

Workforce Investment Act

Frequently Asked Questions

Vol. II

This publication is intended to address some of the most frequently asked questions regarding the Workforce Investment Act, One-Stop systems, local authority and other program related interests. The questions listed are not exhaustive and often represent a series of questions around a specific topic. Answers have been developed that are consistent with federal and state rules and policy. References are included.

13. Are all of the ODJFS Local Offices really closing?

Yes. A report describing the planned transition to state-operated call centers, processing centers, and One-Stops was submitted to the General Assembly on October 1, 2001. The transition report may be viewed online at: <http://www.state.oh.us/odjfs/transition/TPlan.pdf>. Under the plan, all existing State ODJFS local offices will close although some individual State-owned facilities may be retained and reconstituted as call centers or processing centers. A sequence schedule for closing offices is being developed and will be available when finalized. It is a complex process that involves several factors: leases, building sale, facility acquisition and/or remodeling, installation of computer and phone lines, area specific workload fluctuation, staffing levels and cost.

14. Will we have access to SCOTI if we do not have Wagner-Peyser staff?

SCOTI will function as the State's official public labor exchange system. Along with a WIA component, SCOTI will have two labor exchange components: self-service and staff-assisted. Both jobseekers and employers will be able to choose self-service functions or staff-assisted (mediated/facilitated). Approved partners in the local One-Stop system will have access to both the self-service and staff-assisted versions. Approved partner staff will be given access in accordance with their locally negotiated memoranda of understanding and the completion of necessary security and confidentiality agreements.

15. How do you deal with dislocation wages versus demand occupation wages?

This question focuses on the services provided to the dislocated worker population. In some cases, dislocated workers have worked many years at an existing facility. This tenure leads to substantial wage structures (i.e., \$30 per hour). However, when workers are dislocated, they are faced with re-entry into the labor market. It is not uncommon for structural changes in local economies to bring about significant reductions in the number of traditionally high-paying jobs while those demand occupations that are available within the local labor market require vastly different skills. This results in the need for dislocated workers to undergo significant retraining in order to maintain wage levels that approximate the displacement wage. The assessment process is critical to this solution. During the assessment with the dislocated worker, regional labor market demand can play a key factor. The broader regional labor market can be used to identify demand occupations in neighboring counties that

may offer the customer an opportunity to transfer existing skills or identify related career pathways leading to a stronger wage at placement. This strategy enables the customer an opportunity to increase their job opportunities at potentially higher wages and at the same time, allow them to continue to live in their existing community.

In order to maximize local ability to address the needs of dislocated workers, it is important that local workforce boards not limit the definition of demand occupations to only those occupations that produce significant numbers of annual openings. While these types of limitations simplify local processes for determinations of need for occupational training, they also unnecessarily limit the scope of career opportunities explored by dislocated workers. Greater flexibility in these definitions may afford opportunities to utilize specific skills already possessed and require smaller training investments to maintain standard of living. Two different alternative approaches are particularly effective. One approach to consider after first carefully examining available resources from ODJFS-LMI, is to conduct targeted local or regional surveys of occupational demand. Another approach requires individuals seeking training in a particular field to document the availability of jobs in that field.¹

16. Are we certifying One-Stop systems beyond the pilots by January 2003?

ODJFS is currently testing the certification instrument in Pilot One-Stop areas. During this phase, the certification guide and process will be modified as needed based upon our experience in the pilot areas. Around November of 2002, after the testing process has been completed in the Pilot One-Stop areas, the certification guide will be finalized and ODJFS will begin to process requests for certification from both pilot and non-pilot areas.

17. What is the time frame for bringing up the rest of the One-Stop systems (after pilots)?

The full transition of closing offices to the public and moving staff into One-Stops will take place beginning in March of 2003. As detailed in Question 13, the timing of the movement of ODJFS staff into the One-Stops will be contingent on several factors, including:

- Staffing levels in the affected ODJFS offices.
- Current and projected workload of the affected ODJFS offices and the potential impact of any disruption in service during the period of the move.
- The degree of readiness of the facilities where the existing ODJFS staff are to be located.
- The installation of the necessary IT infrastructure in the new facility to ensure connectivity to required systems.
- Certification of the local One-Stop system.
- Budget and resource availability to support the necessary costs related to the move.

It is anticipated that transition to One-Stops will be fully completed during SFY2004.

18. How are funding and allocations handled in a multi-county workforce investment area?

When individual counties elect to aggregate into a conventional WIA area, and are designated by the Governor after consultation with the Governor's Workforce Policy Board, they are treated as a single entity under the Act². Each local workforce area must designate an individual as chief elected official for the area. The chief elected official in an area serves as the WIA grant recipient.³ In areas that

¹ A Guide to Well-Developed Services for Dislocated Workers, USDOL-ETA, 1994, p. 8-11

² PL 105-220, I, B, 2, 116, (a)

³ PL 105-220, I, B, 2, 117, (d), (3), (B), (i), (I)

include multiple units of government, an intergovernmental agreement may be executed that designates how the roles and responsibilities of the chief elected official, including the appointment of the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB), are to be executed by the individual chief elected officials of the political units that comprise the area⁴. Each workforce area will be allocated WIA funds in accordance with provisions of the Act. ODJFS will provide funds to the grant recipient, or their designated fiscal agent⁵. The choice to sub-allocate funds, within a workforce area, among individual units of government is made by the local Workforce Investment Board and chief elected official or in accordance with intergovernmental or other local agreements and does not require the approval of ODJFS or the Governor.

19. Will every One-Stop system qualify for receiving Wagner-Peyser staff?

State Wagner-Peyser staff will be located in certified One-Stop systems where we can achieve maximum customer benefit. There are limited Wagner-Peyser staff resources.

20. Please clarify the difference between cost sharing and resource sharing?

These terms tend to become confusing in various guidance and presentations. The MOU guidance and template attempts to clearly differentiate from the two terms by not interchanging them when discussing these two distinct concepts.

Resource sharing is defined as those program resources that a partner brings to the One-Stop (i.e., OWF, Wagner-Peyser, WIA programs, Rehabilitation Services) which are not included in a cost sharing budget. The individual program partner bears the cost of program resources. An example of resource sharing occurs when a partner places staff in a One-Stop to provide direct services to eligible clients referred by other partners.

Cost sharing refers to the sharing of the operational expenses of the physical One-stop site(s) by the partners either directly or through contributions of staffing or other items. The term contribution refers to what is commonly known as “in-kind” and/or partner “resources” in other guidance. Examples of in-kind cost sharing occur when a partner places staff in a One-Stop to answer the phone and provide clerical support for all partners or when a copy machine is provided for general use.

This is further addressed in the MOU Draft Guidance and Template⁶ on page 8. The document can be viewed at <http://www.ohioworkforce.org/OneStop/OneStopMOU.html>.

21. How do you determine which of the required partners that you need for the completion of your MOU if they are not located within your area?

Thirteen programs are mandated as One-Stop partners in Ohio. Twelve are specified in the Workforce Investment Act⁷ and Ohio has included TANF as an additional One-Stop partner. Not all of these programs are operating statewide. It is not required that local One-Stop systems enter into agreements with mandated partners which do not provide services within the geographic area served by the One-Stop system. Whether or not the partner has an office or facility located within the workforce area is not material. The requirement as to whether they must be a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding for a particular workforce area relates to whether they provide services specified in the Act within that geographical area. Each mandated partner is federally funded, either wholly or in part.

⁴ PL 105-220, I, B, 2, 117, (c), (1), (B), (i)

⁵ PL 105-220, I, B, 2, 117, (d), (3), (B), (i), (II)

⁶ MOU Draft Guidance and Template, page 8, Cost Sharing/Resource Sharing

⁷ PL 105-220, I, B, 3, 121, (b), (1)

Details concerning the location, service areas and contact persons for these programs can be accessed by contacting the federal agency responsible for regulatory oversight for the applicable authorizing legislation. If you are unable to identify whether a program is operating in your area, please contact Sue McKittrick for assistance at (614) 752-4698.

22. Are uniform definitions possible statewide, i.e., One-Stop system satellite?

The initial draft Certification Guide included definitions for the One-Stop system, the One-Stop center, and the One-Stop satellite. Our experience in the pilot One-Stops, as well as discussions with local workforce areas, has led to a re-evaluation of those definitions. As a result, they are not included in the current edition of the Certification Guide. Ultimately, definitions of these key terms, as well as those of other critical terms not specifically defined in law or regulation, are necessary to achieve a common understanding of the concepts underlying the One-Stop system. The following definitions have been developed in order to identify the basic elements that define each of the One-Stop terms listed above with the understanding that those elements may be addressed at the local level utilizing widely varying approaches while still satisfying the intent of the Workforce Investment Act:

- One-Stop System – The One-Stop system is the key component in the delivery structure for public workforce development programs. Either a single One-Stop center or network of One-Stop satellites linked via Memoranda of Understanding to a single One-Stop center can comprise a One-Stop system. Requirements relating to the development of MOUs, One-Stop certification, or compliance with the specific implementation requirements of the Workforce Investment Act, apply to One-Stop systems.
- One-Stop Center – A single physical location which would fully satisfy the requirements for a One-Stop system **whether or not** the location is affiliated with One-Stop satellites or other One-Stop centers in a local One-Stop system.
- One-Stop Satellite – A facility which functions as an access point to a local One-Stop system but does not, independent of an affiliated One-Stop center, fully satisfy the requirements for a One-Stop system.

The ODJFS Office of Workforce Development is currently working on additional WIA definitions, guidance, and policy. Any draft guidance or policy will be available on www.ohioworkforce.org for review and comment or sent for clearance as appropriate according to the nature of the issuance.

23. Is the state considering the purchase of a job search engine for the One-Stop?

See Question #14. The SCOTI system was obtained from the State of Washington. It includes a WIA component and a staff-assisted labor exchange component. We are in the process of customizing both of these components to meet Ohio's business needs. In addition, we are currently remodeling the OJN On-line self-service component to add a self-service labor exchange component to SCOTI. The SCOTI system will be the State's official labor exchange system. Our first goal is to bring up a functional labor exchange system. Enhancements such as the addition of a specific search engine will be considered and prioritized after the first goal is accomplished.

24. Reed Act Money – Will it be allowed to all counties interested – or just certified One-Stop systems?

Reed Act money will be provided to certified One-Stop systems. The following three activities are identified in Senate Bill 261 as approved uses for certified One-Stop systems:

- 1) Development of user-friendly computer links that allow on-line interactive access within various local workforce policy systems.
- 2) Acquisition of hardware and software for resource rooms.
- 3) Promotion and marketing of One-Stops and services provided in the local community.

25. Will there be a formula for potential One-Stop systems for Reed Act money?

A Reed Act Committee convened in June, 2002. The purpose of the committee is to develop the methodology for distribution of the \$10 million.

26. Are we looking at Career Link/Michigan Works as one statewide system?

No. Ohio's reporting and tracking system for WIA is SCOTI. See #14 and #23.

27. Why do our local offices answer the phone "One-Stop"?

The specific direction that office managers received was that during this transition period they should coordinate what we call our operation with the community One-Stop. If this issue remains unresolved in a specific area, please contact John Trott, Deputy Director, Local Operations at (614) 466-4951.

28. Former OBES offices still have One-Stop signage?

Again, see above response. During this transition period we must have signage for the buildings as they continue to offer labor exchange services.

29. Will it be a mandate for all One-Stops to use SCOTI?

Yes. Workforce Development Areas will be required to use SCOTI for WIA reporting and tracking. One-Stops will be encouraged to also use SCOTI for their labor exchange needs. State staff located in a One-Stop will be required to use SCOTI for labor exchange services. See #14 and #23.

30. How can you apply for Reed Act money prior to certification?

The Reed Act Committee is currently discussing this issue. For more information on the Reed Act Committee, please see Question #26.

31. Do we need public comment for MOU/Certification?

No. The Memorandum of Understanding and Certification Reports are not required to be published for public comment. However, we have conducted eight (8) regional T. A. meetings on the MOU and Certification to provide assistance and gather feedback.

32. Does the Reed Act allocation have a life?

Even though the Reed Act money has no time limits, the committee decided on a 3-year time limit to use these One-Stop funds. The funds would carry through FY 05. Toward the end of FY 04 each area would need to certify the use of the funds to release them for use in other areas.