accountable for job retention among WIA clients, they must be able to offer services that will help clients remain employed and become economically self-sufficient. Colleges want to use ITAS to pay for job-readiness courses or to embed soft-skills curricula into their vocational courses. Yet One-Stops and WIBS typically do not allocate adequate WIA funding to cover this type of training.

Lurleen B. Wallace Community College and Jefferson Community and Technical College are two schools that have found ways to provide these needed services by establishing partnerships with other organizations. With this approach, organizations can pool their resources and jointly provide services more efficiently than any one organization could do alone.

Solutions

Establish a broad partnership to create a job-readiness certificate program.

Alabama workforce development agencies, employers, and colleges recognized an urgent need to train people in job-readiness skills to prepare them for successful employment in local businesses. Focused Industry Training (FIT), developed in 2004, was a response to that need. The FIT program was created through a partnership among the Alabama College System, Alabama Industrial Development Training Division (AIDT), the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA), and the Alabama Office of Workforce Development. The program provides training and job placement services at 34 sites statewide, concentrating in areas near Alabama's automotive manufacturing plants. The program is supported by funds from WIA and the community college system.

Conducted by Alabama community colleges and managed by the AIDT, FIT programs are designed to help people who have not worked before or in a long time and focuses on preparing them for entry-level work. Potential participants are screened and monitored by the One-Stops (called "Career Centers" in Alabama) to ensure they will be successful in the program (i.e., if participants lack necessary academic skills, they will be referred first to the community college for basic education). Upon completing the program and passing a comprehensive exam, FIT graduates earn an "Alabama Certified Worker Certificate."

FIT's curriculum is based on workplace readiness standards identified by Alabama employers and is aligned with the standards described in the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report. Because manufacturing plays such a vital role in Alabama's economy, the curriculum emphasizes manufacturing skills in addition to general job-readiness skills, such as computer use, reading,

math, communication, teamwork, and problem solving. Statewide, 1,500 people participated; among participants, 72 percent completed the program, and among those completing the program, 84 percent passed the comprehensive exam and received the Alabama Certified Worker Certificate. FIT graduates are able to continue their training (32 percent) or go directly into the workforce (66 percent).

Cuts made to the state WIA budget have forced ADECA to cut funds for the FIT program drastically. Rather than discontinue the program, however, state staff have decided to move it to the adult education division, which has the instructors, classroom space, and recruitment and intake services needed to continue this program. Staff are hopeful that this move, although prompted by funding cuts, will in fact strengthen the program over the long term.

Create a separate agency to provide high-quality job-readiness preparation.

To create a smoother transition between education and work, Jefferson Community and Technical College (JCTC), Metropolitan College, Career Resources, Inc. (CRI—the One-Stop operator), and KentuckianaWorks (the local WIB) joined forces in July 2003 to form and fund the CREW (Connecting Resources, Education, and Workforce) Career Center. CREW provides free career exploration activities, career planning, and career placement services to JCTC students and the general public. The CREW Center heavily emphasizes academic preparation and career development. Its three objectives are to increase educational attainment, improve educational retention, and provide extensive career services.

Coordinated by Metropolitan College and staffed by counselors and administrators supported by all four partners, the CREW Center shares space with Metropolitan College at one of JCTC's campuses and has satellite

offices at other JCTC campuses and the University of Louisville campus. It also is closely linked to JCTC's academic and vocational programming. It provides students with customized classroom workshops (e.g., mock interviews, professional etiquette, resume writing); links to co-op positions and internships; and employer referrals.

CR1's experienced staff assist with the CREW Center's career assessment and counseling services. KentuckianaWorks provides support for marketing and strategic planning, as well as access to labor market data and other workforce development resources. The WIB also pays for three of the Center's full-time-equivalent positions.

Challenge 9

EDUCATING ONE-STOP STAFF AND EMPLOYERS ABOUT THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITIES OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

WIA CLIENTS AND One-Stop staff are often familiar with proprietary schools and community-based organizations (CBOS), and employers are generally familiar with economic development agencies and Chambers of Commerce. But community colleges sometimes must struggle to gain visibility with both constituencies. Colleges are less accustomed to having to market themselves to prospective clients than are proprietary schools and CBOS. And few use aggressive outreach activities to let employers know about the training they can offer.

Macomb Community College has looked to partnerships to address this challenge, while Fox Valley Community and Technical College has joined with other organizations to conduct research that paved the way for greater collaboration.

Solutions

Create a facility specifically designed to serve business needs.

Macomb Community College (MCC) works to maintain its vital partnerships during good times and bad. Located in the center of the automobile manufacturing area, just outside of Detroit, and surrounded by enormous plants such as General Motors and Chrysler, MCC has a history of working with local employers and One-Stops.

MCC's location also means that the population it serves constantly needs training. Detroit has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country. Many unskilled jobs have been lost as auto manufacturers face international competition and pressure to move production work overseas. The continual upheaval results in large numbers of dislocated and incumbent workers in need of retraining. MCC often partners with local firms and with the local One-Stop to develop and deliver training programs. College administrators believe that workforce development is at the core of their mission and working collaboratively is "the way the college does things."

In the mid-1980s, MCC created the Workforce Development Institute to offer customized training programs for business and industry. Initially focused on delivering modular academic courses for companies, the Institute was an experiment and depended on a solid partnership of state, city, and county government, the local One-Stop, businesses, and the college. To get under way, MCC used state economic and job training funds, which were managed by the One-Stop, in addition to corporate contracts. College administrators decided the Institute met a community need and invested additional resources in expanding this division, consolidating most of the college's workforce development activity there. MCC also provided resources for curriculum development, staffing, and maintenance.

The Workforce Development Institute is housed in one of the state's training facilities, the Michigan Technical Education Center (M-TEC). M-TECs were formed as part of the governor's plan to develop training facilities for advanced manufacturing and high-demand occupations. MCC's M-TEC focuses primarily, though not exclusively, on the needs of the auto manufacturing industry. A focal point for workforce development and partnership building in the region, the M-TEC facility has offices, classrooms, and labs designed to serve diverse business and industry clients and many types of training needs.

With funds from the One-Stop and the state, MCC's M-TEC trained nearly 4,000 workers and served 150 companies during 2004–05. To ensure that businesses can take advantage of available WIA funding and the services offered at MCC, the college asked a staff member to serve as the WIA grants coordinator. Located at M-TEC, this staff member works with the WIB and with companies on processing forms and grant applications, data collection, and reporting. And when the WIA grants coordinator learns of new grants, she actively recruits eligible companies.

Use research to raise awareness and pave the way for cooperation.

The Fox Valley Workforce Development Board (the local WIB), along with the Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) and other regional partners, recognized that lack of a skilled, educated workforce and falling income levels were significant long-term problems in their economy. Long dominated by manufacturing, the region was losing jobs to changing technology and competition with companies that sent jobs overseas. To address this set of complex problems, the partners joined forces to sponsor the Northeast Wisconsin Economic Opportunity Study in 2004. The study drew upon the expertise and experience of workforce and economic development agencies, business and industry, community colleges, universities, and city and county governments. With the help of consultants and funding from the U.S. Department of Labor,

Challenge 9

the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, and 12 counties, the study assessed the economic condition of the region and proposed strategies for recovery.

The study team gathered economic data from regional forums, surveys, and interviews. Participants in the study were asked to consider a range of issues, such as the assets of the region, factors likely to attract and retain business, factors helpful in boosting economic growth, and conditions that weaken the region or inhibit growth. Among other findings, a synthesis of the data and trend analyses predicted a continuing decline in manufacturing and growth in service sectors (e.g., health, education, and business services). Other data showed that high-growth occupations required workers with postsecondary education. Because the study indicated that recruiting educated workers was key to increasing the region's competitiveness, advancing educational attainment became the first strategy named in the action plan.

The partners devised a comprehensive approach to improving the educational attainment of workers in the region. Some specific strategies included the following:

- Create a public relations plan aimed at parents, students, teachers, and counselors in the public K–12 school system to promote the importance of education and the skill sets required in the new economy.

- Develop a scholarship fund.
- Expand postsecondary programs in high-demand sectors.
- Support community colleges in adapting to new technology, helping the colleges to offer training that is up-to-date with industry trends.
- Expand adult education offerings, especially for non-traditional learners and incumbent workers, including those eligible for WIA funding.

The Economic Opportunity study was a vital first step for the region, resulting in a concrete action plan and collaboration among partners to implement that plan. Dr. Susan May, vice president for instructional services and chief academic officer, reports that this collaboration led to more effective relationships with the WIB, businesses, and economic development partners and to more informed discussion and purposeful planning. FVTC's participation also created a greater awareness of the college among business leaders; they now see the college and its workforce development capacity as key to recruiting companies and expanding regional business clusters. Finally, the study resulted in the development of new projects for the college and the WIB. The college now offers a Licensed Practical Nursing program for WIA clients and has begun a new training program for incumbent workers in a nearby county. As Dr. May said, "We've seen some eyes opened."

Create a forum for networking and capacity building among colleges, businesses, and the workforce development community.

The Workforce Development Academy, initiated by the Virginia Community College System (VCCS), brings together core workforce development groups to help strengthen the skills of workforce development professionals and to exchange information about needs, services, and issues. The Academy began when VCCS, recognizing that workforce development professionals need diverse skills, decided to identify the skill standards that could help its colleges upgrade their workforce development capabilities. Working with the University of Virginia (UVA) to create the standards and a training system to promote them, VCCS invited a group of state experts representing businesses, community colleges, state agen-

cies, and other key organizations to identify core competencies and the associated skills. The group chose competencies focused on leadership, strategic planning, collaboration and community development, and business and economic development, among others.

UVA used these competencies and skills to develop curriculum that is the basis for the Workforce Development Academy. With funds and in-kind support from VCCS, UVA, corporations, and other organizations, the Academy offers non-credit courses and a nine-credit graduate certificate in workforce development through UVA's School of Continuing and Professional Studies. Classes are taught by experts from throughout the state.

The Academy attracts not only workforce development staff at the community colleges, but also academic staff, adult education practitioners, One-Stop managers, state agency staff, and private-sector training providers in Virginia. Staff from Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) and the northern Virginia WIB and One-Stops have attended the Academy, which hopes to begin recruiting participants nationwide. Bringing together representatives from business, government, the community colleges, and the workforce development community to plan and implement the Academy has enabled those groups to understand each other's assets and capabilities.

Challenge 10

PROMOTING COLLABORATION — AND AVOIDING DUPLICATION OF SERVICES — AMONG COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND OTHER WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

FEDERAL JOB TRAINING PROGRAMS have long recognized that disadvantaged populations need extra support to complete training successfully. Although funding levels vary, assistance is provided for such services as childcare, transportation, special equipment or clothing, emergency cash, and housing. One-Stops are funded and their staff trained to provide this help. But colleges and WIBs often have trouble determining which organization should provide support services, case management, and job placement assistance to WIA clients. Coordinating this function has been a challenge for colleges and One-Stops from the beginning of WIA.

Community colleges also have learned that substantial resources must be devoted to extra support. The traditional college career guidance center is not enough. Early results from Opening Doors, an evaluation of the effects of enhanced support services on persistence and completion rates at community colleges, show that those receiving support services pass courses at higher rates than do those who do not receive such support (Purnell and Blank 2004).

Several colleges have tackled this challenge in creative ways, including creating a separate agency to coordinate services between the colleges and the One-Stop in Denver and using an inter-governmental agreement in Pima County, Arizona.

Solutions

Create an intermediary organization, specializing in supporting clients already approved for training under WIA, to link One-Stops with colleges.

In 2001, administrators from Denver's Division of Workforce Development (DWD), the city and county agency that oversees WIA, and the Community College of Denver (CCD) met to discuss a growing problem. They were concerned that service delivery to clients was poorly coordinated and inefficient, resulting in many clients not getting what they needed or falling through the cracks. The data showed they were right. ITA funds were not being fully spent, despite the downturn in Denver's economy and high unemployment rates. The system was not working properly, and there were many reasons.

Staff at the Work Centers (One-Stops) were overwhelmed, and some may have avoided awarding ITAs because they were labor-intensive and required long-term follow-up. Policies were followed inconsistently (or not at all), and the region lost potential funds. Approximately \$600,000 in ITA funds were not spent during that year, and the college was unhappy that it was not receiving ITAs. The solution was to start an entirely new agency to act as a broker between the two organizations, keeping the focus on the needs of WIA clients.

In the beginning, DWD contracted with CCD to create Quick Start, a separate organization that would serve both CCD and DWD. The college provided human resources services, space, utilities, and technology support, and DWD paid the salaries of the Quick Start staff. The goal was to have Quick Start staff focus on high-demand/high-wage occupations and work with WIA clients to give them the training they needed—and the college provided—to get these kinds of jobs.

Quick Start would specialize, working only with clients approved for training, so staff would have smaller case-

loads and be able to provide intensive case management. Within a short time, Quick Start put an advertisement in the newspaper and set up a few telephones in a room on the college campus. Some 500 calls came in from dislocated workers in the first week. During the first month of the project, CCD was conducting huge orientations, handling client paperwork and assessments, and placing clients in training programs. DWD sent a staff member to Quick Start several days a week to complete the WIA paperwork for eligible clients.

Soon the three organizations—Quick Start, CCD, and DWD—decided that Quick Start should handle all ITAs, not just those referred to CCD, and support all eligible provider programs offering training in high-demand occupations. Quick Start expanded its staff from three to eight and moved to a small building on campus.

Mindful that local, state, and federal workforce development agencies oversee their work, Quick Start staff say that they have developed a process that works and meets all regulations:

- Staff work with clients referred to them by one of Denver's Work Centers to help them apply for WIA eligibility, complete interest inventories and a self-evaluation, research the labor market and career ladders, and select a training program.
- Staff determine if the client will be a good candidate for an ITA. If not, they refer the client back to the Work Center for core or intensive services.
- Clients receiving an ITA select a training program at CCD or another training provider. Quick Start staff provide full case management and support services as needed.
- Quick Start staff maintain their own database (a customized version of Access), which allows them to monitor their clients and respond rapidly to DWD's requests for data.

CCD administrators, Quick Start staff, and DWD staff believe that this broker model is working. ITA funds are expended, and the region is meeting its WIA performance standards. Quick Start staff have a reputation for providing high-quality, non-duplicative case management services. The success of Quick Start led to their obtaining a direct contract from the state Department of Labor and Employment to expand services to include displaced homemakers.

Use an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) to eliminate duplication.

In their efforts to serve their clients, Pima Community College (Pima) and the Pima County One-Stop Centers found themselves duplicating many services, including job search and placement, case management, and grant procurement. This duplication of effort was inefficient and created tension between the two organizations. While they wanted to work as partners, they found themselves in an adversarial relationship, where “territory and egos,” according to one county staff person, become more important than collaboration.

To address these issues, the college and the county developed an inter-governmental agreement (IGA) to help streamline the relationships between the college and the county. The IGA addresses services offered under WIA, as well as through Youth Opportunity and general funds, and provides for sharing staff, funding, and other resources.

The most important component of the IGA is the staff shared by the college and the county and located at the One-Stop. Among activities covered by the co-funded personnel are the following:

- Registering students.
- Conducting orientation and administering assessments.

- Invoicing and billing.
- Helping case managers with book vouchers, forms, and tuition arrangements.
- Advising students on course-taking requirements.

Although locating staff in one place was considered important, the arrangement yielded other benefits, too, including allowing staff at the One-Stop to have access to both the college’s and the county’s databases. When they need information from one or the other organization, they can get it themselves.

After the IGA was implemented, the county and the college realized that they needed to evaluate their collaboration, so they developed the Joint Task Force on Workforce Development Partnerships. The Task Force identified eight areas for improvement, including enhancing communications and establishing a mechanism for collaboration. For each task, a subcommittee worked to develop an action plan to address the issues involved.

For example, one task was to “establish a plan for job search and placement of students.” Job placement services are often duplicated between community colleges, which have their own career centers, and One-Stops, whose core activities are job development, search, and placement. The same resume-writing and interview skills classes, job opportunity lists, and career counseling services are offered in both locations. Not only is this inefficient, but students also find it confusing and local businesses find it irritating to be approached twice about available jobs or to have two different agreements, one with the college and another with the One-Stop. To share resources and reduce duplication of services, the taskforce developed the following procedures:

- Staff responsible for job development at the county One-Stop visit each of the college career centers on a regular basis. They become familiar with the “Career Awareness” software available at the college, and

Challenge 10

college staff become more familiar with job placement services available at the One-Stop.

- Pima Community College campuses share their list of available positions with the One-Stop centers.

Both the college's Center for Training and Development and the county One-Stop have case managers, and a joint group of case managers meets quarterly to communicate program needs; discuss issues; and share

concerns, information, and resources. When the group was first established, it met monthly, but, as issues were resolved, frequent meetings became less necessary. Nevertheless, case managers are engaged in ongoing communication with one another. Further, the college and the county have begun to write grant proposals together rather than competing with each other, especially proposals requiring WIB sign-off. They see this joint effort as further cementing a real partnership between the organizations.

CHAPTER 3

Conclusions and Recommendations

THE MOST ENCOURAGING finding from this study and other studies referenced here is that, as community colleges increasingly embrace the mission of workforce development, they are learning to incorporate wIA into their larger workforce development system and goals. The data cited at the beginning of this report and the experiences of the 12 colleges featured in Chapter 2 suggest that the relationship between community colleges and wIA has evolved from being troubled and somewhat

dysfunctional to one that, while complex and still changing, works better for WIA, the colleges, and the people they serve. Although national data show that colleges as a group still underparticipate in WIA, participation rates appear to have increased in the seven years since WIA was first implemented.

While the colleges participate more, they do so in ways that depart somewhat from the original intentions of the legislation. For example, colleges still do not receive referrals with ITAS from One-Stops at the rates they expected or desired. But they somehow still have managed to serve large numbers of WIA participants, as indicated by recent estimates of the amount of training provided under WIA. How colleges have accomplished this is not entirely understood, but it is known that many colleges have gone well beyond ITAS to serve the WIA population through alternative arrangements such as contract training and “pre-college” or remedial courses. Some of these arrangements are supported by WIA dollars (GAO 2004).

Colleges’ involvement with their local WIBS and One-Stops has also taken different forms. Colleges have moved from their early reluctance or even refusal to work closely with WIA to increasing participation in operating One-Stops and serving on WIBS.

The 12 community colleges featured in this report, like many similar colleges, have tenaciously found a variety of creative solutions to the challenges they confront in working with the WIA system. Each responded differently to the challenges, partly because the challenges had different dimensions in each setting and partly because of the variation across communities in the position of the college within its community, its ongoing relationship with WIA, and its needs and goals.

From the array of organizational, financial, and political responses described here, we identified several strategies, or “lessons learned,” that appear to address multiple problems. These “meta-strategies” can position

colleges to take full advantage of what WIA offers, be it funding, access to underserved populations, partnerships with businesses or community-based organizations, or a voice on the local WIB. These overall lessons learned seemed to underlie many of the activities, initiatives, and projects that arose from successful relationships between colleges and their WIA partners. Understanding these lessons may help other colleges navigate their own paths to a more effective relationship with WIA.

This report concludes with a summary of the lessons learned, followed by a list of challenges colleges still face. Because solutions to these ongoing challenges are for the most part outside the control of colleges, resolving them may require policy changes on the part of states or the federal government. We provide recommendations for some of these changes below.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lesson One. Community colleges that treat WIA as a small but integral part of their workforce development mission tend to have greater success and experience less frustration.

Community colleges that try to make WIA-supported activities the linchpin of their workforce development efforts often become frustrated by the lack of flexibility in some of the WIA rules and regulations and by what they see as inadequate funding. In some cases, the colleges find that WIA operates in conflict with their institutional missions. Although some of the colleges included in this study used WIA as a core strategy in achieving their overall workforce development objectives, none depended solely on WIA to support these efforts.

When colleges view WIA as a relatively small but important part of their larger workforce development approach and treat WIA as a means to an end rather than an end in itself, both the colleges and WIA agencies seem to work more effectively together. Examples of col-

leges that take this approach are Portland Community College, New Hampshire Community Technical College, Cuyahoga Community College, Alamo Community College District, Jefferson Community and Technical College, and Northern Virginia Community College.

Lesson Two. Community colleges tend to have more leverage with WIA in states where colleges are represented by a strong, cohesive statewide organization and where interagency agreements facilitate their work.

When colleges try to go it alone in working with their local WIA system, they often become mired in local problems or find that they are not heard at the state level. But when community colleges within a state are unified enough to have a strong, cohesive voice at the state or regional level, local problems are more easily resolved. Typically, having a seat on the state workforce investment board is necessary but not sufficient representation in state policy decisions that affect community colleges. Colleges with good representation at the state level include Jefferson Community and Technical College, Northern Virginia Community College, Portland Community College, Tacoma Community College, and Lurleen B. Wallace Community College.

Lesson Three. Colleges that involve their local One-Stops and WIBs in efforts to understand each other's institutional missions and organizational cultures find that their involvement in WIA proceeds more smoothly and effectively.

While interviewing community college administrators about WIA, one site visitor was told, "working with WIA is too hard because of the bureaucracy." Later that day, while interviewing staff at the local One-Stop, the visitor heard the same complaint, stated in almost the same way, about the college. Community colleges are education institutions, and One-Stops and WIBs are employ-

Workforce systems need to be more entrepreneurial; they need to learn to look for other resources that might be more available, such as from the private sector. Because, no matter what, WIA dollars will never be enough.

Gay Gilbert, High Growth Job Training Initiative, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor

ment and training institutions. Their missions, methods, incentive structures, and modes of operation are fundamentally different. These differences create problems in communication that, in turn, can create problems in working together. This divide can often be bridged by a variety of strategies: cross-training, cross-hiring, co-location, regular meetings, and other ways of cooperating that increase understanding and greatly enhance working relationships between these two different institutions. Colleges undertaking such efforts include Pima Community College, Jefferson Community and Technical College, Northern Virginia Community College, and Alamo Community College District.

Lesson Four. Colleges that have combined or merged the "silos" of workforce education, customized or contract training, and academic instruction have realized substantial efficiencies and improvements in the quality of services provided by each.

To fulfill their workforce development missions, colleges work with a wide array of constituencies: employers seeking trained workers, job-seekers wanting to upgrade their skills, economic development agencies soliciting the college's expertise in labor market analysis, adult learners preparing to obtain GEDs or workforce-readiness certificates, WIBs and One-Stops, and many others. Colleges tend to build separate divisions and offices for each of these activities, and they often locate these offices in different areas of the campus or even on separate campuses. This division, both operational

and geographical, usually does not serve these constituencies very well. What works instead is combining workforce education and contract training into one department and building bridges to the academic side of the college. Examples of colleges taking this more holistic approach include Pima Community College, Jefferson Community and Technical College, and Portland Community College.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study also identified some difficult challenges that cannot be solved by the colleges alone. Addressing them may require changes in state or federal policy or outreach and education efforts. Some recommendations for change are listed below that, if implemented, are likely to go a long way in enabling community colleges to participate more fully in WIA.

1. **Relax constraints on contract training.** Constraints on using WIA funds for customized and contract training, a system that works well for colleges and for demand-driven models of workforce development, have inhibited college participation in WIA.
2. **Find a performance-based accountability system that works for colleges.** Colleges need an accountability system that is useful, user-friendly, and designed both to report to WIA and to inform their own improvement efforts. The WIA accountability system, particularly the ETPL, is a poor fit. Colleges would benefit from standard performance measures currently being considered and may need a college-specific accountability system. Statewide consolidation of reporting systems also works well.
3. **Encourage community colleges to operate One-Stops.** Colleges operating One-Stops tend to integrate WIA more successfully into their overall workforce development efforts. Many colleges operate One-Stops, but they are by no means in the majority.
4. **Consider allowing colleges to use WIA funding to build capacity.** WIB-determined funding caps and limits on the duration of ITA-funded training continue to be a problem for colleges. While the ITA is sometimes sufficient to cover tuition for a one- or two-year certificate, it is never enough to increase capacity to serve WIA students by purchasing equipment, hiring instructors, and so on. Ironically, the more One-Stops turn to colleges rather than to proprietary schools for training, the lower the caps tend to be, because college training is so inexpensive.
5. **Encourage colleges to provide case management and support services to ensure positive outcomes.** Colleges are ranked fourth by One-Stops as providers of intensive services. Non-profits and other governmental agencies, most notably Employment Services and proprietary colleges, rank higher (Macro, Almandsmith, and Hague 2003). Community colleges increasingly recognize the importance of support services, but because they are viewed primarily as providers of training and not of support services, they rarely receive WIA funding for these services. To enable WIA participants to succeed in community colleges, the colleges should have the means to meet all their needs.
6. **Educate the workforce development community, including colleges and One-Stops, that WIA is not a “work-first” program.** Initially, One-Stop and WIB staff shared a common misperception that WIA was based on the principle of “work-first” and that training was a last resort, to be supported only when cheaper services did not result in a job placement. This philosophy still prevails in many One-Stops and may be one reason why relatively few ITAs are issued—and why few of those make it to community colleges. Training is key both to helping job-seekers achieve economic self-sufficiency and to promoting healthy local economies, and there is nothing in the WIA legislation that says otherwise.

Appendix

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS
REFERENCES

STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

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