One-Stop Accessibility: A Nationwide Survey of One-Stop Centers on Services for People with Disabilities

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Background

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) created a workforce development system that encourages and facilitates One-Stop service delivery.[1] This re-envisioned employment and training system is intended to serve every job seeker through a central location that provides access to numerous workforce development programs. Core services, including assessment, basic job readiness, and help with job searches, are open to a universal population. For those who require further assistance finding employment, intensive and training services are also available.

In Title IV of WIA, The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the law states:

> increased employment of individuals with disabilities can be achieved through implementation of statewide workforce investment systems under title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that provide meaningful and effective participation for individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities and activities carried out under the vocational rehabilitation program established under title I, and through the provision of independent living services, support services, and meaningful opportunities for employment in integrated work settings through the provision of reasonable accommodations.[2]

To ensure such participation, WIA and the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration espouse an ethos of access and partnership when addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

- **Access.** Universal access to One-Stop services is a central component of WIA. In a notice published in April of 2000, the ETA stated: "the Department of Labor is committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and facilities of each One-Stop delivery system are accessible to all of America's workers, including individuals with disabilities."[3] Every job seeker should have access to the core services available at their local One-Stop Center. Federal law mandates that all WIA activities, from core to intensive services, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. While physical access to the One-Stop Center is important, access to all tools and services offered by the center—including virtual and computer-based resources—is critical if job seekers with disabilities are to benefit fully from the One-Stop system.

- **Partnerships.** WIA mandates a series of partners in the One-Stop system, including Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). VR has a seat on the state and local Workforce Investment Boards, and, ideally, is involved in the design of the workforce development system. States and local areas can also bring other disability organizations into the system as partners. Even before WIA was passed,

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[1] The Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Public Law 105-220. August 7, 1998.
[2] Workforce Investment Act, Public Law 105-220, Title IV, Section 403: 2.
[3] U.S. Department of Labor. Training and Employment Information Notice 16-99. April 20, 2000.

when One-Stops were a demonstration project in 1997, the Director of the One-Stop Disability Initiative enjoined One-Stops to "get involved with your disability community early--develop partnerships with organizations that serve individuals with disabilities--they can help."[4]   The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) strongly encourages state and local policy makers to develop partnerships with disability-specific organizations to create an effective and universal workforce investment system.

Many working-age Americans have a disability. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey (CPS) tracks people with work disabilities. In 2001, the CPS found that 9.6% of those age 16-64 had a work disability, and of those, 29.4% were in the labor force, compared with a labor force participation rate of 82.1% for those without a work disability.[5] People with a work disability faced an unemployment rate of 10.2%, compared with a rate of 4.4% for those without a work disability.[6]   CPS data indicates that while the majority (82%) of working-age Americans are in the labor force, and 65% are working full-time, less than one-third of people with disabilities are in labor force (29%), and only 18% are working full-time.[7]

At the same time, a survey by Louis Harris and Associates found that, in 1994, 79% of those people with disabilities who were not working wanted to work. Furthermore, a 30-year study of disabled workers and job performance conducted by Dupont found that workers with disabilities had high performance rates, with 90% having above-average job performance, as well as higher than normal attendance and safety records.[8]   People with disabilities want to work, and when given the chance are highly successful employees, yet many of them are not working.

People with disabilities who want to work often face significant barriers to entering the workforce, even during a tight labor market. These barriers include lack of physical access to the workplace, employers reluctant to hire people with disabilities, lack of transportation, potential loss of Social Security or federally funded health insurance, lack of experience, and insufficient access to employment services. To open the labor market to all those who want to work, it is critical that the services provided under the Workforce Investment Act are accessible to people with disabilities and tailored to meet their particular needs. The One-Stop system, with its emphasis on filling both the needs of employers and job seekers, could be instrumental in helping match job seekers with disabilities with employers who want qualified, skilled workers.

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[4] U.S. Department of Labor. "One-Stop Disability Initiative." *One-Stop Watch.* Fall 1997. Available at http://usworkforce.org/onestop/pdf/1Stop971.pdf.
[5] U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999 Current Population Survey.
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps101.html
[6] U.S. Census Bureau. March 1999 Current Population Survey.
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps201.html
[7] U.S. Census Bureau. March 1999 Current Population Survey.
http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps201.html
[8] Conlin, Michelle. March 20, 2000. "The New Workforce: A tight labor market gives the disabled the chance to make permanent inroads." *Business Week.* 68.

Purpose of This Study

The purpose of this study is to ascertain the accessibility status of One-Stop centers and the ways that workforce development systems are serving people with disabilities. As we enter the third year of WIA, it is important to gauge how services to people with disabilities are being implemented around the country. While WIA requires that all services be fully accessible to people with disabilities , and that VR agencies be partners in the One-Stop system, the real success of the One-Stop system for people with disabilities depends on the commitment of local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and One-Stop Operators to create a system that responds to their needs.[9] Services and programs for people with disabilities should not only focus on accessibility and non-discrimination. Many other issues impact services to people with disabilities, including:

- local WIB planning and technical assistance around services to people with disabilities;
- whether policymakers and One-Stop operators are pursuing full inclusion for people with disabilities, or if services/programs still remain largely separate;
- the construction and success of partnerships between disability-specific organizations and One-Stop systems;
- the use of assistive technologies that help individuals with disabilities use computers and participate fully in One-Stop services and programs; and
- the collection of performance data tracking services for people with disabilities.

To this end, this survey queried One-Stop managers and operators throughout the country on a series of questions, including:

1. How are partnerships between workforce development agencies and disability-specific agencies working?
2. What technical assistance have One-Stops received on serving people with disabilities?
3. Are people with disabilities largely being referred to disability-specific organizations, or included in general WIA services?
4. Are One-Stops physically accessible, and are all information technology services available in One-Stops accessible to people with disabilities?
5. Do staff and administrators of One-Stop systems feel prepared to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities?

This survey focuses on how those on the frontlines of the workforce development system understand these issues, whether there has been a response to these issues in their local planning, and how individual One-Stops are structuring their responses to these program needs.

The results of this survey are not intended to draw broad conclusions about national WIA implementation. Instead, they provide a snapshot of how some One-Stops are working to

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[9] U.S. Department of Labor. November 12, 1999. "Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Final Rule." 29 CFR Part 37. Sec. 37.7. FR Doc. 99-28202.

meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities, and contributes to the continuous improvement process integral to WIA. The results pinpoint the strengths and weaknesses of the young system, helping policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels to pursue improvements and further support best practices in serving job seekers with disabilities.

Methodology

The Heldrich Center surveyed One-Stop managers and operators throughout the country. As administrators of One-Stops, this population is familiar both with day-to-day operations at One-Stops and policy discussions at the WIB level. The request to respond to the Internet-based survey was sent to One-Stop managers and operators in all 50 states.

Internet-based survey was emailed or faxed to more than 1100 One-Stop managers and operators. The survey included an explanation of the project's purpose and goals, and a link to the survey website. Respondents were provided with information on who to contact if they had difficulty accessing the survey or required other assistance. A second request to participate in the survey was sent one to two weeks after the initial request. After a response period of two months, there were 175 responses from 36 states, a response rate of 16%.

Each respondent logged on to the website or faxed back the recorded answers to a 46 question survey (see Appendix 1 for survey instrument and survey results). Question formats included open-ended questions, multiple choice, and Likert scale (i.e. strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree). Question topics included:

- Demographics
- Opinions about the focus of the One-Stop system in terms of serving people with disabilities,
- Partnerships,
- Performance Collection,
- Assistive Technologies,
- Americans with Disabilities Act, and
- Training and Technical Assistance.

I. Introduction

Effectively serving people with disabilities in the One-Stop system depends on ensuring full and equal access to services, and creating linkages with disability-specific organizations. In many instances, the most effective way of serving a job seeker with a disability is to refer that person to the Vocational Rehabilitation services that best meet his or her needs. However, under WIA, job seekers with disabilities do not have to avail themselves of services provided by partner agencies (i.e., VR) if they are qualified for and prefer to receive WIA services at the One-Stop Center. In other words, while it is critical to have strong relationships between the One-Stop system and organizations that provide specific services for job seekers with disabilities, it is just as critical that all job

seekers have the opportunity to participate in all activities. Providing such opportunity may require reasonable accommodation, such as sign language interpretation, Braille materials, or assistive technologies for accessing a computer, as long as providing that reasonable accommodation does not cause undue hardship for the provider. One-Stop staff must be prepared to address the needs of job seekers with disabilities even when they know that they can refer that job seeker to a disability-specific organization such as VR.

The Heldrich Center surveyed One-Stop operators on all of these issues, to determine if those on the frontlines of the One-Stop system understand these requirements and are prepared to serve job seekers with disabilities both fairly and comprehensively. Do One-Stop managers think that VR will handle all job seekers with disabilities, or do they understand that it is up to the job seeker to decide which programs she or he would like to participate in? How are partnerships between One-Stops and disability-specific organizations functioning? What types of assistive technologies are available in One-Stops? Do One-Stops feel prepared to fully address the needs of job seekers with disabilities? The answers to these questions will give local and state WIBs, elected officials and policy-makers additional information as they continue to create a more accessible and effective One-Stop system for people with disabilities. The survey results show those areas where One-Stop managers feel they need more guidance or training, and illustrate the degree to which managers fully understand the requirements of WIA in areas such as performance management and confidentiality.

The discussion of the results focuses on three main areas:
- Issues and Technical Assistance: the opinions of respondents and the training they have received;
- Partnerships: what types of organizations are partners in respondents' systems and how those partnerships work; and
- Policies, Procedures and Practices: One-Stop policies in areas such as reasonable accommodation and outcome collection.

II. Survey Results

A. Issues and Technical Assistance

The practices of One-Stops are contingent upon their view of how the One-Stop system should serve people with disabilities, and their perception of their own preparedness to serve such job seekers. The technical assistance and training they have received will, in turn, impact their opinion of their own ability to effectively meet the needs of this population. To determine how One-Stop managers and operators view serving people with disabilities, respondents were asked questions about the importance of various issues in creating an effective One-Stop system for people with disabilities, and were questioned about their opinion of how their own system was functioning. They were also asked about what types of technical assistance they have received and who provided that assistance.

The majority of respondents have received technical assistance around serving people with disabilities in some form. The majority (94%) of respondents have received written or web-based materials on serving people with disabilities, while approximately 90% received policy statements on how people with disabilities should be served. A similar number have participated in workshops or received materials focused specifically on compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA).[10] Slightly smaller percentages received frontline staff training on serving people with disabilities (85%) and written or web-based materials on specific disabilities (76%).

Advocacy organizations for people with disabilities supplied the majority of the technical assistance, providing 65% of the respondents with written or web-based materials on serving people with disabilities, more than half (52%) of respondents with frontline training, and 50% of respondents with materials about specific disabilities (see Figure 1). Local and state WIBs provided less technical assistance than other sources, such as state and federal government entities responsible for technical assistance. Only 29% of respondents received policy statements from their local WIBs on serving people with disabilities, while only 35% received such statements from their state WIBs. While there were other questions specifically about partnerships that will be discussed later in this report, the prevalence of advocacy organizations in providing technical assistance begins to show how partnerships have been used to improve One-Stop systems and are a critical part of making the system effective for job seekers with disabilities.
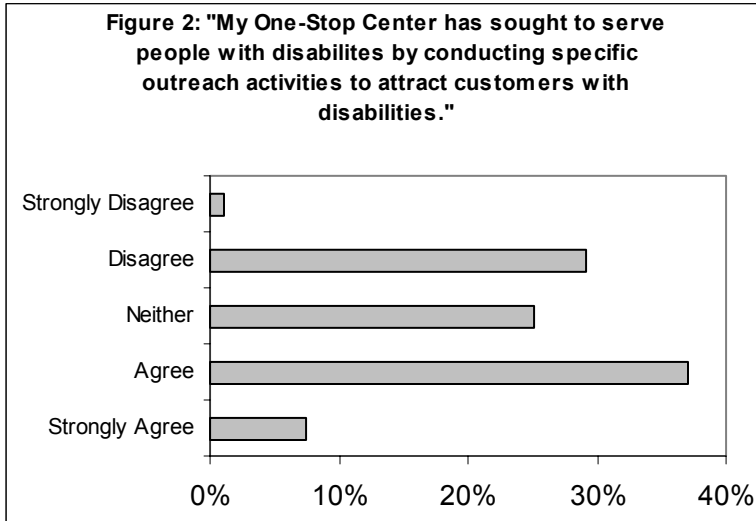
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[10] The Americans With Disabilities Act of 1990. Public Law 101-336.

Figure 1: Topic and Source of Technical Assistance

Bar chart showing percentages by Provider of Technical Assistance (Local WIB, State WIB, Advocacy Organization, Other Source, Not provided) for five categories:
- Materials on Serving People with Disabilities
- Frontline Staff Training on Servng People with Disabilities
- Materials on Specific Disabilities
- Policy Statements on How People with Disabilities Should be Served
- Workshops or Materials on ADA Compliance

As might be expected with such a high level of technical assistance, most respondents believe that their staff is prepared to serve job seekers with disabilities. The majority (82%) of respondents either strongly agree or agree that their staff is prepared to address the needs of people with various types of disabilities. Likewise, 85% of respondents agree or strongly agree that the vendors or service providers that their One-Stop System contracts with for training are also responsive to the needs of job seekers with disabilities. More than three-fourths (78%) of respondents also strongly agree or agree that their center has the technology available to allow individuals with disabilities to use computers and the web site (40% and 38%, respectively). Nearly all (90%) strongly agree or agree that they have a procedure in place to respond to the accommodation needs of customers (42% and 47%, respectively). Most respondents feel they are well prepared to meet the needs of people with disabilities in terms of staff, computer resources, reasonable accommodation, and contractors of training.

While most respondents feel they are well prepared to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities, 70% of respondents strongly agree or agree that Vocational Rehabilitation or other disability-specific organizations will serve most people with disabilities who enter the One-Stop system, with 17% remaining neutral (neither agreeing nor disagreeing) and 13% disagreeing. While most respondents believe that One-Stop staff and their contractors are prepared to meet the needs of job seekers with disabilities, they still believe that most people with disabilities will use special services provided by VR or other disability-specific organizations. More than half (55%) of those surveyed also agree
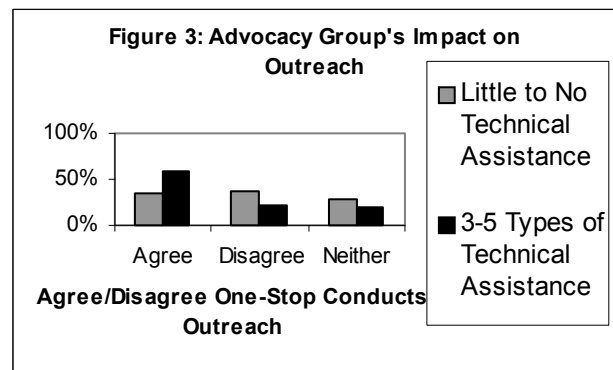
(55%) that they will have difficulty finding job placements for people with disabilities, while 8% strongly agree with this statement. Only 12% of respondents disagree that they will experience this difficulty, while the remaining 25% remain neutral on this question. This may, in part, explain why respondents see VR playing such a large role. Despite reporting that they are prepared to serve job seekers with disabilities, One-Stop administrators still see success with people with disabilities as a significant challenge.

Figure 2: "My One-Stop Center has sought to serve people with disabilites by conducting specific outreach activities to attract customers with disabilities."

People with disabilities generally have had less access than non-disabled workers to the workplace and federal workforce development programs. As a result, many people with disabilities may not know what types of services are available to them, or how to access them. While One-Stops prepare to serve those job seekers with disabilities who find their way to the One-Stop Center, few are actively promoting their services to people with disabilities. Only 7% of One-Stop operators strongly agree that their One-Stop center seeks to serve people with disabilities by conducting specific outreach activities to attract customers with disabilities, while another 37% agree that they have conducted such outreach (see

Figure 2). In stark contrast, nearly one-third (31%) of all operators indicate that they are not conducting any type of outreach to people with disabilities. One-fourth (25%) of all operators seem uncertain regarding outreach efforts, neither agreeing nor disagreeing that they have made efforts to reach out the people with disabilities. These results parallel the ranking of important issues for an effective One-Stop system. The majority of respondents rank outreach to both customers with disabilities and to employers as less important than other issues.

Figure 3: Advocacy Group's Impact on Outreach

Little to No Technical Assistance

3-5 Types of Technical Assistance

Agree/Disagree One-Stop Conducts Outreach

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Interestingly, as illustrated in Figure 3, those respondents who received more technical assistance from advocacy organizations are more likely to be conducting outreach. While nearly 45% of One-Stop operators agree or strongly agree that they conduct outreach, among those respondents with at least three different forms of technical assistance from advocacy groups, more than half (58%) conduct outreach, while only 34% of those with little to no technical assistance from advocacy groups conduct outreach. Advocacy groups may have been more likely than WIBs to stress the importance of reaching out to people with disabilities.

Figure 4. Most Important Issue In Creating an Effective One-Stop System for People with Disabilities
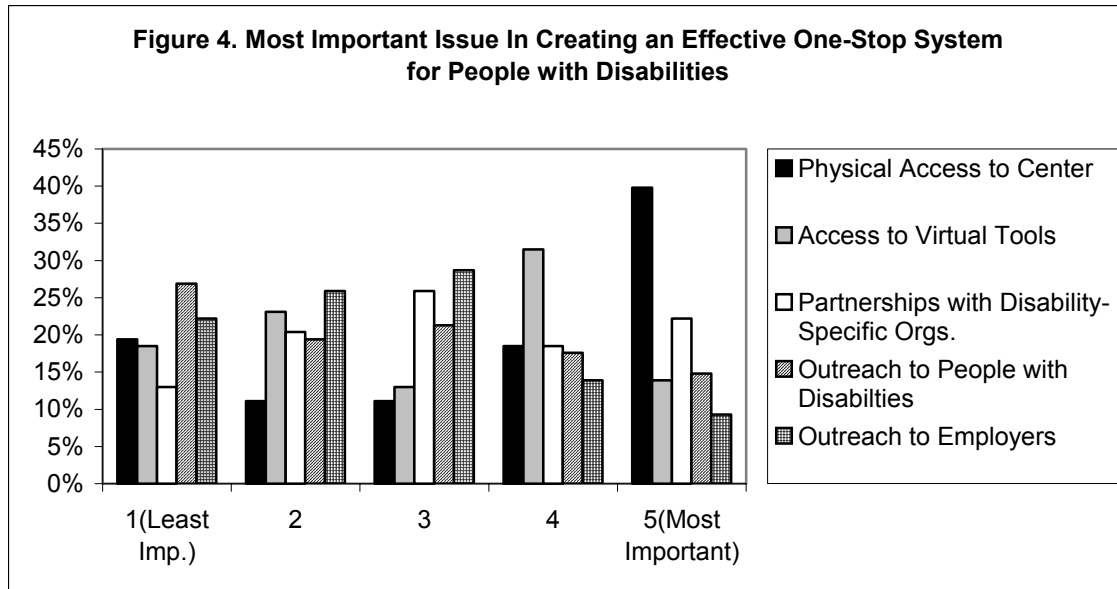
Respondents were asked to rank five issues in terms of their importance in creating an effective One-Stop system for people with disabilities (see Figure 4). The question caused some confusion in responses. While the question asked respondents to rank the issues from 1 to 5 in order of importance, and meant for respondents to compare the issues to each other, some gave each option a 5 or a 4, without ranking the options. Among those who responded correctly, 40% ranked physical access to One-Stop centers as the most critical issue in creating a One-Stop system that effectively serves people with disabilities. Nearly one-fourth (22%) of respondents felt that partnerships with organizations that serve people with disabilities is the most critical issue, while only 15% believe that providing effective outreach to people with disabilities in the local community is most important. Among 32% of respondents, access to virtual tools is ranked as the second most important issue. Outreach to employers regarding hiring people with disabilities is ranked as third most important, with 29% of respondents ranking it as such. Respondents followed the lead of WIA legislation and implementation materials, which focus on physical access, virtual access, and partnerships when choosing their most important issues. Outreach, to both employers and job seekers, is seen as less important in creating an effective system One-Stop system for people with disabilities.

While it is encouraging that One-Stop managers and operators have received technical assistance and feel prepared to serve job seekers with disabilities, slightly less than half
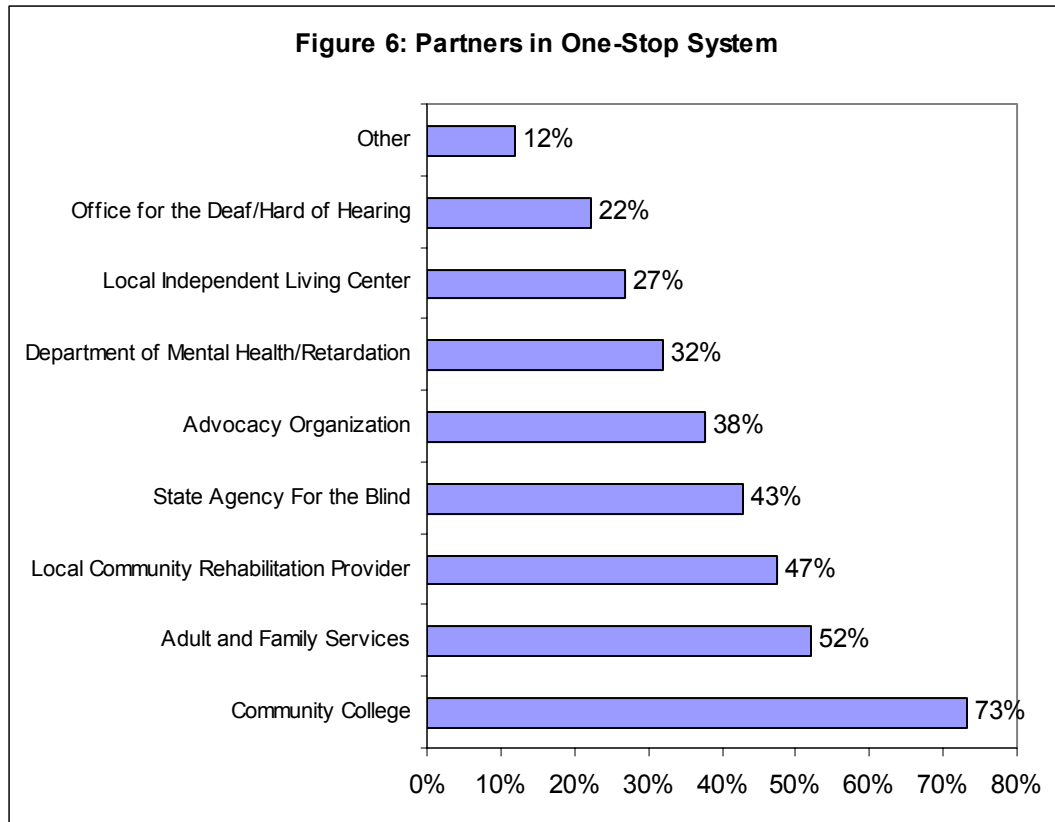
(45%) are actively seeking out customers with disabilities and the large majority feel that organizations specifically targeting people with disabilities will remain the central providers of services. While this may be the case for many job seekers—particularly for job seekers with more severe disabilities requiring specialized training or intervention— it could also signal that many One-Stop systems around the country are not fully integrating job seekers with disabilities. Policy makers should continue to provide effective technical assistance to prepare One-Stops to serve people with disabilities, while continually emphasizing that job seekers with disabilities are eligible for all portions of the One-Stop system.

Figure 5. Training Needs
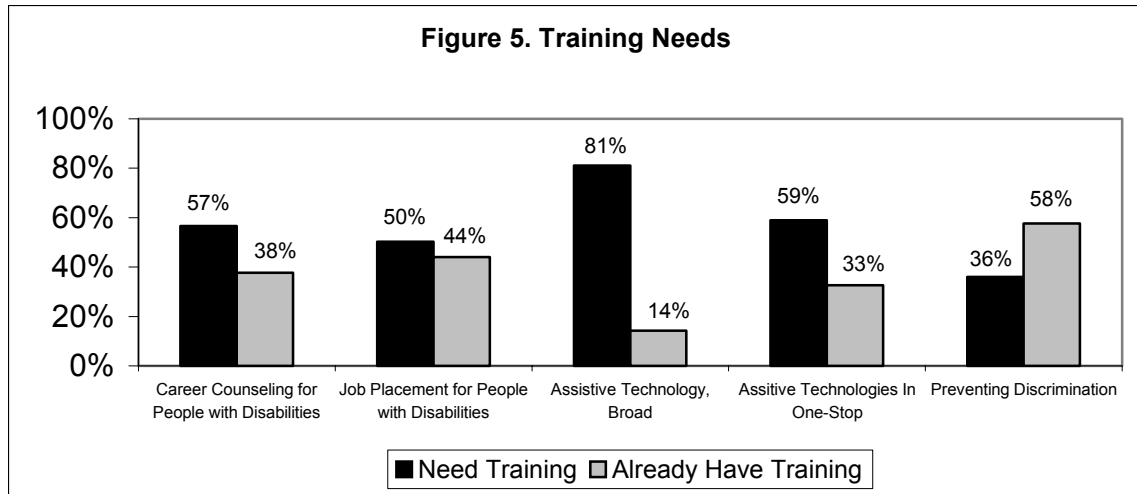
The majority of respondents do feel that their staff need additional training in several areas to serve people with disabilities (see Figure 5). The majority (81%) indicate that their staff would benefit from additional training in assistive technologies, including those that are not available in their One-Stop, while 59% think their staff could use specific training in the assistive technologies that are currently available in their One-Stop. While only 36% of respondents believe their staff need training in preventing discrimination in the One-Stop setting, 57% say their staff need training in career counseling for people with disabilities, and 50% report that their staff require training in job placement for people with disabilities (the technical assistance many reported receiving on serving people with disabilities may have been on more general topics). The need for focused training that will improve daily operations and interactions with individuals with disabilities remains high.

B. Partnerships

The survey asks One-Stop managers to identify those disability-related agencies that are partners in their local workforce development system, and how well those partnerships are being implemented. Respondents have a diverse array of partner organizations (see Figure 6).

Figure 6: Partners in One-Stop System

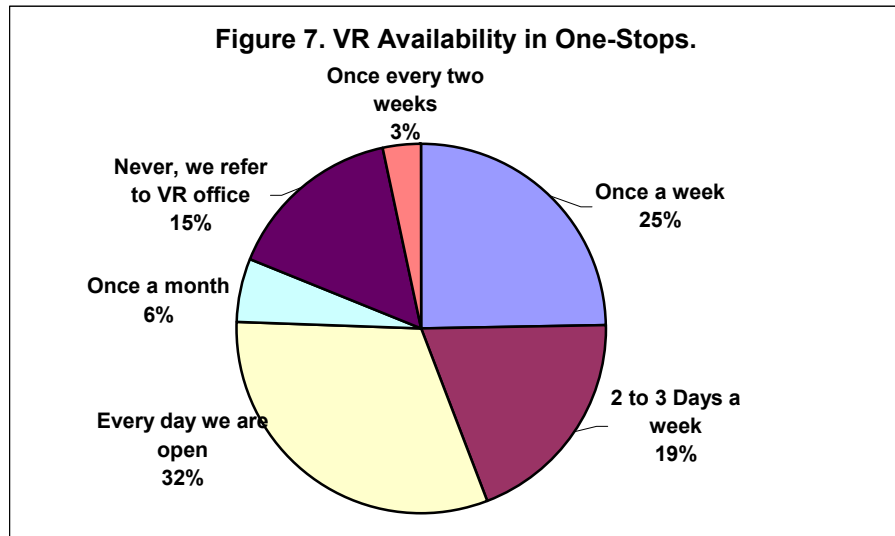| Partner	Percentage
Other	12%
Office for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing	22%
Local Independent Living Center	27%
Department of Mental Health/Retardation	32%
Advocacy Organization	38%
State Agency For the Blind	43%
Local Community Rehabilitation Provider	47%
Adult and Family Services	52%
Community College	73%

Nearly half (47%) of respondents have a local community rehabilitation provider as a partner in their One-Stop system, while 27% are in partnership with a local independent living center. A state agency for the blind is a partner in 43% of the One-Stop systems, but an Office for the Deaf or Hard of Hearing is only involved in 22% of the One-Stop systems, while a Department for Mental Health or Retardation participates in 32% of the systems. Twelve percent of respondents have other types of disability-specific partners, including Goodwill, county level social services agencies, a Federal Council on Disability Concerns, and high school special education departments. Much more frequent partners are community colleges and adult and family services agencies. These types of organizations often have their own initiatives to serve people with disabilities, so it is important that One-Stop Centers work with them to share best practices and discuss how their approaches to serving job seekers with disabilities can and should interact.

Determining the ways that partners work together is also important in understanding the effectiveness of the One-Stop system. A large majority (94%) of respondents report that they have referral relationships with their partner organizations, while 73% say they have a disability-specific organization on their local WIB. Nearly 60% have representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation or another disability specific organization co-located in their One-Stop, but only 22% have a disability task force or committee to assist the One-Stop with disability issues. Respondents also mention a virtual network that connected disability-specific organizations, Memorandums of Understanding (required by WIA to define partnerships), and rehabilitation counselors making presentations in One-Stop workshops and orientations as aspects of their partnerships.

Those respondents who report that a disability-specific organization sits on their WIB are slightly more likely to have referral relationships with disability organizations. Of those with a disability-specific group on their WIB, 95% had referral relationships, while of those without a disability-specific organization represented on their WIB, only 90% have referral relationships with disability organizations. Having disability organizations involved in setting policy for the workforce development system has an impact on the day-to-day practices of that system, and the experience of people with disabilities who enter the One-Stop.

Most of the respondents have representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation available in their One-Stops at least once a month, with only 15% of respondents saying they never have VR in their One-

Figure 7. VR Availability in One-Stops.

- Once every two weeks 3%
- Once a week 25%
- Never, we refer to VR office 15%
- Once a month 6%
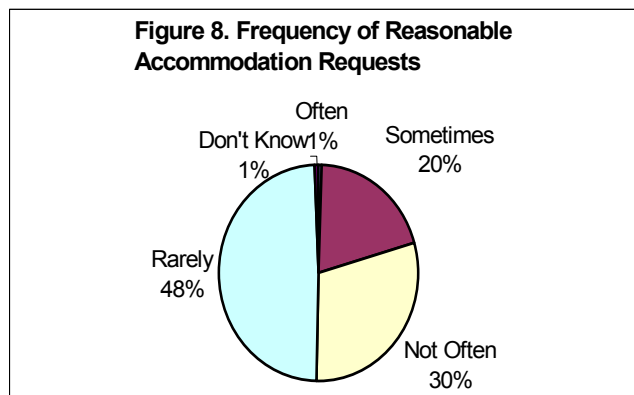- Every day we are open 32%
- 2 to 3 Days a week 19%

Stops, instead always sending clients to a separate office (see Figure 7). Though 59% say that a disability-specific organization is co-located in their One-Stop, only 32% have VR available every day. One-fourth (25%)of respondents have VR in their One-Stop once a week, and nearly one-fifth (19%) have VR staff in their One-Stop two to three days a week. Respondents are generally satisfied with their partnership with Vocational Rehabilitation. About half (51%) are very satisfied with the partnership, while 31% are somewhat satisfied. Only 9% are somewhat dissatisfied and only 4.6% are very dissatisfied. The needs of this minority who are dissatisfied should be further explored, to determine why the partnership is less than satisfactory and to find ways to improve it.

In general, it does seem that the One-Stop systems surveyed are working with partner organizations to better serve people with disabilities, with one-third or more of respondents reaching out to organizations for the blind or deaf, departments of mental health and retardation, local community rehabilitation providers, and advocacy organizations. The majority of these partnerships are referral relationships, with less than one-fourth of respondents integrating disability-specific organizations into the planning or administration of their One-Stops. For the most part, One-Stop managers and operators are satisfied with their partnerships with Vocational Rehabilitation, and three-quarters (75%) have representatives from VR in their One-Stops at least once a week.

The federal law encourages partnerships to insure One-Stops are effective for people with disabilities, bringing diverse groups into the One-Stop system. It is unclear to what extent these relationships involve more than referrals and, in fact, help achieve One-Stop goals such as ensuring all WIA services are accessible and non-discriminatory. A greater emphasis on more comprehensive partnerships, including having disability-specific organizations more involved in One-Stop administration or planning, could be one area for improvement, though we do know that disability specific advocacy organizations have been very involved in providing technical assistance.

C. Policies, Procedure, and Practices

The daily operations and procedures of the One-Stop also affect the experiences of job seekers with disabilities. In addition to guaranteeing accessibility, One-Stops must work through the more complicated tasks such as the collection of data for performance measurement and determining if a customer has a disability.

Figure 8. Frequency of Reasonable Accommodation Requests

Often 1%
Don't Know 1%
Sometimes 20%
Rarely 48%
Not Often 30%

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the non-discrimination requirements of WIA, job seekers must have access to all WIA services, even if it requires providing "reasonable accommodation." These laws require that One-Stops change policies or add resources (for example, assistive listening devices in an orientation or screen magnifier in a computer training class) that will help a customer with a disability get the same benefit from programs and services as any other customer.[11] If providing reasonable accommodation would cause undue hardship to One-Stop or other WIA-funded program, then it does not have to be provided. The survey asked about the frequency of reasonable accommodation requests and the policies that One-Stops have in place to deal with them. The majority of respondents report rarely having job seekers with disabilities ask for reasonable accommodation, with 20% saying they sometimes have reasonable accommodation requests and 30% saying they do not often have such requests (see Figure 8).

Nearly three-fourths (74%) of the respondents say they have a procedure in place to deal with accommodation requests. In comparison, 15% do not have such a procedure, and 11% are unsure if they have a procedure or not. Those who do have a procedure in place were asked to describe it. Many responses include working with One-Stop partners or Vocational Rehabilitation to determine how to best accommodate the needs of the job seeker, again highlighting the importance of partnerships for the One-Stop. Others

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[11] U.S. Department of Labor, "Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998; Final Rule."

depend on a specific member of the staff who is in charge of accommodation requests. One respondent distributes a handbook to all staff on using adaptive equipment, while a One-Stop in California indicates that all staff are "trained by the state to assist in obtaining or implementing reasonable accommodation." Most respondents iterate the requirements of law in describing their policy, stating that they provide appropriate accommodations unless it is extremely difficult to do so.

Many One-Stops already have resources available to increase accessibility. Nearly all (94%) are physically accessible, with wheel chair ramps and the like. A fully accessible computer workstation is available at 55% of respondents' One-Stop Centers, while 37% have sign-language interpretation or orientation materials in alternative formats (such as Braille or audio) available (although many indicated that they can provide sign-language interpretation with prior notice). Only 23% of respondents provide a list of available assistive devices and auxiliary aids at intake, one area that might be important to add so that job seekers with disabilities know from the outset what types of accommodations are on hand for their use.

Figure 9: Assistive Technologies Available in One-Stops

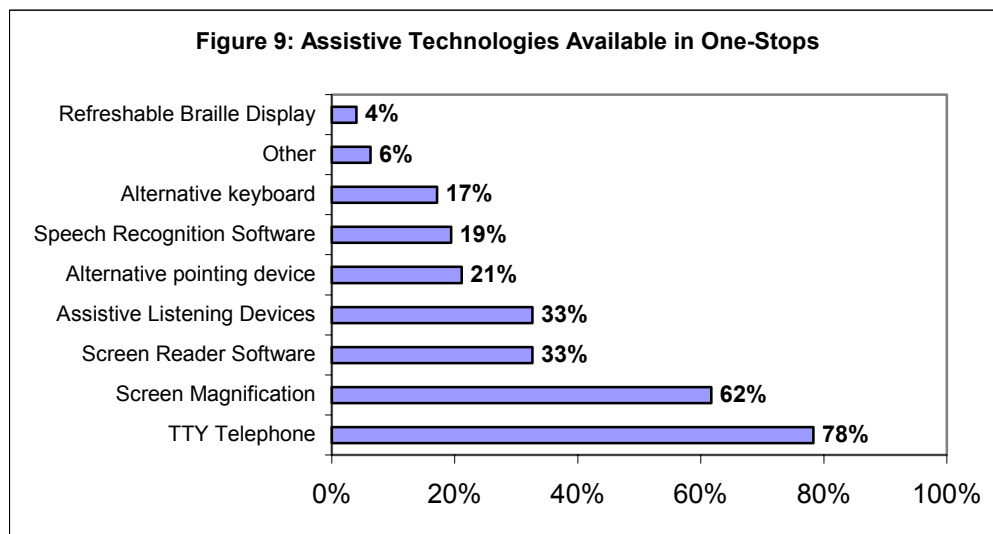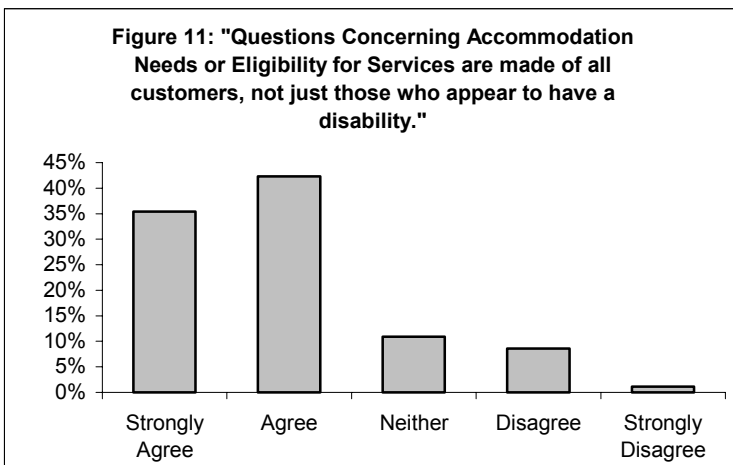| Technology	Percentage
Refreshable Braille Display	4%
Other	6%
Alternative keyboard	17%
Speech Recognition Software	19%
Alternative pointing device	21%
Assistive Listening Devices	33%
Screen Reader Software	33%
Screen Magnification	62%
TTY Telephone	78%

Figure 9 shows the frequency of specific assistive technologies in One-Stops. The majority of respondents have text telephones, or TTY's, and 60% also provide screen magnification tools to help the visually impaired read computer screens. Nearly one-fifth (19%) of One-Stops have software that recognizes human speech, eliminating the need to type, and one-third (33%) have software that reads the content of a computer screen to a visually impaired user. Only 33% of respondents provide assistive listening devices. Alternative keyboards, for use with one hand or the mouth, are provided by 17% of respondents, 21% provide alternative pointing devices to replace a computer's mouse, and only 4% have a refreshable Braille display that relays the content of the computer screen through Braille. Other assistive technologies in use at One-Stops include a motorized wheelchair provided by the One-Stop, large screen monitors, and a Braille software converter and printer. While more than half (55%) of the respondents report having a fully accessible computer work station, significantly fewer report the presence of specific

assistive technologies other than screen magnification that would make a station truly accessible.

Less than one-third (30%) of respondents report that all staff in their One-Stop are trained to use these assistive technologies and help others use them, and, as previously noted, 60% report that their staff needs training in the specific assistive technologies available at their site. Many job seekers, whether they have special needs or not, require basic help accessing on-line resources, and for those with disabilities, that basic help may mean using assistive technologies. Having staff that can help job seekers use these assistive technologies is just as important as having those technologies available.

All job seekers entering the One-Stop should be informed of their rights to equal opportunity and non-discrimination, which includes the right to reasonable accommodation for people with disabilities. One-Stops relate these rights to job seekers in a number of ways, the most common of which are the posted signs used in 88% of respondents' One-Stops. For 58% of One-Stops, a written overview of rights is included in the One-Stop orientation packet, and nearly 38% have an oral overview of rights as part of the orientation session. Several respondents also indicate that rights are detailed on the web site during online registration. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents have an Equal Opportunity Officer on-site at the One-Stop. Only 4% knew of a discrimination complaint being filed, with 6% unsure of whether any complaints had been filed, leaving nearly 90% with no knowledge of any discrimination complaints.

Unlike employers, One-Stop staff are allowed to ask job seekers if they have a disability to assess their eligibility for various programs and services. However, respecting customers' rights and confidentiality must still be an important consideration in this process. Nearly all (94%) respondents strongly agree or agree that customers in their One-Stop are informed that any information they shared about their disability would be kept confidential (67% and 27%, respectively, see Figure 10). No respondents disagree with the statement that clients were informed of confidentiality, though 5% neither agree nor disagree. As Figure 11 shows, a large majority also agree (42%) or strongly agree (36%) that questions concerning accommodation needs are asked of all customers in their One-Stop, not just those who appear to have a disability. This practice is important not only in terms of equal treatment, but also because many disabilities are not readily apparent.
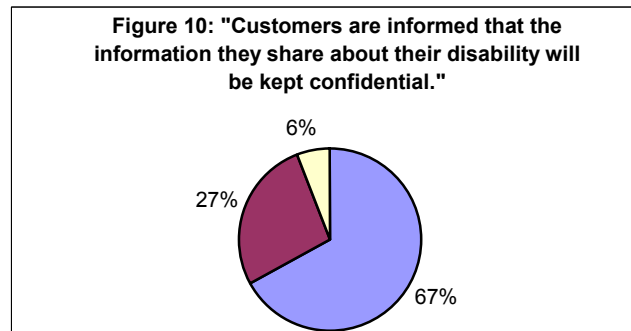
Figure 10: "Customers are informed that the information they share about their disability will be kept confidential."

6%
27%
67%

Figure 11: "Questions Concerning Accommodation Needs or Eligibility for Services are made of all customers, not just those who appear to have a disability."

When asked how the disability status of a job

seeker is determined in their One-Stop, most respondents cite self-identification or referral as the main methods to identify disabilities. However, a significant minority (35%) give assessments to all job seekers to help staff determine if a job seeker had a disability, and 17% give assessments to some job seekers based on the judgment of the staff. A fraction (5%) of respondents have a central case management database across social services programs that helps them determine if job seekers have a disability.

One-Stops seem to fully understand the confidentiality requirements under WIA and ADA. They generally seem to be careful about not signaling out people who they might think have a disability, but rather give every job seeker the same opportunity to disclose a disability or the same assessment to determine if a disability should be considered in program and job placement efforts.

Once a job seeker is determined to have a disability, she or he may be eligible for VR services, while remaining eligible for WIA services. When asked to describe their actions after a job seeker was identified as having a disability, 45% say they offer services in the One-Stop that are accessible and appropriate, such as using assistive technologies, setting up individual accommodation plans, working with VR staff, and providing access to all One-Stop services. Nearly 65% report that they refer the job seeker to an agency that specifically serves individuals with disabilities, while 58% say they provide the same services to all job seekers unless specifically requested. Respondents were allowed to choose more than one response to this question, and Table 1 shows whether those surveyed chose one response or a combination of responses. Nearly half (46%) chose only one response. There is still a heavy reliance on referring job seekers to disability-specific organizations, but only 15% of respondents chose only referral, while 21% refer along with offering appropriate and accessible services, 15% refer along with no different service unless requested, and nearly 14% refer along with both other choices.

Table 1. Actions Once A Job Seeker is Determined to Have a Disability

	Only Response	A+B	A+C	C+B	A+B+C
A. We offer services at the One-Stop that are accessible and appropriate	10 5.7%	37 21.1%	7 4%	26 14.9%	24 13.7%
B. We refer the job seeker to an agency that specifically serves individuals with disabilities	26 14.9%				
C. No different service than anyone else, unless the client with a disability requests specific services	45 25.7%				

Under WIA regulations, One-Stops are required to track people with disabilities that are using their services. The majority of respondents collect some information on people with disabilities served. The survey finds that 60% of respondents track the number of customers reporting a disability, 56% track the number of people with disabilities placed in employment, and 50% track the customer satisfaction of job seekers regarding access

or accommodation issues. Nearly half (46%) of respondents track the number of people referred to disability specific organizations. However, a significant minority (17%) indicate that they do not collect specific information on people with disabilities, and, as previously noted, 30% disagree with the statement "my One-Stop Center collects information about the number of customers with disabilities who use our services."

Figure 12: Impact of Task Force on Disability on Outcome Collection
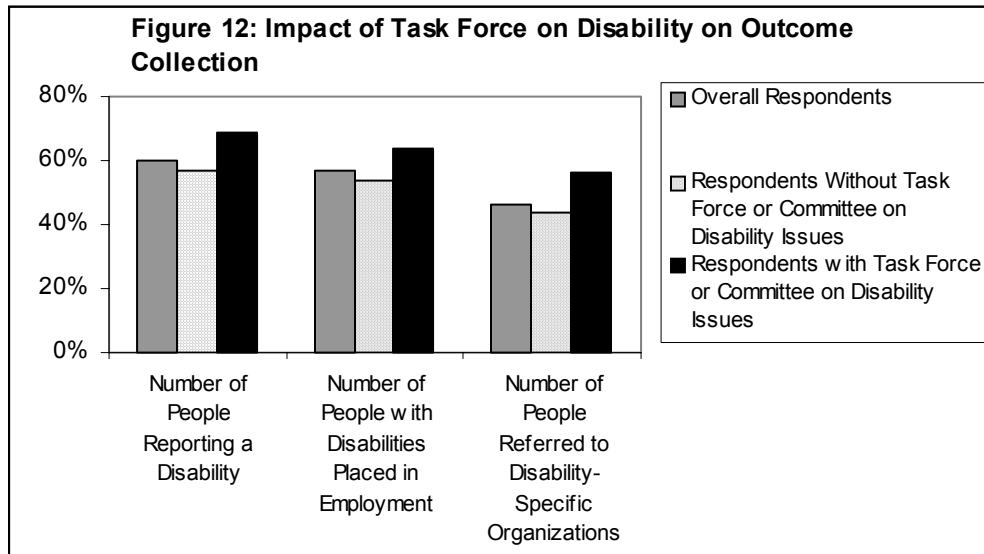
Those One-Stops that have a more integrated role for disability-specific organizations in their administration and planning are more likely to collect outcome measures on people with disabilities. While 60% of respondents collect the number of people with disabilities served, 69% of those with a task force or committee that helps their One-Stop with disability issues collected this information, and only 57% of those without a task force collect that information (See Figure 12). In terms of people with disabilities placed in employment, 57% of all respondents collect that number, while 64% of those with a task force do and only 54% of those without a task force record that statistic.

The same pattern holds true in terms of collecting how many people with disabilities are referred out of the One-Stop. Overall, 46% of respondents collect this information, while 56% of respondents with a task force collect it and only 44% of those without a task force track this number. A closer partnership can result in a better understanding of how to best serve people with disabilities and the importance of knowing exactly how many people with disabilities are served in a One-Stop system and how they move through the system.

There remains some confusion in One-Stop systems around the country about the requirements of performance collection. While it is extremely positive to see that many respondents are collecting information that can help them in evaluating their success serving job seekers with disabilities, it is a significant concern that somewhere between a fifth and a third of respondents, depending on which question response is used, collect no information on this topic. Performance management and continuous improvement are directives in WIA legislation. Particularly for populations that may require special assistance and planning such as people with disabilities, the collection of outcomes is an

important way to make sure One-Stops are providing the right types of services to help people find jobs. A greater role for disability-specific organizations in the planning and administration of One-Stop centers through, for example, a committee that deals specifically with disability issues in the Center, is one way to improve understanding of these requirements.

III. Conclusions and Recommendations

Our survey makes clear that many One-Stops are relying heavily on their partners to create an effective system for job seekers with disabilities. Advocacy organizations for people with disabilities are a major provider of technical assistance, and nearly three-fourths (70%) of respondents agree that Vocational Rehabilitation or other disability specific organizations will handle most of the people with disabilities who enter the workforce development system. Half (51%)of the respondents are very satisfied with their relationship with VR. All of these outcomes create a positive picture of the One-Stop's interactions with those organizations that serve the disability community.

At the same time, fewer respondents indicate that outreach to people with disabilities is an important strategy for creating an effective One-Stop system, and 30% of respondents disagree with the statement "my One-Stop has sought to serve people with disabilities by conducting specific outreach activities to attract customers with disabilities." Outreach to employers regarding hiring people with disabilities is also less important in the respondents' minds in terms of creating a strong One-Stop system.

One-Stops are relying on VR and related agencies to handle the needs of job seekers with disabilities and to bring those job seekers into the system. While it is appropriate for those agencies with expertise in serving job seekers with disabilities to take the lead, there is a concern that One-Stop centers may be too quick to refer anyone with a disability away from their services. One-Stops are working to become accessible and have received some technical assistance on serving people with disabilities. However, a majority report that they usually refer job seekers to disability-specific organizations when it is determined that that customer had a disability, though at least half also offer that job seeker accessible and appropriate services in the general One-Stop system. As long as all options are being presented to job seekers with disabilities, a One-Stop is meeting the mandate of WIA, but improvement in understanding and increasing those options would serve to create a more inclusive and effective system for people with disabilities.

The Heldrich Center identifies several specific areas for improvement:

- An increased focus on outreach to people with disabilities, so it is clear that One-Stops are prepared to handle their needs and they are welcomed in One-Stop programs.

- An increased focus on creating linkages with employers to hire job seekers with disabilities, including educating employers who are participating in the One-Stop

system or come to One-Stops to recruit employees that people with disabilities are positive additions to the workplace.

- One-Stops want training in more specific topics. While they report receiving some training and materials about serving people with disabilities in general, they also report needing training in career counseling and job placement for people with disabilities, as well as in assistive technologies and how to help people use them.

- States and local areas need to ensure that One-Stops understand exactly what is required for outcome collection. Under WIA there are 17 required outcome measures, and those must be tracked for people with disabilities. Having a full and accurate understanding of how people with disabilities are using the system and whether they are successfully being placed in jobs is crucial to evaluating and improving the system for job seekers with disabilities. Having disability-specific organizations more actively involved in administering individual One-Stops is one practice that appears to increase outcome collection.

As One-Stops gain more experience helping job seekers negotiate the workforce development system, they appear to be integrating well with organizations that offer specific programs for people with disabilities. However, they continue to need training in terms of serving people with disabilities and technical assistance for performance collection. As the systems continue to grow, analysis on those outcomes that are available on job seekers with disabilities will be an important way to build on the knowledge gained through this survey. Other areas for further research include determining why some One-Stops may be less than satisfied with their partnership with VR and how to improve on such partnerships. It is difficult to tell from this survey the extent to which One-Stops are relying on referrals to disability-specific organizations at times when the job seeker with a disability may be better served by the One-Stop system. Further research into the experience of job seekers with disabilities may be one way to understand that process and determine when referral is most appropriate or if it is an overused option. Many respondents do believe it is difficult to place job seekers with disabilities in employment, but at the same time do not see outreach to employers about hiring people with disabilities to be important to the workforce development system. Further research to understand how employers view hiring people with disabilities can help to improve job placement outcomes for people with disabilities, while also educating policy makers and One-Stop administrators on the importance of outreach in this area.

Appendix 1. Accessibility Survey Instrument and Results

Q1. In what state is your One-Stop?

	Frequency	Percent
Alabama	5	2.9
Alaska	3	1.7
Arkansas	5	2.9
California	9	5.1
Colorado	3	1.7
Connecticut	4	2.3
Florida	1	.6
Georgia	4	2.3
Hawaii	1	.6
Illinois	10	5.7
Iowa	1	.6
Kentucky	1	.6
Maine	2	1.1
Maryland	5	2.9
Massachusetts	7	4.0
Michigan	5	2.9
Minnesota	1	.6
Missouri	1	.6
Montana	5	2.9
New Jersey	8	4.6
New York	5	2.9
North Carolina	18	10.3
North Dakota	5	2.9
Ohio	2	1.1
Oklahoma	9	5.1
Pennsylvania	17	9.7
Rhode Island	2	1.1
South Carolina	2	1.1
South Dakota	4	2.3
Tennessee	4	2.3
Texas	6	3.4
Utah	3	1.7
Vermont	2	1.1
Washington	10	5.7
West Virginia	2	1.1
Wisconsin	3	1.7
Total	175	100.0

Q2. What is your title/position?

Q3. How would you characterize your local area?
a. Urban	47	26.9%
b. Suburban	25	14.3%
c. Rural	86	49.1%
d. Other (please describe)	17	9.7%

Q4. How long have you been a One-Stop Operator?

a. 1 to 2 years	73	41.7%
b. 2 to 3 years	41	23.4%
c. 3 years or more	59	33.7%
d. Don't know	2	1.1%

Q5.   How many One-Stops do you operate?

a. 1	124	70.9%
b. 2-5	39	22.3%
c. 5-10	7	4%
d. 10 or more	5	2.9%
e. Don't know	0	

IQ6.   The following is a list of possible technical assistance materials and activities that could aid One-Stops in serving people with disabilities. Please tell us if you have received such assistance, and if so, from whom.

	Provided by Local WIB	Provided by State WIB	Provided by Advocacy Organization for People with Disabilities	Provided by Other Source	Not Provided
Q6 Written or web-based materials on serving people with disabilities.	37 21.1%	44 25.1%	115 65.7%	73 41.7%	10 5.7%
Q7 Frontline staff training on serving people with disabilities.	25 14.3%	22 12.6%	92 52.6%	80 45.7%	26 14.9%
Q8 Written or Web-based materials about specific types of disabilities.	17 9.7%	24 13.7%	89 50.9%	70 40%	42 24%
Q9 Policy statements on how people with disabilities should be served.	50 28.6%	62 35.4%	59 33.7%	78 44.6%	19 10.9%
Q10 Workshops or materials specifically focused on ADA compliance.	31 17.7%	45 25.7%	75 42.9%	89 50.9%	18 10.3%

IQ11. Below is a list of five issues impacting job seekers with disabilities. Please rank the issues in order of importance in creating a One-Stop system that effectively serves people with disabilities, with 1 being least important and 5 being most important.

Valid: 108*

	1 (Least Imp.)	2	3	4	5(Most Imp.)
Q11. Physical Access to One-Stop Centers	21 19.4%	12 11.1%	12 11.1%	20 18.5%	43 39.8%
Q12. Insuring people with disabilities can access all virtual tools in the One-Stop system, including web sites and on-site computer resources	20 18.5%	25 23.1%	14 13%	34 31.5%	15 13.9%
Q13. Partnerships with organizations that serve people with disabilities	14 13%	22 20.4%	28 25.9%	20 18.5%	24 22.2%
Q14. Providing effective outreach about the One-Stop system to people with disabilities in the local community	29 26.9%	21 19.4%	23 21.3%	19 17.6%	16 14.8%
Q15. Outreach to employers about hiring people with disabilities	24 22.2%	28 25.9%	31 28.7%	15 13.9%	10 9.3%

*Respondents who put all 5s or just 4s and 5s, for Questions 11-15 were removed any analysis using questions 11-15.

Q16. Vocational Rehabilitation agencies are mandatory partners in the One-Stop System. How satisfied are you with this partnership in your local area?
    a. Very Satisfied   89   50.9%
    b. Somewhat Satisfied   54   30.9%
    c. Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied   8   4.6%
    d. Somewhat dissatisfied   16   9.1%
    e. Very Dissatisfied   8   4.6%

Q17. There are many possible disability-specific partners in the One-Stop system beyond Vocational Rehabilitation. Which of the following organizations are involved in the One-Stop system in your local area? Please mark all that apply.
    a. A State Level Organization for the Blind   75   42.9%
    b. Office for the Deaf/Hard of Hearing   39   22.3%
    c. Adult and Family Services   91   52%
    d. Department of Mental Health/Retardation   56   32%
    e. Local Independent Living Center   47   26.9%
    f. Community College   128   73.1%
    g. Advocacy Organizations   66   37.7%
    h. Local community rehabilitation provider
    (vendor that works with just people with disabilities)   83   47.4%

  i.   Other (please explain)   21 12%

Q18.   There are many different ways partners can work together. Please choose all statements that apply to your partnerships with disability-specific organizations.
  a.   We refer clients to these organizations for workforce development services or training   164 93.7%
  b.   A disability-specific organization has a seat on our local WIB
                 127 72.6%
  c.   We have a disability task force or committee that helps our One-Stop(s) with disability issues   39 22.3%
  d.   Representatives from disability-specific organizations, like Vocational Rehabilitation, are co-located at our One-Stop(s) 104 59.4%
  e.   Other (please explain)   16 9.1%

Q19.   How often are representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation available in your One-Stop(s)?
  a.   Once a week   43 24.6%
  b.   Two to three days a week 34 19.4%
  c.   Every day we are open   55 31.4%
  d.   Once every two weeks   6 3.4%
  e.   Once a month   10 5.7%
  f.   Never, we refer clients to go to the offices of Vocational Rehabilitation
                 27 15.4%

IQ20. Below are a series of statements. Please mark whether you agree or disagree about their applicability to your local One-Stop system.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Q20 Questions concerning accommodation needs or eligibility for services are made of all customers, not just those who appear to have a disability.	62 35.4%	74 42.3%	19 10.9%	15 8.6%	2 1.1% 3 No Response
Q21 My One-Stop Center has a procedure in place to respond to the accommodation requests by customers.	73 41.7%	83 47.4%	7 4%	11 6.3%	0 1 No Response
Q22 My The Center has technology available to allow individuals with disabilities to use the computers and resources of the Center, and access the Center's website	69 39.5%	66 37.7%	21 12%	17 9.7%	1 .6% 1 No Response

Q23 The staffs in our One-Stop(s) are equipped to deal with the needs of people with various types of disabilities.	41 23.4%	103 58.9%	21 12%	9 5.1%	0 1 No Response
Q24 Customers are informed that the information they share about their disability will be kept confidential	117 66.9%	48 27.4%	9 5.1%	0	0 1 No Response
Q25 The vendors or service providers that my One-Stop Center contracts for training services can respond to the needs of people with disabilities.	53 30.3%	95 54.3%	24 13.7%	2 1.1%	1 .6%
Q26 We have difficulty finding job placements for people with disabilities.	14 8%	97 55.4%	43 24.6%	21 12%	0
Q27 My One-Stop Center has affirmatively sought to serve people with disabilities by conducting specific outreach activities to attract customers with disabilities	13 7.4%	65 37.1%	44 25.1%	51 29.1%	2 1.1%
Q28 My One-Stop collects information about the number of customers with disabilities who use our services.	28 16%	73 41.7%	29 16.6%	40 22.9%	2 1.1%
Q29 Vocational Rehabilitation or other disability-specific organizations will serve most people with disabilities who enter our One-Stop system.	42 24%	81 46.3%	30 17.1%	22 12.6%	0

Q30.   One-Stops must collect data for performance measurement. What types of data do you collect? Please check all that apply.
      a.   Number of customers reporting a disability
          105   60%

b. Number of people with disabilities placed in employment.
    99   56.6%
c. Number of people referred to disability-specific organizations
    81   46.3%
d. Customer satisfaction of job seekers regarding access or accommodation issues 87   49.7%
e. Other information on people with disabilities (please list)
    10   5.7%
f. We do not report any specific information on people with disabilities
    30   17.1%
g. Don't know
    13   6.9%

IQ31. According to the Americans with Disability Act, One-Stops must provide "reasonable accommodation" such as changing policies or carrying out services differently, for people with disabilities, unless it would cause "undue hardship" for the Operator.

The following questions will ask about how your One-Stop accommodates individuals with a disability.

Q31. How often do you have job seekers with disabilities ask for reasonable accommodation?
    a. Often   1   .6%
    b. Sometimes   25   20%
    c. Not often   52   29.7%
    d. Rarely   86   49.1%
    e. Don't Know   1   .6%

Q32. Do you have a policy and/or procedure for staff to follow when job seekers ask for reasonable accommodation?
    a. Yes   129   73.7%
    b. No   27   15.4%
    c. Don't know   19   10.9%

Q33. If yes, please explain your policy on reasonable accommodation
Q34. Below is a list of items that One-Stops may provide to increase accessibility for people with disabilities. Please mark all those that are available in your One-Stop.
    a. Physical access to Center (such as wheel chair ramps)
        164   93.7%
    b. Fully accessible computers   96   54.9%
        (for people with vision, hearing, physical and cognitive disabilities)
    c. Sign-Language interpretation
        64   36.6%

    d.   Orientation materials in alternative formats (such as Braille, audio)
             66   37.7%
    e.   A list of available assistive devices and auxiliary aids provided at intake.
             40   22.9%
    f.   Other (please explain)
             36   20.6%
    g.   Don't know
             4   2.3%

Q35.   What types of assistive technologies are available in your One-Stops?

a. Speech recognition software	34	19.4%
b. Screen reader software	57	32.6%
c. Screen magnification	108	61.7%
d. Assistive listening devices	57	32.6%
e. Touch Tone Telephone (TTY)	137	78.3%
f. Alternative keyboards (for use with mouth or one hand)	30	17.1%
g. Alternative pointing devices (to replace a computer's mouse)	37	21.1%
h. Refreshable Braille Display	7	4%
i. Other (please list)	20	11.4%
j. Don't know	11	6.3%

Q36.   Are all staff in your One-Stop trained to use these assistive technologies and help others use them?

a. Yes	52	29.7%
b. No	114	65.1%
c. Don't Know	9	5.1%

Q37.   How does your One-Stop insure job seekers know their rights to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity? Please mark all that apply.

a. Posted signs relating rights.	154	88%
b. Oral overview of rights during orientation	66	37.7%
c. Written overview of rights is part of orientation packet	102	58.3%
d. Other (please explain)	8	4.6%
e. Don't know	5	2.9%

Q38.   Does your One-Stop have an Equal Opportunity officer?

a. Yes	132	75.4%
b. No	33	18.9%
c. Don't Know	10	5.7%

Q39.   To your knowledge, have any discrimination complaints been filed in your One-Stop(s)?

a. Yes	7	4%
b. No	157	89.7%

       c. Don't Know   11   6.3%

Q40.   How is the disability status of a job seeker customer determined at your One-Stop?
         a. Through referral   122   69.7%
         b. Through self-identification   163   93.1%
         c. Through assessments given to all job seekers receiving services
                                                      61   34.9%
         d. Through assessments given to select job seekers based on the judgment of staff   30   17.1%
         e. Through a central case management database used across social services programs in your area   9   5.1%

Q41.   If and when a job seeker is identified as having a disability, what actions are taken by the One-Stop? Please check all that apply.
                 a. We offer services available at the One-Stop that are accessible and appropriate (please list)   78   44.6%
                 b. We refer the job seeker to an agency that specifically serves individuals with disabilities.   113   64.6%
                 c. No different service than anyone else, unless the client with a disability requests specific services   102   58.3%

IQ42   Below are some areas where staff could be trained in serving people with disabilities. Please tell us in which of these areas you would like to see your staff trained, or if they are already trained in that area.

	Need Training	Already Trained
Q42 Career counseling for people with disabilities.	99 56.6%	66 37.7% 10 No Response
Q43 Job placement for people with disabilities.	88 50.3%	77 44% 10 No Response
Q44 Broad knowledge of assistive technologies, including those that are not currently available in your One-Stop	142 81.1%	25 14.3% 8 No Response
Q45 Specific knowledge of the assistive technologies currently available in your One-Stop, and how to help others use them.	103 58.9%	57 32.6% 15 No Response
Q46 Preventing discrimination in the One-Stop setting.	63 36%	101 57.7% 11 No Response