

# How The One-Stop System Serves People with Disabilities: A Nationwide Survey of Disability Agencies

**Prepared by the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development  
at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey**

**Prepared for:  
The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center  
On Workforce Development and Employment Policy  
for Persons with Disabilities**

**Funded by:  
United States Department of Education,  
National Institute on Disability and  
Rehabilitation Research**

**Report written by Ariana Funaro and K.A. Dixon**

**June 2002**

**This report does not necessarily reflect the views of NIDRR or the U.S. Department of Education**

## Table of Contents

Background	2
A. The Workforce Investment Act	2
B. Serving Job Seekers with Disabilities	3
Purpose	5
Methodology	6
Section 1: Introduction	6
Section 2: Disability Agencies And the One-Stop System: Building Partnerships to Serve People with Disabilities	7
A. Demographics	7
B. Planning Partnerships Through MOUs	8
C. Partnerships in Practice	11
D. Performance Measurement	13
E. View of the One-Stop System	14
Section 3: Recommendations	18
Appendix 1: Disability Agency Survey Instrument and Results	21

## Background

### *A. The Workforce Investment Act*

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) created a workforce development system that encourages and facilitates one-stop service delivery.<sup>1</sup> This re-envisioned employment and training system is intended to serve every job seeker through a central location that provides access to numerous workforce development programs. Core services—including assessment, basic job readiness, and help with job searches—are open to a universal population. For those who require further assistance finding employment, intensive services and job training are also available.

In Title IV of WIA, The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, the law states:

increased employment of individuals with disabilities can be achieved through implementation of statewide workforce investment systems under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 that provide meaningful and effective participation for individuals with disabilities in workforce investment activities and activities carried out under the vocational rehabilitation program established under Title I, and through the provision of independent living services, support services, and meaningful opportunities for employment in integrated work settings through the provision of reasonable accommodations.<sup>2</sup>

To ensure such participation, WIA and the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration stress the need for access and partnership when addressing the needs of people with disabilities.

- **Access.** Universal access to One-Stop services is a central component of WIA. In a notice published in April 2000, the ETA stated: “the Department of Labor is committed to ensuring that the programs, services, and facilities of each One-Stop delivery system are accessible to all of America's workers, including individuals with disabilities.”<sup>3</sup> Every job seeker should have access to the core services available at their local One-Stop Center. Federal law mandates that all WIA activities, from core to intensive services, must be accessible to individuals with disabilities. While physical access to the One-Stop Center is important, access to all tools and services offered by the center—including virtual and computer-based resources—is critical if job seekers with disabilities are to benefit fully from the One-Stop system.
- **Partnerships.** WIA mandates a series of partners in the One-Stop system, including Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). VR has a seat on state and local Workforce Investment Boards, and, ideally, is involved in the design of the workforce development system. States and local areas also can bring other

---

<sup>1</sup> The Workforce Investment Act of 1998. Public Law 105-220. August 7, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> Workforce Investment Act, Public Law 105-220, Title IV, Section 403: 2.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. Training and Employment Information Notice 16-99. April 20, 2000.

disability organizations into the system as partners. In 1997, prior to the passage of WIA, the Director of the One-Stop Disability Initiative enjoined One-Stops to “get involved with your disability community early—develop partnerships with organizations that serve individuals with disabilities—they can help.”<sup>4</sup> The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) strongly encourages state and local policy makers to develop partnerships with disability-specific organizations to create an effective and universal workforce investment system.

- *Memorandums of Understanding.* To become a partner in the system, agencies create a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Workforce Investment Board, outlining the responsibilities of each partner. In the WIA final rule, the MOU is defined as “an agreement developed and executed between the Local Board, with the agreement of the chief elected official, and the One-Stop partners relating to the operation of the One-Stop delivery system in the local area.”<sup>5</sup> MOUs can be umbrella documents covering all partners, or each partner can have a separate MOU with the local WIB. Topics covered in MOUs include the basic job search services that each partner will provide, the specifics of referral relationships, as well as policies covering co-location in One-Stops, cost allocation, performance management and conflict resolution.

### ***B. Serving Job Seekers with Disabilities***

Many working-age Americans have a disability. The Bureau of Labor Statistics Current Population Survey (CPS) tracks people with work disabilities. In 2001, the CPS found that 9.6% people ages 16-64 had a work disability, and of those, 29.4% were in the labor force, compared with a labor force participation rate of 82.1% for those without a work disability (see Fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> People with a work disability faced an unemployment rate of 10.2%, compared with a rate of 4.4% for those without a work disability.<sup>7</sup> CPS data indicates that while the majority (82%) of working-age Americans are in the labor force, and 65% are working full-time, less than one-third of people with disabilities are in the labor force (29%), and only 18% are working full-time.<sup>8</sup>

---

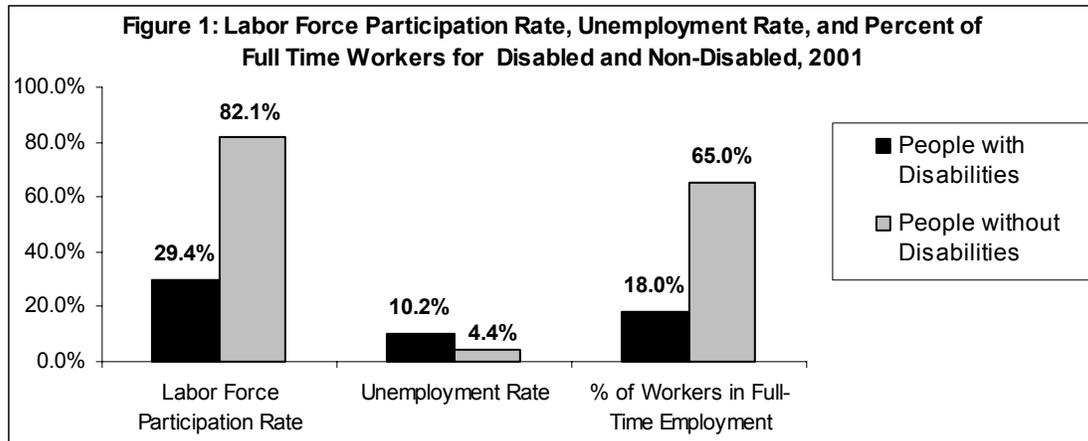
<sup>4</sup> U.S. Department of Labor. “One-Stop Disability Initiative.” *One-Stop Watch*. Fall 1997. Available at <http://usworkforce.org/onestop/pdf/1Stop971.pdf>.

<sup>5</sup> Workforce Investment Act Final Rule, Section 506(c), Public Law 105-220, 20 U.S.C. 9276(c). Sec. 662.300.

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps101.html>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps201.html>

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, March 1999 Current Population Survey. <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/disable/cps/cps201.html>



Source: U.S. Census, Current Population Survey.

At the same time, a survey by Louis Harris and Associates found that, in 1994, 79% of those people with disabilities who were not working wanted to work. Furthermore, a 30-year study of disabled workers and job performance conducted by Dupont found that workers with disabilities had high performance rates, with 90% having above-average job performance, as well as higher than normal attendance and safety records.<sup>9</sup> People with disabilities want to work, and when given the chance are highly successful employees, yet many of them are not working.

People with disabilities who want to work often face significant barriers to entering the workforce. These barriers include lack of physical access to the workplace, employers reluctant to hire people with disabilities, lack of transportation, potential loss of Social Security or federally funded health insurance, lack of experience, and insufficient access to employment services.<sup>10</sup> During economic downturns, all workers face additional barriers to finding good jobs. The recent retrenchment in the "new economy" and technology sector, along with the events of September 11, have resulted in a volatile economy, characterized by large numbers of well-publicized lay-offs and rising unemployment, up to 6% in April 2002<sup>11</sup> (at the same time, however, the Gross Domestic Product was up 5.8% in the first quarter of 2002<sup>12</sup>). While March 2002 mass layoff numbers are 4% less than during March 2001, "from January through March 2002, the total number of events, at 4,989, and initial claims, at 564,141, were higher than in

<sup>9</sup> Conlin, Michelle. March 20, 2000. "The New Workforce: A tight labor market gives the disabled the chance to make permanent inroads." *Business Week*. 68.

<sup>10</sup> The Ticket to Work program, currently being implemented, provides people with disabilities access to employment and training, as well as ways for "states to limit barriers to employment for people with disabilities by improving access to health care coverage under Medicare and Medicaid" even if people are working. This program is designed to address issues around finding work and keeping federal health insurance that people with disabilities face. Ticket to Work will also need to collaborate with the One-Stop system, especially since the "ticket" provides access to employment and training programs. "TWWIIA Fact Sheet." [www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/twwiia/factsheet01.htm](http://www.hcfa.gov/medicaid/twwiia/factsheet01.htm).

<sup>11</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. "The Employment Situation: April 2002." Friday, May 3, 2002. Available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/empstat.nr0.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> U.S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Economic Analysis. "Gross Domestic Product: First Quarter 2002 (Advance)." Press Release: April 26, 2002. Available at <http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/newsrel/gdp102a.htm>

January-March 2001 (4,550 and 544,717, respectively)."<sup>13</sup> With such economic insecurity comes an increasing need for employment and training services, particularly for those job seekers who face significant barriers to employment even during a tight labor market. To open the labor market to all those who want to work, it is critical that the services provided under the Workforce Investment Act are accessible to people with disabilities and tailored to meet their particular needs. The One-Stop system, with its emphasis on meeting both the needs of employers and job seekers, could be instrumental in helping to match job seekers with disabilities with employers who want qualified, skilled workers.

To insure that the needs of job seekers with disabilities are incorporated into planning under WIA, Vocational Rehabilitation is a mandatory partner in the system. States and local areas can also choose to become partners with other disability-specific agencies, such as agencies for the visually or hearing impaired.

### **Purpose of This Study**

The purpose of this study is to understand the opinion of the One-Stop system among state and local agencies that focus on people with disabilities. Representatives of agencies that specifically serve people with disabilities have a unique and important view of the One-Stop system's services. These people are knowledgeable about both the needs of job seekers with disabilities and the extent to which the One-Stop system in their state has included the disability community in planning and implementation.

The successful participation of people with disabilities in the One-Stop system depends on several factors, including:

- Partnerships between disability-specific organizations and the One-Stop system;
- WIB planning around services to job seekers with disabilities;
- Accessibility to One-Stop Centers and their services, both physically and virtually; and
- Performance management that tracks specific outcomes for job seekers with disabilities.

This survey will help to determine where states stand on these issues and how disability-specific agencies have been able to impact these issues in their states. Questions include whether the agencies are satisfied with their partnerships, if performance management systems are linked between various agencies in the state, and what specific areas of service the disability agencies were involved in planning.

The results will allow us to begin to understand how the One-Stop system is viewed in the disability community and where the system needs improvement. These results will be compared to those of the Heldrich Center's February 2002 report, *One-Stop Accessibility: A Nationwide Survey of One-Stop Centers on Services to People with Disabilities*, which surveyed managers and operators of One-Stop centers. Similarities and differences

---

<sup>13</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Mass Layoffs In March 2002." Press Release. April 24, 2002. Available at <http://www.bls.gov/news.release/mmls.nr0.htm>.

between the impressions of these two populations can be very informative, particularly in terms of beginning to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their partnerships, partnerships intended to create a universal and streamlined workforce development system.

This survey's small sample size limits us from drawing broad conclusions about the national implementation of WIA. However, the results begin to illustrate how the disability community is being incorporated into the One-Stop system, which is an important measure of how the system will serve individual job seekers with disabilities. The findings will suggest areas for improvement, as well as topics that require further research to fully understand how this system is working.

## **Methodology**

Representatives of disability-specific organizations who are partners in their state or local One-Stop system in 47 states and the District of Columbia were surveyed by phone. Braun Research, Inc. administered the survey using a list of contacts compiled through the Internet and associations of agencies serving people with disabilities. The survey had a response rate of 54% and was conducted over a three-week period between March 21 and April 12, 2002.

Question topics included:

- Demographics
- Planning for the One-Stop System
- Functions of the One-Stop System
- Accessibility
- Performance Management

Respondents were asked to send a copy of MOUs to survey administrators. These MOUs were used as another primary source for research, to complement the survey results around the creation and maintenance of partnerships between the One-Stop system and agencies serving people with disabilities.

## **Section 1: Introduction**

WIA intended that the One-Stop system work in partnership with agencies that serve people with disabilities to insure that the needs of these job seekers are met. Partnership is a good way to harness the expertise of those working directly with people with disabilities, but there is a danger of relying too much on the partners to provide services for people with disabilities, when the law requires that they must also have access to the entire One-Stop system. To understand fully how these partnerships are working, it is critical to understand the view of both partners. Disability agencies are focused on the very specific needs of their clients, but their participation in the One-Stop system allows them to effectively comment on how well people with disabilities are being served.

Representatives from disability agencies were asked about their views of the One-Stop system in their state. Do the disability agencies feel they have input into the system? Do they think the system is adequately serving people with disabilities? How are partnerships between One-Stops and disability-specific organizations functioning? MOUs shape partnerships, but have varying levels of specificity and complexity in terms of explaining exactly how partnerships will be carried out. How have these documents reflected the actual practice of the systems? The answers to these questions can inform the planning of local and state WIBs, elected officials, and policy makers as they continue to create a more accessible and effective One-Stop system for people with disabilities.

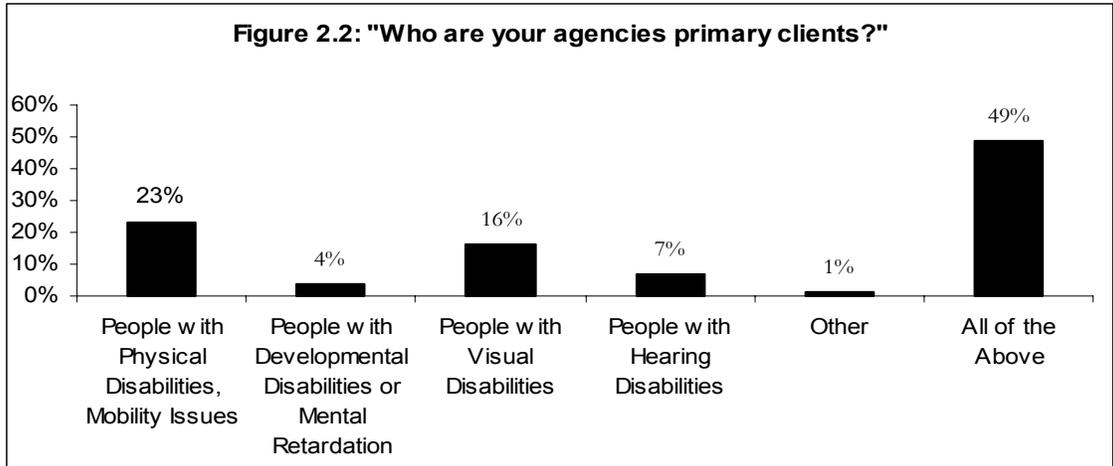
## **Section 2: Disability Agencies and the One-Stop System: Building Partnerships to Serve People with Disabilities**

### ***A. Demographics***

Survey respondents represent 47 states and the District of Columbia. The majority of respondents work for state level agencies (72%), while the remaining 28% work for local agencies. More than half (60%) are representatives of Vocational Rehabilitation agencies, required partners in the One-Stop system. Nearly 28% work for agencies that specifically serve the visually impaired, while 7% work for agencies specifically serving the hearing impaired. Respondents were generally upper-level managers (see Fig. 2.1).

Commissioner	8	Associate or Deputy Director	4
Administrator	8	State Coordinator	7
Assistant or Deputy Commissioner	6	Regional Manager or Administrator	8
Executive Director	5	Supervisor or Manager	7
Director or Chief	27	Other	24
<i>Total Respondents</i>	<i>104</i>		

When asked about their agencies' primary clients, 49% report serving people with a wide range of disabilities, including physical or mobility impairments, mental disabilities, the blind and the deaf (see Fig. 2.2). The remaining respondents serve a mixture of clients. Among these agencies, 60% serve people with physical or mobility issues, 53% serve people with mental disabilities, 47% serve the blind, and 62% serve the deaf. A small number (4%) said they serve clients with other types of disabilities.

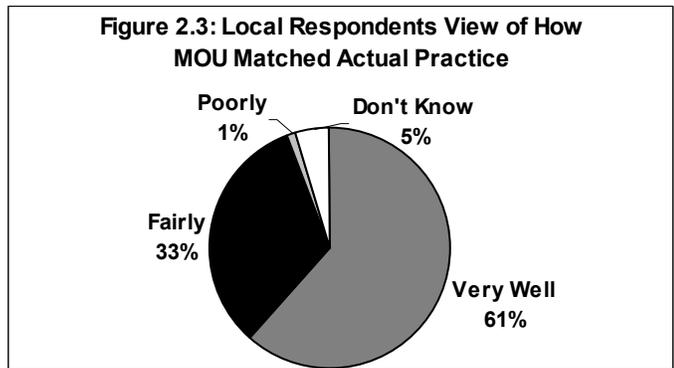


The vast majority of respondents provided a wide range of employment services. Nearly all respondents (99%) provide career counseling, while 96% provide job placement, 95% provide post-employment services, 91% provide job coaching, and 90% provide occupational training. These organizations' experience in helping people with disabilities find and keep secure jobs makes them uniquely positioned to critique similar services provided by the One-Stop system.

***B. Planning Partnerships through MOUs***

To assess the quality of the partnerships between the state disability agencies and the One-Stop system, agencies were questioned about WIBs, MOUs, and the specific nature of the partnerships.

Among the state representatives surveyed, 70% report that their agencies have a seat on the state WIB. At the local level, respondents are much more likely to be represented on their local WIBs, with all but one of the 29 local respondents reporting their agency has a seat on that board.



Partners at the local level must complete a MOU with the local WIB that explains how the two parties will work together. Respondents who categorize themselves as local representatives were asked whether their MOU matches the actual implementation of the One-Stop system and the day-to-day functioning of the partnership (see Fig. 2.3). Among the local respondents, 54% report that the MOU matches actual practice very well, with 29% saying it fairly matches the actual practice of the One-Stop system. Only one respondent indicates that actual practice poorly matches the MOU, while four respondents say they do not know how the MOU matches actual practice. This question was asked to the small subset of the sample that are local representatives, since MOUs are largely created and implemented on the local level. While it seems that, in general,

MOUs are functioning well as blueprints for partnerships, this is an area that requires more research and a larger sample before drawing any firm conclusions.

To supplement the survey information around MOUs, survey administrators asked that respondents send a copy of their MOUs for analysis, and other MOU samples were collected from websites of various state agencies and WIBs. These documents are very different across states and local areas, reflecting the flexibility under WIA to craft a One-Stop system at the local level. Most are vague about costs and performance measures, though some do describe how costs would be shared between the partners and others set very specific performance management benchmarks. Very few outline specific services to people with disabilities, but they are more likely to have non-discrimination or accommodation clauses explaining that all job seekers are to have access to services.

The umbrella MOU examples—agreements between WIBs and all One-Stop partners—are, in general, less specific than individual MOUs regarding services for job seekers with disabilities, despite including clauses on important topics such as reasonable accommodation or confidentiality. It makes sense that umbrella MOUs would cover more general requirements among the partners, rather than exact descriptions of services to people with disabilities. However, it may be important to conduct additional research into whether areas with specific MOUs, created between VR or other disability-specific agencies and WIBs, have better integration of job seekers with disabilities into their One-Stop system.

The umbrella MOU for South Dakota, a state with only one local workforce development area, (i.e., the entire state is served by only one WIB), has a specific section dealing with agreements between the Department of Labor and the Divisions of Vocation Rehabilitation and Services to the Blind and Visually Impaired. This section discusses a project to insure that agencies are following up on clients. The state is creating "an automated system that electronically links administrative databases of various state and federal agencies so comprehensive follow-up data can be developed for former students in South Dakota's education, employment and training programs."<sup>14</sup> Agencies coordinate their follow-up efforts to insure that evaluations of education and training programs are accurate and not unnecessarily duplicative. In addition, this section of the MOU specifically discusses the collection of outcome data. It notes that while the disability-specific agencies will have separate data collection and reporting systems due to different performance measurement requirements in WIA, they:

"will actively research and agree to common reporting and referral systems wherever it can benefit customer service and program performance and meet federal reporting requirements . . . [and] will work with Partner programs to share consumer satisfaction surveys and statewide needs assessment results . . . Results of . . . satisfaction and statewide needs assessments will be reviewed concerning disability implications."<sup>15</sup>

---

<sup>14</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Between South Dakota Department of Labor and One-Stop Partners*. <http://www.state.sd.us/dhs/docs/amended%20Final%20mou.doc>. 25.

<sup>15</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Between South Dakota Department of Labor and One-Stop Partners*, 25.

South Dakota's MOU suggests that the state is trying to insure that the various partners in the One-Stop system are sharing information and looking specifically at how their planning and customer satisfaction evaluations impact job seekers with disabilities.

Another MOU of note is between the Merced County Workforce Investment Board and the California State Department of Rehabilitation. This MOU details the services to people with disabilities provided by each partner. Core services are provided by the One-Stop Operator as required under ADA, and are not funded by the Department of Rehabilitation.<sup>16</sup> The MOU goes on to clearly define what intensive and training services will be provided by the Department of Rehabilitation for job seekers with disabilities.<sup>17</sup> This MOU outlines specific services available to people with disabilities, as well as how people with disabilities will move through the One-Stop system. Again, without further research it is difficult to measure whether such specifics in the MOU directly impact services to people with disabilities. However, the integration between the various agencies serving people with disabilities and the One-Stop system is likely to be more effective with a more explicit MOU.

The Merced County MOU also has a very comprehensive confidentiality section, while many of the other MOUs merely mention that confidentiality should be respected throughout the One-Stop system. This section is very clear about the many types of records and information that need to be kept confidential, including during the outcome tracking process.

An MOU from the Indiana Center for Workforce Innovation WIB provides specific guidance on how Vocational Rehabilitation interacts with the One-Stop. This MOU states that Vocational Rehabilitation representatives are present in the One-Stop one day per week, and lists the type of services VR provides, as well as the eligibility requirements for those services.<sup>18</sup> This MOU also includes specific performance benchmarks that VR must reach in that local area, such as the number of individuals who will be successfully placed into employment and the percentage of those who will be identified as "significantly disabled," as well as the percent who will be placed in competitive employment.<sup>19</sup> Having specific benchmarks in the MOU is useful, particularly because so many local areas fail to collect much specific information on people with disabilities. Here the goals are outlined at the start of planning for the partnership, and other planning can happen with those goals in mind, ideally leading to a greater likelihood that they will be met. Both the South Dakota and Indiana MOUs seem committed to streamlining the workforce development system by insuring that agencies will work together in tracking information on specific populations, such as people with disabilities, and using such information in continuous improvement efforts.

---

<sup>16</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998*. <http://www.co.merced.ca.us/pitd/wib/info/MOUDR.pdf> . 6.

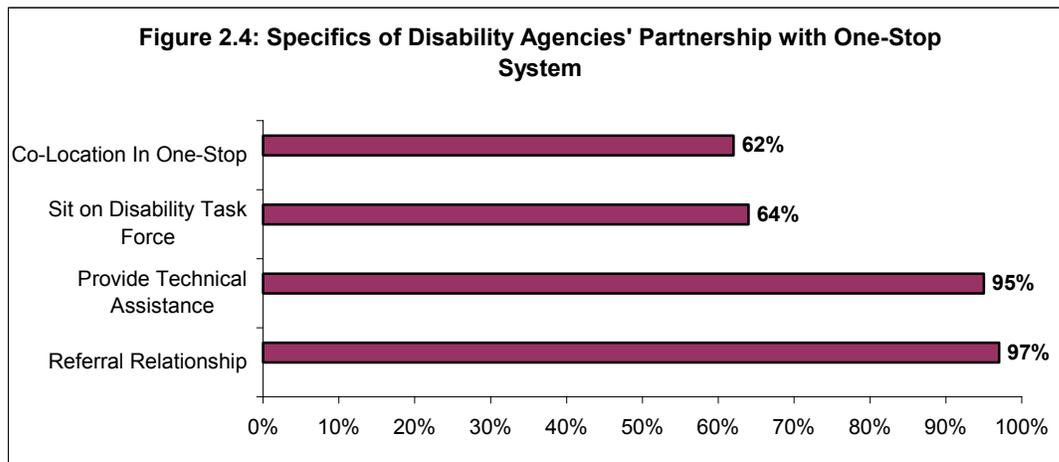
<sup>17</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998*, 6-8.

<sup>18</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and The Center for Workforce Innovations, Inc. Workforce Investment Board*. 1.

<sup>19</sup> *Memorandum of Understanding Between Vocational Rehabilitation Services and The Center for Workforce Innovations, Inc. Workforce Investment Board*. 3-4.

### C. Partnerships in Practice

The survey asked about the activities the disability-specific partners provide in the One-Stop system. Almost all (97%) respondents have a referral relationship with the One-Stop center and the large majority (95%) provides technical assistance to the One-Stops on disability issues (see Fig. 2.4). These activities are the building blocks of the disability agency-One-Stop partnership. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents are co-located in One-Stop centers. Consistent with the majority (60%) representation of VR agencies in the sample, the majority (65%) of co-located agencies are Vocational Rehabilitation. Slightly less than one-fourth (23%) of agencies for the blind report being co-located in One-Stops.

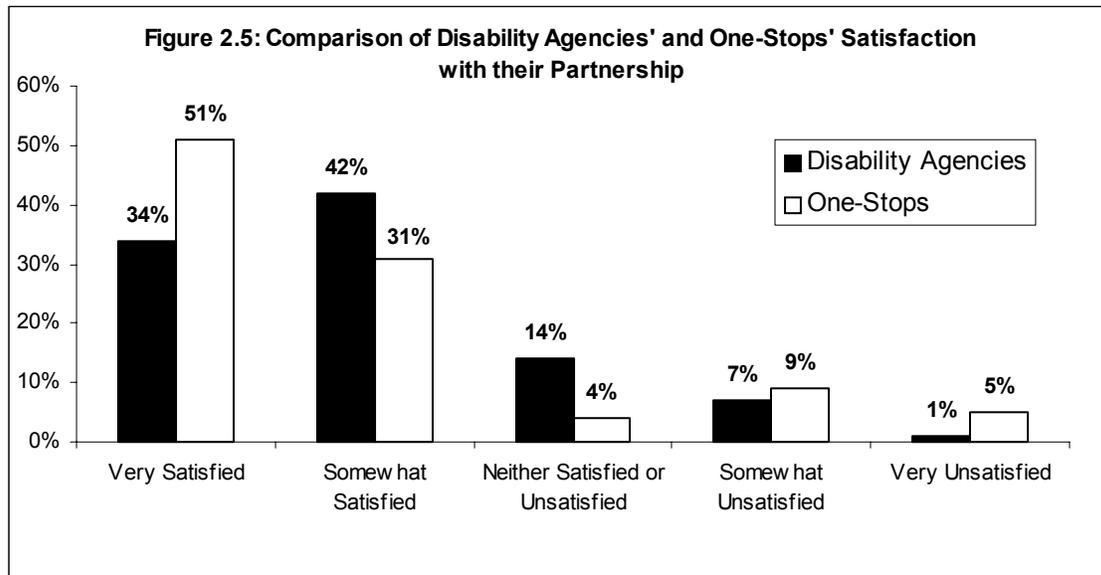


Similarly, 64% of agencies report that they serve on a disability taskforce or committee that aids the One-Stop system with disability issues. In stark contrast, only 22% of One-Stop managers and operators report having a disability-task force or committee to help them with issues around serving job seekers with disabilities.<sup>20</sup> State representatives of disability agencies are slightly more likely than local representatives to report serving on a task force or committee (63% and 59%, respectively). This could also support the theory that, on a macro-level, states pursue such committees to a greater extent than do individual One-Stops. Nevertheless, it is an area that can be expanded in terms of partnerships, particularly on the local level and for individual centers.

The survey also asked respondents about their level of satisfaction with the partnership with the One-Stop system. The majority (76%) of respondents say that they are very satisfied or somewhat satisfied with the partnership (34% and 42%, respectively), as shown in Fig. 2.5. Less than one-fifth (14%) are neither satisfied nor unsatisfied, and few

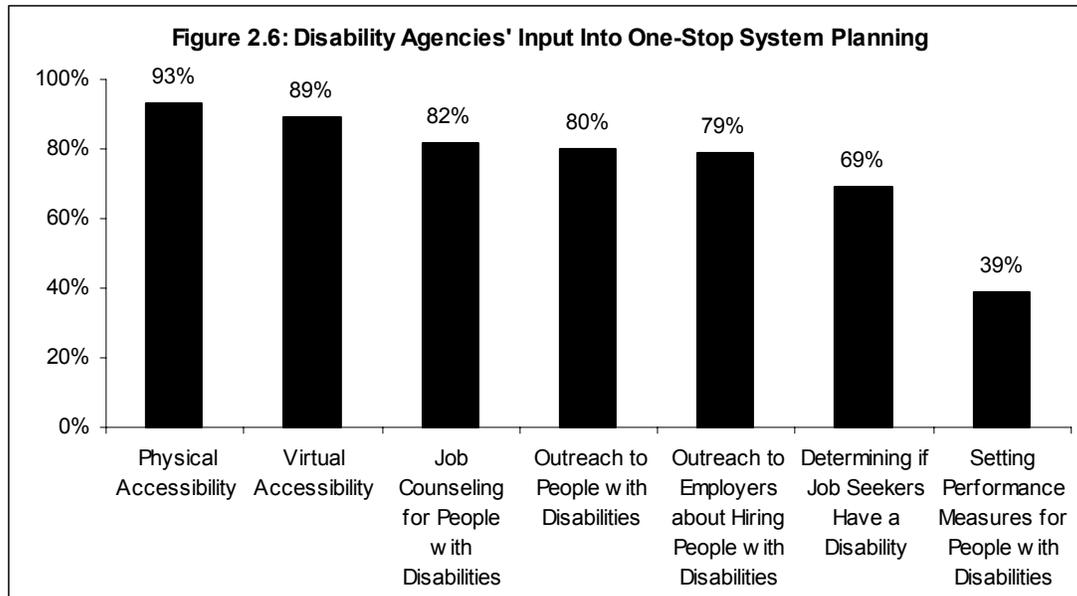
<sup>20</sup> John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. "One-Stop Accessibility: A Nationwide Survey of One-Stop Centers on their Services to People with Disabilities." February 2002. 15. The discrepancy between One-Stop managers and disability agencies may be due to the fact that the question to the disability agencies was focused on the system, while the question to the One-Stop managers focused on their particular One-Stop. For instance, while WIBs may be likely to have a disability-focused committee, One-Stops are not as likely to have one.

are somewhat unsatisfied or very unsatisfied (7% and 1%, respectively). In general, respondents are positive about the system.



This same question was asked of One-Stop managers and Operators in the previous survey, and they are slightly more likely to be at the extremes of satisfaction, also shown in Fig. 2.5. Over 80% are either very or somewhat satisfied, while only 5% are neither unsatisfied nor satisfied, and 14% are somewhat or very unsatisfied.

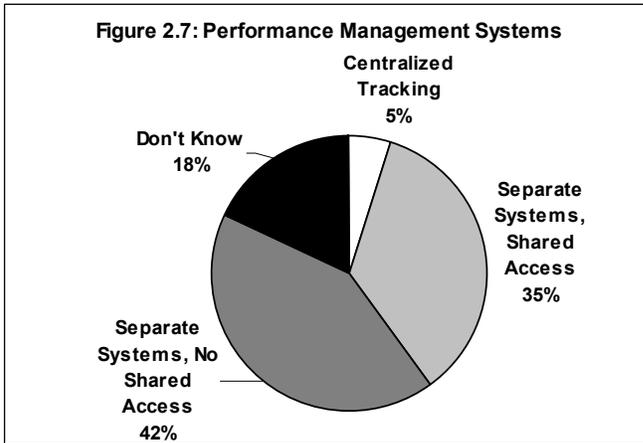
An important role for the disability-specific partners in the One-Stop system is to assist in planning the system and ensuring continuous improvement. The majority of the survey respondents report having input into planning around issues that affect job seekers with disabilities (see Fig. 2.6). While 93% of respondents had input on physical accessibility issues, 89% gave input on accessible computer and virtual job tools and 83% provided input on provided job counseling for people with disabilities. More than three-fourths (81%) helped plan outreach to people with disabilities, with 79% helping the One-Stop reach out to employers about hiring people with disabilities and 69% advising the One-Stop system on how to determine if a job seeker has a disability. However, only 38% of respondents provided input in setting performance measures for people with disabilities. This figure contrasts sharply with the large number of agencies that had input on a wide variety of issues around serving job seekers with disabilities, and suggests to an area for further research and improvement.



#### ***D. Performance Measurement***

The survey also questioned agencies about performance management systems, focusing on the types of outcomes that the disability-specific agencies collect and how much interaction exists between the data systems of disability-specific organizations and the larger workforce development system. As required under the Rehabilitation Act, the majority (87%) of respondents have a performance management system in place. The large majority of respondents report collecting the number of people with disabilities served (83%), the number of people with disabilities placed in jobs (83%), and the customer satisfaction with their services (78%). Fewer respondents collect the number of people with disabilities referred to the One-Stop (58%) and the number of those placed in jobs that are still employed after six months (53%). Again, a similar question was asked of One-Stop operators and managers in the previous survey, and they are slightly less likely to track the number of people with disabilities placed in jobs (56%) and to track the number of people referred to disability specific organizations (46%). It is not surprising that the disability-specific agencies are more likely to track the number of people with disabilities placed in jobs, since those are their only clients. However, the disability-specific agencies do seem to be doing a slightly better job tracking the referrals they are making to the One-Stop system that the One-Stop system is doing tracking their referrals to VR and other agencies.

On the state level, very few (5%) respondents have a centralized tracking system for all workforce development agencies (see Fig. 2.7). Another 35% have separate systems with shared access among agencies, while 42% have separate systems but no shared access among agencies. All agencies and populations involved in employment and training need to be a part of the planning and continuous improvement process, and performance management can be an extremely useful tool in that process. States should consider creating incorporated systems, such that planners and policymakers can easily view outcomes across agencies, with the assurance that participants are not being counted

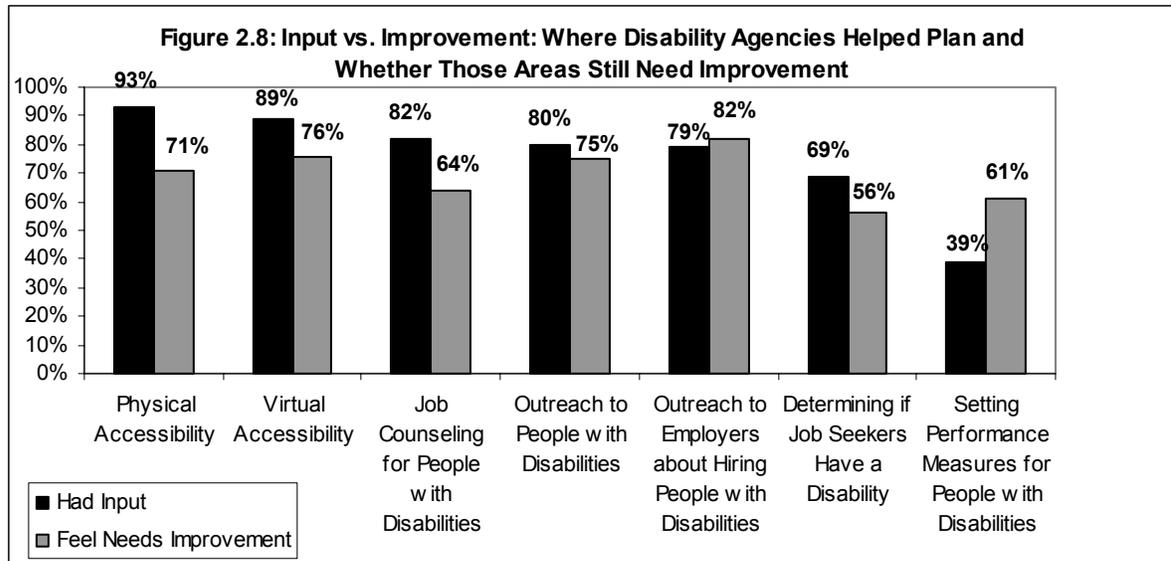


twice. If a participant attends several different types of programs, but there is no shared access between those programs' outcome systems, the experience and success of that participant is not being fully understood. A truly streamlined system must also include streamlined performance management.

The process of setting performance standards under WIA is a complex one, and it is largely the responsibility of the state WIB and local WIBs, rather than individual One-Stop partners. However, just as performance outcomes serve as an important tool in improving services for all One-Stop users, they can be very useful for crafting services for job seekers with disabilities. Setting performance goals and management systems that accurately reflect the needs of people with disabilities can be even more complex than setting them for the general population because of the barriers job seekers with disabilities face in entering the workforce. States need to commit to collecting these numbers if policy makers are going to be able to use hard numbers to evaluate and enhance services to job seekers with disabilities. It is critical that organizations specifically serving people with disabilities have input into creating these measures, and that there is shared access among these agencies and the larger workforce system.

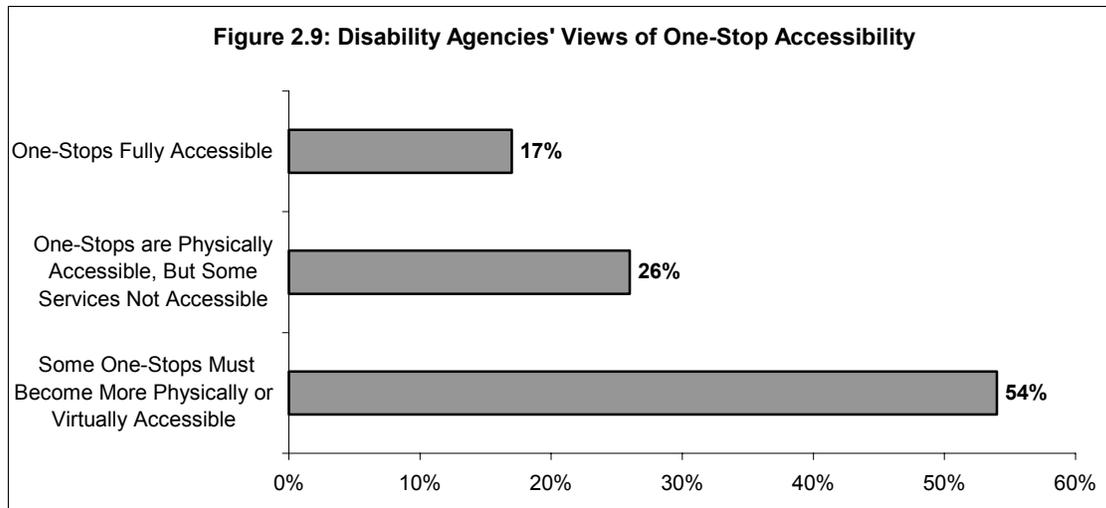
***E. View of the One-Stop System***

While many agency representatives report having input into planning around a myriad of issues affecting job seekers with disabilities, they still believe that the One-Stop system's services to people with disabilities could be significantly improved (see Fig. 2.8). A large majority of respondents felt accessibility issues could be improved, with 71% reporting that the system could improve physical accessibility issues and 76% reporting that their state's system needs to improve accessible computer and virtual job tools.



Outreach is another area targeted for improvement. A larger majority (82%) reports that outreach to employers on hiring people with disabilities needs improvement in their state, and 75% report that outreach to people with disabilities about the One-Stop system needs improvement. These figures parallel findings from the survey of One-Stop managers and operators, very few of whom feel that outreach to employers about hiring people with disabilities is one of the most important issues for the One-Stop system.

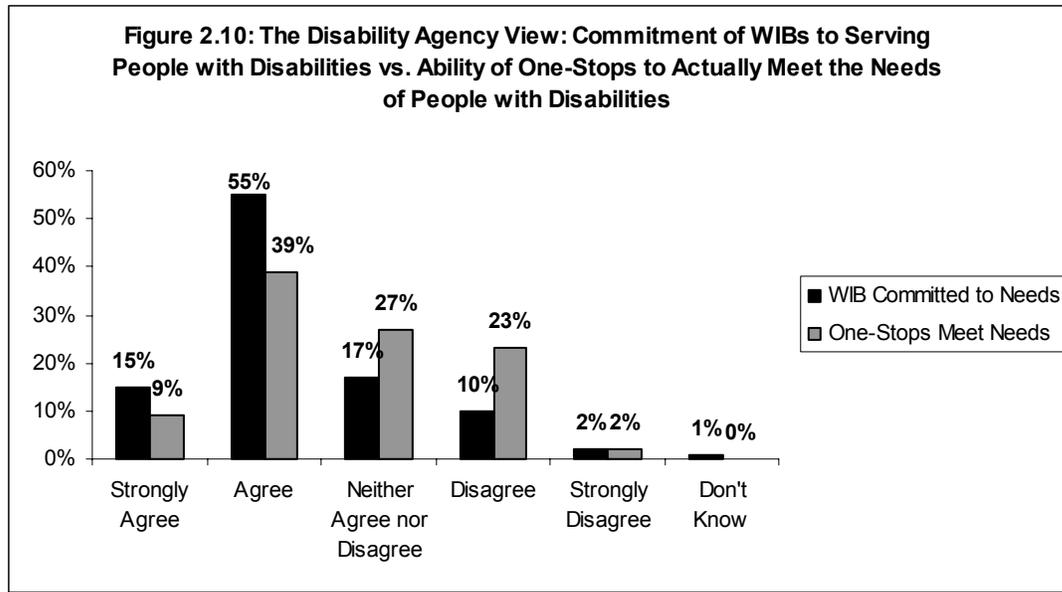
Slightly fewer agencies feel that their state needs to improve job counseling for people with disabilities and setting performance measures for people with disabilities (64% and 61%, respectively). More than half (56%) of respondents see a need for improvement in determining if job seekers have a disability. Creating an effective workforce development system is an ongoing process, so it is not surprising that respondents of this survey of disability-specific agencies generally thought the One-Stop system could be improved. However, the strong support for improvement in the areas of accessibility and outreach is notable. People with disabilities are often not involved in the labor market, and outreach to both jobseekers with disabilities and employers is important to facilitate their entrance into training programs and the workplace.



Accessibility is absolutely critical for the One-Stop system. The One-Stop managers and operators who responded to the previous survey reported that their centers are largely accessible, with 94% reporting that their sites are physically accessible, 55% providing a fully accessible computer workstation, and 78% agreeing that their One-Stop center has the technology available to allow people with disabilities to use computers and the web site. However, along with the nearly three-fourths of disability agency respondents who report that the One-Stop system needs to improve physical and virtual accessibility, over half (55%) answered a direct question about the accessibility of their state's One-Stop system with the opinion that some centers must still become virtually or physically accessible (see Fig. 2.9). Only 17% of respondents report that their One-Stop system is fully accessible, both physically and virtually, a stark contrast with the majority of One-Stop managers who feel their centers are accessible. Another 26% of the disability agencies report that their One-Stop system is physically accessible, but that some services remain inaccessible to people with disabilities.

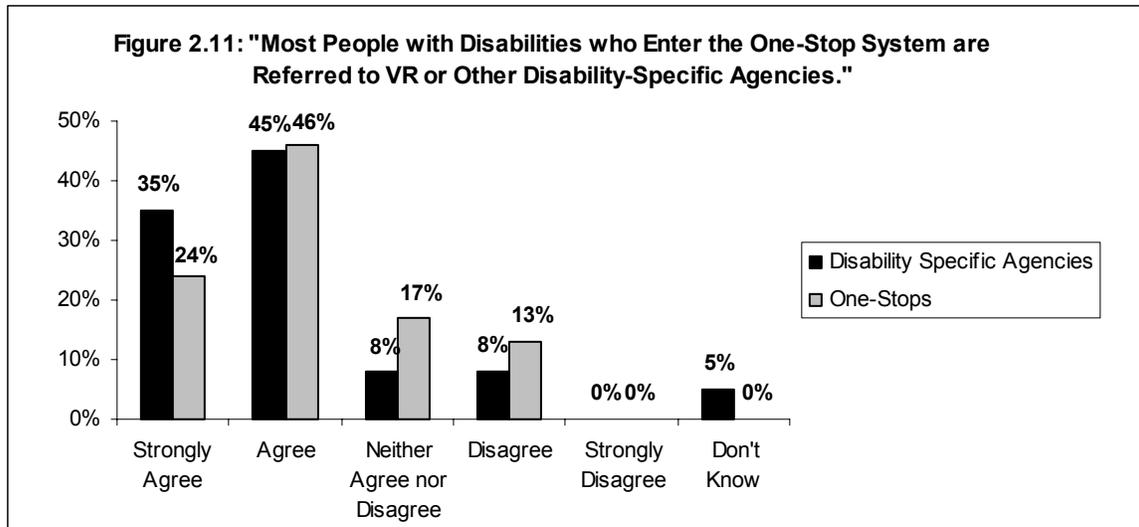
The comparison of these two surveys highlights a possible disconnect between the disability community and those who are running the One-Stop system. While many One-Stop operators say their centers are physically accessible, the disability community believes this is an area that requires significant improvement. A lesser number of One-Stop managers and operators say their centers are also virtually accessibility, but again, even fewer respondents from the disability community say that One-Stops are fully accessible when it comes to computer access. This is an area where partnerships may need to be strengthened, and state and local WIBs should consider developing strategies that focus specifically on accessibility and outreach, two issues that significantly impact their services to job seekers with disabilities.

While disability agencies report that the One-Stop system needs to improve accessibility and outreach, many do still feel that their state WIBs are committed to meeting the needs of people with disabilities. A majority either strongly agree or agree that their state WIBs are committed to serving people with disabilities (15% and 55%, respectively), while 17% are neutral on that statement and only 12% disagree.



However, while 70% agree their WIB is committed to serving people with disabilities, only 48% agree that the One-Stop system meets the needs of job seekers with disabilities (see Fig. 2.10). Almost 27% neither agree nor disagree with this statement, and 25% disagree that the One-Stop system meets the needs of job seekers with disabilities. One-fourth (25%) of the disability-agency respondents say that the One-Stops do not meet the needs of their clients, but another one-fourth (25%) of respondents express ambivalence regarding the ability of One-Stops to meet the needs of people with disabilities. These results suggest that those planning the One-Stop system are interested in fulfilling the needs of job seekers with disabilities, but that implementation of services to meet those needs may be lacking.

When asked about the role of vocational rehabilitation in the One-Stop system, the majority (80%) of respondents strongly or somewhat agree that most people with disabilities entering the system are referred to VR or other disability-specific agencies (35% and 45%, respectively), as illustrated in Fig. 2.11. Only 8% neither agree nor disagree with that statement, while another 8% disagree that VR would handle most job seekers with disabilities who enter the One-Stop system. These results exceed the percentage of One-Stop managers and operators who strongly agree with this statement. Of One-Stop managers and operators, 70% agree or strongly agree that VR would handle most job seekers with disabilities, with 17% remaining neutral and 13% saying they disagree. The disability community is somewhat more likely to see itself handling most job seekers with disabilities, perhaps highlighting their own protectiveness over their clients or their belief that disability agencies are most qualified to handle these job seekers. VR is a required partner in the One-Stop system for precisely that reason; their long-term commitment to serving people with disabilities makes them most qualified to continue doing so.



However, job seekers with disabilities are eligible for all services of the One-Stop system including VR services, and it is important that they are informed of all their choices. Many of the disability-agency representatives report they regularly refer clients to the One-Stop, with 65% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing with that statement (17% and 48%, respectively). Another 17% neither agree nor disagree that they regularly refer to the One-Stop, while 17% disagree. In the majority of One-Stop systems represented by these respondents, referrals are going both ways. While many of these referrals may be due to resource constraints in disability agency, it does suggest successful partnerships and streamlined services, and lessens the concern about people with disabilities being filtered directly and solely to VR and other disability-specific agencies.

### Section 3: Recommendations

Major areas for improvement highlighted by the survey of disability-specific agencies include performance management, accessibility, and outreach to job seekers and employers.

The examination of MOUs shows that many are not very specific in dealing with performance management or outreach plans. These are two areas where policy makers should consider being more explicit to improve planning and implementation around these topics. Several of the MOUs explored here show innovative means to insure that performance management systems function well and that services to people with disabilities are well planned. Further research needs to be done to understand whether areas with MOUs that outline a follow-up project like South Dakota's or very specific performance standards as in Indiana's result in more effective systems.

The accessibility issue is a significant concern, particularly since the large majority One-Stop managers and operators believe their centers are physically accessible and a significant number also indicate that they provide enough accessible virtual tools.

Representatives from disability agencies feel this is an area that still needs improvement, and very few report that their One-Stop system is completely accessible. The lack of full accessibility could be due to funding or planning issues, and is a place for further research into what is blocking these systems from becoming fully accessible. In the interim, state and local WIBs should continue to work with their disability partners and begin to create plans for improving accessibility. One important tool might be an accessibility checklist, which One-Stops would use to evaluate their facilities and highlight specific accessibility problems.

The issue of outreach is also very important. In the previous survey, One-Stop managers and operators rank outreach low in a list of the most important issues for the One-Stops regarding serving job seekers with disabilities. However, this is an area where disability-specific agencies see a great need for improvement, particularly for outreach to employers on hiring people with disabilities. Outreach to people with disabilities about what the One-Stop offers is important, particularly since this is a population that faces significant barriers to participating in workforce development programs and entering the workplace. People with disabilities may not know about the services available in the One-Stop and need to learn about them. In addition, those barriers to employment include the perceptions of employers about hiring people with disabilities. The One-Stop system is focused on the employer-as-customer, and one of the major goals of WIA is to insure that workforce development programs match the needs of business. At the same time, the One-Stop system has a commitment to its job seeker customers, particularly in shaping services to populations that face significant barriers to employment. Reaching out to employers about hiring qualified people with disabilities connects these two goals.

Performance management is the cornerstone of WIA's continuous improvement process. As such it must incorporate outcomes for people with disabilities. State systems should attempt to be as inclusive and streamlined as possible, so state and local policy makers can understand how the system is working throughout various state agencies that are serving various populations. This survey illustrates that very few states have a system that tracks all workforce development programs, and many have no shared access between workforce development agencies serving different populations. While the issue of confidentiality is a difficult one and will have to be addressed in any plan to merge systems or allow shared access, being able to measure the full picture in any particular state will offer substantial benefits in terms of evaluation and improvement. In addition, very few of the respondents from disability-specific agencies had input into setting performance measures for job seekers with disabilities. The One-Stop system needs to track performance for this population, and advice from the disability community on how to measure success will help WIBs to craft reasonable and informative measures.

Both those involved in the One-Stop system and those focused on the disability community are generally satisfied with their partnerships, but expansions of these partnerships and a rethinking of how One-Stops should serve people with disabilities seem necessary, since significant concerns remain about service to this population. In addition, WIBs need to explore how their disability partners perceive the accessibility of their One-Stops, and work to improve those sites that are not up to standard.

## **Recommendations**

- WIBS need to revisit the issue of accessibility. WIBs should reach out to their disability specific partners and to resources on the Americans with Disabilities Act, including the regional ADA technical assistance offices. These resources can help WIBs do a strict evaluation of their One-Stop's accessibility and move towards making all sites and services fully accessible.
- State and local agencies representing people with disabilities and One-Stop operators and staff should work together to develop effective outreach strategies. These strategies should include outreach to people with disabilities regarding the One-Stop system, and outreach to employers about hiring people with disabilities.
- WIBs should consider creating more specific MOUs when current documents expire, or revising MOUs. Including more specifics in terms of performance standards, service delivery, and outreach in MOUs may be one way to encourage various partners to deal with and plan around these issues.
- Create one performance management system for workforce development that allows all partners to meet legislative requirements, or at least provide ways for separate systems to interact. A streamlined performance management system will best serve a streamlined workforce development system.
- WIBs should also reach out to disability organizations in setting performance standards for people with disabilities.

## Appendix 1: Disability Agency Survey Instrument and Results

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling on behalf of the Heldrich Center for Workforce Development. As a member of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for the U.S. Department of Education, the Heldrich Center investigates the experience of people with disabilities in federal workforce initiatives, focusing on the One-Stop system created by the Workforce Investment Act. The Center is currently surveying agencies like yours that directly serve people with disabilities. We hope to better understand your perspective on the One-Stop system and its usefulness for your clients. The survey should take approximately 7 minutes and all answers will be confidential.

Q1. What is the name of your agency?

Verbatim Response

Vocational Rehabilitation	62	60%
Agencies or Commissions for the Blind	29	28%
Agencies or Commissions for the Deaf	7	7%
Other	6	6%

(Please see end of survey for frequencies of states surveyed)

Q2. What is your position at this agency?

Commissioner	8	8%	Associate or Deputy Director	4	4%
Administrator	8	8%	State Coordinator	7	7%
Assistant or Deputy Commissioner	6	6%	Regional Manager or Administrator	8	8%
Executive Director	5	5%	Supervisor or Manager	7	7%
Director or Chief	27	26%	Other	6	6%
			No Response	18	17%

Q3. Is your agency a partner in the One-Stop workforce development system?

- a. Yes 104 100%
- b. No (terminate interview)
- c. Don't Know (terminate interview)

Q4. Are you a local or state-level representative of your agency?

- a. State representative 75 72%
- b. Local representative (skip to Q6) 29 28%

Q5. Does your agency have a seat on the State Workforce Investment Board?

- a. Yes (skip to Q8) 53 71%
- b. No (skip to Q8) 19 25%
- c. Don't Know (skip to Q8) 3 4%

Q6. Does your office have a seat on the Local Workforce Investment Board or WIB?

- |                             |    |     |
|-----------------------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes                      | 28 | 96% |
| b. No (skip to Q8)          |    |     |
| c. Don't know (skip to Q 8) | 1  | 4%  |

IQ7. Under the Workforce Investment Act, all partners in the One-Stop system must sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local WIB describing how the partnership will work.

Q7a. The MOU serves as a guide for the partnership, but actual practice may be different. In your opinion, how well has the actual implementation and creation of the One-Stop system matched the plan set out in the MOU?

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Very Well  | 15 | 54% |
| b. Fairly     | 8  | 29% |
| c. Poorly     | 1  | 4%  |
| d. Don't know | 4  | 14% |

Q7b. Would you be willing to send us a copy of the MOU?  
If yes, please fax it to 732-932-3454.

Q8. There are many different services that your agency, as a partner in the One-Stop system, can provide to fellow partner agencies. Please choose all statements that apply to your partnership with the One-Stop system.

- |   |     |     |
|---|-----|-----|
| a. We have a referral relationship with the One-Stop  | 101 | 97% |
| b. We are co-located in the One-Stop(s)   | 64  | 62% |
| c. We provide technical assistance to One-Stops on disability issues                                    | 99  | 95% |
| d. We are on a disability taskforce or committee<br>that aids the One-Stop system on disability issues. | 67  | 64% |
| e. Don't Know   |     |     |

Q9. How satisfied are you with your partnership with the One-Stop system?

- |                                      |    |     |
|--------------------------------------|----|-----|
| a. Very Satisfied                    | 35 | 34% |
| b. Somewhat Satisfied                | 44 | 42% |
| c. Neither Satisfied nor Unsatisfied | 15 | 14% |
| d. Somewhat Unsatisfied              | 7  | 7%  |
| e. Very Unsatisfied                  | 1  | 1%  |
| f. Don't Know                        | 2  | 2%  |

Q10. Who are your agencies' primary clients?

a. People with physical disabilities/mobility issues	32	31%
b. People with developmental disabilities/mental retardation	28	27%
c. People who are blind	25	24%
d. People who are deaf	33	62%
e. All of the above	51	49%
f. Other	2	2%
g. Don't Know		

Q11. What types of employment services do you provide people with disabilities?

a. Career Counseling	103	99%
b. Occupational Training	94	90%
c. Job Placement	100	96%
d. Job Coaching	95	91%
e. Post-employment services	99	95%
f. Other (please explain)	22	21%
g. Don't Know	1	1%

Q12. In your opinion, how accessible is the One Stop system to your particular clients?

a. Fully accessible, both physically and in terms of services	18	17%
b. Physically accessible, but some services (for example, computer workstations) are not fully accessible	27	26%
c. Some One-Stop Centers must still become more physically or virtually accessible	57	55%
d. Don't know	2	2%

IQ13. The following are a list of issues that impact how One-Stops will serve people with disabilities. Has your agency had input addressing these issues in your One-Stop system, yes or no?

Q13a. Physical Accessibility

a. Yes	97	93%
b. No	6	6%
c. Don't Know	1	1%

Q13b. Accessible computer and virtual job tools

a. Yes	93	89%
b. No	10	10%
c. Don't Know	1	1%

Q13c. Determining if job seekers in the One-Stop have a disability

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 72 | 69% |
| b. No         | 22 | 21% |
| c. Don't Know | 10 | 10% |

Q13d. Job Counseling for people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 86 | 83% |
| b. No         | 12 | 12% |
| c. Don't Know | 6  | 6%  |

Q13e. Outreach to people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 84 | 81% |
| b. No         | 15 | 14% |
| c. Don't Know | 5  | 5%  |

Q13f. Setting performance measures for people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 40 | 39% |
| b. No         | 47 | 45% |
| c. Don't Know | 17 | 16% |

Q13g. Outreach to employers on hiring people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 82 | 79% |
| b. No         | 18 | 17% |
| c. Don't Know | 4  | 4%  |

IQ14. Now I am going to read you the same list of issues. Please tell me if your One-Stop system needs improvement in these areas, yes or no?

Q14a. Physical Accessibility

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 74 | 71% |
| b. No         | 26 | 25% |
| c. Don't Know | 4  | 4%  |

Q14b. Accessible computer and virtual job tools

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 79 | 76% |
| b. No         | 19 | 18% |
| c. Don't Know | 6  | 6%  |

Q14c. Determining if job seekers are disabled

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 58 | 56% |
| b. No         | 40 | 39% |
| c. Don't Know | 6  | 6%  |

Q14d. Job Counseling for people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 66 | 64% |
| b. No         | 31 | 30% |
| c. Don't Know | 7  | 7%  |

Q14e. Outreach to people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 78 | 75% |
| b. No         | 23 | 22% |
| c. Don't Know | 3  | 3%  |

Q14f. Setting performance measures for people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 63 | 61% |
| b. No         | 24 | 23% |
| c. Don't Know | 17 | 16% |

Q14g. Outreach to employers on hiring people with disabilities

- |               |    |     |
|---------------|----|-----|
| a. Yes        | 85 | 82% |
| b. No         | 16 | 15% |
| c. Don't Know | 3  | 3%  |

Q15. Under the Rehabilitation Act (Title IV of the Workforce Investment Act), state vocational rehabilitation agencies are required to track participation of eligible individuals receiving vocational rehabilitation services. Does your agency have a performance management system in place?

- |   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| a. Yes  | 90 | 87% |
| b. No [Go to Q18]                                       | 11 | 11% |
| c. I do not work for a vocational rehabilitation agency | 2  | 2%  |
| d. Don't know   | 1  | 1%  |

Q16. Which of the following outcomes do you track?

- |   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| a. Number of people with disabilities served                          | 86 | 83% |
| b. Number of people with disabilities referred to the One-stop system | 60 | 58% |
| c. Number of people with disabilities placed in jobs                  | 86 | 83% |
| d. Number still employed after 6 months                               | 55 | 53% |
| e. Customer satisfaction with your services                           | 81 | 78% |
| f. Other (please explain)   | 2  | 2%  |
| g. Don't know   | 1  | 1%  |

Q17. Some states have one large outcome collection system that merges many different agencies. What type of system does your state have?

a. Centralized tracking for all workforce-development agencies.	5	5%
b. Separate systems with shared access among agencies	36	35%
c. Separate systems but no shared access among agencies.	44	42%
d. Don't know	5	5%
Declined to Answer	14	14%

IQ18. I am going to read you a series of statements. Please tell me if you agree or disagree about their applicability to your One-Stop system. The choices will be strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, or strongly disagree.

Q18a. The state Workforce Investment Board is committed to meeting the needs of job seekers with disabilities.

a. Strongly Agree	16	15%
b. Agree	57	55%
c. Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	17%
d. Disagree	10	10%
e. Strongly Disagree	2	2%
f. Don't Know	1	1%

Q18b. The One-Stop system meets the needs of job seekers with disabilities.

a. Strongly Agree	9	9%
b. Agree	41	40%
a. Neither Agree nor Disagree	28	27%
b. Disagree	24	23%
c. Strongly Disagree	2	2%
d. Don't Know	0	

Q18c. Most people with disabilities who enter the One-Stop system are referred to vocational rehabilitation or other disability specific agencies.

a. Strongly Agree	36	35%
b. Agree	47	45%
c. Neither Agree nor Disagree	8	8%
d. Disagree	8	8%
e. Strongly Disagree	0	
f. Don't Know	5	5%

Q18d. We regularly refer our clients to the One-Stop.

a. Strongly Agree	18	17%
b. Agree	50	48%
c. Neither Agree nor Disagree	18	17%
d. Disagree	15	14%
e. Strongly Disagree	3	3%
f. Don't Know	0	

That is all the questions I have today. You have been very helpful. Thank you for your time and participation.

STATE

	Frequency	Percent
Alabama	2	1.9
Alaska	1	1.0
Arizona	3	2.9
Arkansas	2	1.9
California	5	4.8
Colorado	1	1.0
Connecticut	4	3.8
District of Columbia	1	1.0
Florida	2	1.9
Georgia	2	1.9
Hawaii	1	1.0
Idaho	5	4.8
Illinois	3	2.9
Indiana	3	2.9
Iowa	1	1.0
Kansas	1	1.0
Kentucky	2	1.9
Louisiana	2	1.9
Maine	3	2.9
Maryland	2	1.9
Massachusetts	1	1.0
Michigan	2	1.9
Minnesota	1	1.0
Mississippi	1	1.0
Missouri	4	3.8
Montana	1	1.0
Nebraska	3	2.9
Nevada	2	1.9
New Hampshire	1	1.0
New Jersey	3	2.9
New Mexico	1	1.0
New York	3	2.9
North Carolina	2	1.9
North Dakota	1	1.0
Ohio	5	4.8
Oklahoma	1	1.0
Oregon	2	1.9
Pennsylvania	3	2.9

South Carolina	2	1.9
South Dakota	1	1.0
Tennessee	3	2.9
Texas	1	1.0
Utah	2	1.9
Vermont	3	2.9
Virginia	5	4.8
Washington	1	1.0
Wisconsin	2	1.9
Wyoming	1	1.0
Total	104	100.0