

Beyond Compliance - Planning that Matters and AJC Certifications that Drive Collaboration

Q&A Document

September 26, 2024



PREFACE

This is a follow up Technical Assistance (TA) resource document for the webinar held by the Next Level Now (NLN) Collaborative on Thursday, September 26, 2024 on WorkforceGPS titled [Beyond Compliance - Planning that Matters and AJC Certifications that Drive Collaboration](#)

This webinar delivered technical assistance and provided information on how to optimize planning and certification processes to strengthen Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) operations and enhance community engagement. The session emphasized effective state and regional collaboration, along with innovative strategies for boosting performance.

Three regional Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) from Texas, Oklahoma and Kansas shared their first-hand experiences and strategies for meeting WIOA compliance while advancing strategic objectives. Information included community engagement, and certifying American Job Centers (AJCs), with a particular focus on improving customer service and fostering collaboration.

Moderator:

Sean Fox, Workforce Development Analyst, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration

Facilitator:

Laurie Bouillon Larrea, Senior Advisor, [National Association of Workforce Boards](#)

Presenters:

Linda Angel, PhD., Deputy Executive Director, [Workforce Solutions of Central Texas](#)

Kerry Manning, Executive Director, [Southern Workforce Board, Inc.](#) (OK)

Keely J. Schneider, Executive Director, [Workforce Partnership](#) (KS)



This document was created to answer the questions that came in during the webinar. The following topics had additional questions from webinar attendees and are covered in this document:

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Additionally, you will see a [Submit Request](#) link button at the end of each topic section. Please use this resource link to submit additional questions regarding the topic and/or to request specific TA with any challenge you may be facing.



Performance

QUESTION: How is addressing issues performance driven? I want to understand the connection.

ANSWER: All of our programs have common and shared performance requirements. If any program has a performance requirement, employees for the entire system are responsible for that measure. As one example, from a performance perspective, that means that we want someone participating in job search to be employed two-quarters after exit just like we do for someone enrolled in WIOA. As mentioned, the four WIOA core programs have the same program outcomes as 2nd and 4th quarter employment and the median wage as well as the business service measures. We want to ensure that our policies and process at the center support these measures.



**SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS**

Compliance with AJC Certification

QUESTION: Does your One Stop Checklist accompany the state agency's Certification matrix or does this checklist stand alone for certification compliance to the state?

ANSWER: Our state administrative office (TX) provides a policy that in turn resulted in the development of the center certification checklists and criteria.

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QUESTION: If the Board is also the Operator, how do you ensure unbiased assessment? Can you give an example of which parties would participate on the certification team?

ANSWER: Contracting out the RFP process with an independent consultant and the Southern Workforce Board (SWB) has a System Oversight Committee, so the One Stop Operator (OSO) reported this as our firewall. On the parties that participate in the center certification team we have used partners that aren't co-located, other board staff across the state that are very familiar with the requirements, and it could also be a board member, but we are required only to have one board member.

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QUESTION: You mentioned that you are operating as your own OSO... my question is outside of strengthening partner relationships what other role do you take on under your OSO hat that has been integral to strengthening your workforce centers?

ANSWER: A clarification on this, our LWDB (SWB) contracts with a One-Stop Operator. It happens to be the same entity as our Title I Service Provider. The board is not the OSO.



**SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS**

Program Operations

QUESTION: Outside of registered clients does Workforce Solutions of Central Texas also offer walk-in Hiring Events?

ANSWER: If someone came in without any preparation, we would pull them aside and help them prepare quickly. We want people to connect with employers with a resume and some basic job search skills. If job seekers don't have some preparation, they won't compete well, and it would be a potential waste of time for hiring employees. Since one of our goals is to connect qualified people to jobs in a timely manner, we align our job seeker preparation activities with the mutual needs of the job seeker and the hiring businesses.

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QUESTION: For outreach - any best strategies on how to reach Limited English Proficient (LEP) individuals?

ANSWER: From Workforce Solutions of Central Texas - Specifically regarding outreach for our workshop on "How to Get a Job in the U.S.," we have our community partner (who provides space for the workshop and helps refer some of their participants to the workshop) translate our flyer and any digital social media posts into Spanish for us (and any other language that they feel they need) - and this is extremely helpful to us. Generally, for our workforce center services, we had our orientation booklets professionally translated into Spanish and have those documents available at the front desk of each of our centers. Spanish speakers are the largest contingent of non-English speaking individuals in our local area - but we do have some substantial concentrations of other less common languages such as Burmese, Mandarin and Swahili. We sometimes do outreach to local community churches and other faith-based organizations serving various communities to reach a variety of individuals.

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QUESTION: What happens to the potential job seekers that didn't get placed at the hiring events once it's over? Does someone track those individuals to assess them for WIOA?

ANSWER: Everyone at the hiring event is registered in [WorkInTexas](#) prior to the event. It isn't a walk-in event; it is for job seekers who are already connected with the Workforce Centers. If they don't get a job, they continue getting services through their assigned teams.

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**SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS**

Strategic Planning

QUESTION: Ms. Schneider, do you have a guide that shares the steps to Strategic Goals? If so, how may we receive a copy? Would you share your 3 recommended goals with us if it's okay to do so?

ANSWER: From Workforce Partnership - Our LWDB's three goals for next three years are: 1 - Increase Non-WIOA Revenue By 20% (This would equate to approximately \$1.5M in additional funds); 2 - Develop Two New Industry Partnerships in Health Care and Manufacturing (increasing the number of qualified applicant referrals to those industry employers who are part of the Partnership); and 3 - Improve the employment rates for justice-involved individuals by 7.5%.

QUESTION: What is the makeup of your strategic goals task force?

ANSWER: From Workforce Partnership - We asked for volunteers from our board to participate in the Strategic Goals Task Force and we were lucky to have a great cross-section come forward. Our Task Force Team included: our higher education representative (community college), our economic development (ED) representative (local chamber with ED functions), a business representative from the financial services industry, a second business representative from the health care industry, and a representative from United Way of Greater KC who is on our board in the "workforce" seat. The staff support for this Task Force included the Executive Director of our organization and our Director of System Performance.



**SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS**

Justice Involved AJC Customers

QUESTION: Dr. Angel, do the AJC or Workforce Boards focus on reentry efforts as a way to assist the justice involved populations and help the unemployment rate among this population?

ANSWER: We don't have separate funding for reentry/second-chance services. However, they are often eligible for specialized programs and services. As one example, they are eligible for bonding assistance funded through the Texas Workforce Commission. They are also eligible for Employer Tax Credits, and we can provide information to their hiring employers to help the employer get tax credits.



QUESTION: Ms. Schneider, could you share any insight into your strategy/tactics for how your boards are planning on achieving that increased employment rate for Justice Involved Individuals?

ANSWER: Yes! We are currently leading a Returning Citizen Consortium of about thirteen different stakeholders in this space. This Consortium has already created a logic model around a new, comprehensive program that will incorporate all of the current solid work being done in workforce development under a grant program (restricted to currently incarcerated people in state prison) and EXPAND that work to include more individuals, such as those in county/municipal jails as well as those who have already released and are on probation or parole. The model also adds important work that is not yet being done comprehensively around developmental trauma therapies and supports for justice-involved and improved staff professional development around this trauma/mental health work. We plan to develop a formal "Work Ready" credential for returning citizens that certifies they are "Mind Ready, Work Ready and Life Ready." We have also included in our comprehensive model the development of a credential for employers to certify them as "Returning Citizen Ready." We believe that by expanding our work model to include more eligible individuals, adding specific support around mental health/trauma AND better preparing our employers to integrate returning citizens into their labor force - we will improve employment rates.



**SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS**



Additional Resources

QUESTION: Where would the locals get a template of the business plan model mentioned by Linda Angel from Workforce Solutions Central TX?

ANSWER: Linda Angel has agreed to share this model if you email her directly:
linda.angel@workforcesolutionsctx.com.

QUESTION: What is RESEA?

ANSWER: The Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program is a federal grant program designed to allow states to provide intensive reemployment assistance to individuals who are receiving unemployment insurance (UI) benefits and are determined to be likely to exhaust their benefits before becoming reemployed. According to §306(b) of the Social Security Act (SSA), the primary goals of RESEA are to provide participants with access to a wide array of resources that support reemployment as quickly as possible and to detect and reduce improper payments to ineligible individuals. For more information see visit the [RESEA page on DOL](#).

QUESTION: Dr. Angel, are WIOA funds used to accommodate the building space for the targeted events that set up with 70 panel employers and 300 job seekers?

ANSWER: We used cost pools for shared benefit/common functions. In that model, everyone pays their fair share, including WIOA.

QUESTION: Why is RESEA only provided to those who are receiving unemployment?

ANSWER: The main goals of RESEA are to help these individuals find new employment more quickly and to ensure that they meet the eligibility requirements for continuing to receive unemployment benefits and are transitioning quickly back into the workforce.

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QUESTION: Is it possible to share the curriculum of the "How to get a job in the United States?"

ANSWER: [How to Get a Job in the U.S. Schedule.](#)

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**SUBMIT A REQUEST ABOUT
TECHNICAL QUESTIONS**



KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Resolving service delivery issues has an impact** upon performance across all partners of the workforce system.
- **Using board members and community partners in strategic planning** can strengthen services and improve the likelihood of AJC certification.
- Service delivery models that take **a holistic approach for formerly justice involved** customers can help both job seekers and employers in the long run.



ABOUT US

The Next Level Now (NLN) Collaborative will serve as U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training's hub for delivering strategic, short- and long-term technical assistance (TA) to the public workforce system and partners, assisting them at the state and local level as they improve services, quality, and outcomes for jobseekers and employers. In addition to developing and disseminating field-requested TA tools and resources, the NLN Collaborative will facilitate peer learning opportunities and information sharing, make subject matter experts accessible to increase efficacy and performance, and offer assistance in applying [evidence-based practices](#) for all users. Learn more about the NLN Collaborative, access and request TA through the [Collaborative's website](#).

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