Workforce Innovation Fund

Harnessing the Power of Data-Driven Innovations Webinar
Q&A Session: Responses to Additional Questions From Participants to Presenters

WIF Project: *Electronic OhioMeansJobs (e-OMJ)*
Presenter: Mark Birnbrich, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services

Q: At what level does Ohio use WorkKeys if at all?

A: Currently, Ohio law (House Bill 2) requires unemployment compensation claimants to complete all of the practice test sections for NCRC WorkKeys by their 14th week of unemployment. Also, some workforce areas in Ohio are utilizing the NCRC as a skills determiner and promoting this to employers in their area.

Q: What outcomes will be evaluated for the OhioMeansJobs work?

A: The main outcome is certainly job placement, but the workforce services provided by the system are also important. The services provided by the system will be rated and compared with services provided via staff assistance.

Q: How are you utilizing these innovations to create a more data-driven system?

A: The system is driven and has been designed based on Ohio's in-demand data to consistently encourage individuals to consider occupations that are in-demand in Ohio. Much effort and thought went into developing Ohio's specific in-demand data and then embedding that information within the system.

For example: When an individual takes an interest assessment and wishes to view occupations matching the interest results, the system will list matching occupations in order of demand within Ohio (highest in-demand jobs listed first). The in-demand occupations are more likely to qualify for funding to cover training costs and ultimately result in a job here in Ohio.

Q: Will this model help identify and reduce the number of providers offering overlapping services?

A: Reducing overlapping services is a goal of the project. As individuals and partner entities become more comfortable with the system, partners/providers will be more likely to encourage individuals to use the system for certain tasks and then provide follow-up and/or more in-depth services to individuals as needed.

Q: How have these systems impacted the experience and skills needs of current staff?

A: The system is designed not only to assist individuals who are comfortable with technology use services remotely, but it also is designed to assist staff/caseworkers in serving individuals. Staff will likely begin to use the tools available through the system, such as the Career Profile, in serving individuals instead of some other career assessment tool. We have expanded training statewide to local staff to encourage use of the system, even though it is a self-service system.

Q: Did you have to develop data sharing agreements first between the partners?

A: No. Since it is a self-service system, it is the individual's decision to share his or her information with a particular partner. The aggregate data transferred to our back-end case management system already has "security agreements" signed by those partners.

Q: I did not hear anything about using LMI to drive program decision-making. Seems this was exclusively about automating interactions with clients. Did I miss something?

A: The data-driven aspect of our initiative is Ohio's in-demand data. Much effort was spent on determining Ohio's specific data and then embedding that information within the system. (To complete the in-demand list, LMI data was one of the primary tools used, along with four-year trend data from electronic postings and data collected from a forecasting effort.) For example: When an individual takes an assessment and he or she wishes to see the results as they relate to occupations, the system will put in-demand occupations at the top of the list. This way, we are presenting to the individual occupations that have the greatest numbers of job openings and that are more likely to have funding opportunities for training.

Q: Do any of these systems use data to make allocation decisions, such as targeting training to programs and occupations which have the greatest success and effect on common measures?

A: With this being a self-service system, there is no direct connection to back-end financials. However, we do use the in-demand data that is embedded within the system to promote in-demand occupations that are more likely to be funded through an OhioMeansJobs Center. To ensure that most training dollars are spent on in-demand occupation training, a policy was passed requiring 85 percent of WIA training funds to be spent on Ohio's in-demand occupations.

Q: Can you elaborate on the type of data you are dealing with?

A: Everything from basic demographic data to resources to help individuals gain employment. Some of the resources that are part of each individual's backpack are a Career Planning center, a Budget Calculator, a Resume Builder, a Resume Rater, a Jobs Applied For section, a Jobs Researching section, a list of schools that offer training in needed skills, a list of workforce programs that could possibly fund training, scanned workforce-related documents, a Career Profile assessment, a list of assessments taken and scores earned, a list of careers of interest, the number of employers that have viewed the individual's resume, and calendar appointments.

Q: Will any of these newly developed data systems be available to other states?

A: Absolutely. The only thing unavailable would be proprietary information from our third-party vendors.

Q: What does evaluation of the third party products look like?

A: In evaluating third-party products, ODJFS considered the cost, the ease of integration, the ability to be white-labeled and appear seamless within OhioMeansJobs, previous experience with a similar project, and the ability for a single sign-on. We didn't want users to need multiple accounts to use the product.

Q: It looks like Ohio was able to access some back-end data. How did you get various state agencies to agree to share their information? In Chicago it looks like you had access to some of the state system interfaces. Did this give you access to back-end data as well? How did you get the state of Illinois to share the data with you?

A: Anything we are sharing and doing in our back-end case management system has already had security agreements signed by partners/agencies. With OhioMeansJobs being self-service, it is up to individuals to share their data with particular providers/programs.

Q: How did you measure the demand for the change that your project precipitates? Did you use consumer surveys or other ways to communicate with employers and jobseekers?

A: Change was necessary because there was a higher demand for services, both from a quality and quantity standpoint. We mapped out a "day in the life of an individual" and what resources they would need. We started with someone being unsure what they wanted/needed to do to get that first job. Then we developed the system to allow individuals to enter anywhere along that continuum. We continue to consider stakeholder input as we maintain and enhance the system.

Q: How are you all encouraging responses to surveys (especially Mark @ Ohio Means Jobs)? And what are your response rates?

A: Right now, I don't have a great answer for you on this. Our independent evaluator is just starting our first round of surveys, so best to ask me in a few months when I'll have information to share.

▶ **WIF Project:** *Integrated Workforce Information System*
Presenter: Dena Al-Khatib, *Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership*

Q: How did the funding for IWIS come about?

A: The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership's integrated workforce information system (IWIS) project is funded through a US DOL-ETA Workforce Innovation Fund grant.

Q: How does IWIS improve efficiency if it is not replacing any data systems? Will data from IWIS populate multiple databases? Or is it just a system to compile data from multiple sources? As you built the IWIS system, was it done with a view to pulling and integrating data from all of the other systems, which seem to have been designed for a single purpose, i.e. Federal reporting? Will IWIS replace existing case management systems (like ETO) and what do workforce service providers think of that? Will they have to pay for IWIS annual maintenance?

A: The IWIS will improve efficiency by creating a common front-end tool for jobseekers and case managers that interfaces and shares data with several state systems.

Due to time and money constraints, we cannot interface IWIS with every existing data system. The agencies that we contract with for WIA services will be required to use the IWIS for WIA. The IWIS will interface with our state WIA data system so that the State receives all the data they need for federal reporting without agencies doing duplicative data entry. Our WIA agencies will be able to use IWIS for their other clients, as they choose. Non-WIA agencies can also opt into using the system. The initial idea for IWIS came from workforce service providers, and there is a lot of excitement among providers about the system.

The Partnership is working on a financial sustainability plan that will include an assessment of how to cover the on-going costs of IWIS.

Q: How are you utilizing these innovations to create a more data-driven system?

A: The IWIS is still in development, it will have robust reporting capabilities. This will allow funders and service providers to extract better data for performance management and program evaluation.

Q: Will this model help identify and reduce the number of providers offering overlapping services?

A: The IWIS will allow workforce service providers to track clients across funding streams, which is expected to reduce overlapping services.

Q: How have these systems impacted the experience and skills needs of current staff?

A: The roll-out of IWIS will include significant staff training, and The Partnership will offer on-going training to staff users.

Q: Did you have to develop data sharing agreements first between the partners?

A: We needed data share agreements with our Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services and for wage data prior to beginning work on these interfaces due to the confidential nature of the data being shared.

Q: Do any of these systems use data to make allocation decisions, such as targeting training to programs and occupations which have the greatest success and effect on common measures?

A: The Partnership is already using LMI to drive program decision-making. For example, we have limited ITA usage to 40 occupations in 7 high-demand industries. IWIS will allow us to better track customer job skills and training-related job placements. See our website for more information: http://www.workforceboard.org/reports/labor-market-data/target-occupation-profiles.

Q: Can you elaborate on the type of data you are dealing with?

A: IWIS will collect jobseeker-level and employer service data across multiple workforce programs. It will also provide LMI.

Q: How did you measure the demand for the change that your project precipitates? Did you use consumer surveys or other ways to communicate with employers and jobseekers?

A: The Partnership conducted a stakeholder engagement process with workforce staff and public and private workforce funders to determine the requirements for the IWIS. A summary of this stakeholder engagement can be found in the Systems Requirement Plan Executive Summary available on our website: http://www.workforceboard.org/a/integrated-workforce-information-system-(iwis)-initiative/.

⊙ WIF Project: *Next Generation Labor Exchange (GenLEX)*
Presenter: Elizabeth Carver, Utah Department of Workforce Services

Q: How are you utilizing these innovations to create a more data-driven system?

A: Utah and Montana are using data to provide real time feedback (push technology) to job seekers and employers as they use the labor exchange system. Utah is also linking in a career pathways system that uses labor market information to provide feedback to job seekers.

We are using data to help drive the decisions we make on what we put in our Labor Exchange system.

Q: What methodology is Utah & Montana using for job matching?

A: Utah and Montana are using a matching methodology that we designed based on three key components. We use career interest, work experience, education and physical location. Career interest, work experience and education are weighted differently.

Q: How have these systems impacted the experience and skills needs of current staff?

A: Current staff has had to learn a new online system. We have seen more job seekers and employers using self service options. Staffs in offices are spending more time with those who need more help to navigate our services.

Q: Did you have to develop data sharing agreements first between the partners?

A: Utah did not have to develop very many data sharing agreements because most of the partners are under one state agency. Montana did have to develop a few more data sharing agreements.

Q: Are there specific strategies to target youth and young adults outside of targeting the general adult population?

A: Yes, many of our youth and young adults do business in a different way. They use texting, social media, mobile devices, and etc. So, we are incorporating these options into our system.

Q: I did not hear anything about using LMI to drive program decision-making. Seems this was exclusively about automating interactions with clients. Did I miss something?

A: Utah and Montana have use data to drive decision making for this project. We used LMI, and other internal data to help determine the success of our job matching methodology prior to adding it into our system. We have also used random survey feedback to drive the features we are adding to the labor exchange system.

Q: How does the "Next Generation Labor Exchange Project" addresses the challenge of gathering accurate demographic data of workforce system customers?

A: Utah and Montana have used a variety of data including: LMI, quarterly wage data, random survey data, job seeker work history ONETs, job seeker education history, demographic data, and more.

Q: Will any of these newly developed data systems be available to other states?

A: Yes, any state can have the code for the Utah and Montana next generation labor exchange system for free.

Q: What does evaluation of the third party products look like?

A: Montana and Utah have received a booklet of our baseline data portion of the evaluation and we will receive another booklet shortly after our first year of data collection has been complete.

Q: How did you measure the demand for the change that your project precipitates? Did you use consumer surveys or other ways to communicate with employers and jobseekers?

A: The Utah and Montana project used online random surveys and focus groups conducted by our third party evaluator for both job seekers and employers.

Q: How are you all encouraging responses to surveys (especially Mark @ Ohio Means Jobs)? And what are your response rates?

A: Utah and Montana randomly pop up the surveys for job seekers and employers. We are getting lots of surveys so we haven't had to add a lot of encouragement. We added tracking so we can better determine response rates. We'll have a better idea of the response rate in November 2014.