



## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act**

# **Business Services Plan**

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# Business Services Plan

## Purpose

To provide guidance and establish the Northeast Workforce Development Board's (NEWDB) plan for the delivery of business services in Northeast Oklahoma in accordance with Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD) policy issuance OWDI # 01-2020 (and subsequent guidance).

In accordance with WIOA, the NEWDB Business Services Plan is designed to support Oklahoma's workforce development system through targeted programs and strategies that address the needs of businesses within the Northeast Workforce Development Area (NEWDA). Through the Oklahoma Works American Job Centers (OWAJC), NEWDA core partners, required partners and other workforce partner entities the NEWDB Business Services team develops, offers, and delivers quality business services that assist businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

## References

- WIOA sec. 108(b)(4)
- WIOA sec 134(c)(1)(A)(v) and (d)(1)(A)
- 20 CFR 678.435
- 34 CFR 361.435
- 34 CFR 463.435
- TEGL No. 16-16
- TEGL No. 16-16 Change 1
- OWDI #06-2018
- OWDI 02-2020

## Message

The Joint WIOA Final Rule requires the provision of business services through the American Job Center (AJC) network, to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area. Through the Oklahoma Works American Job Centers (OWAJC), the core partners and other workforce partner entities (as determined by the NEWDB) will develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy. To support area employers and industry sectors most effectively, OWAJC staff (including designated partner program staff) must:

- Have a clear understanding of industry skill needs;
- Identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers and coordinate business services activities across OWAJC partner programs and local economic development agencies, as appropriate; and
- Incorporate an integrated and aligned business services strategy among OWAJC partners to

present a unified voice for the American Job Center in its communications with employers.

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## **Vision**

The Northeast Workforce Development Board Area will have a world-class workforce that is educated, skilled, and working in demand occupations that meet the local employer needs in order to keep Oklahoma's economy competitive in the global marketplace.

## **Strategy**

In order to accomplish the NEWDB vision the Business Services team will build on existing practices and focus on key areas of business services development that add value to employers and functionally

support the Northeast workforce system as a whole, including the training programs, sector strategies and career pathways. The Business Service team will focus efforts on coordination and connection local and state economic development and chambers of commerce and strengthen linkages and streamline services within the one-stop delivery system, OWAJCs. Additionally, the Business Services team will facilitate business engagement in workforce development programs and services that effectively:

- Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area;
- Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and
- Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system (OWAJC) and unemployment insurance programs.

## **Strategic Goals**

The NEWDB Business Service Team is required to facilitate engagement in workforce development programs. The goals of business engagement goals are to:

- Increase awareness of services and resources provided through the workforce system;
- Increase the likelihood of employers hiring job seekers through the workforce system;
- Create and strengthen career pathways aligned to business and industry demand;
- Provide business intelligence to employers, intermediaries, and partners to ensure the workforce is relevant and useful;
- Ensure strong talent pipelines for demand occupations that allow business to grow and be successful; and
- Establish the NEWDB as an integral partner that adds value to regional economic development efforts by making connections to workforce strategies, solutions, and cutting-edge labor market research and data.

## **Goal One**

Increase awareness of services and resources provided through the workforce system.

### **Goal One Objectives:**

- a) The NEWDB will utilize multiple platforms to help showcase service availability to employers, such as social media (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.) as well as on-going communications with community partners
- b) Engaging employers and the public at various hosted events, such as job fairs, hiring events, Elevate Youth Summit, and roundtables to discuss the opportunities available for no cost
- c) Collaborate with community partners and agencies, when available, to help showcase employers to the ease of braided services for maximum support
- d) Spotlight successes within NEWDB service delivery to help identify ways business customers and businesses can achieve similar successes within their company

- e) Develop and disperse the NE brand to be utilized across all social platforms and deliverable content in order to create and maintain specific branded image

## **Goal Two**

Increase the likelihood of employers hiring job seekers through the workforce system.

### **Goal Two Objectives:**

- a) Utilization of a Hot Jobs list where employers can spotlight their current openings in order to help with recruitment efforts.
- b) Utilization of the Hot Jobs list to showcase open work-site agreements in order to attract referrals to internal paid internships.
- c) Develop a linkage of services for customers needing assistance with placement, directly encouraging Work Experience opportunities that can lead to full time employment with the ability to transition into an On-the-Job Training
- d) Increasing awareness and usage of Registered Apprenticeships that can lead employers to recruit and retain staff that can be referred from the OWAJC and be eligible for above mentioned work-based learning opportunities
- e) Spotlight availability of “in-house” events held at the OWAJCs to help expand the availability of the local labor pool available through job centers.

## **Goal Three**

Provide business intelligence to employers, intermediaries, and partners to ensure the workforce is relevant and useful.

### **Goal Three Objectives:**

- a) Utilize partnerships to develop customized training programs that are identified by comparing the survey results to training available in the region
- b) Develop proactive linkage and referral of establishments to community resources that support their workforce needs
- c) Connect local partners and business customers with current data and trends that directly affect hiring and recruitment needs and barriers
- d) Help develop an approach with individual businesses, with subject matter experts, to help develop pathways to overcome faced barriers

## **Goal Four**

Ensure strong talent pipelines for demand occupations that allow business to grow and be successful.

### **Goal Four Objectives:**

- a) Conduct coordinated outreach efforts on social media platforms in order to increase awareness of the services available through the Oklahoma Works American Jobs Centers.
- b) Improve employer perception of the Oklahoma Works American Jobs Centers located in the Northeast Workforce Development Area through educational outreach campaigns.

- c) Coordinate with partners to ensure all applicable information is available at community outreach events.

## **Goal Five**

Establish the NEWDB as an integral partner that adds value to regional economic development efforts by making connections to workforce strategies, solutions, and cutting-edge labor market research and data.

### **Goal Five Objectives:**

- a) Utilization of LMI from key partners and sources, such as EMSI, and collaborate with mandatory and community partners through the Northeast Business and Workforce Alliance
- b) Establish open communication with local Economic Development entities and Chambers of Commerce to help establish NEWDB as a vital partner in local employment efforts
- c) Build on-going rapport, through open communication and partnerships through localized Sector Partnerships and building stronger in-demand industries

## **Delivery of Business Services**

In accordance with WIOA Title 1, the Northeast Workforce Development Board Business Services Plan is designed to support Oklahoma's workforce development system through targeted programs and strategies that address the needs of businesses within the Northeast Workforce Development Area (NEWDA). Through the Oklahoma Works American Job Centers (OWAJC), core partners, required partners and other workforce partner entities the Business Services Team develops, offers, and delivers quality business services that assist businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

Businesses should have access to a one-stop experience in which high quality and professional services are provided across partner programs in a seamless manner. The NEWDB is positioned to provide a single point of contact to each employer representing all core programs and provide services to the area businesses as a unified unit. Effective business services are developed in a manner that supports engagement of employers of all sizes in the context of both regional and local economies avoiding multiple uncoordinated contacts.

The NEWDB Business Service Plan is intended to provide a roadmap for internal and external workforce system partners, employers, and participants that effectively address skills gaps in Northeast Oklahoma and ensure the effectiveness of the One-Stop Delivery System in addressing employer needs.

## **Core Business Services**

The business services must fall within the eight (8) Core Program Services included within this guidance; however, the description of services is a non-exhaustive list as not to restrict innovative thinking about methods of service provision.

The NEWDB has the flexibility for the development of sector-based strategies that support the needs of the area's businesses and comply with relevant statutory provisions.

Through an employer-focused approach of delivering quality workforce development services, the business services team will support NEWDA employers and industry sectors by focusing efforts around the following eight (8) Core Services:

- Employer Information and Support Services
- Workforce Recruitment Assistance
- Engaged in Strategic Planning/Economic Development
- Accessing Untapped Labor Pools
- Training Services
- Incumbent Worker Training
- Rapid Response/Business Downsizing Assistance
- Planning Layoff Response

### **Business Services Team Structure and Function**

The NEWDB Business Service Team (BST) is staffed by WIOA core partners, including Wagner-Peyser, the NEWDB Business Services Consultant, Workforce System Coordinator, Adult Education and Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, and NEWDB team members. The core partners have designated staff members to represent their organizations on the BST.

The NEWDB has designated the Business Service Consultant to serve as the single point of contact representing the core partners and is responsible for the coordination of business services, including making referrals to other partners as appropriate and will be responsible for carrying out the vision and goals of the Business Services Plan.

### **Process for Delivering Business Services**

The process for delivering services begins with developing an understanding of local business needs. The NEWDB will use demand occupation data to determine which service application(s) meet the needs of employers. The Business Services Consultant will develop employer contact lists using economic forecasting data to identify open positions within the seven-county region. The lists will represent the demand occupations identified by the NEWDB that align with the local and state plans, including Manufacturing, Healthcare, Transportation, Construction and Office Administration & Support.

The business contact and demand occupation lists will serve as the foundation for business outreach and engagement. The business services team will utilize the list to identify and contact new employers for initiating outreach and engagement efforts. The business contacts lists will focus on small to medium companies and minority owned businesses. When setting up a meeting with an employer, the business services team will use the Business Contact Tracking Report, or other NEWDB approved tracking processes, to document upcoming appointments and record outcomes. All business contacts recorded in the contact list will be transferred to OJM, the state mandated system for official record keeping.

The NEWDB will ensure:

- FTEs are trained in required activities.

- All core business services are made available and provided in the local area/region, including
  - Rapid Response/layoff aversion,
  - Data provision,
  - Register Apprenticeship (RA) outreach and program development,
  - Employer focused events (a minimum of one per quarter),
  - Sector partnership support,
  - Competency-based hiring, and
  - Employer incentive promotion and training.
- The development of a coordinated business services strategic plan for the region that includes workforce development and economic development and/or chamber staff.
  - This should include a business needs assessment to inform strategy (e.g., LMI data review, employer focus groups, interviews, survey data, etc.)
  - OOWD may offer technical assistance in the form of local team facilitation
- Monitoring of performance and implementation of continuous improvement strategies as needed.
- Promotion of business services via NEWDB website.
- Partnership with economic development, chambers, and Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC) teams on an ad-hoc basis in order to develop workforce development strategies and solutions for business recruitment and expansion activities.
- The development of a communications strategy for employer engagement activities.

## **Employer Engagement**

While employer engagement occurs through multiple methods, site visits, telephone calls, industry meetings, and etc., identifying business contacts ahead of time allows the business services team an opportunity to conduct background research on the company through OJM, other team members or partners, or through examining the company website to gain a better understanding of the company operations, past services through the NEWDB or system partners.

This initial step, if carried out effectively, will provide the criteria to screen candidates according to the unique needs of a company. The data from outreach activities recorded in OJM helps to ensure full coverage of the NEWDB area and to track the responsiveness of businesses to WIOA programs. Staff must use this list to identify which businesses have been contacted to avoid excessive contact; it is important to be respectful and not solicit so often that it can be viewed as burdensome. The strategy for approaching businesses will be derived from the information in the Business Contact List and OJM.

Obtaining the background information on a company allows the Business Services Team to focus the engagement on the specific needs of a company rather than rely on simply listing services. When meeting with employers, team members should focus on listening and allowing an employer to express their needs before outlining the list of business services available.

The goal of the Business Service Team should be aiding businesses to develop the long-term strength of the workforce, not just providing an activity only to meet performance measures. Meaningful employer engagement is an exchange of dialog between the team member and the company representative that



addresses the business' concerns through customized business service solutions. It is important to ask probing questions to gain a better understanding of needs in order to provide solutions that can benefit the employer and help develop their workforce. The goal is to transform the workforce in a meaningful way rather than offer solutions to non-existent problems.

## **Knowledge of Services**

Credibility is established through broad knowledge of programs offered by the Business Service Team. Each Business Service Team member must:

- Include a narrative concerning goals and obstacles anticipated during development
- Use this plan as guidance for how to best approach businesses
- Develop a clear understanding of industry skill needs;
- Identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers and coordinate business services activities across OWAJC partner programs and local economic development agencies, as appropriate
- Incorporate an integrated and aligned business services strategy among OWAJC partners to present a unified voice for the American Job Center in its communications with employers
- Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and employers in in-demand industry sectors and occupations
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses
- Enhance coordination of workforce development programs and economic development; and
- Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system (OWAJC) and unemployment insurance programs.
- The Business Service Team is responsible for meeting directly with business leaders. During these meetings the team will form positive relationships, assess the needs of the employer, and formulate a customized plan to develop the targeted workforce
- The Business Service Team will provide timely updates to the Business Services Consultant to disclose information regarding which employers they met with, which programs were offered, and how many employees will be served
- The Business Service Consultant will track and manage business service contacts and data entry by all team members to ensure accuracy of reporting
- The Business Service Consultant is responsible for compiling data, based on recorded business service activities and submitting reports as required to the NEWDB and state and federal reporting authorities for performance review
- Include a narrative concerning goals and obstacles anticipated during development
- Use this plan as guidance for how to best approach businesses

In order to establish a professional presence when approaching businesses, the Business Service Team must have an in-depth understanding of the programs offered by the Northeast One-Stop Delivery System. Team members must be able to confidently explain the requirements and benefits of each program, including Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker Youth, Title II Adult Basic Education, Title III Wagner Peyser and Title IV Department of Rehabilitation Services. Business Service Team members must be able

to effectively communicate how WIOA Title 1 services can work in concert to maximize positive results for businesses, including the benefits of the following to employers: WOTC, Federal Bonding, Registered Apprenticeship, Training Assistance, Internships (Work Experience) Incumbent Worker Training, and the On-the-Job Training.

When possible, the Business Service Team should use labor market information (LMI) and develop profiles before consulting with both employers and job seekers. LMI is useful because it explains which career paths are growing within the Northeast Workforce Development Area and helps businesses identify trends in education and training that can assist them in understanding the needs of their workforce.

## **Business Services Toolkit**

To ensure businesses receive appropriate levels of support based on their organizational needs, the Business Services Team will build their knowledge of services available and work toward improving processes for services delivery by focusing on the following priority business services:

- LMI Reports with recommendations on recruitment strategies
  - Competency-based hiring practices/Skills Based Training
  - Assessing new hires for hidden skills using a competency-based skills assessment agreed upon by the business services team
  - Screening candidates for hire
  - Examples of competency-based assessments may include, but are not limited to: introduction to safety credentials, and computer familiarity skill assessments
  - Sector partnerships
  - Expanding Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities
  - Employer-focused events and outreach
    - Specialized recruitment events/job fairs. OESC monthly hiring events.
    - Workforce Summit
    - RA/Work-Based Learning (WBL) Summit
    - Disabilities Summit
    - Youth Summit
    - Rapid Response - WIOA required
- Layoff Aversion - WIOA required
- Promotion of employer incentives (RA tax credit, Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), Incumbent Worker Training (IWT), etc.

Other business services tools:

- Posting job orders, including job order analytics
- Promoting OWAJCs and OKJobMatch as part of communications strategy
- Providing space for interviews at the OWAJC
- Deliver Skillful Talent workshops to employers

## **Benchmarks**

The NEWDB established Memo 02-2021 Revision 1 to provide definitions and requirements for validation of the performance objectives established by Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD). This memo was presented to OOWD for consideration and approval on February 3, 2022. The definitions and validation process were approved by OOWD on February 23, 2022.

**Benchmarks for NEWDB PY 21 for Business Services are as follows:**

<b>Performance Measure</b>	<b>Negotiated</b>
<b>Customer Satisfaction Survey Results (out of 5)</b>	R1 = 4.0
<b>Number of Employer Focused Events per Quarter</b>	1
<b>Number of Sector Partnerships Per Year</b>	1
<b>Number of Registered Apprenticeship Presentations/Program Development per Quarter</b>	2
<b>Number of Business Core Program Services per Quarter (OWDI #06-2016 Attachment 1)</b>	25

### **Effectiveness in Serving Employers**

WIOA requires the establishment of performance accountability measures that apply across the WIOA core programs (Title I b Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs, Title II Adult Education and Literacy, Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation). Effectiveness in serving employers is the sixth primary indicator of performance required by WIOA.

Oklahoma has elected to pilot all three approaches as indicated in The Oklahoma State Plan.

- Approach 1 – Retention with the same employer – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide employers with skilled workers;
- Approach 2 – Repeat Business Customers – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to employers and sectors and establish productive relationships with employers and sectors over extended periods of time; and
- Approach 3 – Employer Penetration Rate – addresses the programs’ efforts to provide quality engagement and services to all employers and sectors within a State and local economy.

The NEWDB will utilize business service data collected through OJM to report the performance of service delivery to the U.S. Department of Labor and the Office of Workforce Development. A successful business service team is the driving force behind a One-Stop center meeting, and exceeding, these goals described in this plan.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT:**

*All Recipients, and Sub recipients/Sub grantees must comply with WIOA’s Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination provisions which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender*

*identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title-I financially assisted program or activity.*