

WorkSource Oregon Continuous Improvement Committee

Initial Assessment Report

December 2021

Prepared By: Coraggio Group





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Project Background and Context

December 2021

Letter from the Co-Chairs of the WorkSource Oregon Continuous Improvement Committee:

Over the past two years, Oregon's economy has been challenged by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a disproportionate impact on Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), younger workers (16-24), women, and low-wage workers. More than 285,000 workers in Oregon lost jobs between February and April 2020, and approximately 100,000 people remained unemployed as of September 2021.¹ In response to this challenge, the Oregon Legislature passed, and Governor Brown signed into law, Senate Bill 623, requiring Oregon's Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) and the state's nine Local Workforce Development Boards to jointly create a Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) to assess the effectiveness of Oregon's public workforce development system, or WorkSource Oregon (WSO).

The committee members were clear from the start: while our collective purpose is to create a case for long-term, transformational change in the state's workforce system, the goal of our initial assessment is to identify near-term solutions that can be piloted and implemented over a six- to nine-month period. The focus of this initial assessment has been to identify ways to improve the user experience and outcomes for those most impacted by COVID-19 and for disenfranchised communities.

To identify and prioritize recommendations, we relied heavily on input from WorkSource Oregon core customers (Job Seekers and Employers) and system partners (direct service providers and organizations providing wraparound services). The committee's commitment to stakeholder engagement was significant. Between July and September 2021, we conducted an in-depth stakeholder engagement process to gather insights and input from Partners, Job Seekers and Employers. The engagement process included individual interviews (17), a survey (895 responses) and focus groups (6).

Analysis of the stakeholder input identified fourteen findings that represent areas of focus to improve WorkSource Oregon. From these fourteen findings, we partnered with subject matter experts—frontline WorkSource Oregon employees—to identify a set of near-term recommendations and potential solutions we will pilot and implement over the next six to nine months. The four near-term recommendations are:

1. Review and redesign the Job Seeker welcome and intake process, with the goal of identifying different tracks and process steps based on customer need.
2. Evaluate the core purpose and functionality of iMatchSkills as a job matching and capability assessment tool to inform, and potentially expedite, OED's planned modernization effort.
3. Explore a single point of contact (e.g., Navigator role) through the WSO system (e.g., one stop centers, through community-based organizations or accessible through an online intake process) to efficiently guide next steps that match the unique needs of each customer.
4. Clarify and communicate the current WSO accountability and evaluation system.

Our initial assessment and the near-term recommendations are a start to a long-term commitment to continuous improvement in the state's workforce system. We are committed to meeting the needs of Oregon's Job Seekers and Employers. We also believe this is a critical moment for Oregon, and we call upon our State Leadership to increase and enhance what they have already invested to improving the state's workforce system, particularly for disenfranchised workers.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

Patsy Richards

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Patsy Richards

DocuSigned by:

Wendy Peterson

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Wendy Peterson

Committee Charge & Purpose

With the passing of Senate Bill 623 during the 2021 Legislative Session, Oregon's Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) and Local Workforce Development Boards collaborated to create the Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) to assess the effectiveness of Oregon's public workforce development system, or WorkSource Oregon (WSO). WSO is a system comprised of public and private partners who work together to respond to workforce challenges faced by individuals and businesses across Oregon.

The purpose of the Committee is to:

- Complete a continuous improvement assessment of WSO every even-numbered year, with an initial baseline assessment to occur in 2021.
- Ensure that the assessment is jointly supported and participated in by all WSO partners.
- Consult with Local One-Stop Operators and align assessments with center certification requirements and State monitoring efforts.

In addition to management and oversight of the comprehensive assessment, the Committee also serves as the coordinating entity for all evaluative materials related to programs delivered through the WSO system. For example, if a certain program requires an evaluation, that evaluation will be provided to the Committee for review.

Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC) Membership

Rod Belisle, NECA-IBEW Electrical Training Center	Wendy Peterson, CIC Co-Chair, Google
Susie Calhoun, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation	Craig Pope, Polk County Commissioner
Michael Funke, WEIR/ESCO	Wendy Popkin, Tualatin Valley / Washington County Visitors Association
Jessica Gomez, Rogue Valley Microdevices	Debbie Radie, Boardman Foods
Tina Irvine, Express Employment Professionals	Jeff Reardon, State Representative
Kyndall Mason, SEIU Local 503	Patsy Richards, CIC Co-Chair, RISE
Joe McFerrin, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center	Robert Westerman, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Anne Mersereau, Portland General Electric	

We would like to provide a special thanks to the participants who provided critical input and insights into the process that is the basis for this report.

CIC Subgroup - Subject Matter Experts

Jesse Aronson, Worksystems	Kendall Lenhares, Incite, Inc.
Brent Balog, Clackamas Workforce Partnership	Ami Maceira-McSparin, Willamette Workforce Partnership
Erin Carpenter, Eastern Oregon Workforce Board	Debbie Sargent, Oregon Employment Department
Julie Davidson, Oregon Employment Department	Stefanie Siebold, East Cascades Works
Aaron Harris, Oregon Employment Department	Ricque Smith, Oregon Employment Department
Stephanie Hurliman, Northwest Oregon Works	Sherri Stratton, Worksource Rogue Valley

Senate Bill 623 and Other Relevant Workforce Legislation and Executive Orders

Senate Bill 623 directs Oregon's State Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) to establish a Committee for Continuous Improvement to assess effectiveness of Oregon's public workforce development system. The WTDB, through the Higher Education Coordinating Commission, working on behalf of the Committee, is charged with completing an initial assessment of the WSO system as outlined in Senate Bill 623A. The goals of this assessment are to:

1. Identify service and resource gaps that may impede the WSO system's effectiveness in serving those most impacted by COVID-19.
2. Identify ways to improve the user experience and increase access and success for disenfranchised communities.
3. Improve alignment with agencies and nonprofits that provide culturally specific services and wraparound supports.

In 2007, Oregon set a goal for integrated service delivery within WSO. This goal would involve co-location of multiple partners within WSO and adoption of Employers as primary WSO customers, in addition to Job Seekers. In 2013, Governor Kitzhaber issued Executive Order No. 13-08, which strengthened roles and responsibilities for Local Workforce Boards; charged state agencies that administer workforce programs to align themselves in light of reduced resources and a changing economy; and designated the Oregon Workforce Investment Board, now WTDB, as an independent advisory body to the Governor to ensure progress and accountability at both the state and local levels.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law in July 2014. This legislation, in addition to Executive Order No. 13-08 and related efforts in Oregon, resulted in a renewed vigor around workforce system redesign. The Oregon Workforce Partnership, in partnership with the Oregon Employment Department and the Higher Education Coordination Commission Office of Workforce Investment, charted a project to establish a statewide framework for consistent workforce service delivery throughout Oregon.

In 2017, as part of continued efforts to implement WIOA, the Workforce System Executive Team and the WTDB adopted the WSO Standards as a system-wide expectation for service delivery. As a result, partners came together to further integrate Department of Human Services Vocational Rehabilitation and Self-Sufficiency employment and training programs, Oregon Commission for the Blind and Adult Basic Education funded through WIOA title II. The standards are based on the premise that partners will continually work together to improve the system, engage new partners, and better serve Oregon job seekers, existing workers, and businesses (WSO Operational Standards, 2.0).

Business Case for Continuous Improvement of the State's Workforce System

The COVID-19 pandemic triggered an unprecedented recession affecting all industries, regions, and populations in Oregon. However, the unemployment rates and economic impact have not been experienced equally. A recent ECONorthwest analysis commissioned by the WTDB showed that this recession has been unusually concentrated in the leisure and hospitality industry, with disproportionate costs for Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC), low-income households, young adults, women, and residents of particular regions such as Coastal and Central Oregon. Furthermore, the Oregon Employment Department has found preliminary evidence that Asian Americans and Black or African Americans appear to be facing unemployment for longer time periods during the pandemic than Oregonians in general.²

WSO assumes a critical role in helping to address the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and its disproportional impact to certain communities through services that assist both individuals and businesses, resulting in job attainment, retention, and advancement. Given that the state's workforce needs are great, it is essential that WSO meet the challenges of the day and commit to identifying opportunities and implement solutions to improve service delivery and the customer experience of both Job Seekers and Employers.

Coraggio developed questions for stakeholders on the following topics:

- Service satisfaction and opportunities to increase satisfaction
- Service importance
- Service effectiveness and opportunities to increase effectiveness
- Experience satisfaction and opportunities to increase satisfaction
- Expectations, goals, and improvements

Opportunity themes were identified by combining interview themes, survey data and focus group outputs. Opportunity themes are designated as common topics both heard through interviews and supported by data. Open response questions were qualitatively themed and then counted to identify key areas. The opportunity themes included in this report reflect Coraggio's interpretation of the perceptions of those who participated in the survey, focus groups, and interviews, based on the questions they were asked. Quotations were captured as stated by respondents without attribution to protect their anonymity.

Once an initial set of opportunity themes was identified they were reviewed and discussed with the CIC. Then, a subgroup of subject matter experts from the local workforce development boards and the Oregon Employment Department met to discuss the themes, prioritize the themes, and develop a series of near-term recommendations for consideration by the CIC. The CIC reviewed the near-term recommendations from the subgroup and further refined and finalized the recommendations included in this report.



Current State Assessment

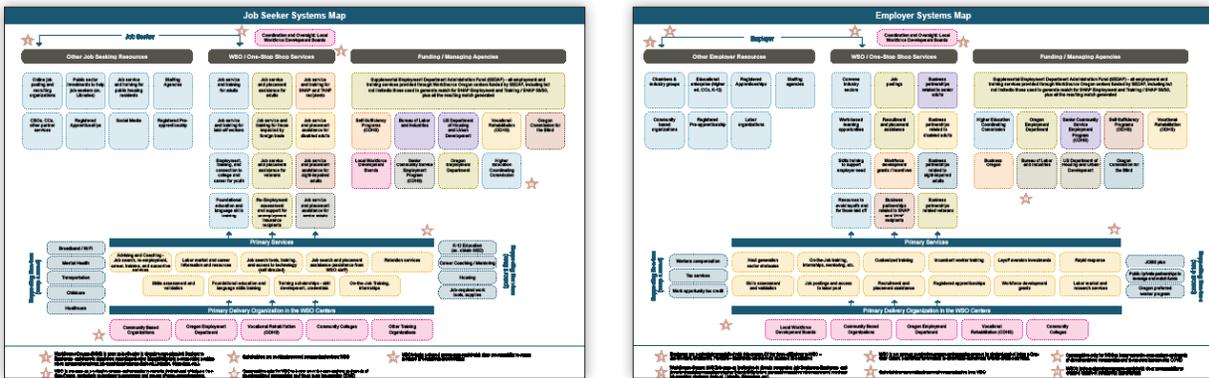
Key Characteristics and Participants of Current WSO System

To assess the current situation, we leveraged a suite of continuous improvement tools and methodologies. Continuous Improvement is a set of principles and tools that help people “learn-to-see,” and enhance effectiveness and eliminate waste following a methodology that is customer-focused and employee driven. Continuous improvement is based on the principle that there is always room for improvement, and that we need to know how we are doing to make priority, targeted improvements. Using a continuous improvement methodology helped us focus on the processes (and systems), not on the people that are doing the work.

To gather an initial understanding of the current WSO system, we facilitated two sessions to build and refine the WSO Systems Maps. A system map shows the components and boundary of a system and the components of the environment at a point in time. We developed system maps that depict the system experience of WSO’s two primary customers, the Job Seeker and the Employer.

Included in Attachment X is the visual depiction of the Job Seeker and Employer Systems Map. The Systems Map includes:

- Key resources available to the Job Seeker / Employer
- The programs available within the One-Stop Shop Service Centers
- The funding / managing agency that provides the funds for the programs within the One-Stop Shop Service Centers
- The primary services that are available and delivered
- The supporting services that are available and delivered



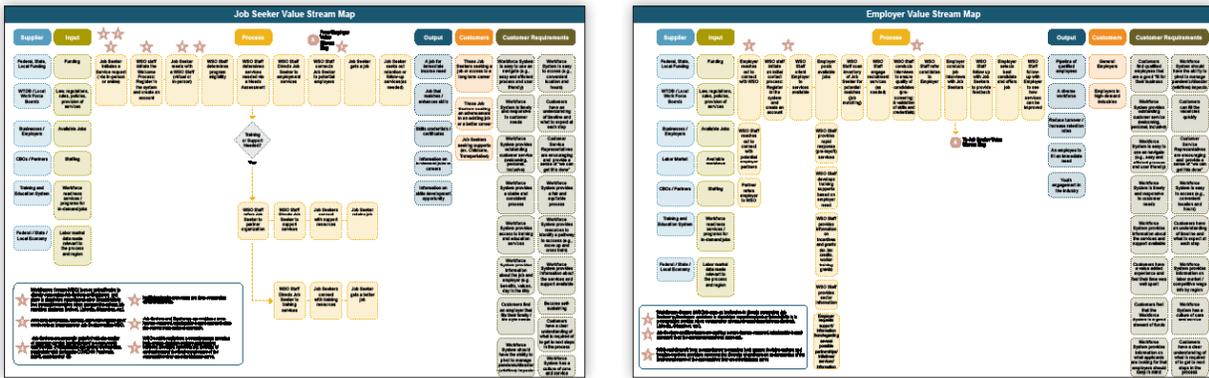
The primary delivery organizations that are available within the One-Stop Shop Service Centers
 The numeric stars on the Systems Maps indicate findings (key themes and improvement opportunities) identified through the stakeholder outreach process. The details associated with these findings are captured in the next section.

Current Process Value Streams

To identify the current process that the Job Seeker and Employer experience in the One-Stop Service Center, we utilized a continuous improvement tool of a value stream map. A value stream map is a visual depiction of how all the activities line up and work together to produce a given product or service. All the activities of a value stream map combine to form a process of value creation. The value stream map has clear start and end points that identify:

- **The supplier** – someone that is providing an input into the process
- **The input** – something received from a supplier that is needed for the process
- **The process** – a repeatable series of steps that adds value to a product or services
- **The output** – something that is given to a customer based on their need
- **The customer** – a person or entity who is the recipient of what is produced, either within an organization or outside an organization

Included in Attachment X is the visual depiction of the Job Seeker and Employer Value Stream Maps. Also included on the Value Stream Maps are the customer requirements which are the criteria for customer satisfaction within the process.



The numeric stars on the Value Stream Maps indicate findings (key themes and improvement opportunities) identified through the stakeholder outreach process. The details associated with these findings are captured in the next section.

Summary of Findings

Stakeholder Engagement Focus/Methodology

To better understand the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders in the WorkSource Oregon system, Coraggio conducted an in-depth stakeholder engagement process during the months of July – September 2021 to gather insights and input from Partners, Job Seekers and Employers. The engagement process included



Coraggio developed questions for stakeholders on the following topics:

- Service satisfaction and opportunities to increase satisfaction
- Service importance
- Service effectiveness and opportunities to increase effectiveness
- Experience satisfaction and opportunities to increase satisfaction
- Expectations, goals, and improvements

A fundamental priority of the CIC was to hear from and gather insights from stakeholders who represent the diverse communities it serves, including:

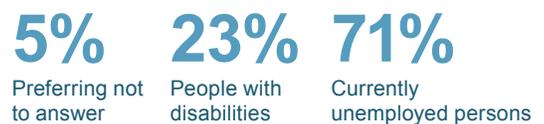
- Community-based organizations with a focus and expertise serving disenfranchised communities, including Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and People of Color
- People with Developmental and Physical Disabilities
- Women
- Immigrants
- Rural Communities
- Lower-Skilled Adults and Younger Workers
- State Agencies
- Labor Organizations
- Education Providers
- Registered Apprenticeship and Pre-apprenticeship Organizations
- Employers and Local Businesses owned/operated by citizens from communities of color, low-income, and rural areas in Oregon

Demographics of Survey Respondents

% Population Source: Census.gov

Oregon population vs respondents by race/ethnicity	% Population	% Respondents
Asian	5%	3%
Black/African	2%	3%
Indigenous/Native	2%	6%
Hispanic/Latino/a/x	13%	6%
Middle Eastern/North African	Not Measured	0%
Pacific Islander	1%	1%
White	75%	79%
Prefer not to answer	Not Measured	7%
Two or more races	4%	

Respondents were:



Job Seeker Participants Workforce Board vs Population of Area Represented	% Population	% Respondents
Clackamas Workforce Partnership	10%	22%
East Cascades Work	9%	4%
Eastern Oregon Workforce Board	4%	6%
Lane Workforce Partnership	9%	9%
Northwest Oregon Works	6%	9%
Rogue Workforce Partnership	7%	10%
Southwestern Oregon Workforce Investment Board	5%	4%
Willamette Workforce Partnership	16%	13%
Worksystems	34%	22%

Equity and Inclusive Engagement

Working closely with the state's nine Local Workforce Investment Boards, the CIC sought to identify participants who could bring diverse perspectives regarding their experiences with WorkSource Oregon. A goal of the CIC's initial assessment and stakeholder engagement process was to specifically get input from those most impacted by COVID-19 and disenfranchised communities.

In addition to collecting data from participants that reflect the population demographics served by WorkSource Oregon, engagement activities centered equity throughout the process. Facilitation of the focus groups included technical assistance for Zoom participants to lower the barriers to participation, as well as the discussion of group agreements to help create an environment that was welcoming and inclusive. Job Seeker participants were also compensated for their time and contributions through a stipend program.

Key Findings

Throughout the engagement process, participants (Job Seekers, Employers, Partner Organizations) offered key insights regarding the challenges they've faced during the COVID-19 pandemic and the improvements they would like to see for WSO to better meet the expectations and needs of disenfranchised communities. For a finding, or theme, to emerge, it needed to be supported by quantitative data and/or consistently referenced through the more qualitative methods, such as open-ended survey questions or interview and focus group conversations. As it relates to the quantitative questions asked in the survey, you will see data where respondents "rated" activities. Good scores are typically 4 or above (on a 5-point scale). A rating of 4 signifies "satisfaction."



Theme One

WSO is seen as ineffective in directly connecting Job Seekers to Employers and there is skepticism regarding whether iMatchSkills is in a competitive position when compared to private job matching platforms (Indeed, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, etc.).

What We Heard

- “A lot of jobs listed but search leads you to things that don’t interest me. A lot of seasonal work, not always getting jobs that match what I want to do.”
- “There’s just a lack of fit between my past job experience, my specialized training, and the skills with the current offerings.”
- “Even if I just want services, I still have to file for unemployment just to get the training I need.”
- “The website is difficult to use and it’s hard to access jobs. It’s easier to use private services like Indeed, Monster, or Craigslist.”
- “The website looks like it was made 20 years ago and has been updated since. It seems to have less than private job sites.”
- “I can’t find industry jobs. For that Craigslist is better.”
- “The job search function on iMatch is clunky, Indeed and Zip Recruiter and other are much easier to use. WSO has these redundant buttons that you have to click. It’s not very user-friendly.”

Insights

1. Matching potential employees to employers is a stated function and goal of WSO. Although Job Seekers were largely satisfied with the WSO system, rating their overall satisfaction of WSO a 4.0 (Figure 1.2), they did highlight a mismatch between the purported purpose of WSO and the services they received.
2. Job Seekers used words like “job,” “employment,” and “work” to describe their expectations and goals for WSO (Figure 1.6); however, only 29% of Job Seekers surveyed indicated they were connected to potential employers, and only 19% received a job through WSO (Figure 1.1).
3. Improved job matching was the top opportunity to improve satisfaction of WSO with Job Seekers (Figure 1.3). There is widespread skepticism regarding whether WSO’s iMatch platform can competitively provide job matching services. Stakeholders indicated that private job sites are easier to use. Job Seekers reported more often using private job matching sites to find employment due to ease of use.
4. Job Seekers requested an improved matching of their skills and experience to potential employers. Connecting to employers that fit my skills/experience was the lowest rated service category (3.39) (Figure 1.4), and the highest rated area for increasing satisfaction (39%) (Figure 1.5b).
5. Stakeholders believed that there is an opportunity to the Needs Assessment that is part of the customer intake process, to be better tailored to the desired outcomes of the Job Seeker. This undoubtedly links to the aforementioned personal and consistent connection with WSO staff, which would allow staff a greater insight into their needs and suitability for potential employment opportunities.
6. Employers also noted a mismatch between the stated purpose of WSO and its ability to match employers to potential job candidates. Employers used words such as “connection,” “employees,” and “matching” to describe their expectation for WSO (Figure 2.12).
7. Compared to Job Seekers, Employers were much more critical, rating their satisfaction with job matching (connecting with potential employees) a 2.97 (Figure 2.4).

8. Employers identified that improved candidate supply, screening, and responsiveness, as well as the provision of an enhanced job posting system, as one of the biggest opportunities for WSO to increase their overall satisfaction (Figure 2.3). When asked why they struggled to find employees, Employers say that candidates are not prepared and are not a good match for the jobs Employers are asking WSO to fill.
9. Employers also expressed concern, indicating that simplified accessibility and navigation of WSO services, more specifically the iMatch experience, is an important opportunity to increase satisfaction of WSO services. (Figure 2.5) This would include improving all of WSO's web-based and digital systems (e.g., iTrac and iMatch). (Figure 3.6)
10. Perceptions also exist that WSO could more effectively help Job Seekers most impacted by COVID-19 and disenfranchised community members connect to jobs (Figures 2.8 and 2.10).

Theme Two

Access to information, training, and connecting to other services is an important way Job Seekers utilize WSO.

What We Heard

- “WSO can provide services beyond job placement, like accommodation and training. Programs should be “learn and earn” so job seekers can learn skills while also having a paycheck.”
- “I really just want the class. Right now, there is a lack of classes in rural areas and that’s what we need.”
- “I was offered classes in the past to develop my skills and become more employable, but now I’m not being offered those more recently. I’m not being told about opportunities to develop those skills.”

Insights

1. WSO provides services beyond job matching that are important to Job Seekers. Stakeholders indicated that preparing a candidate for employment and job competitiveness is also a very valuable outcome of WSO.
2. Of the services provided by WSO to Job Seekers, 78% were provided information on the various services, 44% received help connecting to other services, 29% received help accessing training to increase skills/abilities (Figure 1.1).
3. Focus group participants reported high levels of satisfaction with the information and training they received, highlighting the importance of these aspects of WSO's work with Job Seekers.

Theme Three

Employers are particularly unsatisfied with the current WSO system. Of the three affiliations to WSO – Job Seekers, Employers, Partners – Employers are the least engaged and satisfied.

What We Heard

- “We listed 25 jobs in iMatch yesterday? So what? Who got those jobs, what outcomes did we achieve, what was the impact....this is not part of our culture.”
- “The system is very complicated, it is basically a run on sentence of questions that is being asked, it is trying to hone down to create specific matches. Not sure that is necessary in today’s mobile workforce when people are changing jobs every 2 years.”
- “The process is outdated; it has not really improved in 15 years.”

Insights

1. Employers’ overall satisfaction score was 3.57, compared to 3.8 for Partners and 4.01 for Job Seekers (Figures 1.2, 2.2, 3.1).
2. Important differences were found within the Employer participants. For example, smaller Employers tended to be more satisfied with WSO services compared to larger Employers. Employers operating within the Education and Health sector were most satisfied with WSO, emerging as the only sector awarding an average rating more than 4.0. In contrast, Natural Resources & Mining and Financial Activity Businesses were notably critical of the WSO.
3. Employers cited specific concerns relating to the job matching services provided and the overall efficacy of employee matching and supply, rating it less than 3.0 (Figure 2.4).
4. In addition to job matching services, when asked what WSO could do to improve, Employers overwhelmingly reported that they would like to see the quality of candidates improve. Overall, few Employers felt that WSO had assisted their business recovery post COVID-19.

Theme Four

Job Seekers are generally satisfied with the quality of customer service but find it hard to connect with staff through a virtual/digital dependent environment, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What We Heard

- “The phone system is not working well, don’t always get forwarded to the right people and it has been very frustrating.”
- “I haven’t had a lot of interface with the department since COVID started. There has not been a lot of interface with our organization during that period.”
- “You don’t always get a call back from WorkSource. They are not easy to reach.”
- “Waiting hours on the phone can be very long, 1.5 hours or more.”
- “COVID basically stopped my process and classes.”

- “COVID cut staff at community center that used to be available to help assist folks without computers.”
- “The system has been very frustrating and hard to use during the pandemic.”

Insights

1. While Job Seekers are generally satisfied with the quality of customer service (4.0) (Figure 1.2), they find it hard to connect with staff through a virtual/digital dependent environment, particularly with COVID-19.
2. Participants rely on centers for digital access and the ability to speak directly with staff. Job Seekers reported long phone waits and being unable to reach the staff members they needed.
3. Despite a high rating for staff responsiveness (4.06) (Figure 1.4), improving accessibility and responsiveness were top opportunities identified by Job Seekers (Figure 1.3).
4. Certain Job Seekers specifically indicated that having offices reopened and easier telephone access would improve their satisfaction with WSO (Figure 1.5a), while other Job Seekers pointed to the importance of improved online access (Figure 1.7).
5. Improving access was also a top way to make WSO work better for Partners (Figure 3.8), who also used “accessibility” as the top word to describe their expectations of WSO (Figure 3.7).

Theme Five

Inefficient intake processes are time-consuming and burdensome.

What We Heard

- “The time and effort spent re-entering information is difficult for the staff and customers as well. It would be great if once a question was asked and the answer was captured it didn’t need to be asked again. And additionally, once someone’s identity is confirmed that doesn’t need to be done again also. “
- “We need systems and processes to better support the staff, so they can work on relationships and customers’ needs and not check the box.”
- “It feels like a scavenger hunt to figure out what paperwork you need to start off with.”

Insights

1. One of the ways that Job seekers experienced the lack of cohesion within the WSO system is through redundancies within the intake process.
2. In focus groups, Job seekers reported that inefficiencies in the intake process make working with WSO frustrating. They described being required to go through all the process steps regardless of services needed.
3. Job Seekers and Partners indicated that data systems are not connected; the same Job Seeker data must be entered in multiple systems, multiple times. The current process prevents staff from having more time for relationship building over processing and data entry.
4. Overall, there is a strong desire for a simplified, standardized and streamlined intake process within the services.

Theme Six

Job Seekers and Employers are seeking a more human-centered, relationship-based approach than the current transactional approach.

What We Heard

- “There is a lot of passion and commitment by the people that work in the centers; it is mission based and they are very good advocates.”
- “When the individual enters the system, the points of contact change multiple times. For an individual who has had false starts and they keep getting handed off through the system, it is discouraging. That initial contact is so important to help the individual connect the dots and understand the system. It goes beyond being nice; it is about understanding the system.”
- “Our people are professional and of high-value. Good people; good customer service.”
- “The people there are great, they are not the issue with WorkSource overall.”
- “WSO is not human centered. The system is transactional not transformational. WSO is process motivated, not outcome motivated.”
- “More time for relationship building over processing and data entry.”
- “Staff need better knowledge of the overall system to help Job Seekers navigate. No one understands all the services.”
- “The system feels transactional. People get lost in the system.”

Insights

1. Job Seekers’ number one expectation/goal for WSO is for staff to be helpful (Figure 1.6), suggesting that, for Job Seekers, the attitude of staff at Once-Stop Centers is a fundamental requisite of a positive experience. Job Seekers would like to feel that they are being understood, respected, and looked after – that they are not just a number in a system.
2. While the practical processes of providing information, locating employment opportunities, and training are clearly and obviously viewed as highly important, the need for human helpfulness emerges as the number one future requirement/expectation.
3. Job Seekers request a personal and consistent connection with WSO Staff. Many would like to feel that they have access to a staff member with whom they will be able to connect with more than once and who is knowledgeable, empathetic to, and understanding of their specific circumstances, characteristics, skills, experience and needs.
4. Employer expectations and goals for WSO also emphasize the need for a personalized approach to services. In describing WSO, Employers’ top words of “connection,” “responsive,” and “helpful” highlight the importance of the relationship side of service delivery (Figure 2.12) and offering a timely service which is based on a more interactive and proactive approach.
5. System Partners acknowledged the need for a more flexible and empathetic approach (Figure 3.2) and expressed concern that Job Seekers may drop out of the system due to connection complexity and the process of handing-off customers between people and to different programs or services.

Theme Seven

WSO could benefit from a commitment to ensuring both system decision-makers and frontline services providers represent the diversity of and understand the lived experiences of the communities they are prioritizing to serve.

What We Heard

- “Bilingual staff a key, and an area where we need to improve. Staff who are culturally competent.”
- “If you want to help marginalized communities they should be at the decision-making table. Marginalized/disenfranchised communities need to help drive decision-making and service delivery. This shouldn’t be a system led by dominant-culture organization.”
- “When I first interacted with the system, it was clear that although the system was designed as a one stop shop and was supposed to make it easy for the job seeker – it was not easy for a job seeker to interact with the system. It is not culturally relevant, and we heard the frustrations from their side.”

Insights

1. Because relationships are so essential to the experience that Job Seekers and Employers have in the WSO system, it is essential that both frontline staff and system decision-makers can relate to the experiences of the core customers they serve.
2. Participants identified that staff who work in the system may not fully understand the lived experience of Job Seekers, particularly those from disenfranchised communities.
3. According to Partner Organizations, it is believed that one way the system could improve is for staff to represent the diversity of (Figure 3.6), and have a deeper understanding of, specific community needs (Figure 3.8).
4. In addition to staff directly serving clients, participants noted that it is important that decision-makers in the WSO system be more representative of the communities they serve.

Theme Eight

WSO is not seen as a cohesive system and struggles to meet its desired goal of being a One-Stop Center, particularly as it relates to awareness and access of wrap-around services.

What We Heard

- “Revisit the idea of working together to transition to true One-Stop centers. These could easily be places that could better serve both job seekers and employers by bringing resources together and providing an easier place to collaborate. All co-housed staff will tell you that it’s easier to work together when you are housed together.”
- “We need a true one stop-having a contact person that can communicate all the services available.”
- “There’s no case management-no one to help connect all of the benefits.”
- “We have not realized the full potential of a fully developed workforce development system.”
- “If a person needs five different programs, they may work with five different people.”
- “The system itself does not cross tabulate across programs so it is hard to tell if the person is being impacted by multiple partners.”
- “You have to go to different people for all different parts of the process and it’s not user-friendly.”

Insights

1. Participants noted that WSO does not operate as a “one stop center” for Job Seekers; there is a difference between partner organizations and service providers being housed in the same facility and having true integration of services.
2. According to interview and focus group participants, even if services are co-housed together, participants are passed around and must repeat intake and relationship building processes.
3. Job Seekers reported that they must access multiple locations to find the needed services, and awareness of specialized “wrap around” services is particularly challenging.
4. System Partners identified a lack of understanding of the shared goals, metrics, and vision for WSO.
5. Partners identified increased visibility in community as an opportunity to improve satisfaction. Simplifying and unifying services and systems are seen as a key opportunity for improvement (Figure 3.2).
6. Strengthening and expanding partnerships (Figure 3.8) and better collaboration and dialogue (Figure 3.6) were identified as top ways WSO could improve.
7. Partners highlighted that each local Workforce Investment Board has its own website, level of ease of using the system, and its own ways of communication which can cause confusion for Job Seekers and Employers that cross regions.
8. Improved communication and coordination are key priorities for organizations and individuals working with WSO.

Theme Nine

Stakeholders are seeking improved communication from WSO.

What We Heard

- “It’s easy to access information from counselors, but there are long wait times for any phone contact.”
- “Emails can be jargon-filled and confusing, especially those auto-emails from the website.”
- “More direct communication from WSO boots-on-the-ground staff would be fantastic. OED tends to be afraid of letting their staff share their ideas and opinion on things and there are a lot of good ideas from these employees, especially the more seasoned ones. Their managers often act as a buffer between them and the workforce board and One-stop Operators. This varies a lot depending on the area manager.”

Insights

1. To improve cohesion, stakeholders are seeking improved communication from WSO. “Communication” and “collaboration” were key words used by both Employers and System Partners to describe their top expectations of WSO (Figures 3.7 & 2.12).
2. Effective communication was highlighted by all stakeholders as a critical component of WSO’s service delivery.
3. Improving responsiveness was a top opportunity identified by all stakeholder types. Employers highlighted that clear communication was a top challenge for working with WSO. Partners also identified improved communications, particularly real-time communication about programs and services, as a method to improve Partner satisfaction.
4. Partners reported that often communication from the Oregon Employment Department (OED) is unclear and can be filled with jargon.
5. Overall, participants from all categories noted a need for improved awareness/branding/communication about what WSO is for partners and customers.

Theme Ten

Opportunities exist for WSO to better meet the expectations and needs of disenfranchised communities and those most impacted by COVID.

What We Heard

- “They are just not meeting the needs of workers with special needs or fields.”
- “WorkSource isn’t set up for one-to-one needs, it isn’t set up to meet the needs of people with disabilities.”
- “Key communities are not being served by the system.”

Insights

1. Overall, participants reported that access to WSO has been a challenge during the COVID-19 pandemic. Employers don’t believe WSO has been effective in serving underserved and disenfranchised communities during the pandemic. (Figures 2.8 & 2.10)
2. Accessibility and navigation challenges were echoed by System Partners, who reported that they don’t believe WSO has been accessible to the community during COVID-19, especially disenfranchised communities. (Figures 3.5)
3. There were several very low ratings awarded by community-based organizations in relation to WSO’s perceived ability to serve disenfranchised communities.

Theme Eleven

WSO's lacks a shared governance model with clear accountability to create a culture of continuous improvement.

What We Heard

- “A continuous improvement system should be implemented to capture and vet ideas from staff that ask ‘why not?’ and ‘why couldn’t we do this?’ instead of ‘why?’ or ‘why should we consider doing this?’”
- “The other aspects of the system are not really improved over time. The state leadership in all the various funding sources really struggle and their relationship is dysfunctional. There needs to be better coordination at the leadership level.”
- “WSO hasn’t been historically open to feedback-feedback has been given in the past but improvements have not followed.”

Insights

1. Participants reported that there is a lack of leadership or clear governing body that is truly accountable for implementing system-wide change. Currently, WSO does not have a culture of continuous improvement – issues have been raised or shared in the past, but there is a sense that there is no accountability for action. This lack of accountability from leadership hinders WSO’s ability to implement solutions.
2. Participants also noted that there is an unclear relationship with OED. There is a mismatch between the ownership of improvement process and those who have the resources to implement change.
3. Stakeholders agree that there is a need for evidence-based decision making and data informed analysis of return-on-investment (ROI) and outcomes.
4. Stakeholders identified a need for WSO to increase its focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion as it relates to staff and decision-making. A focus on more inclusive services and the need to eliminate bias in service delivery were also noted.
5. Partner Organizations rated the experience of disenfranchised communities in navigating WSO services as very low (2.85). (Figure 3.5)
6. Employers reported that increasing their participation and input would help WSO to better serve underserved communities. (Figure 2.9)



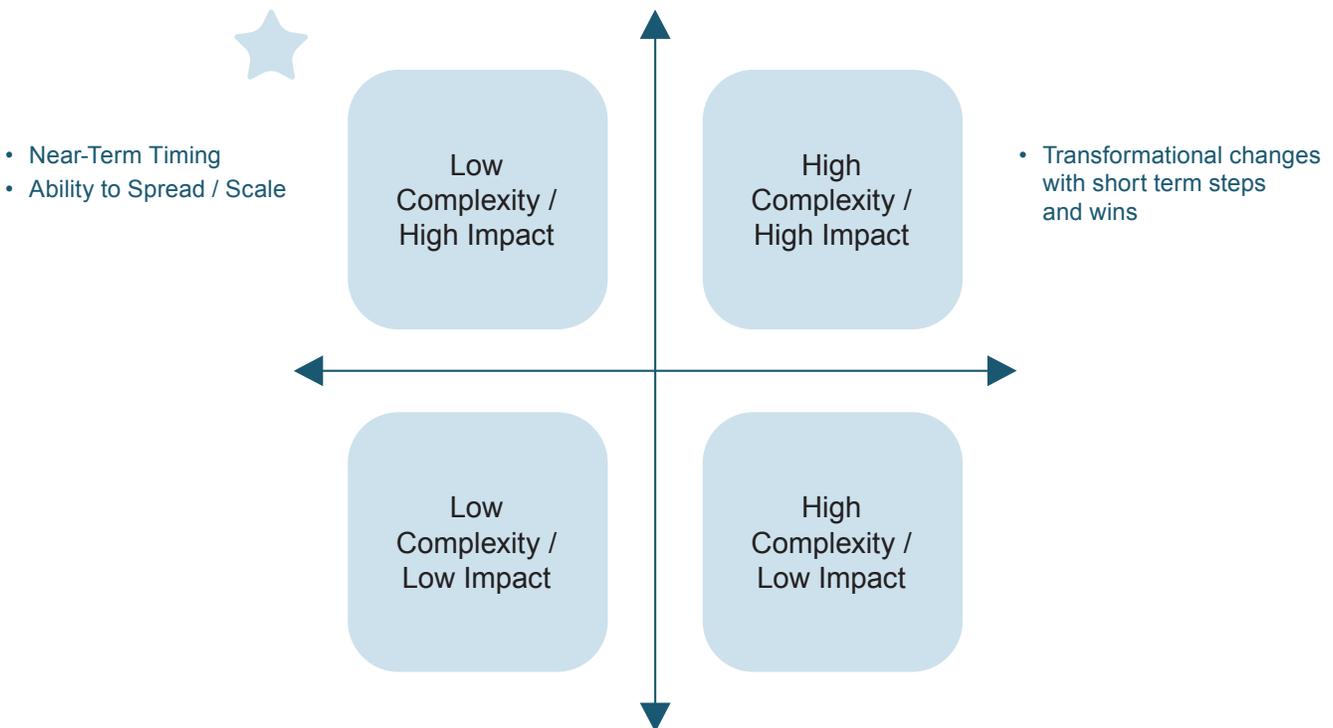
Recommendations

Prioritized Recommendations

Summary of Solutions & Recommendations for Near-Term Implementation and Adoption

The primary goal of this initial assessment of WSO was to identify near-term recommendations for implementation. A subgroup of workforce system subject matter experts and CIC members evaluated the 14 findings that resulted from the stakeholder engagement process and identified a set of recommendations best suited for near-term focus and “quick wins.” More specifically, identifying opportunities or solutions that, if implemented, would benefit Job Seekers and Employers most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly disenfranchised communities (Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), younger workers (16-24), women, and low-wage workers). To help prioritize opportunities and solutions, the following criteria were used:

- Potential level of complexity that would be required to implement the opportunity. Including the capabilities needed to implement the potential opportunity and/or the number of stakeholders that would be needed to engage.
- Potential impact of the improvement on those most impacted by COVID-19.
- Time required to pilot and test a potential solution, with the expectation that the solution could be piloted twice over a six- to nine-month period.
- Ability to scale/spread for system level improvements.



Over four work sessions, the subgroup of subject matter experts and the CIC identified four near-term recommendations or solutions for implementation:

Near-Term Recommendations	Link to Associated Findings
<p>Review and redesign the Job Seeker welcome and intake process, with the goal of identifying different tracks and process steps based on customer need.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify key points in the intake process where relationship-based / human-centered approach can be enhanced and/or amplified. Establish a simple pre-registration process to quickly identify customer requirements and make quick referrals to services needed. Resolve the password reset issue which has resulted in significant frustration for customers. 	<p>#5 – Inefficient intake processes are time consuming and burdensome.</p> <p>#6 – Job Seekers and Employers are seeking a more human-centered, relationship-based approach than the current transactional approach.</p>
<p>Evaluate the core purpose and functionality of iMatchSkills as a job matching and capability assessment tool to inform, and potentially expedite, OED's planned modernization effort.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate how iMatchSkills is used in the provision of services and opportunities to use it differently. Evaluate use and utility of data collection efforts through iMatchSkills with a human-centered, relationship-based equity lens. Determine its value proposition relative to other 3rd party platforms such as Indeed, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, etc. Explore partnership opportunities between iMatchSkills and 3rd partner platforms, such as Indeed, to ensure that these platforms are linked and matching job opportunities with job seekers in the WSO system. 	<p>#1 – WorkSource Oregon (WSO) is seen as ineffective in directly connecting Job Seekers to Employers and there is skepticism regarding whether iMatchSkills is in a competitive position when compared to private job matching platforms (Indeed, LinkedIn, Glassdoor, etc.).</p> <p>#3 – Employers are particularly unsatisfied with this system. Of the three affiliations to WSO – Job Seekers, Employers, Partners – Employers are the least engaged and satisfied.</p>
<p>Explore a single point of contact (e.g., Navigator role) through the WSO system (e.g., one stop centers, through community-based organizations and/or accessible through an online intake process) to efficiently guide next steps that match the unique needs of each customer.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially when engaging the system, they have an unbiased, autonomous single point of contact that provides ongoing continuity throughout the process. Knowledgeable of all services offered and customer centric (e.g., meeting the customer where they are and providing helpful, customer service). Aware of cultural differences and the lived experiences of priority customers and apply that awareness to how they support and connect with the individual customer. Explore the feasibility of a shared funding model for the single point of contact. 	<p>#6 – Job Seekers and Employers are seeking a more human-centered, relationship-based approach than the current transactional approach.</p> <p>#7 – WSO could benefit from a commitment to ensuring both system decision-makers and frontline services providers represent the diversity of and understand the lived experiences of the communities they are prioritizing to serve.</p> <p>#8 – WSO is not seen as a cohesive system and struggles to meet its desired goal of being a One-Stop Center, particularly as it relates to awareness and access of wrap-around services.</p>

<p>Clarify and communicate the current WSO accountability and evaluation system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Define and communicate the roles and responsibilities of each system partner, document existing decision-making authority, and communicate current accountability structure. Align and resolve duplication of roles, responsibilities, and processes between the WTDB Continuous Improvement Committee (CIC), the Oregon Workforce System Executive Team (WSET), and the One-Stop Center Continuous Improvement Team. Ensure relevant committees and boards have the appropriate representation of partners and are reflective of the priority communities WSO is seeking to serve. 	<p>#7 – WSO could benefit from a commitment to ensuring both system decision-makers and frontline services providers represent the diversity of and understand the lived experiences of the communities they are prioritizing to serve.</p> <p>#8 – WSO is not seen as a cohesive system and struggles to meet its desired goal of being a One-Stop Center, particularly as it relates to awareness and access of wrap-around services.</p> <p>#11 – WSO's lacks a shared governance model with clear accountability to create a culture of continuous improvement.</p>
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For each of the four near-term recommendations, an implementation action plan was developed. The action plans answered the following questions:

- What are the specific action steps needed to implement?
- Who is the owner of each action step?
- What is the estimated timing for each action step?
- What is the role of the CIC in supporting each action step?
- Who is responsible for deciding whether to go/no-go the pilot?
- Where should the pilot occur?
- Who is responsible for deciding whether to go/no-go implementation of the opportunity across the WSO system?

In addition to the four near-term recommendations, the CIC is also recommending that the next WSO System Assessment, occurring in 2022, focus on system governance and accountability.

The image displays four implementation action plans, numbered 1 through 4, each presented as a table. The tables are color-coded: #1 is blue, #2 is light blue, #3 is yellow, and #4 is orange. Each table has the following columns: Recommendation, Action Step, Action Step Owner, Action Step Start/End, Action Step Status, Action Step Description, Action Step Impact, Action Step Risk, Action Step Dependencies, and Action Step Notes. Below each table, there are three lines of text: 'Approved for Implementation', 'Approved for Budget Approval', and 'Approved for Budget Approval'.

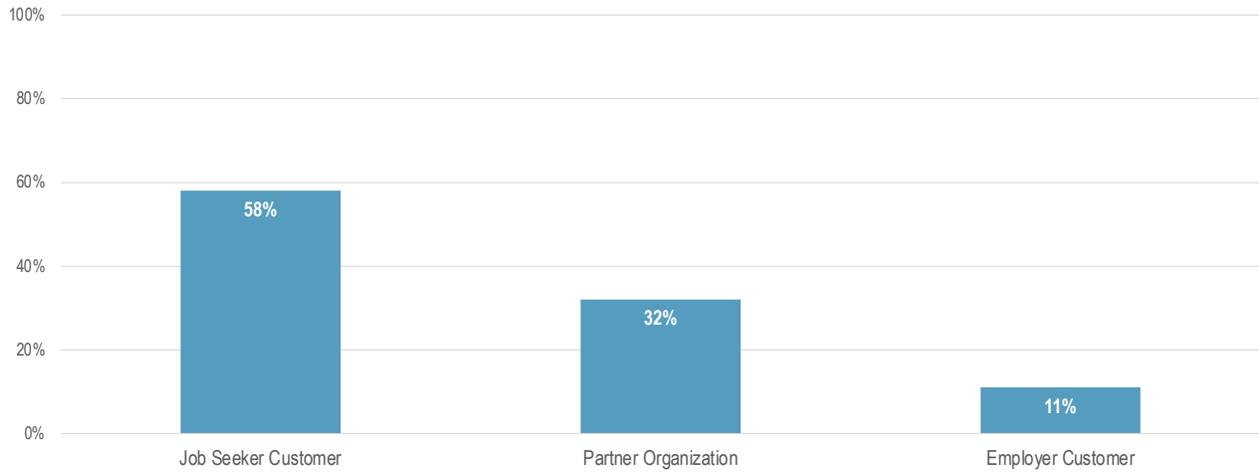
Footnotes

1. Source: Oregon Employment Department, Qualityinfo.org.
2. Source: Johnson, A. 2020. Characteristics of the Covered Unemployed in September 2020. Oregon Employment Department.

Appendices

Survey Findings N=895

Findings based on 895 survey responses collected in August/September 2021. Affiliation with WorkSource Oregon



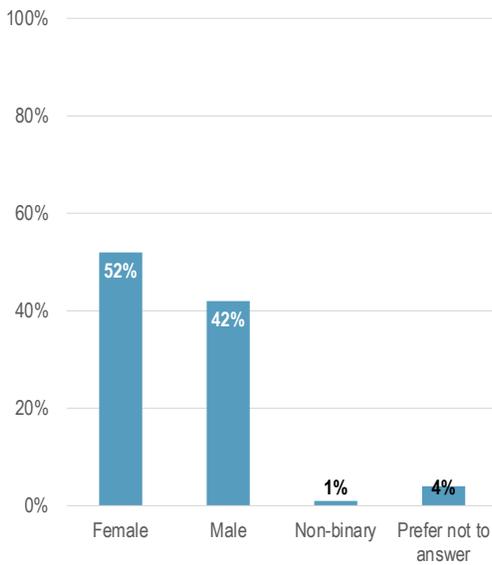
Appendix One: Feedback from Job Seeker Customers

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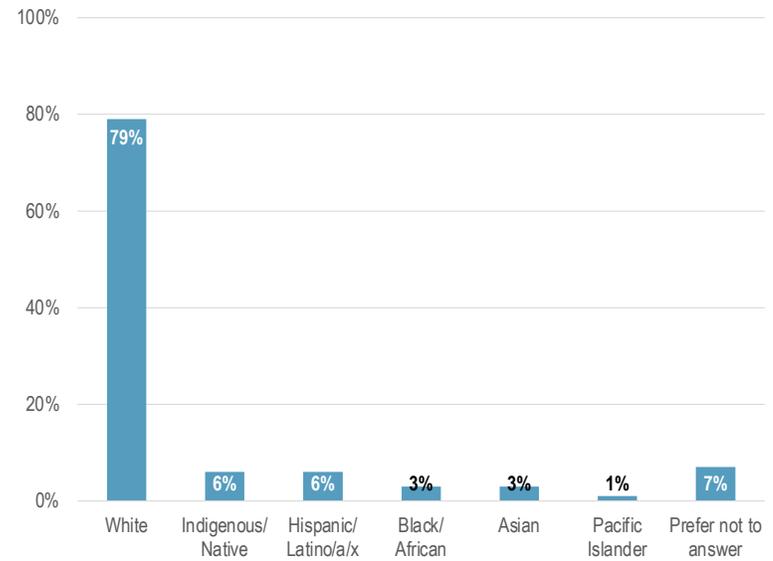
3

Demographics N=510-517

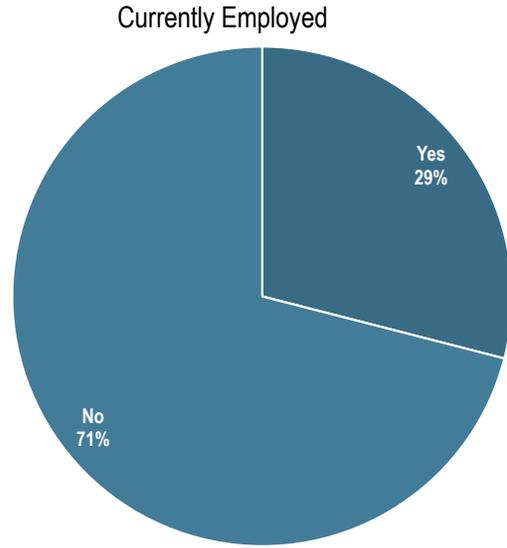
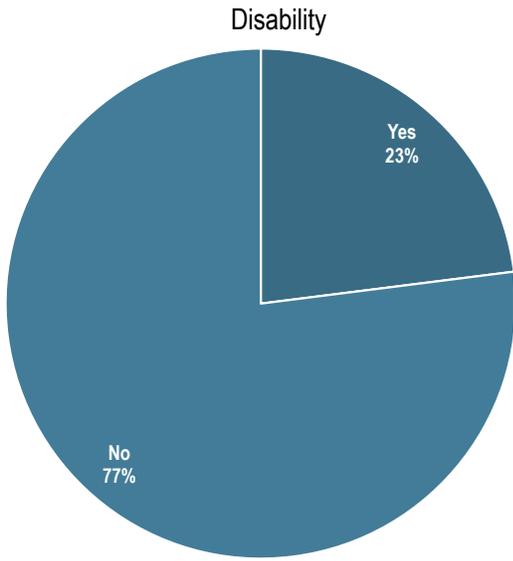
Gender Identity



Race/Ethnicity



Demographics N=510-517



Residence / Location of Services Being Accessed N=511



- Clackamas Workforce Partnership (22%)
- Worksystems (22%)
- Willamette Workforce Partnership (13%)
- Rogue Workforce Partnership (10%)
- Lane Workforce Partnership (9%)
- Northwest Oregon Works (9%)
- East Oregon Workforce Board (6%)
- East Cascades Works (5%)
- Southwestern Oregon Workforce Partnership (5%)

Demographics N=510-517

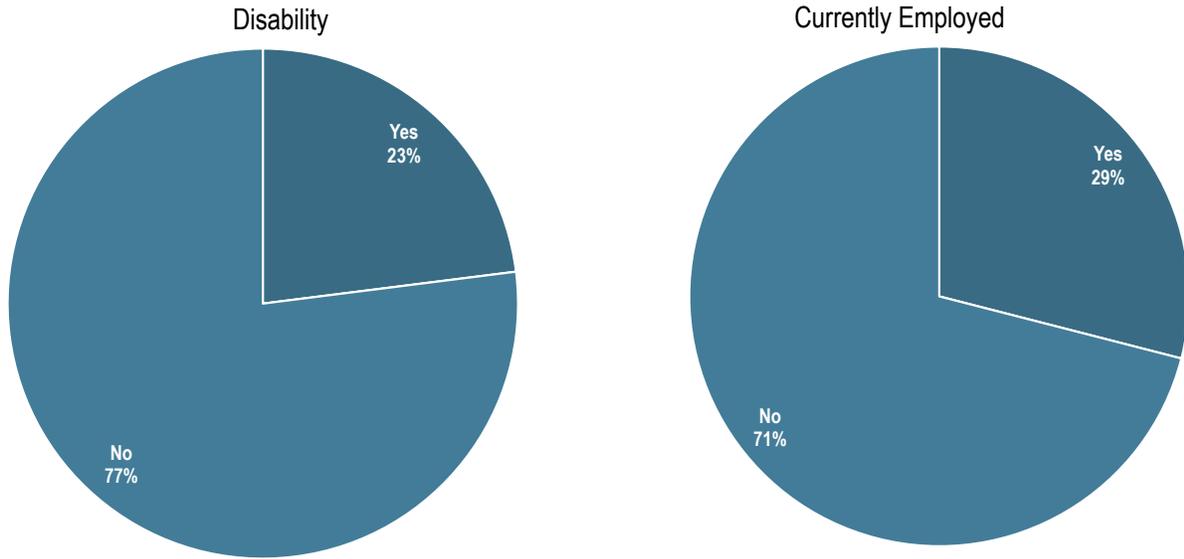


Figure 1.1 – Services Received from WorkSource Oregon N=518
What services have you received from WorkSource Oregon?

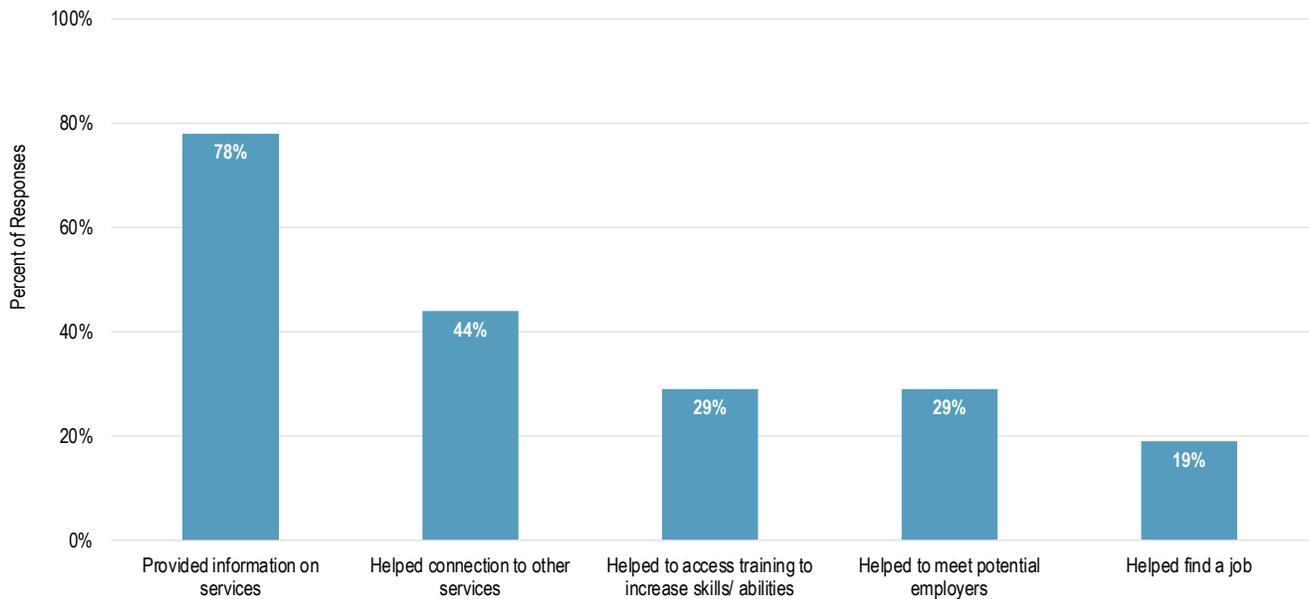


Figure 1.2 – Job Seeker Customer Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Services Received N=507
Overall, how satisfied are you with the WorkSource Oregon services you received?

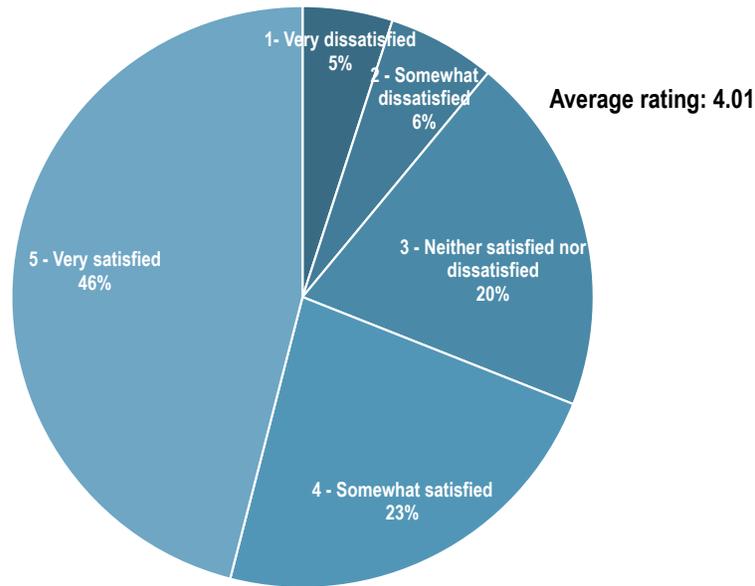


Figure 1.3 – Actions to Increase Job Seeker Customer Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Services N=98
What could WorkSource Oregon do to increase your satisfaction?

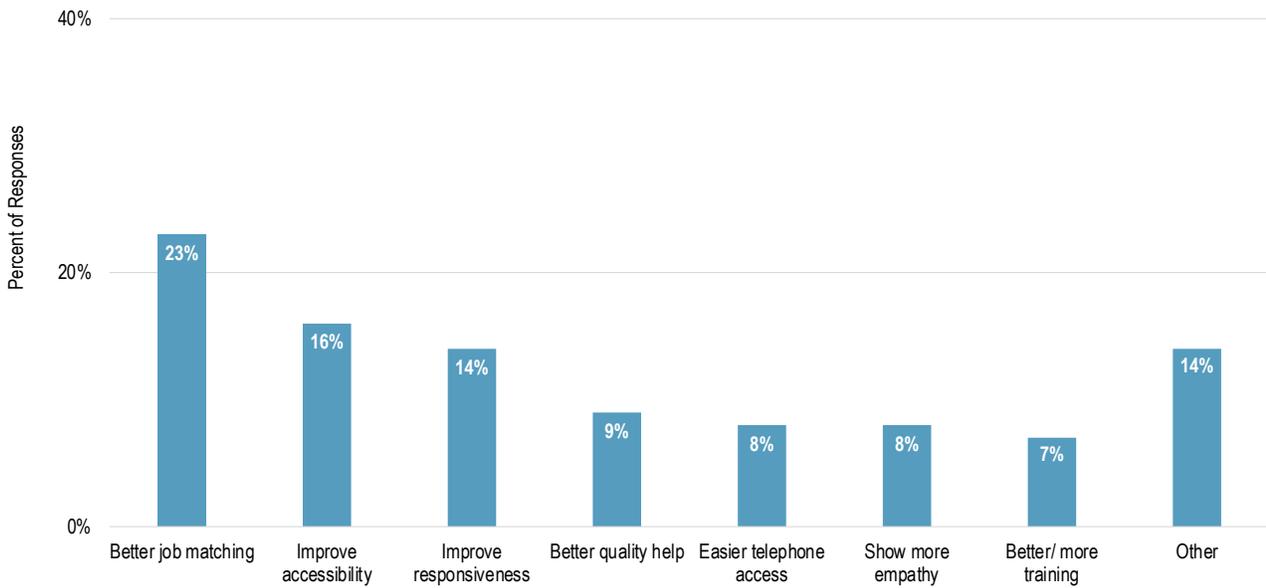


Figure 1.4 – Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Experiences N=388–480

How satisfied are you with your experience with WorkSource Oregon in each of the following areas?

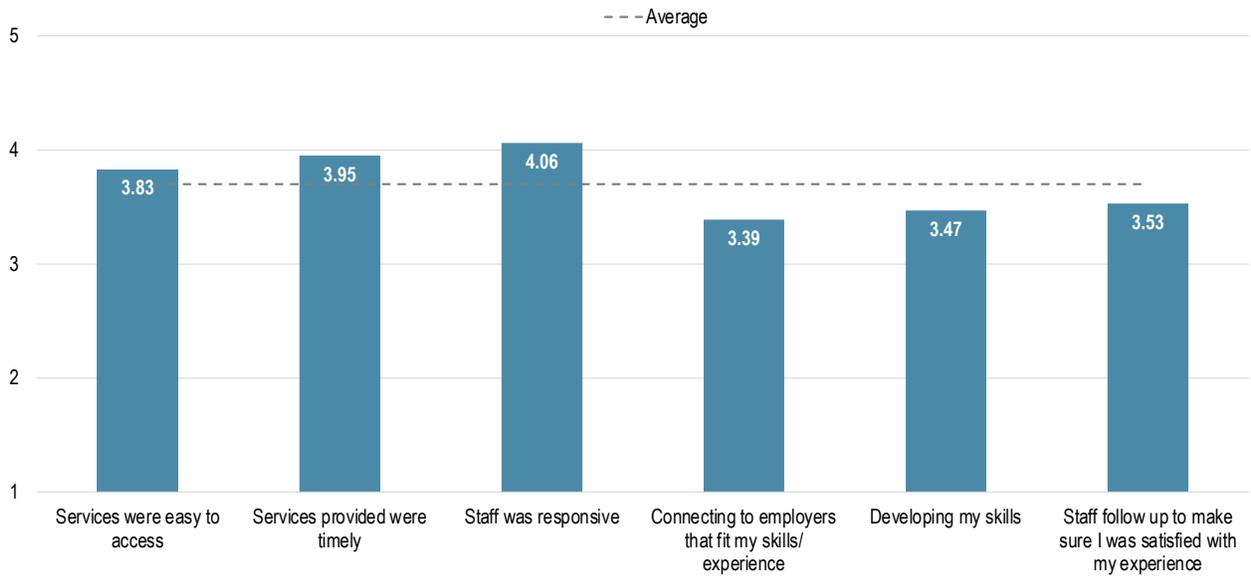
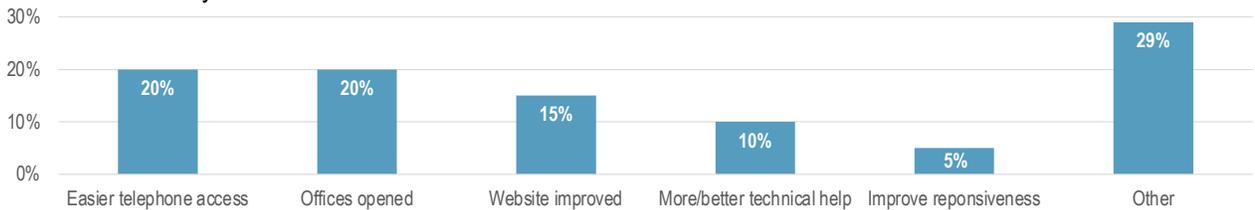


Figure 1.5a – Increasing Specific Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=60 N=31

What could WorkSource Oregon do to increase your satisfaction in the following areas?

Services were easy to access



Services provided were timely

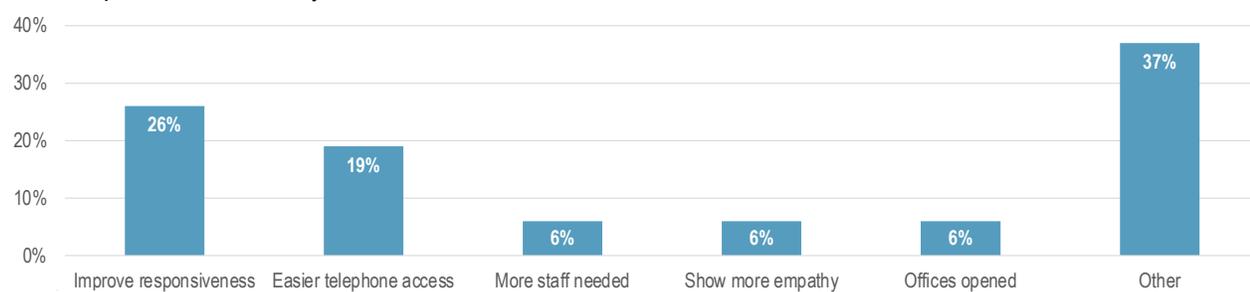
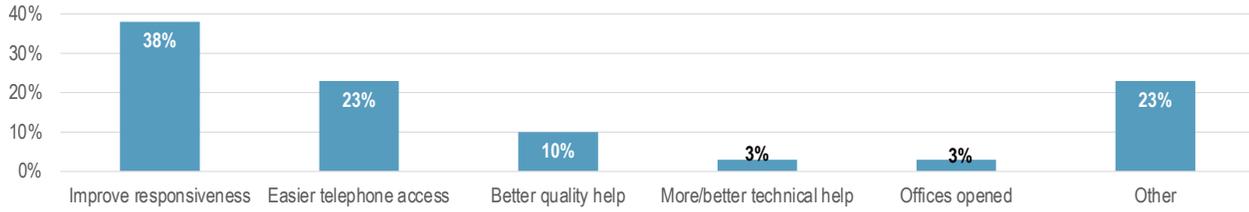


Figure 1.5b – Increasing Specific Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=40 N=69
 What could WorkSource Oregon do to increase your satisfaction in the following areas?

Staff was responsive



Connecting to employers that fit my skills and experience

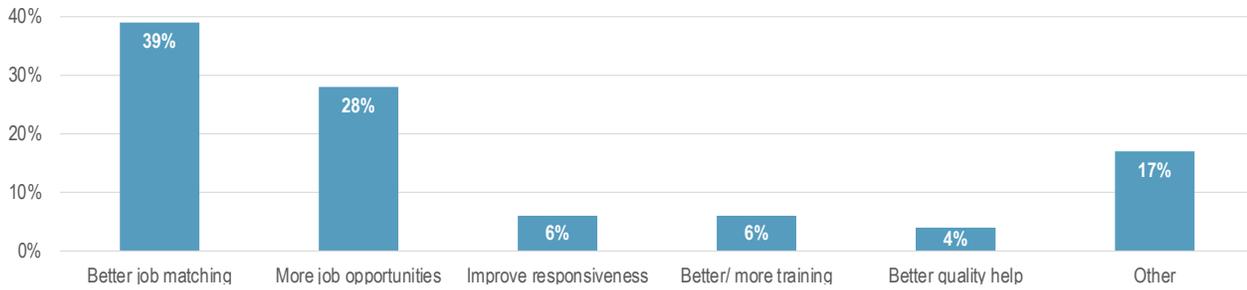
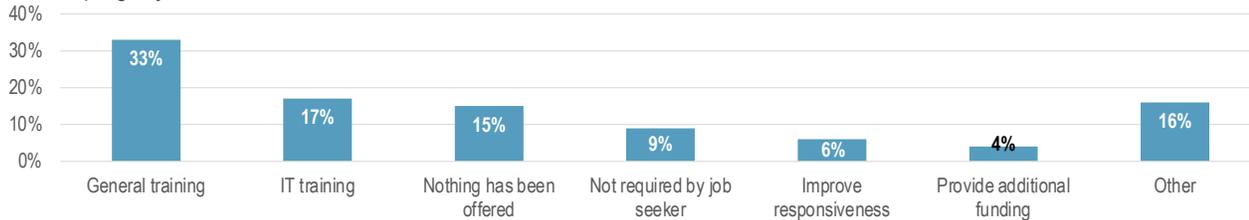
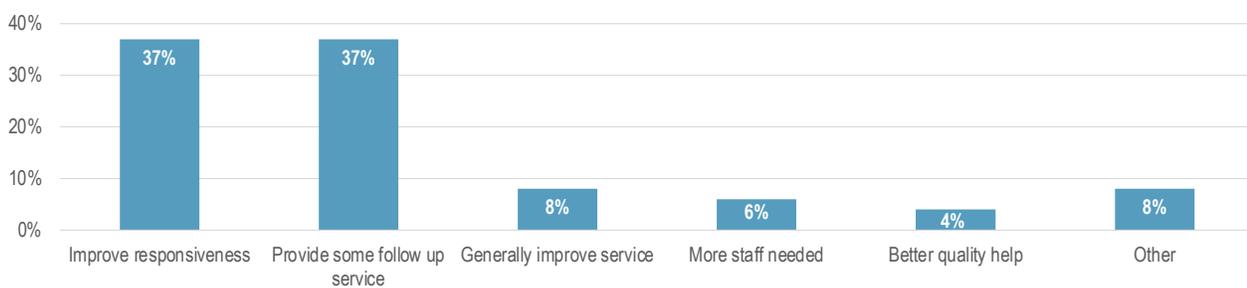


Figure 1.5c – Increasing Specific Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=54 N=52
 What could WorkSource Oregon do to increase your satisfaction in the following areas?

Developing my skills



Staff follow up to make sure I was satisfied with my experience



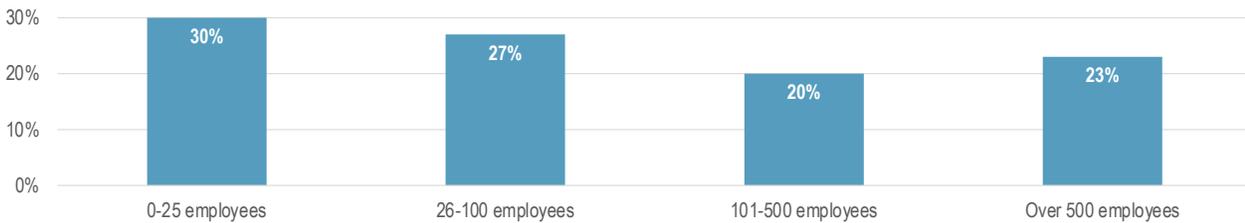
Appendix Two: Feedback from Employer Customers

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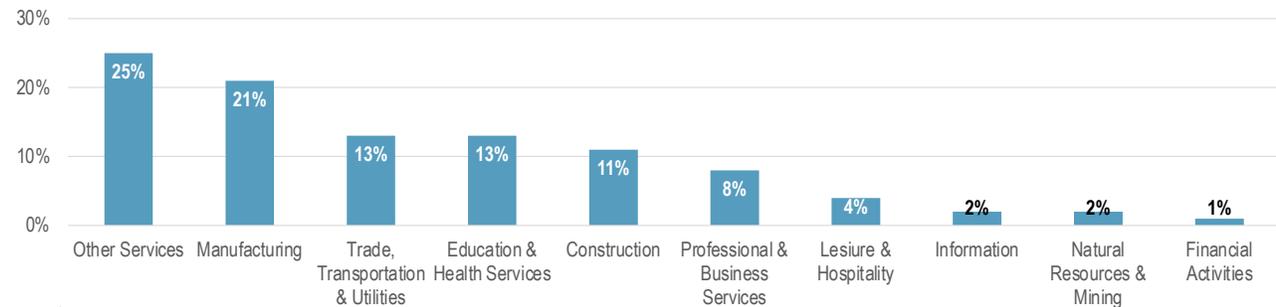
16

Demographics N=94-95

Business Size



Primary Industry/Sector



Location of Workforce Services Being Accessed by Businesses N=94

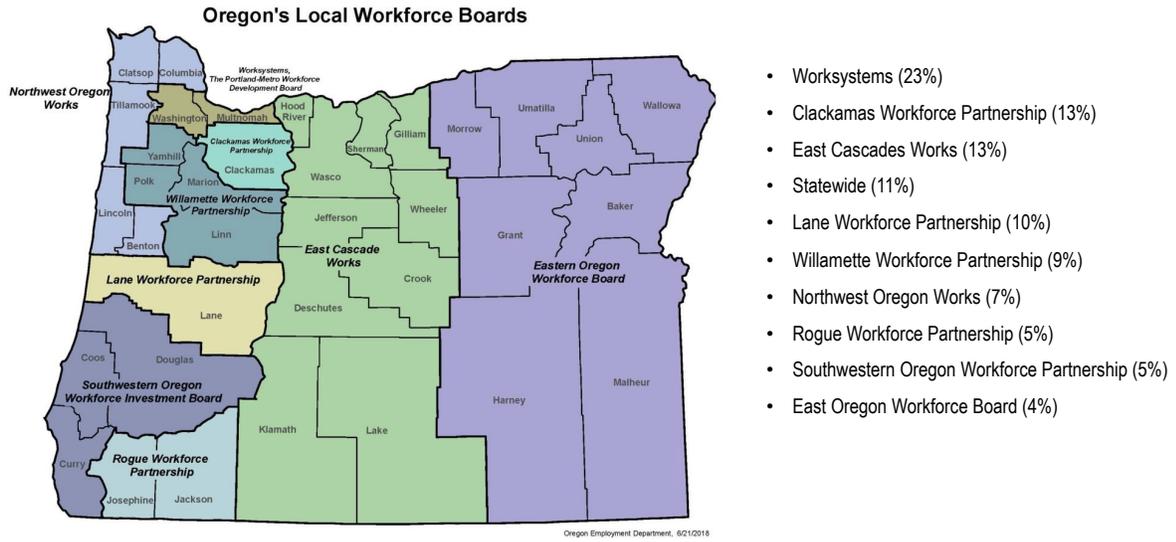


Figure 2.1 – Finding Employees Who Met Business Needs N=83

Did the services you received from WorkSource Oregon help you find employees that met your business needs?

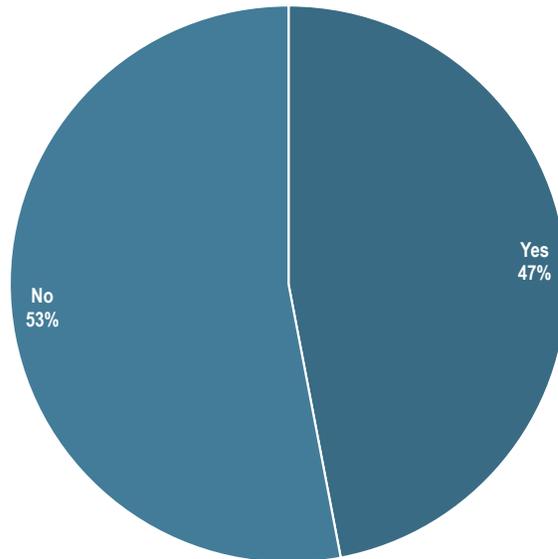


Figure 2.2 – Employer Customer Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Services Received N=86

Overall, how satisfied are you with the WorkSource Oregon services you received?

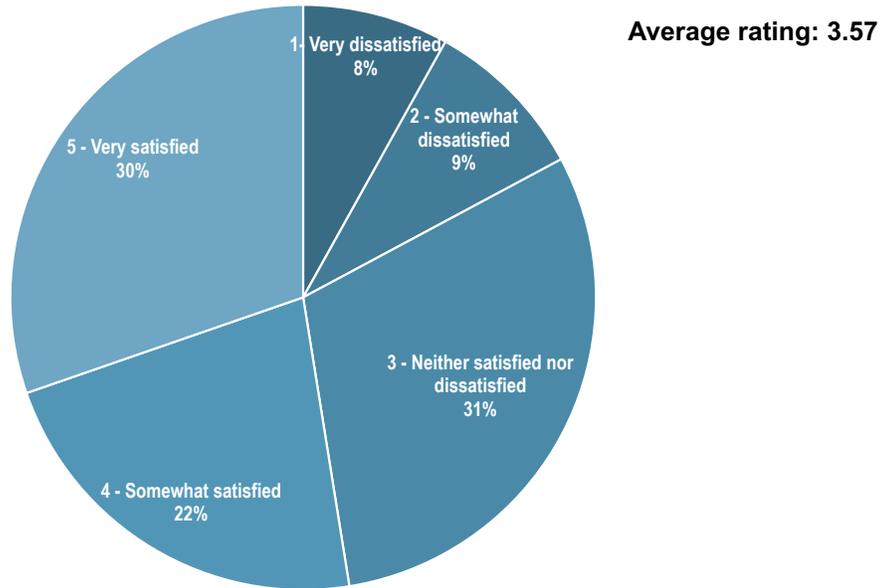


Figure 2.3 – Actions to Increase Employer Customer Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Services N=31

What could WSO do to increase your satisfaction?



- Clear, concise and responsive communication – with follow-up
- Expanded visibility
- Improved and increased candidate supply/screening/responsiveness
- Increased knowledge of local employers
- Provision of job posting boards and enhanced job posting system

Figure 2.4 – Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Experiences N=70-72

How satisfied are you with your experience with WorkSource Oregon in each of the following areas?

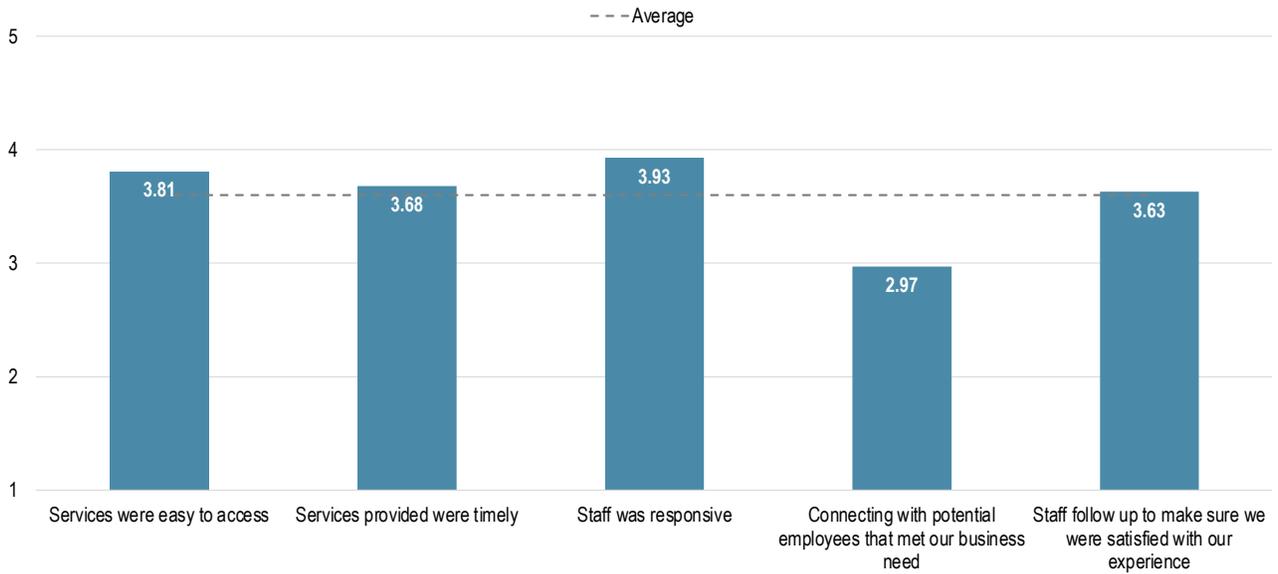


Figure 2.5 – Increasing Specific Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=7-27

What could WSO do to increase your satisfaction with the aforementioned areas?

Suggestions

- Clear, consistent, concise and responsive communication by WSO staff
- Longer-term staffing with consistent personnel for easier connectivity
- WSO staff follow-up
- Increased resourcing
- Expanded visibility
- Improved and increased candidate referrals/screening/responsiveness/willingness
- Increased knowledge of local employers
- Provision of job posting boards and enhanced job posting system
- Easier/simplified accessibility/navigation of WSO services (i.e. iMatch)
- Increased advertising/dissemination of available support/training etc.

Figure 2.6 – Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Assistance in COVID-19 Business Recovery N=12-26

How helpful are/were the following WorkSource Oregon services in helping your business recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

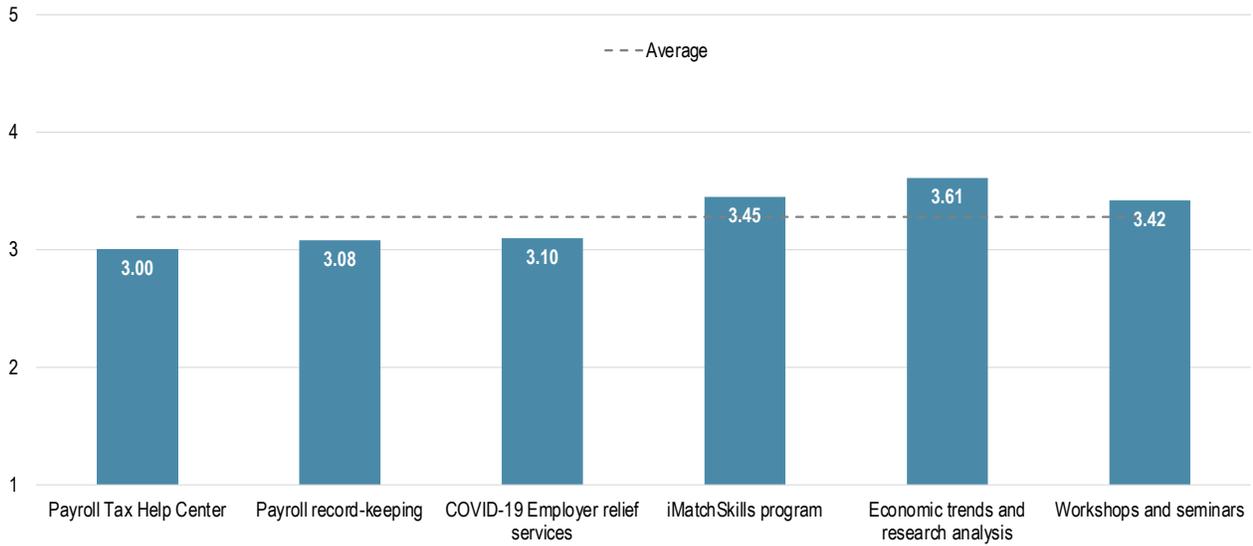


Figure 2.7 – Perceived Importance of WorkSource Oregon Service Areas N=74

I believe the following service areas of the WorkSource Oregon systems are important to underserved communities and those most impacted by COVID-19.

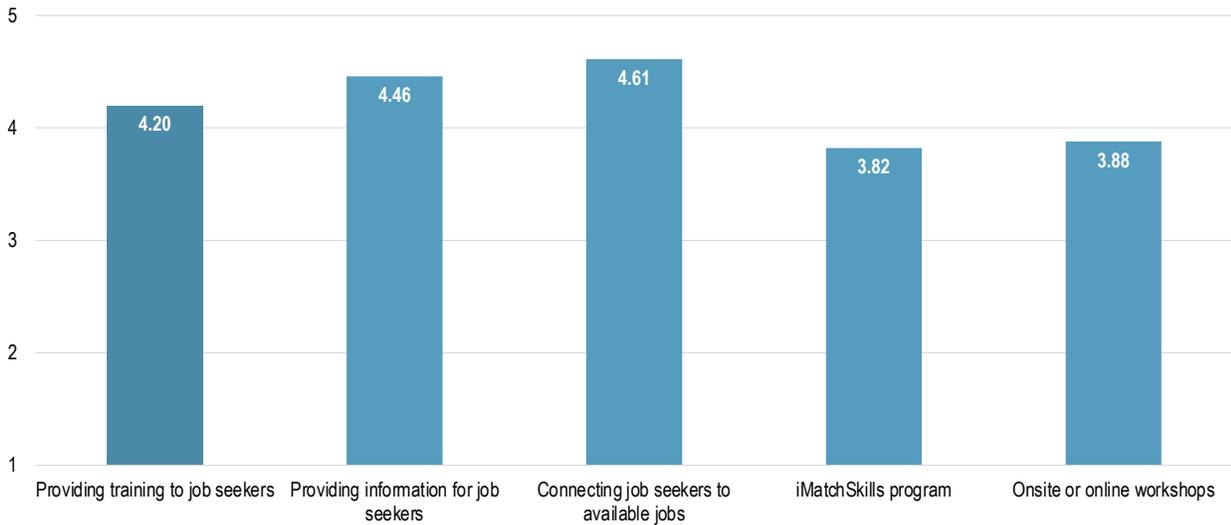


Figure 2.8 – Perceived Effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon Service Areas N=71

I believe the following service areas of the WorkSource Oregon systems are effective in serving underserved communities and those most impacted by COVID-19.

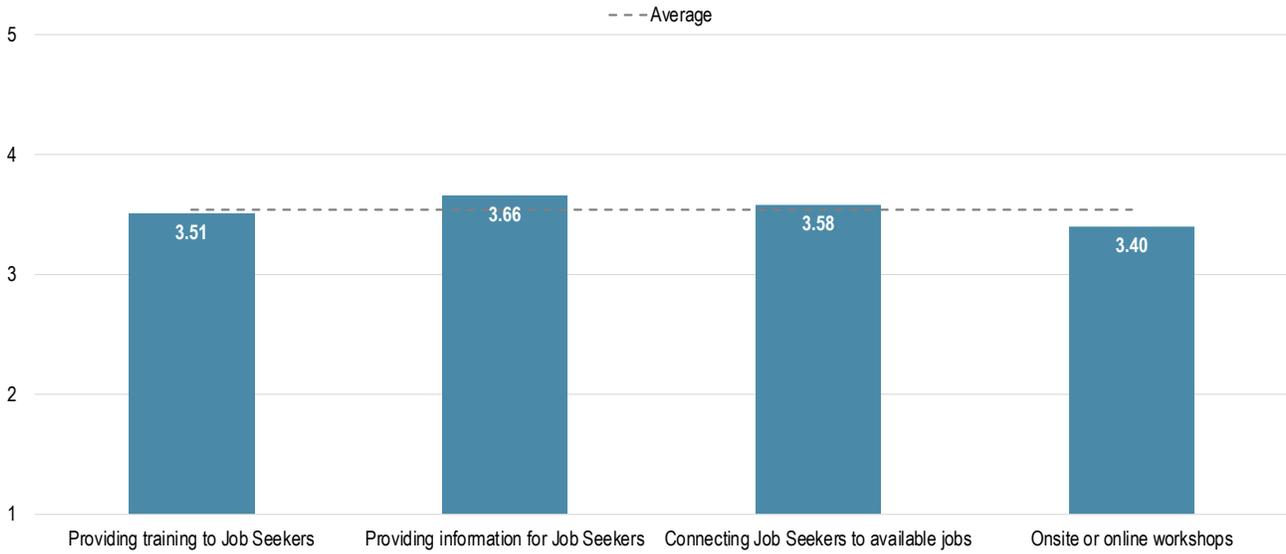


Figure 2.9 – Increasing Effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=3-8

What specifically could be improved - SERVING UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

Suggestions

- Increased advertising/dissemination of available support/training etc.
- Increased employer input
- Soft skills and work ethic/willingness
- Increased practical information provision relating to local business locations, culture etc.
- Expanding workforce support and resources to Washington County
- Out of state marketing to skill talent pools
- Funding for underserved talent to also help with workforce diversity needs
- Interview training and preparation for underserved communities that reflect current interview trends
- Accountability of Job Seekers post connection with Employers.

Figure 2.10 – Perceived Accessibility of WorkSource Oregon Service Areas N=69

I believe the following service areas of the WorkSource Oregon systems are accessible to disenfranchised communities and those most impacted by COVID-19.

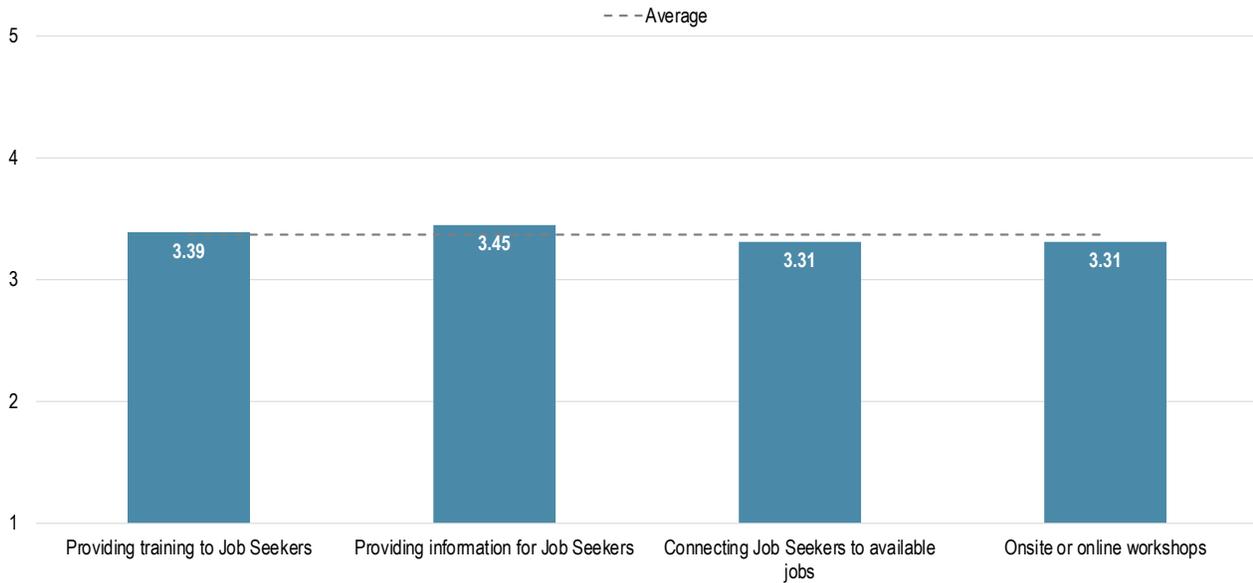


Figure 2.11 – Increasing Effectiveness of WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=6-11

What specifically could be improved - ACCESSIBILITY?



- Increased advertising/dissemination of available support/training etc.
- Improvement/rethinking of the phone tree
- Remote availability
- Job Seeker accountability
- Creation of funding opportunities
- Giving Employers the ability to search Job Seeker profiles and resumes.

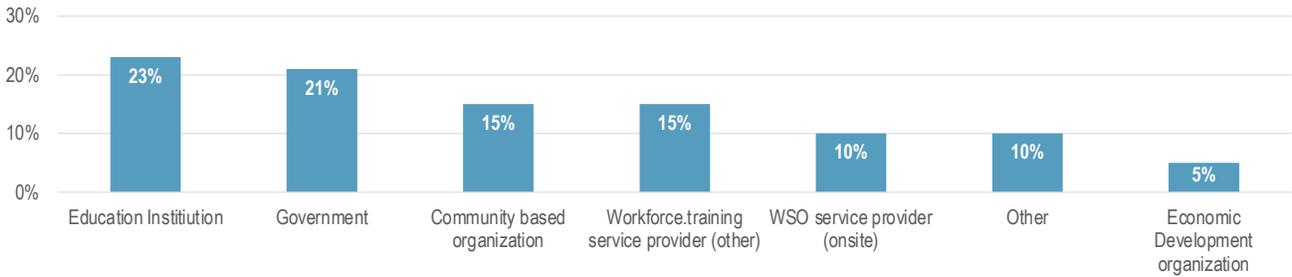
Appendix Three: Feedback from Partner Organizations

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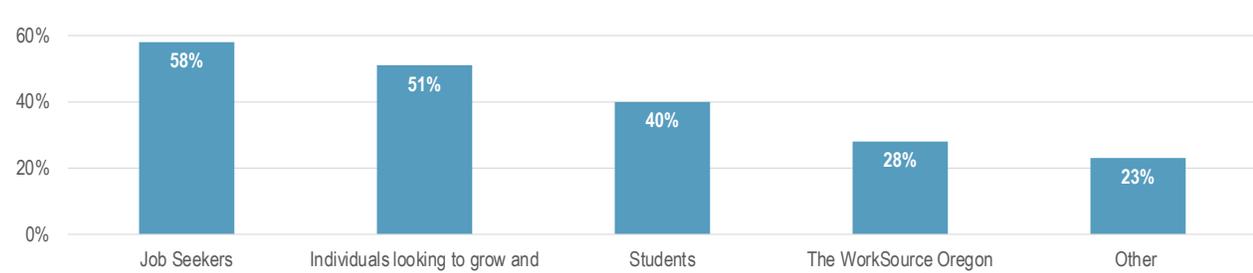
32

Demographics N=277-278

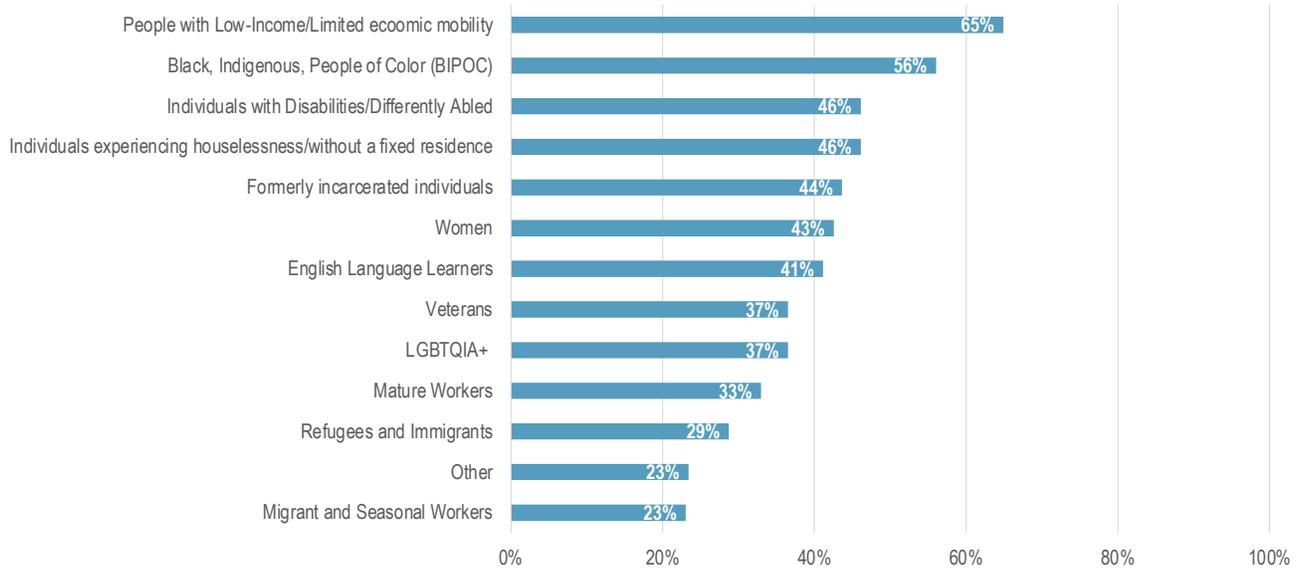
Partner Organization Type



Those Being Primarily Served/Supported



Demographics N=264
 Primary Demographic Targets



Location of Workforce Services Being Provided by Partner Organizations N=277

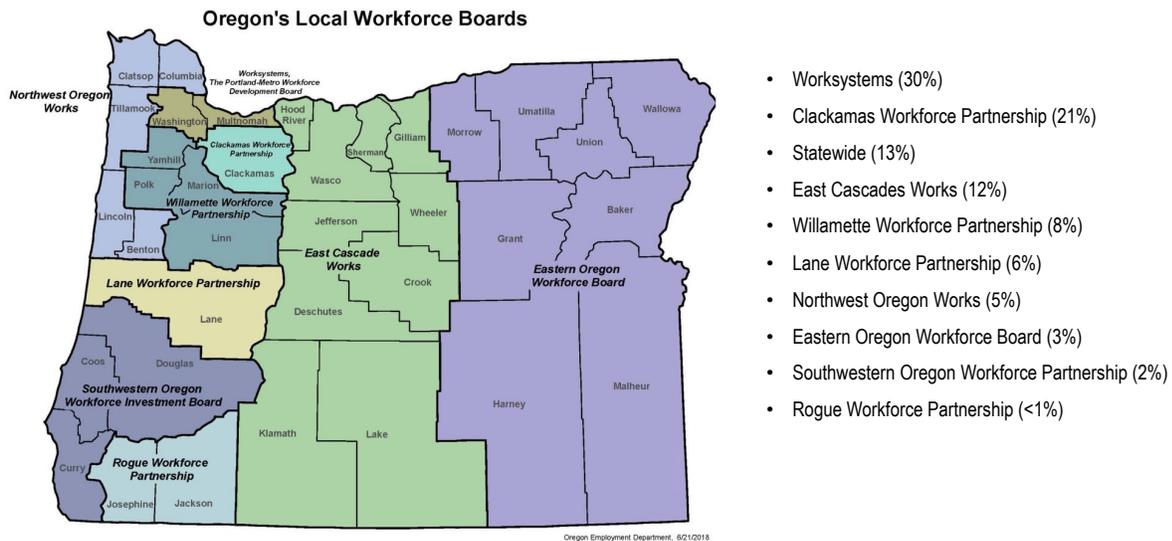


Figure 3.1 – Partner Organization Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Interactions N=274

Overall, how satisfied are you with your interactions with WorkSource Oregon?

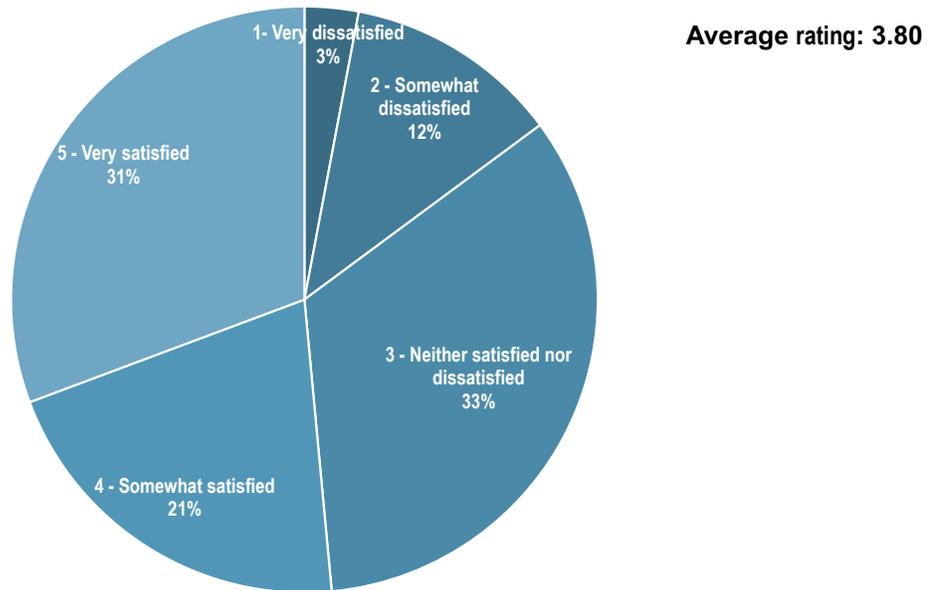


Figure 3.2 – Actions to Increase Partner Organizations Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Services N=74

What could WSO do to increase your satisfaction?

Suggestions

- Adopt a more flexible and empathetic approach - cultivating responsiveness and helpfulness
- Focus on Job Seeker outcomes and their experience, via a customer focused approach
- Increased partnership working/collaboration
- Provide better access and support for people with specific protected characteristics/needs within the community
- Improve communication with partners – ensuring structured channels which embrace clarity and consistency
- Simplify and unify services and systems
- Increase WSO visibility within the community
- Offer more virtual services and improve the information/guidance hosted on the WSO website
- Increase outreach to Employers

Figure 3.3 – Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Experiences N=211-228

How satisfied are you with your experience with WorkSource Oregon in each of the following areas?

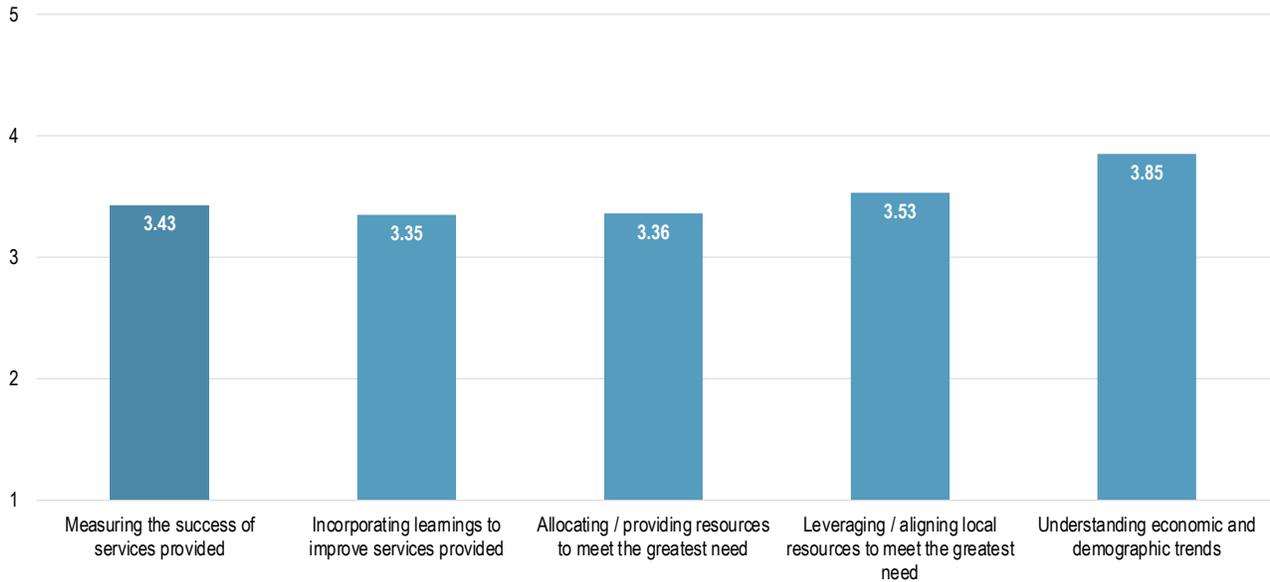


Figure 3.4 – Increasing Specific Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=27-73

What could WSO do to increase your satisfaction in the aforementioned areas?

Suggestions

- Place additional emphasis on service quality
- Cultivate transparency and responsiveness, ensuring reported outcomes and data sharing
- Clearly define measures of 'success'
- Ensure staff follow-up
- Improve Job Seeker connectivity with on-site walk-ins/provision
- Create targeted and tailored programs/services to serve marginalised community sectors
- Explicitly prioritize BIPOC and other marginalized communities and other pockets of tailored need
- Simplify, streamline and unify systems – making navigation easier
- Provide more outreach opportunities to the community
- Reconnect with partners and other stakeholders
- Collect feedback from customers and stakeholders
- Cut bureaucracy.

Figure 3.5 – Community Accessibility N=222-237

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

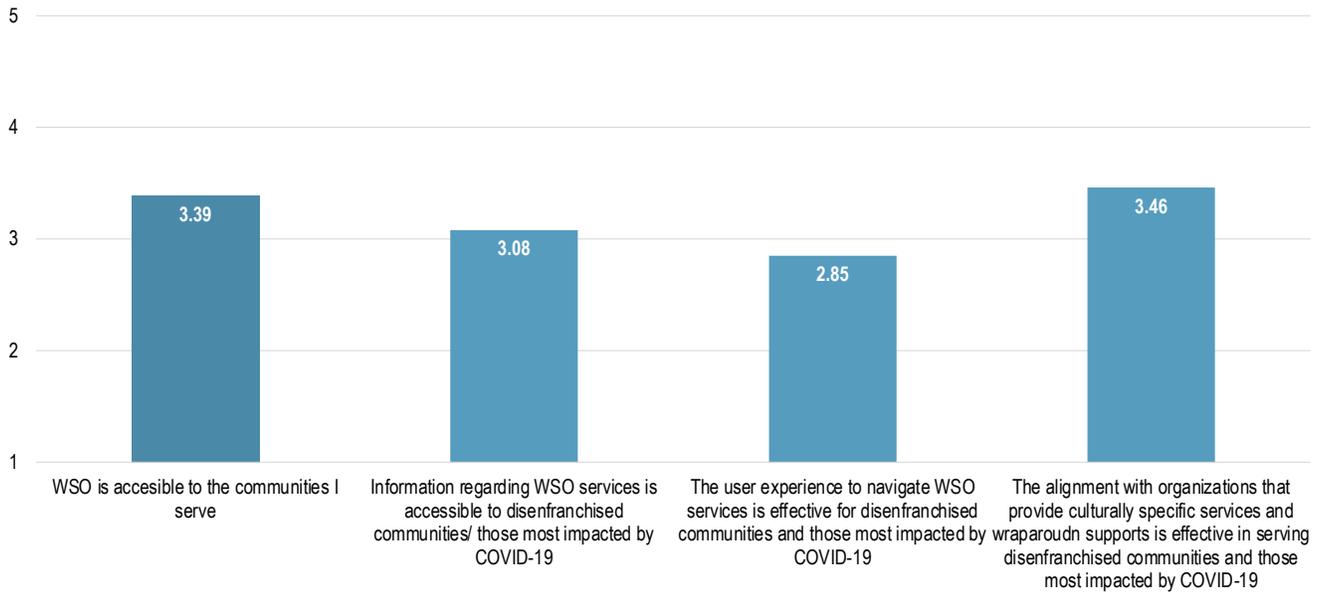


Figure 3.6 – Increasing Specific Satisfaction with WorkSource Oregon Service Provision N=65-116

What could WSO do to improve in the aforementioned areas?

Suggestions

- Offer physical, open locations and satellite offices from which to deliver services
- Offering virtual accessibility options for Job Seekers
- Use benchmarking information to measure accessibility progress/success within other states
- Clarify and simplify communication/messaging
- Increased partnership collaboration and dialogue
- Improvement/alignment/streamlining of web-based and digital systems (e.g. iTrac and iMatch)
- Creation of road maps/cheat-sheets for individuals
- Collect feedback from Job Seekers and stakeholders
- Increase outreach and information sessions within the community
- Ensure culturally relevant wraparound services
- Employ more diverse staff with the lived experience of the communities WSO serves
- Increase personalized support for Job Seekers
- Market available programs, services and support

Figure 3.7 – Describing Expectations and Goals for the WorkSource Oregon System N=176
What three words best describe your expectations and goals for the WorkSource Oregon system?



Figure 3.8 – Making WorkSource Oregon Work Better for Partners N=128
What would make the WSO system work better for you?

Suggestions

- Strengthened and expanded partnerships/collaboration
- Improved accessibility
- Improved communication
- More personalized connections
- A broader and deeper understanding of specific community needs
- Increased outreach
- Services/systems consistency/unification/simplification
- Reduced bureaucracy/politics
- Increased WSO staffing/resourcing



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