



PA CareerLink Quality Review
Final Report – May 1, 2006
Site Visit – Visit Date, January 9-10, 2006

Pennsylvania CareerLink Lehigh Valley at Allentown
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Pennsylvania
CareerLink

FEEDBACK REPORT

PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley at Allentown

This feedback report is presented in three (3) parts. Part 1 is an overview describing the process that was used to complete the PA CareerLink Quality Review (CLQR) and overarching findings resulting from the review. Part 2 provides detailed findings by category that match those in the CLQR. Part 3 contains short-term planning recommendations, based on the findings of the CLQR.

Part I. Overview

The CLQR Team has evaluated your organization's Self-Assessment and conducted an on-site visit. This Feedback Report contains background information of the evaluation and the findings of, the CLQR Team that reviewed your organization's Self-Assessment. The findings include an Executive Summary of the overall findings, as well as detail by Item of your organization's strengths and opportunities for improvement.

Self-Assessment Review and Evaluation Process

After your Self-Assessment was submitted, the CLQR Team followed a three-stage process. The individual team members completed Stage 1, an independent review of your Self-Assessment.

The Self-Assessment then went through a consensus review (Stage 2). At Stage 2, those who evaluated the application in Stage 1 participated as a team to review the Self-Assessment and reach agreement on key issues. This included developing consensus on prospective strengths and opportunities for improvement for each Item to be further clarified and verified during the Site Visit.

The third stage of the process was the site visit review (Stage 3). During the site visit, the CLQR Team gathered facts to clarify, confirm and verify information presented in the Self-Assessment, and review the extent of deployment and integration of management systems. The site visit team also evaluated the quality maturity level of the organization based on the degree to which the PA CareerLink management processes are systematic, sustainable, integrated and self-learning.

KEY THEMES

Identified during the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Allentown Quality Review:

Strong LWIB Model

PA CareerLink operations and outcomes are interwoven in all WIB aspects. The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Allentown is the workforce “system” of the LVWIB.

Management Philosophy

A visionary and proactive WIB is evident, using a unique WIB Committee structure overseeing the PA CareerLink, to successfully align consistent goals and objectives at all levels. Forward thinking, proactive management consistently provides direction and guidance on initiatives linked to the strategic plan.

Satisfaction Measurement

There is a culture of persistently obtaining feedback from all customers and stakeholders that interact with the PA CareerLink for any reason, such as services received, referrals to employers, community activities, Career Fairs, and other events of all kinds. The acquisition of this information is consistent and systematic, and the results are compiled into a central survey response database, built in SPSS (taking advantage of statistical functions), with the results constantly compiled and evaluated for operational improvement.

Location

The location and building are assets – spacious office building on major thoroughfare near public transportation.

Part 2. Findings by Category

Category 1 –

Organizational Leadership:

The *Organizational Leadership* Category examines the organization's leadership system. It examines how leaders address the organization's values, purpose, focus, and performance expectations, as well as its focus on customers and stakeholders, including staff, regulatory requirements, and public responsibilities.

1.a. Leadership (i.e., Operator Consortium or Local Management Teams)

Strengths

Management Communication

The leadership team shows evidence of direction, guidance, organizational values, and performance expectations. There are regular and consistent meetings among the leadership, and frequent contact among the leadership is evident.

The Workforce Investment Board and the Consortium of Operators meet quarterly. The PA CareerLink Management team meets monthly. Meeting agendas and minutes were provided for both sets of meetings.

Organization

LVWIB has an innovative committee structure relative to PA CareerLink oversight. Four of the committees (the four “A’s”) are: Alignment, Accountability, Awareness, and Access. These committees provide oversight to the PA CareerLink operation. Organizational charts were provided for all leadership levels.

Mission and Vision Linkage to Operations

Mission and Vision statements are well articulated and linked to the strategic plan and objectives, making it possible to communicate clear and consistent messages to internal and external customers. The link between the mission and operations is deployed primarily through the LVWIB Access Committee’s strategic objectives and the Accountability Committee’s progress tracking.

Partner Collaboration

The collective management by the LVWIB and Operators of the PA CareerLink indicates a strong collaboration by all of the partners to support collective goals and objectives, which transcends and overcomes the limitations of partner-specific measurements.

Opportunities for Improvement

Cross-Partner Performance Measures

Although strong partner relationships and attempts to implement relevant cross-partner measures are evident, systematic cross-partner integration of performance measures are not yet formalized, relying on strong partner relationships and ad hoc communication and interaction.

1.b. Organizational Leadership – Communications System

Strengths

Public Outreach

Leadership’s outward communication to the public is systematic and effective. This is accomplished primarily through the Business Services team.

Efforts to communicate with the community-at-large are measured for effectiveness, specifically the measurement and tracking of employer activity, recruitment information, and event follow-up surveys.

Communication Methods

The strategic plan elements are communicated to the stakeholders through a variety of methods, including the strategic planning process, and dissemination of collateral marketing materials, and newsletters.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

1.c. Regulatory Requirements and Public Responsibilities

Strengths

Review Process

A management process exists to ensure regulatory compliance. There is evidence of continuous review and corrective action in the documentation provided.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

Category 2 –

Local Planning:

The *Local Planning* Category examines the organization's process of developing strategic objectives to enable LWIBs to achieve outcomes of their strategic plan, as well as creating action and related plans to support organizational direction. It examines the methods that the organization has to examine the deployment of plans and track performance. It examines the working relationship that the organization has with key stakeholders that supplement the effective development and implementation of strategic planning.

2.a. Strategic Planning

Strengths

Strategic Planning Process

A strategic plan is current and linked to PA CareerLink operational initiatives. Systematic processes exist to ensure that the strategic planning process includes key data.

There is evidence that all levels of the organization participate in the development of the strategic plan. Board and committee meetings review progress of plan objectives, address frontline strategic challenges, and are currently in process of modifying the plan accordingly.

Opportunities for Improvement

Strategic Plan Tracking

Although a strategic plan exists and is being revised, other than specific strategic objectives for the WIB Executive Director, PA CareerLink-specific measurable objectives linked to key outcomes, including timetables, milestones and responsible parties were not provided.

2.b. Continuous Improvement Planning

Strengths

Continuous Improvement Process and Quality Principles

The strategic plan emphasizes continuous improvement. Regularly scheduled process for the constant evaluation of improvements is documented. Process, priorities, and outcomes are measured. Definition, collection, and evaluation of key performance measures and resulting links to operational improvements were demonstrated.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

Category 3 –

Workforce Connections:

The *Workforce Connections* Category examines the process that the organization used to determine requirements, expectation and preferences of customers, stakeholders and employer markets. It looks at how the organization builds relationships with customers and community members and determines the key factors that attract customers and partners to the workforce development system. It looks at the methods for ‘listening and learning’ from its customers.

It also examines the organization’s system to engage a broad representation of the businesses and community it serves. It looks at how the services provided reflect community involvement and promote an understanding of the partner needs and accomplishments to the community.

It also examines how the organization responds to questions and complaints.

3.a. Assessment of Business and Community Needs

Strengths

Business and Community Connections

The PA CareerLink has numerous connections to the local community and businesses through the involvement of the WIB, the Operators, and the PA CareerLink staff. Staff from the WIB, the Operators, and the PA CareerLink are involved with the boards and committees of various organizations, such as: the Society for Human Resource Management; the Chamber of Commerce; and the Latino Alliance. The information gathered through these activities is used to determine what services are needed for the jobseeker and employer community.

Community Assessment

Surveying is done to further assess community and business needs. As a result of jobseeker surveying, a need for evening hours was identified and implemented. Employer surveying highlighted the need for an employer website training seminar, which was then established. Additionally, evaluation of customer demographics revealed the need for services in Spanish, such as the Spanish version of the Introduction to Services workshop.

Muhlenberg College Study

Muhlenberg College recently completed an independent study of the PA CareerLink's involvement in the local community. Leadership is in the process of reviewing the report to determine opportunities for continuous improvement.

Opportunities for Improvement

Information Sharing

Although there are numerous connections with employers and community-based organizations, there does not appear to be a formalized method to collect and share the information among staff, which may lead to a more cohesive understanding of local needs.

3.b. Community Engagement

Strengths

The Institution of Peer Professional Networking Group

The Business and Industry Relations team has instituted a gathering of professionals called the "Peer Professional Networking Group". This is a group of unemployed professionals who meet every week to share tips on job searching. A profile of each member is available to the business community via an internet-accessible Yahoo Group.

Opportunities for Improvement

Common Customers / Compatible Services

It appears there is no process in place to coordinate services for non-WIA customers in order to reduce duplicative services. Customer services are coordinated when jobseekers are accepted into WIA training and then case-managed. Non-WIA customers are given a form to select services they may find useful.

Category 4 –

Jobseeker Service Delivery:

The *Jobseeker Service Delivery* Category examines the organization's process management approach, which includes customer-focused design of products and service delivery, as well as support, supplier and partnering processes involving all work units.

4.a. Processes and Flow

Strengths

PA CareerLink Customer Flow

The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Allentown has a system to ensure that all customers are provided with opportunities available through the PA CareerLink delivery system. For example, all customers who enter the site are required to attend an “Introduction to Services” session to provide customers with an overview of PA CareerLink services available. The sessions are offered on a daily basis and are held in English and Spanish. After the session, customers are required to complete a Data Collection Sheet to apply for employer recruitment opportunities, seek job training, or employment information. All customers are provided with staff assistance as necessary.

Data Collection Sheet

The PA CareerLink uses the Data Collection Sheet to assess customer needs. After completion, a copy is placed in the mailboxes of PA CareerLink partners to provide follow-up services. Data collected is entered into a MicroSoft Access database to track customer information, such as personal/demographic information, workshops attended, and WIA services provided. The information is available for all partners to view. The data tracking is essential for providing quality customer service.

PA CareerLink Websites

The PA CareerLink has developed two local websites – www.CareerLinklehighvalley.org and www.lvprofessionals.org. The websites offer opportunities for both employers and jobseekers to obtain invaluable information related to workforce development in the Lehigh Valley area. The PA CareerLink tracks website data on usage, updates, and changes regarding the effectiveness of the websites.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The PA CareerLink tracks information received from customer satisfaction surveys. All customers visiting the PA CareerLink during the third week of each month are given an opportunity to complete a survey. The surveys measure the effectiveness of workshops, training sessions, job fairs, and general PA CareerLink services. All surveys are forwarded to the WIB Compliance Section for data entry and analysis using SPSS. Copies of surveys indicating concerns are presented to the PA CareerLink Administrator for resolution.

Opportunities for Improvement

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

Although customer satisfaction surveys are collected and forwarded to the WIB, there appears to be a delay of approximately 2-3 months until PA CareerLink staff and Operators are informed of the results. It may be more beneficial in terms of customer

service and continuous improvement strategies for staff to be informed in a timely manner.

4.b. Integration of Services / Seamless Services

Strengths

Partner Cooperation / Seamless Delivery

PA CareerLink partners share responsibility for core duties such as staffing the Career Resource Room and delivering workshops. It is evident that a strong culture of shared responsibility is present. Staff is willing to contribute at every level without a tendency to say, “It’s not my job.”

Opportunities for Improvement

Career Pathways

Although WIA-enrolled customers are provided with case management services, there is no evidence that other customers receive documented services designed to develop career pathways. Having a case management system to track customers’ progression in preparation for long-term sustainable employment is vital.

Customer Follow-up Services

There is little evidence that a process is in place to provide follow-up services with all customers. For example, if a customer is referred to a partner off-site, there is no follow-up conducted to determine what services are provided and/or the client’s status.

Category 5 –

Business Services:

The *Business Services* Category examines the organization's business services approach, including a business led, demand-driven strategy for the design of products and service delivery. It also examines the process through which the organization works on improving collaborative efforts with the business community and leveraging resources.

5.a. Resources

Strengths

Partner Representation and Training

The team includes staff members of both counties in the Lehigh Valley, the Business and Industry Relations Manager, two BWDP supervisors and one PA CareerLink Administrator. Bi-weekly meetings are held to coordinate activities and to provide updates to the team.

The team members receive business services training from a variety of sources, such as seminars, meetings, and workshops provided by the Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Society for Human Resource Management and the Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce etc.

Mentoring New Members of the Business Services Team

New members of the Business and Industry Relations team are mentored for as long as is necessary to ensure consistent delivery of information to employers.

Opportunities for Improvement

Roles and Responsibilities of the Business and Industry Relations Team

Although a business services team exists at this facility, their roles and responsibilities are vague and undefined. This is crucial on improving collaborative efforts with the business community and leveraging resources.

5.b. Approach

Strengths

Strong Relationship Building

It is evident that there is a strong relationship building between the Business and Industry Relations Team and employers. The development of an in-house publication, called “*Outlook*”, by the PA CareerLink provides a quick overview of available services, job development, and labor market information to employers. Lastly, every third Wednesday of the month the center conducts training for employers who need training on the PA CareerLink website.

Assessment of Customer Needs

The needs of the business customer are determined through extensive contact with the Business and Industry Relations Team. Information gathered through this contact is entered into a database of employer information maintained by that team.

Mentoring Program

The business services team, in conjunction with the LWIB, coordinates a mentoring program, linked to health care, for in-school youth. The program involves introducing middle and high school grade youth from four (4) of the area schools to the Lehigh Valley Medical Center Lehigh Valley Hospital system in support of the workforce need identified through the LWIBs cluster analysis and strategy.

Opportunities for Improvement

Complaint Process

There does not appear to be a formal process of addressing complaints from businesses to ensure service delivery recovery. An ad hoc process exists in addressing jobseeker and employer complaints. Complaints are not documented and compiled. This aggregation of complaints would allow trend analysis to be developed identifying recurring service gaps or problems.

5.c. Measures

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Success Measures

There appear to be success measures in place but their usage/application for business services to improve and plan are unclear. Thus, processes, outcomes, and priorities may not be adequately and consistently measured.

Category 6 –

Resources: Staff, Facilities and Equipment:

The *Resources* Category examines the organization's availability and proper use of equipment and technology in providing quality services. It examines the availability of adequate equipment, assistive technologies, materials, supplies, reference texts, resources, audiovisual aids, automation, etc. It also looks at the organization's staff use of a variety of materials and methods in accordance with customer needs and the objectives of the program/services.

Also examined is how the organization approaches its physical facilities to ensure that it provides adequate space, safe utilities and quality service delivery related to program objectives. It examines the organization's approach that both customer service and non-service areas such as storage, restrooms and offices are adequate for the number of customers and staff, while giving consideration for meeting the needs of customers with barriers.

6.a. Staffing

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Staff Training and Development

Although the performance appraisal for some partners includes a staff development component, there does not appear to be a process for assessing PA CareerLink staff training and development needs across partner lines. A common process to determine and deliver PA CareerLink-wide training and development would benefit all staff.

Staff Motivation

Motivation and recognition of staff are informal. A common PA CareerLink employee handbook/manual, and formal motivation and recognition programs with selection criteria would enhance staff development and promote cohesion.

6.b. Internal Customer Satisfaction

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Staff Satisfaction Measures

There is no formal process for collecting and processing data on staff satisfaction. Formally measuring staff satisfaction may lead to improvements that benefit PA CareerLink operations and customer satisfaction.

6.c. Technology and Equipment

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Formal Processes

Formal processes in the PA CareerLink are not evident for assessing, acquiring, and maintaining technology, equipment, and supplies, although the informal processes appear to function adequately.

6.d. Physical Facilities

Strengths

Facility Management

The facility is well lit and has good signage; both parking and public transit are nearby. The on-site presence of a Facilities Manager and staff provides prompt attention to health and safety issues that may arise.

Opportunities for Improvement - None identified at this time.

6.e. PA CareerLink Partners

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

PA CareerLink Identity

Partner integration is not evident. Although an amount of shared responsibility is present, clear or distinctive PA CareerLink identity among staff was not clear.

Category 7 –

Systems Indicators:

The *Systems Indicators* Category the organization's collection and use of data regarding labor market penetration, new and existing services, customer satisfaction, staff development, partner participation and customer outcomes. It examines how the organization systematically uses information gathered to improve or change services.

7.a. Labor Market (LM) Penetration

Strengths

Definition of Labor Market Penetration

There is a defined constant measure of labor market penetration. A stated goal was also to begin addressing penetration for the industry clusters specified by the local WIB and the Commonwealth.

Training Funds

Measuring labor market penetration has helped identify emerging industry sectors in the region. The PA CareerLink then uses the information to determine where to direct training monies for job seeker development specifically to enhance the regions workforce.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

7.b. New and Existing Services

Strengths

Review Process

There is an established process to review services provided to PA CareerLink Customers. Information is collected from attendees through a standard data collection sheet. The next step is to compile the results and every six months review the information to alter or enhance the programs.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

7.c. Customer Satisfaction

Strengths

Customer Satisfaction Survey Return Rate

Beginning in 2003, the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Allentown has achieved a survey return rate of 49%. The surveys supply actionable, broad scope, dependable data upon which the PA CareerLink can impact service delivery.

Opportunities for Improvement

WIB Involvement

All survey results are returned to, aggregated by and disseminated by the local Workforce Investment Board. Although this process seems to work for the Lehigh Valley, it is

unclear what role the PA CareerLink plays in the process. Because all information is disseminated through the WIB the PA CareerLink management is circumvented. There is a separation of duties between the PA CareerLink and the WIB. It may prove beneficial to more clearly develop and define what is a PA CareerLink function and what is a WIB function.

7.d. Staff Development

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Sharing of Training Information

There is no systematic way to distribute or aggregate information about training programs the staff has attended. A PA CareerLink-wide distribution of training material or an information session conducted by attendees can help educate those who did not attend the training session.

7.e. Partner Participation

Strengths

Monthly Foot Traffic Report

Each partner agency keeps record of the number of customers each month. This information is then forwarded to the PA CareerLink management team for future planning.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

7.f. Customer Outcomes

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

PA CareerLink-wide Outcomes

Customer outcomes are currently tracked by some of the programs, and only for the purpose of measuring federally mandated standards. No PA CareerLink customer outcomes and measures were provided.

7.g. Other

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement – None identified at this time.

Part 3. Short-Term Planning Recommendations

This section of the feedback reports provides guidance and/or direction on what the review team and COPA recommend that the organization focus energies on to continuously improve. There are three (3) levels of recommendations: 1) organizations determined to be above average – These organizations will receive broad guidance and recommendations; 2) organizations determined to be in the average range – These organizations will receive detailed recommendations and will be required to submit an action plan with timelines regarding these recommendations; and, 3) organizations identified as lower than average – These organizations will receive detailed recommendations, be required to submit an action plan with timelines regarding the recommendations made, and receive a follow-up site visit within three (3) months from the date of the report to assess and evaluate deployment and implementation of the action plan.

- Your One-Stop Center scored within an above average range. General guidance for continuous improvement is outlined below.
- One-Stop Center scored within an average range. An action plan with your timelines, on the implementation and deployment of the actions is required to be submitted to Vicki Lori within 30 days of this report. Technical assistance is available by contacting Vicki Lori at vlori@state.pa.us or at 717.787.4273.

A report outlining the following information is required:

- date results/findings of the quality review shared with staff
 - how (forum -- meeting, email, etc.) the results/findings of the quality review were shared with staff
 - who participated in the report to staff i.e. just Administrator, with WIB director, Operators, etc.
 - what information was shared with staff (i.e. full report, tidbits, etc.)
- Your One-Stop Center scored in the lower than average range, and has been determined to not currently meet minimum standards. To be responsive to the needs of the organization, we will schedule a meeting to discuss the implications of the findings cited in this report. An Action Plan with timelines on the implementation and deployment of the actions must be submitted to Vicki Lori within 30 days of the receipt of this report. After receipt of the Action Plan, BWDP will develop an effective approach to providing technical assistance. A follow-up site visit will be scheduled three (3) months from the date of the Action Plan. This site visit will be conducted by members of the initial review team, who will make a determination of the adequacy of progress made on the Action Plan to ensure that the minimum standards will be met prior to the expiration date of your One-Stop's charter. A report on the results of this subsequent site visit will be issued and supplement the original PA CareerLink Quality Review report.

The most significant improvement opportunities for the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Allentown are:

Further Strengthening of the Business and Industry Relations Team

The Business and Industry Relations Team has many excellent features including the informative “*Outlook*” publication and extensive knowledge of the business community. However, roles and responsibilities for the members of the Business and Industry Relations team have not been developed.

Internal Customer Satisfaction

The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Allentown would benefit from developing a formal process to measure internal customer satisfaction. An internal customer satisfaction survey can provide actionable data to aggregate and compare over periods of time. Trend analysis can be developed to help identify organizational strengths and recurring problems.

Integration of Staff and Services

There is no process in place to educate all employees on the variety of services provided by each partner. The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley Allentown already has great working relationships among the partner staffs, the next step is to use this to your advantage by training all PA CareerLink workers on the basics of partner programs and developing a consistent cross-training process to keep all workers updated on program changes and enhancements.

Cross-Partner Measures

PA CareerLink-specific cross-partner measures linked to key outcomes were not provided. Goals and objectives can help provide a platform to create a PA CareerLink identity and promote unity throughout the staff and integration across partner lines.