

COMMON REGISTRATION
OREGON EMPLOYMENT DEPARTMENT
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND WORKFORCE
DEVELOPMENT
OREGON WORKFORCE PARTNERSHIP

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1. Executive Summary

In the spring of 2008 the Oregon Employment Department (OED) and Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD) recognized the need to provide integrated service delivery to customers in One Stop WorkSource centers throughout Oregon. This initiative, along with federal reporting mandates required coordinated management of related technology initiatives.

Common Registration was defined as a critical first step to support integration of information systems managed by OED, CCWD, and the seven Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB). The Common Registration Project delivered a statewide, single registration process for the Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Act participants.

The Common Registration process includes:

1. Securely collecting demographic information including name, Social Security Number (SSN), date of birth, race, and gender;
2. Establishing a single userid and password for access to OED and Workforce online resources;
3. Assignment of a unique participant identifier for use by all workforce systems;
4. Securing SSN and other personally identifiable information against unauthorized disclosure;
5. Providing selected registration information to OED and Workforce applications through secure data exchange;
6. Supporting integrated service delivery as a single gateway, and dual registration into the Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Act programs.

The project team members came from OED, CCWD, and Local Workforce Investment Boards. The OED and CCWD jointly provided funding, as well as true leadership of the project.

The Common Registration Project is the first project in a series of work efforts to streamline workforce business processes, consolidate technology solutions, improve security, increase data quality, and reduce the cost burden technology places upon the Workforce Investment Act program. This project will allow for more funding to be utilized in the area of direct service delivery.

The timing of this project proved to be extremely important due to the changes in the economy in 2008. With more people than ever unemployed, the One Stop environment has been flooded with individuals seeking assistance in finding employment and/or improving their skills. Common Registration provided through the One Stop locations allows individuals to create their own registration and receive some services right away. If this project had not implemented in October of 2008, the number of people who are coming to the Employment office for assistance would completely overwhelm the staff and resources available.

2. Description of the business problem and solution

The State of Oregon has a number of organizations across the state providing services to employers and job seekers. These organizations consist of two state agencies, the Oregon Employment Department, and the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development, as well as multiple Local Workforce Investment Boards distributed around the State. Services are delivered to participants primarily through One Stop Centers (One-Stops), with some services also available through workforce websites. Each Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) was responsible for creating and managing their own data systems for management of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services and locally available services. Oregon Employment Department developed a system for managing the Wagner-Peyser (WP) Services and providing skills based job matching services. A single individual participating in both the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Wagner-Peyser programs were required to register in each system independently. When an individual moved from one local area to another they could maintain the Wagner-Peyser registration across the state. However, to receive the Workforce Investment Act services they were required to register again in the Local Workforce Investment Board system. There was no method for statewide registration reporting, or measuring outcomes beyond the local geographical area.

Business process and technology changes were needed to streamline service delivery to the public, reduce duplication of data collection, and to improve the State's ability to assess the effectiveness of the WIA and WP programs.

Project Objectives

The intent of the initiative was to create an integrated business process to welcome, assess and provide training, and or job search services to all individuals seeking assistance. In support of the initiative a project was developed to create a single common registration portal to be used by all of the Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Act service providers in Oregon. The project would assign a unique identifier to each registrant and make that registration and identifier available to both the Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act systems. This identifier allows record matching to support consistent statewide monitoring and assessment of the Workforce Investment Act and the Wagner-Peyser programs by OED and CCWD.

Project Deadline

Statewide workforce leadership including the Director of OED, the CCWD Commissioner, and the Oregon Workforce Partnership Directors, set a launch date of October 6, 2008 for implementation of the new business process. The change in business process could only occur if common registration and improved statewide monitoring could be implemented in the same time frame. As a result, the leaders established a delivery deadline for the technology of October 6th, 2008 to coincide with the business process and service delivery changes.

Barriers and Challenges

The challenges to the success of this project were many. Both the business process and the technology varied throughout the State. Participant registration occurred in multiple systems including Microsoft Access databases, hosted software as a service, Oracle based solutions, and Microsoft SQL based solutions. Some had self service components; others had a paper forms submission processes with data entry done by the staff.

The diversity of organizations that were represented on the project team created opportunities for both collaboration and competition. The project team consisted of business and technical representatives from:

- Oregon Employment Department (OED)
- Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD)
- Chemeketa Community College
- Worksystems Inc.
- The Oregon Consortium & Oregon Workforce Alliance
- Lane Workforce Partnership
- Community Services Consortium (Linn, Benton, Lincoln counties)
- The Job Council (Jackson & Josephine counties)
- Clackamas Community College (Clackamas county).

While the project team worked together to achieve the desired result, it was critical that the OED and CCWD facilitate with achievement of the statewide solution at the forefront.

The time frame for defining requirements, development, testing and implementation of those requirements was six months. There was no room for the schedule slip, as the business process change was also scheduled to be implemented on October 6, 2008. The changes in the business process and the participation of many organizations in defining the business requirements for the application caused the timeline for design, development, and testing to be reduced to three (3) months.

Assessment and Decision Process

There were three options considered in the design of the registration process:

1. Re-purpose existing code in the development of a new application that would serve the data to the downstream systems;
2. Expand the existing Wagner-Peyser iMatchskills® application to manage all registrations and pass the data to the Workforce Investment Act systems;
3. Expand one of the existing Workforce Investment Act systems to manage all registrations and pass the data on to the other systems.

Each of these choices was assessed to identify the level of effort required, the security of the data, the skills of available resources, and if the solution would support the build toward a manageable architecture for the future.

After the assessment it was determined that the most appropriate solution was to re-purpose existing code in the development of a new central application, with the sole purpose of collecting registration data and storing it in a shared data mart. The data mart concept is a building block in the OED information architecture. The OED is the hosting organization for the application and has an overall technology strategy to reduce the maintenance footprint of technology, reduce data duplication, simplify, reduce code duplication, and create base systems that are extensible. Every application whether new or being enhanced is evaluated to determine how it fits within this strategy.

The common registration project met this objective in two ways. It moved to utilize one code set for multiple applications, the Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act, and it builds toward the extensive use of a data warehouse for all Federal, State, and Local reporting requirements. In addition, it will support developing a clearer understanding of trends in the needs of the workforce, as well as the effectiveness of programs to meet those needs. The data warehouse is scheduled to come on line in the summer of 2009.

Operating Timeframe

Common Registration Intake was implemented on October 6th, 2008, and has been running for eight (8) months. Improvements continue to be implemented and data is being shared by both the Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act systems. Since the implementation in October 2008, the Workforce Investment Act data systems have consolidated on to two platforms and the intent is to have one consolidated workforce system in early 2010.

3. Significance

In 2006, the workforce partners commissioned a study to help identify what needed to be done to develop a more effective Integrated Information Management System. The results of the study stated the need for a single data management system as a necessity. The fragmented data did not serve the customers, those providing oversight, or those interested in improving programs.

At the conclusion of the study, the primary element that was needed to begin to consolidate was a common identifier that would be used by all workforce service providers. This as an idea is simple, but when all of the stakeholders and their particular interests, priorities and diverse systems are considered, it becomes a significant challenge. This project through strong and structured project management and careful group facilitation, worked through all the challenges. All organizations had to participate in setting requirements, defining specifications, and documenting existing data definitions, at the same time the business was reorganizing and reinventing the One Stop experience for the public.

In late 2008, when the wave of increased unemployment hit the One-Stops their ability to provide services to more people was greatly improved. The reduction in

paper through the use of the self service common registration has allowed more people access to information and services than has ever historically been required.

4. Benefit of the Project

Customer Support

From October 6th, 2008 through March 31st, 2009, over one hundred twenty-six thousand (126,000) customers registered through Common Registration.

- October 2008 20,538
- November 2008 19,147
- December 2008 21,534
- January 2009 25,034
- February 2009 19,774
- March 2009 20,776

Without Common Registration, a significant majority of these customers would have registered in more than one system, and their records in each system would not be linked. The majority of these participants would have received only the Wagner-Peyser services and would not have been offered the opportunity to receive the Workforce Investment Act funded services. Those who did receive services from both would have experienced separate interactions some of which would be redundant. This project paved the way for a more seamless experience for participants where more comprehensive services can be delivered in less time.

The implementation of Common Registration built infrastructure for continued integration of all the Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act funded programs. Based on the fundamental structure of Common Registration, the integrated project team has continued to build and implement additional integrated functionality:

- Standardized reading and math assessments of WorkSource center customers.
- The migration of 50% of the state's centers into a single Workforce Investment Act tracking system.
- Statewide reporting of customer counts, demographics and activity
- The centralization and automation of program eligibility for the Wagner-Peyser and the Workforce Investment Act. The Workforce Investment Act eligibility was previously determined at the regional level.
- An offering of electronic links providing services including job search, unemployment insurance information, basic skills education, advanced skills & occupational information, and career & market data.