

# Strengthening D.C.'s One-Stop Centers: The Next Step in Reforming Workforce Development in the District of Columbia

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## Executive Summary

The District of Columbia has taken a number of steps to strengthen its workforce development system. Yet central components of that system – one-stop career centers (recently re-branded as American Job Centers) – have not been reformed and have serious limitations. Residents and businesses are supposed to access employment services at one-stops. Yet job placement and retention rates are low, both job seekers and employers feel that one-stops do not serve them well, there is little consistency in services at the city's centers, and one stops lack a clearly defined mission.

The District can better meet the needs of job seekers and businesses – and make the most of its resources – by transforming its one-stop career centers. This policy brief describes the characteristics of effective one-stop centers and explains how the District can use a process known as “certification” to set uniform standards, drive improvement, and provide accountability for its one-stops.

The District is currently developing a certification process in response to U.S. Department of Labor requirements. The effort's success, however, will depend on making certification a meaningful exercise: setting a clear mission, developing high-quality standards, establishing accountability tools, and connecting one-stops with experts to make needed changes.

Strengthening D.C.'s one-stops can also make the District's other workforce efforts more effective. This includes the One City One Hire program started in 2011, which has placed over 5,000 unemployed

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residents in D.C. jobs,<sup>2</sup> the workforce intermediary that will be launched this year to match hospitality and construction employers with workers in those fields, and the D.C. community college. As a gateway to the District's workforce system, effective one-stops can help job seekers and businesses take advantage of these other efforts.

### I. Effective One-Stop Centers Are Key To a Workforce System's Success

#### What One-Stop Centers Do

One-stop career centers, required by the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA)<sup>3</sup>, are intended to be places where residents can access

job opportunities, training programs, and other services to prepare for work. Businesses can also use one-stops to recruit workers with the skills they are looking for.

One-stops are required to offer three levels of job assistance – “core,” “intensive,” and “training” services.<sup>4</sup> (See Table 1 for a description of these services).

Table 1

WIA Services for Job seekers	
<p><b>Core Services</b> (Provided at One-Stop)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determination of eligibility for WIA-funded and other employment services</li> <li>• Initial assessment of skill levels, ability, and supportive service needs</li> <li>• Job search and placement assistance</li> <li>• Information on labor market, education and training providers, and social services</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Intensive Services</b> (Provided at One-Stop or by partner)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comprehensive and specialized assessment of skills level and service needs</li> <li>• Development of an individual employment plan</li> <li>• Group counseling, individual counseling, and career planning</li> <li>• Case management</li> <li>• Short-term pre-vocational or work readiness services</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Training Services</b> (Provided by outside organizations)</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupational skills training</li> <li>• Entrepreneurial training</li> <li>• On-the-job training</li> <li>• Job readiness training</li> <li>• Skills upgrading and retraining</li> <li>• Adult education and literacy activities combined skills training</li> </ul>	

People can use core services on their own (for example, by conducting their own computer job searches at one-stop centers), or with the assistance of one-stop staff.

The federal law also requires each local area to have at least one center that in addition to WIA services, offers unemployment insurance services, labor market information, and programs administered by partner agencies.<sup>5</sup> The majority of job seekers who use WIA services at D.C.’s one-stop career centers receive self-directed core services only, while a smaller number receive staff-assisted core, intensive and training services.

One-stop centers are also intended to help *employers* recruit qualified workers for job openings, arrange job fairs, and meet special staffing needs.<sup>6</sup> The centers’ ability to coordinate with employers, other service providers, and training organizations is crucial. By matching qualified job seekers with employers seeking skilled workers, one-stop centers mutually benefit both. Under the law, a range of organizations can operate one-stop career centers, including local government agencies, colleges and universities, community-based or nonprofit organizations, and private entities.<sup>7</sup>

The local workforce board has the authority to choose and certify one-stop operators and conduct oversight of the system.<sup>8</sup> The law requires local workforce boards to certify one-stop centers, but the District has not done so. The District’s state and local workforce board, the Workforce Investment Council (WIC), is now leading an effort to develop a certification process in partnership with the Department of Employment Services (DOES), which currently operates all of D.C.’s one-stop centers.

### Characteristics of Effective One-Stop Career Centers

Many local jurisdictions have gone beyond the letter of the law by creating one-stop career centers that excel at connecting job seekers and employers. Effective one-stops<sup>9</sup>:

- **Have a Clear Mission and Organizational Plan:** They set performance goals and have detailed plans to achieve those goals. They understand that they operate within a larger workforce system,

## Highlight on Effective Practices

### New York City Workforce1 Career Centers<sup>a</sup>

New York City reformed its one-stop system in 2003. Before that, the city was under fire for not spending WIA funds, the workforce board was inactive, and a single one-stop center served all of New York City.<sup>b</sup> Mayor Bloomberg relocated adult workforce programs in the Department of Small Business Services (SBS) — and eliminated the Department of Employment — to better align them with economic development initiatives.<sup>c</sup>

SBS created a one-stop system focused on outcomes and used data on successes and failures to ensure accountability and transparency. There are now 18 Workforce1 Career Centers in New York operated by nonprofit organizations, private companies, and community colleges. Together, they served over 100,000 job seekers in 2012 and placed over 27,000 in jobs – 54 times the number of placements made in 2003.<sup>d</sup>

New York's Workforce1 Career Centers have a clear mission — they fulfill business customers' hiring and training needs by preparing and placing the most qualified individuals in available jobs. The centers target employers who need staffing assistance and then source, screen, and match qualified candidates, relying primarily on recruitment events that Workforce1 Career Centers conduct on behalf of those employers.

While the Workforce1 Career Centers are most suited to help job seekers who are work-ready or nearly ready, the centers also help customers with multiple barriers get the services they need by making referrals through a large network of community partners, including nonprofit organizations, other city agencies, and the city's Center for Economic Opportunity. The centers also use federal WIA funds to provide individual training grants for in-demand occupations to a limited number of qualified job seekers. The city funds two career centers to recruit and train workers exclusively for health care and industrial and transportation jobs.

SBS uses a competitive process to designate one-stop operators. This process, along with active management of contracts, helps SBS ensure that its one-stop operators successfully carry out the Workforce1 mission and meet performance goals. To be selected as a Workforce1 operator, vendors must be able to demonstrate that their experience, capacity, and proposed approach will allow them to carry out the Workforce1 mission and meet businesses' staffing needs. Additionally, all Workforce1 centers must use a staffing model that supports this work, including:

- **Career Advisors** who serve as an initial contact for job seekers. They assess clients to determine what job preparation services they need, and then work with other Workforce1 staff to connect them to services, training, or potential job opportunities.
- **Business Account Managers** who research prospective employers with hiring needs and screen and place job seekers to ensure that business needs are met.
- **Partner Coordinators** who build relationships with partner organizations who can help customers who are not job-ready and need other services.
- **Strategic Operations Coordinators** who support and improve the center's operations, data management, customer flow, and service delivery.
- **Information Technology Leads** who manage a data system to support case management and outcome reporting, as well as other center technology and networks.

SBS works with its Workforce1 vendors to set performance goals, including the number of business-advertised positions that are filled and other job placements. Twenty percent of the vendor's contract is based on performance, and SBS regularly reviews the performance of each Workforce1 Center to actively manage contracts, track progress, and help identify needed adjustments.

and clearly delineate one-stop roles from those of partner organizations and programs.

based on their track record of job placements in high-demand occupations.

Effective one-stops<sup>10</sup>:

**Have a Welcoming, Professional Atmosphere with Strong Customer Service:** One-stops should be located in clean, modern, and accessible facilities. Effective centers offer an orientation to job seekers to highlight their services and to help job seekers to register. (Orientation and registration also should be available online.) The registration process allows the center to record job seekers' needs and interests, as well as employment services received on each visit, so they can receive efficient services on a continuing basis. Employers entering one-stops are greeted and introduced to business services staff who inform them of available services, as well as any training programs or hiring incentives available to employers. Employers are registered in a client database.

- **Connect Job seekers with the Right Services:** Following orientation, job seekers meet with a workforce development expert who assesses their skills and interests and steers them in an appropriate direction – toward a job, job training, or support services.

One-stop staff members use information on the labor market to guide job searches, and they keep a robust database of job openings developed by business services staff. Job seekers can attend workshops to create a resume, submit online job applications, and develop interview skills. One-stops have resource rooms with computers, printers, and phones for job seekers to use.

One-stop staff members also have an up-to-date list of training and social service providers, including government programs and non-profits, which they use to make referrals when appropriate. Referrals are tracked to make sure job seekers connect with other service providers. Partner agencies, such as public assistance, housing, or disability services, may even locate staff at the one-stop center to improve the referral process. Training referrals are made only to programs certified by the local workforce board<sup>11</sup>

- **Meet Employers' Staffing Needs:** Employers use one-stops to recruit qualified workers and gain access to other services. Business services staff members work with employers to identify their hiring needs, including the number of positions and the skills needed for each. That information is then used to screen job seekers. Employers can use one-stop centers to conduct job fairs, interviews, or new-employee orientations. Employers can get information on customized skills training for their employees, on-the-job training subsidies, employer tax credits, and programs available to small businesses. They also can get referrals to intermediaries that specialize in workforce development for particular industries. Effective one-stops don't wait for businesses to come to them, but also actively market their services to employers.

- **Are Performance and Information Driven:** Effective one-stops use information technology systems to make service delivery efficient, and to track and evaluate their performance. They keep information on job seeker and employer characteristics and needs, and use it to make sure clients are getting the services they need. Information about one-stop services and training providers is offered through their Web sites, along with online registration and orientation. They readily provide information on their job placement rates and customer satisfaction ratings to promote transparency and use the data internally to improve services.

## II. The District's One-Stop Career Centers Are Not Living Up to Their Potential

The District of Columbia has four full-service one-stop career centers and one affiliate center that serves only veterans, all of them operated by DOES. Over 84,000 people visited the centers in Fiscal Year 2012<sup>12</sup>, making them by far the District's largest workforce service. Yet in many ways, the one-stops are not meeting their intended purposes. The WIC and DOES acknowledge these shortcomings and have identified plans to improve D.C.'s one-stops.

### Low Job Placement and Retention for WIA Participants

Job seekers use one-stop centers to access a variety of federal and local workforce programs in addition to WIA services. While DOES complies with the U.S. Department of Labor’s reporting requirements, it has historically failed to collect the full range of information necessary to assess whether its programs meet the needs of the job market or operate effectively and efficiently.<sup>13</sup> Information on outcomes for job seekers is limited to WIA participants who receive staff-assisted core services, as well as intensive or training services. These job seekers represent a fairly small share of D.C.’s WIA participants – for example, just 1,056 of the roughly 17,000 individuals who received<sup>14</sup> WIA services for adults in the 2011 Program Year.<sup>15</sup>

A review of this limited information shows that the District’s job placement and retention rates for WIA recipients are low compared with states. A review of outcomes for WIA adult programs for Program Years (PY) 2007-2011 shows that roughly three-fifths of those who received WIA services got jobs<sup>16</sup> (see Figure 1). This means roughly 40 percent of job seekers who received WIA services in D.C. failed to find work. These rates are consistently lower than the average for U.S. states and lower than the performance targets D.C. negotiated with the U.S. Department of Labor; however the District’s performance requirements were technically met each year except for PY2008 because states must only come within 80 percent of the negotiated performance level<sup>17</sup> (see Figure 2).

Figure 1

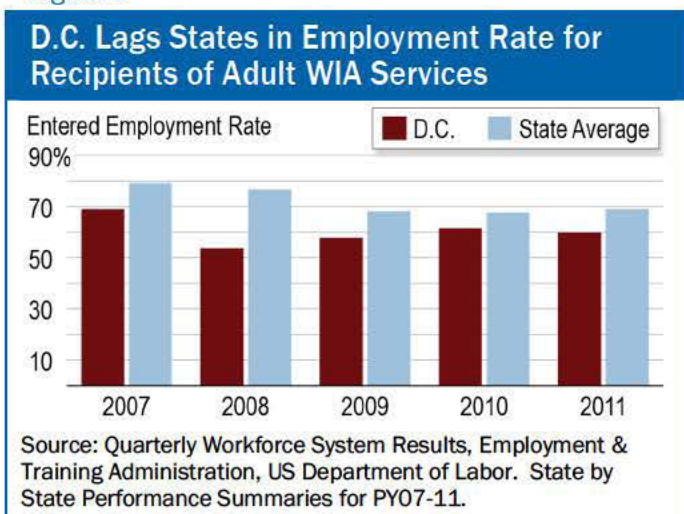
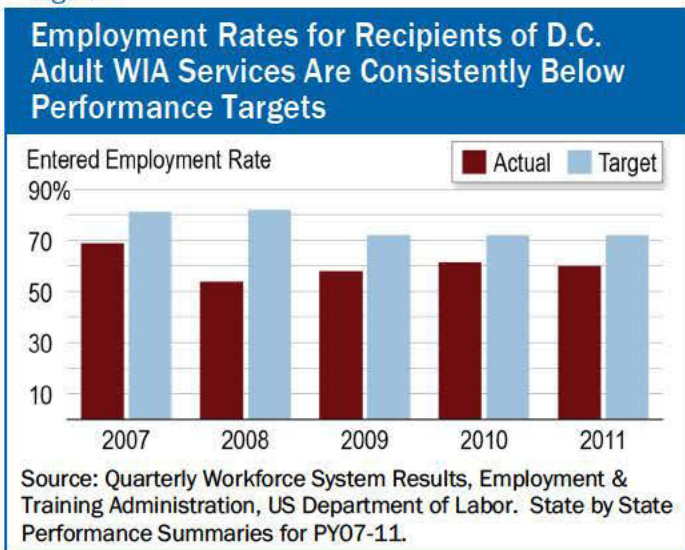


Figure 2



Employment retention is also lower in D.C. compared to the average state (see Figure 3). With the exception of PY2011, at least 28 percent of those who entered employment after receiving one-stop services left or lost their jobs within 6 months.

### Deficiencies that Inhibit Service Delivery

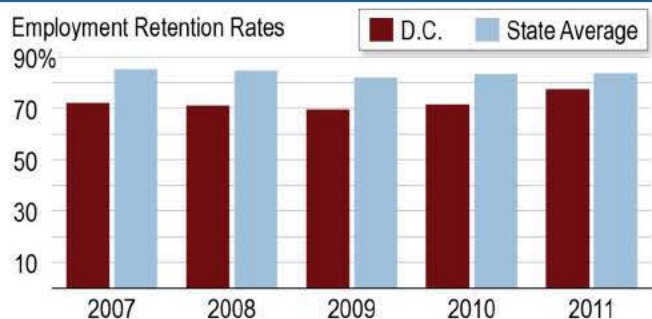
Recent reports by DOES and the D.C. Auditor flag deficiencies within the one-stop system that likely prevent it from effectively delivering services. A 2013 D.C. Auditor report found problems in recent years<sup>18</sup> with data management and documentation of services that were provided, a lack of written operational policies, and inadequacies in assessing job seeker needs.<sup>19</sup> DOES acknowledged that a lack of professional development and standard operating procedures resulted in “poor performance and operational deficiencies in years past.”<sup>20</sup> It also recognized “the need for better systems that ensure that jobseekers no longer have different (or varying quality levels) service experiences depending on which center they visit.”<sup>21</sup>

### Job Seeker and Employer Concerns

Past external reviews of D.C.’s one-stop system show that it has not historically served job seekers or employers especially well. Focus groups of job seekers and employers conducted for DOES in 2008 found that few job seekers believed that one-stops played a role in helping them find work, and that employer use of one-stops was marginal.<sup>22</sup>

Figure 3

### D.C. Lags States in Six-Month Employment Retention Rate for Recipients of WIA Adult Services



Source: Quarterly Workforce System Results, Employment & Training Administration, US Department of Labor. State by State Performance Summaries for PY07-11.

Similarly, a 2010 report by the D.C. Council Committee on Housing and Workforce Development<sup>23</sup> laid out a number of constituent concerns about the District's one-stop career centers, including a lack of uniform quality standards, a lengthy process to get residents into approved training programs, and unsuitable facilities.

### III. The District Can Use Certification to Develop Effective One-Stops

The process of "certifying" D.C.'s one-stop career centers, which the WIC is now developing in partnership with DOES and others, can set standards, drive improvements, and increase accountability.

#### D.C. Is Developing a Certification Process to Meet WIA Requirements

The District's lack of a process for certifying or monitoring its one-stops appears to have contributed to the uneven level of services across its centers and the deficiencies documented earlier. Indeed, the D.C. Auditor found that "[w]ithout a certification process, the District could not document that One-Stop Career Center operators were qualified and capable of delivering effective, competent training and employment guidance."<sup>24</sup>

Local workforce boards have substantial flexibility when designing a certification process, with no

specific standards laid out in federal law and regulations. The process of certifying one-stop centers can be done either through a competitive application process or as an agreement between the workforce board and at least three "partner" agencies, such as the Department of Employment Services.<sup>25</sup> No entity can receive federal funds to operate a one-stop center unless it goes through one of these processes.<sup>26</sup>

D.C.'s WIC is now working to develop and implement a certification and monitoring process for the centers, in response to being found out of compliance with the law by the U.S. Department of Labor. The District is required to submit to the Department "a proposed certification plan for all centers and a description of the method by which the WIC with the One-Stop operator(s) will address instances of deficiency, non-compliance, and underperformance."<sup>27</sup> The District is currently operating under an "At-Risk" designation from the Department, which can impose a variety of restrictions and special conditions on the District.<sup>28</sup>

With support from the Department of Labor, the WIC is working with an independent expert to review how services are delivered and how operations are managed at the District's one-stops. The WIC's consultant has conducted one-on-one interviews with one-stop managers and staff, and this expert will also help the WIC develop certification standards and policy. The WIC also is convening a "one-stop certification task force" representing employers, community based organizations, DOES, and other city agencies that are mandated partners in the one-stop system.

#### Certification Provides an Opportunity to Set Standards, Drive Improvement, and Increase Accountability

The District has the opportunity to use the certification process to create a framework for transforming its one-stops and making them a robust resource for employers and job seekers. The WIC should use certification to set clear standards for D.C.'s one-stop centers, identify a path for improvement, and hold one-stops accountable when they fail to meet basic standards or make improvements. While such a process should be used to certify the existing one-stop centers operated by

DOES, it also would help the WIC designate other entities to operate one-stop centers if it chooses to do so in the future.

**Certification Standards:** These help ensure that services are delivered in a way that advances a community's goals for its one-stop centers. Certification standards also help ensure that the same basic services are uniform across a city's different one-stop career centers.

At a minimum, certification standards should verify that one-stop centers are providing required services in a standardized way. Many workforce boards also use the certification process to determine whether a one-stop center's day-to-day operations further the organization's mission and goals and, if not, identify areas where improvements can be made. Many workforce boards set standards in key areas including leadership; strategic planning; customer service; information, technology and analysis; human resources; operations; and results.<sup>29</sup> Certification results in a contract or written memorandum of agreement between the workforce board and the one-stop operator.

**Driving Improvement:** Certification is also used to drive improvement at one-stop centers in several different ways:

- **Assessment and Technical Assistance:** Certification of an existing one-stop center often begins with an in-depth assessment to determine where it meets standards and where it falls short. The workforce board often helps one-stop operators get help from experts to make needed improvements. For example, the State of Kentucky required its existing one-stop centers to conduct a self-assessment before submitting a certification application, and it provided one-stops with the opportunity to apply for technical assistance funding and make improvements.<sup>30</sup>
- **Certification Requirements for Continuous Improvement:** Some workforce boards require one-stop operators to have formal processes in place for making continuous improvements in order to become certified. For example, the Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board requires centers to have a continuous quality

improvement plan and team in order to be eligible for certification.<sup>31</sup>

- **Tiered Certification:** Other states and localities set different tiers of certification to drive continuous improvement. For example, the State of Ohio has four different levels of certification, with the one-star white standard being basic compliance and the four-star gold level being exemplary.<sup>32</sup>

**Providing Accountability:** If a center does not meet certification standards (either at the time of certification or during monitoring), the local workforce board can require the operator to make improvements. Local workforce boards also can strengthen their oversight by tying funding to the certification process, outcomes, or improvement actions. For example, some workforce boards provide incentive grants to one-stop centers that achieve a high certification score while others tie a portion of funding to performance outcomes. Although it is an option of last resort, workforce boards also have the authority under federal law to terminate a one-stop operator's eligibility for WIA funds<sup>33</sup>, and a strong certification process can help workforce boards make that determination.

## Next Steps for the District

As the District develops its one-stop certification process, we make the following recommendations to maximize certification as a tool for setting standards, driving improvement, and providing accountability:

### **1) The Mayor, WIC, and DOES should articulate a clear mission and goals for effective one-stop career centers.**

The District does not seem to have a clear mission for its one-stop centers. The District adopted a mission statement for its overall workforce system to "build and sustain an integrated workforce investment system of skilled staff and partners delivering high-quality services that help District residents gain the skills to meet business needs and connect to career pathways."<sup>34</sup> The Mayor, WIC, and DOES should work together to determine what specific role the city's one-stops will play in achieving that larger mission. The mission should address how the one-stops will meet the varying needs of job

## Highlight on Effective Practices

### Northern Virginia SkillSource Centers<sup>e</sup>

The Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board (NVWIB) contracts with the Fairfax County Department of Family Services to staff and administer five “SkillSource Centers” throughout Northern Virginia. From Program Year 2005-11, SkillSource Centers exceeded their federal performance targets for new employment rates, employment retention, average earnings, and credential receipts.<sup>f</sup>

SkillSource’s mission is to enhance its clients’ employability and help employers find qualified workers. In addition to providing job seekers with WIA-funded services, SkillSource Centers provide access to services that support employment by working with several other organizations, ranging from Northern Virginia Community College to Catholic Charities Migration and Refugee Services. These partner organizations are either physically located at SkillSource Centers or available to job seekers on a regularly scheduled basis. SkillSource also has site locations, called “SHARE,” at faith-based or community organizations. Job seekers can go to a SHARE site in their neighborhood (for example, a church or community center) to look for jobs and get assistance from trained workers or volunteers who connect them to the one-stop system. SkillSource Centers help employers post job openings, find skilled candidates, and access employer tax credits and on-the-job training wage subsidies.

SkillSource Centers use information and technology to improve service delivery in several ways:

- Customers establish an account online, creating a history of their visits.
- Job seekers who provide their email addresses get a weekly newsletter informing them of upcoming workshops, job fairs, and recruitment events at the Center.
- Centers track business and job seeker customer satisfaction in an electronic database that is reviewed regularly.
- SkillSource is in the process of adopting an online orientation process so that customers are not limited by the dates and times of in-person orientations.

The NVWIB has developed a robust bi-annual certification and monitoring process to ensure that SkillSource Centers meet basic standards and are continually improving their service delivery. In order to be certified, an organization must have:

- **A continuous quality improvement (CQI) plan** for making improvements to the center’s operations and service delivery. The CQI team charged with carrying out the plan meets regularly and uses information on performance and customer satisfaction to improve service delivery.
- **An interagency training plan** that explains how staff members from different partner agencies and organizations work together to carry out the one-stop center’s key functions.
- **Competency certifications** for 60 percent of the Center staff, using certifications provided by organizations like the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals or the Dynamic Works Institute. SkillSource pays for staff to become certified and allows them to prepare during work time.

A SkillSource team makes monitoring visits to each Center twice a year to ensure that the Center is complying with federal law, making progress with its CQI plan, and to provide feedback. SkillSource also monitors monthly outcomes for all programs provided at its Centers.



seekers, from job matching to training to social services; how it will meet the needs of employers; and how it will connect with partner agencies. The WIC should then set clear performance goals for the District's one-stop centers that support their mission.

**2) The WIC should adopt certification standards that foster effective one-stops.**

The certification standards adopted by the WIC should set the expectation that the District's one-stops will have the characteristics of an effective one-stop described in the first section of this policy brief. They should also set expectations for how the one-stop centers' leadership, strategic planning, customer service, information technology and analysis, human resources, and operations advance the one-stop mission and performance goals. The certification standards should provide a framework for making effective one-stop practices standard across the city's one-stops.

The standards should be developed with input from the WIC's certification task force, which includes a wide array of stakeholders. The task force should take into account the perspectives of one-stop managers and staff, since they will ultimately be responsible for implementing changes at the one-stop centers.

**3) The Mayor should reaffirm the WIC's oversight responsibilities by transferring authority of WIA grant funds to the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED).**

WIA requires its grant funds to be disbursed at the direction of the local board.<sup>35</sup> Currently, DOES acts as both the disbursing of the District's WIA grant and as the one-stop operator. This dual role creates an inherent conflict of interest and constrains the WIC's ability to use WIA funds to drive certification and continuous improvement at DOES's one-stops. In order to address this issue, the Mayor should make DMPED – the agency in which the WIC is located – the recipient of WIA grant funds, as the Mayor has the authority to do.<sup>36</sup> The WIC could then provide DOES with federal funds to operate one-stops in accordance with certification standards.

**4) The WIC should work with an independent expert to evaluate one-stop centers based on the certification standards and provide technical assistance for compliance.**

The certification process will be most successful if the WIC starts with a baseline assessment of where D.C.'s one-stops are relative to certification standards and provides one-stops an opportunity to make improvements before applying for certification. Once the WIC sets its certification standards, we recommend that it continue to use an external consultant to help conduct this analysis to ensure an independent and objective assessment. The expert can also help the WIC determine how to structure and provide technical assistance so that one-stop centers can meet certification criteria.

**5) The WIC should build its capacity to implement the certification and monitoring process.**

As explained, federal law designates the WIC to certify and oversee one-stop career centers. This process is likely to be time-intensive and will likely involve, at a minimum, application reviews, site visits, creation of a certification report, oversight of technical assistance, and monitoring. We recommend that the WIC form a committee to provide oversight of the certification and monitoring process, and to potentially participate in application review and site visits. WIC staff should be charged with managing the day-to-day activities of this committee. The WIC currently has a small staff and may need to build capacity to take on this responsibility.

**6) DOES should explain how it will reform operations to meet the new certification standards.**

Following the baseline assessment of one-stops, DOES should develop a strategic operations plan that explains how it will reform operations at its one-stop centers to meet the certification standards. This plan should explain how all one-stops will:

- Provide a welcoming and professional atmosphere with strong customer service;
- Standardize job seeker assessments and a systematic approach to connecting job seekers with the right jobs and services;
- Develop a process for meeting employers' staffing needs (potentially by employing the approach used by One City One Hire);

- Use data, information, and technology to improve service delivery and one-stop system performance;
- Solidify partnerships with other agencies and organizations in the workforce system, including the co-location of certain agencies at the one-stop centers or developing a client data system that can track referrals between partners and the one-stop.

## Conclusion

One-stop centers have the potential to play a central role in helping local economies reach their fullest potential. In the District, as in many communities, one-stop centers serve more people and businesses than any individual workforce development service.

Under federal law, one-stop centers are supposed to help residents seeking jobs, as well as employers looking for qualified workers. While WIA sets requirements about the types of services that one-stops must provide access to, many of the specifics of how to operate one-stop centers are left to the discretion of local workforce boards, one-stop operators, and partner agencies. They must choose how to design one-stop centers that:

- Connect job seekers with work opportunities that match their skills;
- Provide residents not yet ready to work with employment services, access to training, or the appropriate social services; and
- Help businesses find qualified workers and access training programs and hiring incentives.

These complex tasks cannot be accomplished without careful planning, clear goals and standards, continuous organizational improvement, and ongoing monitoring. The certification process is a perfect tool for setting goals and standards for one-stop centers and then holding center operators accountable for meeting them. As the District embarks on its effort to create a one-stop certification process, it should see this as an opportunity to make the entire workforce development system operate more efficiently and to make the city's one-stop places where residents and businesses can count on getting the employment help they need.

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## Notes:

<sup>1</sup> Elissa Silverman of the DC Fiscal Policy Institute also contributed to research for this brief.

<sup>2</sup> Mike DeBonis "D.C. Mayor Gray: 5,100 residents find jobs with help of city program," *Washington Post*, December 12, 2012, at [http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-12/local/35789282\\_1\\_jobless-residents-unemployment-rate-highest-jobless-rates](http://articles.washingtonpost.com/2012-12-12/local/35789282_1_jobless-residents-unemployment-rate-highest-jobless-rates)

<sup>3</sup> Workforce Investment Act of 1998, 29 U.S.C. § 2801 (1998).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.* § 2864(d).

<sup>5</sup> *Id.* § 2864(c)(2)(A).

<sup>6</sup> Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, 29 U.S.C. § 49f(e) (1933).

<sup>7</sup> 29 U.S.C. § 2841 (d)(2)(B).

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* §2832(d).

<sup>9</sup> This summary is based on literature, interviews with workforce experts, and site visits to effective one-stop centers. Literature includes: United States Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: One-Stop System Infrastructure Continues to Evolve, but Labor Should Take Action to Require That All Employment Service Offices Are Part of the System*. Report to the Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, GAO-07-1096 (September 2007). Also: John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. *One-Stop Innovations: Leading*

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*Change Under the WIA One-Stop System*. Final Report Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration/Office of Workforce Security under contract #L6826-8-00-80-30 (March 12, 2002).

<sup>10</sup> This summary is based on literature, interviews with workforce experts, and site visits to effective one-stop centers. Literature includes: United States Government Accountability Office. *Workforce Investment Act: One-Stop System Infrastructure Continues to Evolve, but Labor Should Take Action to Require That All Employment Service Offices Are Part of the System*. Report to the Chairman, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, GAO-07-1096 (September 2007). Also: John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey. *One-Stop Innovations: Leading Change Under the WIA One-Stop System*. Final Report Prepared for the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration/Office of Workforce Security under contract #L6826-8-00-80-30 (March 12, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> 29 U.S.C. § 2832(d)(2)(C) gives local boards the authority to determine eligibility for providers of training services.

<sup>12</sup> Department of Employment Services, Fiscal Year 2012-2013 Performance Hearing Responses.

<sup>13</sup> Office of the District of Columbia Auditor. *Audit of the District's Workforce Development Programs*, at [dcauditor.org/sites/default/files/DCA042013\\_0.pdf](http://dcauditor.org/sites/default/files/DCA042013_0.pdf) (February 2013).

<sup>14</sup> We characterize those who "received" WIA services as participants who have exited WIA. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, an individual is counted as a WIA exiter when that participant does not receive a service funded by the program or funded by a partner program for 90 consecutive calendar days and is not scheduled for future services. U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Training and Employment Guidance Letter 17-05 at [wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=2195](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2195) (February 17, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> District of Columbia. *District of Columbia Workforce Investment Act Annual Report, Program Year July 1, 2011 Through June 30, 2012*, at [does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/page\\_content/attachments/DC%20WIA%20Annual%20Report%20PY%202011-FINAL.pdf](http://does.dc.gov/sites/default/files/dc/sites/does/page_content/attachments/DC%20WIA%20Annual%20Report%20PY%202011-FINAL.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> We reviewed outcomes for individuals enrolled in WIA adult programs since they represent the great majority of WIA-registered job seekers in D.C. The employment rate referenced is defined by the U.S. Department of Labor as the ratio of the number of adult participants who are employed in the first quarter after their exit quarter to the number of adult participants who exit during the quarter. The rate only applies to those who were not employed at their date of participation. The exit quarter represents the calendar quarter in which the date of exit is recorded for the individual. U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Training and Employment Guidance Letter 17-05 at [wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr\\_doc.cfm?DOCN=2195](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2195) (February 17, 2006).

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<sup>17</sup> U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration Training and Employment Guidance Letter 29-10 [wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL29-10ACC.pdf](http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL29-10ACC.pdf) (June 1, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> The Auditor's report covered FY2009, FY2010, and FY2011.

<sup>19</sup> Office of the District of Columbia Auditor. *Audit of the District's Workforce Development Programs*.

<sup>20</sup> Department of Employment Services, Fiscal Year 2011-2012 Performance Hearing Responses.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Jim Callahan, Keith Massey, Kisha Toppin. *Review of the District of Columbia's One-Stop Service System* (Callahan Consultants, Inc., October 2008).

<sup>23</sup> Councilmember Michael Brown, Chairperson, Committee on Housing and Workforce Development. *Special Report on the State of the District's Workforce Programs* (December 14, 2010).

<sup>24</sup> Office of the District of Columbia Auditor. *Audit of the District's Workforce Development Programs*.

<sup>25</sup> 29 U.S.C. § 2841(d)(2)(A)

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Final Monitoring Report for the District of Columbia Department of Employment Services Issued by the ETA Region 2 Office, United States Department of Labor (February 20, 2009).

<sup>28</sup> Special conditions for at-risk grantees are defined in 29 CFR § 97.12 and may include payment on a reimbursement basis; withholding authority to proceed to the next phase until receipt of evidence of acceptable performance within a given funding period; requiring additional, more detailed financial reports; additional project monitoring; requiring the grantee or subgrantee to obtain technical or management assistance; or establishing additional prior approvals.

<sup>29</sup> These categories are adapted from the Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Excellence for the Nonprofit Sector, available at [www.nist.gov/baldrige/enter/nonprofit.cfm](http://www.nist.gov/baldrige/enter/nonprofit.cfm). Many jurisdictions use the Baldrige Criteria within their certification process per the National Association of Workforce Board's guidance.

<sup>30</sup> Maher and Maher. *Kentucky One-Stop Certification System: Implementation Framework and Process* (August 16, 2011). Confirmed through personal communication with Thomas Wheatley, Kentucky Office of Employment and Training, February 4, 2013.

<sup>31</sup> Northern Virginia Application for Certification to become a SkillsSource One-Stop Center, developed by Strumpf Associations for Certification Cycle July 2010 to June 2012.

<sup>32</sup> The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, The Ohio One-Stop System Certification and Quality Assurance Initiative January 2008 through June 30, 2010 at [jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/Docs/GOLD\\_STANDARD\\_CONTINUOUS\\_IMPROVEMENT\\_PROGRAM.pdf](http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/Docs/GOLD_STANDARD_CONTINUOUS_IMPROVEMENT_PROGRAM.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> 29 U.S.C. §2841(d)(1).

<sup>34</sup> District of Columbia. *State Integrated Workforce Plan for Workforce Investment Act/Wagner-Peyser Act and Department of*

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Labor Programs Program Years 2012-2016, at:  
<http://dmped.dc.gov/DC/DMPED/Programs+and+Initiatives/DC+Workforce+Investment+Council/The+DC+Workforce+Development+Strategic+Plan+2012-2016>

<sup>35</sup> 29 U.S.C. § 2832(d)(3)(B)(i)(III).

<sup>36</sup> They Mayor can designate any entity to serve as the local sub-recipient or fiscal agent of WIA funds. 29 U.S.C. §2832 (d)(3)(B)(i)(II).

<sup>a</sup> This highlight was informed by the *Under One Roof Report* noted below, as well as by an April 8, 2010 Notice of Solicitation Request for Proposals for Job seeker and Business Services at Workforce1 Career Centers by the City of New York Department of Small Business Services and interviews with SBS staff and staff at Workforce1 Centers operated by Grant Associates.

<sup>b</sup> NCEE, *Under One Roof: New Governance Structures for Aligning Local Economic and Workforce Development, Volume I* at [http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Under\\_One\\_Roof\\_vol1.pdf](http://www.ncee.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/04/Under_One_Roof_vol1.pdf)

<sup>c</sup> Ibid.

<sup>d</sup> Personal communication with Chris Neale, New York City Department of Small Business Services, January 25, 2013.

<sup>e</sup> This highlight was informed by interviews with SkillSource staff as well as certification materials, program information, and annual reports provided by SkillSource.

<sup>f</sup> SkillSource Group 2011 Annual Report for PY2005-2010. SkillSource staff reported that centers exceeded WIA performance targets for PY2011.