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## Collection of Intern Research Reports: 2005/2006

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## Collection of Intern Research Reports: 2005/2006

### **Abstract**

The third year of the DOL-APU internship program for Cornell University students, held during the winter intersession, has recently ended. Eight students, seven from the ILR School and one from the School of Arts and Sciences, completed the program as described in the appended Objectives and Features of the Program; seven then submitted written reports of varying levels of completion and utility. From among this pool, we selected three reports as sufficiently advanced in their presentation and in the value of the data to warrant inclusion in this collection.

### **Keywords**

money, internship, Department of Labor, program, Alliance for Prevention Unemployment, DOL/APU, model, funding, comparison, center, job, state, employed, career, ILR, student, Cortland, barrier, resource, service, job, search, client, technology

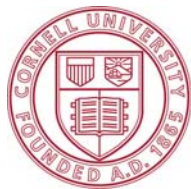
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# Collection of Intern Research Reports

2005/2006

Department of Labor / Alliance for Prevention Unemployment (DOL/APU)  
Internship Program



Cornell University  
ILR School

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## *Preface*

The third year of the DOL-APU internship program for Cornell University students, held during the winter intersession, has recently ended. Eight students, seven from the ILR School and one from the School of Arts and Sciences, completed the program as described in the appended *Objectives and Features of the Program*; seven then submitted written reports of varying levels of completion and utility. From among this pool, we selected three reports as sufficiently advanced in their presentation and in the value of the data to warrant inclusion in this collection.

We of the DOL/APU staff are pleased to be able to distribute this volume of potentially useful reports so early in the evolution of the program. A great deal was asked of the students this year and they quickly adjusted to their assigned job/career centers and settled down to work. All made interesting oral presentations at the final debriefing session at Cornell. And, to our delight, many continued to refine their written reports well into the new semester.

Plans are now being made to provide the next class of interns with more resources earlier during the winter internship period and to provide more intensive mentoring during the early stages of assembling and analyzing field data and constructing a rational and compelling research report. We anticipate the production of insightful research reports will double with greater effort on our part during the coming school year.

We welcome your comments and suggestions for making the work of the interns, in the field and in their research, more beneficial to the unemployed and more helpful in bringing their education one step closer to the reality of the labor market.

Harold Oaklander  
Director, Alliance for the Prevention of Unemployment

Maralyn Edid  
Senior Extension Associate, ILR School

Stuart Basefsky  
Senior Reference Librarian, ILR School, Catherwood Library

April 21, 2006

## - AN INVITATION TO STUDENTS SEEKING WISP ASSIGNMENTS -

### A COMPREHENSIVE PROGRAM SPONSORED JOINTLY BY: THE NYS DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND THE ALLIANCE FOR THE PREVENTION OF UNEMPLOYMENT

The annual **NYS-DOL / APU internship** for 2005/06 will give students the unconventional opportunity to get potential career-enhancing work experience in New York State by looking into, and being looked at by, a large potential employer – a state labor department, one of 50 in the United States. In addition, this unique internship goes much further by providing at least three important educational benefits not found in traditional non-paying, non-credit-bearing WISP internships.

1. The **NYS-DOL / APU internship** attempts to give some introductory experience in field research by exposing interns face-to-face, in a specially planned structured environment, to the varied clientele of a state labor department field office (One-Stop Job Centers). Interns will also be exposed to the findings of applied field research conducted by the state's central labor department research staff. Such studies are often labor program investigations and evaluations of the realities in local labor markets which, typically, are not funded at the national level. Both types of research are rarely found in university libraries.

2. The internship also aims to broaden the ILR students' education by exposing them to practical knowledge not readily available in classrooms. The intent is to achieve more balance between theory and reality. By enabling the intern to understand the day-to-day field operations of a county labor department office, the curious intern will gain insights into the successes and failures of federal and state programs mandated to provide social benefits and assistance to needy workers; that is, to the underprivileged employed, underemployed, outsourced, unemployed, handicapped, and displaced. The day-in and day-out relationship between employers and their state labor department will also come under observation as employers seek, chose to ignore, or lack awareness of potential state aid programs, legal advice, and even subsidies to assist them in effectively managing human resources in an ethical manner.

3. The internship takes cognizance of the activist tendencies and budding citizenship so many college students demonstrate today, when on their own initiative they confront such global issues as sweatshops, environmental degradation, race and gender relations, terrorism, etc. It also focuses them on a leading critical economic, social and political issue that impacts negatively on the other issues – unemployment and job insecurity. This issue impacts significantly on every aspect of the interns' employee relations studies and on their future professional roles in that field.

4. Finally, the internship helps advance the communications skills so necessary for professional-quality oral and written presentations.

## **Features of the Three-Week NYS-DOL / APU internship (2005-2006)**

1. Internships will be offered to some ten students who submit a resumé and statement indicating why they are attracted to the **DOL/APU program**. A DOL representative and Professor Harold Oaklander of APU will interview and select a team of interns who will work together before, during, and after their One-Stop Job Center assignments, as follows.

2. An orientation phase follows recruitment. It will be scheduled for Wednesday, November 30 in Ithaca, prior to the three-week winter intersession. Some four hours of group sessions and a short bibliography of articles for over-the-holidays reading will treat each of the above benefits/objectives of the program. Presentations will be made by staff members of the ILR library and Extension service; the Survey Research Institute, where Cornell students are routinely trained in field survey methodology; managers from a local NYS One-Stop Job Center; and by faculty from Cornell and other institutions.

3. Armed with a road map of a typical 'local' labor market, a product of the orientation, each team member will report on January 2 to the manager of one of the approximately 80 participating One-Stop Job Centers most convenient for daily commuting to his or her home or intersession residence. The full three-week, five-days/week supervised field assignment will focus on both the clients of the center and on the centers' major functions in the local labor market. Applicants for the **DOL/APU internship** should carefully plan to be on assignment for the full 15 day period.

4. The **DOL/APU internship** program will conclude with an afternoon meeting and dinner to be held in Ithaca during the first two weeks following the end of field work. Each team member will present a short, but well-conceived, individual report based on guidelines discussed during orientation. Discussion will follow, focusing on both the interns' systematic perceptions and comparisons of observations made at the different One-Stop Job Centers. Experts will be invited to the proceedings. Stipends for \$200.00 will be awarded for full completion of the program.

For further details contact Professor Harold Oaklander,  
<[hoaklander@usadatanet.net](mailto:hoaklander@usadatanet.net)> Phone (518) 731-8097

(revised October 17, 2005)

**Money and Models:**  
A Comparison of Different Funding Systems  
for One-Stop Job Centers

Aaron Gingrande  
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Cornell Presidential Research Scholar  
Class of 2008  
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## **I. Introduction**

During my internship at The Career Place in Woburn, Massachusetts, I had the experience of talking with people at the local, regional, and state levels in the departments and agencies that deal with issues pertaining to the state's unemployed. The Career Place (TCP) is one of two One-Stop Job centers (career centers) in the Metro North region. Under terms of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Massachusetts was divided into 16 regions, based on demographic and geographic considerations, to facilitate the provision of services that would meet the particular needs of each area's unemployed residents.

The career centers in the Metro North region have a unique relationship. Unlike the centers in many other regions in the state, the Metro North centers compete with one another. The Career Place vies with The Career Source for a higher percentage of the grants that the region receives to fund both centers. Only three regions in the state use this competitive model, and Massachusetts is the only state in the country that is currently testing this approach. The other career centers in Massachusetts and the majority of centers throughout the country have adopted a collaborative model, whereby the career centers work together to develop services that address the needs of the local population, the funds they receive are evenly divided among the centers, and allocations are not based on performance.

In this paper I will use Massachusetts as a case study to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the competitive model. I will provide some of the most recent data on the difference between the performance of collaborative and competitive career centers in Massachusetts and comment on some of the obstacles that impede the effectiveness of the competitive model as it currently exists.

## **II. The Massachusetts Vision: Creation of the Competitive Model**

There are two models for how money is distributed to the career centers of a given region: the collaborative model and the competitive model. The vast majority of career centers throughout America adhere to the collaborative model, and this is also true of the majority of career centers in Massachusetts, where 13 of 16 regions in the state are collaboratives. Under the collaborative model, the career centers do not compete with each other but instead try to handle the unemployed population together. Little if any of their financial support is based on their performance from year to year; instead, the Workforce Investment Board of the region either distributes money based on the demographics of the population served by each career center or divides the money evenly among the career centers.

In October, 1994, the U.S. Department of Labor allocated \$11.6 million to launch a statewide system of One-Stop Career Centers in Massachusetts. This initial roll-out included the establishment of competitive centers. Both state and regional workforce development planners thought competition in government programs would improve job center performance and inspire innovation. The MassJobs Council wanted to use competition to focus workforce development programs on customers' needs instead of on reporting requirements. The MassJobs Council's other goal was to empower users of the One-Stop Job Center system to make informed choices about how to meet their individual employment or training needs.

Massachusetts's state profile reveals that the MassJobs Council's vision for a statewide career center system included competition at three levels. First, the 16 private industry council Regional Employment Boards (REB) in Massachusetts were encouraged to compete for career center funds based on their proposals for implementing One-Stop Career Centers. Second, each REB was to administer an open bidding process enabling public agencies, private firms, and community-based organizations to compete for selection as center operators. Indeed, each operator of the seven competing career centers in Massachusetts won the contract through a competitive bidding process organized by the local REB. The expectation was that requiring bidders to write proposals encouraged them to offer fee-based "enhanced" services that, in combination with required core free services, would create a broad spectrum of workforce

development services available to job seekers and employers. And third, local centers were to compete for the same customer base and enjoy a high degree of freedom in operating individual centers.

### **III. The Linchpin of the Competitive Model: Performance**

#### **A. How Career Center Performance is Measured**

The Massachusetts Jobs Council (MJC) provides state-level oversight of the One-Stop Career Centers. The MJC is responsible for establishing general policies and performance/output measures for the centers. Based on these measures, career centers in a region will either obtain a higher or lower percentage of the grants the local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) receives. In other words, the career centers in each region compete with each other for funds that are allocated to the WIB by the federal government (the money flows through the states to the WIBs) and by other sources, such as special interest groups.

An elaborate system of formulas is used to measure the centers' performance and distribute money from each grant the WIB receives. Competitive centers are paid for every customer and receive additional money based on specific target populations they successfully serve, such as minorities, the elderly, and the disabled. Funding also depends on their placement rates; that is, how many customers who visit the center manage to get a job (presumably) as a result of the services received at the career center. The executive officer of the WIB of the Metro North region where I worked did not consider "one-timers," the people who only make one visit to the career center and never come back, to be customers. Thus, even though 43% of the people who came through The Career Place (TCP) only once reported subsequently finding jobs, these people did not get counted toward TCP's customer placement rate and TCP did not receive money for serving them.

#### **B. Comparing Performance Rates: Competitive vs. Collaborative Job Centers**

The most recent available data indicate that regions in Massachusetts that have adopted the competitive model have had more success at placing customers in jobs than

those regions using the collaborative model. In fiscal year 2005, collaborative career centers across the state averaged a placement rate of 16%, while competitive career centers had an average placement rate of 20%. At first this difference of four percentage points in placing customers may not seem substantial. Its significance becomes more apparent, however, when considering that competitive career centers helped 25% more people find jobs than did collaborative centers (i.e., for every 16 people out of 100 that a collaborative center helped place, a competitive center placed 20 people). Indeed, the One-Stop Job Center with the highest placement rate in Massachusetts, The Career Place, is competitive. TCP's placement rate is nearly five percentage points higher than the highest collaborative center's placement rate. The Metro North region, of which TCP is a part, serves more people than any other region in the state and has a higher absolute number of job placements than any other region; this might indicate that the center's high success rate reflects more than just having a small number of customers on whom to focus.

When I talked to Jenn James, an official at the Massachusetts Department of Workforce Development, she explained that TCP's high success rate can probably be attributed to the extensive menu of workshops and services that TCP provides to customers. These services include free one-on-one resumé critiques, interview training sessions, workshops on using age as an advantage, group sessions on how to cope with job loss, a "Worksmart" skills enhancement training session in computer-based programs, and many others. Customer feedback surveys have shown that customers highly value the variety of services that TCP and its competitor, The Career Source, provide to address their specific training, skill development, and job-search needs. Managers at TCP agreed that the thought and effort they put into developing workshops and programs can in large part be attributed to the "race to the top" that the competitive model encourages, whereby each center tries to serve more customers than its opponent by developing more high-quality services and by reaching out to various target populations.

## **IV. Issues to be Addressed**

### **A. Accurate Performance-Measuring Criterion**

Despite the competitive centers' success rate, as noted above, it is impossible to conclude that the competitive model will work for all career centers or all regions, or that competitive centers consistently out-perform collaborative centers. One important goal of the One-Stop Career Centers initiative is to create an employment service that is accountable to taxpayers and customers. Consequently, a competitive model should only be widely adopted after accurate performance measurements are available to decisionmakers. In fact, the results of an extensive cost-benefit analysis that included a comparison of the results of the performance of competitive centers and collaborative (public) centers and spelled out concerns raised by various stakeholders (including the Regional Employment Board Association, made up of management, labor, and public representatives) about the quality and cost of experimenting with the competitive job center model prompted the Massachusetts legislature to halt additional expansion of the pilot project in 1997.

One issue that must be addressed before the model should be replicated elsewhere pertains to the challenge of obtaining accurate information about performance, namely placement rate, for each career center. Currently, when determining job placement rates, all career center customers (people who visit a given career center more than once) who fail to report back to the center about their employment situation are assumed to be unemployed. Thus, the career center fails to receive credit and money for customers who may have successfully found jobs after their visits to the center but for whom the center does not have information regarding job status.

One way TCP has sought to solve this problem is by forming a committee to call all customers who have not reported their job status and ask if they are currently employed. While some customers refuse to offer this information to TCP staff when called, and other customers' numbers may be out of service or busy, any information the staff collects from people who do answer the phone and report their job status allows the center to improve its placement rate and obtain a higher percentage of funds.

## **B. Handling “One-Timers”**

Another issue affecting TCP’s competitive performance is the challenge of turning people who only visit once into regular customers. While TCP currently has the highest percentage of visits per returning customer in the state, getting “one-timers” to return for a second visit would allow the center to increase its client population and hence improve its chances of placing these unemployed individuals in jobs.

To tackle this problem, George Moriarty, executive officer of TCP, started a customer service program specifically to contact one-timers and figure out why they come to the center only once. During my internship, I received an assignment to put together a survey to collect information about why one-timers fail to return. The survey I designed consists of a series of checkboxes where respondents can indicate why they did not return to the center (including options ranging from “inconvenience of TCP’s location,” to “I have decided to retire”), followed by a series of questions asking them to assess the center’s services, and finally, by a place to indicate their current employment status. Hopefully these questions will help TCP discover both if, and how, the center can help people make more than just one stop to their one-stop job center.

## **C. Target Populations**

Finally, some critics of the competitive model may argue that the incentive to collect fees for the non-core services that competitive One-Stop Job Centers provide may drive these centers to cater to middle-class job seekers and high-end employers at the expense of unskilled and less educated workers, low-income workers, and the unemployed who cannot afford fee-based services. This problem, however, is already being addressed by the fact that Regional Employment Boards specifically award money to competitive centers that provide services to cater to the needs of these particular target populations. Providing even greater sums of money to centers that adequately address the needs of target populations may further reduce this negative incentive. Competitive career centers in low-income areas, however, should be responsive to the local needs of their unemployed and adjust prices for fee-based services and the number of free services that they provide accordingly.

## **V. Conclusion**

Although some issues must be addressed before widely implementing the competitive model for One-Stop Job Centers, the data seem to indicate that the model works: competitive centers yield a high job-placement rate for customers. This model is worthy of further experimentation. The high placement rate recorded in the competitive regions in Massachusetts most likely reflects the monetary incentive that leads competitive centers to provide clients with high-quality services above and beyond those offered by their direct competitors (other competitive-model centers) and by the collaborative centers, as well.

The competitive model has at the very least proven its worth in getting centers to develop more accurate performance measures and a more thorough analysis of the customers they serve. Unlike collaborative centers, competitive centers get paid based on the number and type of customers who receive their services, as well as on the number of customers they help to find jobs. This system gives competitive centers an incentive to collect accurate data on their clientele. Such data can be used at the local, regional, and state level to more accurately measure the demographics of the state's unemployed and determine how many people need the services of One-Stop Job Centers. Collecting this information is costly but necessary in order to improve the ways in which the state addresses the needs of its unemployed citizens.

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<http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov/owsdrr/>

Social Policy Research Associates, “Springfield Massachusetts Future Works Career Center:  
One-Stop Profile Source”: June, 1996

## **Appendix #1**

### **Unemployment in Foreign Countries**

“Asia’s Jobless boom”  
The Economist, January 12, 2006

“Europe’s economies”  
Fortune magazine, August 18, 2005

“The European Economic Engine that Could”  
Mark Landler, The NY Times, January 27, 2006

“Germany’s economy”  
The Economist, August 18 2005

### **Worker and Employer Woes**

“Idaho’s got the work, but not the workers;  
Employers have hard time filling thousands of jobs”  
Joe Estrella, The Idaho Statesman, January 23, 2006

“Working Hours”  
The Economist, May 19, 2005

“Workforce Woes Pile Up”  
Jeffrey Blackwell, Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, January 20, 2006

“Recruiting From Afar: Superstore luring workers from maritimes”  
Jeff Korenko, The Daily Herald Tribune, January 10, 2006

### **Job seeking advice**

“Getting laid off should be a call to get busy”



Brian O'Connor, The Detroit News, January 24, 2006

“Just the Job- The year ahead is full of opportunities”  
Erica Watson, The Daily Telegraph, January 21, 2006

“Job search tips for students”  
Edmonton Sun, January 6, 2006

### **Job-related events**

“Jobsapalooza job fair attracts employers, hundreds of hopefuls”  
Matt Glynn, Buffalo News, January 6, 2006

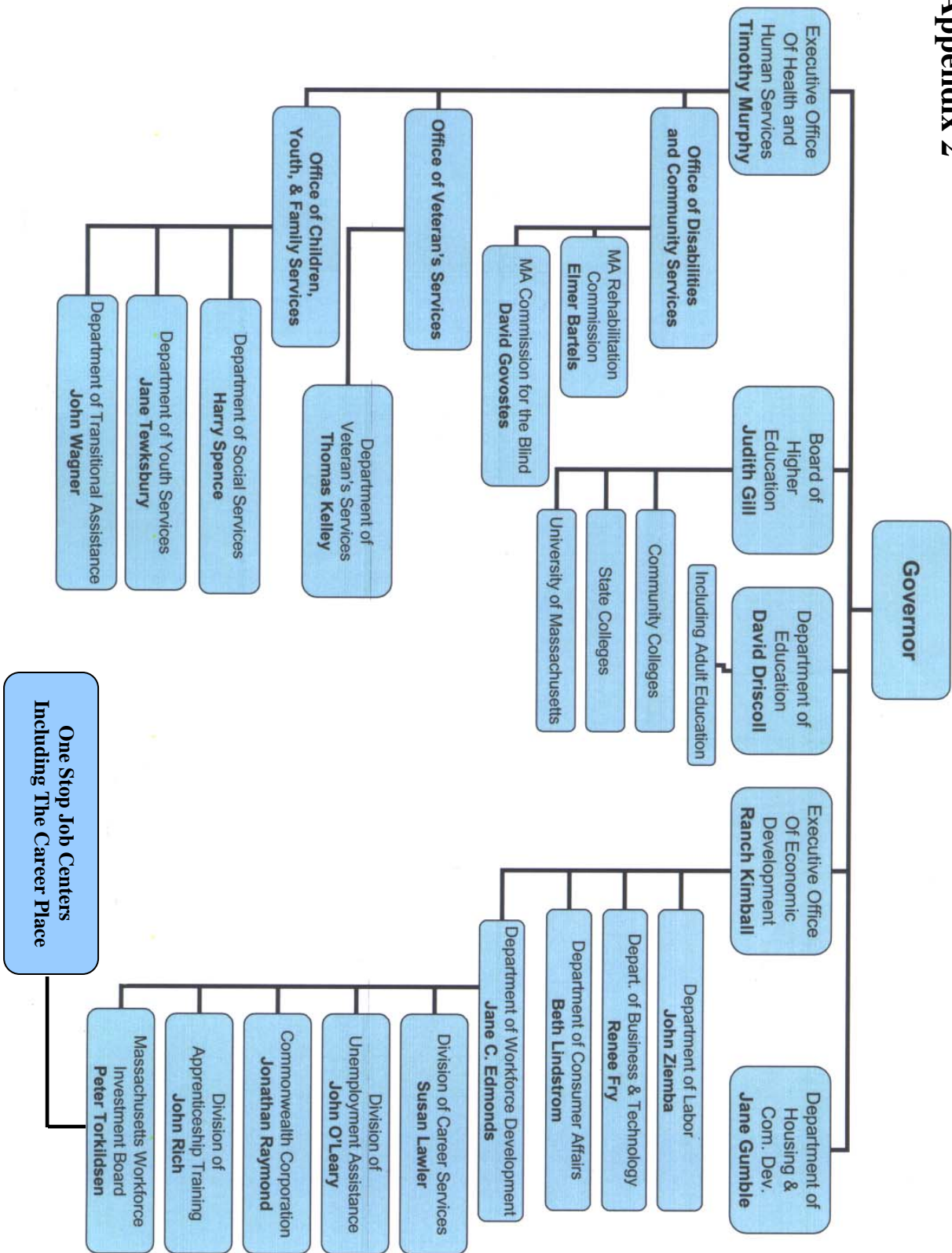
“The jobs governor? Economic developers across the state say, 'Yes.'”  
Greg Edwards, The Richmond Times Dispatch, January 2, 2006

“Working their way back up”  
Nicole C. Wong, San Jose Mercury News, December 19, 2005

### **General unemployment information**

“Jobless claims at nearly 6 year low”  
Fortune Magazine, January 19, 2006

# Appendix 2



NOTE: Additional executive departments and divisions of the state are not reflected in this chart. Only major workforce development partners are included.

## Appendix 3

DOL/APU Program Student Internship Assignments during January 2006  
Characteristics of the host DOL Career Center in Massachusetts

### *Site Specifics*

1. Student name Aaron Graff Gingrande  
School Cornell University Status \_\_\_\_\_
2. DOL host  
Official name of site The Career Place  
City or Village Woburn, MA  
Counties covered Primarily Middlesex County
3. Approximate mix of local labor force: (Labor force size: 410,000)  
agriculture \_\_\_\_\_% manufacturing 8 % service/retail 24 %  
professional/white collar 11 %
4. Manning of the site, excluding regional staff: (indicate # full/part-time)  
Manager: F 5 P 0 Supervisors: F 3 P 0 Specialists: F 21 P 1  
Clerks/reception: F 3 P 1
5. Regional staff housed at this location: F 2 P 2

### *Customer Specifics (November 2005)*

6. Joblessness data:  
# seeking first job 550 # seeking next job 4,00 # seeking training 422  
of total: first visit 52% % second visit 48% % third (or more) visit \_\_\_\_\_%  
of total, length of unemployment: <1mo \_\_\_\_\_% 1-3mo \_\_\_\_\_% 3-6m \_\_\_\_\_% more \_\_\_\_\_%
7. Currently employed: N/A  
# seeking better job \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking training \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking other \_\_\_\_\_  
of total: first visit \_\_\_\_\_% second visit \_\_\_\_\_% third (or more) visit \_\_\_\_\_%
8. Employers calling/visiting:  
# seeking to hire 390 # seeking aid for in-house training 10  
# seeking information or clarification on policy or procedure 120 # other 85

*Note: Enter N/A if information not locally available*  
*Compiled by Harold Oaklander, Jan. 18, 2006*

## Appendix 4

# The Career Place Customer Survey

***This survey designed for customers visiting The Career Place only once***

1. What service(s) or program(s) did you use or attend during your visit to The Career Place (TCP) (please check all that apply)?

- CCS: Career Center Seminar
  - Library computers
  - Library books
  - Resumé critique
  - TCP orientation
  - TCP free workshop
  - TCP fee-based service
  - None
  - Other (please specify)
- 

2. If you used any of The Career Place's services, what is your overall rating for the services that The Career Place provides (please circle)?

1	2	3	4	5
poor	somewhat helpful	helpful	very helpful	excellent

3. Which of the following best categorizes why you did not come back to The Career Place (please check all that apply):

- I came to The Career Place once because of a letter from Unemployment, and was exempted from attending further meetings (due to being a seasonal worker, or other reasons)
- I came to The Career Place once because of a letter from Unemployment, and I am still in phone contact with the career place, but not visiting
- I found a job on my own soon after I visited The Career Place
- I am currently looking for a job on my own
- I could not find transportation to get to The Career Place
- I found another career center closer to my home
- I am continuing my education
- I have decided to retire
- I have decided to become a homemaker
- I found another career center that I like more than The Career Place
- I have gone to a placement service for job-seeking help
- I just needed to use the computers/interview phones once at The Career Place
- The services at The Career Place were unhelpful
- The people at The Career Place were unwelcoming/unfriendly
- The Career Place did not provide enough services to meet my needs
- I was unimpressed with the quality of the workshops at The Career Place
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Please list your current employment status (please check the one that applies):

- I am currently employed
- I am unemployed, and still seeking a job
- I am unemployed, but no longer seeking a job (due to retirement, homemaking, etc.)
- I am continuing my education

5. If you are currently employed, please fill out the other form in this envelope regarding your current job, and call The Career Place at 781-932-5555.

Also, please answer the following question:

Did your visit to The Career Place help you find a job?    yes \_\_\_    no \_\_\_  
If yes, please briefly describe how The Career Place helped you find your current job:

---

---

6. If you are currently unemployed, or no longer seeking a job, please answer the following question:

Do you feel that you could have benefited from more visits to The Career Place?  
yes \_\_\_    no \_\_\_

Please briefly explain why or why not:

---

---

\*\*\*

Thank you for your time and effort. Your responses will help The Career Place better meet the needs of the customers requiring our services.

\*\*\*

# **ATTITUDE:**

**The Barrier that Prevents the Use of Resources/Services  
Available at the  
Cortland Works Career Center**

**M. Carmen Hernandez**

Cornell University  
ILR School  
Class of 2008  
mh354@cornell.edu

## I. PROBLEM

The partners of the One-Stop office in Cortland, better known as the Cortland Works Career Center, work together to assist individuals with their job searches. The partners' goal is to help job seekers find the right job as quickly as possible. They strive towards this goal by providing an array of resources such as computers, printers, fax machine, books and more. In addition, they offer various services, including resume and interview skills workshops as well as classes in computers for beginners that teach Microsoft Word and Excel.

Why then, do the majority of these valuable resources and services go unused by most clients? The common response from clients was that they were not aware of the resources/services that were available. A closer analysis of their responses, however, reveals a different answer. By the time an individual arrives at the reception desk he or she would have had three opportunities to learn about the center's resources/services. First, near the entrance a large, white erase board announces the various workshops and events that will take place throughout the week. Second, directly in front of the white board are two large bulletin boards displaying an array of information about the services offered, training programs and on-site job recruitment. Finally, the wall directly behind the reception desk neatly displays flyers reiterating information. Essentially, the center fulfills its duty by announcing the resources/services it has to offer. It is the client who must then decide to use what is offered. My interviews with the clients reveal *attitude* as the major barrier as to why the majority of resources/services go unnoticed and therefore unused. Either the clients do not make an effort to become aware of what is available or they are aware, but simply do not take the initiative to make use of the resources/services.



## **II. METHODOLOGY**

In order to arrive at the answer to my question, I gathered data from two sources. First, I obtained records from the center detailing the number of people who walked through the doors for the period of three months. I also obtained three months of customer satisfaction surveys given to clients who participated in a workshop or class. Second, I interviewed the staff and a random sample of clients who came into the center at varying hours of the day.

## **III. DATA**

The data I gathered is summarized in the charts displayed in Figures 1-9. The swipe card report found in Figure 1 indicates that in the course of three months the number of people who visited the center remained fairly constant with minor fluctuations. The data in Figures 5-9 is derived from the interviews I conducted with random clients throughout the course of one week. The data in Figures 5-8 display the demographics of the clients who participated in my interviews. Figure 5 indicates that the ratio of males to females was nearly equal. The majority of clients were older than 25, as shown in Figure 6. Of the clients interviewed, 68% described themselves as single (see Figure 7). For nearly 50% of the clients, a high school diploma or the equivalent was their highest level of education (see Figure 8). The data in Figure 9 demonstrates the problem I am attempting to explore: Why do few people use the many resources available at the center? Most people replied “no” when asked if they used the various resources listed. The 36% who said they did not make use of the computers indicated that they were computer illiterate and had no desire to learn how to use a computer. Figures 2-4 display three months of data showing that of the clients who made use the resources/services, the majority rated them as excellent.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION**

For the majority of the clients, a high school diploma/GED is the highest level of education (see Figure 8). Also, the majority is over the age of 25 (see Figure 6). From the information in Figures 6 and 8, one can deduce that those who responded “no” to using the resources/services (see Figure 9) are likely to have a maximum of a high school diploma/GED and be over the age of 25. Essentially, what you have is a low-skill and older group of clients visiting the center, which could explain the lack of use of the computers without staff assistance and other materials in the resource room (i.e. printer, copier, fax, books).

To clients who responded “no” to using the computers, I asked why? The majority of them said they were not computer literate. I then proceeded to inform them about the workshop: computers for beginners. Many demonstrated little interest, others said they had heard about it but had not made the decision to sign-up. I recall one incident in particular when an older man, whom I will call John, came to the center hoping that someone would fill out an online job application for him because he was not computer literate. The receptionist told John they could not type the information for him, but that a staff member was willing to sit and help him learn to use the computer. The other option he was given was to sign up for the computer workshop. Neither of the options satisfied John and he opted not to apply for the position at all. John’s negative attitude is shared by many of the clients at the center. I can only hypothesize that it could stem from fear of technology or reluctance to sit in a classroom or perhaps from the worry about financial obligations. It’s unfortunate this attitude keeps clients from using the valuable resources at the center because Figures 2-5 suggest that clients who make use of the workshops do find them extremely useful; indeed, they rated the workshops as excellent.

The staff interviews revealed that more individuals tend to use the workshops when the staff speaks to the clients one-on-one and recommends them directly. One staff member commented that she believed one-on-one contact with the client allowed her to impart the value of the workshops. Another staff member who is in charge of one

of the workshops shared with me that most of the clients who attend her workshop are recommended by other staff. Essentially, staff plays a critical role informing the clients about the resources/services the center has to offer. By doing so they increase the probability the client will actually use the resources/services recommended.

## **V. RECOMMENDATIONS**

My primary recommendation is that the front desk personnel should have more one-on-one contact with the clients. The reason is that they are the first to make contact with the client, whether in person or via the telephone. My hypothesis is that individual contact with the clients would help to break down the attitude barrier. The front desk personnel have a general idea of most of the resources/services available. They are in charge of compiling a monthly calendar of events and maintaining the white erase board and bulletin board, and keeping printed material up to date.

In order to make my recommendation feasible it is necessary to enhance the efficiency of the front desk personnel. The following are three specific suggestions to increase efficiency.

*First*, the center should install an automated response system that greets callers, gives general information about the center, and allows clients to choose to which staff member they want to be directed. This arrangement would greatly reduce the number of calls the receptionist must transfer.

*Second*, voice mail should be installed into the phone system to relieve the receptionist of the responsibility of writing down messages that must then be delivered to the appropriate staff member.

*Third*, allowing clients to enter through the back door requires the receptionist to press the release button located across from the receptionist desk, which means she

has to drop everything to stand up and walk over to the button. Moving the desk next to the button or moving the button near to the present location of the receptionist desk would save time and allow for increased multitasking.

These simple changes combined would free up more of the front desk personnel's time and thus facilitate the implementation of my primary recommendation; that is, informing the clients about the resources/services through one-on-one contact.

## **VI. CONCLUSION**

The partners at the Cortland Works Career Center are committed to helping job seekers find employment as quickly as possible. They provide sufficient printed material throughout the facility to inform clients about the resources/services offered. It is the clients who fail to seek out and utilize what the center makes available. This lack of initiative can be attributed to the client's attitude. I therefore recommend increased one-on-one contact with clients in hopes that increased contact will break down attitude barriers that prevent clients from utilizing all that the center has to offer.

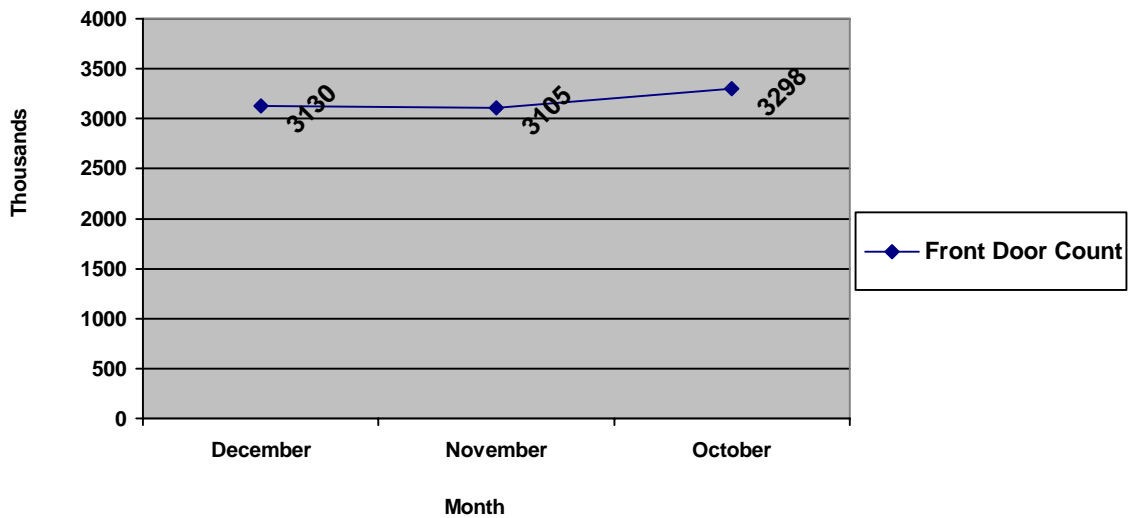
## Tables and Charts

Figure 1

### Cortland Works Career Center Swipe Card Report

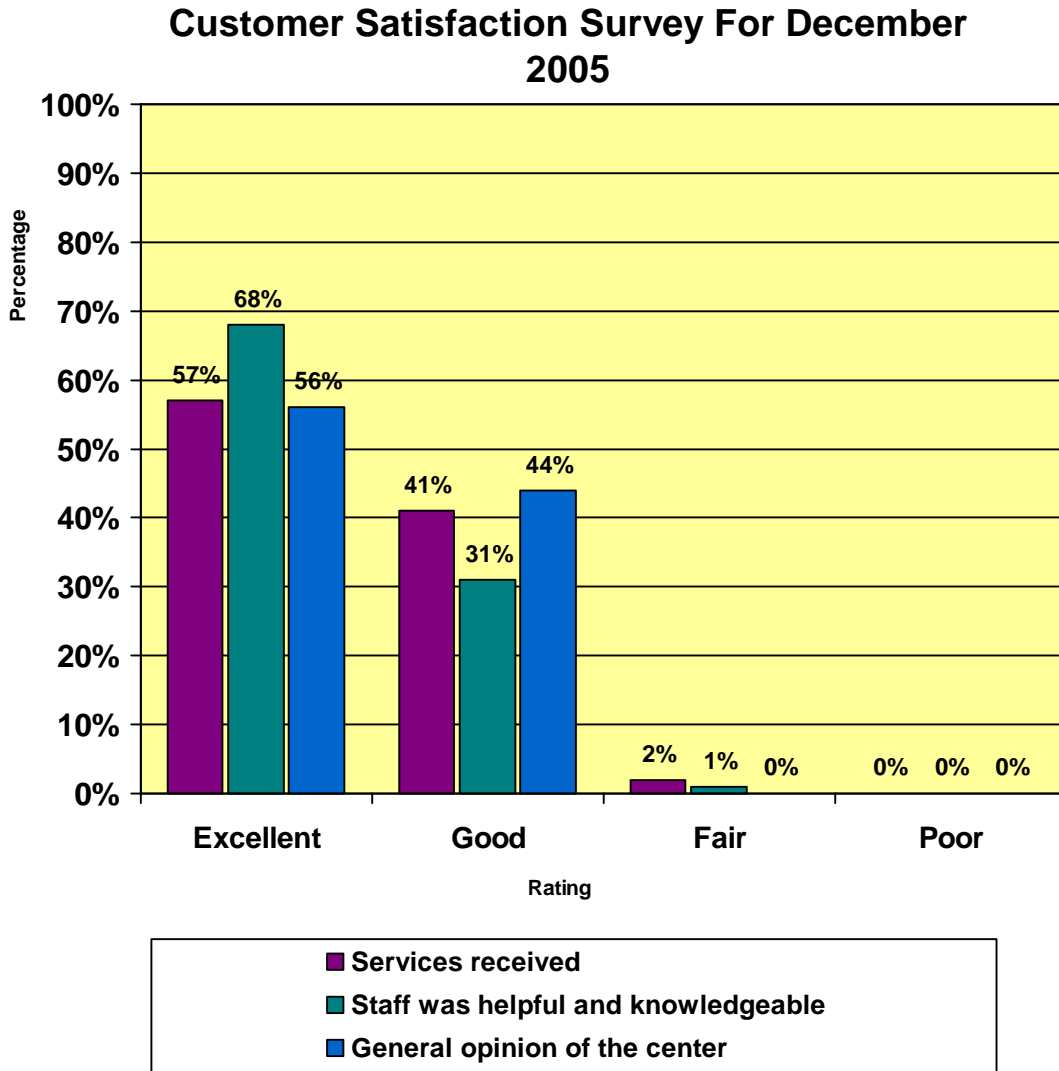
Month	Front Door Count
December 2005	3,130
November 2005	3,105
October 2005	3,298

### Front Door Traffic



*Note: Data was gathered from the Cortland Works Career Center.*

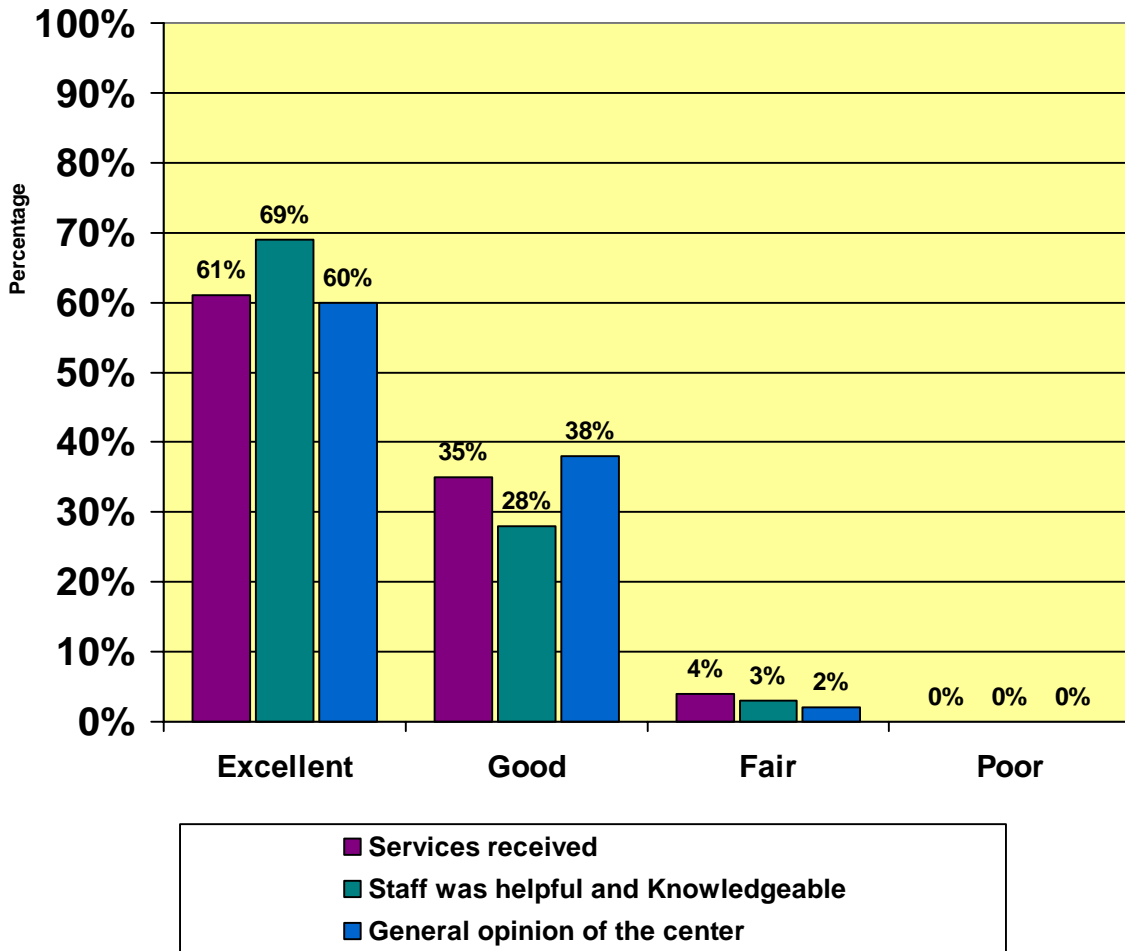
Figure 2



Total Surveyed: 120

Figure 3

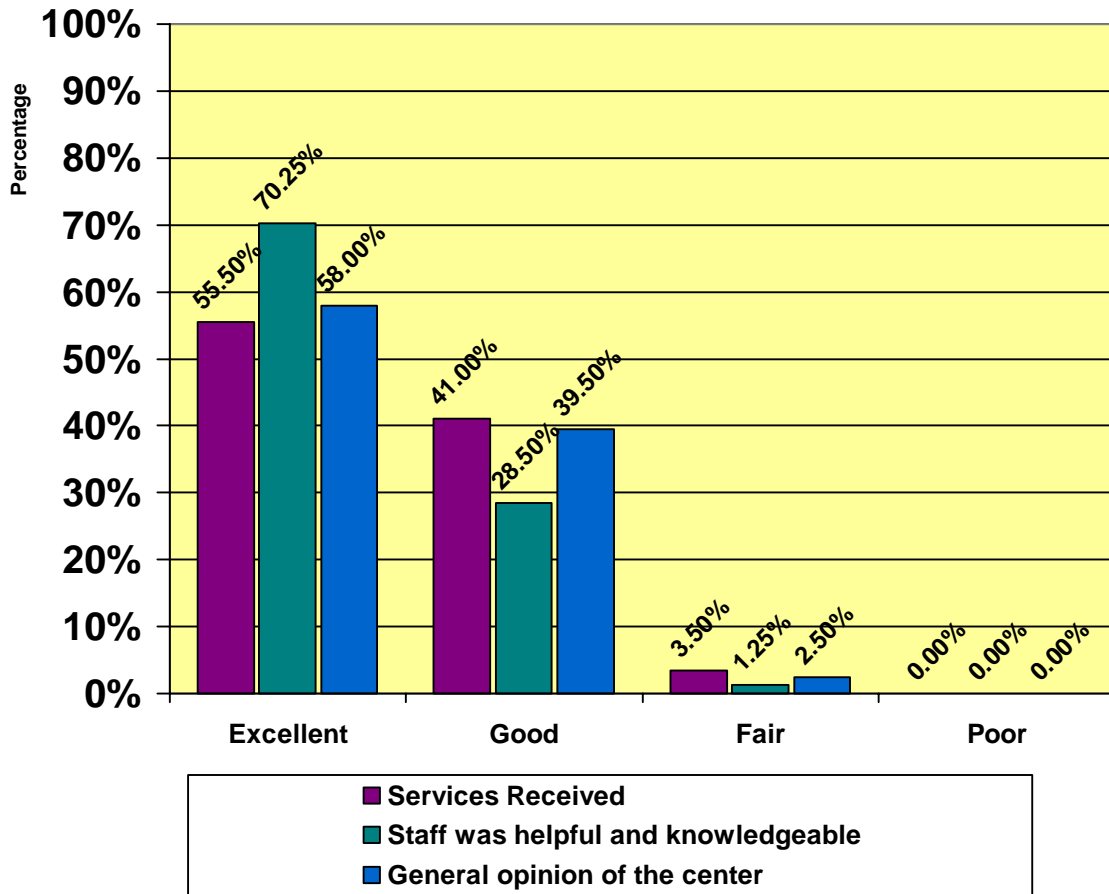
### Customer Satisfaction Survey For November 2005



Total Surveyed: 102

Figure 4

### Customer Satisfaction Survey For October 2005



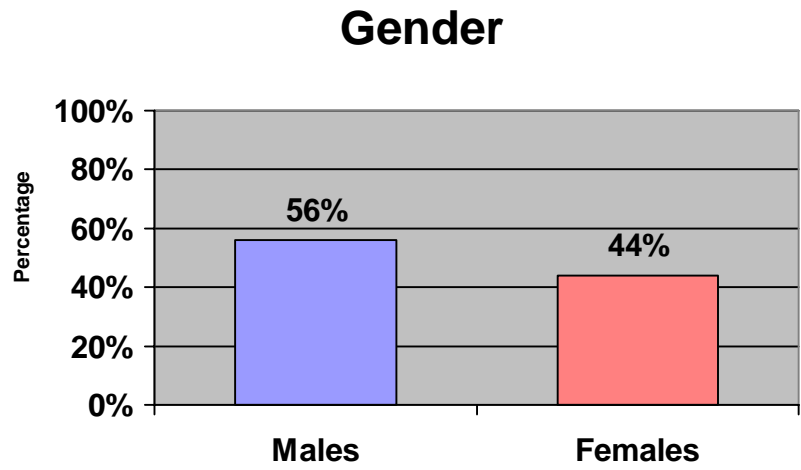
Total Surveyed: 81

*Note: The surveys apply only to clients who participated in a workshop or class. It does not apply to clients that came to the Center for any other reason. The data was obtained from Cortland Works Career Center.*



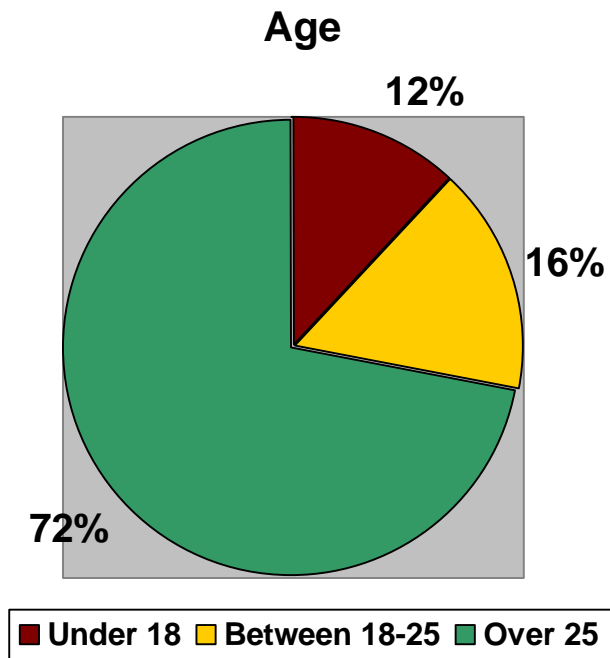
Note: Figures 5-9 were derived from the survey I conducted.

Figure 5



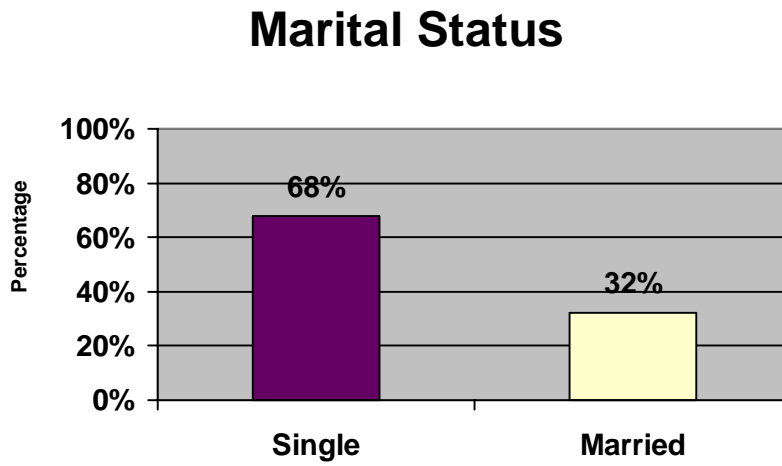
Total: 25

Figure 6



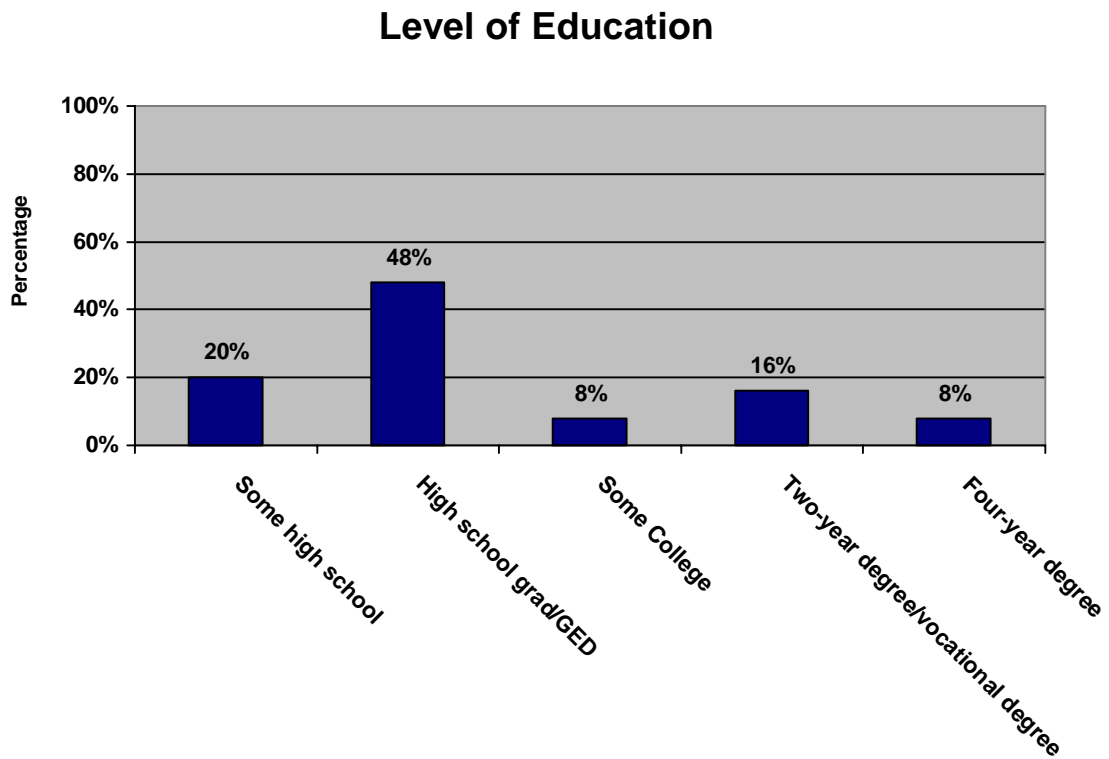
Total: 25

Figure 7



Total: 25

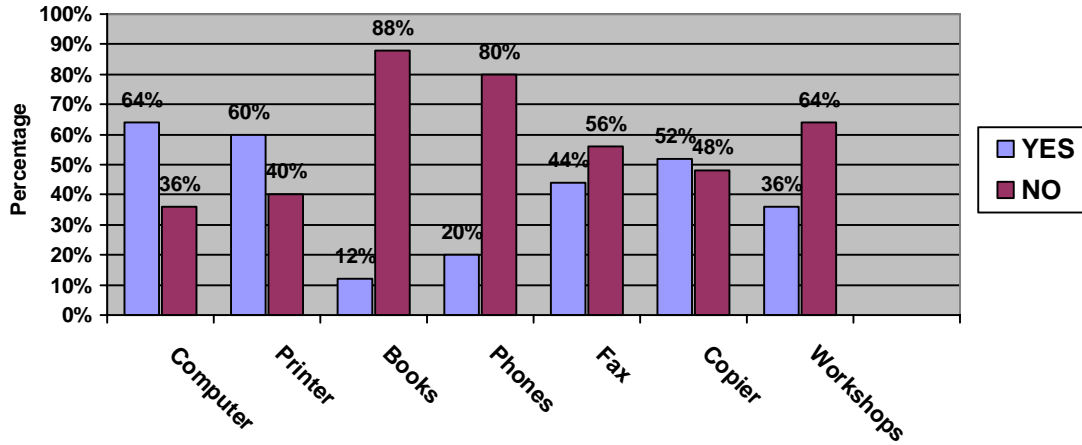
Figure 8



Total: 25

Figure 9

### Do you use the following resources



Total: 25

#### Summary of comments when asked why they use or didn't use the above resources:

- |           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Computer  | YES—online job postings, resume, job application, Microsoft Office tutorials<br>NO—not computer literate, the jobs I'm applying to don't require online applications, I have one at home |
| Printer   | YES—resume, cover letter<br>NO—I don't need it   |
| Books     | YES—resumes, cover letter samples<br>NO—stated no specific reason simply that they didn't  |
| Phones    | YES—save money on long distance calls to employers<br>NO—I have one at home therefore I don't need it  |
| Fax       | YES—resume, cover letters<br>NO—I don't need it  |
| Copier    | YES—copy sample resumes from books<br>NO—I don't know how to use it, I don't need it   |
| Workshops | YES—they were required, staff recommend I go<br>NO— I didn't know about them, I don't need them, I don't have time   |

Summary of Figures 5 through 8

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>AGE</b>	<b>STATUS</b>	<b>LEVEL OF EDUCATION</b>
11 Females	3 under 18	17 Single	5 Not a high school graduate
14 Males	4 between 18-25	8 married	12 High school graduate/GED
	18 over 25		2 Some college
			4 Two year degree/vocational degree
			2 Four year degree

Total interviewed: 25

Summary of Figure 9

	<b>Computer</b>	<b>Printer</b>	<b>Books</b>	<b>Phones</b>	<b>Fax</b>	<b>Copier</b>	<b>Workshops</b>
<b>YES</b>	16	15	3	5	11	13	9
<b>NO</b>	9	10	22	20	14	12	16

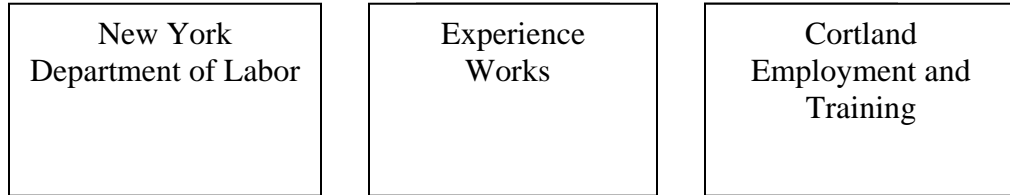
Total interviewed: 25

## **Appendix 1: Partner Agency at the Cortland Works Career Center**

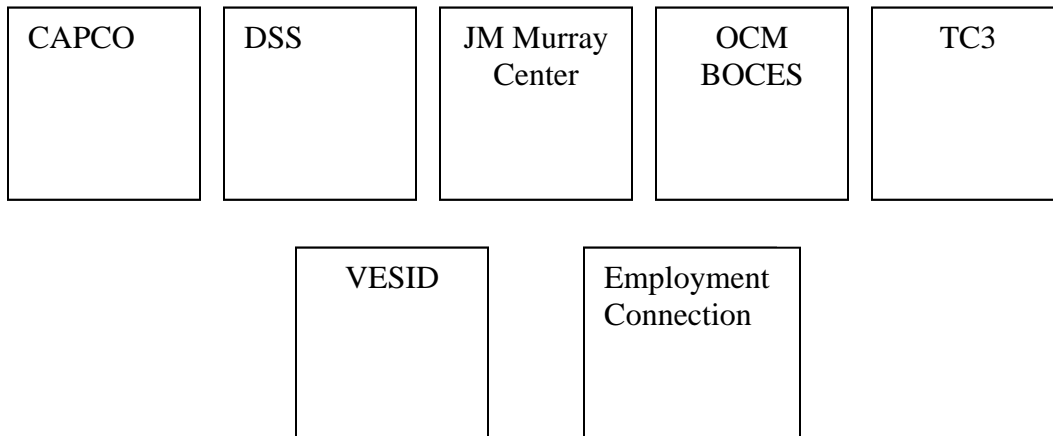
The following is a list of all the partner agencies local at the Cortland Works Career Center. All the partners work together to provide the appropriate services for individuals that arrive at the Center. The partners that are not able to contribute financially to maintain the center contribute in other ways such as providing human resources. There are three agencies that co-manage the Center: New York Department of Labor, Cortland Employment and Training and Experience Works.

1. New York Department of Labor
2. Experience Works
  - Provides services for people 55 and older seeking to reenter the workforce
3. Cortland Employment and Training
4. Community Action Partnership (CAPCO)
  - Provides various services to individuals that live in poverty
5. Cortland County Department of Social Services (DSS)
6. JM Murray Center
  - Provides vocational, habilitation and other services to people with disabilities
7. Employment Connection
  - Provides job-related services for people with disabilities
8. Onondaga-Cortland-Madison Board of Cooperative Educational Services (OCM BOCES)
9. Tompkins Cortland Community College (TC3)
  - Does not have a representative at the Center
10. Vocational and Educational Services for Individuals with Disabilities (VESID)

Main consortium provides management for the Center



Other agencies



## Appendix 2: Career Center Description and Basic Performance for November 2005

DOL/APU Program Student Internship Assignments during January 2006  
Characteristics of the host DOL Career Center in New York, State.

### Site Specifics

1. Student name M. Carmen Hernandez  
School Industrial and Labor Relations Status 2008
2. DOL host  
Official name of site Cortland Works Career Center  
City or Village Cortland  
Counties covered primarily Cortland
3. Approximate mix of local labor force: *N/A*  
agriculture \_\_\_% manufacturing \_\_\_% service/retail \_\_\_%  
professional/white collar \_\_\_%
4. Manning of the site, excluding regional staff: (indicate # full/part-time)  
Manager: F 1 P 1 Supervisors: F 2 P 0 Specialists: F 13 P 4  
Clerks/reception: F 1 P 2
5. Regional staff housed at this location: F 0 P 0

### Customer Specifics (November 2005)

6. Joblessness data: *N/A*  
# seeking first job \_\_\_ # seeking next job \_\_\_ # seeking training \_\_\_  
of total: first visit \_\_\_% second visit \_\_\_% third (or more) visit \_\_\_%  
of total, length of unemployment: <1mo \_\_\_% 1-3mo \_\_\_% 3-6m \_\_\_% more \_\_\_% *N/A*
7. Currently employed: *N/A*  
# seeking better job \_\_\_ # seeking training \_\_\_ # seeking other \_\_\_  
of total: first visit \_\_\_% second visit \_\_\_% third (or more) visit \_\_\_%
8. Employers calling/visiting:  
# seeking to hire 14 # seeking aid for in-house training 1  
# seeking information or clarification on policy or procedure 15 # other 0

*Note: Enter N/A if information not locally available*  
*Compiled by Harold Oaklander, Jan.18, 2006*

# **Maximizing One-Stop Center Services for Job-Seeking Clients Using Technology**

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Class of 2007

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## **I. Introduction**

The Capital Region Career Central, a full-service one-stop center located in Albany, New York, included many features expected in one-stop centers. It has a resource center equipped with computers and Internet access and printers, copier and fax machines, telephones that allowed registered clients to create personalized voicemail accounts, career development and preparation software, and a variety of specialized programs. The center also offers a variety of exclusive services, such as an on-site computer lab that could be used for specialized classroom training. In 2003, the Capital Region Career Central served 4,032 job-seeking clients, who were unemployment insurance recipients or had been referred by partner agencies. The center provides three categories of services to job-seeking clients: core services available to the general public to facilitate individuals' job searches; intensive services focused on career development, planning, and counseling; training services specific to increasing an individual's career-related skills and knowledge for certain high-demand occupations.<sup>i</sup> The Capital Region Career Central also provides many services to business clients; this paper, however, focuses on the services and training available to the job-seeking clients.

## **II. Methodology**

The research conducted at the Albany Career Central office included reading the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, interviewing state and local employees of the center, interviewing clients in the center, conducting a case study of the resource room, and collecting literature and data produced by the New York State Department of Labor.

### **III. Observations and Analysis**

The job-seeking clients could not adequately benefit from the services at the One-Stop center. The employees were preoccupied with meeting their performance goals described in the Workforce Investment Act performance measures, which also determined funding. The services that are provided are not well developed, structured, or client-oriented.

- The informational literature available for clients was outdated, often contained misinformation, and was written in bureaucratic/procedural language that is not consumer-friendly. The center's website was difficult to navigate, contained little information about the center's structure and purpose, posted inactive links, and posted important information in files that needed to be downloaded to view.
- The workshops were not scheduled during the hours of high traffic and therefore were poorly attended. The staff, instead of viewing the scheduled workshop times as inconvenient, associated the low participation rate with workers' lack of motivation.
- The computers in the resource room were not always functional during the hours of operations. One day, the computers were not able to access the Internet. This was extremely frustrating for the clients and resource center staff because the majority of their job searches required them to use the Internet. A valuable core service was lost for the day.
- The reemployment services orientation (RSOs) is an informational meeting about the one-stop center services and the unemployment insurance program. All participants have been or are in the process of being laid off from work. They are required by state law to attend the meeting in order to become eligible for unemployment insurance benefits. The RSO is the responsibility of state employees in the center who usually present a PowerPoint presentation about the center's services by reading verbatim from each slide while the audience reads along. The presentation is written in bureaucratic legalese and the presenter has a monotonous

tone. Overall, this method of delivery fails to engage the audience. Afterward, the audience is expected to complete forms that provide the center with the individual's employment history. These questions fail to provide the center staff with a realistic assessment of the individual's employment skills and abilities. The RSO lasted about 1.5 to 2 hours, but if better structured could have lasted only 45 minutes to one hour.

The center's resource room is where most of the core services are provided. Its operations are based on the assumptions that there is equal access to information, that most of the career development and preparation processes are common sense, that the unemployed are available at all times, and that every customer of the center is computer literate. The language in the Workforce Investment Act, which is derived from commonly accepted economic principles, says a person must be ready, willing, and able to work in order to qualify for unemployment benefits. Based on my observations at the Capital Region Career Central, I have concluded that these assumptions are incorrect.

The Resource Room was the main component of the center. The waiting room was nearer to the resource room than to the library. The library was small and had a small collection of books that did not fill the one wall of bookshelves; the books in the library were written in college-level language and were dense. The center had many computers but no on-site computer courses. The adult population observed at the Capital Region Career Central was low-middle income, had completed secondary education requirements but nonetheless had difficulty using the office equipment within the center and could not estimate the amount of time or number of steps that were needed to find employment. One client in the resource center could not distinguish a cover letter from a resume. The client expected to create both of these documents and send them to a prospective employer via e-mail. The client, by the way, was computer illiterate and was observed to have a typing speed of five words per minute. If the client had been able to access the resource room staff, then perhaps he could have been more efficient in his job search.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

After reviewing and analyzing the various operational aspects and resources in the Capital Region Career Central, the following suggestions were developed. Overall, one-stop centers should tap into the available technology to provide employees with on-demand services and educational and informational materials that are available for people to use at their convenience; should design the resource room services to accommodate people with little to no computer experience; and should consider investing in computer software programs that would expedite the flow of services to job-seeking clients.

- ❖ The New York State Department of Labor in collaboration with the one-stop centers should develop a brand of multimedia instructional videos, CD-ROMs, and DVDs that teach people skills on career planning and development. These videos would be scripted in language that can be understood by middle school-aged children, yet would not include childish content (i.e. cartoon characters), would be 15-20 minutes in length, and would cater to all types of learners. These videos would be cataloged at all one-stop center libraries for the client to watch on demand. Creating these instructional videos would move Intensive services, which require the assistance of the center's staff, into Self-Assisted Core Services, where no center staff involvement is necessary. **Possible Videos:** Resume and cover letter writing, the job application, the Internet resume, using the Internet in your job search, employer expectations, impression management during the interview and on the job, tips for negotiating equitable salaries, business etiquette, networking, the proper business attire, soft skills, opening an e-mail account, personal financial management, and the structure of the work force (explains the different types of employees -- full/part-time, temp, seasonal -- and explains that fulltime workers are eligible for fringe benefit packages).
- ❖ The Department of Labor should create a companion DVD for job-seeking clients that would explain the purpose of the one-stop center and how it can benefit them. It would explain the services and workshops available for their use. The DVD would help educate the workers who register at the one-stop center independently and could be shown to jobseekers during the reemployment services orientation.

- ❖ The one-stop centers should ensure that the computers are functional during the hours of the center's operations. This includes investing in anti-virus software and enough capacity so the computers can handle the level of Internet traffic.
- ❖ The center should increase the amount of basic computer skills workshops. The computer lab should be open to the public so individuals could work on their typing skills and practice using word processing programs. The center can take advantage of free software available online at <http://www.freewarehome.com/>; the software can be quickly downloaded after the center gets consent from the software developers and acquires a business license. Computer software programs are categorized by topic on this website: business and productivity, desktop, education, games, graphics, home and hobby internet, programming, system utilities, and miscellaneous.
- ❖ The resource room computer network should be electronically linked to the administrative computers in the resource room so that the staff can better monitor clients' computer activities, lock the computers and end clients' session, thus preventing client abuse of the available services. Instead of having people request a computer from the resource room staff, the staff should adjust the computer settings so that people would have to log onto the computer with a user name and password. The password would be the same or similar to their swipe-card number. This would ensure that the client's personal information (i.e. social security number) is kept confidential and would make the resource room staff available for more important matters. A computer timer program should be installed that would count down the one-hour session. The computer should be set to time out or lock when one hour has passed. This would benefit the resource room staff because it would prevent abuse of the computer lab policy without creating conflict between the clients and the staff.
- ❖ The center should invest in an LCD monitor television to be hung in the waiting room. The television could advertise various services available to clients at the one-stop center by creating the advertisements in Microsoft PowerPoint. The monitor could be used to publicize upcoming events at the center and, possibly, allow other partner organizations to advertise their career-related events. The

- LCD monitor would benefit the center in three ways: clients would learn more about the services offered at the one-stop; clients would be less likely to notice the amount of time that had elapsed while waiting for service; and the center might profit by charging employers a small fee for posting help-wanted advertisements.
- ❖ The resource room computers should have informational documents saved to the desktop of every computer instead of relying on hardcopy printouts listing job search-engine links. This way, the jobseeking client would only need to click on the web link and be connected to the website. This would benefit computer illiterate clients because they could reach the website faster and have less to remember.
  - ❖ The centers' websites should contain entry portals for identified categories of clients, e.g., the unemployment insurance recipients, the jobseekers (individuals not receiving unemployment insurance), youth, and employers. The NYS Department of Labor should work with the local centers to aggressively collect, advertise, and post to the website career-focused events, workshops, and seminars that would benefit job-seeking clients. The clients should be able to view important information directly from the website.

### **Note on additional finding**

While collecting information for this paper and after conceiving the recommendations laid out above, I discovered the "Secret Shopper Statewide Findings" of 2003. The secret shopper program required all local one-stops to give background information on their partner agencies and a list of its services to a consultant agency. The consultant agency selected 13 secret shoppers, including one youth and one hearing-impaired person, to visit 86 centers, either as a business client or a jobseeker. After the secret shoppers visited the various centers, the consulting agency submitted a set of recommendations aimed at improving the centers' services.<sup>ii</sup> That report raised many of the issues discussed in this paper and coincidentally made some similar recommendations. The NYS Department of Labor should review the report and see that the one-stop centers address these issues.

## **V. Conclusion**

These recommendations are intended to enhance the efficiency of the centers and improve the delivery of services to their clients: The resource room staff would gain more time to complete other tasks/provide more individualized services; the job-seeking clients would use technology and not the resource room staff to obtain new skills and would become more autonomous and confident in their job searches. As the clients' confidence increases, so would their motivation to find a satisfying career. Customer satisfaction would increase as there would be less negative interaction with the one-stop center staff. Happy customers would result in friendlier staff, who would feel their work was appreciated and valued.

## Appendix 1

Taken from the 2003 NYS Annual Report

### *Table O - Local Program Activities*

Local Area Name Adults	1,312
Dislocated Workers	2,630
Capital Region Older Youth	90

### *Total Participants Served*

Younger Youth	605
Adults	491
Dislocated Workers	786
Older Youth	45

### *Total Exiters*

Younger Youth	192
---------------	-----

## **A Guide to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

“Unemployment Insurance: A Federal-State Partnership”

[http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepaper\\_published/CMS\\_013569.asp](http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepaper_published/CMS_013569.asp)

“The Inner Workings of the Unemployment and the Bottom Line”

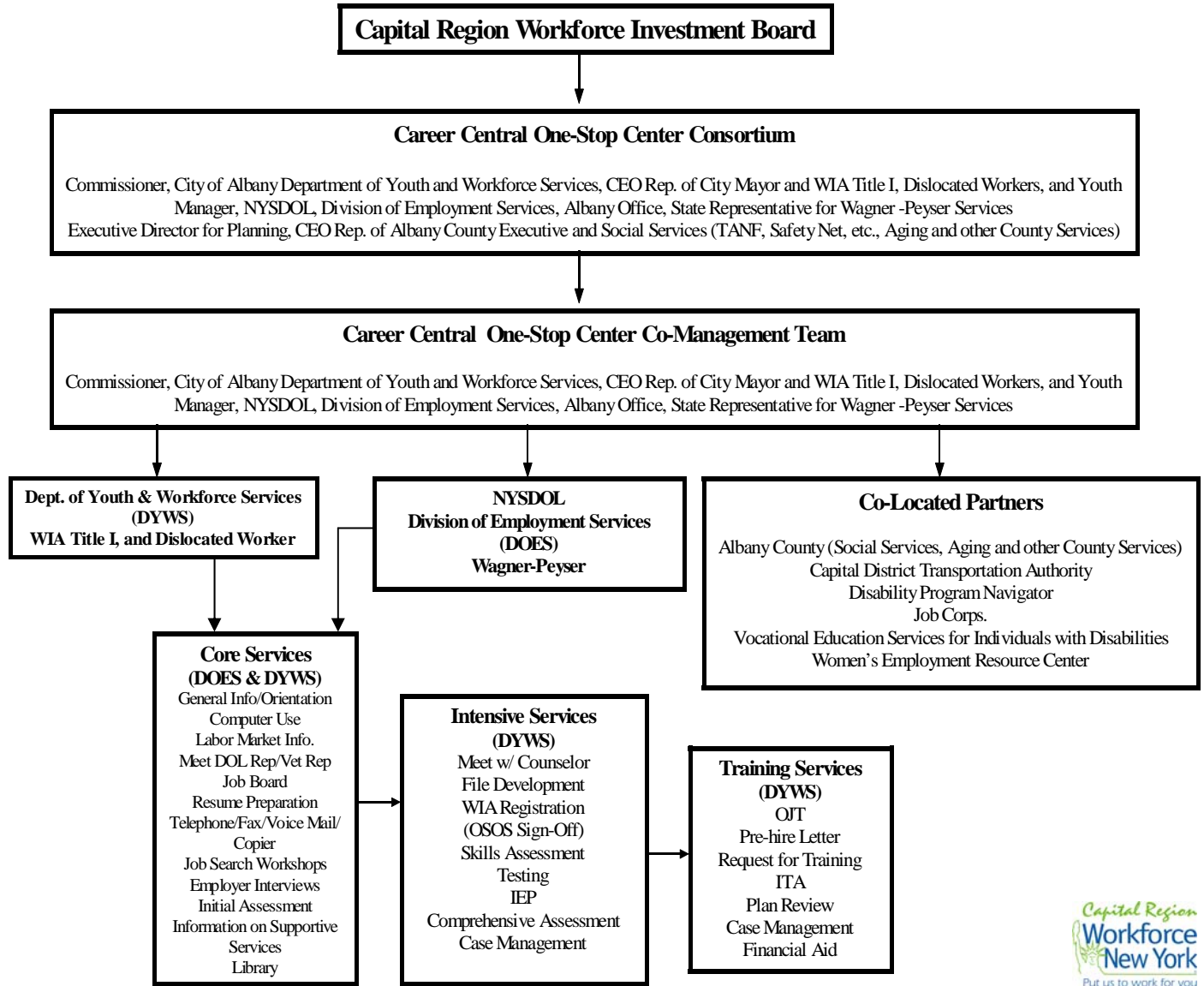
[http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers\\_published/CMS\\_000045.asp](http://www.shrm.org/hrresources/whitepapers_published/CMS_000045.asp)

New York State Department of Labor Secret Shopper Report March-June 2003 Statewide Findings

<http://www.workforcenewyork.com/swib/ssreport.htm>



# Appendix 2



### Appendix 3

DOL/APU Program Student Internship Assignments during January 2006  
Characteristics of the host DOL Career Center in \_\_New York\_ State

#### *Site Specifics*

1. Student name: Alessandra Payne  
School: ILR Status: Junior
  
2. DOL host  
Official name of site: Career Central, Albany's One-Stop Center  
City: Albany  
Counties covered: Albany County
  
3. Approximate mix of local labor force  
Agriculture: 5,583 Manufacturing: 32,797 Service/retail: 223,290  
Professional/white collar: 169,301
  
4. Manning of the site, excluding regional staff (indicate # full/part-time)  
Manager: FT 1 Supervisors: FT 2 Specialists: FT 1  
Clerks/reception: FT 2
  
5. Regional staff housed at this location  
FT 7

#### *Customer Specifics (November 2005)*

6. Joblessness data: NA  
# seeking first job \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking next job \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking training \_\_\_\_\_  
of total: first visit \_\_\_% second visit \_\_\_% third (or more) visit \_\_\_%  
of total, length of unemployment: <1mo \_\_\_% 1-3mo \_\_\_% 3-6m \_\_\_% more \_\_\_%
  
7. Currently employed: NA  
# seeking better job \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking training \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking other \_\_\_\_\_  
of total: first visit \_\_\_\_\_% second visit \_\_\_\_\_% third (or more) visit \_\_\_\_\_%
  
8. Employers calling/visiting: NA  
# seeking to hire \_\_\_\_\_ # seeking aid for in-house training \_\_\_\_\_  
# seeking information or clarification on policy or procedure \_\_\_\_\_ # other \_\_\_\_\_

*Note: Enter N/A if information not locally available  
Compiled by Harold Oaklander, Jan.18, 2006*

## **Abstract of U.S. Workforce Investment Act of 1998**

### **Empowering the Nation's Job seekers**

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 provides the framework for a unique national workforce preparation and employment system designed to meet both the needs of the nation's businesses and the needs of job seekers and those who want to further their careers. Title I of the legislation is based on the following elements:

- Training and employment programs must be designed and managed at the local level where the needs of businesses and individuals are best understood. Customers must be able to conveniently access the employment, education, training, and information services they need at a single location in their neighborhoods.
- Customers should have choices in deciding the training program that best fits their needs and the organizations that will provide that service. They should have control over their own career development.
- Customers have a right to information about how well training providers succeed in preparing people for jobs. Training providers will provide information on their success rates.
- Businesses will provide information, leadership, and play an active role in ensuring that the system prepares people for current and future jobs.\

The Act builds on the most successful elements of previous Federal legislation. Just as important, its key components are based on local and State input and extensive research and evaluation studies of successful training and employment innovations over the past decade. The new law makes changes to the current funding streams, target populations, system of delivery, accountability, long-term planning, labor market information system, and governance structure.

Title I authorizes the new Workforce Investment System. State workforce investment boards will be established and States will develop five-year strategic plans. Governors will designate local "workforce investment areas" and oversee local workforce investment boards. New youth councils will be set up as a subgroup of the local board to guide the development and operation of programs for youth. Customers will benefit from a "One-Stop" delivery system, with career centers in their neighborhoods where they can access core employment services and be referred directly to job training, education, or other services.

Title I requires that standards for success be established for organizations that provide training services and outlines a system for determining their initial eligibility to receive funds. It establishes the funding mechanism for States and local areas, specifies participant eligibility criteria, and authorizes a broad array of services for youth, adults, and dislocated workers. It also authorizes certain statewide activities and a system of accountability to ensure that customer needs are met.

Also authorized are a number of national programs the Job Corps; Native American programs; Migrant and Seasonal Farm worker programs; Veterans' Workforce Investment programs; Youth Opportunity grants for high-poverty areas; technical assistance efforts to States and local areas; demonstration, pilot, and other special national projects; program evaluations; and National Emergency grants. Title II reauthorizes Adult Education and Literacy programs for Fiscal Years 1999-2003.

Title III amends the Wagner-Peyser Act to require that Employment Service/Job Service activities become part of the "One-Stop" system and establishes a national employment statistics initiative. It requires linkages between the Act's programs and Trade Adjustment Assistance and North American Free Trade Agreement Transitional Adjustment Assistance programs. It establishes a temporary "Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission" to study issues relating to the information technology workforce in the United States.

Title IV reauthorizes Rehabilitation Act programs through Fiscal Year 2003 and links these programs to State and local workforce development systems.

Title V contains general provisions that include authority for State unified plans relating to several workforce development programs, incentive grants for States exceeding negotiated performance levels under the Workforce Investment Act, Adult Education Act, and Perkins Vocational Education Act, and transition provisions.

### **A Customer-Focused System**

The most important aspect of the Act is its focus on meeting the needs of businesses for skilled workers and the training, education, and employment needs of individuals. Key components of the Act will enable customers to easily access the information and services they need through the "One-Stop" system; empower adults to obtain the training they find most appropriate through Individual Training Accounts, and ensure that all State and local programs meet customer expectations.

"One-Stop" Approach - The new system will be based on the "One-Stop" concept where information about and access to a wide array of job training, education, and employment services is available for customers at a single neighborhood location. Customers will be able to easily:

Receive a preliminary assessment of their skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and support service needs. Obtain information on a full array of employment-related services, including information about local education and training service providers. Receive help filing claims for unemployment insurance and evaluating eligibility for job training and education programs or student financial aid. Obtain job search and placement assistance, and receive career counseling.

Have access to up-to-date labor market information which identifies job vacancies, skills necessary for in-demand jobs, and provides information about local, regional and national employment trends.

Through the "One-Stop," employers will have a single point of contact to provide information about current and future skills needed by their workers and to list job openings. They will benefit from a single system for finding job-ready skilled workers who meet their needs.

To date, over 95 percent of the States are building these Centers, and over 800 Centers are operating across the country. Each local area will establish a "One-Stop" delivery system through which core services are provided and through which access is provided to other employment and training services funded under the Act and other Federal programs. There will be at least one Center in each local area, which may be supplemented by networks of affiliated sites. The operators of "One-Stop" Centers are to be selected by the local workforce investment boards through a competitive process or designation of consortia that includes at least three of the Federal programs providing services at the "One-Stop."

Empowerment Through Training Accounts - Provisions of the Act promote individual responsibility and personal decision-making through the use of "Individual Training Accounts" which allow adult customers to "purchase" the training they determine best for them. This market-driven system will enable customers to get the skills and credentials they need to succeed in their local labor markets.

Good customer choice requires quality information. The "One-Stop" system will provide customers with a list of eligible training providers and information about how well those providers perform. Payment for services will be arranged through the Individual Training Accounts. Only in exceptional cases may training be provided through a contract for services between the "One-Stop" Center and organizations providing the training.

Accountability - As individuals become empowered to choose the services they require, States, local areas, and providers of those services will become more accountable for meeting those needs.

For adults and "dislocated" workers (such as those who lose their jobs because of permanent layoffs or plant closings), measures for the rates of entry into unsubsidized employment, job retention, post-placement earnings, and acquired education and skill standards for those who obtain employment will be established. Measures for older youth

(19-21) will also include the attainment of a high school diploma (or its equivalent) for those who enter post secondary education or advanced training as well as for those who get jobs. Measures for younger youth (14-18) will include rates of basic skills and work readiness or occupational skills attainment, attainment of high school diplomas (or the equivalent), and placement and retention in post secondary education, advanced occupational training, apprenticeships, the military or employment. These measures apply to both statewide and local performance.

Measures will also be established relating to customer satisfaction of both participants and employers. The Act also requires that training providers must meet certain requirements in order to receive adult or dislocated worker funds. There are separate requirements for initial eligibility and for subsequently maintaining eligibility to receive funds. Training providers will be held accountable for completion rates, the percentage of participants who obtain unsubsidized jobs and for their wages at placement. Training providers must also provide information about the cost of their programs. This information will be available to clients at "One-Stop" Centers.

### **Eligibility and Service Requirements**

The Act specifies three funding streams to the States and local areas: Adults, dislocated workers, and youth.

Adults and Dislocated Workers - Most services for adults and dislocated workers will be provided through the "One-Stop" system and most customers will use their individual training accounts to determine which training program and training providers fit their needs.

The Act authorizes "core" services (which will be available to all adults with no eligibility requirements), and "intensive" services for unemployed individuals who are not able to find jobs through core services alone. In some cases the intensive services will also be available to employed workers who need more help to find or keep a job. While the services for adults and dislocated workers may be the same, there is a separate funding stream for dislocated workers.

Core services will include job search and placement assistance (including career counseling); labor market information (which identifies job vacancies; skills needed for in-demand jobs; and local, regional and national employment trends); initial assessment of skills and needs; information about available services; and some follow-up services to help customers keep their jobs once they are placed.

Intensive services will include more comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans, group and individual counseling, case management, and short-term pre-vocational services. In cases where qualified customers receive intensive services, and are still not able to find jobs, they may receive training services which are directly linked to job opportunities in their local area. These services may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, entrepreneurial training, skill upgrading,

job readiness training, and adult education and literacy activities in conjunction with other training. If adult funds are limited in an area, recipients of public assistance and low-income clients will be given priority for services. The Act also authorizes the provision of supportive services (e.g., transportation) to assist participants receiving the other services and the provision of temporary income support to enable participants to remain in training. Youth - Eligible youth will be low-income, ages 14 through 21 (although up to five percent who are not low-income may receive services if they face certain barriers to school completion or employment). Young customers also must face one or more of the following challenges to successful workforce entry: (1) school dropout; (2) basic literacy skills deficiency; (3) homeless, runaway, or foster child; (4) pregnant or a parent; (5) an offender; or (6) need help completing an educational program or securing and holding a job. At least 30 percent of local youth funds must help those who are not in school.

Youth will be prepared for post secondary educational opportunities or employment. Programs will link academic and occupational learning. Service providers will have strong ties to employers. Programs must also include tutoring, study skills training and instruction leading to completion of secondary school (including dropout prevention); alternative school services; mentoring by appropriate adults; paid and unpaid work experience (such as internships and job shadowing); occupational skills training; leadership development; and appropriate supportive services. Youth participants will also receive guidance and counseling, and follow-up services for at least one year, as appropriate. Programs must provide summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning. (In contrast to the current legislation, a separate appropriation is not authorized for a "summer" program.) The mix of year-round and summer activities is left to local discretion.

### **Designing and Managing the New System**

Several new features are included in the law to ensure the full involvement of business, labor, and community organizations in designing and ensuring the quality of the new workforce investment system. These include State and local workforce investment boards, local youth councils, and long-term State strategic planning. State and Local Workforce Investment Boards - Each State will establish both State and local workforce investment boards. The State board will help the Governor develop a five-year strategic plan describing statewide workforce development activities, explaining how the requirements of the Act will be implemented, and outlining how special population groups will be served. The plan which must also include details about how local Employment Service/Job Service activities fit into the new service delivery structure must be submitted to the Secretary of Labor. The state board will advise the Governor on ways to develop the statewide workforce investment system and a statewide labor market information system. The state board will also help the Governor monitor statewide activities and report to the Secretary of Labor.

Local workforce investment boards, in partnership with local elected officials, will plan and oversee the local system. Local plans will be submitted for the Governor's approval.

Local boards designate "One-Stop" operators and identify providers of training services, monitor system performance against established performance measures, negotiate local performance measures with the state board and the Governor, and help develop the labor market information system.

Youth Councils - Youth Councils will be established as a subgroup of the local board to develop parts of the local plans relating to youth, recommend providers of youth services, and coordinate local youth programs and initiatives.

## **Funding**

The Workforce Investment Act authorizes three funding streams: adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Eighty-five percent of adult and youth funds will be allocated to local areas: the remainder will be reserved for statewide activities. For youth, funds appropriated in excess of \$1 billion (up to \$250 million) will be used by the U.S. DOL to fund Youth Opportunity Grants. For dislocated workers, 20 percent will be reserved for National Emergency Grants, dislocated worker demonstration efforts, and technical assistance. Of the remaining 80%, 60% will be allocated to local areas. 15% will be reserved for statewide activities, and 25 will be reserved for State rapid response efforts.

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<sup>i</sup> These three types of services are generally depicted as an inverted pyramid where core, intensive, and training services are ranked respectively. The theory is fewer clients qualify to receive the services at the bottom of the pyramid.

<sup>ii</sup> New York State Department of Labor Secret Shopper Report March-June 2003 Statewide Findings  
<http://www.workforcenewyork.com/swib/ssreportstatewidefindings.htm>