Wagner-Peyser Employment Services

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THE
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AND REINVESTMENT
ACT
*The Role of
Workforce Programs*

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Editors

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BACKGROUND

The Wagner-Peyser (W-P) Act of 1933 established the Employment Service (ES), sometimes called the Job Service, which provides labor exchange services for workers and employers. As One-Stop Career Centers have become more established, in many states the Wagner-Peyser funded staff is no longer identified as the Employment Service, but simply as workforce staff whose job is to assist One-Stop customers. Services for workers include job search assistance, placement assistance, job fairs, and labor market information. Services for employers include labor market information, employee recruitment, job fairs, development of job descriptions, and assistance during layoffs and closings. The Wagner-Peyser Employment Service (W-P ES) program traditionally has funded job search assistance for UI claimants, and it serves migrant and seasonal farm workers, youth, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, older workers, and other special populations. In 1998, the act was amended to make the W-P ES part of the One-Stop delivery system, with the objective of having all workforce development activities easily accessible and often in the same location (USDOL 2010).

Prior to enactment of the Recovery Act, the W-P ES functions had steadily diminished because of sustained periods of federal funding cuts and static state funding. The ability of the staff funded by W-P to provide one-on-one assistance to all job seekers had all but disappeared in the early 1980s. To continue to serve job seekers, innovative modes of service delivery were developed. Today there are resource rooms for self-directed services, allowing customers to use computers with Inter-

net access for reviewing job listings, developing résumés, and researching labor market information for any area in the country. In cases where customers are less skilled in the use of Internet tools, a second level of service includes the assistance of a resource room attendant. One-on-one services are available to customers needing an assessment of skills, abilities, and aptitudes, as well as career guidance or counseling if a career change is being considered. In addition to these kinds of services, many W-P ES offices and One-Stop Career Centers with W-P ES services offer workshops where job search techniques are discussed or where résumé preparation assistance is provided. Customers seeking job training are often scheduled into workshops where different training programs are discussed and eligibility requirements are explained.

OPERATING POLICIES AND CHANGES AS A RESULT OF THE RECOVERY ACT

General Operational Structure

State agencies administer W-P ES services, and those services are provided by state employees in all but two states in the study, Colorado and Michigan, which operate demonstrations approved by the USDOL that allow nonstate public employees to deliver W-P ES services at the local level. The majority of study states have all W-P ES services integrated into their One-Stop systems. Of the 20 states visited, 13 had no separate W-P ES offices, and all services were delivered in a One-Stop setting. One-Stops in several of these states were managed by the W-P ES, with WIA as a partner. In the remaining seven states, there were some with stand-alone W-P ES offices, but all of these states have One-Stop operations with W-P ES, WIA, TAA, and other mandatory partner workforce development programs under one roof in at least one One-Stop Career Center in each local workforce investment area, as required by the WIA statute.

Colorado and Michigan have longstanding demonstrations in which W-P ES staff are not required to be state employees. Under the demonstration rules, W-P ES staff can be employees of local public agencies such as local education authorities, county or city government, or com-

munity colleges. In addition to providing W-P ES services (including staffing of One-Stop resource rooms), staff in these states are responsible for providing direct customer services under the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) and Reemployment Services (RES) programs.

With the advent of the Recovery Act, no states reported any changes to their existing W-P ES service delivery structure. However, several states (e.g., Arizona, Ohio, Texas, and Virginia) opened new offices with Recovery Act funds to accommodate increased need. Other states opened some temporary satellite operations. There were no changes in services offered in these new locations, but because of additional staff, it was possible to reduce wait times for services. With the elimination of Recovery Act funding and reductions in formula funding, temporary offices are mostly gone. Both Texas and Virginia have closed some fully functioning offices (opened as a result of the availability of Recovery Act funding), while Arizona has continued to operate the three offices originally opened with Recovery Act Wagner-Peyser funding. Ohio added ten "overflow" offices, which were expected to close by no later than August 2012.

It is important to note that Recovery Act funding for W-P ES services did not keep pace with customer demand. In the third quarter of 2006 (the low point of customer demand), slightly fewer than three million customers were registered for services at the various Wagner-Peyser funded offices throughout the country. In the last quarter of 2010 (the high point of customer registration) the number had risen by 60 percent to slightly fewer than five million customers. Regular formula funds during this period decreased by 11 percent. With the addition of Recovery Act funding there was a 13 percent increase, but certainly not enough to keep pace with the 60 percent increase in customers. Even with Recovery Act funding, expenditures per participant fell from an average of $55 during the pre–Recovery Act period to $34 in the second Recovery Act period.[1]

Coenrollment Policies

A majority of states (16) do not automatically coenroll W-P ES customers in WIA. Customers coming into the One-Stop or W-P ES office are normally first offered core services in the self-help resource rooms where they are enrolled in W-P ES. If customers are only seeking

more self-directed services, such as research on labor market informa-
tion, information on available jobs, or assistance in the development of
a résumé, enrollment in WIA is typically not automatic. Because this
is the primary pattern of service across the states visited, most WIA
customers are coenrolled in W-P ES, as W-P ES services are the first
offered to visitors to W-P ES or One-Stop offices.

Assessment and Counseling

Of the 20 states visited, all reported that assessment and counseling
services were available before the Recovery Act but that the availabil-
ity of Recovery Act funds enabled them to make improvements in how
these services were offered. Montana reported that "before (the Recov-
ery Act) we didn't offer all job seekers/claimants intensive services;
now we do . . . We try and capture everybody and make sure they're
getting all the assistance they need. Now we try and offer personalized
services for everybody coming through."

Before Recovery Act funding, the wait time was long, and there
were limited tools available to assist in the assessment and counseling
process. Several states reported that at the beginning of the recession
there were lines of people out the door waiting to start the process and
that using resource rooms had to be done on a scheduled basis. Where
possible, some One-Stop offices had evening hours to accommodate the
demand. As a result of Recovery Act funding, the wait time for these
services diminished and customers were being encouraged to complete
enrollment documents and to utilize the counseling services. In the
NASWA survey on the workforce provisions of the Recovery Act, 75
percent of states reported an increase in the number of customers being
assessed or counseled. This number is consistent with comments made
during the site visits, but at the site visits the increase was attributed to
an increase in customer demand and not a change in policy. Increased
assessment and counseling numbers can also be partly attributed to the
services provided as a result of Reemployment Services (RES) funding
rather than W-P increases. (A full discussion of RES services is covered
in the next chapter of this book.)

Several states enhanced their assessment and counseling activities
by purchasing proprietary programs to assist in determining customer

skills, knowledge, and abilities for career counseling and job placement. Some of the systems mentioned were as follows:

- **WorkKeys.** This is a three-step assessment and training program matching individuals to jobs and training (ACT 2013). The first step includes assessments to measure cognitive abilities such as applied mathematics, reading for information, locating information (foundational skills), and assessments to predict job behavior (personal skills). The second step is to conduct a job analysis, and the third step is training. The training module matches the skills of the worker with selected occupations to determine if there are gaps that can be addressed by training. This final step includes KeyTrain, which offers curriculum details to address the skills gaps. Once a customer has completed the assessment, a certificate of proficiency is obtained from WorkKeys which is then used to facilitate job search activities. Related to WorkKeys, the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) is an industry-recognized, portable, evidence-based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success.[2] This credential is used across all sectors of the economy. Individuals can earn the NCRC by taking three WorkKeys assessments:

  - Applied Mathematics
  - Locating Information
  - Reading for Information

- **TORQ.** The Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient is a single measurement that defines "transferability" of an individual's skills between occupations (TORQworks 2013). The tool links occupations based on the abilities, skills, and knowledge required by workers in occupations using the O*NET database. This is both a job-search and a counseling tool.

- **SMART 2010.** This is artificial intelligence software used in New York that analyzes a customer's résumé for skills, work experience, and related talents.[3] The software compares the content in résumés submitted against the content in job orders, sorting through words and similar themes. The system then recommends a number of job leads drawn from the New York State job bank. These job leads are e-mailed directly to the customer by One-

     Stop staff. The appeal of this tool is that it continues to generate job leads until the résumé is removed. Changes can be made to the résumé, which, in turn, will change the focus of the search.

- **JobZone.** JobZone is an on-line resource that includes a career exploration section, a self-assessment section, and résumé preparation assistance (New York State Department of Labor 2010). The user may view occupations, training program information, and information on colleges. The self-assessment includes a review of career interests and work values as well as skill surveys. The résumé preparation section not only includes information on how to construct a résumé but allows the user to develop and store multiple résumés that can be used for different occupations. The system also includes a job search journal.

In addition, Arizona initiated a policy that customers do a "work readiness self-assessment" that now provides a basis for employment services delivery statewide. In Nebraska, customers complete a self-directed assessment on NEworks (an on-line portal to workforce services) as a first step in the customer flow process. The result of this assessment shapes the development of their Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

    Some states had already implemented these programs prior to the receipt of Recovery Act funding, but Recovery Act funds allowed for increased customer usage because several newly adopted assessments have per-person charges associated with them.

The states also reported that having these systems in place will be very useful once Recovery Act funds for staffing disappear.

Staffing

According to the states visited, planning for Recovery Act implementation for W-P ES was conducted by existing staff. States generally elected to use the majority of the Recovery Act funding to increase staffing at the One-Stops or local W-P ES offices. When central office staff was hired using Recovery Act funds, generally the functions performed included program oversight, labor market information development, or special projects such as Recovery Act liaison, business development, or green jobs projects. States generally hired temporary full-time, part-

time, and intermittent workers, so full-time-equivalent (FTE) information does not tell the whole story regarding numbers of new people working in W-P ES. Hiring statistics cited by the states often comingled the numbers for RES and W-P ES. The following are examples of W-P ES hires reported by the states:

- In Arizona, ARRA-related staff positions peaked at 160 seasonal and temporary workers (not FTE) prior to the expenditure of all Recovery Act Wagner-Peyser and RES allocations by September 30, 2010. Sixty permanent state W-P ES/RES positions have been retained since that time. Wagner-Peyser funding increased 3.4 percent for FY 2011, permitting continuation of these positions and the RES program.

- Nebraska reported that it hired 32 full-time personnel. The equivalent of 22 of the 32 Recovery Act W-P ES/RES FTE positions have been retained since the expiration of Recovery Act funding and are covered by formula allocations; nine positions were eliminated. To manage personnel, the state has orchestrated retirements, relied on turnover, used temporary hires, and, as a result of cross-training workers, has individuals charge time to different programs.

- Ohio initially hired between 300 and 400 intermittent staff (allowed to work up to 1,000 hours per year) using ARRA W-P funding. As of the follow-up visit, some staff remained paid from regular W-P ES funds. Thus far, no layoffs have been experienced at the state level.

- Initially, Texas hired 325 temporary staff to help meet the demand for services at One-Stop centers. Three hundred were retained for an additional program year. In Summer 2011, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) tentatively planned to retain 100 temporary staff in FY2012 and 50 temporary staff in FY2013 if funding was available. The planned retention was a result of customer volume in the One-Stops not dropping significantly.

- Colorado staff stated that the Recovery Act provided extra resources that enabled some workforce regions to hire and deploy additional staff to One-Stop resource rooms to deal with the surge of job seekers coming into One-Stops for assistance.

- Florida hired four staff for monitoring and two for performance measurement in W-P ES, whom it hopes to move into permanent positions.

- Montana's Department of Labor and Industry added 23 temporary employees to meet increased demand for W-P ES services. It plans to move these employees into permanent positions through vacancies and attrition.

- Virginia hired four statewide coordinators and 12 regional specialists for newly established Business and Economic Development Specialist positions. It also hired two staff in the Registered Apprenticeship Program agency.

In states such as New York, Texas, and Florida, where there is full program integration between WIA and W-P ES, core services traditionally associated with W-P ES may be carried out by WIA-funded staff, so making a distinction regarding W-P and WIA staffing (and funding for W-P ES services) is almost impossible.

The challenge facing states related to W-P ES staffing is that the W-P ES positions are generally covered by state civil service rules. According to some states, this meant that the hiring process for positions could take several months. For a program with a one-year duration, four months could be spent in the hiring process, not to mention the additional time needed for training. If there was a vacancy toward the end of the program year, there would be no point in attempting to refill the spot. Some states also faced hiring freezes (e.g., Arizona and Maine), and although they were ultimately able to move forward with recruitment, getting waivers from the appropriate state authority added additional time to the process. Some states were able to promote W-P ES staff to fill higher-level positions for one-on-one assessment and counseling and hire temporary staff to provide some staff-assisted services.

In states with high unemployment rates, finding high-quality staff was relatively easy, whereas in low-unemployment states like North Dakota, the state was in competition with a healthy private sector, which could often offer better pay and benefits. Several state officials mentioned that the recession had helped them attract better-quality staff than in periods of full employment because of the larger pool of available high-skilled workers.

CHALLENGES

Not surprisingly, the major difficulties faced by the states in the W-P ES program were staffing and turnover. As mentioned earlier, the challenges were due to operating within the confines of civil service requirements and dealing with hiring freezes. Table 4.1 provides a sample of challenges cited by the states.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The major achievement cited by most of the state and local respondents was their ability to serve many more customers. Some states reported that they were better prepared to meet this challenge because of changes to policies (e.g., coenrollment in WIA) or their workforce systems (e.g., integrating W-P ES and WIA services, computerized self-assessment tools) that they had implemented prior to the Recovery Act. For example, New York officials reported that the state's integration of programs at the state agency and at One-Stop offices allowed them to scale up to serve the increased number of customers. The state has cross-trained all One-Stop staff so that W-P ES and WIA staff can be deployed where needed. Other major accomplishments include improving business services and the introduction of additional labor market and assessment tools. Table 4.2 provides a sampling of the accomplishments cited by the states.

AFTER THE RECOVERY ACT

Many states are not optimistic about their ability to maintain the level of services established with Recovery Act funding. Most states hired temporary or intermittent staff for ES positions, knowing that once the Recovery Act funds were spent, the formula monies would not be sufficient to support the additional positions. In most cases, states did indicate that they would keep staff if positions became available

Table 4.1 Challenges in Implementing Wagner-Peyser Programs under the Recovery Act

Challenges	State comments
Staffing	**Arizona**—The hiring freeze required the agency to obtain specific waivers to spend Recovery Act funds on W-P ES staff, adding about a month to the process.
	Florida—Hiring additional W-P ES staff was a challenge, as was the need to train new staff.
	Illinois—There were hiring delays for new, intermittent W-P ES staff, and once hired the staff could only work for 1,500 hours per year.
	Maine—Managing the program in spite of the hiring freeze was both an accomplishment and a challenge.
	Montana—Bringing on and training new W-P ES staff at the same time the Job Service was deluged with new claimants was very difficult.
	North Dakota—At the same time North Dakota was attempting to increase the number of W-P ES staff, its Human Resources Department experienced a total staff turnover. In addition, North Dakota's unemployment rate is the lowest in the nation, which means that finding people willing to accept temporary work, or keeping temporary staff on, is more problematic than in most other states.
	Ohio—Bringing on 300–400 intermittent W-P and RES staff was inherently difficult.
	Pennsylvania—The hiring process was challenging for the state because it had to obtain exceptions to the hiring freeze and hire permanent merit staff, which was a lengthy process.
	Texas—The state had difficulty in hiring and experienced turnover in the temporary W-P ES positions funded by the Recovery Act.
	Virginia—The state experienced delays in bringing on new W-P ES staff which, when coupled with the need to train all new staff, resulted in staff shortages at the local level. The state cited background checks as a problem in the hiring process.
	Washington—Hiring and training of W-P ES staff was a challenge for the state. The Seattle–King County Workforce Development Council (WDC) noted that it was difficult to retain temporary ARRA staff, and despite an intention to convert positions to permanent it was still competing with other employers for high-quality individuals.

Funding   **Illinois**—Respondents were concerned about what would happen once Recovery Act funds were spent, especially as the need for W-P ES services had not abated.

Louisiana—State officials expressed a need for additional funding for staff development to deal with harder-to-serve populations and continued long-term unemployment.

Nebraska—As of March 2011, about 20–25 percent of the ARRA Wagner-Peyser and RES funds remained unexpended. Unexpended funds included, in part, obligations toward technology improvements. $1,092,623 of RES and $620,834 of Wagner-Peyser ES funding (48.64 percent of combined ARRA funding) were budgeted for the system upgrade contract; residual upgrade obligations carry forth through December 31, 2012.

Maine—Obligating the money in a timely manner was both an accomplishment and a challenge.

Michigan—ARRA/W-P ES funds were fully obligated by the state, but several local MWAs did not fully expend the funds obligated, [and so, as of December 2011], $109,957 [of the $5.2 million received by the state] was unspent.

Office space   **Florida**—To deal with an increase in customers, the state needed to find space without opening new centers.

New York—Customers at some centers experienced wait times to access computers in resource rooms, wait times for appointments with counselors, and crowded orientation meetings. Some locations were able to secure donated space or short-term leases for temporary extra space, but in some areas of the state such arrangements were not possible. The major issue was that because of the temporary nature of Recovery Act funding, long-term lease arrangements were not possible.

Other issues   **Arizona**—
- There is a need to tailor approach to meet the needs of older, longer-term workers who never thought they would be in the unemployment line searching for a job.
- The state is developing effective procedures and informative workshops that will continue to address employment needs in a flat economy beyond the stimulus funds.

Illinois—Purchasing a new automated labor exchange program through the state procurement process took time.

Nevada—The state is serving large numbers of clients—19,000 as of April 30, 2011.

Table 4.1 (continued)

Challenges	State comments
Other issues *(cont.)*	**New York**—Not only were there large increases in the numbers of customers coming into the One-Stop, but the characteristics of ES customers have changed. Individuals with long work histories but little experience in job search activities tended to need more assistance searching for a job and in some cases demanded more attention.
	North Dakota—Serving large numbers of clients is a major challenge.
	Texas—Officials were concerned about the impending layoff of workers on September 30, 2010.
	Colorado— • The state procurement process can be long and cumbersome. Trying to get funds out quickly and meet procurement requirements was in some cases a trial. Much of the money was allocated to local regions that did not have to deal with the procurement process. • The state Department of Labor had to scramble to set up a separate set of financial reports to meet ARRA requirements. This was because the timing for ARRA reporting was not the same as for reporting on other expenditures that the state normally uses.
	Michigan—Reporting was a particular concern and burden: the state often found itself operating ARRA funding programs and activities before it knew what it would have to report on for performance reporting. Additionally, the need to separately report on ARRA-funded activities was burdensome (and in the view of state administrators and staff unnecessary).
	North Carolina— • North Carolina's JobLink system, especially in certain regions, had difficulty in handling the large number of individuals coming through the doors. • The education and work experience of these laid-off workers were reasonably diverse, which presented a challenge to staff doing assessment and counseling.

Ohio—
- Guidance (from ETA) came at the eleventh hour or after the fact . . . Guidance and how it was issued was not as helpful as it could have been, especially on data reporting.

There was great pressure to spend ARRA funds quickly (but wisely), especially to get the Summer Youth Employment Program up and running—not enough time for planning.

Wisconsin—
- An initial challenge for both the state and local workforce areas was that ARRA represented a sizable infusion of new funding and that the state and especially local areas had to ramp up services and spend ARRA resources over a relatively short period.
- For one-time funding, the reporting burden for ARRA is considerable. With ARRA, there has been a strong emphasis on "transparency." The monthly reporting required under ARRA meant double reporting for the state—continued reporting on its regular funds and separate reporting on ARRA activities, accomplishments (e.g., job creation), and expenditures. In some instances, the ETA provided last-minute instructions on reporting requirements. Also, within the state, the TAA, Wagner-Peyser, and WIA programs are linked by a common data system; thus, reporting-requirement changes for one program affect data collection and reporting for the other programs. In addition, it may be necessary to make changes to IT systems once ARRA reporting goes away—i.e., to revert back to how reporting was conducted prior to ARRA.

SOURCE: Table is based on site visits conducted in states between December 2009 and April 2012.

Table 4.2 Achievements in Implementing Wagner-Peyser Programs under the Recovery Act

Achievements	State comments
Serving more customers	**Colorado**—The Recovery Act provided extra resources to hire and deploy additional W-P ES staff to One-Stop resource rooms to deal with the surge of job seekers.
	Montana—The Recovery Act enabled the state to have a major expansion of services without increasing the "size of the business."
	Nevada—Lines, which had once snaked around buildings, were eliminated because of additional W-P ES staffing.
	Ohio—The hiring of 300–400 intermittent W-P ES staff helped One-Stops deal with huge surges in customers and expand RES orientations for UI claimants.
	Pennsylvania—The Recovery Act funding allowed the Department of Labor and Industry to become more strategic in how it focused its workforce development investments. The key was to invest in increasing the service level (e.g., increased staffing, one-on-one assessments), not in facilities, equipment, or Web sites. There were greatly increased service levels because of Recovery Act money.
	Virginia—Several new Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) and UI Express offices increased the number of access points for ES customers and returned the system to one-on-one assessments.
	Maine—"As a result of Recovery Act funds, our ability to serve job seekers and employers will jump incredibly."
	Washington—The funds enabled the state to increase its capacity to meet the greater volume of customers during the recession. The state invested ARRA funding in front-end processes, business services, and staff training—all of which will continue to pay dividends in the post-ARRA period. The Recovery Act also promoted collaboration within the broader workforce system. The state's incentive for training and the urgency to spend the money well and quickly helped to break people out of their silos.

| Program/service enhancements | **Washington**—The state implemented a new approach to business services with Recovery Act funding. The vision has shifted from engaging employers in the One-Stop to actively working with employers to find jobs that match the inventory of skills of the customers in the system. |

New York—Use of technology tools enabled the state and LWIAs to manage workforce and UI programs and better serve customers. The SMART 2010 technology was appropriate for serving customers with Internet access, and JobZone has been successful for career exploration by adults, especially for those who may need skills upgrades and need to plan for training.

North Dakota—The state purchased TORQ software, which is used to develop STA (Skills Transferability Analysis) reports for those occupations affected by layoffs. These were provided to One-Stop offices to be used in rapid-response events and in working with laid-off workers.

Maine—The state is making infrastructure changes, including a revamped Web site to make it more user-friendly with a consistent look.

Texas—The Capital Area Board noted one accomplishment: the creation of a series of workshops for higher-earning clients—often individuals who were connecting with the workforce system for the first time after having earned a high-level salary with a single employer for a number of years. The workshops included stress management, budgeting, and how to build a consultant tool kit.

Ohio—The state implemented IT systems integration. With respect to promoting ES and UI integration, the state agency has used ARRA Wagner-Peyser funds to do the following two things: 1) create a Web site to provide an online orientation option for UI claimants and job seekers to introduce them to available services through the workforce development/One-Stop system and 2) create the Web site www.ohioheretohelp.com for UI claimants and job seekers, which provides a holistic overview of services available (e.g., help with housing, food, and other aspects of life as well as with getting a job). Labor market information (LMI) tools (e.g., Help Wanted OnLine technology) have been made more user-friendly and connected with job-posting sites, as well as marketed to additional employers to encourage the posting of new job openings. These technology upgrades have increased the capacity of the ES to serve more job seekers and claimants, especially by making unassisted services more readily available to claimants and job seekers. The upgrades also have made it possible to serve those who were not comfortable coming into centers.

(continued)

Table 4.2 (continued)

Achievements	State comments
Program/service enhancements *(cont.)*	**Wisconsin**—State administrators observed that the ARRA-ES funding allowed the state to cope with heightened demand within Workforce Development Centers and to implement several innovations that would not have otherwise been undertaken.
	Toll-free Job Service call center implemented: ARRA-ES funding was instrumental in instituting and staffing a toll-free call center. This call center serves several purposes and is particularly aimed at dealing with changes in TAA provisions and the much higher service volumes being faced by Workforce Centers as a result of the recession. State officials note that the call center, staffed by 12 ES/TAA workers, fills a niche between in-person services and information available from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's Web site. The call center also helps to provide information and referral services for job seekers located in outlying areas and has helped in responding to heightened demand for services within the workforce system. Key features and services offered through this toll-free call center include the following four: 1) the call center serves as a general job-seeker help line, answering questions and providing job leads to unemployed or underemployed individuals; 2) the call center staff includes a TAA case manager who can handle inquiries about TAA and changes to TAA provisions; 3) the call center has the capability to serve as an "employer call center"—i.e., employers can call in with questions or to place job orders; and 4) the call center serves as the central point for scheduling customers for the WorkKeys testing, a major initiative undertaken by the state and local Workforce Centers in recent years to provide customers with a transferable credential.
	Expanded use of social media**:** ARRA funds have provided added resources (mainly in the form of staffing) to push state and local areas to increasingly use social media—such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn—as tools for better connecting with job seekers and making additional services for the customer more readily available. For example, local workforce staff can now make announcements of training and job opportunities available to job seekers instantaneously via Twitter; Facebook is being used to disseminate information on job orders and create a virtual "job club" environment. Workforce centers have also conducted workshops on how to use Facebook and LinkedIn as effective job-search tools.
	IT upgrades: Some ARRA funding has been used to upgrade IT systems within the workforce system and to meet increased reporting requirements under ARRA.

One-Stop enhancements	**Arizona—**
- The state used ES funds to improve the infrastructure of One-Stops, including redesigning lobbies and resource rooms, increasing the size of some locations, and adding new television screens for videos and looped information.
- The state also opened three reemployment centers with ARRA funds in July 2009 in counties with high unemployment—Maricopa and Pinal (in the Phoenix metro area) as well as Pima (Tucson). Originally funded by RES, these continue to operate with regular ES funds. (Wagner-Peyser funding increased by 3.4 percent for FY 2011.)

Colorado—ARRA provided extra resources to hire and deploy additional staff to One-Stop resource rooms to deal with the surge of job seekers coming into One-Stops for assistance.

North Dakota—The state used some ARRA Wagner-Peyser funds to purchase laptops for use in the Job Service North Dakota offices. The availability of additional computers allowed more customers access to on-line services and labor market information, and it has been of substantial benefit given the decrease in staff.

Ohio—
- Computer labs: ARRA funding was used to establish seven computer labs within One-Stops across the state. Between six and 10 new computers were added to each computer lab. Software was included on the new computers to help customers develop computer skills, and the computers have been used for WorkKeys training and testing.
- The state opened ten "overflow" centers in metropolitan areas across the state, including centers in Cleveland, Dayton, Akron, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Belmont-Jefferson. The centers particularly serve UI claimants, providing UCRS and REA workshops, as well as résumé-building workshops. The centers have helped the ES meet surging demand for services among UI claimants and job seekers at the local level.

Texas—The state opened new One-Stop centers in Dallas, Tarrant County, and Alamo. |

Table 4.2 (continued)

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Achievements	State comments
Other successes	**Colorado**—The efforts implemented under ARRA have helped bring the UI and workforce systems closer together. Staff on both sides are more knowledgeable about the other's programs and more willing to collaborate.
	Nevada—
	• Officials believed they were in a better position to implement the Recovery Act because of the existing structures in place in JobConnect offices and in the LWIB structure. They did not feel the need to change procedures to accommodate Recovery Act demand.
	• The state was enabled to direct Recovery Act resources into business services; this action has the potential to enhance job opportunities.
	North Carolina—ESC staff discussed the capacity-building efforts in training staff to provide enhanced assessment and counseling to customers and in developing new job-search tools as a major accomplishment.
	Michigan—
	• ARRA funding provided the MWAs across the state with the flexibility to respond to an onslaught of unemployed and underemployed workers. ARRA funding was used by MWAs to pay overtime and hire temporary (limited-term) staff at One-Stop Career Centers, to expand hours of operation, and to lease additional space (if necessary) to respond to heightened demand for services. Some areas of the state, especially those affected by the downsizing of the automotive industry, experienced unemployment rates as high as 25 percent.
	• ARRA-ES funding enabled the state to pay for costs associated with implementing National Career Readiness Certificates (NCRCs) statewide. Though the state had already made a policy shift emphasizing the use of NCRCs prior to receipt of ARRA funding, the Recovery Act provided the funding necessary for implementing this policy statewide.
	Wisconsin—
	• ARRA funding helped bring the Unemployment Insurance (UI) and workforce system programs closer together.
	• ARRA helped bring many more UI claimants into the local workforce centers for employment and training services.

- ARRA-ES funding resulted in the ability to better meet the needs of job seekers through bolstered staffing of the call center and the workforce centers.

Texas—

- It was an accomplishment for the system to put 325 temporary staff in place quickly, and a testament to the ongoing volume of customer demand that 300 of those staff have been retained for an additional program year.

- The TWC also highlighted training events held for ES staff across the state over the summer of 2010, including contractor staff and others. These events provided training on labor exchange and RES services, and they included high-level agency staff, commissioners, local board leaders, representatives of the state's Skills Development Fund, and others. The purpose of the training was to emphasize service priorities, particularly for UI claimants; highlight available tools (such as Work in Texas and LMI) and how to fully use them; identify and share best practices; and recognize One-Stop Career Center staff for rising to the current challenge.

Washington—

- Since the first-round site visit, Washington solidified the customer flow model with its emphasis on initial assessment. There is a new interest in the value-added aspect of workforce services, particularly in three key services: up-skilling, packaging (such as building résumés as a marketing tool), and job referrals. Up-skilling in particular has become the most common service at Washington One-Stop centers. Washington anticipates that the customer flow model and focus on business services will remain in place post-ARRA. The new emphasis on high-quality referrals to keep employers engaged with the system is important, though administrators noted a tension between ES staff, who want to make many job referrals, and business services staff, who only want to refer those likely to succeed.

- Washington is shifting toward functional teams over "siloed" programs. W-P provides an opportunity to improve teamwork and collaboration across the workforce system. WDC staff in Olympia noted that dedicated business services staff have made a difference in connecting with employers. The growing use of KeyTrain is another important shift, as it signals a new emphasis on career development that showcases a commitment to the value-added capabilities of the workforce system.

- Seattle–King County staff noted a need to distinguish between job-ready and non-job-ready clients. Lessons learned from ARRA have helped push the WDC toward a "career-broker model" to connect clients to training.

SOURCE: Table is based on site visits conducted in states between December 2009 and April 2012.

through normal attrition. Three states were somewhat positive about being able to retain staff after Recovery Act funding was exhausted. Three other states were more pessimistic than the rest, doubting that they would retain any staff past the initial funding cycle. Those states that have implemented additional self-help tools believe that they will be able to continue to support those activities. A few examples of post–Recovery Act actions are as follows:

- Nebraska was able to retain the equivalent of 22 full-time positions through June 2011.

- Arizona's Employment Administration indicated that Arizona will
    - make every effort to retain workers hired during ARRA;
    - continue the state's reinvigorated and more structured business services and employer engagement;
    - continue the state's use of the Virtual One-Stop (VOS) in the Arizona Workforce Connection as a major element of service delivery;
    - continue the service strategies stimulated by RES advances, including improved workshops and informed "knowledge presenters," targeted job clubs, social media networking, and better use of career guidance and labor market information (LMI) for as many clients as possible.

- Pennsylvania had anticipated retaining much of the newly acquired workforce after Recovery Act funds were no longer available; however, this is becoming a problem because of union contracts and early retirements.

- Washington's investments in front-end processes, business services, and staff training will continue to pay dividends after all the Recovery Act funds have been expended. Administrators indicated that high-quality staff was hired across the state that might never have been available otherwise. The Employment Security Department (ESD) workforce is aging, and the Recovery Act provided the state with an opportunity to bring in a significant number of new workers and expose those workers to multiple facets of the operation. The Recovery Act also pro-

moted collaboration within the broader workforce system. The state's incentive for training and the urgency to spend the money quickly and wisely helped to break people out of their silos. Washington's ESD is now taking a close look at what services can be sustained efficiently through better collaboration and integration. There is a need to work smarter in an environment of high demand and few resources. The approach the ESD took to the Recovery Act, such as relying on the strategic leadership teams and the internal performance Web site, kept everyone involved and aware of what was going on. The ESD is using this as a lesson as it continues to explore opportunities for improved coordination within its own programs.

All states recognize that there continue to be unmet needs and that the volume of customers is still considerably greater than in the pre-recessionary period, so the focus is now on how states will have to do business with fewer resources.

Notes

1. Data are from the USDOL's Public Workforce System Dataset and have been assembled and analyzed by the Upjohn Institute.
2. All customers of the Michigan Works! agencies (MWAs) are now asked to take the certification tests.
3. Information on SMART 2010 is based on interviews with state and local respondents. "SMART" stands for "Skills Matching and Referral Technology."

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