



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

Pennsylvania CareerLink Lehigh Valley at Easton
220 Ferry Street
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Pennsylvania
CareerLink

FEEDBACK REPORT

PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley at Easton

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 - Easton Quality Review:

Strong LWIB Model

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

Management Philosophy

A visionary and proactive LWIB 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.

Lack of Partner Program Staff

The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Easton is staffed by five full-time Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership employees. Other partners contribute staff only on a part-time basis. The lack of staff makes it very difficult to provide the quality customer services, which are located in comprehensive PA CareerLink locations.

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 to modify 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

It appears that staff from the PA CareerLink – Easton are involved in community organizations such as the newly reformed Chamber of Commerce. This office also benefits from the extensive employer outreach work done by the regional Business and Industry Relations team that is located in Allentown. The team provides information to both PA CareerLink sites in the Workforce Investment Area.

Community Assessment

Personnel at the PA CareerLink – Easton include bilingual staff that has identified the need for service delivery in languages other than English. As a result, there is now a Spanish job club and a computer workshop where instruction is given in Spanish.

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 could lead to a more cohesive understanding of local needs.

3.b. Community Engagement

Strengths

Assessment of Customer Needs

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

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 – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Customer Flow

Due to a lack of CareerLink partners available on a consistent basis in the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Easton, it is not indicative of the State’s policy of providing quality employment and training services in a timely and effective manner. The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Easton has minimal customer traffic. A receptionist keeps a tally of customers that enter the office. The information is forwarded to the WIB. A staff member from the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley Allentown provides for WIA and trade services one day per week. An OVR staff representative shares responsibility for both Lehigh Valley offices and is available in Easton approximately two days per week.

Websites

The PA CareerLink has developed two local websites – www.CareerLinklehighvalley.org and www.lvprofessionals.org. The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley Easton has not utilized these websites. The websites offer opportunities for both employers and jobseekers to obtain invaluable information related to workforce development in the Lehigh Valley area.

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. The results are shared via a newsletter. More timely communication of survey results to staff may be more beneficial in terms of customer service and continuous improvement strategies.

4.b. Integration of Services / Seamless Services

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

CareerLink Partners

There is little evidence of integration of services available in the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Easton. Without adequate staff and partners available to adequately serve business and job seeker customers, the services provided do not meet the standards for continuous improvement opportunities.

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 process 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 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.

<i>Opportunities for Improvement</i>

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

<i>Strengths – None identified at this time.</i>
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<i>Opportunities for Improvement</i>

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

Assessment of staff training and development needs are handled by each partner's organization, and there is no evidence of a PA CareerLink-wide record of staff training plans or progress. Developing a process to assess and deliver staff training needs across partner organizations would help ensure that the most appropriate training is delivered to the most appropriate staff to achieve common PA CareerLink goals.

6.b. Internal Customer Satisfaction

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Staff Satisfaction Measures

Staff feedback and satisfaction measures are informal. It is noted that the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Easton recognizes that surveying staff for satisfaction levels and analyzing results for improvements would be valuable to staff motivation and morale.

6.c. Technology and Equipment

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement - None identified at this time.

6.d. Physical Facilities

Strengths

Facility

The facility is large, well lit and efficiently and effectively configured.

Opportunities for Improvement - None identified at this time.

6.e. PA CareerLink Partners

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Partner Involvement

There is no evidence that the mandated partners, other than the Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership, are represented on-site on more than a part-time basis. Without partner organizations present and providing services and programs to jobseeker and business customers, partner participation cannot be assessed against PA CareerLink system standards.

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 – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Easton Specific Measures

The measure of labor market penetration is a function of the Business and Industry, which is headquartered in the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Allentown office. There are no specific measures for the Lehigh Valley - Easton office are forwarded and controlled by the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Allentown.

7.b. New and Existing Services

Strengths – None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Services Tracking

There are no measures of services (ie. workshops, training programs, etc.) delivered specifically in the PA CareerLink – Easton. While being staffed on a full time basis by only BWDP staff, customers in need of training and more intensive services are referred to the PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Allentown.

7.c. Customer Satisfaction

Strengths

Customer Satisfaction Survey Return Rate

The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley - Easton has achieved a customer satisfaction survey return rate of 20%. The surveys supply actionable, broad scope, dependable data upon which the PA CareerLink can enhance 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; what is a PA CareerLink function and what is a WIB function could be further developed and defined.

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– None identified at this time.

Opportunities for Improvement

Partner Services

The effectiveness of partner participation is difficult to determine since there are no measures established. With only five BWDP full-time staff assigned, it is difficult to assess effectiveness of services other than for BWDP. Other Partner agencies contribute staff on a part-time basis, with the workers splitting time between the two full service PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley offices or access points.

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 - Easton are:

Internal Customer Satisfaction

The PA CareerLink Lehigh Valley – Easton 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.

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.

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.

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; what is a PA CareerLink function and what is a WIB function could be further developed and defined.