



## **WELFARE PEER TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE SUMMARY**

**Event:** Site Visit to Kenosha and Racine Counties, Wisconsin  
**Date:** April 18-19, 2000  
**Location:** Kenosha County Job Center, Kenosha, WI  
Racine County Workforce Development Center, Racine, WI

### **I. Overview**

The Welfare Peer Technical Assistance (TA) Network sponsored a two-day site visit to Wisconsin in coordination with the Kenosha County Department of Human Services and the Racine County Department of Human Services. The purpose of the visit was to offer participants an opportunity to obtain an overview and description of both centers' delivery systems, tour their facilities, and interact one-on-one with program area staff. Topics addressed on the visit included integration of service areas; operational issues; on-site client services such as career assessment and services, job training, educational opportunities, child care, etc.; employer/community outreach and partnerships (to include education partnerships and business services); cost allocation and funding issues; staff deployment and training; Wisconsin Works (W2) Program; and client flow (intake process). John Milisauskas, Kenosha County Job Center Manager, and Debra Jossart, Racine County Workforce Development Center Manager, assisted in the planning efforts that resulted in this event: Each hosted a one day visit to their respective centers.

### **II. Participants**

The visit was intended for participants who were either in the process of establishing one stop centers in their Counties/States, or they were looking for programmatic ideas in a particular area. Many of them came to Wisconsin with specific issues in mind they wanted to explore further with the intention of gaining fresh ideas they could implement in their own organizations. The participants represented a mix of both State and county TANF staff members. The group came from all over the country to visit Wisconsin and included State representatives from Indiana, Kansas, Missouri, and Washington, DC, as well as county representatives from El Paso County, Colorado, and Hot Spring County, Arkansas.

### **III. Background**

#### **A. The One Stop System and the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**

Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1999 (WIA) requires each local workforce investment area to establish a One-Stop system for the delivery of certain Federal workforce development services. Entities responsible for the administration of separate Federal workforce investment, educational, and other human resource programs and funding streams (referred to as One-Stop partners) are to collaborate to create a seamless delivery system that will enhance access to services and improve employment outcomes for individuals receiving services. The system must include at least one comprehensive physical center that provides core services and access to the other activities carried out by the partners. The comprehensive center may be supplemented by additional comprehensive centers, a network of affiliated sites, technological and physical linkages with the partners, and specialized centers.

For more detailed information on this Act, refer to the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration's web site at <http://wtw.doleta.gov>.

#### **B. Wisconsin Works (W-2)**

Both centers visited operate within the context of this statewide TANF program. Open to any and all job seekers, job centers are the integrated service delivery system for individuals who need to access the Wisconsin Works (W-2) program. W-2 is based on work participation and personal responsibility. Under W-2, there is no entitlement to assistance, but there is a place for everyone who is willing to work to their ability. Each W-2 eligible participant meets with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP), who helps the person develop a self-sufficiency plan and determine their place on the W-2 employment ladder. The ladder consists of four levels of employment and training options:

1. Unsubsidized employment- Individuals entering W-2 are first guided to the best available job opportunity.
2. Trial jobs (subsidized employment)- For individuals who are unable to locate unsubsidized work, but have a willing attitude, the FEP explores options for subsidized employment.
3. Community service jobs- For those who need to practice the work habits and skills necessary to be hired by a regular employer, CSJs are developed in the community.
4. W-2 Transition- Transition is reserved for those who, because of severe barriers, are unable to perform independent, self-sustaining work.

Another major part of W-2 consists of the related support services and features designed to facilitate access to and sustain employment. These supports include job centers that combine job search, job opportunities, education, training, and W-2 services in one location; local children's services networks; child support; child care; transportation funding (Job Access Loans, etc.), and health care (Medicaid/BadgerCare).

Many of the site visitors found Wisconsin's TANF program to be quite different from the programs in their States. They admitted that many differences were due to the fact that Wisconsin is ahead of many States in the area of welfare reform. All the visitors were impressed with the motivation both counties' staffs displayed in supporting the Wisconsin Works (W-2) Program. For further information on Wisconsin's TANF programs, visit the State's web site at [www.dwd.state.wi.us](http://www.dwd.state.wi.us).

#### **IV. Introduction**

The Kenosha County Job Center has been identified by a 1999 University of Washington study (funded through a grant award from the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services) as one of five of the most developed and promising One-Stop Center models around the country. The neighboring Racine County Workforce Development Center was featured in the 1998 first edition of the U.S. Department of Labor's One Stop Newsletter *One Stop Watch*. The center was highlighted in an article entitled "In A League of Their Own" and was praised for setting a new standard for world class customer services.

Both days featured a flexible agenda that afforded participants an opportunity to tour both centers, hear presentations from various program area staff members as well as an employer and a local labor market economist, and then visit with the program staff of their choice for further discussions. There was also time available for participants to discuss their own individual State or county programs and initiatives and gain insights from their peers from all over the country.

#### **V. Kenosha County Job Center Visit B Summary (Day One)**

##### **Job Center Description - At A Glance**

This center offers one of the most integrated collocation models in the country, with a long list of State, county, non-profit, and for-profit organizations collocated in a small, urban shopping center. Applicants for welfare and other economic assistance benefits (Food Stamps, child care, health care, etc.) are assisted in the same reception area as all other job center users. Economic assistance, support services, job readiness, and job search are coordinated by case managers in interagency teams which work together in an open office arrangement. The center serves this intermediate-sized urban location

midway between Milwaukee and Chicago under the leadership of Kenosha County and the partners collocated there, with two satellite locations to serve rural portions of the county.

#### **A. History**

The One-Stop shop concept has been part of Wisconsin's service delivery efforts since 1986, collocated with JTPA and Job Service offices in the southwest corner of the State. In 1987, the State legislature provided funding for welfare reform pilots in four of the State's seventeen service delivery areas. Kenosha became one of four counties in Wisconsin to begin a pilot welfare reform program called "Work Experience and Job Training." In 1988, the local Chrysler Corporation plant laid off over 6,500 employees. This, along with leadership by the county executive, provided an increased incentive for job services and led to the grand opening of the job center in December 1989. The center soon became a national model program for welfare reform. It was used by President Clinton's 1995 welfare reform task force as a model of a system that emphasized moving people off welfare and into the workforce. Since 1990, given the early national attention the center received, it has provided technical assistance to over 500 visitors representing more than 100 groups interested in learning more about creating one stop career centers.

#### **B. Kenosha County Workforce Profile**

Kenosha County has rebounded from the closing of the Chrysler manufacturing complex in 1988 and has diversified its economic base in manufacturing, retail, and tourism. The local unemployment rate is 2.7%. Roughly 40% of the resident work force commutes outside of the county for employment, yet 12% of the total county employment is comprised of commuters into the county. As the majority of the commuters travel south across the state line into Illinois, the effective labor market is composed of Kenosha County, WI, and Lake County, IL.

#### **C. Job Center Programs and Services**

The Job Center provides all community employment and training activities and economic support programs for the county, although some access is provided to rural areas of the county via satellite offices. Over eighteen agencies operating more than twenty programs are part of the Center. The programs and staff are fully integrated. In most program areas, staff are seated according to function and integrated services areas and not according to agency affiliation.

1. The following integrated functions are utilized by program participants and the general public:
  - Community-wide Employment and Training Coordination: Coordinated employer outreach, sharing of all job orders, job development, and the joint marketing of hiring incentives benefit all users of the facility.
  - Job Search Research Room: This room offers a common job search and placement venue for all users of the facility. It is staffed on a multi-agency and multi-program basis.
  - Mutually Accepted Case Management Protocol: This is used by all programs in the facility including the commitment to share the assessment results of common participants.
  - One General Reception Area with a Unified Telephone System: All agencies in the facility benefit from this feature.
  - Sharing of Common Areas: A reception area, classrooms, and conference rooms are available.
  - On-Site Child Care Playroom: This is available on a short term basis to parents who use the facility.
  - Fully Integrated and Consolidated Public Welfare Delivery System: The Job Center provides economic support, Welfare-to-Work, and child support in a single facility and under unified supervision.
  
2. The following programs operate at the Kenosha County Job Center:
  - Labor Exchange and Employment Security- basic services provided by Wisconsin Job Service
  - Mandatory Work Search Program of the Unemployment Compensations System
  - Dislocated Worker Programs
  - Older Worker Programs
  - Senior Community Service Employment Program- under Title V of the Older Worker Act
  - Veterans' Program
  - Job Training Partnership Act Programs

- Economic Support Programs (AFDC, Medical Assistance, Food Stamps)
- Child Care Resource and Referral
- Basic Jobs Skills Training Program
- Child Support Enforcement
- Child Care Services
- Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers Program
- Children First- an employment and training program for noncustodial parents
- SSI Advocacy
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Nutritional Services
- Extension Food and Nutrition Education Program
- Food Stamp Employment and Training Program
- Job Corps Recruitment
- Child Health Screenings
- Head Start
- Trade Adjustment Assistance

3. The following services are available at the Job Center:

- Computer and hard copy access to the Wisconsin Career Information System- *Career Visions*. This systems offers extensive information relating to occupational choice, entry qualifications, education and training requirements, salary ranges, employment outlook, and comments of those currently in the field on both national and state levels.
- *JOBNET*-An automated, touch screen system that lists information on jobs available state-wide; area newspaper and magazine employment advertisements; recruitment announcements; and microfiche viewer for out of state job orders.
- Labor market information- Publications by the State of Wisconsin and the regional Labor Market Analyst are available in the Job Search Resource Room.

- Information on local education and training- Marketing materials and course catalogs from the three higher educational institutions in Kenosha County are available. These include two campuses of the University of Wisconsin and Gateway Technical College.
- Hiring requirements- These are maintained in the Wisconsin Career Information System and contain both general and specific information. Referrals to available jobs are made by the staff of the Job Search Resource Room.
- Job search skills assistance- Staff can assist job seekers with finding written materials on job application preparation; resume writing and interviewing skills assistance is also available.
- Job contact support- Job seekers can obtain assistance with resume preparation, cover letter writing, as well as gain access to telephones, fax machines, and even on-site interviewing with employers.
- Testing services- Job Center users can take typing tests and then enhance their skills using the center's typing tutorial. They can also take the General Aptitude Test Battery (for apprenticeship applications), the state civil service typing and word processing tests, as well as shorthand, spelling, and medical spelling tests.

4. A few of the Job Center's unique features include the following:

- Community-wide coordination of employment and training activities- The Job Center coordinates virtually all the employment and training activities in the Kenosha community including those activities not physically collocated at the Center. This includes employer outreach activities, shared job orders, common applicant pool, and incentive brokering.
- Jointly managed job search resource room- This room is available to both the general public as well as program affiliated participants. It is jointly funded and staffed by the collocated agencies.
- Location and environment- The Job Center is located on a major thoroughfare midway between Milwaukee and Chicago. It is accessible by both private automobile and public transportation. The Center occupies over 62,000 square feet of space and has ample space to grow; as it expands, its customers drive the need for new services. The Center's creative room names such as Employment Central, A Child's Place, the Challenge Room, Success Room, and Courage Room reinforce the staff's commitment to providing support and encouragement to job seekers.
- Extensive private sector contracting- The major programmatic funding sources that operate programs out of the Job Center have a long and successful history of

contracting for most services with private non-profit and private for-profit organizations. This privatization of service delivery provides a model for public-private partnerships for innovative program approaches.

- Assessments- The center offers a variety of assessments for Job Center visitors to assess their job interests, job abilities, job motivation/values, and basic academic skills as well as more specific learning disability, psychological, English proficiency, etc. assessments. Assessment tools include over thirty-five different types of tests available such as the ABLE (Adult Basic Learning Exam), COPS (Career Occupational Assessment System), CAPS (Career Ability Placement Survey), COPEs (Career Orientation Placement Evaluation and Survey), ELSA (English Language Skills Assessment), SAM (Skills Assessment Module), Wonderlic Basic Skills Test, and the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational battery.
- Employer Relations Team- The Job Center has a staff dedicated to employer outreach. Kenosha County has over 2,800 employers and 65% of them have less than twenty people. The staff function as human resource generalists and assist local employers in matching potential applicants with jobs and also provide labor market and basic hiring information to employers. The Team mails out newsletters to employers, conducts educational sessions on topics such as labor law for employers, advises employers on hiring incentives such as tax credits, conducts on-site job fairs, and visits off-site job fairs to market its pool of job seekers. The Team also includes a small business center manager who assists individuals in learning how to set up their own businesses. The team maintains a large network of contacts including local employers, local two year colleges and technical colleges, the Economic Development Council, and the Chamber of Commerce.
- Personal Career and Development Unit- Services are open to the general public, and some clients may be referred by case managers to this unit. It includes a two week program called *Excel*. The program includes courses in self-awareness, self-marketing, interviewing, job preparation, job applications, resume writing, and other job related job skills. Applicants have the opportunity to rehearse interviews and can even have their rehearsal audio-taped for feedback from staff. The Unit also offers a work experience program that places individuals in temporary jobs or coordinates their participation in on-the-job workshops. The case manager coordinates closely with the Unit staff to ensure clients are not held back by a lack of supportive services such as transportation, child care, housing, or other basic needs.

## **VI. Racine County Workforce Development Center Visit -- Summary (Day Two)**

### **Workforce Development Center - At A Glance**

The Racine County Workforce Development Center opened its doors in October 1996 intent on re-inventing the concept of a One-Stop career center. Its designers wanted to expand upon the popular one stop model used at that time of housing a collection of different agencies under the same roof. The approach they took was to reinvent all their employment and training services so that there is one system that provides universal access, but still meets the funding source needs of the various activities. Its central mission has been to promote the economic prosperity of the community by providing quality services to its customers, local employers, and job seekers. The Center is committed to using state-of-the-art technology to meet its mission. Job seekers have access to its Employment Resource Room that has the feel and look of a public library complete with computers featuring instant touch screen access to job listings (*JobNet*-the same state-wide employment listing used in Kenosha County), Internet employment listing, newspapers (hard copy and Internet), and a vast array of information for job seekers. The Center's Career Development Area offers individual career counseling as well as computerized career counseling and exploration tools, on-site recruitment, and interviews by local employers. The Academic Improvement Area provides basic skills instruction via *NovaNet* (a computerized self-pace instructional curriculum), tutoring in apprenticeship testing, SAT and ACT test preparation and many technical courses. The Center's main focus is on providing quality services to two groups of customers: job seekers and local employers. It is understood that neither customer can be effectively served without providing equally effective services to the other. Its services are open to all Racine County residents and range from individualized self-paced to customized staff supported depending on the client or employers' needs.

#### **A. History**

In order to create the Workforce Development Center, a strong commitment was made by the County Executive and the County Board of Supervisors. The County bonded to finance the complete renovation of an old, vacant manufacturing warehouse within the city of Racine. The renovation cost was \$14.5 million and included over 58,000 square feet devoted to the Center. The County combined a myriad of funding sources aimed at providing employment and training assistance into its own version of Ablock granting. Utilizing existing public funds, one system of employment services has been created for any county resident to access. The system of services that had been operated by various organizations and agencies within the community has been eliminated.

The Center's original designers visited many other one stop centers before 1996 and noticed a lack of combined program funding. They saw this as a necessity for their future center. Various major "funding organizations" made a very serious commitment, which

essentially eliminated their autonomy and identity, in order to achieve the goal of one center of service that provides universal access to any job seeker and any employer. These funding organizations included: the Racine County Human Services Department, Southeastern Wisconsin Private Industry Council, Lakeshore District Job Service, and Gateway Technical College. The funding streams from these organizations which support the Workforce Development Center include:

- Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)
- Veteran's Assistance Programs
- Income Maintenance Administration
- Food Stamp Employment and Training
- Local Property Taxes
- Wagner-Peysner
- Wisconsin Works (W2)
- Dislocated Workers Programs
- Adult Basic Education

## **B. Racine County Workforce Profile**

The county experienced 7.9 % population growth while the city of Racine's population grew by only 1.7% since 1990. Much of this is due to the commuting patterns of the County's residents. The county has two types of commuters: The traditional industrial commuter who travels to manufacturing companies both inside and outside of the County, and the emerging market commuter who travels to a newer business park near an interstate highway or downtown Milwaukee. The second type of commuter is more likely to be employed in the service sector of the economy. One-third of the jobs within the County are in the manufacturing industry. Wages paid to these workers represent almost one-half of total wages paid to workers in the county. These wages are 27 % higher than the statewide average due to the fact that several large manufacturers are located in the county, and the County has a higher percentage of skilled trade workers than other areas of the State.

The Workforce Development Center keeps a close watch on the local economy and maintains a regular dialogue with the County labor market economist. The Center has made it a priority for it to identify skills needed in future jobs in order to ensure that the employers it serves are finding qualified county applicants.

## **C. Services Available at the Workforce Development Center**

The Center offers services and targets its programs towards its two central customers: job seekers looking for suitable jobs and employers looking for qualified applicants. It operates in a customer friendly environment and offers services for both English and Spanish speakers. Information is provided to customers through state-of-the-art technology. It strives to meet the needs of local workforce employers while assisting customers in reaching their highest economic potential. Every effort is made by the Center to make the most efficient use of fiscal resources.

## 1. Services to employers

- Recruitment Assistance- The Center works with employers to tailor these services to an employer's specific needs. Job listings with local, state, and national access are offered by the Center. Through the Employer Services Team, employers can list their job openings on a computerized job listing service, *JobNet* (referred to previously in this report). This system lists local and state jobs as well as national ones via the Internet. Over 500 county jobs are listed each month. Employer Account Representatives contact employers daily to update the list and advise them of the services available at The Center. These representatives also work with employers by arranging on-site interviews, on-site applications, and job fairs.
- Employer Seminars- Training is provided to employers on topics such as the Wisconsin Fair Employment Law, the hiring process, and legal aspects of employee handbooks.
- Applicant Testing Service- The Center assists employers by saving them time, energy, and money by aiding in the selection of the most qualified candidate for a particular position. The Center will also assist employers in identifying training needs for current employees. Tests that are administered on behalf of employers include office proficiency and certification, general aptitude tests, mechanical aptitude batteries, and other customized tests.
- Employer based training opportunities- If an employer designates specific positions for the purpose of providing training to job seekers who meet predetermined eligibility requirements, they are provided a financial incentive to offset the initial training costs.
- Short term training programs- The Center attempts to address skill shortages in the local community through these programs.
- Labor market information requests- Employers are able to access information and analysis of labor market data through The Center.

## 2. Services to job seekers

- Registration- Job seekers can obtain specific information and register at one of the computer kiosks in the lobby of The Center on their own or with the help of staff.
- Children's Area- An on-site playroom is available for the convenience of parents using The Center's resources. The Center is also working with the private sector, the city of Racine, and the University of Wisconsin on a new high quality child care center (*Next Generation Now*) that recently opened. It is open twenty-four

hours a day and is anticipated to become a national model for child care.

- Resource Room- Job seekers can use a computer workstation to access a listing of available jobs throughout the State via JobNet. A job description as well as application instructions are available. Resume writing assistance is available as well as access to telephones and fax machines.
  - Workshops- A variety of workshops are available to job seekers on topics such as resume writing, interviewing, career planning, and negotiating a job offer.
  - Career Development Center- This center offers both career assessment for job seekers unsure of their future as well as specific services for individuals interested in advancing in their careers. Interest inventories, aptitude tests, and proficiency tests are available. A variety of software, on-line computer programs, videos, books, magazines, and other resources are available. Specialized one-on-one service is also available from Center staff for interested job seekers.
  - Academic Improvement Center- The Academic Improvement Lab in this Center allows customers to improve their academic skills by utilizing either self-paced computer programs (*Learning 2000* software) or one-on-one instruction. Individuals may work towards earning a GED, High School Equivalency Diploma, up-grade for a higher skilled job, or prepare for advanced education.
3. A few of the unique features of the Workforce Development Center include the following:
- Use of Technology- The Center has invested heavily in utilizing technology to deliver the most modern services in a state-of-the-art work environment. Its lobby displays several informational, interactive kiosks that enable walk-in customers to obtain information, register for workshops, or set up an appointment with Center Staff. These JETT'CON '97 award winning entry kiosks offer a menu of Center services available to the public. The Center has also linked into the Racine County web site and offers the same information on-line at [www.RACINECO.com/wdcservices](http://www.RACINECO.com/wdcservices).
  - Employer Account Representatives- A team of six staff members contacts area employers daily to advise them of the Center's services, update current job listings, and to encourage them to list their new job openings. This effort enables the Center to bring in over hundreds of new job opportunities each month.
  - Career Discovery Center - This service provides a friendly place for all youth in Racine County to explore career options and to learn the process of developing career plans. The County launched this service after observing that many area youth were either leaving the County or were not gaining the necessary skills for

the jobs available in the County. In cooperation with the Racine Unified School District, The Center hosts mandatory field trips for students in grades five, eight, ten, and twelve. Throughout these visits, The Center guides students in learning about careers, selecting a career path, and applying for training, college, or a job. The Center has also launched a web page for youth entitled *YouthNet*. It features area job listings for teens, volunteer activities, and links to college planning. The site can be visited at [www.RACINECO.com/youthnet](http://www.RACINECO.com/youthnet).

- Racine County Small Business Development Center- The Center is a member of a local partnership (Racine County Small Business Development Partnership Council) involving ten community and statewide organizations that provide services and assistance to existing small businesses and start-ups. Free counseling is provided and programs are available for a minimal charge. The Council was established in 1998 with the intent on becoming the area's One-Stop shop for growth and assistance.
- Job Retention Program- This program provides clients with child care assistance, employment referrals, job skills training, transportation and housing assistance, securing Food Stamps and child support, medical assistance, educational needs, mentoring and support groups, and counseling.

## **VII. Summary of Key “Learnings”**

Both centers have their own unique similarities and differences. Some of the key themes participants appreciated included: strong backing and continued support from the county government both financially and in overall support of the centers' mission and successful involvement in the community; a dedication to working with area employers that includes efforts such as having staff members assigned responsibilities only for employer services, regular dialogue and meetings with employers, sending newsletters to employers, and providing on-site job services to employers including job fairs, interviewing, and collecting job applications for employers; on-site child care located near the front entrance; commitment to both moving clients toward self-sufficiency and helping them advance in their jobs by offering comprehensive educational and job assessments, on-site training and educational opportunities, and providing clients continued support in their job search as needed; and an extensive resource room that offers exhaustive job information (including *JobNet*-a computerized state-wide job listing that allows applicants to obtain job information on companies and instructions for applying for specific jobs), job search help, and job workshops.

Several aspects of both centers seemed to be indicative of what makes a successful One-Stop center. Location and the actual physical setting in both centers was conducive to carrying out the centers' services. Both centers have established themselves as an integral part of the community and have formed partnerships with employers that support that

role. They have worked hard to combine various funding streams and have wholeheartedly opened their services up to the general public. As proof of its commitment to serve the public-at-large, the Racine center focuses on providing quality services to two groups of workers: job seekers and local employers. Both centers have integrated services and have staffed their programs to facilitate this process. They both stress information sharing between clients and staff members as well as with employers. The Kenosha center reflects this emphasis in its founding guidelines. These guidelines are: the notion that everyone can work, integration is critical to success, and give people access to as much information as possible up front. These centers have recognized that a complete culture change among job center staff was needed with the passage of recent welfare legislation, and they have responded appropriately in order to be successful in the future.

### **VIII. Final Remarks**

Closing discussions allowed the participants an opportunity to reflect on what they learned and how they could apply these new ideas to their own organizations. Everyone agreed that there is probably not one particular One-Stop Center that can be a model for every county or State to emulate across the country. Local economics, demographics, geography, politics, and other discrepancies make it necessary for developers of future One-Stops to focus on the key cross-cutting themes that could be implemented in their own counties or States.

For more information on this technical assistance event, or the Welfare Peer Technical Assistance Network in general, please visit our web site at [www.calib.com/peerta](http://www.calib.com/peerta) or call Blake Austensen at (301) 270-0841.