



## National Council on Disability

An independent federal agency making recommendations to the President and Congress to enhance the quality of life for all Americans with disabilities and their families.

### Workforce Investment Act Reauthorization

National Council on Disability  
March 23, 2010

#### **TOPICAL BRIEF: One-Stop Career Centers**

##### **ISSUE 1: Use of universal design in the delivery of One-Stop services**

###### **Recommendation:**

**Congress should direct workforce development partners to incorporate universal design in the delivery of One-Stop Career Center core, intensive and training services to insure access and use by all individuals seeking employment services and supports, including individuals with disabilities. Universal design should be applied to all methods of information dissemination, assessment, and training.**

###### **Summary of Concern:**

One of the principles of WIA that guides implementation of One-Stop service delivery is universality – the intent for all services available through the One-Stops to be accessible to everyone who uses them. Workforce Investment Boards have made great strides to improve the accessibility of One-Stop Career Center facilities, but barriers remain, preventing full access to services and supports. Services and materials need to be developed from their inception using universal design, rather than continuing to depend on assistive devices that require knowledgeable staff to oversee their use. This may mean making it possible for assessments to be completed independently on a computer that has screen reading capabilities or that the assessment be presented aloud and responded to verbally. Rather than converting hard copy documents, it would be more cost effective if the document was created in a format that lends itself to screen readers, Braille writers, or audio recordings. Training can be developed, delivered and evaluated in modules using universal design so that participants who need additional support or time for completion can still participate along with the general public.

##### **ISSUE 2: Expansion of the Disability Program Navigator role in One-Stops**

###### **Recommendation:**

**Congress should require that each One-Stop Career Center employ a Disability Program Navigator (DPN) in the workforce system, and require that the role of the Navigator be expanded to include the provision of service coordination to facilitate the use of One-Stop services by individuals with disabilities. Congress**

**should dedicate funding to support the DPNs and require that qualified individuals with disabilities be given hiring priority for vacant DPN positions.**

**Summary of Concern:**

DPNs were envisioned to assist people with disabilities to navigate through what is often perceived as a complicated employment service delivery system. Individuals who do not have the assistance of a VR counselor often need ongoing coordination of employment related support services. Currently, there is not a mandate for Disability Program Navigators (DPN) to be located in One-Stop Career Centers. Through a joint funding initiative of the Employment Training Administration (ETA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA), DPNs have been in One-Stops in 42 states and territories for several years, but this does not mean that every One-Stop in these states has a DPN, nor that the DPNs in place can keep up with the demand for facilitating access to services for people with disabilities who are seeking workforce system services. Furthermore, DPN funding is not secure, as it currently depends on a funding allocation by two different federal agencies. Should Congress require DPNs, One-Stop administrators will need direction for hiring them. People with disabilities who have experience using One-Stops are a logical source for filling newly-created positions.

<b>ISSUE 3: Participation credentials for when completion criteria cannot be met</b>
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**Recommendation:**

**Congress should direct ETA to conduct a demonstration project in which individuals earn credentials of completion after finishing each key portion of training programs offered through One-Stop Career Centers. These credentials would be made available to all people as a form of documenting the skills and competencies successfully demonstrated to date.**

**Summary of Concern:**

One-Stop Career center training programs may include requirements or time limits that are difficult if not impossible for some people with disabilities, to complete. For example, a single program requirement that necessitates demonstration of physical dexterity or endurance should not preclude an individual with a particular physical disability from obtaining documentation of partial completion when that individual has otherwise satisfactorily met all the rest of the program's requisites. Establishing a system whereby each individual participant is provided with documentation of incremental as well as partial program completion would provide built-in flexibility to recognize the skills and competencies gained through a training experience. For some people, for whom industry certification or graduation from a college degree program is not possible, such documentation may prove a useful tool in articulating skills proficiency to a prospective employer. Employers look at credentials when hiring new employees, so having some type of certification would provide verification that the job applicant has earned a particular level of skill proficiency. It is not known what a partial credential/certification of training would look like, nor is it known the extent to which such a certification would assist an individual in obtaining employment. Therefore, a demonstration project is a sensible method to obtain this information before requiring it of the One-Stops.

*The National Council on Disability wishes to express its appreciation to Dr. Beth Bader and Dr. John Kregel of Virginia Commonwealth University for their assistance in developing this brief.*