Implementation Guide

Pathway to Reemployment
Framework

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
STATE WORK FORCE
AGENCIES

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Introduction

Many states are recognizing that how people find work in today's labor market is very different from how it was done in past decades, and rethinking their unemployment insurance (UI) work search polices to expand the scope of actions that meet their requirements. To assist with this effort, a group of state workforce system leaders, in collaboration with representatives from the National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) and national and regional Employment and Training Administration (ETA) staff, came together to develop the **Pathway to Reemployment Framework**. This framework consists of a set of resources ("tool kit") that provides state policymakers and other stakeholders with a "re-envisioned" approach to work search for UI claimants, and a set of strategies and behavioral insights related to UI work search requirements that states may elect to adopt.

This **Implementation Guide** is part of this resource tool kit. Other tools include:

Pathway to Reemployment Framework

This document is the cornerstone of the "Re-envisioning Work Search Requirements" initiative. It provides:

- An overview of the changes in how job seekers and employers connect;
- An outline of essential elements of 21st century reemployment and work search requirements; and
- A suggested menu of possible work search activities.

If you are a state policymaker or other stakeholder considering an alternative approach to reemployment and/or UI work search policies, it is recommended that you begin your analysis by reading this document first.

Validation and Documentation

This white paper explores the topic of successful documentation and validation of 21st century work search activities. It considers topics including but not limited to: What can and should be validated? Where can documentation be relied on and what might that look like? Is self-attestation enough for some activities?

My Reemployment Plan Template

The My Reemployment Plan template (MRP) is a general, interactive job search guide, i.e. a "road map" of sorts. It is structured in a modular way, which facilitates adaptation to the specific requirements and various economies of states and regions. Each module outlines proven steps to successful reemployment in a 21st century job market and may be used by job seekers directly or as a case management tool for professional workforce development staff.

Promising State Practices and Lessons Learned

A compilation of pilot projects, successful models, and lessons learned from across the nation, this collection of resources may aid states with their decision-making processes in implementing revised work search requirements and updated service delivery models.

The Reenvisioning Work Search Toolkit can be found on the Reemployment Connections Collection on WorkforceGPS.

Purpose

This Implementation Guide is designed for public workforce system leaders and practitioners who choose to adopt some or all of the re-envisioned work search principles **and** want to use the MRP as the primary tool for creative and expanded methods of self-directed work search. The MRP, of course, may be implemented partially or in its entirety "as is", or may be customized to the applicable state, region, or local area's workforce system policies, state unemployment insurance laws, and/or regulations. All of the information contained in the Pathway to Reemployment Framework tools is in the public domain and available for sharing and distribution, with acknowledgement to the Pathway to Reemployment Framework.

The Guide provides an outline of successful, practical strategies to assist policy makers with the design of a service delivery approach that facilitates the successful use of the MRP, poses a springboard for job seeker success, and – at the same time – positions UI programs to:

- Provide job seekers with a more modern and effective roadmap for conducting their work search;
- Ensure UI claimants meet their responsibilities to actively seek work; and
- Maintain UI Program integrity.

In many instances, these changes may have a significant impact on existing policies, plans, and service delivery/job seeker support models. Initially, the efforts of the re-envisioned work search requirements initiative and the design of the Pathway to Reemployment Framework were driven from a UI program perspective. However, it became evident during the development process that the UI program cannot, on its own, reach its goal of providing job seekers with the comprehensive array of resources necessary for conducting successful work search in today's competitive job markets. As Federal and public resources continue to be limited, the importance of partnership and integration continues to increase. It is becoming more important than ever for workforce partners to streamline and link their service strategies to benefit their customers. A workforce system that is able to respond to the demands of the 21st century job market requires a holistic approach; a model in which multi-program services are aligned and integrated in such a way that they:

- Provide all reemployment resources necessary for job seeker success;
- Deliver up-to-date, evidence-based solutions; and
- Allow easy and streamlined access to all resources to facilitate job seeker success.

It is understood that each state, region, or local area may be at a different point on the continuum of redesigning its work search and reemployment principles. But no matter where you are, this Implementation Guide outlines helpful approaches, tools, and resources to assist you in moving forward. There are four proposed implementation strategies:

1. Examine Policies;
2. Optimize Service Delivery Models;
3. Implement Staff Training; and
4. Enhance IT Infrastructure.

Simply pick up where it is most suitable for your area and move on to the next step!

Note: The Pathway to Reemployment Framework does not promote a system in which work search requirements are regarded as tasks that must be "checked off" for the purpose of obtaining UI benefits. Instead, this framework assumes that UI programs will promote reemployment as well as providing benefit payments. With the support of the MRP, a model for reemployment should incentivize job seekers to use creative and expanded self-directed work search activities. Hence, for the purposes of this Implementation Guide, no distinction is made between "regular" job seekers and UI benefits-claiming job seekers.

Implementation Strategy 1: Examine Policies

Let's begin by examining what modifications can be made from a policy perspective – and how to make those changes – to move the needle toward a holistic, integrated workforce development system. Following are a few considerations that may help you along the way.

It's a team effort.

In order to be successful, the process of re-envisioning work search requirements and reemployment strategies can only be completed as a comprehensive, inter-agency team, with a mindset in which partners view themselves as colleagues (whose programs and services complement each other), not competitors, and where value is placed on shared ideas and best practices. Naturally, each partner thinks first about its own program's rules, regulations, performance measures, and goals. However, when trying to create a more holistic and integrated approach to service delivery, it is vital that partners think more broadly. To build a truly integrated system in which the implementation of successful 21st century work search policies and reemployment strategies is possible, it is essential that partners successfully achieve the transformation from a collection of hard-working individual agencies to one efficient, effective system providing seamless and comprehensive services, designed with the customer's success as its foremost priority. Therefore, the strategies proposed in this Implementation Guide are intended for a team of workforce system partners rather than one individual entity.

Joint Vision and Planning

Having a solid vision for what is to be accomplished is the cornerstone of every successful endeavor. Only when a concise vision is in place can goals, objectives, and strategies be developed. Consider the following extract from the National Call for Innovation (page 13), which provides an example of a team vision statement focusing on the issue of reemployment:

> "We envision a system that is driven by an Integrated Workforce Customer Registration as the entry to the nation's "reemployment system" – and offers a coordinated customer-centric focus with full partner access. The UI claimant process is seen as a part of the broader "job seeking" process and customers are treated as job seekers (their UI claim being just one aspect of the services available to job seekers). Services are available via the Internet as well as other means – but the Internet access is supported by dynamic social networks linking customers, career counselors, employers and educators. Integrated service delivery is focused on customer outcomes. The system is focused on skills transferability, is data driven, measurable and accountable (both to the law and to customer needs)."

Once the team to build the integrated system is in place and the vision for the service delivery system has been developed, team members will need to work together closely, perhaps over extended periods, to plan and accomplish integration goals. It will be important to nurture and support the team over time if the goals are to be attained.

Service mapping should probably be the team's first activity in designing the most effective service delivery system. It is particularly important to get a clear picture of who provides which services, to whom, when and why. This will identify unnecessary duplications and potential service gaps early on. Once this is clear, and there are common definitions and commitment to the integrated system, a team will be positioned to build and launch a coordinated, customer-centric system.

Key Policy Considerations

When examining current policies and considering new ones, there are often situations where seemingly competing or even conflicting interests must be balanced carefully. Examples include: trying to be innovative, while abiding by the parameters of the law; trying to simplify "legal language" while still providing sufficient details; or trying to issue joint policies for programs governed by different statutes and regulations. The challenges are hardly avoidable, but the result of achieving common goals to reach that customer-centered vision shared by all partners is certainly worth the effort, as it poses an invaluable, long-term investment in the general welfare of the community.

One way to overcome these challenges is to create a list or matrix of issues that need to be addressed and then examine the policies governing those issues, one by one, against a set of agreed-upon standards. These standards should promote the general concepts of an integrated, holistic workforce development

system that serves the needs of the community. Key considerations in designing effective work search and reemployment policies include:

- Do current policies generally facilitate or hinder innovative service delivery approaches that empower customers' success in a 21st century job market?

- Do current policies promote or hinder the implementation of the work search activities proposed in the Pathway to Reemployment Framework? Can all work search activities proposed in the Pathway to Reemployment Framework be adopted, or are there any applicable restrictions?

- What implications do the work search activities proposed in the Pathway to Reemployment Framework have on the UI program?

  o What reemployment service delivery components can be considered as work search for UI purposes?

  o What new UI policies will need to be developed to expand the menu of work search activities?

  o How will new work search activities be documented/validated for UI benefit purposes? (Refer to the "Tying in Your Reemployment Efforts with Your Unemployment Insurance Benefits" section in the MRP for additional considerations on this issue.)

  o What impact (if any) will new work search and reemployment policies have on the increments in which UI claimants are expected to touch base with program staff during the life cycle of their UI claim?

- How will the MRP tool be leveraged in support of work search and reemployment policies?

  o Will the MRP be implemented only partially (only some modules/activities) or in its entirety?

  o What type of customization, if any, will be necessary to adapt the MRP to laws, policies, and/or regulations governing the workforce system?

  o Will the MRP be used by job seekers solely a self-service tool or will it also be used as part of a staff-assisted career coaching plan?

  o May some of the MRP reemployment activities be incorporated into local American Job Centers' (AJCs) workshop menu?

  o How can the activities outlined in the MRP fulfill the UI program's work search requirements?

  o What other programs could leverage the MRP reemployment activities in support of their eligibility and/or benefit payment requirements?

  o Should the new work search/reemployment service delivery policies present the MRP as part of the UI Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program? How should it be introduced to claimant?

- Are current policies primarily designed with the customer in mind, or are they designed to comply with statutory and/or regulatory requirements?

- Are any policies unnecessarily restrictive? Are these restrictions truly necessary?

- Do policies promote collaboration across partner programs and/or funding streams or do they encourage a "siloed" approach?

- Are policies issued individually by partner program or jointly? Can any individual policies be merged across partners to foster integration and program/service alignment?

- Are any policies excessively driven by performance measures (beyond what is required by law or regulation)?

- Do policies actively promote a holistic and integrated workforce development system, addressing such issues such as co-location, resource sharing, co-enrollment, integrated registration, and a common "front-door" across programs?

Some of these considerations may also be addressed in local or regional Memoranda of Understanding or Infrastructure Funding Agreements (previously known as Resource Sharing Agreements). In Implementation Strategy 2: Optimize Service Delivery Models, you will find additional insights on topic areas that may require policy revisions and/or new policy development.

Implementation Strategy 2: Optimize Service Delivery Models

Once reemployment and work search policies are in place and communicated uniformly to staff throughout the state, the next step is to design and implement service delivery models that align with and advance those policies. For example, if state policy now requires or encourages co-enrollment across all programs for which a participant is eligible and interested, then delivery of key services such as intake, assessment, and case management must be coordinated across partners.

The MRP template includes steps that job seekers can take to be successful. Behind each of those steps are services and supports made available through the AJC system that customers should be able to access quickly and easily, when needed.

The following steps provide a framework for state and local systems to use when designing and implementing an effective reemployment service delivery model:

Including staff from all levels in service delivery model design.

States must remember that changing from a collection of programs delivered in silos to an integrated system designed around a shared goal of reemployment can seem like a seismic disruption to staff who may have spent years doing their jobs in the old system. Building buy-in and understanding from staff is critical to achieve meaningful change, and staff from all levels and all partners should be engaged to ensure successful implementation. For example, UI staff in many states have spent the last several years isolated in call centers rather than physically connected to the full spectrum of service delivery. However, UI is a fundamental component of the workforce system and WIOA provides an opportunity to improve access for UI claimants needing assistance in filing claims. And, as the gateway to the system for many, the UI program's involvement and ultimate integration into the service delivery model design is critical to success.

A new top to bottom focus will feel like a major change for staff and change can be difficult for most people. For resources on managing change, including the three major components: transformational leadership, individual resiliency, and organizational resiliency, take a look at ETA's ION Change Management Talks which offer a video and discussion guide for each topic.[1]

Staff in various roles should be consulted regarding front-line service delivery. Ideas that may work on paper may not have the desired outcome when working with real people with significant challenges to reemployment. Additionally, important components of integration, such as information sharing across partners and functions must have the infrastructure and unified processes to support communication. Representative staff from case management, reception, business services, and IT and facilities management, should be included in the service design discussion for two primary reasons: 1) to ensure the vision and policy works in the real world of service delivery, and 2) to ensure all staff understand, support and drive successful implementation.

Including staff from various roles within UI and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs is not sufficient to ensure a truly integrated service design that leverages all available resources. In addition to all of the legislated partners, community-based organizations and other non-required partners, such as Dress for Success, financial literacy or counseling programs – essentially any partner with a shared goal of reemployment or reemployment support - should also have a voice in the discussion of service delivery design to ensure they understand and are ready to contribute to the success of the new model.

Focusing design efforts on the customer.

As important as it is to include the staff implementing your service design, there is one group whose voice is even more important to the ultimate success of your model – the customer. Understanding your customer is central to effective service delivery. Customer-centered design (CCD) is a set of methods you can use to gain a deep understanding of the customers you're looking to serve, their needs, and their resulting behaviors. It drives the development of ideas to create innovative new solutions, rooted in what is actually needed to achieve job seekers' employment goals, as opposed to following more traditional and potentially outdated thought and process patterns.[2]

Once you've assembled your service design team representing all roles, functions and partners, your group can use a CCD approach to define the delivery structure and details based on what will best serve the customer – an approach that generally achieves better outcomes and higher customer satisfaction. A simple example of this winning approach is offering RESEA customers the ability to determine their own date and time for their appointments through an automated scheduling system. These systems allow claimants to schedule RESEAs on their own at times that do not conflict with other appointments such as scheduled job interviews. They also reduce staffing costs incurred and reduce the number of claimants

who must be rescheduled. And, most important, they result in higher participation rates than programs that do not offer this service to customers.[3]

The CCD approach typically includes five key steps:

1. **Research** – listening to customers to generate new ideas on how to deliver services
2. **Synthesize** – identifying patterns and insights to inspire new opportunities for design
3. **Ideate** – brainstorming new ways to serve customers
4. **Prototype** – trying out ideas and getting feedback from customers so you can revise and get more feedback
5. **Test** – try out a pilot program and experiment with ways to implement new ideas

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"By using this (CCD) approach we can develop plans in a different way not with the law and the regulations in the center but with the customer in the center."

~Virginia Hamilton, USDOL/ETA Regional Administrator

CCD uses human-design thinking to drive service delivery solutions, but it doesn't have to be a lengthy or complex process. It uses empathy and an understanding of the customer's emotions and needs to re-frame the discussion from "What can't we do?" to "How might we do it?" As an additional benefit, CCD often re-sparks passion and energy in workforce system staff, many of whom originally went into the human services field to work with people rather than systems or programs. To support implementation of CCD, USDOL/ETA offers many online tools and resources, including the experiences of states and local areas that are successfully doing CCD, on the [Customer Centered Service Delivery Design Initiative](#) site.[4]

Examining the AJC organizational structure.

Your AJC organizational structure and service delivery model should be driven by the needs of your job seeker and business customers and may vary from place to place. There are several organizational features, however, that are increasingly seen as hallmarks of an integrated and effective system and are quickly being adopted in AJCs across the country. These features include:

> Customer flow designed using principles and methodologies of CCD, lean management, and strengths-based customer service.

In addition to CCD, Lean Management seeks to maximize customer value while minimizing waste. Simply, lean means creating more value for customers with fewer resources. A lean organization understands customer value and focuses its key processes to continuously increase it. A popular misconception is that

lean is suited only for manufacturing. That's not true. Lean applies in every business and every process. It is not a tactic or a cost reduction program, but a way of thinking and acting for an entire organization.[5] Many states and local areas are using the principles of Lean Management to design a customer flow based on integrated service delivery across programs. Learn more about Lean Management, including a framework for implementing the Lean Transformational Model, at the Lean Enterprise Institute.

Strength-based customer service asks the question, "What would happen if you focused on customers' strengths instead of on the barriers they face?" A common pattern in workforce development is to identify challenges first. This is only natural, since challenges are often what make a customer eligible for a program or for more intensive and training services. However, employment and educational success can be enhanced by focusing on customers' strengths, and staff using this approach may be better positioned to support job seekers as they develop and move through their Reemployment Plan. USDOL provides tools including a self-assessment, state and local examples and hallmarks of outstanding strengths-based customer service in Opening Doors for Everyone: Providing Outstanding Customer Service at One-Stop Career Centers Toolkit.

> Your state's Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services delivery is often the starting point for customer flow into the workforce system. By design, Worker Profiling starts with customer's weaknesses, rather than their strengths, by identifying the characteristics that make them "likely to exhaust" UI benefits. The Reemployment Services interview is where your state has the opportunity to partner with customers understand they have strengths and resources for their own employment.
>
> "Using a strengths-based coaching approach helps solidify our relationship with customers. It quickly makes us partners, and as we help them feel stronger, they see more possibilities, and they're likely to return and continue to work with us. It gives the message "I'm here to work with you from the beginning to the end." Dr. Cal Crow, co-founder and program director for the Center for Learning Connections and Center for Efficacy and Resiliency at Edmonds Community college (Washington State)[6]

Organization of staff (across partners) by function rather than program or funding stream.

Customers do not typically care which agency or organization they are working with as long as they receive quality services. In fact, many customers find navigation of various programs so confusing and frustrating that they give up trying to access reemployment services or do not attempt to access them at all. As a result, many people stay on benefits longer than they may have with access to the right services or, worse, they exhaust benefits and remain unemployed. That is why it is critical for States and locals to design an easy to comprehend and navigate system with a focus on services rather than programs.

To put the needs of customers first and to support collaboration across partners, many AJCs are physically organizing staff by the function or service they provide rather than their affiliation with a program or agency. For example, in Kentucky, staff serving job seekers are organized across three primary functions:

- *Welcome* which includes the center greeter, resource center staff and core service providers;

- *Assessment* which includes staff performing assessments on behalf of WIOA and Adult Basic Education; and

- *Skills Development* which includes Career Counselors representing the WIOA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs as well as Vocational Rehabilitation. (See: Functional Organizational Chart for Kentucky Career Center)

Business Services is a key area in which to consider functional organization across partners. It is well documented that most employers prefer that workforce system partners coordinate outreach and service delivery so employers don't have to deal with multiple contacts and programs. An integrated service approach provides employers with solutions from the system as a whole. This design typically increases customer satisfaction and engagement with the system which, in turn, leads to better reemployment outcomes for job seekers.

Expand coordination across programs.

While physically organizing services by function rather than program or agency is a great first step, it is only the beginning of designing and implementing a customer-driven, integrated service design. As noted above, coordination across programs maximizes resources, streamlines and enhances access to services, and improves outcomes. Those benefits make it worth the effort to do the hard work of building partnerships, mapping services/customer flow and dissecting processes to develop a truly integrated service delivery model. As states and local areas have moved forward with integration, several areas have emerged as key indicators of an integrated workforce development system:

Common Intake

Common intake means that partner programs follow one intake process, which simultaneously determines eligibility and potentially enrolls participants in multiple programs. Common intake saves customers the time and frustration of meeting with multiple program staff to repeat the same information. It also saves valuable staff time which could be used supporting job seeker reemployment activities instead.

Common intake can be launched by developing a common paper intake form and integrating staff processes across programs. The most efficient, effective, and streamlined approach, however, is through a technology solution that creates a common "front-door" which removes any duplication in the information customers provide at a physical one-stop career center through or virtual sites. Data collected through the registration system is stored in one or more connected data management systems and should be available to inform customer service throughout the customer's interaction with the integrated system.

Common Assessment

Workforce partners will need to determine how funding, staff and services can be aligned and leveraged to ensure services provide the maximum value for customers as they move through their Reemployment Plan. Streamlining the assessment process is a good approach to consider. For example, if one partner has a thorough and cost-effective assessment process, could the results be accepted among the programs serving that customer? Such an approach could conserve resources, avoid repeated customer testing and provide high-quality feedback for all partners.

Mini Assessments

State and local systems may want to consider implementing an up-front "mini assessment," in the "triage" model, as an alternative to moving customers immediately to self-directed job search in the Resource Room. An enhanced basic front-end assessment of interest, skills, and goals could go a long way toward supporting the larger objective of advancing customers' longer-term career development, and better connecting them more quickly to the right partners, services, and supports.[7]

Co-enrollment

Co-enrollment of customers in more than one program can increase the probability that resources are available to support the individual as they follow their Reemployment Plan. This approach enables customers to simultaneously access all services which may be of use to them, rather than the traditional model of customers being "owned" and served by a single program at a time, and then later referred sequentially to other partners and programs.

Many states and local areas have adopted policies that mandate or encourage co-enrollment and have developed MOUs that outline how co-enrollment will take place. The State of Utah, for example, co-enrolls participants in every partner program for which the participant is eligible and interested. This practice allows participants to quickly access a variety of services across programs and leverage resources to maximize their impact. To expedite the co-enrollment process, Utah also uses two electronic systems called e-REP and e-Share. E-REP stands for Electronic Repository Eligibility Product and is the system the Utah Department of Workforce Services uses to determine eligibility for public assistance programs including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Financial Assistance (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance, General Assistance, and Refugee Cash Assistance), Child Care, and Medicaid. The system interfaces with UWORKS, the state's workforce development case management system, on information for common customers. For example, if a customer is receiving SNAP benefits, the information is passed to UWORKS and is used to determine if the customer is categorically income-eligible for WIOA (because of SNAP eligibility).

E-Share is a front-end approach to accessing information from other systems (either real-time access or information stored in the state's data warehouse, depending on the information source). E-Share is primarily used by employment counselors to determine eligibility for the TANF training program ("TANF Non-FEP"). For example, TANF regulations require states to verify Social Security numbers. This is done by an interface with the Social Security Administration through e-Share. Utah also has an interface with Utah Vital Statistics and can verify if someone was born in Utah and is, therefore, a US citizen.

Joint or "Team-based" Case Management

Joint case management is an essential element of integrated service delivery for those co-enrolled customers who require assistance managing their career development process. Since each program has a shared goal of job seeker reemployment that leads to self-sufficiency, aligning case management can avoid confusion, maximize efficiency and ensure the provision of coordinated and comprehensive services.

Joint case management means that case managers from the various programs serving a co-enrolled customer work as a team to support the job seeker's progression through their Reemployment Plan. This involves all applicable partners meeting, or at least communicating regularly, to ensure customer service coordination. On a practical level, this shift means moving from a model in which a single agency or program "owns" a customer to one in which a primary agency may take the lead brokering responsibility for a customer's service plan.[8]

Critical components of effective team-based case management include clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the case management team (that are articulated to the job seeker), consistent communication and a tool and process for sharing information across programs.

> Profiled claimants in Utah engage in an in depth assessment with RESEA staff who may then refer claimants to appropriate services to support their reemployment efforts. Data sharing, supported through the interface between the UI system and an integrated case management system for workforce programs, allows RESEA staff access to individual claimant benefit information. RESEA staff benefit from the extensive training they receive from UI staff who, in turn, benefit from knowledgeable RESEA staff reporting possible cases of fraud and abuse and resolving, when possible, customers' UI questions and concerns. RESEA staff also has immediate access to DWS UI staff via phone where they can ask general questions or help claimants resolve issues or concerns regarding their benefits or status. This service helps support the RESEA staff's relationship with the job seeker and improve customer follow through for services.

Integrated Business Services

Integrated Business Services are critical to engaging and meeting the needs of the business customer. Many of the same principles used to integrate job seeker service delivery apply to the business customer – a user-friendly customer interface, continuous updating of information, and connectivity of data on the back end. A successful model for serving business customers includes coordinating outreach, listening to business needs rather than talking about programs, and offering solutions that meet those needs rather than imposing bureaucratic processes. An extensive array of resources on effective business services is available on USDOL/ETA's Business Engagement Collaborative page.

> In States like Massachusetts and Washington Rapid Response teams are working closely with their UI partners to integrate employer engagement and information sharing. This strategy recognizes that UI staff have significant knowledge around business cycles and needs and can also support innovative layoff aversion strategies such as shared work.

Types and methods of service delivery.

Once the optimal AJC organizational structure is determined, the next step is to identify what services will be offered and how they will be delivered to most effectively support reemployment. There are many services that must be offered by law and are critical to any reemployment service design, but additional services may also be made available directly or through partners to meet the needs of both your job seeker and employer customers.

Assessing customer needs.

Identifying the best mix of services goes back again to listening to the needs of your customers. Are there common demographics, characteristics and challenges faced by your job seeker customers that warrant the addition of services outside the traditional design? The Worker Profiling process may provide key insight into the demographics of those most in need of reemployment services in a given area. What about your business customers? What are they identifying as their greatest challenges to filling positions and meeting their skill needs?

There are many examples of state and local systems across the country that have considered the unique needs of their populations and work with community partners to add services to address those needs, such as financial literacy training, on-site childcare, success mentoring, and even cognitive behavioral therapy. The idea is to think beyond a traditional set of services to one that meets the current needs of the customers walking through the door.

Sector strategies are a critical tool to identify the right solution-based service for business. This approach can also inform service design for both job seekers and business customers that leads to rapid reemployment. A sector strategy is a partnership of multiple employers within a critical industry that brings together education, economic development, workforce systems, and community organizations to identify and collaborate to meet the workforce needs of that industry within a regional labor market. Sector strategies represent a new way for workforce organizations to conduct business: moving from a "program administration" focus to a more strategic role that involves building regional talent pipelines, addressing skill gaps, and creating meaningful career pathways for a range of workers in important regional industries. For comprehensive tools and resources to support sector strategy development, visit USDOL/ETA's Using Sector Strategies and Industry Focus Groups to Support Local Businesses site.[9]

Community audit or resource mapping.

Once customer service needs are identified the next step is to determine the programs and services that best support the customer's path to reemployment. To do this in the most comprehensive way possible, many partnerships complete what's called a community audit. Community auditing is often referred to interchangeably as asset mapping or resource mapping. It is a type of inventory or environmental scan that builds system capacity to allocate resources efficiently and maximize a region's ability to serve those most in need.

Community audits identify, by type and source, all of the relevant services and resources available in the community. The results of that inventory can serve as a blueprint for service delivery. Areas can align, coordinate and integrate how those assets or resources are deployed to achieve planned outcomes. Mapping available agency services, supportive capacity, community-based organization benefits (such as free glasses or assistance with utility bills for indigent individuals), and volunteer subject matter experts within a community can maximize results and allocate costs more efficiently. For more information about community auditing and tools to get started, visit Workforce GPS' Community Auditing - Asset and Resource Mapping to Maximize Capacity.[10]

Access to services.

Offering the right mix of services is only part of the reemployment equation. Customers need to be able to easily access those services when they need them. In an effort to minimize costs while reaching more customers, many state and local systems have invested in online service delivery. Job search, resume development, assessments, some workshops, and even initial eligibility determination can now be delivered virtually, which means customers can access those services anywhere, at any time. When customers need staff assistance or more intensive services, they are referred to a physical AJC. It's critical that information regarding reemployment services, whether virtual or physical, is provided to job seekers at the first point of contact with the integrated system. For many customers, that is the point in which they file a UI claim. Completing that claim must require the provision of information regarding how to access reemployment services.

Leveraging Technology to Enhance Service Delivery.

The State of Ohio received a Workforce Innovation Fund grant to test the virtual service delivery concept. The result was a significant expansion of their online labor exchange system, Ohio Means Jobs, to allow job seekers to establish a "profile" to document and track their progress through their Reemployment Plan. The site offers online career planning, assessments, labor market information, video tutorials and even virtual interview practice.

While expanding online service delivery offerings will improve access, not every service will work in a virtual environment. It is important to consider what services work best in a virtual format and which ones require face-to-face interaction. Staff-assisted job search, counseling, some case management, and workshops may require face-to-face interaction to ensure a high level of quality and successfully move customers through their Reemployment Plan. You will need to regularly revisit this question, however, as technology continues to improve and the job market and customer needs change.

> States across the country are looking at ways to integrate information technology to support the public workforce system's overall shared mission of rapid reemployment. Utah was an early pioneer in this area by targeting integration and improvement of its worker profiling process to promote data sharing and the use of timely labor market information to support UI claimants' job search. The Utah RES Orientation/Assessment Eligibility Review System overview provides a detailed look at the resources and steps that Utah used to drive this initiative as well as benefits and lessons learned along the way.

Work readiness skills.

A common theme heard from employers across the country is that workers need better work readiness or soft skills. Job seekers with good soft skills understand the basic expectations employers have regarding attitude and behavior in the workplace. Soft skills are generally considered a cluster of personality traits, social graces, communication skills, personal habits, friendliness, optimism, team work, and critical thinking. Reemployment counselors need to assess for this soft skills when meeting with job seekers because, for many, some type of training in this area will be an important component of their Reemployment Plans. Consequently, work readiness preparation resources should be available through your online or in-person service delivery – or both.[11]

There are many existing resources you can use, if you do not have an effective work readiness preparation program in place. The USDOL/ETA, for example, offers a curriculum called Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success.

Staying current and continuous improvement.

Once you define your integrated service design and delivery model, it is essential to ensure that outreach and orientation materials are updated routinely to accurately reflect what is available and how to access those services. The goal is to communicate effectively with the customer so they understand how the workforce system can help them find a job, what they will find at the AJC, and how to easily access those services.

Job seeker and business customer needs are not static – they can change with shifting demographics, economic growth/downturns, and evolving workplaces. AJC service design and delivery must also constantly evolve to meet those customers' needs. In addition to performance outcomes, it is also important to have a system in place to track customer usage of and satisfaction with services to evaluate whether your system is continuously improving to meet their needs. You can also access a broad variety of technical assistance resources and best practices around service design and delivery to drive reemployment through USDOL/ETA's online technical assistance platform: Workforce GPS.

Implementation Strategy 3: Implement Staff Training

You've identified why change is necessary. You've worked collaboratively across partner programs to:

1. Develop effective policies and procedures in support of a re-envisioned approach to work search and reemployment;
2. Implement the My Reemployment Plan (MRP) template as a standard tool in your system-wide job seeker support model; and
3. Design a holistic approach to meeting job seekers' and employers' needs through innovative and integrated service delivery strategies.

So how can you ensure the effective implementation of these new policies, tools, and systems? How do you bring your new vision to life? The place to begin is by communicating and training staff at all levels, from "board room to mail room." The goal is to leave no question unanswered, in an effort to minimize the natural resistance to change. Questions that may be on everyone's mind include:

- WHAT is the change?
- WHY is this changing?
- WHERE will this happen?
- WHEN will this happen?
- WHO will be affected?
- HOW will this be done?[12]

Rolling out changes *horizontally* across partner programs and *vertically* to inform and equip staff at all levels requires careful planning and investments. The following roadmap will help you avoid pitfalls on your journey.

Phase 1: Build and support your leadership team (your "champions").

One of the benefits to using a collaborative design process is that you should have a set of champions, representatives of all applicable partners who understand what you're doing and why, and who can deliver that message to their fellow staff with excitement and passion. They are the leaders who can promote your reemployment service model, build consensus, and drive improvements – or not. Support their work, and you'll be off to a good start.

As the group comes together, consider whether you need to invest in some general baseline skills training so your champions can manage change and perform effectively in a team.

- Are they equipped with basic team skills like facilitation and brainstorming?
- Can they help a group reach consensus?
- Do they know how to deal with inevitable conflict?
- Do they buy into and understand the concepts of customer-centered design?
- Do they have the communication skills needed to inspire those they lead?

Recognize that some individuals may have years of experience and buy-in, while others may see this as a complete departure from business as usual. Provide the support (and sometimes push) needed for everyone's success.

At the same time, identify any training and supports your champions need to take on the specific challenge of implementing an integrated customer-focused reemployment service delivery system. When Oklahoma piloted a customer-centered certification for local workforce systems in 2012, they learned the importance of practical support for redesigning more effective service delivery models. The state provided consultants who offered neutral facilitation support and training in service, resource, and process mapping for local leadership teams charged with system integration. Facilitation ensures meetings stay on track and all partners have an opportunity to be heard – critical for building buy-in and momentum. Service and resource mapping tools ensure all partners understand the services and funds available under each partner program so they can fill gaps and eliminate duplication and inefficiencies. Process mapping helps each partner know what their role is and the roles and services of other programs. Visit Oklahoma's System Certification Toolkit for more details and to see their service-mapping tools.

These types of investments in training and facilitation move the process along, while also communicating that the state is "putting its money where its mouth is," which gets attention and helps overcome natural resistance to change.

Phase 2: Communicate (repeatedly) the vision, benefits, and roles for each partner.

Tap your champions to communicate and train everyone in the system on the common vision and roles of each individual agency and partner.

The leadership team should develop a package of communication tools to help ensure consistent messaging across partners throughout the system. These could include a set of talking points, a PowerPoint presentation, handouts, and common information posted across partner websites and newsletters. It may also include any number of creative ideas like posting a YouTube video. Remind leaders who've been involved from the beginning that they know much more about the initiative than almost anyone else. Focus on the key questions – what, why, where, when, who, and how – for each partner.

While presentations and repeated descriptions will be valuable, training and conversations should be two-way, when possible, with opportunities for people to discuss the rationale, perceived benefits, possible challenges, proposed solutions, and supports needed from state and regional leaders. This will build understanding and buy-in, as well providing invaluable insights regarding challenges and supports needed. Facilitate new relationships by conducting multi-partner training sessions.

Set expectations for all partners to spread the message within their spheres of influence, and hold people accountable. Initially, look for volunteers on your leadership team to carry the message. This will bring your natural cheerleaders to the fore, and give others time to see models in action and get more comfortable with the new way of doing business. Pairing program leaders to deliver the message can also build their capabilities and comfort levels, while reinforcing to the audience your commitment to the system, not program silos.

Expect that people will need to hear the message several times before it sinks in. Skeptical people might tune out a message about a new way of doing business until they see something persisting over time. Look for every opportunity to send and reinforce the message, from annual training academies to weekly staff meetings to routine communications from program leads. Where possible, publicly reward leaders serving as early adopters of the integrated, customer-centered service delivery approach.

Everyone must understand and get behind the vision, from leaders, to supervisors, to front line staff. Seeing state and leadership involvement, persistent messaging, and investments in time and resources will reinforce your message.

Expect Resistance

> When the winds of change blow, some people build walls and others build windmills.
>
> ~ Chinese Proverb

Resistance to change is predictable, and might stem from a variety of fears:

- The unknown
- Failure
- Loss of status

- Loss of control
- Losing a job
- Increased workload[13]

You may be asking people to transition from serving as specific program experts, to generalists who can help clients navigate an integrated reemployment system, to customized services. Some may welcome the change, while others protest, "That's not what I signed on for!" Some skeptics will wait to engage until they can see that the change will stick. And a small percentage simply won't want to go through the change process, so consider offering transfer options or early outs.

Managing resistance begins with a conversation around the WIIFMs – "What's in it for me?" People have to see the value for themselves. A more customer-focused reemployment system with 21st century work search requirements could have many benefits for staff, ranging from saving time (for instance on a shared data portal), happier customers, better customer outcomes, cost savings, and/or job growth.

Here's an example of WIIFMs workforce partners in Oklahoma identified during their pilot efforts to design a customer-driven holistic workforce system.[14]

Benefits for Staff	Benefits for Customers	Benefits for the Community
• Staff is prepared • Staff job satisfaction • Increased business recruitment • More effective, efficient processes • Clarity for front line staff • Common goals • More resources at the table • Happier/less stressed staff • Better communication • More trust of other agency staff • Reduction of turnover	• Employers/job seekers are prepared • Lowered UI tax rate for employers • Reduced training costs to employers • Timeliness of delivery • Integrated system • Happier clients • Increased business development • Customers trust system • Health benefits (Having a job means a higher quality of life.)	• Economic prosperity • Reduced recidivism • Skilled workforce • Reduced poverty • A more educated workforce • Increased revenue • Improved quality of life for communities • More public acceptance of our system/who we are and what we do • High return on investment • Less people on depend on public assistance • Statewide unity • Reduced unemployment

Recognize that people and organizations' interests vary, but everyone can win. For the UI program, shorter claim duration, lower improper payment rates, and suitable reemployment outcomes might be paramount. For employment service agencies, their natural motivation might be streamlining services for job seeker customers and helping case managers do their jobs more effectively. Training providers and Chambers of Commerce might tune out those messages but be open to discussions around how to support employers, economic growth, and a talent pipeline in a way that saves them money or time. One effective way to help everyone find common ground when you're communicating your vision is to paint a picture of

why this matters in terms of real people: What is a customer's current experience when they're looking for a job? Specify the plans to improve this experience.

Phase 3: Equip everyone with knowledge and skills for successful implementation.

Once you've communicated the service delivery model vision and expectations, and refined your approach in response to feedback received, it's time to equip everyone with the knowledge and skills needed to successfully bring the vision to life. The state's leadership team will play a key role - identifying and aggregating training and development needs, then establishing priorities for investments. Regional leadership teams may also work with the state team to implement the changes, depending on the state's size, culture, and level of local flexibility. It will take coordination and commitment among all partners, since no single entity has responsibility and authority over all staff in the system to implement a more fully integrated reemployment model and promote the consistent use of the MRP across all programs/partner agencies.

Whether at the state or local level, the following tips will help your team design a unique training plan tailored to your vision, policies, processes, and existing staff capabilities.

1. **Identify** the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to implement the change. This will include an understanding of the new policies, procedures, the MRP template, and any new or modified support systems like an integrated MIS or case management system. It may require a deeper understanding of partner program resources, how the pieces fit together into a system, and each partner's roles. Customer service skills and the ability to work in cross-functional teams are essential.

2. **Assess** the knowledge, skills, and abilities of your current staff to identify gaps. In most areas, front-line staff are well equipped to help people with job search and placement. However, making the shift to equipping job seekers to become active managers of their own long-term career development and advancement may require some new skills.

3. **Design** training to fill the gaps and equip all staff for success.

   - Identify methods that work in your area, such as training in new policies, procedures, and teamwork skills may roll out through statewide conferences, webinars, train-the-trainer sessions that support local in-person sessions, self-paced online training sessions, how-to guides, and/or regularly-scheduled in-service days. For example, Kentucky created a Workforce Academy that provides in-person and online competency-based training to all partners that can result in a certification for completers.[15] Kentucky's Workforce Academy began by creating a common vision and training staff statewide regarding the global economy and its implications for Kentucky's workforce system. Workshops on transformational leadership followed.[16] Figure out what works for you, given the resources and opportunities in your state. When designing your approach, consider how training for existing staff might be made available in the future as new staff come on board.

- Infuse a deeper understanding of partner program resources and requirements through cross-functional teams, inter-agency special projects, cross-training, and/or participating in the joint development of local policies and process maps. An integrated delivery system must include well-trained staff who not only know their own particular role, but who also have enough information about the basic requirements and operations of other programs to help customers have the best possible workforce system experience. Cross-functional collaborations strengthen connections between partners, increase awareness of the wider range of services, and facilitate a shared vision and goals.

- Consider how best to offer "Continuing Education" to bolster capabilities as you ask staff to shift from job search and placement to long-term career development. Training might include sessions on local labor market information, skill assessments and transferability mapping, career coaching, effective use of social media in a job search, online job search strategies, and equipping job seekers to become active managers of their own career development and advancement. In Kentucky, for example, the Workforce Academy provides training in the power of labor market information to guide services, resource leveraging and alignment, and understanding sector strategies in relation to goal setting.

4. **Reassess** regularly and adjust, as needed, to ensure accountability for training results. For example, Kentucky is building on its success with the Workforce Academy and is now looking for ways to better help staff apply the learning to their work, such as peer exchanges and mentoring, and more opportunities for multi-partner cross training.[17]

In all your efforts, be persistent and flexible with the timeline. As states and regions have worked through integration efforts, one common theme time and time again is that change takes time and commitment. It won't happen overnight. But with perseverance, the desired "future state" will become the new normal.

Implementation Strategy 4: Enhance IT Infrastructure

For Customers

The Pathway to Reemployment Framework, and specifically the MRP, makes it clear that the business of finding work has gone high-tech. Resume development, networking, job searching, even the job application process, in many cases, is now frequently (if not primarily) done on-line. To be effective, job seekers need access to resources that keep up with these developments. Therefore, AJC resource rooms should be equipped with state-of-the-art technology, such as up-to-date computers and computer software, fast and reliable internet capability, cloud storage access, and high-tech scanning and copying machines. The same goes for AJC classrooms, workshop rooms, and other meeting spaces. Additionally, it is vital that all AJCs offer assistive technology, such as screen readers, accessible workspaces, and TTY services for job seekers with disabilities to engage employers and staff members.

For Staff

To support the additional collaboration required of staff in an integrated service delivery model, states, regions, and local areas across the country are looking at opportunities to align case management systems to allow for data sharing, or adopting a common system for use across partners. Data sharing is the framework upon which real-time identification of customers' needs and seamless delivery of services are absolutely dependent. If you are to implement a truly integrated system, you must examine how you gather and store data from the various workforce programs and determine how you can best connect it internally so the customer experiences a seamless continuum of information and services. States, regions, and/or local areas must also map out how data will be shared among the programs comprising its delivery system. If you are upgrading your current systems, this process includes consideration of how best to build in the "hooks" to be able to connect existing systems in the future.

It is possible, even probable, that you will not be in a position to completely overhaul your data management systems. In these instances, you may be able to add an Application Programming Interface, or API. This is a set of programming instructions that facilitates integration of new features into existing software. The bottom line is that you must look at the individual systems and see how the data can be shared and used – and how you might best construct your framework to share data across the entire integrated system.

An integrated delivery system must also have cross-matching of data between and among programs. Since all states share some data among programs (e.g. UI claimant data is sent to Wagner-Peyser on those claimants identified as most likely to exhaust their UI benefits under requirements of the Profiling system), all states have some experience and established methods for cross-matching and sharing data.

States with emerging promising practices have policies and procedures that encourage or require registering all UI claimants with Wagner-Peyser, and registering them early in the claim cycle. These

states work to optimize data sharing to improve quality and timing of service delivery. States with more cutting-edge practices have systems to capture the skill sets and experience of claimants and other job seekers at first contact with the system. Whether the customer is filing for UI benefits or simply logging on to check for job openings, the system identifies the customer's skills and experience and provides information and service opportunities real-time to meet the customer's needs.

The very best systems have data exchange and processing occurring on the back-end to constantly examine detailed information about the job seeker, the latest labor market information, and the requirements of job openings from the business customer, to ensure job seekers experience a continuous, real-time flow of information and services leading to positive career advancement, and the business customer receives a referral of the most qualified job applicants.

The USDOL/ETA is in the process of updating the Integrated Service Delivery Toolkit, which provides resources and examples to help states address the critical elements of data storage, sharing, and usage.[18]

General characteristics of a state labor exchange system that will support the implementation of enhanced work search requirements and the MRP include:

- A modern, "high-tech", and user-friendly interface;

- An embedded aggregator job bank;

- An electronic data management system (EDMS);

- Numerous automated features to help customers navigate, such as prompts on what they need to do next, based on what they have done last (e.g., complete personal profile, update resume, conduct job searches, etc.);

- A variety of types of online assistance, such as online AJC and program orientations, online tutorials on how to use the labor exchange system, online workshops, etc.; and

- All information must be kept current and new resources added, where possible, to encourage registered customers to return to the site frequently until they attain reemployment.

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