

A Study of Employer Services Provided at One Stop Job Centers in Wisconsin

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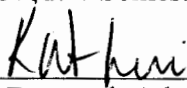
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kathryn", is written over a horizontal line.

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ABSTRACT

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With the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, there was a push for one-stop Job Centers to provide services to job seekers and employers throughout the country. In Wisconsin there are currently eleven workforce development areas with 72 One-stop Job Centers. Since the WIA was implemented, there have been several studies that have looked at how services are provided to job seekers, but very few have looked at how employer services are provided. There are several services that are required to be provided for employers, but each local area has the final say in how these services are provided. Some areas have dedicated teams to work with their local employers, and while other areas may have employer services teams, their team members also have other job duties they are responsible for as well. This research is being done to

ascertain what services may be considered best practices in their local area, and to discover if these services can be transferred to other workforce development areas with similar success.

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Chapter I: Introduction

In 1998 President Clinton signed into legislation the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), replacing the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) which had been in existence for 16 years. The WIA “provides the framework for a unique national workforce preparation and employment system designed to be customer-focused in meeting both the needs of business for skilled workers and assisting individuals in easily accessing the information and services needed to manage their careers.” (Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, 2003-2004). The WIA has seven key principles:

1. Streamlining services through the One Stop Job Centers delivery system; 2. Empowering individuals to take responsibility for the services they require to succeed in the local labor market; 3. Universal access to the One Stop Job Center system is available to anyone who wants to advance his/her career; 4. Increased accountability for States, local areas, and providers of services that require performance and customer satisfaction to be a top priority; 5. Strong role for local workforce investment boards and the private sector in designing and managing programs at the local level where the needs of business and individuals are best understood; 6. State and local flexibility to design and implement customer-focused, comprehensive delivery systems tailored to meet the particular needs of local and regional labor markets, and 7. Improved youth programs that offer a broad range of coordinated services that are linked more closely to local labor market needs. (Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, 2003-2004).

One of the mandates of the WIA is that each local area provides a “One-Stop” center for all employment related programs. The premise behind these “One-Stops” is that all agencies that provide services to job seekers be housed in one location so the customer does not need to travel all over the city or county to apply for services from the different programs. There are several agencies that are required to be housed in the “One Stop” Job Centers which include:

The Wagner-Peyser Act; the Adult Education and Literacy title of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA); the Vocational Rehabilitation Act; the Welfare-to-Work grants; Title V of the Older American Act; postsecondary vocational education under the Perkins Act; Trade Adjustment Assistance; veterans employment services under chapter 41 of title 38, U.S.C.; unemployment compensation laws; Community Service Block Grants; and employment and training activities carried out by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (The Workforce Investment System and Related Programs, 2003).

In many of the “One Stop” Job Centers, there are several functions that are funded by all agencies; these may include staff for the Resource Room/Center, Reception, Switchboard, and other clerical functions. There is usually one agency that is considered the lead agency in each Job Center and is responsible for collecting rent and other payments to keep the Job Center operating at appropriate levels. Depending on the agencies housed in the Job Center, funding for these functions may come from any of the following sources: Wagner-Peyser; Veteran’s Programs; Workforce Investment Act; Welfare to Work (WtW); Carl Perkins; Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA); Rehabilitation Act of 1973; Wisconsin Works (W2); Temporary Assistance to

Needy Families (TANF); Food Stamp Employment and Training Program (FSET); and Child Care Subsidy.

In Rock County as the “one-stop” concept was in the formative stages, there were two sets of standards developed by the local Management Team that established guidelines for the Job Center. The Management Team is composed of supervisors from the following agencies: Wisconsin Job Service; Department of Vocational Rehabilitation; Blackhawk Technical College; AFL-CIO Labor Education and Training Center; Rock County; South Central Wisconsin Child Care Resource and Referral; and Community Action. The two standards developed included Service Standards which refer to the services that are available to Job Center customers, and Functional Standards that reflect how each Job Center providers services in relation to the areas of Intake, Case Management, Assessment, and Employer Relations. Development of these standards allowed the local agencies that were coming together in the Job Center to create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that addressed the issues of how each agency would provide services in each area (Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board website, retrieved October 10, 2004).

Following the mandates of the WIA, each “One Stop” Job Center is required to have available three levels of service for any customer entering the Job Center. These levels of services include Core, Intensive and Training. Services at the Core level are available to all adults and have no eligibility requirements. According to the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board, Core Services include the following:

Job search and placement assistance (including career counseling;

Labor market information (which identifies job vacancies; skills needed for in-demand jobs; and local, regional and national employment and salary trends);

Initial assessment (skill levels, aptitudes, abilities and supportive services needs);

Information about available partner agency services;

Eligible training provider performance information;

Follow-up services to help customers keep their jobs once they are placed

(Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Workforce Investment Act Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, Program Year 2003-3004).

After receiving services at the Core level, participants may move into the Intensive level if they meet certain eligibility requirements. For an adult participant to move into the Intensive level, they must meet 200% of the federal poverty level, and for dislocated workers, they must have documentation of their layoff or plant closing.

Services at the Intensive level include:

- A Comprehensive assessment;
- Development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for Adults and Dislocated Workers;
- Development of an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for Youth;
- Services documented on the IEP/ISS may include group and individual career counseling, case management, and short-term pre-vocational services (including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training).

Intensive Services must be provided by WIA funded staff (Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Workforce Investment Act Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, Program Year 2003-3004).

If after receiving Intensive services, the participant is still unable to secure employment, then they may move into the Training level of service. At this level, the services provided can include:

Occupational skills training

Job readiness training

Adult education and literacy activities in conjunction with other training

(Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Workforce Investment Act Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, Program Year 2003-3004).

In addition to services provided to job seekers, there are other services that can be provided to employers, and each local area may provide slightly different services which affect the amount of use employers in that area give the local Job Center. The focus of this research will be on employer services, specifically job order posting on the Wisconsin Job Order System (WJOS). Job orders can be posted on WJOS in two ways: 1) by Job Center staff directly into WJOS, or 2) by the employer via Internet access, which is then approved by Job Center staff before it appears on JobNet.

Statement of the Problem

While the WIA lists services that should be provided to employers, each local workforce development area can decide how they will provide these services. Some areas have a dedicated team of staff members who deal only with employer services, while

other areas have a team of staff members who also have other job duties in addition to providing employer services. There are several factors that can affect how much employers utilize WJOS including: how informed the employers are about services offered by their local Job Center, if the employer has any current job openings, if they have access to the technology required to enter their own job orders, and if they feel they get enough qualified job applicants from the Job Center. This research will look at how employer services are offered in Rock, Kenosha, and Racine Counties, as these three counties are similar in population. Employer services are provided differently in these counties resulting in widely varying numbers of job orders being entered on the Wisconsin Job Order System (WJOS) by both staff and employers.

The researcher will investigate how each Job Center provides information on their employer services, what services are offered, how these services are offered and will compare information gathered from reports from the WJOS to see how these services affect employer use. This will be accomplished by visiting the websites of each Job Center to see how information is presented for employers in that format, as well as visiting both the Kenosha and Racine County Job Centers to speak with employer services teams in those locations to see how they provide services to their employer communities.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore how each of the three areas provides their employer services and to determine if successful practices from one area can be utilized in the other areas to increase employer usage and the number of job orders being placed

on the system. This study will look for best practices from each of the three areas that will be compiled into a report that each Job Center will have access to.

Assumptions of the Study

One assumption of this researcher is that how the local Job Center provides their employer services either adversely or favorably affects how employers utilize those services. Another assumption is that employer usage of their local Job Center will increase if best practice services are taken from one area and provided in another area.

Definition of Terms

One-Stop Job Center – A single location “where information about and access to a wide array of job training, education, and employment services is available for customers...” (Workforce Investment Act of 1998, 1998).

JobNet – JobNet is a self-service, computer-aided system that job seekers can use to quickly find available job openings. (Department of Workforce Development Website, retrieved October 11, 2004). It can be operated via either a touch screen or the mouse and can also be accessed via the Internet.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) – Legislation enacted in 1998 to update the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) which “provides the framework for a unique national workforce preparation and employment system designed to be customer-focused in meeting both the needs of business for skilled workers and assisting individuals in easily accessing the information and services needed to manage their careers.” (Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, 2003-2004).

Dislocated Worker – A person who has been terminated or laid off, or who has received a notice of termination or lay-off from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or substantial layoff at, a plant, facility, or enterprise.

(Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Out-of-School Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Handbook, 2003-2004).

Wisconsin Job Order System (WJOS) – Computerized database system used by employers and employer services staff to list job openings on the JobNet (Department of Workforce Development Website, 2004, retrieved October 15, 2004).

Job Order – Information regarding the open position(s) a company has that they want to post on WJOS which includes the job title, job duties, wage, hours and other pertinent information (News Release dated July 6, 2001, retrieved on October 15, 2004).

Limitations of the Study

There are three limitations to this study which may affect the outcome, and need to be taken into consideration. While the three counties are similar in population, both Racine and Kenosha counties have more employers than Rock County which may skew the number of job orders placed on WJOS. Another limitation is the amount of time staff members in each area will have to assist this researcher in gathering information. The third limitation is the fact that information entered into WJOS may be affected by local policy regarding listing orders placed through the Internet. In some local areas, staff members visit the websites of companies and take job orders off that system to enter into WJOS. This practice will affect the numbers that are reported on WJOS regarding job orders placed with each local Job Center.

Methodology

This paper will discuss the current literature pertaining to the practice of benchmarking, as well as requirements for One Stop Job Centers. It will also discuss the research that was completed along with the questionnaire that was utilized, what the findings of this research are, and how this research can be used to enhance employer services offered through One Stop Job Centers in Wisconsin.

Chapter II: Literature Review

While the WIA lists services that should be provided to employers, each local workforce development area can decide how they want to provide these services. Some areas have a dedicated team of staff members who deal only with employer services, while other areas have a team of staff members who also have other job duties in addition to providing employer services. There are several factors that can affect how much employers utilize WJOS including: how informed the employers are about services offered by their local Job Center, if the employer has any current job openings, if they have access to the technology required to enter their own job orders, and if they feel they get enough qualified job applicants from the Job Center. This research will look at how employer services are offered in Rock, Kenosha, and Racine Counties, as these three counties are similar in population. Employer services appear to be provided very differently in these counties resulting in varying numbers of job orders being entered on the Wisconsin Job Order System (WJOS) by both staff and employers.

A review of current literature shows that this type of study has not been attempted before. In this chapter the researcher will discuss benchmarking practices and how those practices will assist the researcher to gather relevant information for this project. The researcher will also further describe what services are listed in the WIA that are to be provided to employers, and compare how those services are provided in the three Job Centers.

Michael J. Spendolini defines benchmarking as “A continuous, systematic process for evaluating the products, services, and work processes of organizations that are recognized as representing best practices for the purpose of promoting organizational

improvement.” (Spendolini, 1999). An important aspect of Spendolini’s definition is that benchmarking needs to be a continuous process meaning the organization needs to continue looking at what they are doing and how it is affecting their business. Just looking at a certain process and benchmarking themselves against a competitor once will not allow the company to improve their process for the long haul. They need to keep checking on their competitors to keep up with new technology and other advances in their particular field. While Spendolini’s definition is a good place to start, there are other definitions that should be considered also.

In an article by Mohamed (1999) his definition of benchmarking is “...the art of establishing superior performance by identifying gaps in performance and emulating the best practices which help close them.” Identifying gaps in performance can sometimes be difficult for some organizations especially if not everyone in the organization is buying into the benchmarking process, but it is a very important aspect of benchmarking that should not be ignored. Finding out where the gaps in performance are allows an organization to make small changes that will ultimately improve their overall processes and final product or service. If these gaps are ignored, they could become a larger problem for the organization that they may not be able to repair which could possibly put them out of business.

According to the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC)
“Benchmarking is the process of identifying, understanding, and adapting outstanding practices from organizations anywhere in the world to help your organization improve its performance” (Jones, 1999). The APQC’s definition reminds organizations that they can benchmark their processes against any other organizations even if that company is half

way around the world or makes an entirely different product. The process itself is what needs to be looked at, how is each step of the process performed? What types of materials are used in the process? Are there other ways of performing the process that may improve productivity? Are there other materials that could be used to lower production costs? Are there safety precautions that could be implemented to cut down on the danger of accidents? These are all important questions of the benchmarking process that organizations need to ask when looking at the processes of another organization.

Sloley (1999) sees benchmarking as “the process of establishing known performance parameters for comparison purposes.” This is another important aspect to the benchmarking process. How can you benchmark your process against another organization if you do not know what your own performance parameters are? Once an organization has discovered their parameters, then they can begin to look at other organizations to see how they compare. For the purpose of this study, an example of a performance parameter might be the percentage of job orders that are entered into WJOS by employers. Another performance parameter might be the actual services that are provided to employers. Both of these items are discussed in the WIA and will be explained more completely further in this chapter.

Bernard Williams Associates (1994) definition reads “Benchmarking is the process of comparing a product, service, process – indeed any activity or object – with other samples from a peer group, with a view to identifying “best buy” or “best practice” and targeting oneself to emulate it” (Housley, 1999). A precaution for organizations looking at this definition is that they must carefully select what organization they want to compare themselves with. If they pick a company that is performing at a lower level than

their own company, they may feel that they are doing everything the way it should be done and stop looking at their processes for ways to improve. At the other end of that spectrum is the fact that the organization could choose a company that is performing so far above their current processes that they may feel that they can no longer compete in that market.

Organizations also need to realize that they do not necessary have to go outside of their own company to benchmark certain processes. They could compare different departments in their own organization to see how each is performing certain processes. There is a danger in doing this type of benchmarking as well as some departments may not openly share the processes they currently utilize for fear that the other department may outperform them. Another danger could be the fact that each department may fear having to make changes to their processes which might have been in place for quite some time. These fears are another important aspect of the benchmarking process that needs to be addressed when first starting the process.

It is very important when benchmarking that the organization set some parameters for who they want to benchmark with. Examples of these parameters could be organization size, the product they produce, location, current sales, or manufacturing processes. Once the organization has decided on whom they would like to benchmark with then they need to decide on what specifically they want to benchmark.

Benchmarking can be defined in many different ways, but each definition comes down to the fact that any aspect of your organization can be benchmarked either against another department in your organization, or another company that may produce a completely different product. While benchmarking can be a very effective tool for some

organizations, we need to keep in mind that it may not work well in certain types of industries or with certain processes.

There are several reasons why benchmarking may not work for an organization, one is that they may be the only company that does what they do. Depending on the processes that they use in their facility, it may be difficult to benchmark against another type of organization that uses different processes or produces an entirely different product. There may be other companies who make similar products, but those companies may not wish to participate in a benchmarking venture. Companies may not be able to decide on what they should benchmark, some staff may want to look at their process of manufacturing their product, others want to look at their distribution process, and still others may want to look at their marketing processes. An important aspect of benchmarking is getting buy-in from staff and management that this is a valuable tool that will improve their current situation and should be taken seriously. Once that has happened, the organization will be able to proceed with their benchmarking effort.

Mohamed (1992) states that “benchmarking...encourages business organizations to go beyond meeting customer requirements and by proactively and voluntarily seeking the establishment and implementation of best practices so that superior performance can be achieved.” An aspect of benchmarking that some companies neglect is getting customer feedback. Since the customer is the person who receives the final end product or service, their feedback is very important in determining how the organization is doing. Asking customers for their input shows that the company is interested in their customer’s opinions and they want to provide a good product or service.

In summary of benchmarking, there are several points that an organization should decide on before they endeavor to benchmark their organization against another. Why are they going to benchmark? What exactly are they going to benchmark? What information do they need to have before they get started? How long do they have to complete the benchmarking effort? What are they going to do with the information they discover? When an organization has answers to these questions, they are ready to get started with the benchmarking process.

When looking at the Wisconsin Job Center Standards of 1999 on the Department of Workforce Systems website (retrieved November 30, 2004), the employer services that are listed include:

- Assistance with recruiting qualified job applicants;
- Information and assistance on entering job orders on electronic systems;
- Access to labor market information;
- Information on employer events;
- Assistance with planning for workplace expansion or downsizing; and
- Information on retention and post-employment support services for employees.

In a report by D'Amico, et al (2001) which looked at the implementation of the WIA of 1998, services available to employers included:

- ...the ability to post new job openings, review a pool of job seeker resumes, and initiate an individualized job match that links the skills of a pool of job applicants to the employer's specific job requirements. Additional information services that states have made available to employers through employer-oriented websites include labor market information, economic projections, tax credit information,

information about training programs and training provider performance, and information about labor law compliance.

Most One-Stop Job Centers have websites that list the various services that their Job Center offers to employers, along with brochures or flyers that can be given to area employers to alert them to the services that are available. How this information is shared with the employer community is what this researcher is interested in along with printed resources available in each of the Job Centers.

When looking at Job Center websites, the researcher discovered that each Job Center lists similar services which appear to be offered differently. These services are listed in the following table.

Table 1 Local Job Center Services

Rock County Job Center	Kenosha County Job Center	Racine County Job Center
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post Your Openings • Personal Account Representative • Interview at the Job Center • Get Help With Large Recruitment Efforts • Access Wage Subsidy Programs • Layoff & Worker Dislocation Services • Pre-screening and Referral • Assessment and Testing • Resource Connections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment Services • Labor Market Information • HR FAQ's • Financial Incentives • Training and Education • Employee Assessment • Resource Directory • Business Development • Resume Matrix • Economic Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment Advertising • Training Subsidies • Pre-employment Assessment • Wage and Salary Information • Human Resources Workshops • Business/Technical Seminars • Job Description, Recruiting Assistance • Resume Evaluation • Job Fairs • Customized Training • Business Consulting • HR Assistance/Consulting • Business Loans

Information gathered from the websites for Rock, Kenosha and Racine County Job Centers (November 2004).

These services are one factor that accounts for the amount of usage employers give their local One-Stop Job Center. As can be seen from the listed services, each Job Center provides certain services in common, and several that are unique to their specific Job Center. The researcher needs to ascertain if the services provided at each Job Center might actually be the same services just called something different at each location. For example, are business development and business consulting the same service, or something totally different? Also, are assessment and testing, employee assessment and pre-employment assessment the same in each area, or is one County doing something that is more intensive than the other Counties? Once the unique services have been determined, the researcher will address each of those in a later chapter.

By further exploring these unique services, the researcher intends to discover if these services could be provided in another area with similar results. Since two of the three Job Center's being studied provide certain services to employers for a fee, these centers may have an advantage of having additional funding available for advertising or staff that might not be possible in smaller counties with less employers.

Another factor that affects Job Center usage is the amount of marketing each Job Center has done, which can include brochures, newspaper ads, television ads, radio ads, flyers, and other marketing tools that may be specific to each Job Center. The researcher will look at how each Job Center alerts their local community employers to the services that are available to them at no cost. Again, the centers that provide services for a fee may have a larger operating budget than the other counties in the state, which will in turn affect the amount of employer usage.

In further exploration of the Department of Workforce Developments website (retrieved, November 30, 2004), there is a link specifically for employers to learn about WJOS which explains what the system is, what the benefits are for employers, and how to register and use the WJOS system. According to this website, WJOS is: "Internet based, available 24/7 to input, edit or remove job postings, in real time, provides a 24 hour Veteran's priority, and requires employers to have Internet Explorer, version 5.0 or better" (Department of Workforce Development Website retrieved, November 30, 2004). The website goes on to explain what the benefits are for employers, which include: "flexibility for the employer to enter and update their own job orders, the format of job orders is clean, appealing to the readers' eye, and displayed in sentence case, new and updated job orders are reflected in real time, job openings listed on Wisconsin JobNet are automatically listed on America's Job Bank, and is available at no cost to the employer" (Department of Workforce Development Website retrieved, November 30, 2004).

The final link on the website is "Learn more about registering and using WJOS" and includes information on registering to use the Wisconsin Job Order System as well as instructions for registering, and PowerPoint presentations on using the Wisconsin Job Order System and job order tips for employers.

There are specific requirements for an employer to post a job order on JobNet. These requirements are also listed on the Department of Workforce Development's website (retrieved, November 30, 2004).

"All job listings placed in Wisconsin JobNet must comply with the following conditions: There must be a current job opening or an anticipated job opening within the next 90 days; an employer employee relationship will exist between

the worker and the company; the work site is in Wisconsin or in a border county with Wisconsin in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan or Minnesota; No monetary investment is required by a job seeker; No fees will be charged job seekers to apply or be considered for the position; The position being filled is not involved in a labor dispute; You must guarantee at least the state/federal minimum wage for all hours worked. This includes jobs paid on commission, performance based incentive, piecework or any other method of compensation; You will comply with all applicable state/federal employment laws; The job listing contains no potentially discriminatory wording; The job listing accurately describes the employment situation and complies with DWD/DWS policy and quality standards; If listed by an employment agency, the agency must confidentially provide the work site company name in the "Employer Comments" field of the job listing. This information will not be available to job seekers; Requests for job listings that do not meet the above requirements will be denied or deleted from the system."

As long as an employer follows the above listed conditions, their job order will be placed on JobNet. By teaching employers to enter their own job orders, this allows employers to get their open positions listed more quickly when compared to the previous way of contacting their account representative or the job order taker at the Job Center. With the previous way, the employer would contact the Job Center, give the information to the job order taker, the job order taker would enter the information, print a copy of the job order, fax it to the employer to proofread, and then the employer had to contact the job order taker again to let them know if there were any corrections.

There were delays with the previous system as the job order taker may have too many orders to enter into the system, the account representative or job order taker may have been out of the office and unable to contact the employer, or there may have been difficulties with the equipment. With the new system, as long as employers are willing to learn to enter their job orders themselves, their job orders hit WJOS/JobNet more rapidly, which means the employer can fill those open positions faster. Employers can learn to use the new system by following the instructions on the Department of Workforce Development's website or by having their local account representative meet with them at their location to go over the registration process and how to use the system.

In this section the researcher explained what benchmarking is, how it can be utilized and how it pertains to the research that is being attempted. The researcher also discussed the various services that are provided at the three Job Centers being studied for this research. The requirements for employers to post job orders on the WJOS/JobNet system were also reported. This information will be utilized in future sections as the researcher further explores how employer services are provided in the three Job Centers. It will also assist the researcher as they decide which services will be benchmarked and how to present that information.

Chapter III: Methodology

There are several factors that can affect how much employers utilize WJOS including: how informed the employers are about services offered by their local Job Center; if the employer has any current job openings; if they have access to the technology required to enter their own job orders; and if they feel they get enough qualified job applicants from the Job Center. While these factors all affect how much an employer utilizes their local Job Center, the researcher believes that how employers are treated and what services are offered to them once they do contact the Job Center influences whether they will become a repeat customer.

In this chapter, the researcher will discuss how the study subjects were selected, the questionnaire that was used to collect the data and how it was developed, how the data was collected, and how it was analyzed for this study.

Subject Selection and Description

In preparing for this study, the researcher looked at the seventy-two counties in Wisconsin which house seventy-two Job Centers and compared population sizes. The researcher selected their own county and two others that were similar in population size and in fairly close proximity to the researcher. According to the Demographic Services Center, Wisconsin Department of Administration (2004), Rock County has an estimated population of 152,307, Racine County has an estimated population of 188,831 and Kenosha County has an estimated population of 149,577. All of these counties are in the southern part of the state which could make implementation of some of their practices more difficult in some of the more rural counties in the state such as Iron, Pepin or

Florence. Selecting these three counties to work with allowed the researcher to keep the study manageable and also allowed the counties to be examined in more detail.

Instrumentation

Once the counties were selected, the researcher created a questionnaire with fifteen items (Appendix A) to use when interviewing employer services staff in each of the Job Centers. The questions concentrate on the size of the employer services team, the types of services that are provided, the number of employers in each local area, and the number of job orders that were placed on WJOS in each county. Once the researcher received approval to conduct the study, they then contacted each Job Center to schedule appointments to tour the facilities and meet with members of the employer services teams in those areas.

Data Collection Procedures

After compiling this information, the researcher then contacted employer services team members in Kenosha and Racine Counties and scheduled times to tour each center and meet individually with staff members to go over the survey questions. The survey questions were sent to the Team Leaders of the employer services teams at each Job Center before the on site visit to facilitate the information gathering process. The researcher then met individually with each of the Team Leaders to go over the questionnaire and gather other pertinent information regarding how employer services are provided in each location. Before starting any discussion, the researcher had each team leader complete the Consent to Participate form. The team leaders in each County provided copies of the employer packets that are used when contacting new and existing employer accounts. The researcher spent about an hour meeting with staff members

discussing how employer services are offered and provided in their area and noted pertinent information on the questionnaire for each County.

Data Analysis

Services offered at all three Job Centers were compared using tables looking for similarities and differences. Since there is a population size of only three, descriptive statistics will be used to report and analyze the information the researcher gathered.

Limitations

Since only three of the seventy-two Counties in Wisconsin were studied, there may be a problem with similar services being called something different in each County. This may cause the researcher problems as they report their findings and determine which best practices can be attempted in others Counties.

In the next chapter, the researcher will present the data that was gathered for this study along with further discussion on the types of services that are provided to employers in each area and how those services could be provided in other areas.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of this study was to look at how employer services are offered in Rock, Kenosha and Racine Counties to uncover some best practices and to ascertain if those best practices can be implemented in other Counties in Wisconsin with similar success.

As part of this study, the researcher accessed the WJOS system to ascertain how many job orders were placed in each County from November 2003 to November 2004. Rock County had a total of 2,217 job orders for that time period. Eighty-six percent of those orders were entered by staff members. Racine County had a total of 2,600 job orders of which ninety percent were entered by staff members. Kenosha County had a total of 3,379 job orders with ninety percent being entered by staff members.

As can be seen from these numbers (Table 2) Rock County had fewer total job orders placed on WJOS than the other two Counties, but they also had a higher number of employers placing their own orders on WJOS than Racine county and almost as many as Kenosha county.

Table 2 Number of Job Orders

County	Total Number of Job Orders	Entered by Staff	Entered by Employers
Kenosha	3,379	3,074	305
Racine	2,600	2,352	248
Rock	2,217	1,918	299

Information gathered from Wisconsin Job Order System (November, 2004)

The researcher developed a questionnaire with fifteen items designed to gather information on how each local area provides employer services to their local employers.

In this section, the researcher will list each question that was covered and then discuss the various ways each County provides that particular service.

How do you provide employer services?

All three counties utilize Account Representatives who are members of an Employer/Business Services Team. Kenosha County has five members on their team, Racine County has six members, and Rock County has eight members. In Kenosha and Racine, these Account Representatives are dedicated to strictly employer services while the Account Representatives in Rock County also have other duties including case management with WIA Adult, Older Youth, and Dislocated Workers, W-2 clients, and they also staff the Resource Room in the Job Center.

What types of services do you offer employers?

All three Counties offer the following services: On site recruitment; enter job orders for employers; training employers to enter job orders via the Internet; tax credit information/workshops; employment/assessment testing; labor market information; job fairs; wage and salary information; information on commuting patterns; and bonding. Kenosha County also offers application/resume screening and assistance with writing job descriptions for a fee as well as a resume matrix for employers. The resume matrix is only offered by Kenosha County and consists of the employer services team collecting resumes of individuals who are looking for work and then on their website and in their employer newsletter they list brief information about each person, totally anonymously, and employers can call their office and request a resume they are interested in. Anecdotally, they have had great success with this initiative.

How do you assign accounts?

Rock County utilizes an alphabetical system for assigning accounts where each Account Representative has certain letters that they are responsible for. In Kenosha County, they have had the same Account Representatives for years, and each of them has been working with the same accounts during that time. When new employers move to the area, one of the Account Representatives adds them to their list. In Racine County, they use a survey and assign points to each employer which in turn puts them into a service level. The criteria that is used includes growth opportunity; number of employees; employer average wage; business structure; new product/process/service development capability; sales growth; and scope of employer's market. To receive core services an employer must score between 0 – 17, to receive key services they must score between 18 – 26 points, and to receive premier services they must score between 27 and 35 points. The table that follows lists the services that are provided at each level.

Table 3 Racine County Services to Employers

Core Services	Key Business Services	Premier Business Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Racine E-classified (online listing for adult jobs) •YouthLink (online listing service for youth jobs) •Application EZ (WDC is only source for employer application) •On-site recruitment (at WDC in Racine & Burlington centers) •Job Fair participation •Workshops •Training Grants •Brokered partner services •Opening Your Business Service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All Core Services •Regional recruitment service •More personalized service •Candidate testing •Workshops •Customized training brokering •Training grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •All Core & Key services •Resume/application sorting to employer criteria •College/national recruitment system use •Key person search •Recruitment for critical positions •Recruiting website (ProTech online) for professional/technical positions •Provider of economic development links •Knowledge broker •Care & feeding of targeted businesses

How do you contact new employers?

In Racine County the Account Representatives contact new employers by telephone or in person. In Kenosha and Rock Counties, the Account Representatives contact new employers by mail as well. In Rock County, one member of the Employer Services Team is called the Business Liaison whose primary responsibility is to make contact with employers to let them know about service offered through the Job Center and who their Account Representative is if they have further questions or wish to place a job order.

How do you contact your current accounts?

In all three Counties, the Account Representatives contact their employers via telephone, mail, email or in person. In Kenosha County they are required to have contact with their employers a minimum of three times a year. Racine County Account Representatives contact their employers monthly with a mailing for their Professional Career Expo. In Rock County, many of the Account Representatives have monthly contact with their employers who attend the Info Lunches that are provided. At these Info Lunches, employers get a hot meal and a speaker who addresses various Human Resource issues. The speakers are all volunteers from the community who cover different topics. This feature has been well received by the employer community in Rock County.

Do you have an area in your Job Center dedicated to employers?

At this time, Kenosha, Rock and Racine Counties do not have a separate area designed specifically for employers. The vision behind this question was to ascertain if any of the Centers had office space dedicated for employers. Ideally this would be a place for employers to stop in to get current signage required to be posted, to check on new

services that might be offered by their local Job Center, and to have computer equipment available for smaller employers who may not have the technical capabilities to post their own job orders on JobNet/WJOS.

Do you provide any fee for service activities?

Rock County does not provide any fee for service activities at this time. Kenosha County provides application/resume screening and assistance writing job descriptions for a fee. In Racine County the Account Representatives provide different Human Resource functions for a fee. These can include assistance writing job descriptions, application/resume screening and other activities that may be requested by the employer.

How many employers are there in your County?

Kenosha County has 3,500 employers, while Racine County has close to 4,000 and Rock County has 3,000 employers.

How many job orders does your Job Center average per month?

All three Counties average fifty-one plus job orders each month.

How many of your employers enter their own job orders through the Internet?

Racine County averages fifty-one or more job orders entered by employers while Kenosha County averages between thirty-one and forty and Rock County averages between twenty-one and thirty.

Do you make presentations to community groups to share information on your available services?

In Rock County, Employer Services Team members are available to speak to various community groups which can include the Kiwanis, Optimists, Elks, and Moose clubs. In Kenosha county team members have made presentations to Economic

Development organizations, Chambers of Commerce, and various other boards. In Racine County, team members are available to speak with any group that requests a presentation.

Are there any other services that you offer to employers that haven't already been mentioned?

In Kenosha County, as already mentioned, they provide a resume matrix for employers to peruse the resumes of individuals who are actively seeking employment. In Rock County the Info Lunches that are provided monthly are currently the only "extra" service being provided to employers. Racine County offers HR Roundtables, an online employer newsletter, and they broker services between employers and training providers.

Are there any additional services you plan to provide employers in the future?

Rock County is in the process of looking at other possible services that could be provided to employers, but with current staffing issues it is unknown if any suggested services could be provided. Kenosha County is in the process of starting an Employer Advisory Board which would be made up of employers in the area who would advise employer services team members on issues pertaining to services that might be requested by the employers. Racine County is in the process of implementing a new product line of business services available to employers. These services include the categories of Forms, Consulting and Training. As can be seen in the following table, Racine County will be offering a wider variety of services to their employer community. The table lists all of the services that will be offered.

Table 4 Racine County Anticipated Employer Services

Forms	Consulting	Training
•Application for Employment	•Internal Hiring Process	•Interview Techniques
•Pre-Employment Questionnaire	(Step by step process)	•Hiring New Employees
•Offer Letters	•External Hiring Process	•EEO/Diversity
•Employee Agreement	•Check list for hiring process	•Government Contractor
•Background Search	•Search Firm Contracts	•Requirements for EEO-1
•Release Form	•HR Policies	Compliance
•Disclosure & Consent	•New Hire Packets	•Recruiting
•Letter of Pre-Adverse Notification	•1st Day Orientation (on-	
•Letter of Adverse Notification	boarding)	
•Summary of Consumer Rights	•New Employee Orientation	
•FCRA Contact Information	– quarterly meeting for all	
•Interview Evaluation Form	new employees	
•Interview Application Log	•Applicant Tracking	
•Recruitment Survey (for internal	Systems	
manager's to evaluate HR's	•EEO-1 for Government	
recruitment process	Contractors	
•Rejection Letters	•Job Descriptions	
•Policies	•Drug Testing	
•I-9's	•Co-Op Internship Program	
•State & Federal Tax Forms		
•Reference Checking Questions		

As can be seen from the information in the previous table, Racine County is attempting to expand the amount and diversity of services they provide to their employer community. Many of these services are areas that other Counties may want to explore as possible fee for service activities that could bring in some funding to increase the size of their employer services teams.

If you had the funding available, what would your ideal employer services team look like?

Racine County would keep their same format that they use to provide services, but would like to add a clerical person who would be responsible for data entry and other time consuming functions that currently take away from Account Representatives being able to spend more time with their employers. Kenosha County would increase the number of members on their team, have better Human Resource training for their staff, and be able to provide more competitive professional consulting services to their employers. Rock County would like to increase the size of their team with staff members who are dedicated to providing only employer services as well as increasing the number of services they currently provide to employers.

Summary

In looking at the data that was gathered, the researcher noted similarities and differences in the way the three Counties provide their employer services. All of the Counties have some type of employer services team, but only Racine and Kenosha Counties have staff members who are dedicated to providing employer services. Only Racine and Kenosha Counties currently off any fee for service activities for their employer communities. All three Counties contact new and existing employer accounts in

the same ways, via mail, email or telephone. None of the three Counties have an area in their One Stop Job Center that is dedicated to employers.

It should also be noted that all three Counties have between 3,000 and 4,000 employers and average fifty-one or more job orders each month. All three Counties have twenty-one or more job orders entered by employers each month, which could be increased by training employers how to do this. It should be noted, that the staff at the Kenosha County Job Center feel that it is important that they enter the job orders for the employer so that their employers will continue to list their job openings on JobNet. This service along with their Resume Matrix could be seen as services that delight their employers.

In the next chapter, the researcher will further summarize the findings of this research, discuss what services could be benchmarked between the Job Centers and will highlight some of the services that can be considered best practices in each area.

Chapter V: Discussion

In 1998 President Clinton signed into legislation the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), replacing the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) which had been in existence for 16 years. The WIA “provides the framework for a unique national workforce preparation and employment system designed to be customer-focused in meeting both the needs of business for skilled workers and assisting individuals in easily accessing the information and services needed to manage their careers.” (Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board Out-of-School Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Handbook, 2003-2004).

While the WIA lists services that should be provided to employers, each local workforce development area can decide how they want to provide these services. Some areas have a dedicated team of staff members who deal only with employer services, while other areas have a team of staff members who also have other job duties in addition to providing employer services. There are several factors that can affect how much employers utilize WIOS including: how informed the employers are about services offered by their local Job Center, if the employer has any current job openings, if they have access to the technology required to enter their own job orders, and if they feel they get enough qualified job applicants from the Job Center.

While these factors all affect how much an employer utilizes their local Job Center, the researcher believes that how employers are treated and what services are offered to them once they do contact the Job Center influences whether they will become a repeat customer. The purpose of this study was to look at how employer services are offered in Rock, Kenosha and Racine Counties to uncover some best practices and to

ascertain if those best practices can be implemented in other Counties in Wisconsin with similar success.

Limitation

In doing the literature review, the researcher discovered that this type of study had not been attempted in the past. This required the researcher to focus on benchmarking and how it could be utilized in this study. When developing the questionnaire that was utilized in this study, the researcher decided which services would be chosen to be benchmarked. These included how employer services were provided, the composition of the employer services teams, how many job orders were listed on JobNet in each area, and how the employer services teams interacted with their employer community.

Conclusions

As was discussed previously, all three Counties provide certain services that are very similar, so in this section, the researcher is going to focus on the services that are specific to each of the Job Centers. One type of service that is offered in Racine and Kenosha Counties are their fee for service activities. Providing application screening, writing job descriptions and other types of Human Resource functions are services that could be offered in any Job Center, provided they have staff available that have the training and time to provide these functions. The downside of offering these types of services is that staff members may not have the proper training or the time to provide these types of services. The upside of offering these types of services are the fact that the Job Center would be bringing in additional funding that could be used to pay for the staff to provide the services.

Another service offered in Kenosha County that could be implemented in other areas is the resume matrix that they offer for their employers. Presently, this service is provided via an electronic newsletter where employers can view a brief synopsis of a person's resume. If the employer is interested in the person, they contact the employer services team staff and request a paper copy of the person's resume. This is a service that could possibly be offered as a fee for service to raise funding to pay for the service itself. Another interesting idea for this type of service is to provide the resume database electronically via the Job Center's website. This would allow customers to add their resume to the database and then employers could view them and decide who to bring in for an interview. This could be an income generating service that would pay for itself, providing the Job Center has staff available to have the training and time to provide this service.

Having staff in each Job Center that have training in Human Resource functions could allow the Job Center to offer services to employers that could in turn generate funding to pay for staff to provide these services. It would be beneficial if all staff members had this type of training so they could work together as a team to provide the services the employer needs.

Another area that Racine County is currently working on, and Rock County is interested in getting into, is working with employers to determine the employer's needs in new employees and then provide training in those areas. This training could include areas such as soft skills, computer, safety or communications training. By working closely with the employers, the Job Center staff would be able to provide accurate training for the

actual needs of the employer. This type of training could lead to certification that the employer could use as part of their hiring criteria.

Recommendations

This researcher believes that many of the services offered in Rock, Racine and Kenosha Counties could be offered in other areas of the state. These other Counties may need to start on a smaller basis, but as they start offering services that they can charge for, they should be able to increase their staff and be able to provide more services.

Depending on the size of the Job Center, the County, and the amount of staff available to provide employer services, there may be certain Counties that might not be able to provide any of these services. It would be very interesting to research each Job Center in the state to learn what types of services they currently offer, and to discover if those services could be provided in other areas of the state with similar success.

A recommendation from this researcher is that staff from the employer services teams at each local Job Center visit other Job Centers to see how employer services are offered there. There are many things being offered in the different Job Centers that are services that could be offered in other Job Centers which could improve customer (employer) satisfaction. Unless staff members are willing to explore and discover what these services are, they could be missing out on opportunities to improve the services they offer to their local employer community.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

- 1) How do you provide employer services? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Account Representatives
 - ☐ Employer Services Team
 - ☐ Any staff member that is available
- 2) What types of services do you offer employers? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ On site recruitment
 - ☐ Enter job orders for employer
 - ☐ Train employers to enter job orders via the Internet
 - ☐ Tax credit information/workshops
 - ☐ Application/resume screening
 - ☐ Employment/assessment testing
 - ☐ Labor market information
 - ☐ Employer newsletter
 - ☐ Job fairs
 - ☐ Assistance writing job descriptions
 - ☐ Wage and salary information
 - ☐ Information on commuting patterns
 - ☐ Bonding
 - ☐ On-the-job training
 - ☐ Other
- 3) How do you assign accounts? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ Alphabetically
 - ☐ Geographically
 - ☐ As they come in
 - ☐ Other _____
- 4) How do you contact new employers? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ In person
 - ☐ By mail
 - ☐ By telephone
- 5) How do you contact your current accounts? (Select all that apply)
 - ☐ By telephone
 - ☐ By mail
 - ☐ By email
 - ☐ In person
- 6) Do you have an area in your Job Center dedicated to employers?
 - ☐ Yes
 - ☐ No

☐

If yes, what information do you provide and who funds this?

7) Do you provide any fee for service activities?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what are they?

8) How many employers are there in your County?

☐ 0 – 499

☐ 500 – 999

☐ 1000 – 1499

☐ 1500 – 1999

☐ 2000 – 2499

☐ 2500 – 2999

☐ 3000 +

9) How many job orders does your Job Center average per month?

☐ 0 – 10

☐ 11 – 20

☐ 21 – 30

☐ 31 – 40

☐ 41 – 50

☐ 51 +

10) How many of your employers enter their own job orders through the Internet?

☐ 0 – 10

☐ 11 – 20

☐ 21 – 30

☐ 31 – 40

☐ 41 – 50

☐ 51 +

11) Do you make presentations to community groups to share information on your available services?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what groups have you presented to?

12) Are there any other services that you offer to employers that haven't already been mentioned?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what are these services?

13) Are there any additional services you plan to provide employers in the future?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, what are these services?

14) How have your services to employers changed over the years you've been in operation?

15) If you had the funding available, what would your ideal employer services team look like?