

Executive Summary: CareerOneStop Electronic Tools Mini-Forums July 2003

Background

The Office of Workforce Investment (OWI) in the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (DOL/ETA) sponsored three mini-forums in July 2003, to gather input from members of the workforce development, economic development, and community college systems, and the business community about the CareerOneStop electronic tools (E-Tools). Information from these forums will inform the strategic planning process for the E-Tools.

The CareerOneStop E-Tools

The E-Tools provide a “virtual” means for customers of the public workforce system to access and obtain career planning and workforce development information and services. The mission of the CareerOneStop electronic tools (E-Tools) is:

- To meet the self-service needs of the nation’s workforce investment system; and
- To assist DOL/ETA’s partners in meeting their business needs and delivering their services.

The suite of E-Tools includes:

- The CareerOneStop portal (COS)
- America’s Job Bank (AJB)
- America’s Career InfoNet (ACINet)
- America’s Service Locator/Toll Free Help Line (ASL)
- O*NET Online/O*NET Code Connector
- Workforce Tools of the Trade (WTT)
- Transaction Database

Objectives of Mini-Forums

The purpose of the three mini-forums was to obtain information to inform the strategic planning process currently underway for the CareerOneStop E-Tools. As DOL/ETA continues to develop and operate the suite of tools, and create a strategic plan for the tools, it requested feedback from stakeholders and customers about these services.

The purpose of developing this 3-year plan for the E-Tools is to strategically align the CareerOneStop’s mission with ETA’s mission, and target the E-Tools’ resources toward achieving key ETA and Administration goals. The tools, under this plan, will be directed

at transforming the workforce investment system into an economic development engine, thereby enhancing that system’s ability to quickly identify employer needs and emerging skills gaps in real time. The expanded suite of tools will increase access to the public workforce system and improve employment outcomes, helping the system to lower the per participant cost while increasing the value of the services being offered. Also, the enhanced tools can provide technology that will be used to better engage business, job seekers, and other stakeholders.

In service to the development of this strategic plan, the objectives of the mini-forums were to:

- Gather input about the value of the U.S. Department of Labor’s financing and operating a set of national electronic tools to support the one-stop system.
- Gather views about the need for a publicly financed national electronic labor exchange and suggested changes to AJB.
- Gather input into the services and information needed/desired of national electronic tools and the preferred method for their delivery.

Overview of the Mini-Forums

Selection of Participants and Advanced Reading Materials

DOL/ETA conducted three mini-forums.

<p><u>Washington, DC</u> July 11, 2003 Marriott Wardman Park Hotel Attendees: Workforce development professionals</p>	<p><u>Chicago, IL</u> July 23, 2003 Hyatt Regency O’Hare Airport (in Rosemont, IL) Attendees: Education professionals, including executives from community colleges, and members of the workforce development and economic development systems</p>	<p><u>Chicago, IL</u> July 24, 2003 Hyatt Regency O’Hare Airport (in Rosemont, IL) Attendees: Members of business community, including members of local and state Chambers of Commerce</p>
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Participants for the mini-forums were sought from the professional organizations that represent the various stakeholder groups. A staff member from the Office of Workforce Investment (OWI) asked National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) and National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) to identify individuals from the workforce development system to participate in the first mini-forum. For the second mini-forum, OWI asked the American Association of Community Colleges to

provide a list of individuals. For the third mini-forum, OWI asked U.S. Chamber of Commerce and ETA staff in the Business Relations Group (BRG) to identify a list of possible participants. The final list of nominated participants was cleared through the Assistant Secretary's Office. Prospective participants were then sent a letter of invitation with an advance packet of materials, including information about the CareerOneStop E-Tools, and the discussion questions (see attachments).

Discussion Questions

Discussion questions addressed three major topics:

Rationale for the CareerOneStop E-Tools

- The CareerOneStop set of national electronic tools was developed to respond to various "business needs" of the one-stop system. (The term "business needs" used here does not refer to the needs of the business community, but rather the one-stop system.) DOL/ETA developed a list of these business needs, and asked participants to determine whether the rationale presented is still valid, or if there are gaps in the rationale. (See question #1.)

Value of the CareerOneStop E-Tools

- DOL/ETA developed a list of perceived values of the current set of CareerOneStop E-Tools. Participants were asked if they would affirm these values or not, and identify other values that the tools offer customers or stakeholders. (See question #2.)

Changes to the CareerOneStop E-Tools

- Participants were asked which E-Tools they believed should be maintained, changed, stopped, or added. (See question #3.)

Additional questions particular to each group were also discussed. (See question #4.)

Forum Agenda

Each of the four-hour forums began with the Forum Purpose and Objectives presented by Grace Kilbane, Administrator, Office of Workforce Investment, DOL/ETA, or by David Morman, Director, Electronic Tools & Linkages, DOL/ETA. David Morman also provided an Overview of the CareerOneStop E-Tools. The Overview allowed participants to ask questions about aspects of the E-Tools with which they were not familiar. All participants were informed that they were participating as experts from their system or community to provide individual input. Participants were not expected to represent their organizations or attempt to achieve consensus on any views expressed.

Themes from the Mini-Forums

Rationale for the CareerOneStop E-Tools

Overall, participants of the three forums validated the rationale presented by DOL/ETA to support the business needs addressed by the CareerOneStop E-Tools, with the exception of the rationale regarding meeting legal requirements. (See question #1 for the rationale.)

Value of the CareerOneStop E-Tools

Participants of all three forums reaffirmed many of the values presented by DOL/ETA. Participants added new values to the list, while invalidating some of the perceived values. (See question #2 for list of perceived values.)

Participants suggested additional values of the CareerOneStop E-Tools, including the following:

- Participants of all three forums said that the E-Tools are extremely comprehensive, reliable, and informative. The E-Tools provide a high quality suite of services.
- Participants of the three forums said they value the labor market information and utilize this information in a variety of ways: to inform business decisions, create curricula for community colleges, and predict growth in different industries.
- Participants of all three forums said that while they appreciate the value of AJB, they would continue to use other job boards in addition to AJB because they like having choices. They noted that this does not detract from the value of AJB because the need for AJB is valid and it can enhance the workforce system by contributing more resources and information.
- Participants of the workforce development and education forums said they value the trust established by DOL/ETA and the agency's policies regarding the protection of private information, especially with regard to the services offered by AJB. The E-Tools are not driven by profit, as are commercial sites.

Participants did not validate the following values:

- Participants of all three forums stated that meeting the legal requirement should not be a primary value of the E-Tools.
- Regarding the question, "Should the CareerOneStop E-Tools be used to promote national recognition and customer loyalty for the public workforce system," participants of the education forum asked, "Does it enhance the government to have the recognition from the public? Or, is it more important to get people jobs?" They

felt that promoting loyalty to the public workforce system should not be a primary value of the tools.

Business participants also did not think that the E-Tools should be used to promote national recognition and customer loyalty for the public workforce system. They said that because the entire workforce system does not work the same across the country, there is no way to breed loyalty to the system as a whole. There is no one-stop, there are multiple systems. Also, national recognition takes away from the recognition that state and local systems would receive. This will intensify turf wars as states and local areas try to claim credit for finding employment for job seekers.

Changes and Other Suggestions for Improvement

The following themes for improvement were common to the three dialogues. These topics were not necessarily included in the discussion questions, but participants continuously raised these topics for discussion.

Marketing: DOL/ETA must market these tools because many customers and stakeholders do not know about the services. Workforce development professionals said that while they are familiar with many of the E-Tools, a large number of staff in the workforce system, including One-Stop staff, do not know how to properly utilize the tools to help job seekers. The Education professionals said they are familiar with some of the tools, and the E-Tools should be marketed to community colleges and school districts. Business said that they do not know very much about these resources. Some of the employer participants have used AJB, but said that most employers are not even aware of this suite of E-Tools. In addition, they said, for DOL/ETA to invest in the development and operation of the services and then not market the services is “fiscally irresponsible.”

Participants suggested the following marketing tactics:

Market the E-Tools through Chambers of Commerce, associations, schools, and community colleges. Use success stories (people who found jobs through the tools) as spokespeople. Do a “road show” in the regions to explain the tools. Market the services through the local and state WIBs, and ask the WIBs to market the tools in their communities and states. Show states and locals that these services are a solution to their diminishing funding for new resources.

Training: There is a strong need and desire for training around the E-Tools. Provide training and/or training guides and other materials for One-Stop staff as well as job seekers and employers, who are the end-customers. Participants said that frontline staff are not sufficiently equipped to train their customers to use the E-Tools. Training can also be a form of marketing. When workforce professionals are trained, they can spread the word to customers and partners.

Interfacing with States and Locals: The three groups addressed issues about interfacing with the local areas, working more efficiently with the states, combating turf wars, and confusion about performance measures (who gets to count the job seeker when he/finds a job: local/state/AJB?).

Interfacing at the local level was a major concern of many of the participants. They asked, how the E-Tools fit into the local systems, under WIA, where accountability is going down to the local level.

Participants worried that states do not always submit the most accurate, up-to-date data and job listings to AJB; in addition many local jobs are not included in the information uploaded by the states to AJB for various reasons including poor technology, miscommunication between states and local areas, and turf wars between states and local areas that revolve around performance measures and resources.

Participants urged DOL/ETA to work directly with local areas to find a better way to engage locals and ensure that their data and jobs are included in the E-Tools. DOL/ETA does not currently work with local areas, but many participants thought this could enhance the system.

Participants expressed concern about the issue of duplication of services between the state resources and the E-Tools. Currently, states receive grants and use some of this money to build job sites and the same information is uploaded to AJB. Participants question how these resources can better be utilized. Participants suggested that DOL/ETA work more closely with states to show how the tools are meant to be an enhancement to state services rather than competition.

Employer Engagement: DOL/ETA should engage employers more--through marketing and outreach--to explain the public workforce system and convince employers to post jobs on AJB and use the suite of E-Tools. Participants said that employers are paying for the services through FUTA so they should be informed about the products. Small businesses, especially, are not using the tools because they are not aware of them and, therefore, do not know the value. Business participants stated that employers are not clear about the goals of the E-Tools. They said, it is important to meet employers' needs in use of the tools, and make it easy for employers to use the tools. Businesses expect DOL to keep abreast of technological advances.

Report of the Stakeholder Discussions at the CareerOneStop Mini-Forums

July 11, 2003 Mini-Forum with Workforce Development Professionals

Overview

Workforce development professionals participated in the first CareerOneStop Mini-Forum on July 11, 2003, at the Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, in Washington, DC.

Participants included:

- Michael Broward, Information Systems Manager III, New Mexico Department of Labor Management Information
- Liz Clingman, Staff Services Manager II, California EDD
- Donna F. Coles, Manager, DeKalbWorks! One-Stop Center
- Susan D. Corey, Workforce Development Manager, SEMCA
- Traci DiMartini, Job & Consortia Coordinator, Metropolitan Washington Career
- Barbara Griffin, Deputy Director for Program Support, Agency for Workforce Innovation
- David A. Griffin, Administrator, Program/Policy, Department of Workforce Services
- Catherine Hart-Wright, Executive Director, STRIVE-DC
- Jack Hile, Information Specialist, Columbiana County One-Stop
- Garry Jeffries, Senior Programmer Analyst, Department of Employment Security Commission
- Susan Jordan, Chief Information Officer, South Carolina Employment Security Commission
- Pam Keibler, IT systems Consultant, Department for Employment Services, MIS Branch
- Korrine Lang, Director, Employment Statistics and Workforce Programs, Job Service North Dakota
- LC Qualls, Program Operations Manager, Office of Employment Assistance, Arkansas Employment Security Department
- Shannon Seaver, Career Coordination, Joint Action in Community Service
- Cathy Shenkle, Bureau Chief, Workforce Technology Bureau, Workforce Services Division
- Cynthia Spencer, Career Counselor, Lewistown CareerLink
- Mark Sorensen, Director, Workforce Training, University of Texas at Brownsville
- Florene Williams, Workforce Development Specialist, Missouri Career Center

Forum Summary

The following forum summary captures key points in the discussion, which include answers to the four questions posed by DOL/ETA as well as additional issues raised by participants.

Rationale for E-Tools

Question #1 (abridged version): The CareerOneStop set of national electronic tools was developed to respond to various “business needs” of the one-stop system. Given both real and proposed changes in the public workforce investment system, in the current environment (such as the advent of large private job boards such as Monster.com), and in the capability of the technology, we are now exploring the continuing validity of that rationale, identifying gaps or new opportunities that have emerged, and whether new approaches for delivering these services have evolved.

The majority of the participants in this mini-forum were aware of the E-Tools and have used several of the tools, especially AJB. After a brief presentation of the rationale supporting the “business needs” that are addressed by the CareerOneStop E-Tools, participants validated all of the rationale, with the exception of the rationale regarding legal requirements. (See question #1.)

Participants particularly affirmed the following items listed in the rationale:

- There is a need for a publicly-funded national labor exchange where the services provided are made universally available, at no charge, both to individuals seeking jobs and to employers seeking workers.
- There is a need for self-service tools.

Participants said that providing these tools liberates One-Stop staff resources to work with customers who need more one-on-one instruction. Participants noted that many of their customers are computer literate, and the numbers are increasing, but there will always be job seekers who are not computer literate and do not have the skills to access these tools. In many cases, One-Stop staff could assist job seekers by utilizing the tools for them.

- There is a need for a national entry point to the public workforce system.
- There is a need for a common language around labor information, and the creation and dissemination of national and interstate data sets.

Regarding the legal requirement, participants felt that while this requirement is, in fact, fulfilled by the E-Tools, this is not a strong rationale for the development and operation of the services.

The Value of E-Tools to Customers and Stakeholders

Question #2 (abridged version): Independent of the rationale for their development, national investments should provide a pay off in value to their customers or to their stakeholders or to both. As part of the strategic planning process, we are seeking to

re-affirm these values with stakeholders and to identify other values that the tools may or should offer customers or stakeholders.

Participants said that the tools are valuable to them, their staff and clients. They affirmed the entire list of values set forth by DOL/ETA regarding the CareerOneStop E-Tools. (See question #2.)

In particular, participants validated the following values:

- Based solely on usage, (see handout COS Product Overview), CareerOneStop E-Tools produce results and offer attractive cost per service ratios.
- The CareerOneStop E-Tools can serve as the impetus for establishing a common language about work, jobs, and skills by promoting and using services such as O*NET.

In addition to those values presented by DOL/ETA, participants identified other values that the E-Tools offer to customers and stakeholders:

- The consistency and quality of the E-Tools is impressive.
- The tools are reliable and they provide timely, useful information.
- It is valuable to have a virtual “one-stop” that can direct workforce development staff, job seekers, and employers through different aspects of the public workforce system, with state information included, with one entry point.
- The trust established by DOL/ETA and the agency’s policies regarding the protection of private information, are valuable to the participants. They felt that AJB is more trustworthy than for-profit companies such as Monster.com because it is not driven by profit margins. If Monster.com and other such companies decided the business was not profitable, they would leave job seekers without resources. Also, they said, DOL/ETA ensures a certain protection of private information. Job seekers often feel nervous about putting resumes and personal information on the Internet, but DOL/ETA does not distribute or sell private information (though many internet companies do), so customers can utilize the services with a high degree of confidence.
- The labor market information is useful to workforce development professionals.

Participants said that while they appreciate the value of AJB, they would continue to use other job boards in addition to AJB because they like having choices. However, this does not detract from the value of AJB. The need for AJB is valid because AJB can enhance the workforce system by contributing more resources and information. For example, in California, there are many different job boards through the state, local areas, and private sources that could all be used in conjunction with AJB.

Services to Maintain, Stop, and Improve

Question #3 (abridged version): The question provides an open-ended opportunity to identify services within the CareerOneStop tool kit that YOU believe should be maintained, changed, stopped, or added - and why.

Services to Maintain:

Overall, the participants agreed that everything in the suite should be maintained.

Services to Add and Suggested Improvements:

The following suggested improvements were repeatedly raised as themes throughout the forum. These topics were not specifically included in the discussion questions, but they were continuously addressed during the discussion.

- **Marketing: DOL/ETA must market the CareerOneStop E-Tools to the workforce development system, employers and job seekers.** Many of the participants were familiar with some, but not all, of the E-Tools. They noted that most workforce staff know very little about these tools. Therefore, they recommended that DOL/ETA create a marketing strategy to raise awareness in the workforce system about these products. In addition, they said, DOL/ETA must market these products to employers directly so that more employers will utilize the suite of tools and, in particular, work with AJB more effectively. Participants also felt that many job seekers are not aware of the benefits of the CareerOneStop E-Tools, and as a result are not using the tools.
- **Training: DOL/ETA should conduct trainings and develop materials, such as a manual, to provide more in-depth information about how to use the E-Tools effectively.** Participants said that One-Stop staff are not all sufficiently trained to use these tools and, therefore, they cannot recommend the services to their customers. Training is especially needed to correctly read, interpret, and use the labor market information.
- **Employer Engagement: DOL/ETA needs to engage employers more--through marketing and outreach--so they will understand the benefit of using the CareerOneStop E-Tools.** Participants suggested that DOL/ETA do the following: Communicate to employers that they are contributing to the financing of the tools through the Federal Unemployment Tax Act (FUTA). Consult with employers about the type of information job seekers would like to see in job listings. For example, on commercial sites, many employers do not list the type of information that is useful such as salary, contact information, and company name. Consult with employers about the type of labor market information, tools, and services they would utilize if added to the suite of E-Tools.

Participants also suggested the following additions to the services and other improvements:

- Validate businesses on AJB through the Better Business Bureau.
- List the state job order number before the AJB order number.
- Send job seekers using AJB an acknowledgement with every resume received and a letter of regret if the applicant is not successful. When job seekers apply online, there is no documentation to prove that the person has applied to jobs and this may affect their eligibility for unemployment benefits.
- Add federal jobs to AJB.
- Reach out to system partners that have job banks and leverage resources.
- Simplify the labor market information because all staff do not understand the proper way to utilize this information. Organize the information so that staff can more effectively use this resource.
- Disseminate labor market information that is no more than 5 years old. Include labor market information that is at a local level because this information could help local areas to recruit employers from certain industries, and better serve job seekers.
- Create a listserv for workforce development professionals through WTT.

Additional issues for the Workforce Investment System stakeholders

Question #4 contained questions (in bold below) specific to Workforce Investment System stakeholders:

How can the CareerOneStop tools better integrate with State systems? Are the tools perceived as competing with rather than complementing existing state tools? Why?

- DOL/ETA should work more closely with states to show that the tools are meant to be an enhancement to state services rather than competition.
- Technical staff from the states should be trained about how the E-Tools system works as they are uploading the information.
- Interfacing with states and local areas was another major area of concern for the participants. They suggested that DOL/ETA begin interfacing directly with local areas, for the following reasons:

Working directly with local areas would allow DOL/ETA to engage locals and ensure that their data and jobs are included in the E-Tools. DOL/ETA does not currently work with local areas, but many participants thought that this could enhance the system.

Under WIA, accountability is going down to the local level, and local areas are being held accountable for performance measures. Participants asked, “How do the E-Tools fit into the local systems?” Local systems do not want to send customers to AJB if there is no local focus and the local jobs are not listed on the site.

Participants acknowledged that working with local areas raises several issues: Will local areas be able to put a local brand on the AJB page? How will DOL/ETA effectively work with local areas? Will this cause tensions in the federal-state partnership?

States do not always give the most accurate, up-to-date data and job listings; in addition many local jobs are not included in the information uploaded by the states to AJB for various reasons including poor technology, miscommunication, and turf wars between states and local areas.

Participants expressed concern about the issue of duplication of services. States receive grants and use some of the money to build job sites and the same information is uploaded to AJB. How can these resources be better utilized?

The issue of states competing with local areas and with AJB to meet performance measures was an important theme. Participants asked, “Who claims the job seeker when he/she finds a job through AJB? The local area, state or AJB?”

States do not widely take advantage of AJB data sets. Why?

- Some states are not using the data sets because of bad past experiences: jobs were obsolete or from staffing companies and now states do not want to use the tools.

Would a national database of transactions data, e.g., types of jobs posted, skills sought by employers, unfilled jobs, etc., if made easily accessible to all states, be of value?

- Yes, this information would be valuable.

Is it valuable to have a publicly funded electronic resource for workforce development professionals?

- Yes, the tools are valuable to workforce development professionals. It allows workforce development professions to see what the national trends are.

Do staff in your state or local workforce area use Workforce Tools of the Trade or Promising Practices website?

- The Promising Practices site is valuable. Participants said they use WTT, though many of the participants said they also look to NAWB, NSWA and DOL for staff development opportunities.

Other Issues:

- **Should DOL continue to operate the E-Tools through grants to states or should DOL compete service delivery to private providers?** (See Question #3.)

Participants were split evenly on this issue, with some voting for DOL to operate the E-Tools through direct contracting and others arguing for DOL to continue making grants to states.

- In response to the claim that AJB “validates all employers,” a participant noted that it is becoming increasingly more difficult to determine what makes a “valid” employer.

July 23, 2003 Mini-Forum with Educators and Members of Workforce Development and Economic Development Systems

Overview

Education professionals, including executives from community colleges and technical colleges, and members of the workforce development and economic development systems participated in the second CareerOneStop Mini-Forum on July 23, 2003, at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Airport in Rosemont, IL.

Participants of this forum included:

- Marcia Ballinger, Vice President, Lorain County Community College
- Carol Brown, President, Waukesha County Technical College
- Patty Cannon, Executive Director, DE Workforce Investment Board
- Larry Devane, President, Redlands Community College
- Melodye Johnson, Employment & Training Consultant, Georgia Department of Labor
- Sharon Kennedy, Dean, Career Programs, Moraine Valley Community College
- Bryan Stone, VP Policy and Programs, WorkSource
- Bruce William Sweet, Jr., Schoolcraft College
- Chad K. Taniguchi, Director, Workforce Development, University of Hawai'i Community Colleges
- Mike Waltman, Strategic Planning Coordinator, Missouri Department of Economic Development
- Karen Wells, Office of Learner Services and Academic Affairs, Lorain County Community College
- LeAnna Wilson, Director Johnson County Community College

Forum Summary

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The Rationale for E-Tools

Question #1 (abridged version): The CareerOneStop set of national electronic tools was developed to respond to various “business needs” of the one-stop system. Given both real and proposed changes in the public workforce investment system, in the current environment (such as the advent of large private job boards such as Monster.com), and in the capability of the technology, we are now exploring the continuing validity of that rationale, identifying gaps or new opportunities that have emerged, and whether new approaches for delivering these services have evolved.

After a brief presentation of the rationale supporting the “business needs” that are addressed by the CareerOneStop E-Tools, participants validated all of the rationale, with the exception of the rationale regarding legal requirements. (See question #1.)

Participants particularly commented on the following rationale:

- There is a continuing need for a publicly funded national labor exchange where the services provided are made universally available, at no charge, both to individuals seeking jobs and to employers seeking workers.

Participants said this is particularly necessary for laid-off workers who need a resource that is free-for-use.

- There is a need for a set of national electronic tools that offer a national entry point to the public workforce system; helps to establish a common language about work, jobs, and skills; and creates and distributes national and international data sets.
- Declining resources and advancing technology within the public labor exchange system have created new efficiencies and economies in its delivery system, such as using self-service labor exchange services provided over the Internet.

Participants added that many customers are computer literate and so they expect self-service tools to be available. However, participants also noted that many job seekers, especially older job seekers, do not have the skills to utilize self-service tools and they will need assistance to use the services.

Participants did not validate the rationale regarding the legal requirement:

- They felt this is a weak justification for the E-Tools and should not be included as a primary justification for the tools.

Participants also noted that the rationale does not address the business needs of the entrepreneurial workforce:

- The business needs of the entrepreneurial workforce are not addressed by the rationale. The rationale presented seems to address more traditional types of employers and industries, yet it is this group of entrepreneurs, especially those who are moving into the knowledge technology fields, that is going to drive the economy forward. This entrepreneurial group can include people who are starting companies, or who have existing companies that are looking for resources that will help to them to expand their businesses, and learn more about how to run a successful business, and find staff development opportunities. These E-Tools are not set up to serve this group.

The Value of E-Tools to Customers and Stakeholders

Question #2 (abridged version): Independent of the rationale for their development, national investments should provide a pay off in value to their customers or to their stakeholders or to both. As part of the strategic planning process, we are seeking to re-affirm these values with stakeholders and to identify other values that the tools may or should offer customers or stakeholders.

Participants reaffirmed several of the values to customers and stakeholders, and asserted other values provided by the E-Tools. They validated the following values:

- The CareerOneStop E-Tools are of value to their customers, produce results and offer very attractive cost per service ratios.
- It is valuable to have a national entry point to the public workforce system. Participants said, having the ability to send people online and help find national resources is priceless.
- The CareerOneStop E-Tools should serve as a means to leverage resources for the development of new self-service tools and web-based content. Participants said that it is important for DOL/ETA to partner with other organizations because there is power in partnering with others and it is important to stress collaboration vs. competition.

Participants added the following values:

- The suite is extremely comprehensive.
- The national and international data sets are valuable.
- The transaction data are a terrific tool for curriculum development because it allows educators to know what the labor market is doing.
- The E-Tools could provide a common ground for all users. There is one system and everyone could know how it works. The commercial sites are all different. The tools

have the ability to establish a common language about skills and work that both job seekers and employers can understand and utilize.

- The E-Tools are not driven by profit, as are commercial sites. AJB, for example, is free of pop-up ads, unlike most commercial job boards.

Participants raised the following issues regarding the value of the E-Tools:

- Regarding the question, "should the CareerOneStop E-Tools be used to promote national recognition and customer loyalty for the public workforce system," participants said that the public workforce system should be driving the tools instead of the tools driving the system. They also asked, "does it enhance the government to have the recognition from the public? Or, is it more important to get people jobs?" They felt that this promoting loyalty to the public workforce system is not a primary value of the tools.
- A participant said that rather than value based on government regulations, the E-Tools should serve as a clearinghouse and act as an honest broker without other issues, such as profit motive. DOL is positioned to fulfill this role for job seekers and employers.

Services to Maintain, Stop, and Improve

Question #3 (abridged version): The following question provides an open-ended opportunity to identify services within the CareerOneStop tool kit that YOU believe should be maintained, changed, stopped, or added - and why.

Services to Maintain:

Overall, the participants agreed that everything in the suite should be maintained.

Services to Add and Suggested Improvements:

The following improvements were themes repeatedly addressed throughout the forum. There were no specific questions addressing these issues, but participants continuously suggested these additions:

- **Marketing: DOL/ETA must market the CareerOneStop E-Tools to job seekers, employers, and workforce agencies, and educators.** Participants said that while they were somewhat familiar with the services offered by the E-Tools, they did not know about all of the possibilities the tools offer. In addition, they noted that their customers are not aware of the tools and, therefore, are not utilizing them.

To be competitive, they suggested that DOL/ETA conduct a national marketing campaign through broadcasting or through state and/or local WIBs. Many participants especially argued for DOL/ETA to market the tools by pitching the services to local

WIBs that can then market the tools to the local community. DOL/ETA should communicate to local areas that these services are a solution to their diminishing funding for new resources.

Participants said DOL/ETA should: utilize Chambers of Commerce to market the tools; market the tools designed for serving military and veterans, such as translation of skills and competencies into civilian terms, because this is an underserved population that would benefit from these tools; and promote success stories--job seekers who found jobs through AJB are the best advertisers.

- **Training: DOL/ETA must provide trainings and training materials to accompany the tools.** Participants suggested that training would help frontline staff, customers, and employers to use the tools more effectively.
- **Employer Engagement: DOL/ETA must engage employers more--through marketing and outreach--so they will understand the services and utilize them.** AJB should also consider allowing employers to place logos in exchange for listing jobs. Participants said that employers are not using the E-Tools, especially AJB, as much as job seekers; therefore, employers need to be informed that they are contributing financially to these services (through FUTA) so they will take advantage of them.

Participants said that employers use multiple services and resources for recruiting and will continue to do so. This does not detract from the value of AJB, because the tools offered by AJB contribute to the success of the employers.

- **Interfacing with States and Local Areas: Participants raised several issues around interfacing with state systems and also suggested that in addition to working with states, DOL/ETA should interface directly with local areas to enhance the quality of the services.** Participants said that information from the local areas is not always in the state system and, therefore, local jobs are not included in AJB. Participants asserted that because some state systems are outdated, local agencies have to enter job information a second time for the state system and possibly a third time for AJB; as a result, many local areas do not send the information up to the state level and so on. Therefore, it appears that states are participating, but their information is not total or accurate. A solution could be for AJB to upload information from local areas directly; or conduct a marketing effort geared towards getting buy-in for more efficient cooperation at the state level. Customers looking for local jobs will not use AJB if they cannot find local jobs in the system.

Marketing the tools to state WIBs and local WIBs would increase utilization of the E-Tools. DOL/ETA should ask the local WIBs to recommend to local One-Stops that they use the E-Tools, and ask state WIBs to encourage their states to upload information to the E-Tools.

Participants acknowledged that DOL/ETA does not currently interface directly with local areas.

Participants said DOL/ETA must combat "turf wars" by convincing states of the niche they fill in the national strategy. Make a pitch directly to the states to get their buy-in. This would enhance the functionality of the E-Tools and will ensure cooperation and timely information from the states. There are declining resources overall and many states are going broke so DOL/ETA could make a pitch to the states to keep them from developing individual tools and duplicating information captured in the national database.

Participants wanted to see better connectivity with existing state and local resources so that there is less duplication between the E-Tools and these resources. For example, in Ohio, there is a skills matching system that provides testing and assessments. A participant asked how this tool could connect with the suite of E-Tools. Is there a way to promote both resources without having a duplication of services?

Participants also suggested the following additions and improvements:

- Add a translation tool or a bilingual component.*
- Add resources about entrepreneurship and explain how to start your own business. This would be a great benefit.
- Add information for ex-offenders about how to translate competencies, skills, and assessments and find additional work-related resources.
- Ensure that the language/vocabulary does not intimidate customers. Create a common language that is welcoming to users (who may have less education).
- Compile data that is segmented by customer base (i.e., employers, job seekers, etc.) to show how people are using the E-Tools and how often. This would be useful in determining the value of the E-Tools.
- DOL/ETA should always keep in mind the core mission of the E-Tools and not lose focus as it continues to add services and form partnerships.
- DOL/ETA must keep abreast of technological advances as it continues to develop the tools.
- Add to AJB an international component with jobs and labor market information.*

* These resources already exist in the CareerOneStop E-Tools. Participants may not be aware that these services are currently offered, but they see value in their inclusion.

- Add to AJB more career tracks.
- Develop a way for users to create an electronic portfolio that can be posted on AJB.*
- Add to AJB listings for work-based learning opportunities such as internships and co-ops. Students see the value in work-based learning experiences.
- Add to ACINet information about local community partnerships and activities, and more business tools that will help local areas. Provide labor market information that shows concrete information about the impact on local economies. Also, expand the occupational video section because these are one of the most useful features on the site.
- Add faith-based and community-based organizations to the Service Locator.
- Add a section to WTT about best practices for One-Stops and best job-path curriculum for community colleges.
- Add a section to WTT where users can safely share bad/failed practices without repercussions from the state.

4. Additional Issues for the Education System stakeholders:

Question #4 contains questions specific (in bold below) to Education System stakeholders:

How can the CareerOneStop E-tools better connect with the educational systems?

- Include a “best curriculum” component. Participants said that they are trying to prepare their students for jobs and they want to know what works.
- DOL/ETA should market the E-Tools to school districts so they will be aware of the services.

Would a national database of transactions data, (e.g., types of jobs posted, skills sought by employers, unfilled jobs) if made easily accessible to all community colleges, be of value in deciding upon and developing new courses and curriculum?

- Participants said that this type of transaction data would be of value in deciding upon and developing new courses and curriculum.

* These resources already exist in the CareerOneStop E-Tools. Participants may not be aware that these services are currently offered, but they see value in their inclusion.

July 24, 2003 Mini-Forum with Business

Overview

Members of the business community, including representatives from Chambers of Commerce and private employers, attended the third, and final, mini-forum at the Hyatt Regency O'Hare Airport in Rosemont, IL.

Participants of this forum included:

- Don Bergman, CEO, The Greater Merced Chamber of Commerce
- Debbie Bogdanski, Vice President, Government Initiatives and Grants, Orange County Chamber of Commerce
- Webb Brown, President, Montana Chamber of Commerce
- Michelle Carrera, TekJobs Project Coordinator, Workforce Development
- Patti Clapp, Vice President, Workforce & Education, Greater Dallas Chamber of Commerce
- David Donlin, Executive Director, Schuylkill Chamber of Commerce
- Cheryl Hay, Vice President, Workforce Development, Greater Columbus Chamber of Commerce
- Parminder Jassal, Director of Workforce Services, Greater Louisville, Inc.
- Anna Kruse, Program Coordinator, Public Policy & Government, Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce
- Robin Nicholls, Skills Now Coordinator, Workforce Development Division, Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce
- Paul Ouellette, Vice President of Community Development/Education, Northern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
- Bettye Poignard, Vice President, Workforce Development, Greater Fort Wayne Chamber of Commerce
- Jack Porteous, Workforce Development Manager, Greater Topeka Chamber of Commerce
- John Scott, Business Services, DOL/ETA
- Vonda Turner, Director, Workforce Preparedness, Entry Level Employment, Public Affairs, Detroit Regional Chamber of Commerce
- John Walker, Corporate Recruiter, PETCO Animal Supplies, Inc.

Forum Summary

The following forum summary captures key points in the discussion, which include answers to the four questions posed by DOL as well as additional issues raised by participants.

The Rationale for E-Tools

Question #1 (abridged version): The CareerOneStop set of national electronic tools was developed to respond to various “business needs” of the one-stop system. Given both real and proposed changes in the public workforce investment system, in the current environment (such as the advent of large private job boards such as Monster.com), and in the capability of the technology, we are now exploring the continuing validity of that rationale, identifying gaps or new opportunities that have emerged, and whether new approaches for delivering these services have evolved.

Those participants who have used the E-Tools said they find them easy-to-access and easy to understand; however, several of the participants were not familiar with the E-Tools prior to this discussion.

Participants validated the rationale for the tools (which address the business needs to which the tools respond). They agreed that the rationale is sound and suggested additional rationale. In particular, participants validated the following rationale:

- There is a continuing need for a publicly-funded national labor exchange where the services provided are made universally available, at no charge, both to individuals seeking jobs and to employers seeking workers.
- In this context, a set of national electronic tools-- that, among other things, offer a national entry point for customers, provide a means to meet federal legal requirements, help establish a common language about work, jobs, and skills, and create and distribute national and interstate data sets--make sense.
- Participants were especially interested in having one central entry point to the workforce system.
- Government at all levels has recognized a continuing and expanding public expectation for Internet-based access to Government information, resources, and services, i.e., the move towards e-Government. A corollary to this is Government’s expectation that the public is improving in its technological fluency and that citizen access to the Internet will become ubiquitous.
- Participants agreed that there is a need for self-service electronic tools, but also acknowledged that the move to e-government will never be complete or total. Some people will never have computer access. They said it is important for DOL to continue to develop these resources, but there will always be limitations. Participants also noted feeling frustrated with the government’s bureaucracy and outdated technology and confusing resources.

Participants created another rationale that they felt should be included:

- They felt that the tools need to better engage employers and this should be a primary rationale for the E-Tools. The tools should be easy for employers to utilize. Employers should feel as though DOL/ETA has created special services that cater to their needs. Employers want one entry site (as in available through the COS portal) and they want easy access to business resources.

Participants did not think that rationale regarding legal requirements should be a primary rationale for the development and operation of the E-Tools.

Value of E-Tools to Stakeholders and Customers

Question #2 (abridged version): Independent of the rationale for their development, national investments should provide a pay off in value to their customers or to their stakeholders or to both. Below are listed some perceived values of the current set of CareerOneStop E-Tools. As part of the strategic planning process, we are seeking to re-affirm these values with stakeholders and to identify other values that the tools may or should offer customers or stakeholders.

Participants reaffirmed the list of values presented by DOL/ETA. In particular, they commented on the following values:

- It is valuable to have a national entry point to the public workforce system. Participants said there should be a way to coordinate all the state systems to avoid duplication. For employers, having one access point that is easy to use is important.
- The CareerOneStop E-Tools should serve as a means to leverage resources for the development of new self-service tools and web-based content within the public workforce system. Participants said that DOL should mandate that states participate in AJB.
- It is valuable to have a mechanism to develop, transfer, and maintain national and interstate data sets. Participants said employers have a need for real-time data and they use this information when making business decisions.
- Participants did agree that the CareerOneStop E-Tools should serve as the impetus for establishing a common language about work, jobs, and skills, but they were not sure if that would ever be possible.
- It is valuable to have the CareerOneStop E-Tools serve as a means to establish partnerships and alliances with organizations and businesses that need or desire a national scale for their operations.

Participants added the following values:

- Participants said they value the labor market information. They said this information could benefit parents who are projecting job trends and growth as they prepare to send children to college. This information should be used to encourage students to earn technical degrees and certifications because the information shows that certain industries will require this type of training.

Participants disagreed with the following values:

- Participants did not think that the E-Tools should be used to promote national recognition and customer loyalty for the public workforce system. They said that because the entire workforce system does not work the same across the country, there is no way to breed loyalty to the system as a whole. There is no one-stop, there are multiple systems. Also, national recognition would take away from the recognition that state and local systems would receive. And, this would intensify turf wars as states and local areas try to claim credit for finding employment for job seekers.
- Meeting the legal requirement should not be a primary value of the E-Tools.

Services to Maintain, Stop, and Improve

Question #3 (abridged version): The following questions provide an open-ended opportunity to identify services within the CareerOneStop tool kit that YOU believe should be maintained, changed, stopped, or added - and why.

Services to Maintain:

Overall, the participants agreed that everything in the suite should be maintained. They especially liked the occupational videos and resume tutorial on ACINet.

Services to Add and Suggested Improvements:

The following suggested improvements were repeatedly addressed throughout the forum:

- **Marketing: DOL/ETA must market these services to employers and job seekers.** Marketing is crucial to the success of this project. Participants said that developing the products and then not marketing them is "fiscally irresponsible." Participants acknowledged that the federal government hates the word "marketing," but businesses do not understand why. Participants said, it is not a case of "if you build it, they will come"; the services must be marketed to the customers.

DOL/ETA should: market the services to the Chambers of Commerce so they can market the services to employers and members; market the tools to schools and guidance counselors (especially O*NET), and to Human Resource professionals, and One-Stops; also, do regional "road shows".

- **Training: DOL/ETA must develop trainings and training materials for One-Stop staff, job seekers, and employers so they can more effectively utilize these services.** Participants suggested that DOL/ETA create resources explaining the correct way to use labor market information. Sometimes, this information is interpreted incorrectly by One-Stop staff and job seekers.
- **Engaging Employers: DOL/ETA must do more outreach and marketing to attract employers to use the CareerOneStop E-Tools.** According to a U.S. Chamber of Commerce survey, 72 percent of businesses are not aware of AJB. Participants said business is not clear about the goals driving the CareerOneStop E-Tools, and employers are not using services such as O*NET. DOL/ETA has not effectively communicated with employers about these products.

It is important to meet employers' needs in the use of the tools, and make it easy for employers to use the tools. Businesses use sophisticated technology and they expect DOL to keep pace; also, many employers have created their own Internet recruiting tools because they have the perception that a federal job board would not meet their needs. It is not enough to just create the tools, employers must be convinced that this is better than the competition and the employers will gain something by using these services.

Participants suggested: add more resources for employers, especially small businesses; and ask employers what type of resources and tools would be beneficial.

- **Interfacing with states and local areas: DOL/ETA must create more efficient ways to interface with state systems and also consider interfacing directly with local systems.** Participants were concerned about the outdated technology used by states that are uploading information to the E-Tools. They asked, "Why would DOL take this on without telling states to create compatible systems?" DOL should require states to upgrade technology to match the performance level of AJB, and if the state resources are not of comparable quality to AJB, states should be required use AJB and refer employers and job seekers to AJB.

Participants expressed concern about the connectivity between state systems and the CareerOneStop E-Tools. They also worried that states are duplicating resources and using money for similar tools that could be used in other ways. Also, DOL/ETA should provide continuity and synergy with local systems.

Participants complained that data from the states is often too far behind; and they need data sooner. CareerOneStop E-Tools try to fill this gap because employers have a need for real-time data.

Participants suggested having all of the local One-Stops link to AJB. They said that it is "confusing for employers if you say it's the One-Stop online, but all of the local One-Stops aren't connected and all of the One-Stops' job listings aren't on AJB."

They added that having a national entry point is important, but there needs to be local distribution.

Participants also suggested the following improvements:

- Explain why the component that translates military competencies and skills into civilian terms is important. Employers do not understand that this is a valuable tool.
- Have a glossary in a prominent location for employers. The acronyms are confusing and users may not even realize that they are misinterpreting the acronyms. Government language can be a turn off for employers.
- Add more assessment tools. Employers use assessments to weed out applicants who do not meet their standards.
- Develop a search function for AJB that allows users to search multiple categories/occupations at once.
- Expand job categories. Participants said they did not always see the logic in how the jobs match the categories.
- Develop a way for employers to post jobs on AJB and for the employers to determine where the job will be listed--national, state, local, etc. Or, create a system that would link all state and local systems so that the employer can list the job once and it will be posted in multiple places.
- Add a drop-down menu with more specific salary increments.
- Create a service matrix that maps the services offered by local One-Stops. Or, have links to state websites that can link to local One-Stop information.
- Add information about grants, trainings, and development opportunities for businesses.
- Add bilingual information. There is a major need for bilingual resources. Add a translation component.*
- Develop ways for the CareerOneStop E-Tools to interface with already existing resources, such as WorkKeys, for example.
- Add salary and wage surveys to the resources. Employers want this type of information.

* These resources already exist in the CareerOneStop E-Tools. Participants may not be aware that these services are currently offered, but they see value in their inclusion.

- Add information about internships.
- Segment information about customer usage of E-Tools by customer base (e.g., employers) to show the value of the tools to the customer. Employers want to know how other employers are using the tools. Break the information down by average job seeker and mid-size and small businesses.

Additional Issues for Business Stakeholders:

Question #4 contains questions (in bold below) specific to Business stakeholders:

Do you use the Internet to hire people? If yes, what product do you use? If no, why not?

- Yes, participants said they do use the Internet for hiring, but this is not the primary method of recruitment. They said the number one recruitment method is through word-of-mouth. Participants said they use several job boards including state, local, commercial and AJB.

Do you use labor market information in making business decisions? If yes, where do you get your information?

- Yes, participants said they use labor market information in making business decisions. Participants said that LMI is used by colleges, One-Stops, WIBs, economic development agencies, and business. Several of the participants said they use the LMI from the CareerOneStop E-Tools. They said it is useful to have all of the information consolidated and in one place. AJB should provide the type of LMI that business needs and wants. The information needs to be no more than 1 -1 1/2 years old.

Is it valuable to you to have a set of publicly funded electronic resources like AJB, ACINet, ASL?

Yes, the E-Tools are valuable. Participants said:

- We are paying for it, so we might as well use it.
- On the other hand, if it works and works really well, you don't need to do the marketing because people will let other people in the field know.
- If we could not post to Monster.com, that would be ideal. We pay for it because they bring us the applicants. We would rather use a service at no cost.
- Without marketing, it's an irresponsible way to do business.

- States shouldn't be allowed to use money to create identical state resources if they choose not to interface with AJB.
- We have to get this information to the HR people. They are the people who need this information.

Are you familiar with O*NET? Do you use O*NET in your business?

- Only 1/4 of the participants were familiar with O*NET. Almost all of the participants agreed that local businesses are not aware of O*NET.

Conclusion:

Major Themes from the CareerOneStop E-Tools Mini-Forums

The three stakeholder groups were engaged and proactive in their discussions about the E-Tools. They offered many differing perspectives. Conclusions were related to the following topics:

Rationale for Investing in E-Tools

- Participants validated the rationale for E-Tools, which was presented by DOL/ETA.
- All the participants believed that employers and customers should have a publicly-funded labor exchange.
- They validated the need for a national entry point to the public workforce system. Participants said there is a need for self-service tools, and noted that a growing percentage of the population is computer-literate and can use self-service tools; however, there is a percentage that is not computer literate and for them, access to the tools would have to be provided with the help of a personal intermediary. Members of the business community said that the move towards e-government has its limitations: lack of Internet access, lack of expertise/training to use tools, and it is not comprehensive (continual need for in-person service). It will never be complete or total; however, this does not detract from the value of self-service E-Tools.
- Overall, the participants thought all of the E-Tools should be maintained. Groups especially liked the tools and information offered by AJB, O*NET, LMI and ACINet (especially the resume tutorials and occupational videos).
- Participants did not validate the rationale about using the E-Tools to fulfill legal requirements because they found this to be a weak rationale for the development and utilization of the E-Tools.
- Some participants did not validate the rationale for using the E-Tools to help establish a common language about work, jobs, and skills. They argued that this should not be a rationale, but rather an outcome of the services.

Value of E-Tools

- Participants validated the majority of the perceived values presented by DOL/ETA.
- Participants said they find value in the tools for themselves, their fields (workforce, education, business) and their customers.

- They disagreed with the value concerning using the E-Tools as a means of gaining recognition for the national public workforce system.
- Participants do not value that the E-Tools can be used to meet legal requirements. They do not think this should be a primary value.

Participants also introduced new values:

- They said they value the labor market information.
- They value the reliability and comprehensiveness of the E-Tools.
- They value DOL/ETA's protection of the privacy of the users of the E-Tools.
- Many participants value the fact that AJB is not driven by profit motives like commercial job boards.
- They value having self-service tools because these tools address the needs of computer literate customers and free workforce professionals to help clients who cannot use the Internet tools.
- Business representatives said that many employers have developed private sites for recruiting because the government moves slowly and is hampered by bureaucracy. Participants noted that employers and states will continue to use multiple Internet job boards and other resources for listing and finding jobs, but this choice is good and does not detract from the value of AJB.

Labor Market Information

- All three groups found the LMI contained on ACI Net useful and valuable. They use the information in a variety of ways.
- Participants all validated the need for real-time data.
- Workforce development professionals said they value the type of short-term forecasting provided on ACINet. Community colleges can use the transactions data in developing curriculum. Business especially needs real-time data, and many employers use the information in making business decisions.
- All stakeholders said that DOL/ETA must develop materials about how to correctly read, interpret, and use this data. Participants cited examples of how LMI might be misused by un-trained One-Stop staff or job seekers.

Marketing

Marketing was a major theme from all three forums. Participants suggested:

- DOL/ETA must market these tools because customers do not know about the services. Participants of the workforce system said that workforce staff, including One-Stops, know very little about the E-Tools; and job seekers and employers do not know much about the resources either. Business is paying for the services through FUTA, but they are not aware of these products.
- Investing in the development and operation of the services and then not marketing the services is “fiscally irresponsible.”
- DOL/ETA could market the tools through Chambers of Commerce, associations, schools, and community colleges; use success stories (people who found jobs through the tools); do a “road show” in each of the regions to explain the tools; market the services through the local and state WIBs, and ask the WIBs to market the tools in their communities and states; and show states and locals that these services are a solution to their diminishing funding for new resources.

Training

- Participants said there is a strong need and desire for training around the E-Tools.
- Participants suggested that DOL/ETA should provide training for One-Stop staff as well as job seekers and employers, who are the end-customers.
- Participants said frontline staff are not sufficiently equipped to train their customers to use the E-Tools.
- Training can also be a form of marketing. When workforce professionals are trained, they can spread the word to customers and partners.

Interfacing with States and Locals

The three groups addressed issues about interfacing with the local areas, working more efficiently with the states, combating turf wars, and confusion about performance measures (who gets to count the job seeker when he/she finds a job: local/state/AJB?)

- Interfacing at the local level was a major concern of many of the participants. Participants wonder how the E-Tools will fit into the local systems under WIA where accountability is going down to the local level. Local systems do not want to send customers to AJB if there is no local focus and the local jobs may not be included in the system.

- Participants worried that states do not always give the most accurate, up-to-date data and job listings; in addition many local jobs are not included in the information uploaded by the states to AJB (for various reasons, including technology, miscommunication, and turf wars).
- Participants wanted to know if DOL/ETA would work directly with local areas to find a better way to engage locals and ensure that their data and jobs are included in the E-Tools. DOL/ETA does not currently work with local areas, but many participants thought that this could enhance the system.
- If DOL/ETA were to work with local areas that would raise several issues: Will local areas be able to put a local brand on the AJB page? How will DOL/ETA work effectively with local areas? Will this cause tensions in the federal-state partnership?
- The issue of states competing with local areas to meet performance measures was also a concern. They asked, “Who claims the job seeker when he/she finds a job through AJB: the local area, the state or AJB?”
- Participants expressed concern about the issue of duplication of services. States receive grant funds and use some of the money to build job sites and the same information is uploaded to AJB. Participants wanted to know how these resources could be better utilized. They suggested that DOL/ETA should work more closely with states to show that the tools are meant to be an enhancement to state services rather than competition.
- Participants said DOL/ETA must combat turf wars by convincing the states of the niche the states fill in the national strategy. DOL/ETA should make a pitch directly to the states to get their buy-in. This would enhance the functionality of E-Tools and ensure cooperation and timely information and data from the states.

Employer Engagement

- Participants said DOL/ETA should engage employers more--through marketing and outreach--to explain the public workforce system and convince employers to post jobs on AJB and use the suite of E-Tools. Employers are paying for the services through FUTA so they should know about the services so that they can use them.
- Small businesses are not using the tools because they are not aware of them and, therefore, do not know the value.
- Employers are not clear about the goals of the E-Tools. It is important to meet employers’ needs in use of the tools. DOL/ETA must make it easy for employers to use the tools.
- Business use sophisticated technology and they expect DOL to keep pace.

Additional Suggested Improvements

- AJB could send job seekers an acknowledgment with every resume received and a letter of regret if the applicant is not successful. When job seekers apply online, there is no documentation to prove that the person has applied to jobs--this may affect their eligibility for unemployment benefits.
- Incorporate information and resources about entrepreneurship.
- Add to AJB listings for work-based learning opportunities (co-op, internships, etc.).
- Add to AJB more career tracks.
- Translate the data to show the impact on local economy and show concrete results.
- Add a glossary of workforce terms and acronyms in a more prominent location so that business will not feel turned off by the language of workforce.
- Develop more assessment tools for employers. Assessment tools can be used to screen applicants who meet employer standards.
- Create a way for employers to post on AJB and then determine where it will be listed from there (e.g., state, local and other job boards), or create a system that would link all state and local systems so that the employer could list the job once and it will posted in multiple places.
- Segment the data about how who is using the E-Tools by customer base to show more concretely what types of people and employers are using the services and how they are using the products.

Other Issues:

- Business said that it does use Internet for recruiting, but this is not the primary recruiting tool. The primary means of recruitment is word-of-mouth. Some of the participating business representatives use AJB for recruiting.
- How do these tools apply for ex-offenders who are job seekers?