
Executive Summary:

**COORDINATION AND INTEGRATION OF
WELFARE AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEMS**

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Executive Summary

The policy context for both welfare programs and employment and training programs operated by the workforce development system has changed dramatically in the past few years. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 requires welfare agencies to focus more than in the past on moving welfare recipients into employment. PRWORA provides funding to welfare agencies in the form of a block grant, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), to support efforts to achieve this objective. The need to move more TANF clients into work activities and jobs means that TANF agencies need to expand or develop structural and organizational arrangements that make this possible, including coordinating with the workforce development system.

The Welfare-to-Work (WtW) Grants Program provides additional funding to serve welfare recipients, but the resources flow through the employment and training system, now commonly called the workforce development system. WtW creates new incentives for the workforce development system to coordinate with the welfare system on behalf of welfare recipients. The workforce development system is also changing, moving towards universal access to employment related services and the use of technology to serve job seekers and employers better.

States and localities are responding to this dynamic environment in different ways, and their responses reflect historical relationships as well as current policy objectives. This study builds on earlier research in the area of service coordination and integration, and provides a current description of local operational interaction between welfare and workforce development programs. It is based on a review of the literature and site visits to twelve localities in six states. The main intent is to add to the understanding about how welfare recipients receive employment-related services. The study identifies different approaches to coordination, the advantages of coordination for clients, and factors that promote and impede coordination.

Study Methods

States and local sites selected for this study represented a range of organizational structures, historical experiences, and economic and demographic variables. Site selection criteria included the proportion of welfare clients served by the Job Training Partnership/Workforce Investment Act (JTPA/WIA)* system, the current state structure of the JTPA and welfare systems, urban/rural setting, and economic conditions. This approach contrasts with studies that focus on “best practice” sites.

* The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 replaces the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). At the time of our site visits, states had not completed this transition. Therefore, in this report we refer to the relevant agency as the “JTPA/WIA agency.”

Site visits were conducted between May and August 1999 to:

Missouri: Kansas City and Sedalia
Ohio: Cleveland, Dayton, and Painesville
Oregon: Portland and Salem
Pennsylvania: Beaver County and Pittsburgh
Rhode Island: Providence
South Carolina: Charleston and Manning

Site visits focused on the interaction between welfare and workforce development programs from the perspective of services receipt for TANF clients who are required to engage in work activities. Discussions were held with local TANF agencies and workforce development agencies, including the Employment Service (ES), JTPA providers (and administering agencies), and WtW providers. Agency directors, supervisors, and service delivery staff were included in the discussions. This study did not collect information from clients. Thus, the descriptions of client flow and service receipt are developed from discussions with service providers and administrators.

Coordination and Client Services

Coordination generally refers to situations where two or more organizations work together, through a formal or informal arrangement, to meet one or more goals such as improving the effectiveness and/or cost-effectiveness of programs, improving access to services, avoiding the unnecessary duplication of services, and improving performance. There is generally a distinction between *service integration* and *coordination*. Integration is characterized by features such as common intake and “seamless” service delivery, where the client may receive a range of services from different programs without repeated registration procedures, waiting periods, or other administrative barriers. In contrast, coordinated systems generally involve multiple agencies providing services, but clients may have to visit different locations and re-register for each program to obtain services. Integrated services are sometimes, but not always, physically co-located.

Overview of Services Provided

The general flow of services for an individual applying for cash assistance at the welfare office has changed under TANF. Prior to TANF, the typical sequence of activities was: eligibility screening, intake for cash assistance benefits, followed by an orientation on work-related program rules and services for those required to participate in work activities. Under TANF, the service sequence more often includes orientation for all clients, whether required to work or not. An individual applying for TANF now is generally provided with information materials and participates in an individual or group orientation, which typically addresses eligibility requirements, the time-limited nature of TANF, the requirement to participate in work or work-related activities, and the criteria for exemption from work participation requirements.

As an individual moves from welfare intake into work, s/he may participate in the following activities and services: intake and eligibility determination; assessment; pre-employment or work preparation services (e.g., job readiness training, family life skills, general equivalency diploma (GED) or adult basic education (ABE) classes, basic skills training, job specific skills training); job development/placement services (e.g., job search/job club/job placement, labor market information); work experience; and post-employment services (e.g., retention services, advancement services). Under TANF, however, clients are more likely to engage in short-term pre-employment activities and job search than in skills training and education. In addition, case management services are provided to the client as s/he moves through these services.

As discussed below, several key agencies/organizations can be involved in providing work-related services to TANF recipients: the welfare agency, the ES, the JTPA/WIA administering agency, the WtW administering agency, community colleges, and other subcontracted service providers, including community-based organizations and for-profit service providers.

Organizational Approaches to Coordination

The enactment of TANF—with its emphasis on time-limited receipt of welfare benefits, “work-first,” and moving large numbers of TANF recipients off the welfare rolls into full-time, unsubsidized employment—has created an impetus for strengthening coordination between the welfare and workforce development system.

In order to provide employment services to welfare recipients and help them move into jobs, state and local welfare agencies can (1) “go it alone” and provide the full gamut of employment-related services to move TANF recipients to jobs on their own, or (2) link with the workforce development system to share some or all of the work-related functions required to move TANF recipients into jobs. For example, a welfare agency might choose to run a four-week job readiness workshop for TANF recipients using its own agency staff, at one of its own agency offices. Alternatively, the welfare agency might choose to link with a workforce development agency (such as a JTPA/WIA agency) that may already be running such workshops and refer non-exempt TANF recipients to the workshop.

In our site visits, we found substantial variation in the extent and scope of coordination between welfare and workforce development agencies. In some localities, there were few links between the two systems; in other localities, the two systems were highly integrated with one another. For example, the local sites we visited varied substantially in terms of the numbers of and types of organizations linked, the ways in which coordination had evolved, the types of work-related services integrated, and numbers of individuals referred between agencies. Overall, those services most directly associated with cash assistance, such as eligibility determination and sanctioning, were the most likely to be kept in-house by the TANF agency. Orientation, case management, and support services were more often shared by coordinating agencies. TANF agencies were more likely to use workforce development providers for more specialized services such as job skills training, GED preparation, and job development services.

To further illustrate the range of service delivery configurations, we identified three broad organizational approaches: welfare-centered, shared responsibility (where work-related services for TANF clients were jointly administered by the TANF agency and the workforce development agency), and highly integrated. These are broad classifications, and several variations were observed within the welfare-centered and shared responsibility approaches. Five study sites were considered to be welfare-centered, six sites used a shared responsibility approach, and one site in the study was highly integrated. The two boxed examples from our site visits illustrate, from a services receipt perspective, two approaches to providing work-related services for TANF recipients at different ends of the spectrum – one featuring the welfare agency as the hub of work-related services for TANF clients and the other featuring a highly integrated system.

Charleston: Work-Related Services at the Welfare Office

- ❖ A new TANF applicant signs in with the receptionist and is assigned to an orientation session. The TANF agency has 30 days in which to approve the application for cash assistance, during which time the individual is conducting a self-directed job search. Following approval for cash benefits, the client's case is officially opened and s/he meets with a case manager to develop a plan for work-related services.
- ❖ Next, a client may complete a basic skills assessment. Typically, a client will then attend two weeks of family life skills and two weeks of job club before participating in eight weeks of self-directed job search. All of these activities are directed by welfare agency employees and are held at the welfare office. The family life skills classes address a broad range of topics, such as time management, self-esteem, personal and family health, and family budgeting. Job club addresses job readiness skills such as resume preparation, interviewing skills, and appropriate workplace attire and behavior.
- ❖ Job search involves using resources at the welfare office such as help wanted advertisements from daily newspapers, job requests submitted by employers, and job listings provided by the state ES. The client is expected to use these resources and any personal referrals to complete three to four employer contacts per week.
- ❖ If the client has not obtained a job after completing these activities, the TANF agency has a variety of other workforce-related classes and training options that they provide in-house. These include computer-based programs that help the client identify job interests, learn about skills needed for particular jobs, and brush up on basic skills. Work experience placements are also offered. If a TANF client is in need of more specialized services, such as vocational rehabilitation or substance abuse treatment, the case manager makes a referral to the appropriate agency.
- ❖ When a client has fewer than 12 months left on cash assistance, s/he is referred to the WtW program operated by the JTPA/WIA agency at the one-stop career center. Welfare staff work with the one-stop center to facilitate communications and problem-solving for individual clients, especially if questions come up about participation requirements, sanctions, or approved work activities.

Dayton: Highly Integrated Services at a One-Stop Career Center

- ❖ An individual applies for TANF at the One-Stop Career Center, where s/he is greeted at the center's reception desk. The receptionist refers the individual to the appropriate provider within the Center based on the services s/he is requesting. The Job Center is the only location in the city for welfare eligibility determination and enrollment. If the individual is in need of TANF, he/she is sent to the welfare agency (i.e. Department of Human Services, DHS) reception area. Here, the individual will first meet with a DHS screener, who discusses general types of assistance available and completes the first few screens of a client record in the welfare data system. In this county, DHS is merged with the JTPA/WIA agency, so many of the other services the client receives are also provided by DHS staff or contractors.
- ❖ After viewing an orientation video, the TANF applicant is referred to one (of the nine) DHS units housed at the Job Center. During the initial visit, the individual will meet with a DHS eligibility specialist, a DHS work activities specialist, and a DHS-contracted (through Goodwill) case manager. The applicant will also be introduced to the many other types of services available throughout the Job Center. All of this occurs in the initial visit, which typically takes 2-3 hours.
- ❖ The DHS eligibility specialist will take the individual through the eligibility determination process for cash assistance, Medicaid, Food Stamps, and other types of assistance, and will discuss grant diversion—if it seems appropriate. Necessary data screens will be completed to determine eligibility, and the individual receives a listing of documents s/he will need to submit to DHS before her/his application can be finalized.
- ❖ Next, the TANF applicant meets with a DHS work activities specialist to discuss TANF work requirements and the various available work assignment options. The DHS work activities specialist also takes the client to the Job Center's Job Bank to familiarize the individual with the job search resources available at the Center (including computerized job listings maintained by the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services). Following this meeting, the applicant meets with a Goodwill case manager, who reviews the various types of support services that are available.
- ❖ The Goodwill case manager tracks the client's progress throughout her/his involvement in TANF, helping to arrange for support services, serving as an advocate in securing needed services, and troubleshooting problems as they arise. In subsequent visits to the Job Center to meet with the Goodwill case manager, the TANF recipient may access a variety of services available at the Job Center through the 47 agencies located on-site. For example, among the services available for job seekers (anyone from the general public may use Job Center facilities) are: lists of available job openings; labor market information; information on all local education, training, and re-training programs; hiring requirements; assistance with job search skills; resume preparation; free access to a telephone and fax machine; and typing and word processing tests/tutorials.
- ❖ TANF recipients also take part in the activities that the Job Center hosts for area employers. For example, the Center screens and tests job seekers, takes job applications, sponsors job fairs, and provides space for employers to conduct recruitment and even some job training activities. The Center also works with employers to customize training programs, link employers with educational and training facilities, and provide funds for training of TANF recipients, dislocated workers, and others. Companies come to the Job Center to recruit workers, including entry-level workers, as well as high-skilled workers. TANF participants are blended in with other job applicants from the general public for many recruitment activities conducted by employers at the Job Center and in referrals of applicants to fill job openings.

Advantages of Coordination for the Client

Although coordination occurred in different ways, for sites that were able to achieve a relatively coordinated program, it generally resulted in a variety of advantages for TANF clients.

- **Referrals to more services and to a wider range of services.** Availability of expanded services is often the result of referral agreements or contractual relationships between coordinating agencies. For example, linkages between a welfare agency and the ES bring job listings and labor market information to welfare clients and introduce welfare clients to a resource that can continue to serve them as they progress in the job market. Linkages between a welfare agency and a JTPA/WIA agency may result in availability of a wider range of employment and training services for welfare recipients, including increased access to employers.
- **Greater intensity of services to clients.** Linkages with other agencies may reinforce the services that are provided through the welfare agency. For example, WtW programs may provide more comprehensive or more intensive job preparation services for those with greater barriers to employment. Linkages between the welfare agency and community colleges might enable the welfare agency to more thoroughly assess the abilities and occupational interests of clients or may provide customized training opportunities.
- **Simplified referrals.** A simplified client referral process might mean the client faces fewer obstacles when seeking services from another agency because the agency has already received some basic information about the client. Coordination tends to make each of the agencies more aware of services that the other is providing, resulting in more appropriate referrals of clients. Thus, clients are less likely to be turned away or to find that the services do not meet their needs.
- **Convenience of having several or all agencies in one location.** In some instances, agencies are co-located in the same building or at a one-stop. Another approach used in many programs we visited is out-stationing of staff — i.e., the full or part-time locating of staff at another agency. Nine of the 12 sites visited in our study either co-located some services or outstationed workers. Both types of coordination improve access to services (e.g., clients might be seen the same day by the other agency) and reduce travel time and other barriers for clients.
- **Improved case management.** When staff of coordinated programs share information and communicate regularly, they can better understand and address the client's needs. Several of the sites visited indicated that staff of partner programs meet regularly to discuss specific client cases or meet together as a team with clients.

Factors that Promote Coordination

Prior research indicates that there is no single model of coordination and no method that guarantees coordination. Still, across the sites visited, there are many common factors that are important in promoting coordination.

Previous History of Coordination

A previous history of working together was often cited as an important factor in agency coordination. Having worked together on prior initiatives often meant that agency staff had an awareness of each others' program objectives and operations and had developed collegial relationships.

- In many of the sites visited, we found that **current organizational relationships reflect the arrangements that were in place as far back as the Work Incentive (WIN) program** in the late 1960s. For example, ES continues to be an important partner in work-welfare activities, as noted in eight of the 12 of the sites visited.
- In several of the sites, **current relationships between the welfare and workforce development systems build upon the structure established for administering the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program**. In Missouri, Pennsylvania, and Oregon, welfare and JTPA agencies worked together to serve clients in the JOBS program. Local sites in these states reported that this experience facilitated current coordination efforts.

Local Economic Factors

A strong economy and low unemployment often lead to high levels of coordination among welfare and employment and training agencies. The tight labor market in many locales has created an environment conducive to the placement of TANF recipients in the workforce. As a result, both workforce development agencies and employers work more closely with the welfare agency to employ TANF recipients.

- **TANF clients have become sought after “customers” by some workforce development programs.** Current labor market conditions have forced many employers to seek out alternative sources, such as WtW and TANF work programs, for recruiting job applicants. Coordination between welfare and workforce development agencies provides more customers for the workforce development agency and the employers they serve.
- **Welfare agencies have expanded their relationships with employers.** As the welfare system has become more employment-focused, welfare agencies seek out employers in order to create more opportunities to place clients in jobs – both subsidized and unsubsidized. Some TANF agencies have found that coordinating with workforce development providers improves access to employers.

A well-coordinated system and a good economy allow TANF and workforce development agencies to share in the success of placing clients in gainful employment.

Technology

Technology is having a broad impact on the nature of welfare-workforce system coordination, in some cases making physical location far less important. On our site visits, we saw computers being used to access labor market information, prepare resumes, and assist in career choices and job searches, at welfare offices, at JTPA/WIA agencies, at one-stop career centers, at community colleges, and at the offices of private employment and training contractors.

- **For the client**, this results in fewer separate trips and a choice of locations for some services. For example, a client could check job listings or prepare a resume while at the TANF office to meet with a case manager or after attending a work readiness class at the workforce development agency.
- **For agency staff**, technology improves access to information about the programs and services offered by other agencies and facilitates referrals of individual clients.

Greater Financial Resources

States and localities have new levels of financial resources available to fund services for welfare recipients and other needy families. With declining welfare caseloads, less money is needed for cash assistance. Since TANF block grant amounts are fixed, welfare agencies have more funds available for work-related services. WtW grants provide a new source of funds to meet the often intensive needs of the least-employable portion of the welfare population. In addition to the availability of TANF and WtW funding, the good economy in many places has resulted in increased local resources from tax revenues.

- **Funding is more flexible.** For example, there is no limit on the length of time an individual can be served under WtW, and the welfare agency can use block grant funds to provide a variety of supportive services. Welfare and workforce development providers can partner to fund services such as child care and transportation that may facilitate an individual's success while enrolled in an employment and training program, and to provide ongoing follow-up and retention services after an individual obtains employment.
- **Increased resources encourage cross-agency planning.** With greater financial resources, agencies are more willing to share resources and to come together for planning purposes. WtW represented a new source of funding which, in some sites, provided an incentive for joint planning.
- **Increased resources encourage co-location.** The availability of resources has helped to support the creation of one-stop service centers or has led to the co-location of services in several of the sites visited. With increased funding, some agencies are more likely to enter into arrangements that provide space, equipment, or staff services to another agency at a lower cost, which encourages coordination.

- **Availability of funds stimulates new services.** Available funding, coupled with federal incentives in the TANF and WtW programs, is stimulating new services such as post-employment support, job retention, and advancement services. TANF provides strong incentives for welfare recipients to find immediate work, but the five-year limit on cash assistance also creates an incentive for building the basic education and occupational skills of welfare recipients so that they can transition to higher-skilled and higher paying jobs along a career path. WtW funds can be used for training or education once a person has begun work, either as a post-employment service in conjunction with work or as a work-based activity. In response, some welfare agencies are implementing post-employment training and retention services and promoting coordination with WtW programs to provide additional training opportunities and workplace support.

State Initiatives

Some states have taken a pro-active role in improving state-level coordination and in encouraging local coordination. States have promoted coordination through state-level organizational decisions, contracting processes, and initiatives specifically directed towards local level collaboration.

- **State level organizational decisions.** Reorganizations of state-level agencies and organizational mandates that more directly affect local operations, such as requiring local welfare agencies to have referral agreements with community colleges or JTPA/WIA agencies may be helpful in avoiding conflicting policies across programs, minimizing duplication, and sending a message to local agencies of the importance of coordination.
- **State-level contracts.** Several states have used the contracting process to shape the delivery of services and promote coordination at the local level. For example, some state welfare agencies contract with local JTPA/WIA agencies across the state to provide work-related services for welfare clients.
- **Local coordinating councils.** A few states have taken additional steps to promote local level coordination, by mandating some type of local interagency coordinating council. While some of these efforts met resistance at first, consistent support from the state over a period of time helped agencies to overcome differences.

Challenges to Coordination

There are several challenges to coordination that study sites encountered. Even successful coordination efforts had to overcome obstacles along the way. These challenges involve **programmatic** barriers, **logistical** barriers, and **managerial** barriers. An underlying factor in discussions of challenges to coordination is personality issues. Personality issues are often the difference between overcoming a barrier and finding that barrier to be insurmountable to coordination.

Programmatic Barriers

- **Different program goals.** One challenge encountered in many sites is the difference in the philosophies that guide welfare and workforce development agencies.
 - In response to PRWORA, many welfare agencies have adopted a “work-first” approach, which supports the work participation and caseload reduction goals that welfare agencies must meet and reduces the possibility that welfare clients will exceed the time limit for cash assistance. The focus is on getting a job quickly and minimizing time on TANF.
 - Workforce development agencies, on the other hand, have historically subscribed to the human capital investment approach, preferring to train clients for a better job rather than placing clients in a job with low wages and little advancement potential. While many workforce development specialists acknowledge the value of any work experience, even unpaid work experience, for someone who has never been in the workforce, they encourage clients to take every opportunity they can for training.
- **Different concepts of coordination.** Directors may not agree on the services that should be provided by each agency. For example, agencies may disagree on what the one-stop should be—co-location, sharing staff, or a computer system that facilitates referrals and information sharing. They may also disagree on who should perform client assessments (and what that entails), how long clients should be engaged in TANF work activities before being referred to another agency for services, or what the definition of “work ready” is.
- **Different performance standards.** Since many agencies are held accountable to performance standards, including the number of job placements, they may be reluctant to refer clients to another provider and lose the opportunity to get “credit,” or count that client among their successes. Some performance-based contracts are structured so that agencies are only paid for job placements—that is, the agency does not get paid if the client is not placed in a job after completing the job readiness class. Agencies then have to work out the issue of who should pay for the class when a client completes the class, but is not able to obtain a job.
- **Declining welfare caseloads.** In the states we visited, caseload declines ranged from 12 percent in Rhode Island to 65 percent in South Carolina. The decline in TANF has had three important effects related to coordination: the number of TANF clients in JTPA has declined; there are fewer clients either eligible for or seeking work-related services from TANF, workforce development agencies, community-based organizations, and others; and, caseworkers in some TANF offices are able to spend more time with each client.
 - In some cases, this has reduced referrals and interaction between agencies. Some TANF caseworkers were less inclined to work with other agencies since they had the time to provide more services themselves.

- In other sites, because caseworkers had the opportunity to get to know individual clients better, they were more likely to identify additional services needed. This encouraged their coordination with other agencies in order to facilitate access to additional services for clients.

Logistical Barriers

- **Geographical issues.** In several sites, coordinating agencies must contend with different geographical boundaries for their service areas. Some JTPA/WIA agencies, especially in rural areas, have large multi-county service areas and must work with several county welfare offices, each with its own local needs and personalities. In some communities physical barriers such as rivers and major highways, coupled with inadequate public transportation systems, preclude single service locations or impede coordination between agencies that are not in close proximity to each other.
- **Long-term leases and space limitations.** Despite their willingness to co-locate, agencies may be reluctant to actually do so because of lease and other facility constraints. Many agencies either own their buildings or are committed to long term leases. In other cases, the space available for co-location may be too small to accommodate the needs of partner agencies.
- **Confidentiality.** Concern about preserving client confidentiality often hinders agencies' ability to work together to resolve client-specific issues. It also makes it difficult to either access other agencies' management information systems that are used to verify program eligibility or participation in work activities. Several sites have gotten around this issue by restricting certain data fields based on each agency's "need-to-know."
- **Incompatible client forms and management information systems.** Programs have developed forms and paperwork specific to their individual needs. Often, this paperwork, and the management information systems that were developed from it, is not compatible with the forms and systems used by partner agencies. Respondents noted that even when they try to have as much common paperwork as possible, federal and state reporting requirements still vary considerably by agency.
- **Union rules and civil service regulations.** Differing rules and personnel systems create barriers to integration between various government agencies and private organizations. Unions may object to integration of staff between agencies due to fears of job loss and problems resulting from workers being paid at different wage rates even though they are sitting next to each other and doing essentially the same work.

Managerial Barriers

- **“Turf” barriers.** Perhaps one of the most common barriers is “turf” issues, including the fear of losing decision-making autonomy and distrust of other agency administrators or staff. Case managers, and other staff, may feel that their job security is jeopardized when other agencies are providing similar services to their clients. Agency staffing needs and responsibilities are changing. Examples include the reduced staffing requirements of ES offices due to telephone claims processing for unemployment insurance and automated access to job postings and labor market information, and the expanded role of welfare case managers beyond eligibility and benefits processing. These changes may affect the morale of workers and result in fewer client referrals to other agencies.
- **System complexity.** The availability of multiple resources has resulted in a proliferation of programs and access points, with many similar or overlapping services. Several different agencies and community based organizations within a single jurisdiction may be providing job readiness, family life skills, and job placement services. This causes confusion for clients, organizations, and staff as they try to sort through the process of moving from welfare to work, and may result in fewer referrals or in clients not following through on appointments.
- **Time commitments.** Planning and maintaining service coordination takes a considerable amount of time and effort from staff at all levels. In several sites, staff from the welfare and workforce development agencies serve on inter-agency committees that were formed to address the collaborative effort. The time dedicated by staff to working on the collaborative is in addition to the other functions that they perform as part of their jobs. For example, in Charleston, three teams were created to guide the operations of the one-stop and all decision making is done by consensus in an effort to promote a team-building atmosphere. Several sites mentioned the time-consuming nature of developing procedures for WtW referrals and for documentation of participation in a work activity when the activity was provided by an agency other than the TANF agency.

Conclusions

This study provides a snapshot of welfare and workforce system coordination in a limited number of sites at a point in time where welfare programs are work-focused and workforce development systems are reorganizing to provide one-stop services to a broad population. As a result, there is an increased interest in coordination between welfare and workforce development agencies and a greater awareness in each other’s programs and services. Several key findings emerged.

Key Lessons Learned

- **Importance of past relationships.** Past relationships and coordination approaches, especially those developed in implementing the WIN program and the JOBS program, were important factors in current coordination models and activities.

- **Coordination efforts generally encounter one or more serious barriers to coordination.** Even successful efforts may not be fully developed – in the sense that one or more other agencies that could be involved are not involved or are only partially collaborating.
- **Coordination can occur under a variety of organizational approaches.** We found successful examples of coordination in sites where the welfare office was the dominant provider and service location as well as in systems that shared responsibility for service delivery across welfare and workforce development providers. Only one of our study sites, Dayton, was fully integrated, both physically and functionally. Different levels of coordination may be appropriate in different communities.
- **Service systems need to fit local conditions.** For example, planners must consider issues of scale—a one-stop with all services in one location works in Dayton, but may not work in a larger city. In some localities, a decentralized, neighborhood-based structure may be more effective.

Implications for the Future

- **Coordination can benefit the hard-to-serve client.** It appears that the ability to access many referral services and take a more holistic approach to addressing barriers to work is especially important for the hard-to-serve client. Looking ahead, the increased reliance on technology may not meet the needs of those clients who require more personal attention. However, technology may free-up time for providers so that they can devote more attention to the hard-to-serve. Location, access, and referral mechanisms need to be considered from both vantage points—maximizing the effective use of technology and facilitating the progress of the hard-to-serve.
- **Coordination is a process, not an event.** State and local responses to policy changes in the welfare and workforce development arenas reflect historical relationships as well as current policy objectives. Coordination models we observed had evolved over a number of years, and required time and energy on the part of agency staff over a sustained period.
- **Integration is a means, not an end.** Integration should not be promoted for its own sake, but for the improvements it can bring to service delivery. Some of the desired service delivery outcomes can be accomplished in other ways, without a fully integrated system, and in some communities such alternative arrangements might offer the best solution.

Finally, the nature of underlying relationships has not changed—those who coordinated historically found it easier to do so with WtW and other changes—good management and determination still drives successful coordination. Personality and informal mechanisms continue to be important factors that determine the success of coordination. Many of the barriers to coordination (turf issues, differing reporting requirements, and different philosophies) still exist, and probably always will. Because of the effort coordination requires and the significant barriers faced in some communities, systems with more limited

coordination may be more effective in serving clients than poorly managed but technically more “coordinated” efforts.

Creative approaches are being spawned due to greater resources available per client, the need to address multiple barriers faced by many who are still in the welfare system, and the rapid expansion of computer technology and computer-based labor market information. Combined with the tight labor market, which is increasing employer involvement, the current environment offers unprecedented opportunities for partnerships aimed at finding employment for welfare clients and preparing them for better quality jobs. Policies that seek to enhance the factors that promote coordination and minimize barriers will support these efforts.