

## ARKANSAS WORKFORCE SYSTEM EVALUATION EXECUTIVE SUMMARY - NORTHWEST REGION Sites Visited - Harrison and Fayetteville

The purpose of the Executive Summary is to provide a concise overview of the Northwest Region site report. This summary is intended to be shared with regional leaders so they may respond to the recommendations with action strategies for process improvements.

### Strengths



#### *Highlights of Collaboration*

**Analysis:** At both locations, it is evident that staff collaborate well within their respective communities to maximize resources that benefit their customers. From job fairs to serving as Chamber Ambassadors, the AWC (Arkansas Workforce Center) is a part of a collaborative resource, increasing its positive impact throughout the community. The following are some examples:

- ✓ Staff at the Harrison location participate in the Boone County Resource Council meeting to share information on the services available at AWC and gather useful community information.
- ✓ The LWIB (Local Workforce Board) is involved with a strategic four state initiative to build coalitions of businesses in targeted, high-growth sectors that share borders, residents and services.



#### *Highlights of Customer Service*

**Analysis:** A strong and consistent theme of dedication to the customer is evident in both Centers. Customer service is of utmost importance resulting in customer satisfaction and positive outcomes. The following are some examples of that focus:

- ✓ Staff are eager to make the extra effort to learn more about other partner programs on their own to provide the best possible experience for the customer.
- ✓ Customer referrals are made by personal introduction to partner program staff. Staff do not simply rely on paper referrals. The size of the Center and relationships between staff make this a successful method to keep customers engaged and make them feel comfortable.



#### *Highlights of AWC Brand and Business Services*

**Analysis:** The AWC brand continues to improve throughout the community as people learn about the services being offered and as the Business Services staff reach out to employers. This effort will continue to be a work in progress. Some successful approaches include:

- ✓ Staff market the AWC brand as they attend job fairs, community events and chamber meetings with branded materials.
- ✓ Media outreach is used to promote the brand and change the image from an “unemployment office” to a Workforce Center.
- ✓ The role of the Veterans Representatives serves a dual purpose to promote AWC brand awareness and to offer business services to the employer community.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

### Challenges

- At the Harrison Center, the single most prevalent challenge is the division between DWS and WIA. There is no single person that provides direction or oversight.
- There is significant confusion regarding the management structure of the Centers. Various organizational charts exist by agency but no one consolidated organizational chart exists. The One Stop Operator role is not clearly defined or understood.
- No written policies and procedures or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) exists for the operation of the One Stop Centers. Most decisions default to the state policies and procedures policy manual.

### Recommended actions:

- Create a clear functional leadership structure and communicate the structure to all staff and partners. Support the functional leadership approach from the top down.
- Create a consolidated organizational chart that clarifies the structure of the One Stop system and communicates the organizational structure to staff while clarifying roles.
- Create a Center wide policies and procedures manual that address professional attire, professional workspace appearances, professional behaviors in the workplace, safety, and a mutual code of professional ethics and practices for all partners. All functional leaders should embrace and enforce the Center policies.

## SERVICE INTEGRATION AND COLLABORATION

### Challenges

- Communication with staff and all partners is limited to time available before regularly scheduled work hours or during normal business hours when not all staff can attend. Opportunities to gather all staff and partners are limited.
- DWS staff are cross trained. However, this cross training appears to be one way – to assist in meeting the UI (Unemployment Insurance) demand. Cross-training among all other partner staff and partner programs are not as well known.

### Recommended actions:

- Consider opening the Centers one hour later on a regular basis to afford time for an all staff meeting of partners. The one hour can be used for training, information sharing, program performance reviews or departmental meetings.
- Provide an opportunity for staff to more strategically “job shadow” subject matter experts to learn more about other programs and services.
- Develop a formal training process/system that teaches practical application of teamwork, collaboration, and integration of services.

**CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

**Challenges**

- Currently, no customer satisfaction surveys are being collected and analyzed. There is no systematic approach to evaluate if customers are satisfied with the services being provided since there is no way to provide feedback other than a formal complaint.

**Recommended actions:**

- Develop a consistent approach to more formally and routinely collect customer satisfaction data at all centers in the region. There are many tools available to accomplish this task.
- Conduct an internal “climate survey” of all partner staff.

**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

**Challenges**

- There are no consolidated, Center-wide performance goals that are gathered and reviewed by Center management.
- Center staff are not aware of partner goals. The challenge is not only to understand the goals, but to also actively work to help each other achieve those goals.

**Recommended actions:**

- Develop a scorecard/report card that captures the performance goals of all Center programs and additional system performance goals for the local area.
- Create a mechanism to capture all Resource Room and Center activity.
- Share programmatic goals of partners with all staff and provide monthly reports at staff meetings with progress on achieving goals. Discuss strategies on how staff can work together to achieve these goals.

**BUSINESS SERVICES/SERVICES TO EMPLOYERS**

**Challenges**

- Identify a coordinator for Business Services outreach. Define roles and responsibilities and identify other members that will be contributing to team activities.
- Develop a local marketing approach for business outreach. Identify products and services available and develop a script to use with employer customers.
- Create uniform marketing materials to be used by all team members that are doing Business Services outreach.

**Recommended actions:**

- Identify a coordinator for Business Services outreach. Define roles and responsibilities and identify other members that will be contributing to team activities.
- Develop a local marketing approach for business outreach. Identify products and services available and develop a script to use with employer customers. Rather than marketing individual programmatic services, ensure that the AWC brand and all Center services are marketed.

**AWC BRAND****Challenges**

- A common theme is that most people still think of the AWC as the “unemployment office”.
- The AWC brand is not used consistently throughout the Centers or by staff responsible for contacting employers. Business cards utilize the DWS logo and not the AWC brand. The DWS brand is displayed more frequently throughout the Centers than the AWC brand. The two incoming phone lines are not answered identifying the AWC.
- No local marketing plan is in place since DWS is undertaking an effort to develop a statewide marketing plan. Some local staff are participating on this workgroup with DWS.
- At the Harrison location, the Center describes its set of products as a menu of services to the public in the form of a poster upon entry to the facility. However, the eye-catching menu of services which would encourage customer choice was not observed in the Employment Services Resource Room or throughout key areas of the Workforce Center. The menu of services is also not consistent throughout the Center areas.
- While searching on the Internet for the Arkansas Workforce Centers in this region, you may be directed to a number of links, including Workforce Connection and Arkansas Department of Workforce Services. There is no easy way to find a website for the Centers in this region. The current regional website has a conflicting brand, “Workforce Connection” rather than the AWC brand.

**Recommended Actions:**

- Develop a written menu of services that is branded with the logo and includes all partner services that is clearly visible at the entrance and is available in a take home version.
- Create a single point of access by having one main phone line instead of one for each program. Establish a phone script for voicemail and answering phones for all staff within the Center using the AWC brand as the identifier.
- Encourage all Center staff to use business cards, letterhead, envelopes, flyers, and brochures with the AWC brand.
- Ensure that the AWC brand is used on all internal and external communications.
- Explore website options that are more consistent with the AWC brand identity. There are existing models nationally that provide interactive access to local Workforce Center services under a brand identity. One example is the Brevard Workforce website (<http://www.brevardjoblink.org/>).

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**Arkansas Workforce System Evaluation**

237 South Street, Waukesha, Wisconsin 53186

(262) 544-4971

Project Manager: James Nitz, Executive Vice-President

jnitz@kaisergrp.com