

STATE LEVEL
ONE STOP OPERATOR
RECERTIFICATION TOOLKIT

For use by
Local Workforce Investment Boards
And One-Stop Operators

May 2004

Produced by
NYS Department of Labor
in consultation with
Systems Integration Subcommittee of the
New York State Workforce Investment Board

SECTION I
STATE LEVEL ONE-STOP OPERATOR
RECERTIFICATION TOOLKIT

Introduction:

This toolkit has been designed for use by both Workforce Investment Boards and One-Stop Operators. Section I outlines the Recertification process and includes the application forms. Sections II and III provide detailed guidance for WIBs in developing the local level Recertification process; Sections IV, V and VI provide information to assist Operators in: Preparing for Recertification, Developing a Consortium Agreement, and updating the Business Plan. Additional information is included from the Benchmarking One-Stop Centers report specifically on the Critical Success Factors, and an explanation of the System Indicators adopted by the State Workforce Investment Board. **The Board and its Operator(s) should review this Guide in its entirety before applying for Recertification.**

Recertification Process:

The process for applying for State Level Recertification of your One-Stop Operator(s) is similar to the initial certification application process; the steps are outlined below. The primary change you will notice is the elimination of the State site visit, replaced with the Department of Labor's (Department) "comprehensive review" of available data and information about a local area. A list of elements that may be reviewed by the Department during Recertification is attached. Questions from the Board about the Recertification process may be directed to onestop@labor.ny.gov or daphne.forezzi@labor.ny.gov.

Each local Board will be required to submit the following documents to the Department in applying for state level one-stop operator recertification:

- Application Forms ([Attached](#))
- Description of Local Recertification Process
- Copy of Completed Operator Application and WIB Feedback to Operator
- Copy of Operator Consortium Agreement (if applicable)
- Copy of Updated Operator Business Plan
- Updated WIB/Operator Agreement w/original signatures

Once the application has been received and reviewed, the State will conduct a comprehensive review of available data and information to get a broader picture of the relative "health" of the local system as it relates to WIA. Subsequently, written findings will be transmitted to the WIB Director and a conference call will be scheduled to discuss findings and any issues that need resolution prior to Recertification. The Department's central office workforce staff and local field staff will be involved in the comprehensive review and will participate in the follow-up conference calls. If there are outstanding issues, the WIB will be required to provide the Department with a timeline for addressing the issues. The Department will provide technical assistance and/or training and will make consultants available if necessary to assist the local area in achieving Recertification.

If a local area is unable to address issues and achieve Recertification within a reasonable period of time (agreed to between the local WIB and the Department) after issues have been identified, sanctions will be discussed.

The application forms must be included with the documents noted in the bulleted list above. Please mail all application documents, with a transmittal letter, to:

**Ms. Margaret Moree
Director, Workforce Development
And Training Division
NYS Department of Labor
State Campus, Building 12, Room 450
Albany, New York 12240**

SECTION II

GUIDELINES FOR THE BOARD IN DEVELOPING LOCAL RECERTIFICATION PROCESS

It is the responsibility of each local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) to designate and certify one-stop operators in their local workforce investment area. It is also the responsibility of the WIB to oversee and evaluate them. The Recertification process gives the WIB the opportunity to make a formal assessment.

Many of you will be tempted to simply follow the procedures you established for initial certification as your Recertification process; however, this is a good opportunity to review and see if your process is as meaningful as it could be. Each WIB should be taking a close look at the performance, achievements and outcomes resulting from your center(s) and/or system operator. Some things you may want to consider (beyond meeting WIA mandated performance goals) based on the roles and responsibilities articulated in the WIB/Operator Agreement or otherwise agreed to by the parties:

- Are services being provided efficiently and effectively?
- Has progress been made according to the Operator's business plan?
- Is the Operator responsive to customer concerns, WIB feedback and secret shopper findings?
- Has the Operator(s) been proactive in bringing in additional partners, leveraging and maximizing resources, establishing strategic relationships with non-traditional partners?
- Has the Operator kept the WIB informed, met or exceeded performance goals, implemented new ideas?
- Given the economic climate of your area, is the Operator proactive, aligning priorities with labor market conditions and known trends?

Is the Operator's current performance and planned goals in alignment with the WIB's vision and strategic plan?

- Does the WIB expect that the Operator will actively participate in the Strategic Planning grant and respond to (or assist in development of) the State of the Workforce report?
- Does the Operator actively engage in networking within the community and with peers to anticipate or respond to needs, or seek promising practices that might be replicated?
- Are the center(s) well managed, attractive and clean, well stocked with materials and functioning equipment?
- Does the Operator communicate well with the Board, with center staff, with partners in the one stop center and in affiliate sites?
- If your Operator is a "system" operator, are you satisfied with the performance of the system? Is there a system focus to the Operator's approach?

- Have you recommended center measures or instituted the State Board's system indicators in the WIB/Operator Agreement and if so, is the Operator in compliance?

In revisiting your certification process (or Recertification process if already in place) you may want to incorporate a "report card" or something similar to quantify your Operator's performance during initial certification. For some of you who established a multi-level certification, you will want to ensure that the Operator meets all of the criteria necessary to move to the next level. If they haven't met the criteria, what sanctions do you have available according to your process – or will you decide to terminate the relationship and designate a new Operator either by going out for bid or identifying a new consortium? Remember your Operator Agreement is a contractual agreement. Did the Operator hold to the commitment that was made to the Board?

Below are the elements the State will require you to include in your local Recertification process. These are the minimum; it is expected that your Recertification process will include additional elements.

The Local Recertification Process Developed by the WIB must require:

- That the Operator review and update (if applicable) their current Operator's Consortium Agreement. If changes are made, a copy of the new Consortium Agreement must be submitted with the Recertification application to the WIB. If no Agreement currently exists, the members of the Consortium must develop an Agreement, sign and submit it to the WIB;
- That the Operator update and submit a Business Plan with a statement as to goals achieved during the period of initial certification and new goals set. The Business Plan should be in alignment with the vision and goals of the Board;
- That the Operator provides the name and address of each full-service one-stop center and certified affiliate site that they oversee and their operating hours. The list should include the names of partners on-site and how often they are on-site (e.g. two days per week); and,
- That the Operator review and sign the revised WIB/Operator Agreement.

The WIB will be required to submit a complete copy of the Operator's local application materials (including a current Consortium Agreement unless the Operator was selected through competitive bid) as well as the WIB's feedback to the Operator application. If deficiencies were noted by the WIB, the Operator's timeline for addressing the deficiencies must also be included.

(See Section I, the State's Recertification Process for additional application requirements)

**SECTION III
TIPS FOR THE BOARD
IN DEVELOPING THE WIB/OPERATOR AGREEMENT**

As part of the State-level Recertification Process, the Board must submit a revised WIB/Operator Agreement. This Agreement is drafted by the Board and is presented to the Operator for discussion and signature. As stated in WIA Section 662.400, “The Agreement between the Local Board and the One-Stop Operator shall specify the Operator’s role. That role may range between simply coordinating service providers within the center, to being the primary provider of services within the center, to coordinating activities throughout the One-Stop system.”

The WIB/Operator Agreement establishes the contractual relationship between the two entities and, therefore, should clearly state the WIB’s expectations in relation to performance and accountability and whether the Operator is a “center” operator or a “system” operator.

If you hired your Operator through a competitive bid process, you will have entered into a legal contract that spells out what the Operator will deliver in exchange for the sum you agreed to pay. Similarly, if you have designated a consortium of partner programs as the Operator, you should look at the WIB/Operator Agreement as the contract between you and the Operator you have “hired” - what is the role of the Operator; what responsibilities do they have in relation to the center(s), to the system, to customers, partners and the community; and what activities or outcomes will you hold them accountable for? What can the Operator expect from you - technical assistance, support in developing the customer base or bringing in additional resources?

The following categories must be addressed in the WIB/Operator Agreement. Questions and comments are provided under each category heading to assist you in formulating the content of each section of the Agreement.

1. Designation of the Operator

State whether the Operator was chosen through a competitive process or is a consortium of three or more partner programs (and name them). If the Operator is a Consortium, one Consortium member should be named as liaison to the Board (previously agreed to among Consortium members through their Consortium Agreement). State the beginning and termination date of the Agreement.

2. WIB’s Vision for the One-Stop System

In order to perform well, the Operator must know what course the WIB has set for the system as a whole; therefore the WIB should briefly state their vision and goals so that the Operator can align center policies and services accordingly. For example, given shrinking resources, will regional coordination of some projects or grant resources be one of your goals to help advance the Board’s vision? If so, how will you expect your Operator(s) to support this goal?

3. WIB’s Role in Relationship to the Operator

State the Board’s role as overseer of the Operator. Will the Board also oversee the one-stop system or has the Operator been designated as a “system” operator to fulfill that role? Will the Board be responsible for marketing the system or will that be the role of the Operator? What role will the Board play with regard to business services and business customers? What other responsibilities will the WIB have with respect to the Operator?

4. **Operator's Role and Responsibilities**

Will the Operator oversee one center, multiple centers or, as mentioned above, the one-stop center system? If the Operator will oversee multiple centers or the system, is there a particular management structure the Board will require to ensure day-to-day management of each center? What services will the Board require the Operator to provide beyond traditional core, intensive and training services? Must the Operator provide extended hours at one or more centers? Is the Operator required to have a staff development plan in place? Is it the Operator's role to oversee the business services team?

5. **Working Relationship Between the Board and the Operator**

What is the protocol the Operator must follow for bringing issues to the attention of the Board? How will communications take place between the Board and the Operator and how often? Will the Operator be expected to participate with the Board in the development of strategic planning for the one-stop system, contribute to the State of the Workforce report, and provide the Board with an Annual Report of Accomplishments? What type of decision-making authority does the Operator have, and have parameters been established regarding the Operator's ability to set center level policies and protocols or standards across the system?

6. **Standards, Measures and Performance Outcomes**

The WIB sets forth specific outcomes they expect the Operator to achieve in addition to the WIA Title I measures mandated by law. Some things to consider:

- A. Are you requiring the Operator to collect data with regard to system indicators as adopted by the State Workforce Investment Board (Appendix A)?
- B. Are there particular center outcomes or minimum standards that are desired such as:
 - Outcomes expressed as a percentage increase in: customers or special populations served, workshops delivered, number of jobs retained, partners on-site;
 - Standards for greeting customers, answering the telephone, staffing the resource room;
 - Policies or strategies for follow-up and exiting of job seeker customers?
- C. Is there a particular customer or service focus the Board wants the Operator to adopt during the period of the Agreement?
- D. How often will there be a formal and informal review of the Operator's performance; will the Board conduct anonymous visits to one-stop centers; how will Operator deficiencies be handled?

In addition, the Board should articulate its expectations of the Operator in relation to the Critical Success Factors (Appendix B) contained in the Benchmarking One-Stop Centers report by the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce. Include additional terms in the Agreement as appropriate, e.g., parties' ability to terminate or change the Agreement, description of the Recertification process and timeline, etc.

SECTION IV TIPS FOR THE OPERATOR IN PREPARING FOR RECERTIFICATION

Before Applying for Recertification

- Conduct an assessment of your current operation using either an assessment tool or “report card” approach. Assessment discussions should include Consortium members (if applicable), center staff, partners and customers as appropriate. Review performance outcomes, customer feedback, Swipe card and OSOS data, and other reports and data available to you;
- Meet with partners to discuss working relationships, any operational changes involving partner programs, access to partner services, etc.
- Review Business Plan; identify and discuss strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that may not have been uncovered during assessment. Acknowledge accomplishments and articulate new goals and strategies that align with vision and strategic plan of the Board. Include center measures and system indicators (Appendix A) and incorporate Critical Success Factors for one-stop centers (Appendix B); and,
- Review WIB/Operator Agreement and determine if there are any changes the Consortium members would like to negotiate with the Board.

If Operator is a Consortium, also:

- Meet with Consortium Members to determine any modifications necessary in working relationships, roles and responsibilities, or changes to the Consortium membership;
- Revise Consortium Agreement (or establish one if not already in place). The Consortium Agreement should clearly outline each member’s role and responsibilities with regard to operating the center(s) or system as applicable.

SECTION V TIPS FOR THE OPERATOR IN DEVELOPING A CONSORTIUM AGREEMENT

An Operator Consortium must submit a Consortium Agreement to its Board as part of the local Recertification process.

The purpose of the Consortium Agreement is to define the role of each partner program as it pertains to the operation of the center(s) or system. This document is NOT a duplicate of the language in the MOU, which outlines the contribution each mandated partner program will make to the system.

A Consortium must be made up of a minimum of three partner programs to be eligible for designation as Operator. The role of each Consortium member will depend upon whether the Consortium is Operator of a single center, multiple centers, or Operator of the system. In general, the role of a one-stop operator Consortium is to:

1. **Understand and Build a Collaborative Leadership Team**
How will you encourage collaborative leadership? How will you demonstrate the existence of a cohesive leadership team to center staff? What communication methods will you use and how often will you meet to discuss concerns or new ideas?
2. **Determine How Decisions/Policies Will be Made and Carried Out**
Will you make decisions by consensus, majority vote or other method? Are there certain decisions that Consortium members can make unilaterally or must all decisions be brought to the full Consortium for agreement? What center-wide policies will be in place; how are they determined and who is responsible for implementation or updating?
3. **Identify System, Center and Program Roles and Responsibilities**
System, center and program roles and responsibilities should be identified for the Consortium as a whole and for each member of the Consortium. Without clearly defined roles and responsibilities, service gaps, staffing problems, unhappy customers, ineffective processes and negative perceptions of leadership ability may occur.
4. **Determine How Each Consortium Member will Contribute to Center Operations and Provide Input into the System**
Who will manage the day-to-day operations of each center? Is there one Consortium member in charge of overseeing particular processes (e.g., collecting and analyzing customer feedback, tracking performance, managing the SWIPE card system) or customer groups or activities in the center(s)? Who will assume administrative responsibilities, address staffing issues and staff training, and who is responsible for matters related to the actual one-stop facility? How will each member provide input into the system?
5. **Select one Member as Liaison to the Board**
One of the Consortium members should be named as primary liaison to the Board. This member's duties might include reporting out at Board meetings, communicating regularly with Board staff and relaying information back to the other Consortium members. How and how often will this occur and what other responsibilities will this member have as liaison to the Board?

Additional information about System and Center Operators:

System Operators:

- Implement the system described in the MOU
- Achieve and are accountable for system outcomes
- Convene one-stop partners to continuously improve seamless service delivery
- Coordinate seamless service delivery between system sites, the full-service center and partners' programs

- Develop and maintain system technological links
- Seek to expand system partnerships and resources
- Additional responsibilities as required by the Board

Center Operators:

- Oversee center operations and provision of services
- Implement the provision of core services and access to intensive and training services, including acting as point of access for Individual Training Accounts
- Coordinate customer access to one-stop partner programs and activities
- Ensure customer access to Wagner-Peyser services, including job search, placement, recruitment and other labor exchange services

NOTE: Some information excerpted from handouts developed for NYS Department of Labor by Greg Newton, Greg Newton Associates.

SECTION VI TIPS FOR THE OPERATOR IN DEVELOPING A BUSINESS PLAN

You've been designated to "operate" one center, multiple centers or the entire one-stop career center system in your local area. How well you succeed is based in large part on having an effective, well thought out business plan. Suggested plan elements were included in the original Guide to One-Stop Operator Certification, which can be viewed at www.labor.ny.gov/workforcenypartners/ososguide.shtm. Listed below are questions that may help you in revisiting and updating your business plan. In addition, the business plan should incorporate the State Board's system indicators (Appendix A) and be focused toward achieving excellence in relation to the one-stop center Critical Success Factors (Appendix B).

1. **What Business Are You In?**

If you walk around your one-stop center and ask staff what business they're in, will everyone have the same answer? Is it the job development business, the job placement business, the skills training business, the "swipe them and street them" business, or the "let's just make sure we make performance outcomes" business? Is there a particular emphasis on one or more of these that will help you achieve the others more easily? It's worth a discussion. You may want to look not only at the one-stop center Critical Success Factors, but also use an assessment tool or report card method to help identify where you should focus efforts and resources.

Examples of assessment tools were included in the hard copy of the May 2001 Guide to One-Stop Operator Certification. In addition, there is an assessment tool that Corporation for a Skilled Workforce created as a companion to the Critical Success Factors. To request a copy, contact onestop@labor.ny.gov and ask for the "CSW Self-Assessment Tool."

2. **Who are Your Target Customers?**

Businesses and job seekers are your primary customers but is there a particular segment of either of those customer groups that you are trying to reach or want to place particular emphasis on for the next six months or more? How will you determine this - do you have measurements in place that show your market share of business and job seeker customers as described in the system indicator measures? Do staff, center management, partners and affiliate sites share the same focus? Are there customers who might be willing to pay for some services? With dwindling resources, should fee-for-services be a focus this year? Are there internal customers who, if positively approached, might be able to help operations run more smoothly or increase service levels? Are you aware of your customer demographics and have designed services in relation to those demographics? Does the Board have expectations with regard to a particular customer goal or emphasis? Again, data collection around market penetration related to your two customer groups and customer satisfaction indicators are essential for determining how to target services.

3. **Who is Your Competition?**

Identify your own organization's strengths and weaknesses and then take a look at the competition. What can you do to distinguish your services from your competitors'? Do you provide a unique service or focus on a particular customer group that gives you a market niche, or have you perhaps designed an innovative service delivery method? Benchmark successful practices of other local one-stop systems or private sector competitors; borrow ideas and initiate strategic alliances that mutually benefit all parties.

4. **What Are the Financial and People Resources You Need?**

Resources are always tight –the best way to stretch them is by developing partnerships that will help you leverage additional resources. Is your resource room sufficiently staffed? Invite non-traditional partners to participate; they may be willing to contribute staff or other resources for the possibility of reaching more of their own clientele through free advertising in your center or other mutual benefits.

5. **Do you Need to Revamp Your Products and Services?**

Are customers asking for services you don't provide? Have economic conditions changed or an increase/decrease in a particular customer group that would affect your service mix? Is there a way to allow access to services or products that would be more convenient for your customers? What about the business customer specifically – how does their business climate change the way you design and deliver services or expand the array of services you offer? In order to benefit all customers, many one-stop systems have begun to bring in additional services like a notary public, legal aid, eldercare service providers, drug testing, and services that address small business owner needs. You'll gain the advantage if you can offer something different than your competitors and that adds value to the customer.

6. **Managing the Center and Staff**

Does everyone know his or her role and responsibilities? Does staff have the training and tools they need to do their job well? Do you have a training or staff capacity plan for front line staff? Are there new or ongoing training needs identified and a plan for implementation? How are policies communicated from management to supervisors to front line staff? What is the mechanism for staff to provide feedback

or put forth ideas to management? Are there operating procedures, written protocols and resource manuals that staff can reference when needed? Are staff trained to perform more than one function and aware of partner resources and services? Is staff aware of and working in concert with the Board and center management's vision and goals? Is staff empowered to make decisions and have parameters been established? Do center and system policies and procedures encourage teamwork? Are facilities clean, designed in a customer-friendly manner (e.g., enabling easy customer flow, positioning the resource room as the focal point of the center, providing a modicum of privacy for customers meeting with staff), and secure? Are center materials up-to-date, easy to read, plentiful and available in a variety of formats including access for the disabled? Is equipment up to date and in good repair? Is any staff member or members specifically responsible to take care of these types of center and resource room concerns? Is there adequate staffing at all times, particularly in the resource room? Are there additional ways you can maximize staff resources available to you (e.g., partner staff, part-time staff or volunteers, youth interns)?

7. **How Do You Know You're Making Progress Toward Goals and Mandates?**

What is your data telling you about the success of your center or system? How do you stack up against the Critical Success Factors? Do you have center measures in place that everyone is aware of and working toward? Are you collecting data in relation to the system indicators adopted by the State Board? Has the Operator or someone else been designated to track progress toward goals stated in the business plan or goals outlined by the WIB in the WIB/Operator Agreement? How do you know when to change something that isn't working? Have processes been mapped, policies checked periodically to see if they're working or causing difficulties in some part of the operation? Is there a standardized customer satisfaction feedback instrument that allows you to aggregate information across the system? Is feedback used, posted for staff and public to see? Have improvements been made that positively affected outcomes? If so, they should be published so staff and customers alike are aware that you're being responsive.

Review your current business plan, assess your strengths and opportunities for improvement and determine new goals. Your new business plan should be aligned with the Board's vision and provide you with a blueprint for action that all Consortium members agree to support and work toward.

[Appendix A](#)

[Appendix B](#)