

# *Implementing the Vision:* **Integration Between Workforce and Welfare in the Contra Costa County One-Stop Centers**

ROBERT HAYS

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

San Francisco's initial five-year work force development plan (1999-2004) envisioned the creation of a one-stop delivery system to provide universal access to a wide-range of employment and training services and ultimately link job seekers, workers, employers and training providers. In keeping with federal mandates to streamline service delivery, the plan envisioned that the one-stop programs and partners would coordinate and integrate services in a central location so the local workforce development system could function more coherently.

Practically speaking, San Francisco has struggled with their one-stop integration implementation. Key challenges have included the reluctance of some partner agencies to fully contribute and participate in one-stop activities, difficulties integrating the resources available from multiple funding streams and in particular, a modest level of integration between Workforce Investment Act and Welfare to Work programs.

While the San Francisco Human Services Agency has made significant progress in developing the one-stop system, a high percentage of one-stop customers who receive core services are not being enrolled in intensive services. Factors that have inhibited service integration between WtW and WIA programs include the lack of common intake procedures, lack of referral mechanisms and lack of case-managed, intensive services in the One-Stop Centers.

Contra Costa County has faced similar challenges in restructuring its employment services delivery systems but efforts to comply with WIA mandates eschewed the incremental approach favored by

San Francisco and instead fully embraced the principles embodied within WIA legislation. By merging the WIA and WtW programs under a single county administration, Contra Costa has built its workforce development structure on the One-Stop Career Centers design and increased opportunities to attain a higher level of integration between WIA and WtW programs.

At present, Contra Costa's One-Stop Centers are the key mechanisms to delivering employment and training services to universal customers including:

- (a) single point of entry and common intake procedures;
- (b) referral mechanisms between WtW and WIA funded services;
- (c) case-managed intensive services that can provide universal customers with a wide range of employment services, including labor information, assessment, career decision making, job search, and knowledge of training providers;
- (d) implementation of Individual Training Accounts model; and
- (e) One-Stop staff who are cross-trained in WtW and WIA programs.

This case study aimed to explore the operational aspects of Contra Costa's One-Stop Career Centers and learn about the degree of integration between the WIA and WtW employment programs. This topic was of interest to me because, unlike San Francisco, Contra Costa's WIB is embedded within its

---

**Robert Hays** is the Projects Manager in the Workforce Development Division with the City and County of San Francisco Human Services Agency.

Employment and Human Services Department. Specifically, I wanted to:

- Explore the efforts taken by Contra Costa County to serve WtW participants in the One-Stop Career;
- Learn how one-stop customers flow from core to intensive services;
- Increase understanding of One-Stop Operations;
- Identify best practices to help San Francisco County shape one-stop service delivery to meet the needs of job seekers based on customer needs rather than on eligibility or funding stream.

Although Contra Costa County has not yet achieved full integration, the One-Stop Centers do provide core and intensive services to universal customers. The One-Stop Centers have formal linkages with the WtW programs that allow for opportunities to co-case-manage clients.

### **Recommendations & Opportunities for San Francisco**

In comparing the two county's efforts towards the road to full integration, it appears that San Francisco County needs to expand and enrich one stop service delivery beyond core services to better serve a broader customer base. It also appears that San Francisco could immediately expand on their "light touch," staff-supported services for users of core services as the bridge to intensive, case-managed services. Finally, I make the following recommendations to improve San Francisco's delivery of seamless services to one-stop customers.

- Provide WIA Adult intake and registration at the One-Stop Centers to identify eligible core services customers for intensive services.
- Consider having discussion with the WISF Board on re-deploying the Private Industry Council's employment services staff and functions to the one-stop Centers and place under the general supervision of the One-Stop Operator.
- The use of WIA Intensive Services in the One-Stop Centers is underutilized. Consider implementation of one-stop case management and offering Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) to improve customer choice.
- If the one-stop Centers provide case management, the caseloads should not exceed 100 cases.
- Invest in one-stop staff cross-training to improve understanding of the variety of services in the one-stop Center, as well as the ability to access information on community services for customers.

The implementation of CalWIN may provide new opportunities to discuss and review the efficacy of the integrated case management model in WtW program knowledge of WIA/WtW programs. Given the ever-evolving and expanding workforce development system and new work participation requirements, the integrated caseworker model may not provide the advantages it once did prior to CalWIN. With the return of an eligibility driven system, it may be worth considering the separation of the two functions.

# *Implementing the Vision:* **Integration Between Workforce and Welfare in the Contra Costa County One-Stop Centers**

**ROBERT HAYS**

## **Introduction**

In response to federal legislation and subsequent requirements imposed by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to create a workforce development system and streamline access to employment services, the City and County of San Francisco developed an initial five-year workforce development plan in 1999.

The plan outlined the framework to overhaul the delivery of citywide, publicly funded employment programs and described the fundamental strategies to improve service delivery. In keeping with WIA key principles, the five-year plan called for the development of One-Stop Centers as the centerpiece of the new workforce development system.

The chief goals of the City's five-year plan included:

- Develop an integrated One-Stop Center system to link job seekers, workers, employers and training providers;
- Align publicly funded employment programs and resources with the larger workforce system;
- Establish a local workforce development board (WIB) to provide oversight and policy development for the one-stop system; and
- Select a program operator to deliver WIA funded employment services at the One-Stop Centers.

Prior to 1999, under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the employment services components of the San Francisco Department of Human Services (SFDHS) and the Private Industry Council (PIC) independently operated a wide range of employment services serving low-income residents of San Francisco. Although they shared many of the same objectives, were focused on employment, had an overlapping customer base and contracted with

many of the same community based organization for employment services, the two agencies co-existed with only moderate levels of coordination for direct services.

The SFDHS was instrumental in the preliminary planning and implementation of the City's first One-Stop Centers, and was one of the partner agencies of the operators' consortium that included two state agencies, the Employment Development Department and the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, City College of San Francisco and the Private Industry Council of San Francisco. More recently, the SFDHS through a memorandum of understanding agreement with the San Francisco Workforce Investment Board (WSIF) is the One-Stop Systems Operator responsible for the delivery of WIA-funded services in the one-stop Centers.

Operationally, some of the on-going challenges within the San Francisco one-stop system include:

- Funding;
- Availability of on-site case management for WIA Adult intensive services customers;
- Customer access to WIA Adult intensive services; and
- Front-end staff cross-training on WIA/WtW employment services.

Although the San Francisco One-Stop Centers provide a wide-range of core services for universal customers, the Centers do not have a common intake process or staff who are knowledgeable and well trained in WIA and WtW employment programs to screen and assess customers to help identify eligibility and determine customer service needs. And, the Centers currently do not have an effective means to identify and link potentially WIA Adult eligible

customers to case-managed intensive services, and there are few, if any, formal referral mechanisms to connect customers to job training providers. Generally speaking, most customers who register for employment services at the San Francisco One-Stop Centers receive little, if any, information about WIA intensive or job-training resources with the possible exception of WIA dislocated customers.

In some respects, despite the many achievements of the San Francisco One-Stop system, the JTPA service delivery model is still operational. For example, the PIC and the SFDHS fund and operate discrete employment programs with limited amounts of service integration, the WIA Adult Individual Training Account voucher system was never implemented, the PIC still engages in cost reimbursement contracts with community-based employment programs, and customers who enroll in WIA Adult-funded training are typically recruited by the provider independent of the One-Stop Centers.

Contra Costa County, like San Francisco, began implementing a one-stop system in 1999. However, the Contra Costa County Administrator, the Board of Supervisors, and the Director of the Social Services Department decided early on to pursue a strategy that eschewed an incremental approach. They merged the PIC with the county social services agency to streamline service delivery and reduce duplicative services. Contra Costa is still one of the few counties in the state to integrate the administration of their WtW and WIA employment programs within the same agency.

## Objective

My initial project goals were to learn about Contra Costa's efforts to link WtW clients with the One-Stop Centers. I wanted to learn more about one-stop job seeker, service delivery and client flow from core to intensive services. I also wanted to increase my understanding of one-stop operations.

## Background

The Contra Costa County Employment and Human Services Department (EHSD) is a large organization

that provides a wide-range of social services to residents of the county.

In 1999, Contra Costa's Social Services Department underwent a major reorganization and merged with the Private Industry Council (PIC / WIB) to create a single administrative structure that was renamed the Employment and Human Services Department. To facilitate the merger of the two organizations, the EHSD created a new Workforce Division under the direction of the EHSD executive director. The merging of the two programs was intended to align the workforce and welfare employment systems, reduce service duplication, and strengthen linkages with the WIA and WtW programs. The EHSD is staffed with 1447 full-time employees with a budget of \$331,972,913 in FY 05-06.

## Governance

The Contra Costa County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is comprised of 37 community leaders appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The WDB is responsible for the policy development, coordination and implementation of the county's workforce development system including the county's four regionalized One-Stop Career Centers. The WDB also provides oversight for the integration of CalWORKS into the larger workforce development system.

The Executive Director of the WDB manages the county's WIA programs, i.e., Youth Services, Small Business Development, Policy, Strategic Services and Labor Market Information.

The WDB is itself a partner in EASTBAY Works, a regional consortium of Workforce Investment Boards and employment and training agencies that includes the 14 One-Stop Centers in Alameda and Contra Costa County.

## One-Stop Operators Consortium

The EHSD, under an MOU agreement with the WDB, is the County's One-Stop Operator and lead fiscal agent for the one-stop system. The Consortium Administrator, also a county employee, manages daily operations of the One-Stop Centers. According to one manager, "The power of the One Stop Ser-

vices Operators Consortium (OSSOC) arises from the partnership of individual organizations. This alliance is also strengthened by formal and informal associations partners have with a myriad of other community, county, and state agencies, including community-based, faith-based, non-profit, and for-profit organizations.”

### Strategy

To accomplish the goals of my project I reviewed WIA legislation to familiarize myself with key WIA principles and read the five-year plans for both counties. I also interviewed workforce managers at the SFDHS and EHSD and visited the One-Stop Centers in San Pablo, Concord, and Pittsburg and met with site coordinators and case managers. I also had the opportunity to spend a half-day with the One-Stop Consortium Administrator at the county's comprehensive center in Concord.

### One-Stop Centers

In FY 05-06, the Contra Costa County One Stop Centers were funded at about \$3.3 million WIA funding totaled about \$2.9 million and the remaining funds were in-kind contributions from Consortium partners. Service goals for the 2005-06 operating year included:

- 8,700 new universal / core customers;
- 750 intensive service customers; and
- 275 training customers.

Outcomes for FY 04-05 included:

- 9,559 new / universal core customers;
- 398 training customers;
- 1250 (15%) WtW customers registered for services in FY 04-05; and
- CalWORKs = 488, GA = 128 and FSET = 634

The One-Stop Centers I visited were well maintained, organized, and professional in appearance. I was immediately impressed by the way front-end staff engaged customers, their level of program knowledge and ability to direct customers to center resources based on customer needs. I also noted the overall effort from all staff to create a customer friendly environment in the centers.

### Integration of WIA And WtW

As is the case in San Francisco, Contra Costa County WtW and WIA employment programs have a moderate level of coordination but they are not integrated. Generally speaking, WtW case managers do not refer clients to the One-Stop Centers for WIA Adult funded intensive or job training services. This may soon change, however, as the Concord One-Stop has started a pilot to provide job readiness and job search activities for WtW clients at the center. Aside from the pilot, it appears that Contra Costa's One-Stop system has not yet developed sustained linkages with the county's WtW programs beyond encouraging clients to use the available and abundant core services. In a survey conducted by the One-Stop Consortium on customer outreach, only 5% of customers who responded indicated they had heard about one-stop services from the EHSD. Several factors may partially explain the modest level of service integration:

- TANF funds are more abundant and flexible, are only available for cash assistance recipients and pay for a wide-range of employment and support services.
- The more restrictive and limited WIA funds serve one-stop customers who are identified by WIA/One-Stop case managers.
- WIA funds have historically not funded WtW clients and the funding stream silos inhibit integration.
- The CalWORKs program operates an in-house employment services program.

Contra Costa County did not implement an integrated WtW case management model. Reportedly, their decision to separate workforce and income maintenance functions was based on the belief that one integrated worker cannot effectively provide eligibility and workforce services. Workforce staff is fully dedicated to the provision of employment services, and customers reap the benefits and tend to not seek one-stop services.

## Intensive Services

WIA One-Stop services are prioritized and organized into three sequential categories: core, intensive, and job training. In the Contra Costa One-Stop Centers, I learned that non-aided, universal customers, who are potentially eligible for WIA intensive or job training services, attend special orientations to learn about supportive services and training opportunities. Customers who complete the initial workshop are invited back for more intensive exploration of WIA services and a review of their WIA application. The entire intake, eligibility and application process is completed on site by the WIA One-Stop staff. Once enrolled in intensive services, case managers will assess customer needs and barriers before training becomes an option. If job training is recommended by the case manager, the client must complete specific activities such as comprehensive assessment of their skills, abilities and interests, and engage in labor market research before an Individual Training Account (ITA) voucher is approved. I learned that ITA's are currently not restricted by income eligibility guidelines; any adult, regardless of income, is potentially eligible for WIA job training.

## Case Management

From my interview with a case manager at the Pittsburg One-Stop, I learned that the case manager plays a key role in developing ITA's. Following the completion of a comprehensive assessment process, the case manager provides guided assistance in career exploration, self-assessment, skills identification, labor market research, and life management issues, if any, to ensure customers make an informed choice. As the case manager explained her role, it was apparent to me that the overarching case management philosophy empowers customers to be pro-active in the discovery process. By modeling self-sufficiency and self-determination via informed decision-making, the case manager empowers clients to take responsibility for the final decisions in selecting a vendor or career path.

## Summary and Conclusions

From my limited perspective, it appears that Contra Costa County made a strategically sound decision by merging the PIC / WIB and EHSD. Although full integration has not occurred, the vision and the leadership that influenced and managed the merger reflects the aspirations of the EHSD to complete the goals envisioned in their initial five-year workforce development plan.

As one EHSD Manager put it, "the nesting of the WIB under the EHSD has allowed staff that traditionally worked with one population (WIA or CalWORKs) an opportunity to branch out and serve a broad customer base. This has broadened the horizon of the one-stop of whom the WIA and the WIB can serve." The same manager said "the alignment of the WIB and WtW under one administration has improved cross- program communication and increased program understanding in the areas of funding restrictions, eligibility, and services. For example, when the WIB secures grant funding to serve the unemployed / under-employed, there is an easily accessible pool of applicants on the WtW side. Cost savings / cost avoidance is also achieved by requiring only one infrastructure, like HR, IT support, etc."

## Recommendations & Opportunities for San Francisco

- Provide WIA Adult intake and registration at the One-Stop Centers to identify eligible core services customers for intensive services.
- Consider having discussions with the WISF Board on redeploying PIC's employment services staff and functions to the One-Stop Centers and place them under the general supervision of the One-Stop Operator.
- The use of WIA Intensive Services in the One-Stop Centers is underutilized. Consider implementation of case management services and the Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) model to improve customer choice.
- Invest in One-Stop staff cross-training to improve cross-program knowledge of WIA/WtW.

The implementation of CalWIN may provide new opportunities to discuss and review the efficacy of the integrated WtW case management model. Given the City's ever-evolving and expanding workforce development system and, with the addition of new work participation requirements, the integrated WtW caseworker model may not provide the advantages it once had prior to CalWIN implementation. It is worth considering the separation of the eligibility and workforce functions.

## **Acknowledgements**

My thanks to:

Stephen Baiter, Administrator,  
Contra Costa One Stop Consortium

Karen Morgan, Lead Division Manager,  
Contra Costa County Workforce Services

David Lyons, Coordinator  
West County Career Center

Richard Cox, Coordinator  
Pittsburg/Brentwood Career Centers

Monta Vaca, Case Manager  
Pittsburg Career Center

And, especially  
John Cullen and Lynn Yaney

