



NOVA

**Integrated
Service Delivery
Self-Evaluation
Report 2010**

NOVA Workforce Board

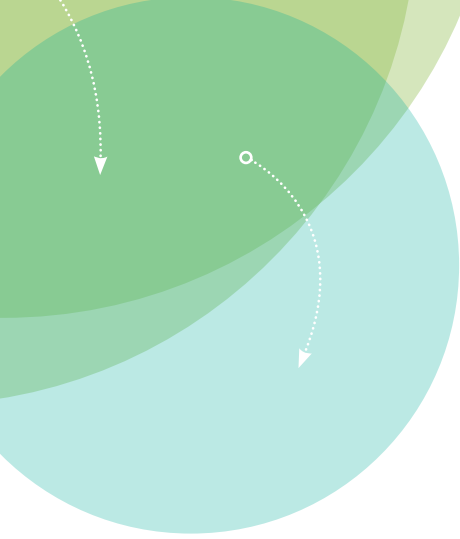
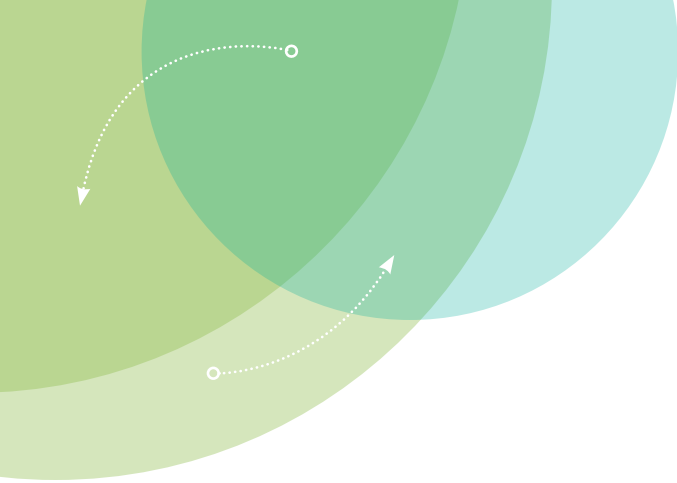


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOVA WOULD LIKE TO acknowledge the dedication and determination of the NOVA and EDD CONNECT! staff members who work tirelessly on behalf of job seeker and employer customers despite staff layoffs, furloughs, the challenges of a new service delivery model and the lingering effects of the Great Recession.

We give special thanks to the 29 focus group participants and to the 329 job seekers who responded to the online survey.

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NOVA Economic Stimulus Manager Luther Jackson wrote this report.

Executive Summary

THE GREAT RECESSION OF 2007–2009 slammed California’s Silicon Valley with the sudden and violent force of a tornado. Global economic shocks crippled demand for export-sensitive technology goods and services. The exploding housing bubble forced consumers to slash spending and threatened scores of homeowners with foreclosure. Unemployment soared to 12.4 percent in January 2010 from 4.8 percent in November 2007 in the Metropolitan Statistical Area including San Jose, Sunnyvale and Santa Clara. And as of March 2009, northern Santa Clara County had experienced 7.2 percent of the statewide Worker Adjustment and Retraining Notifications (WARNs) despite having only 1.5 percent of the state labor force.

At the same time, many dislocated workers faced a vastly changed employment landscape. Temporary and contract positions replaced full-time jobs. Silicon Valley employers accelerated the pace of internal workforce churn—laying off highly skilled workers in one narrow industry subsector while simultaneously hiring equally skilled professionals in emerging subsectors. Companies expected new hires to be flexible, entrepreneurial and willing and able to perform the work of two or three. Workers had to be able to market

themselves and manage their own careers. Networking, both in person and through social media, became even more important as job seekers sought to call attention to themselves amid an avalanche of incoming resumes for every opening.

But by the time the Lehman Brothers investment bank collapsed in September 2008, the NOVA Workforce Investment Board in Sunnyvale was prepared for the growing numbers of job seekers.

Over two years ago, NOVA and its chief local one-stop partner, the California Employment Development Department (EDD), launched a bold initiative to drastically change service delivery for job seekers and employers at the CONNECT! one-stop in Sunnyvale.

For customers, this Integrated Service Delivery (ISD) model was designed to provide a broader range of workforce services available to a greater number of job seekers and employers. For NOVA and EDD staff, the change meant trying to integrate staff functions between two agencies with similar missions but often competing and non-complementary funding streams, mandates and cultures.

CONNECT! is one of 12 California one-stop and workforce investment board systems which adopted the ISD approach in 2008 as a pilot project. Collectively, these WIBs are known as Learning Labs. After

an initial test period, all 12 have decided to continue with some version of the ISD model.

NOVA commissioned this self-evaluation last year to answer some basic questions about the effectiveness of this new model:

- Are we addressing the needs of customers?
- Are we making efficient use of scarce staff and training resources?
- Are federal and state government workforce initiatives in alignment with local efforts to integrate services and promote a globally competitive workforce?

Seeking greater objectivity and desirous of both qualitative and quantitative data, NOVA hired consultant Hilary Goodkind, Ph.D., to lead this research effort. In December 2009, she facilitated a total of five focus groups composed of employer and job seeker customers as well as NOVA and EDD staff. She then validated those data with an online survey of job seeker customers. NOVA Economic Stimulus Manager Luther Jackson also interviewed local NOVA and EDD staff as well as representatives of 11 other California workforce boards that also launched the ISD model. He wrote this report.

A. OVERVIEW

NOVA—NORTH VALLEY JOB TRAINING CONSORTIUM—is directed by the NOVA Workforce Board that works on behalf of a seven-city consortium composed of the northern Santa Clara County cities of Cupertino, Los Altos, Milpitas, Mountain View, Palo Alto, Santa

Clara and Sunnyvale. NOVA is administered by the City of Sunnyvale. Another workforce board, work2future, oversees workforce activities in San Jose and the rest of the county. NOVA delivers services to job seekers and employers through CONNECT!, which has 21 contributing and affiliate partners in addition to NOVA and EDD, the two investing partners.

NOVA provides employment-related services to job seekers and employers through its mandate under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). Those services include job search, job readiness, basic skills and vocational training for dislocated workers, lower income adults and youth. For employers, NOVA offers staffing and recruitment assistance, pre-layoff assistance and outplacement, information on business trends and analysis, and employee training and retention services.

Due to its location in the heart of the Silicon Valley technology sector, NOVA's job seeker customer base is more likely to be a well-educated dislocated tech engineer than a lower income adult with less attachment to the workforce. As of June 2010, 60.4 percent of those enrolled in CONNECT! had earned a college degree or higher and another 22.8 percent had some college but no degree.

Headquartered in Sacramento, EDD is organized into several separate branches including Workforce Services, Unemployment Insurance (UI), Information Technology and Disability Insurance. The Workforce Services branch administers job referral, search and placement services funded by the federal Wagner-Peyser Act, as well as the CalJOBS online job and resume



“The question is, how do you provide good customer service? If it’s a hybrid (of ISD), I am willing to go with that.”

– Fran Kennedy, (former) North Central Counties Consortium

bank and a labor market information operation.

NOVA and EDD are partners in ProMatch, a sophisticated career networking initiative for job seekers with extensive career experience. Participants volunteer their time to assist in networking and success team activities and also lead workshops. ProMatch was launched as a chapter of Experience Unlimited, an EDD-led program designed to provide similar services in workforce areas around the state. Over the last several years, NOVA has increased its investment in ProMatch and the program currently has two NOVA staff members and one from EDD.

Initially planned in 2007, ISD is designed to enroll all job seeker customers in a common system featuring the range of job seeker services provided through Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Wagner-Peyser, Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) and Veterans’ Employment & Training Service funding streams. Traditionally NOVA staff oversaw WIA-related work and partnered with EDD on TAA issues while EDD’s workforce services division staff was responsible for the other programs. As originally designed, ISD would lead to integrated work teams of EDD and NOVA staff performing all of the above-listed functions. For job seeker customers, ISD was to result in seamless service delivery without distinction to funding source.

B. ISD EVALUATION FINDINGS

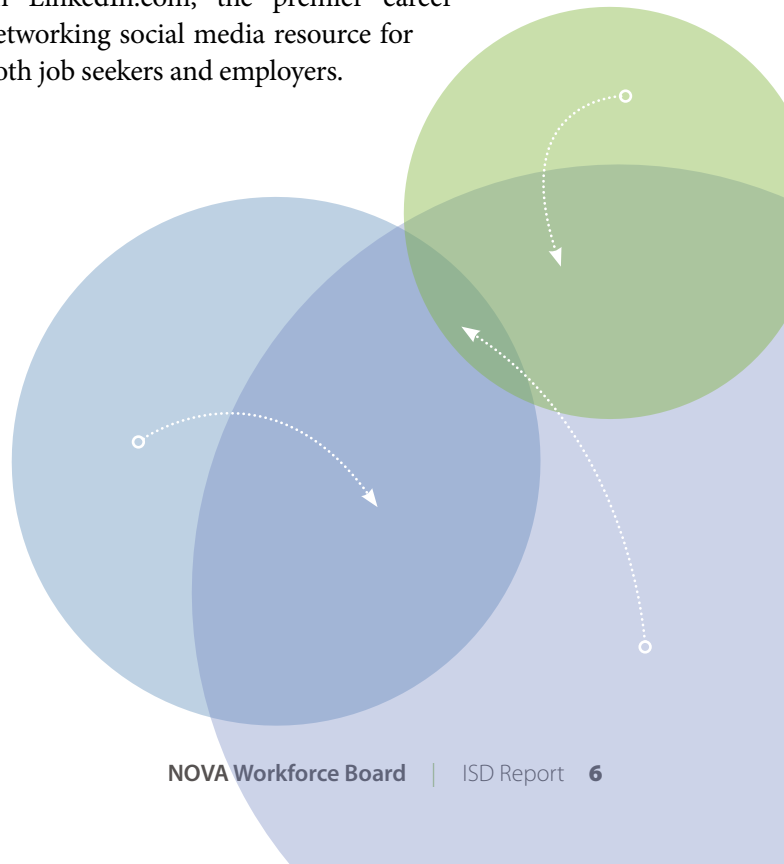
BY MANY MEASURES the CONNECT! ISD process has been successful. Through the teeth of the recession, CONNECT! accommodated more job seekers and offered a higher volume of workshop offerings.

One key change in the new service delivery model is a shift from providing comprehensive one-on-one case management to a select group of job seekers to

enrolling virtually all eligible customers. CONNECT! enrolled approximately 15 percent of one-stop visitors pre-ISD and is currently enrolling between 90 and 95 percent of visitors. This change enabled CONNECT! and the other state ISD participants to strategically re-deploy staff and provide drop-in career advising, additional workshops and other services tailored to quickly and efficiently meet customer needs in a recessionary and dynamic economy. “It’s more customer driven,” one NOVA staff member said of the new approach.

In the program year ending June 30, 2009, CONNECT! memberships jumped 61 percent from the previous year to 8,720. Daily client visits increased 44 percent to 76,032. The number of drop-in appointments spiked 160 percent to 10,150 and the number of workshop attendees rose 266 percent to 13,536. At the same time, dwindling federal resources caused NOVA to cut its staff to 43 from 61 in July 2008, after losing 17 staff members in February 2007. California budget shortfalls resulted in state employees—including CONNECT! EDD staff—placed on thrice-monthly furlough days in 2009 and 2010, the equivalent of a pay cut of almost 15 percent.

Compared with the pre-integration program year, CONNECT! has more than tripled the number of monthly workshop sessions available to customers, added six new workshop titles and has become one of the first WIBs in the U.S. to offer a workshop on LinkedIn.com, the premier career networking social media resource for both job seekers and employers.





The efficiencies resulting from more customers, fewer staff and a diminution of the case management model combined to reduce the amount spent per CONNECT! customer to \$1,000 in the 2009 program year from \$5,000 the previous year.

For the most part, job seeker customers who participated in the focus groups said they appreciated the ability of CONNECT! to help prepare them for the rigors associated with finding work in Silicon Valley. Employer representatives said they recognize CONNECT!'s potential as a value-added partner that can help them find job candidates who are highly skilled, flexible and entrepreneurial.

The evaluation revealed a split between focus group customers who visited CONNECT! both before and after ISD implementation and those who are only familiar with the new service delivery model. The "post-ISD" group members praised CONNECT! services, which they said destroyed their stereotypes about government-supported agencies. "NOVA is a best practice," said one. "I would hope that more centers have learned what you have learned. You're doing some great stuff here."

Asked by Dr. Goodkind to describe CONNECT! as if it were a person, these participants said: professional, empathetic, efficient, kind, effective, dedicated and pragmatic.

Because of their experience with longer-term and

multiple incidents of dislocation, the "pre and post ISD" customers were more insistent on CONNECT! to provide even greater value. That included facilitating direct connections between job seekers and employers with specific job openings, promoting additional networking opportunities and making better use of technology.

Said one "pre and post" focus group participant: "NOVA focuses on the (job) search and preparation but doesn't focus on attracting and finding the jobs that are really there for them."

The 329 CONNECT! job seeker customers who completed an online survey generally echoed the focus group conclusions. Asked what they would like to see at the one-stop, these respondents said it would be most important for them if "employers came to CONNECT! to recruit employees, career advisors were able to help you reframe your past experience for new career opportunities, career advisors could match your skills to current job openings and CONNECT! could refer you to knowledgeable unemployment insurance specialists."

Like some of their job seeker counterparts, the employer focus group participants were pleasantly surprised by CONNECT!'s core competencies and one said the service level was on a par with outplacement firms. Their initial attitude regarding CONNECT! was to view the relationship as an act of corporate community service. For CONNECT! to play the role of value-added business partner, however, it must address a number of key issues. Those include the ability to pre-screen candidates and to more fully utilize technology to increase real-time information flow—of available jobs and qualified applicants—between the one-stop and employers.

Generally, the data show a sense of increased expectations by customer stakeholders. Intrigued by the theory and promise of one-stop integration, these customers are collectively calling for CONNECT! to adhere to three fundamental service delivery principles: transparency, clarity and integrity. For example, if CONNECT! advertises that it is the one place to go for employment-related needs, then some customers are asking:

- Why isn't there someone on site who can answer my unemployment insurance questions?

- Why can't career advisors link my skills and experience to existing Silicon Valley job openings?
- Why isn't there a resume database where employers like me can easily find qualified candidates?

The customers' voices rang out loud and clear throughout this self-evaluation process. And as the research progressed through the last quarter of 2009, the report found that customers were less interested in assessing the impact of ISD and more concerned about whether CONNECT! is meeting customer needs, regardless of the service delivery model.

While there has been progress on the service delivery front, both NOVA and EDD staff acknowledge that achieving full staff integration has been a major challenge. The original plan called for the two staffs to participate in integrated work teams performing all essential one-stop center functions ranging from welcome and registration to skill development to working with employers. In fact, there is an integrated staff on the welcome team but the NOVA welcome staff members often steer customers to NOVA activities and the EDD welcome staff members often refer customers to EDD activities.

“CONNECT! is another reason to get dressed up, go meet people, keep your attitude up.”

– ISD job seeker

There is a fair degree of tension between the two staffs, much of it focused around a lack of mutual understanding and inherent cultural issues. As a large organization administering state and federal regulatory programs, EDD is, by necessity, a compliance-driven and hierarchical organization. For example, one important success metric for EDD staff is quantitative—the number of workers who enroll in the CalJOBS online resume database. Being much smaller and with a locally based management structure, NOVA and related agencies are more flexible organizations. NOVA and other Learning Labs are veering away from strictly quantitative enrollment metrics because of the importance of customer choice and a concern about being

able to serve all who visit the one-stops. EDD staff may ask “Why can't NOVA managers just follow the rules?” NOVA staff may ask “Why can't EDD staff go the extra mile to please the customer?”

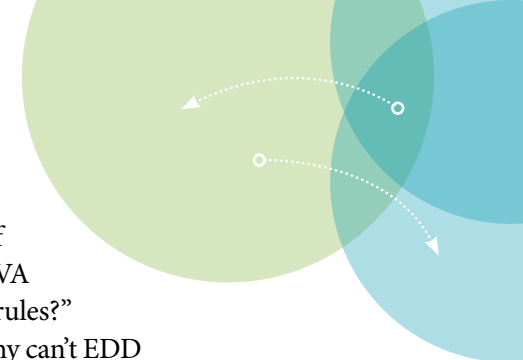
Unemployment Insurance (UI) is the root of many problems and frustrations. Many customers and NOVA staff expect EDD staff to be able to answer questions regarding UI. That's understandable. EDD does administer UI and there is a large EDD sign on the CONNECT! building. But, in fact, UI and workforce services are two separate branches within EDD and the EDD staff at CONNECT! does not have the training and experience to address unemployment issues. This lack of EDD integration has hindered CONNECT! staff integration.

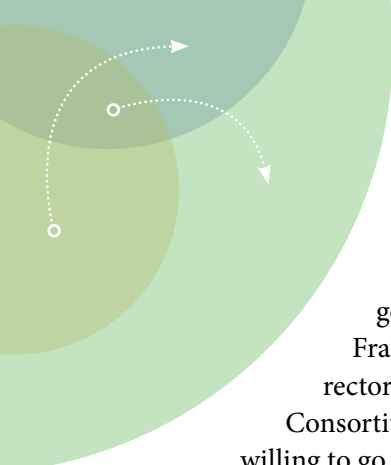
The CONNECT! staff schisms have not escaped the notice of job seeker customers, many of whom arrive for one-stop services weighed down by many economic and emotional burdens. As customer needs and expectations continue to mount, the looming threat of staff disintegration could lessen CONNECT!'s ability to sustain a high level of service delivery into the future.

The CONNECT! staff integration challenges are not unique, according to interviews with leaders at 11 other California workforce boards which adopted the ISD approach at the same time as NOVA and its EDD partner. Data from these Learning Labs served to both validate the findings of this research and provide accessible and actionable models for addressing ISD-related concerns. Those that addressed WIA and EDD cultural conflicts head-on with intentional team-building initiatives have generally enjoyed the greatest amount of progress in realizing the staff integration vision.

During the first month of ISD, the San Diego one-stops closed early every day so the WIA and EDD staff could convene and discuss what worked and did not work that day. “Daily review allows you to see that problems are shared problems and you don't have time to build up blame,” workforce advancement director Reg Javier said.

As for the service delivery changes, the Learning Labs cited challenges stemming from huge enrollment increases, the inability to answer UI questions and concerns about the inability to connect one-stop customers directly with available jobs. However, all





say they will not return to pre-
ISD models. Ultimately, “the
question is how do you provide
good customer service?” asked
Fran Kennedy, former executive di-
rector of the North Central Counties
Consortium. “If it’s a hybrid (of ISD), I am
willing to go with that.”

C. ANALYSIS AND NEXT STEPS

THIS UNFLINCHING SELF-EVALUATION tells two stories, one local and one state and federal.

There is a CONNECT!/NOVA story that suggests a series of actionable steps that can be addressed locally. The report recommends a series of incremental steps designed to position this report as a catalyst for immediate change. Most importantly NOVA believes it is critical for CONNECT! customers and both NOVA and EDD staffs to know that NOVA values their contributions to CONNECT! and to this evaluation process and appreciates their ongoing commitment to building a state of the art one-stop system.

The chief goal of this incremental phase is to promote team building among NOVA and EDD staff by

presenting them with joint problem solving challenges designed to address the needs of job seeker and employer customers.

Once NOVA, EDD and other partners are able to lay a foundation for positive action, the report foresees a detailed set of initiatives seeking to fulfill the ISD model’s potential through better coordination. These include a survey of CONNECT! staff to assess staff resources and better align them with one-stop needs.

Despite the rough edges, CONNECT! has made a positive impact on its job seeker and employer customers. This was underscored by the fact that members of each of the three customer focus group offered to volunteer their resources going forward to work with NOVA staff to implement improvements based on this report. These volunteers could be the foundation of a CONNECT! stakeholder council which would include EDD and NOVA staff and could work together to make recommendations to NOVA and EDD management for one-stop improvements.

There are also efforts underway locally and in Sacramento to alleviate some of the ISD challenges identified in this report. EDD has launched a comprehensive overhaul designed to upgrade its computer systems, enabling UI staff to shift their focus to customer service from administrative duties. That change should reduce the volume of UI



concerns that find their way to the one-stops, EDD officials say.

As a result of this self-evaluation, CONNECT! leaders have engaged EDD and NOVA staff in a process to identify and address ISD-related challenges including UI and the staff cultural divide.

In a continuous improvement process, CONNECT! leadership is also reaching out to other Learning Labs to thoroughly examine ISD processes and determine ongoing improvements. CONNECT! convened a meeting with representatives from the San Diego and North Central Counties Consortium one-stop operations in May.

D. STATE AND FEDERAL IMPLICATIONS

SILICON VALLEY STAKEHOLDERS CANNOT ADDRESS the challenges all by themselves. There is also a federal and state narrative suggesting a whole set of policy remedies that are beyond the direct control of NOVA and EDD. Indeed, there are many instances in which a lack of policy integration in Washington, D.C. stymies efforts to achieve authentic service and staff integration in Sacramento and in the NOVA region and at the other workforce boards involved in the ISD process.

NOVA believes that a clear understanding of the impact of federal and state mandates on local one-stops and customers will provide essential direction for legislators and administrators seeking to better align the nation's workforce system with the real-world needs of local workforce boards and the demands of a dynamic economy.

Though addressing the service delivery challenges and opportunities in a corner of Silicon Valley, this self-evaluation is directly relevant to state and national workforce practitioners because NOVA believes that the economic dynamism and workforce churning experienced here will ultimately spread to other areas.

Finally, this self-evaluation underscores the value of detailed customer data. The vast majority of CONNECT! job seeker and employer visitors are not steeped in the intricacies of WIA or Wagner-Peyser. But they have a clear vision of what they need—a well-resourced, seamless workforce system—and the existing barriers to achieving that vision.



E. METHODOLOGY

NOVA'S PROJECT RESEARCHER, Dr. Goodkind, is a Santa Cruz-based consultant with extensive workforce board and executive partnership and strategic planning experience. She has been a NOVA board member for eight years and was selected for this project as the result of a procurement process that included a request for qualifications shared broadly with the local workforce consulting community. Dr. Goodkind previously worked with NOVA in a consulting role as leader of the agency's "Voice of the Customer" initiative that provided a template for using qualitative data to improve customer service.

She led five focus groups with CONNECT! stakeholders including job seekers who visited the one-stop both before and after integration (six attended), job seekers only familiar with the post integration model (five), employers (four), NOVA staff (six) and EDD



staff (eight). Dr. Goodkind led each group through a series of questions designed to reveal ISD weaknesses and problems, current issues and motivations, future system enhancements and the latent needs of participants. All responses were anonymous to ensure the utmost candor. (See Appendix A of the full report for a complete list of focus group questions.)

The focus groups yielded verbatim transcripts that Dr. Goodkind organized by affinity groups and analyzed for intersections of ideas. Ultimately the process

produced conclusions and some cause and effect relations that will be discussed in depth later in this report. (Please see Appendices B 1–5 for schematics of this data analysis process.)

Based on the qualitative survey results, Dr. Goodkind and NOVA staff then created an online quantitative survey sent to over 4,000 CONNECT! job seeker customers. The purpose of the survey was to validate the qualitative data with the quantitative. Some 329 customers completed the survey.

NOVA manager Luther Jackson wrote this self-evaluation based on Dr. Goodkind's analysis and on separate conversations with NOVA and EDD staff and telephone interviews with officials from the 11 initial ISD Learning Labs. These are North Central Counties Consortium, Madera County, Pacific Gateway (Long Beach), Riverside County, Sacramento, San Bernardino County, San Diego, Santa Ana, Sonoma County, Verdugo (Glendale) and work2future (San Jose).

The report is structured as follows. The next section provides some basic background about the ISD process on the federal, state and local levels and will include a "tour" of CONNECT! services—before and after integration—with two fictitious job seekers. The following section will include a detailed assessment of CONNECT!'s ISD service delivery from the standpoint of job seeker and employer customers. There will then be a similar discussion of ISD staffing integration challenges with the NOVA and EDD focus group and input from the 11 Learning Labs. The main body of the report will follow with analysis and conclusions and prioritized recommendations from both the federal and state and the local—CONNECT!—perspectives. An appendix will feature all focus group questions, verbatim responses from participants, quantitative survey results, a list of current CONNECT! workshops and the complete results of the online quantitative customer survey.

ISD Background

NOVA'S INTRODUCTION TO THE integrated service delivery concept dates to 2007 when nationally recognized consultant Greg Newton delivered his staff and service delivery vision to an EDD-sponsored meeting. EDD invited NOVA and other workforce investment boards to the presentation and then asked workforce representatives if they wished to participate in the ISD pilot program. Beyond the service and staff integration focus, the broad outcomes for the ISD process were that job seekers would know their skills, improve their skills and get jobs with their skills.

In September 2007, EDD designated the CONNECT! One-Stop as one of 12 so-called Learning Labs where EDD and NOVA staffs would be integrated, all one-stop customers would be co-enrolled in both NOVA (WIA) and EDD (mainly Wagner-Peyser) programs and—most importantly—all customers would be enrolled for services and offered a common selection of services. These included an orientation—in which a welcome/registration team handled data collection, eligibility verification and registration and enrollment, an initial needs/skills evaluation with a career advisor; a range of workshops—including resume development and interviewing practices; and unlimited access to

career advisors on a drop-in basis. The goals of this pilot project were to increase the number of customers enrolled, build the most effective, data-driven service design, integrate customer flow and staffing, minimize overhead costs, demonstrate return on investment by reporting a more accurate number of customers served and address administrative tasks and customer tracking.

According to EDD, the Learning Lab model was developed to help California respond “to 21st century industry demands” and to “ensure that our services and training are aligned with current local and regional labor market requirements. Once implemented, it will create a new local workforce system that is skill based and will move each One-Stop Career Center client through a common set of value-added services designed to increase their employability and their chances of retaining jobs and advancing in them.”

Specifically the EDD-led initiative was to identify strategies and operating models in three areas:

- a common pool of co-enrolled customers composed of WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Workers, as well as those seeking assistance from Wagner-Peyser, Long Term Unemployed, Veteran, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker (MSFW) and

- Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) funding sources;
- a common set of services available to all customers in the pool through a common customer flow; and
- a shared WIA, Wagner-Peyser, Veteran, MSFW and TAA staffing of the common integrated service and customer flow.

To fully appreciate the impact of service integration locally, it is important to understand both the roles of federal and state workforce agencies as well as the recent history of NOVA, EDD and CONNECT!.

NATIONAL AND STATE IMPACT ON ISD

THE MONEY, RULES AND MANDATES for CONNECT! services originate in the same place, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (ETA). And ETA’s mission statement certainly has a unified focus: “to contribute to the more efficient functioning of the U.S. labor market by providing high quality job training, employment,

labor market information, and income maintenance services primarily through state and local workforce development systems.”

But, from the standpoint of a California one-stop Learning Lab seeking to integrate service delivery and staff, the unified purpose begins to unravel before the money, rules and mandates leave the District of Columbia. Support for local employment and training programs—focusing on job training and placement—flow through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) to approximately 575 locally operated workforce investment boards (WIBs) including NOVA. Support for job service—referral, job search and placement, unemployment insurance and labor market information activities flows through the Wagner-Peyser Act to state employment agencies such as California’s Employment Development Department (EDD).

From the job seeker customer perspective, all of the WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs serve a common purpose of addressing basic needs caused by unemployment or underemployment. But workforce practitioners see two large silos—WIA and Wagner-Peyser—which address similar and occasionally competing programs.



CONNECT! “is a best practice. I would hope that more centers have learned what you have learned. You’re doing some great stuff here.” – ISD job seeker

Literal-minded customers may visit one-stop career centers with the expectations that all of their employment and unemployment related concerns can be addressed under one roof by any staff member regardless of their WIA or Wagner-Peyser affiliation. But they are met by two systems—sometimes operating seamlessly side-by-side, sometimes not—two sets of rules and mandates and, in many cases, two work cultures.

Because of the connection with UI payments and other cash payment programs necessitating careful monitoring and frequent audits, Wagner-Peyser programs tend to be compliance-driven and more tied to a set of clear-cut regulations from federal and state administrators. Despite ties to the WIA enabling legislation, WIBs are run locally by diverse groups of stakeholders and therefore, ideally, have the flexibility to react quickly to customer needs and to local economic conditions. This WIB focus on local input and the ability to address local demands and barriers with local programs is a key element that distinguishes WIA from its predecessor, the Job Training Partnership Act.

There are also impenetrable silos within Wagner-Peyser-enabled agencies. In California and elsewhere, the recession and resulting new unemployment insurance rules and extensions have heightened customer confusion and added many questions. Up until the last decade or so, UI recipients could visit a one-stop and get answers to their questions. But even though Californians receive their checks from EDD, they cannot get UI information from one-stop EDD staff because the state job service

and UI staff work for separate and distinct branches.

The Great Recession and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) have magnified the WIA-Wagner Peyser divide. For example, ARRA has provided support for Wagner-Peyser staff to assist customers with career advice and counseling. But those services are also provided through WIA-funded staff and it is possible to have separate sets of WIA and Wagner-Peyser staffs performing similar services to the same set of customers.

The strategic workforce misalignment born in Washington, D.C., trickles down through state capitals to one-stop operations. And, as seen below in this report, while most job seeker and employer customers are not aware of federal workforce legislative processes, they do recognize the impact of the WIA/Wagner-Peyser silos on the quality of service they receive.

CONNECT!’S ISD BACKGROUND

PRIOR TO APRIL 2008, CONNECT! selectively enrolled about 15 percent of its adult and dislocated worker population and provided intensive case management support until the job seeker customer was either employed or was no longer interested in services. Other one-stop visitors were not enrolled but were offered CONNECT! membership, which gave them access to a limited range of workshop offerings, limited drop-in career advice and the use of the one-stop computers and library. Although NOVA and EDD staff worked in a common office and performed similar job seeker assistance functions, the staffs operated independently and reported to separate managers. Similarly, one-stop customers were enrolled in either NOVA-focused programs funded by WIA or EDD-focused programs supported by the federal Wagner-Peyser Act, as well as Veterans, Long Term Unemployment and MSFW. Trade Adjustment Act customers were co-enrolled prior to ISD.

According to a memorandum of operations between NOVA and EDD, the ISD process was to create:

- **FUNCTIONAL TEAMS:** Integrated work teams of EDD and NOVA staff performing welcome/registration, drop-in/core/skill enhancement services,



intensive/skill enhancement/training services and employment assistance to job candidates and businesses.

- **FUNCTIONAL SUPERVISION:** EDD or NOVA managers/supervisors providing oversight of an integrated team in all areas other than defined by terms of labor agreements and individual agency personnel management practices.

FOLLOWING IN THE CUSTOMER'S FOOTSTEPS

TO BETTER UNDERSTAND the impact of integration on job seekers, here are two fictional scenarios of how customers accessed CONNECT! services pre- and post-integration. The customers are:

- Tom Jones. Tom is 28, has a high school diploma and a spotty work record with five short stints in local retail establishments. He was fired from a department store job because of poor attendance. His career goal is to find a stable job in an allied medical position and he is willing to be retrained.
- Jane Smith. Jane is 39 and has leveraged a masters degree in electrical engineering into two management positions at Silicon Valley high tech firms and

has launched two technology start-up companies. She was laid off when her latest company was acquired by a competitor. She is open to full-time jobs and entrepreneurial opportunities.

In the pre-integration days, June 2007, both Tom and Jane would report for services to the CONNECT! facility, a squat, square, brown and beige building emblazoned with a State of California EDD sign. They were met by either NOVA or EDD staff depending upon the service they desired.

NOVA staff decides to enroll Jane for services in the dislocated worker program and she is assigned to an experienced career advisor who will serve as her personal case manager. The case manager works with Jane to develop a personal job search plan and works to refine her resume and conducts role-playing exercises with her to sharpen her interviewing skills. Though Jane has had a strong work history, her layoff has taken an emotional toll on her which makes it difficult for her to vigorously shift into “job search” mode. Jane’s case manager addresses her emotional and job search needs in bi-weekly planning sessions and holds Jane accountable for following her job search plan.

After three months of intensive services, Jane applies for an engineering management position at a Silicon Valley start-up. Thanks to a last few coaching tips from

her case manager, Jane gets the job. The case manager exits her from the WIA system and NOVA is able to list Jane as a success story in performance reports to state and federal stakeholders. This is an example of a so-called “hard exit,” one in which CONNECT! staff are able to manually control when the customer leaves the system and can directly report employment without having to wait months for EDD’s UI base wage data.

Tom is not as fortunate as Jane. For no stated reason, NOVA intake staff declines to enroll him but encourages him to take advantage of resume and interviewing workshops that are available to non-enrolled job seekers. Not being a self-starter, Tom is unable to muster enthusiasm for the workshops and gives up on CONNECT! He is concerned that NOVA staff did not move him forward to enrollment because of his poor work record and the likelihood that he would not get a job, thus hurting NOVA’s job placement performance reports.

Fast forward two years and Jane and Tom once again find themselves visiting CONNECT!, but this time under the ISD model. Unlike in their 2007 experience, this time both are enrolled for services. Here’s Tom’s story.

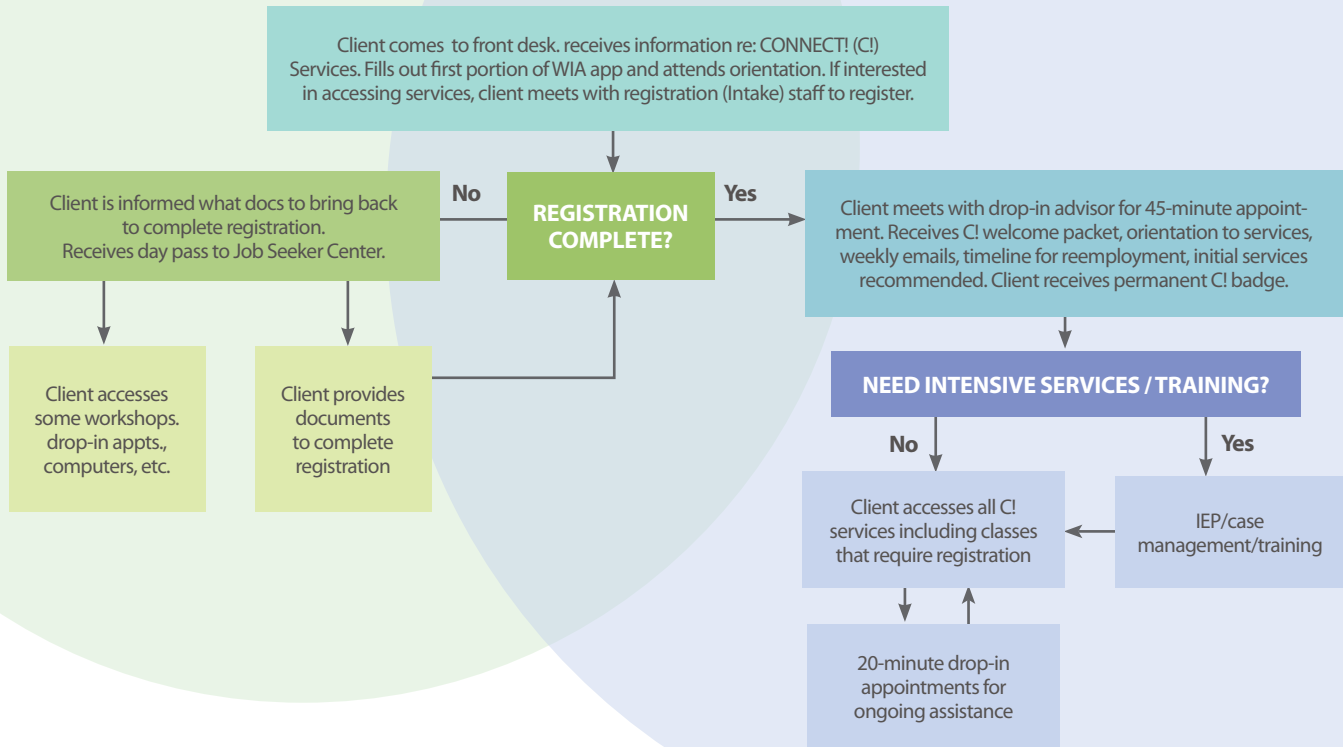
1. He meets with the Welcome Team at the front desk, receives information about CONNECT! services and completes the first portion of the WIA application, as well as his CONNECT! membership application, and meets with the registration staff to register.
2. He doesn’t have all of the documents required for registration but receives a one-day pass enabling him access to some workshops and drop-in appointments with career advisors and use of the computer.
3. He returns to CONNECT! with his documentation and completes registration.
4. He meets with a drop-in advisor for an initial 45-minute appointment. The advisor conducts an initial assessment and gathers information about Tom’s job search goals, reviews his current resume and recommends he attend the 90-minute “Resume Facts” workshop. He also says he is interested in participating in training as a medical assistant. The advisor files this and other information in the Customer Information Services

Reporting System (CISRS) for future reference by other career advisors. (This is an essential tool in providing customers with continuity and consistency of service as they move from one career advisor to another.) Tom also receives orientation material and a permanent CONNECT! badge.

5. He joins the CONNECT! Job Seeker Center group on LinkedIn.com, the career networking website. CONNECT! welcome staff encourage all customers to join the group.
6. He participates in the *Career Exploration* workshop, required of all CONNECT! members who express interest in training.
7. He enrolls in a vocational training course at De Anza College for medical assistants thanks to a federal Pell grant. He has access to intensive case management because of the training.
8. After completing training he continues to access CONNECT! workshops and avails himself of 20-minute appointments with career advisors on a drop-in, as-needed basis. Although he may see a number of advisors during his CONNECT! membership, they all have access to his background, history of one-stop services and job seeking plan through the CISRS case notes.
9. He does not participate in additional one-stop services.

After 90 days CONNECT! removes Tom from the membership roster and exits him from the system. Typically one-stop staff would not know why he left or if he got a job until at least six to nine months later when his name appeared as employed under the EDD’s UI base wage file. But Tom posts news of a new medical assistant job on the CONNECT! LinkedIn site and staff are able to contact him, verify his employment status and report his new job

CONNECT! Job Seeker Center Client Flow



in a timely manner for internal record keeping purposes. But, because CONNECT! is a Learning Lab there is no mechanism for reporting this information to the state and federal governments. This is an example of a “soft exit” from the CONNECT! system. Under ISD, all customers who have not accessed one-stop service for 90 days are automatically exited from the system.

Because CONNECT! now enrolls virtually all customers who show up, Jane’s story is similar to Tom’s. But because she is not interested in vocational training, she has a different experience after the registration and welcome process. Jane ultimately wants to join ProMatch, the career networking organization for experienced professionals. She wants to leverage her ProMatch contacts to get another high tech job. But there is a three-month ProMatch waiting list so:

1. Jane works with drop-in career advisors to create a detailed workshop plan focusing on the in-person and online personal marketing skills she will need to be more effective in ProMatch. Those workshops include *Informational Interviewing*, *Using LinkedIn* and *Behavior-based Interviewing*.
2. She attends workshops and joins peer-based networking success teams available to those on the ProMatch waiting list.
3. She enters ProMatch and ultimately finds a job through connections in her new network.

SERVICE DELIVERY ASSESSMENT:

The Customer Speaks

DR. GOODKIND INTERVIEWED **CONNECT!** job seeker customers in two separate focus groups. One group, labeled Post ISD group, was composed of those who only experienced services under the ISD model. The other, labeled Pre- and Post-ISD group, included customers who were **CONNECT!** members both before and after ISD implementation. Responses from both groups focused around a key foundational question: What key factors influence a job seeker's ability to find jobs using **CONNECT!**?

Dr. Goodkind also convened a focus group with recruiters from four Silicon Valley companies—an information technology giant, a technology-based family entertainment provider, a security company and an in-home care firm. Employer representatives addressed this large question: What are the primary factors influencing an employer's decision to recruit through **CONNECT!**?

POST ISD GROUP

PARTICIPANTS HAD A strong appreciation for the magnitude of **CONNECT!**'s challenges and were pleasantly surprised by its potential for adding value

for customers. They see **CONNECT!** as a refuge for the unemployed where the pain of the recession is palpable. In that context, the one-stop's very existence serves to offer emotional support for job seekers. Said one focus group participant: "**CONNECT!** is another reason to get dressed up, go meet people, keep your attitude up."

While noting a strong infrastructure and a service level that breaks the negative stereotypes of government-related services, participants did say that the one-stop services are underpublicized. **CONNECT!** "is a best practice," one participant said. "I would hope that more centers have learned what you have learned. You're doing some great stuff here."

However, given the magnitude of the Great Recession and the particular challenges of finding a job in entrepreneurial Silicon Valley, customers said extreme creativity is needed to build effective solutions under current conditions. They said that the allocation of scarce resources is a challenge and that **CONNECT!** is beyond capacity with clients spending time waiting for services. Said one: "If you don't have an appointment, you have hours to kill."

Given the resource constraints, customers see opportunities to contribute to **CONNECT!**'s support infrastructure by leveraging the workshops to maximize



networking among similarly skilled professionals and by providing a network of customers wanting to help customers.

Customers noted that clearly defined outcomes at all levels of CONNECT! are needed with a clear path through NOVA/CONNECT! services. They said ProMatch and CONNECT! do not meet everyone’s needs. “People are at very different places,” one customer said. “These programs have to be differentiated.”

Despite the integration imperative, EDD and NOVA agency differences are striking to customers who say that EDD, particularly the UI branch, and CONNECT! offer contrasting service experiences. “EDD leaves us in a state of confusion,” one customer said.

Some job seekers had significant comments that did not fit neatly into categories. One expressed concern that employers who make presentations at CONNECT! often only have lower level job openings and no offerings for professionals.

PRE- AND POST-ISD GROUP

COMPARED WITH THE Post-ISD group, these participants were more likely to have multiple experiences with unemployment and—while cognizant of CONNECT!’s potential—were much more aware of

the organization’s service delivery challenges. Many spoke about ProMatch, the EDD/NOVA partnership which focuses on career networking. They had three major themes. The first is that the “connection” that underpins CONNECT! is challenged.

Heightened demand and resource constraints mean that NOVA cannot be all things to all people. Although NOVA attempts to help everyone, counselors struggle to serve everyone and caseloads exceed capacity. “It is important for CONNECT! to do what they say they will do,” one customer said. “If they can’t do it, don’t advertise it. If you don’t have the capability, leave it to someone else.”

Customers want services that extend the current CONNECT! scope. They want the employer market brought to them. “I would like to see NOVA do more with corporations to work more closely with hiring managers and help with informational interviews,” one customer said. “That would help people who are frustrated.”

And, another said, “NOVA focuses on the (job) search and preparation but doesn’t focus on attracting and finding the jobs that are really there for them.”

Then there are the customers who feel they are misfits within the system. Whereas CONNECT! best serves people on a linear career path, not all customers fit into the service model. Said one: “I think (CONNECT!)

“I’m amazed how many others don’t know about CONNECT!. Their eyes glaze over when I tell them about it. I say, “No, this is different, they will help you.””

– ISD job seeker

is doing a great job for entry to mid level positions. I would like to feel more focus on the (professional/management) side of things to help more people who don’t fit the (linear) mold.”

The second major theme this group echoed is similar to a realization in the post-ISD focus group: the process of becoming unemployed produces fragility. Customers have basic needs that threaten their stability. Health care is a frightening obstacle and unemployment insurance is a confusing irritant.

Many stressed that the human element is essential when addressing issues of joblessness because customers have emotional needs that extend beyond the job search. “There is nothing more beneficial for a person looking for a job than to feel useful,” one customer said. “There is a mental side of being out of work that is hardly addressed by anyone and is completely glazed over.”

While CONNECT! counselors could make connections to bridge gaps in social services, many said that peer support saves lives. One customer said: “I’ve seen people from ProMatch who were homeless, have gotten booted out and someone took them into their home. I have taken people to the hospital because they didn’t have a car. There is a community in ProMatch where the help has to come from.”

As the Great Recession marches forward, customers are acutely aware of the trials they face with the current job market. They have an urgent need to accelerate the job search process. They are painfully aware that it is an employers’ market and know that new skills will only help them be more desirable to employers.

“You can’t wait three months to get into an organization like (ProMatch) ... In employment terms that is like aging in dog and cat years,” one customer said.

The third major theme for this group of focus group participants is that alternative modes of delivery can improve services. This theme was also stressed in the employer focus group.

Within CONNECT!, the function of networking is underutilized and that is particularly significant because finding a job these days requires multiple networks. “It’s like all networking things,” one customer said. “You have to reach out beyond the walls of NOVA to build a base of connections to build opportunities.”

As a networking model, ProMatch is a place where highly experienced clients get help from each other, and ProMatch customers want to help CONNECT! customers. “If you are used to working your whole life and now you can’t find a job and no one wants to have you ... it always feels good to have a purpose.”

Despite its Silicon Valley location, technology is underemployed at CONNECT! and the use of technology is deficient, customers say. “You are at the temporal epicenter (of the high tech world) ... and you use technology of 20 years ago. You have a sign-post website, no classes on there, no social networking on there. Where is the connection?”

As an example of the tech challenges, the CONNECT! workshop registration process is exclusive. “In order to get into the workshops, you have to be here physically. I’ve seen people in tears because they have to drop off kids or whatever and can’t be in line for 1.5 hours.”

Ultimately, technology offers an opportunity for CONNECT! to extend services. “I can’t think of very many services that CONNECT! offers that can’t be online ... (including) counseling and ProMatch networking,” one customer said.

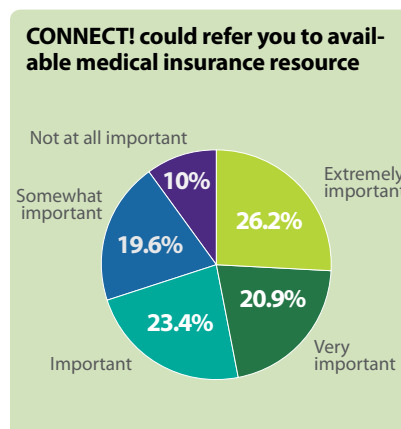
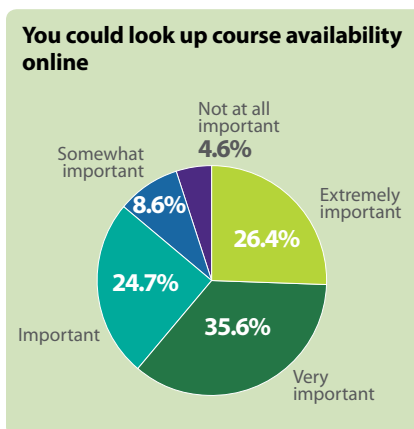
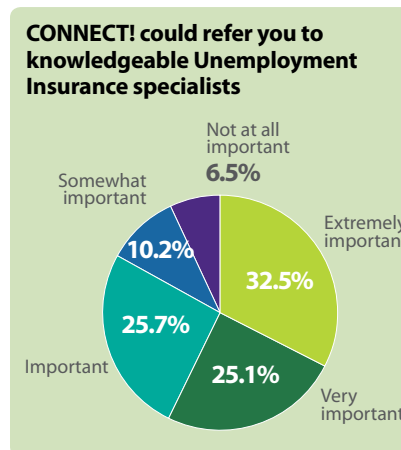
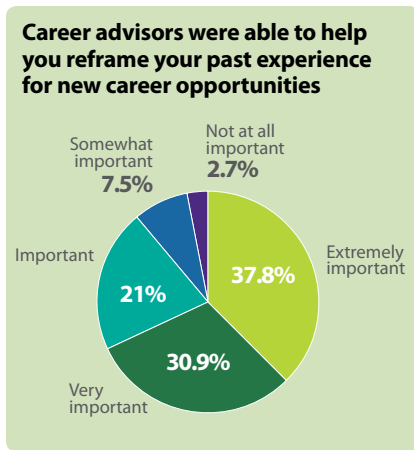
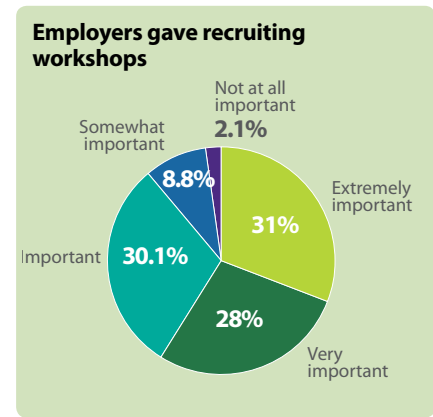
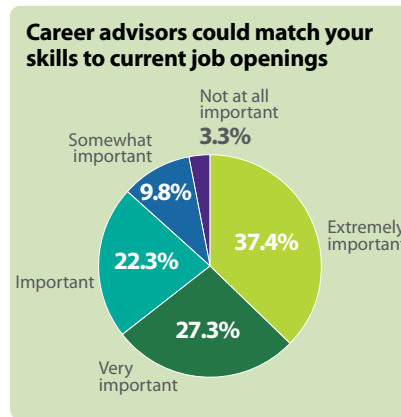
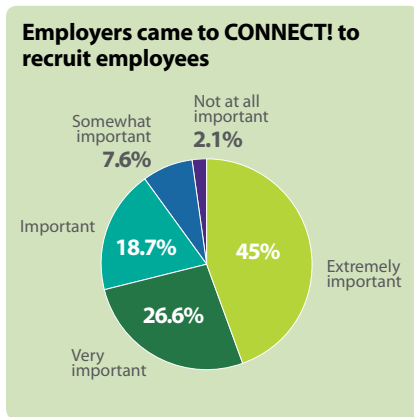
On the key initial question—what has changed under ISD—this focus group reported that the CONNECT! center was busier than ever.

Like the first job seeker focus group, one of these participants expressed concern about the nature of jobs posted at CONNECT! by employers.

Finally, all six focus group participants volunteered to work with NOVA to follow up on and perhaps implement some of the feedback.

QUANTITATIVE SURVEY RESULTS

IN THE QUANTITATIVE survey process, Dr. Goodkind drew conclusions from the two job seeker focus groups and created questions based on that information. In response to the question—such as “What would you like to see at the CONNECT! center?”—respondents were asked to choose among the following responses: extremely important, very important, important, somewhat important and not at all important. The following responses most strongly correlated with focus group data:



The correlations were less strong regarding customer desire for online classes and workshops, website social media functionality, CONNECT! providing a place to meet other customers and the opportunity to mentor customers in similar fields.

EMPLOYER FOCUS GROUP

REGARDING CONNECT!, THE four employer participants, all recruiters, reflected the same sense of potential and challenges as the job seekers. They appreciate the vision of a value-add recruitment/employment partner that can assist them in their own internal challenges with hiring managers.

Said one: “(The challenge) is on our side in terms of hiring managers. ... My company has cookie cutter job descriptions but sometimes there are superstars (who don’t fit the mold). They just need to realize that. I’m trying to open the cookie cutter beyond the job description.”

Collectively the employers implicitly suggested two large-scale themes. The first is that the potential of NOVA’s employer services is unrealized. Here is what they said.

The mission of employer services is undefined. Employers appreciate that CONNECT! offers them more than just an opportunity to provide a community service but they do view CONNECT! services as undistinguished.

On the one hand: “I would put this interaction (with CONNECT!) on par with outplacement firms we use. It makes it easy to do good, to do right by the community. I don’t associate that (level of service) with a government entity.”

On the other hand: “How well does CONNECT! market to employers? Are companies made aware this is a resource?”

At this point, the value proposition for employers using CONNECT! is not strong. Employers need to appraise the value of CONNECT! services quickly. But the ability to track CONNECT! hires would justify the partnership with employers. One said: “Internally, we would like to be able to justify ... and say which source (gave us the hire). The tracking process is just overwhelming.”

The second employer theme reflects the optimistic view that strong employer partnerships with CONNECT! can put the unemployed back to work faster. Employers want to come into CONNECT! to recruit from an organized pool of customers, where CONNECT! is a resource to pre-screen candidates. An employer said: “If CONNECT! were to coach the candidate before sending them to me ... what the requirements are, the culture, what we are looking for...that would



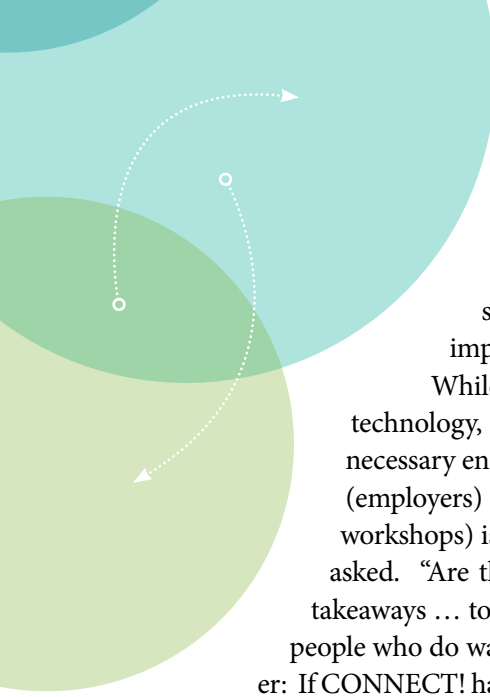
help the candidate and their success (in speaking with us.” But employers do want control of the screening process.

Employers further say that successful partnerships with the one-stop require personal connections. Building from a growing foundation where personalized service for employers makes a valuable connection, NOVA could broker job seekers among multiple employers.

Currently, “CONNECT! includes me in additional events that are going on, not necessarily here (at CONNECT!),” one employer said. For example, a (veterans) job fair ... I had a wonderful job fair ... hired five people. If (the one-stop representative) hadn’t told me that, I would not have had that type of opportunity.”

Going forward, “What (Drake Beam Morin) and others (outplacement companies) do is facilitate their own job fair when Cisco, HP, etc. does layoffs ... If (employers laying off employees) knew they should connect with CONNECT!, there’s one more touch point.”

The employers also stressed the importance of CONNECT! to strategically leverage technology to reach its potential and spoke of the tools that job seekers need



in order to be successful in today's economy. They provided resources for follow up and improvement.

While NOVA underutilizes technology, employers view it as a necessary enabler. "How much of what (employers) share (at CONNECT! workshops) is retained?" one employer asked. "Are there notes taken, top five takeaways ... to be able to share that with people who do want to learn?" Said another: If CONNECT! had online access, "I'd log in and screen them and look for different employees ... I would set up alert searches based on key words so I would get flagged every time there is a match."

As the pace of the local economy continues to quicken and the rules of job seeking continue to change, employers believe self integrity to be a critical core value of a job seeker. Job candidates need to market themselves consistently and strive to continuously improve themselves professionally to be attractive to employers. What's needed is the "mindset of you own your professional development" and "do some serious asking of questions: How do I make myself more valuable? What do I need to do? What relationships do I need to further nurture, develop or create?"

The speed of technological change means that skill development is not the deciding factor to hire, focus group participants said. "If you are in an (industry) segment that rapidly has to change, it requires you to be self-learning. We don't do any training because (technology) is moving too fast."

STAFF ASSESSMENT:

Voices from Inside the Learning Labs

WHILE CONNECT!'S JOB SEEKER and employer customers are constantly battling a swirling vortex of changing economic and employment conditions, one-stop staffs have also seen significant changes in their work lives. The Great Recession has led to dramatically increased enrollments and higher levels of customer anxiety. A legacy of state and federal budget cuts have required staff to continuously do more with less. And the integration of workforce investment board and EDD staffs have exacerbated culture clashes that have the potential of undermining morale as well as service delivery.

To understand the impact of ISD programs on WIB staffs, NOVA staff conducted interviews and a focus group with NOVA one-stop managers, supervisors and lead staff and with EDD management responsible for CONNECT! operations. Report staff also interviewed representatives from the other 11 Learning Labs to understand their challenges, opportunities and best practices regarding ISD service delivery and staff integration issues.

Dr. Goodkind also facilitated separate focus groups of NOVA (five participating) and EDD (eight) staff assigned to CONNECT! They both addressed this

question: "What are the primary factors influencing service integration?"

NOVA SUPERVISOR, MANAGEMENT AND LEAD STAFF PERSPECTIVE

WHILE STAFF INTEGRATION with EDD has posed problems, ISD has been a major win for CONNECT! job seeker customers, NOVA lead staff members say. The following met with Luther Jackson in a separate set of interviews on September 10 and September 21, 2009: the NOVA job seeker center manager, two job seeker center supervisors, an administrative coordinator and a career advisor.

ISD has produced a system which is more customer-driven and responsive, more transparent and offers more workshops designed to provide customers with the personal marketing and entrepreneurial skills needed to access employment opportunities in the new economy, they say.

Before ISD, case managers had more control over the process. They scheduled the meetings for customers and controlled when employed customers exited the one-stop system. Now the system is more responsive.



“Customers are able to meet one-on-one with a drop in advisor more quickly and address their immediate needs,” supervisor Lisa Rijhwani said.

By redeploying resources and shifting staff from one-on-one case managers to drop-in career advisors and workshop leaders, CONNECT! has been able to add six workshops to its arsenal and has tripled the number of monthly workshop sessions available to customers. For example, CONNECT! now offers two workshops on using LinkedIn, the premier social media career networking site which is quickly becoming a required tool for Silicon Valley job seekers.

In addition to the class, CONNECT! is now encouraging every customer to join its LinkedIn group upon enrollment. The site now has about 900 members and provides job postings and the capacity for online discussions. It also could address one of the ISD dilemmas: How to determine what happened to customers once they exit the system, a so-called soft exit, after over 90 days of one-stop inactivity. Because employed group members can now post notice of their new jobs on the discussion board, CONNECT! staff can look for changes in a customer’s LinkedIn profile as a clue to whether the individual has gotten a job.

The LinkedIn site was one response to a lingering concern for NOVA CONNECT! staff post-integration: Without a direct connection to a customer and direct knowledge as to whether and when he or she gets a job, career advisors and workshop leaders do not know how

their work contributed to customer success and that can affect job satisfaction.

“I need to know that what I do is helping people get jobs,” NOVA administrative coordinator Jennifer Cheyer said. “I need to know that there is value-add to what we do.”

NOVA leaders also say they have been able to leverage the staff’s educational and practical counseling experience to create a best-practice approach to addressing the needs of customers in emotional distress as a result of job loss.

The staff integration side of ISD is not getting such rave reviews from NOVA leaders. Despite a goal of complete integration, EDD staff is not currently participating as career advisors or, with two exceptions, workshop leaders. “Before, NOVA did career advising workshops and worked with EDD on TAA, and EDD answered EDD (and unemployment) questions and facilitated a job search assistance workshop, ran the veterans program and worked with NOVA on TAA,” Cindy Stahl, manager of job seeker services, said. “For the most part that’s still happening.” There are both NOVA and EDD staff on the welcome team that greet new customers.

There are 44 NOVA and 7 EDD staff members at CONNECT!. In addition to the welcome team, EDD staff members work with employers and oversee customers applying for veterans and TAA benefits.

Asked to explain the lack of integration, NOVA leaders said EDD staff doesn’t hire for career advisor skill sets and said the agency’s core compliance focus makes it difficult for staff to quickly adapt to customer service principles and practices.

EDD SUPERVISOR PERSPECTIVE

WHILE PLEASED WITH the increased access of services available to customers, EDD managers Janeen Dittrick and Maria Lucero are frustrated by the slow pace of staff integration. The lack of EDD participation in workshops is particularly troubling. “They are off limits,” Dittrick said in an interview with Luther Jackson and Lucero. “This is unique to NOVA and not what we see in other (Learning Lab) integrations. It affects the partnership and the morale of the staff.”

The solution is to provide cross training for staff and

leverage the human resources of all of the NOVA and EDD staff, Dittrick and Lucero said.

But the service delivery aspects have been a plus, they say. “For me, this model just gives more people the opportunity to get assistance. This new model gives people the opportunity to participate as much as possible,” Lucero said. And CONNECT! has taken advantage of ISD to provide cutting-edge services, including the LinkedIn course. “The variety is more expansive and there is a richer product box than is available in other Learning Labs,” Dittrick said.

Both cautioned about the importance of not targeting services solely to Silicon Valley engineers and professionals and neglecting other workers, including the elderly, people with disabilities and non-English speakers.

NOVA STAFF FOCUS GROUP

DESPITE THE STRONG ISD customer service gains noted by both sets of managers, both the NOVA and EDD staff spent the majority of the focus groups talking about a key irritant: the lack of staff integration and clash of organizational cultures. The NOVA and EDD staff focus group data were both organized in a cause and effect diagram. Here are the NOVA comments:

Staff said that a lack of fundamentals impairs the entire system because of a lack of information and the lack of basic needs such as working fax machines and copiers for client use. The lack of UI information is a particular challenge.

Ultimately quality customer service will make or break the integration process. The NOVA staff see customer service as inconsistent between NOVA and EDD and said that an effective partnership with EDD requires workarounds.

But, despite all, customers are forgiving when the service is good. “When I meet with a client (and) go over paperwork, they’re like ‘Wow, I’m glad this place exists. It’s very efficient,’” one NOVA staff member said.

Still, this group said that inter-agency power struggles impede integration because the two cultures are at odds and information, or lack thereof, is power. Said one: “In my mind there’s no reason why we can’t have access to (UI) information if that’s what service integration is about.” The fact that these organizational differences are

obvious to customers is a large area of concern.

Other challenges exist. Customers are confused about CONNECT! and are not quite sure what to make of it. Further, staff professional integrity is threatened because they feel personally responsible for clients and feel a need to protect their reputations. The agency differences “force us to make a distinction as to who the main players are ... I let them know that we are NOVA,” one employee said.

NOVA staff did point to a couple of ISD positives, including the facts that there are more enrollments than before and staff members are more knowledgeable about UI.

But the net effect of the ISD experience is that staff enthusiasm is waning. Resentment is deepening the divide between the agencies and alignment around integration is lacking. “We need buy in,” one participant said. “We just seem more flexible, more open. We are ready for change, they (EDD) are not.”

EDD STAFF FOCUS GROUP

ISD FRUSTRATION IS not limited to NOVA staff.

Like their NOVA counterparts, EDD staff said that the cultures of the two agencies are misaligned with a clear cultural divide, illustrated by divergent approaches to management. “We deal with clients in a more forward way,” an EDD staffer said. “More black and white. This is the way it is. The rules are the way UI works. (NOVA) is more lenient.”

Another challenge is that the EDD infrastructure is deficient. Understaffing is limiting, EDD is void of basic supplies and information technology is a handicap. “The fax machine, printer, copier, toner ... everything is dead,” one focus group participant said. “There are no basic supplies. It is very difficult.”

In fact, the two agencies are in a struggle for control of CONNECT! with EDD and NOVA battling to claim credit for programs such as ProMatch. There is a strong feeling that NOVA owns the workshop process. “I would like to see us given the opportunity to facilitate” but “they own it,” an EDD staff member said.

Looming over much of this frustration is the fact

“You are at the temporal epicenter (of high tech) ... and you use technology of 20 years ago. You have a sign-post website, no classes on there, no social networking on there. Where is the connection?” — ISD job seeker

that UI dominates staff work and is a misfit within CONNECT!. UI confuses staff, the answers to questions vary and the public doesn't know the difference between UI and EDD and that the CONNECT! EDD staff is not trained to answer UI questions. Further, UI monopolizes staff time and they feel that answering customer UI questions limits their ability to grow and stifles their potential. “It is a struggle to sit there for four hours and answer the same questions over and over,” one said. “What a waste of our skills.”

Like their managers, EDD staff spoke of the importance of addressing the needs of all segments of the population. And they also spoke of the value of staff diversity when serving a diverse customer base. “Our Spanish-speaking clients are not being served,” one said. “I think they are turned away. There is no Spanish counselor. That concerns me.”

Like their NOVA counterparts, EDD staff did point out that customer service is a source of pride. “We provide excellent customer service from the customer's point of view,” one participant said. “We (attract) people from San Francisco, Gilroy, Marin, Danville, Hollister, Salinas.”

But, the net effect of ISD is that EDD staff feel as if they are passive participants. They don't feel they have a voice to influence change, they feel disconnected from ISD and there is a sense that the process is being led from outside of their organization. “Service integration is homeless, like you don't belong or have a place. It needs to blend.”

LEARNING LABS' PERSPECTIVES ON ISD SERVICE DELIVERY

ALL OF THE ISD CHALLENGES and opportunities experienced by NOVA and CONNECT! are quite familiar to the other 11 initial California Learning Labs. Ending reliance on case management? Confusion over UI? Customer enrollment challenges? New workshops? Been there. Done that. All agree that it takes a considerable amount of creativity and flexibility to create a customer-friendly, staff-friendly ISD-style one-stop operation. The Learning Lab experiences also served to validate the data NOVA captured in the focus groups, interviews and quantitative survey. Below are summaries of Learning Lab experiences and best practices for addressing concerns.

MOVING FROM CASE MANAGEMENT TO WORKSHOP AND CAREER ADVISOR-BASED SERVICES

THE ABILITY TO redeploy staff from case management duties to leading more workshops and providing just-in-time career advising has enabled Learning Labs to serve more customers and has provided an opportunity to rethink and retool workshop offerings to help job seekers address 21st century challenges. There is a greater emphasis on skill development – including resume and interviewing skills. “The staff is not tied up with appointments,” said Kathleen Oles, a deputy director in San Bernardino County's Department of Workforce Development. “We have more workshops. I like having a good menu of services to offer, a stronger tool box.”

In Santa Ana, ISD is very clear-cut. “In the old model you enroll a few and help them find a job,” Program Manager Carlos De La Riva said. “In the new model you enroll everybody and help people help themselves.”

Some Learning Lab leaders believe that a case management relationship can actually be harmful, particularly in a job market where successful job seekers must be able to market themselves. Said Verdugo Job Center Manager Judith Sernas: “I'm not a big proponent of



case management. It creates a dependency relationship.” There is value in customers getting comfortable with presenting themselves and telling their story to many different career advisors. When they encounter customers who insist on meeting with a career advisor who already knows them and their story, “We’re trying to train staff to refer them to the process (e.g., workshops),” Sernas said. “Since we see over 10,000 people a month—and with limited staffing—we have to refer customers to our center products, which allows us to create a group case management approach.”

ENROLLMENT CHALLENGES

IN THEORY, THE goal of enrolling all customers is an excellent idea, particularly in light of the flood of new job seekers caused by the recession. But some Learning Labs have run up against capacity limits and wonder if everyone who visits a one-stop needs to be enrolled. Some visitors may have immediate needs that can be adequately addressed in one or two visits and do not require the staff resources associated with a full-fledged three-hour enrollment process.

The San Diego one-stop system saw a ten-fold increase in adult and dislocated worker enrollments between the fiscal year ending June 30, 2008 (1,639 pre-integration), and June 30, 2009 (16,105 post integration). The result? “We hit the wall,” said Reg Javier, director of workforce advancement. “We can’t service 16,000 effectively.” Follow-up studies have shown that 50 percent of those enrolled dropped out of the system after one service. This leads Javier to believe that his system either didn’t engage those customers or they enrolled some customers who shouldn’t have been enrolled. Still, “as a system we are better,” and will continue to work on addressing the capacity issues, Javier said.

Riverside County tried to enroll everyone for the first month of ISD but after conducting staff focus groups, leaders realized “We weren’t providing service,” director Felicia Flournoy said. Now the decision to enroll or not is left to customer choice.

More people in San Jose’s work2future system has led to waits of up to two hours for customers to see talent coaches on a drop-in basis. In response, the staff is considering establishing an appointment system, said Monique Melchor, adult program manager.

But there’s no alternative to continuing to tinker with

*“It is important for **CONNECT!** to do what they say they will do. If they can’t do it, don’t advertise it. If you don’t have the capability, leave it to someone else.”*

— ISD job seeker

system designs to address the larger numbers, said Bryan Rogers, director of the Pacific Gateway Workforce Investment Network in Long Beach. “Otherwise, what’s our value? If you want the system to grow, you have to serve people.”

UI CONFUSION

AS AT CONNECT!, UI is a major irritant statewide. Job seekers have a difficult time making the distinction between EDD’s Workforce Services branch which staffs one-stops and the UI branch. In Sonoma County, customers flood the Job Link facility with UI questions,

which forces EDD staff to answer UI questions instead of fully participating as an integrated staff with all of the one-stop jobs, Job Link Manager Kathy Young said.

Learning Lab integration would be greatly helped if EDD job service personnel had more direct access to UI personnel and resources, so customers could see the one-stop as a place to address all of their job search needs. “Integration within EDD is an interesting concept,” a WIB official said.

CONNECTING ONE-STOP CUSTOMERS WITH JOBS

A SPORTS-MINDED CONNECT! customer, noting that the current system helps to prepare people to find jobs but does not adequately help them actually land a job, said the ISD offerings succeeded in getting a customer in the “red zone” (within an opponent’s 20-yard line in football) but did not help in scoring a touchdown. De La Riva from Santa Ana picked up the thread. “Are we providing value-added services to the job seeker to help score that touchdown?” he asked. “My gut tells me no. Are we providing the level of job match? We’re providing valuable workshops” to help people find work but “we need to increase the job match.”



PERFORMANCE MEASURES WITH FEWER HARD EXITS

FOR A SYSTEM built on results—customers getting jobs—and accountability, the loss of case management and so-called hard exits is difficult to address. By enrolling virtually all customers, WIBs have seen their performance levels—the ratio of customers served to customers ultimately employed—plummet. Learning Labs drop, or soft exit, customers for whom there is no activity for 90 days. “We aren’t managing people and people are soft exiting. And they don’t show up in the base wage file” for months, said Sacramento Employment and Training Agency Deputy Director Robin Purdy. Under ISD, a customer who does not access one-stop services because she was in vocational training for eight months would be automatically exited after 90 days. In Madera County, the combination of higher enrollments (four times higher than before), the tough economy, more vocational training and limited staff resources mean that the WIB doesn’t have the staff to physically monitor every customer as they approach the 90 day soft exit cutoff. “We need to be able to strategize our exits” so as to accommodate individual needs, Madera Executive Director Elaine Craig said.



CONCLUSION

THE LEARNING LABS are unanimous that, as result of this pilot project, they are not returning to pre-integration models. Going forward, the vision is not necessarily strict adherence to the ISD model as explained by consultant Greg Newton. The goal is providing relevant and strategic customer service. “There is a need to maintain local control,” Craig said. “ISD must be based on local needs.” Ultimately “the question is, how do you provide good customer service? If it’s a hybrid (of ISD), I am willing to go with that,” said Fran Kennedy, former executive director of the North Central Counties Consortium.

LEARNING LABS’ PERSPECTIVES ON ISD STAFF INTEGRATION

The challenges of merging WIA and EDD staff are crystal clear to all Learning Lab leaders. “It’s a huge culture clash,” said Kathleen Oles from San Bernardino. “We had no idea that culture was going to be such a factor. They are more structured because they are a large statewide agency and, because we are local, we have the ability to be flexible. Both groups struggle with understanding and working in the environment of the other agency’s business processes. I’ve heard that across the board.”

In some cases federal mandates and the availability of separate American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding streams work to defeat integration at the local level. For example, there is a separate ARRA silo for Wagner-Peyser recipients that pays for career advisor positions. That advisor/counselor function is also available through WIA, thus creating the possibility of a one-stop’s WIA and Wagner-Peyser workforce performing similar and competing roles.

A number of the Learning Labs have achieved some measure of staff integration where EDD and WIA staff perform all of the one-stop functions, including career advising. But in no case has this process been easy.

Those successful agencies have benefitted in some cases from factors that can’t necessarily be replicated.

They include long-term positive relationships with EDD managers and pre-existing structures—such as joint WIA and EDD training capacity—that have eased the transition. Others have tackled the cultural issues head on with ongoing team-building processes. Here are several best practice ideas that may be valuable to NOVA as well as to other state and national workforce service providers. (For these practices to succeed, each must be tailored to address unique local factors such as staff cultures, resources and stages of integration.)

Riverside County

(Felicia Flournoy, director):

EDD AND WIA leadership both participate on a joint leadership team making joint decisions for one-stop center operations. Two years prior to integration, her staff and EDD staff jointly established a Continuous Quality Improvement program which features staff participation in team-based decision making. There was infrastructure in place when ISD came along. Despite this, staff integration “is like a marriage,” she said. “You have your ups and downs.”

Sonoma County *(Kathy Young, one-stop manager):*

EDD AND WIA staff participate jointly in welcome and orientation activities, workshops and some career advising. They implemented a team-building structure in 1998 and held a one-day refresher workshop in April 2009 with a facilitator from UC Davis Extension to address ISD specifically. “Everybody is working hard,” she said. “You have to understand each other’s programs, understand each other’s constraints.”

Verdugo *(Judith Sernas, job center manager):*

“INITIALLY INTEGRATION WAS tough on staff since we did not know what to expect and the economy created an influx of customers to our center. Staff was burned out, work was stressful and very fast paced. Without our EDD partners it would have been impossible to assist all the job seekers needing our help.” Her center is preparing a request for qualifications for a training provider to help the staff address team build-

ing, customer service, stress management and change management issues.

Sacramento *(Sandra Brown, staff):*

THERE ARE EDD staff who already had coaching and career assessment skills and they currently work with WIA staff in these areas. Ten years ago, Sacramento used a grant to establish a training program which has been a valuable asset in the ISD process. “We have a training development team that includes many of the (one-stop) partners,” she said. “Staff input tells us what training is needed. If in-house staff can’t do it, we bring in outside trainers.”

San Diego

(Reg Javier, workforce advancement director):

THE WIA AND EDD staffs are essentially integrated. For the first month of ISD, the San Diego one-stops closed early every day and the staff from both agencies got together and discussed what worked that day and what did not. This joint approach ensured that problems were jointly owned and that they did not fester. Also, if a staff member that day created an innovative approach to problem solving, the daily meeting provided a forum for institutionalizing that practice and helping to ensure future consistency among the staff. “Daily review allows you to see that problems are shared problems and you don’t have time to build up blame,” he said.

San Jose work2future

(Monique Melchor, adult program manager):

WIA AND EDD managers have achieved some staff integration by determining whether EDD staffers had any prior background as talent coaches. Those who did received one-on-one mentoring, attended a one week training boot camp and shadowed a seasoned talent coach and had that talent coach shadow them. EDD staff without the requisite background are trained for the welcome team but are not considered for talent coaches.

THE NOVA/CONNECT! STORY: Analysis and Conclusions

SD AT CONNECT! HAS been a net positive because of its ability to provide services to many more people and to rationalize resources and offer a broader array of high quality workshops and timely counseling. Many stakeholders have compared CONNECT! services favorably with those of Drake Beam Morin and other large outplacement firms. Fortuitously, the expanded opportunities came available just as the Great Recession pummeled Silicon Valley.

But the challenge of staff disharmony raises sustainability concerns and makes it difficult to foresee adequately addressing job seeker and employer stakeholder issues regarding a need for increased technology investments and the ability to connect prepared job seekers with job openings.

The potentially destabilizing nature of the EDD and NOVA culture clash was clearly illustrated in the two staff focus groups. Both teams had the freedom to raise a wide array of issues within specific, pre-determined parameters. They both mentioned CONNECT!'s excellent customer service but they chose to dwell on the challenges of staff integration. Both groups seemed to say that they see integration and the concept of seamless service as fiction, thus undermining integrity and morale.

Meanwhile, customers arrive at the CONNECT! door-

step with many burdens. They need work. They need health insurance. They need answers to UI questions. Some need basic shelter. The last thing they need is to have to notice this one-stop's internal challenges regarding staff integration and marketing and resource issues.

With a full plate and major challenges and opportunities, there is a strong need for NOVA and EDD to come together in order to move forward with maximum resources and minimal distractions. In short, CONNECT! cannot continue to float along as a state and national WIB leader without a unified team pulling the oars.

The good news is that, as the Learning Lab interviews made clear, the NOVA and EDD staff are both in a mess that is not of their making. The two agencies represent a misalignment of culture and mission, a violent collision waiting to happen. Customer focus and regulatory compliance cannot live side by side without an intentional intervention strategy. Both staffs are also saddled with years of state and federal underfunding resulting in layoffs at NOVA in 2007 and 2008 and current furloughs for EDD staff which amount to a 14 percent wage cut.

The customers, both job seekers and employers, were very clear in their vision for CONNECT!. They are seeking transparency, clarity and integrity. They appreciate the concept of a one-stop agency where they can get answers to all of their employment related concerns. They

like the idea of a seamless, integrated institution. They are pleasantly surprised that CONNECT! customer service far exceeds their expectations for a government-funded agency.

But once they saw the potential, their expectations rose. Participants questioned whether CONNECT! was truly an integrated, seamless, one-stop if:

- staff couldn't answer all questions.
- staff didn't have access to the same information.
- they couldn't get answers to UI questions.
- they didn't feel they can get answers about available health insurance and social services resources.
- there weren't strong connections between job seekers and employers who came to CONNECT! with a wide variety of job openings.

Here's some good news. Both employer and job seeker

focus group participants are so impressed by the level of CONNECT! services and the system's potential, they agreed nearly unanimously to volunteer their time to work with staff and make improvements.

In some cases CONNECT! is already providing the services customers told Dr. Goodkind they would like to see. This includes the strong majority of the quantitative survey respondents who said they thought it would be extremely important for CONNECT! to help job seekers prepare to transfer their skills and attributes to new careers. This is already taking place but the survey response could show a need for more transparency and making this benefit clear to customers.

In the end, this research project extends far beyond an evaluation of the ISD model. This is an assessment of CONNECT! customer service.

In that vein, here are some summary conclusions of this research which provides some direction for the



prioritized recommendations that follow. The data's foundational question is: **What are the key factors influencing stakeholders'/customers' ability to strategically leverage CONNECT! services?**

First of all, all of the participants in this system are operating in an environment in which the rules have changed.

- Finding a job requires multiple networks.
- It's an employer's market.
- Health care is a frustrating obstacle.
- Clients have emotional needs that extend beyond the job search.

This comes at a time when everyone in the system is working at capacity.

- Caseloads exceed capacity.
- Understaffing is limiting.
- CONNECT! is beyond capacity.
- Employers face hiring challenges.
- NOVA's use of technology is deficient.
- The workshop registration process is exclusive.
- Employers view technology as a necessary enabler.
- CONNECT! struggles to serve everyone.
- Companies that come in have junior jobs.

Further, unmet basic needs threaten CONNECT!'s foundation.

- Employees lack basic needs.
- UI is a confusing irritant.
- Resentment is deepening the divide among agencies.

- Clients have an urgent need to accelerate the search process.
- The cultures are at odds.
- Alignment around integration is lacking.
- EDD is void of basic supplies.
- What is CONNECT!?! Customers are confused.
- Employers view CONNECT! services as undistinguished.

There are factors that could be positives or negatives depending upon the effectiveness of next steps.

- EDD staff potential is unfulfilled.
- Staff feel personally responsible for their clients.

There is much underutilized potential.

- NOVA's infrastructure is strong.
- NOVA's service breaks government stereotypes.
- ProMatch customers want to help CONNECT! customers.
- Personalized service for employees makes a valuable connection.
- NOVA could broker job seekers among multiple employers.
- Workshops have the potential to maximize networking among similarly grouped professionals.
- Peer support saves lives.
- The focus group participants articulated a clear vision for CONNECT!
- Tracking CONNECT! hires justifies the partnership.
- CONNECT! is a resource to pre-screen candidates.
- Customers want a clear path through NOVA services.

ISD Updates and Prioritized NOVA/CONNECT! Recommendations

BEFORE THIS SELF-EVALUATION WAS completed, there were several initiatives developing locally and in Sacramento that have the potential of alleviating many of the concerns raised in this study.

In Sacramento, EDD is working on several UI automation projects designed to free up UI staff from administrative duties and allowing them to focus on customer service. This shift of resources could potentially reduce the volume of UI-related issues at the one-stops. The improvements include a call center upgrade and a feature that will allow all UI claimants to certify claims on the web instead of by paper. Some of the improvements will be finished by the end of 2010 and the entire process will be completed by the end of 2012.

Locally, self-evaluation consultant Dr. Goodkind convened EDD and NOVA CONNECT! staffs in March 2010 to share research results and to launch a process where the staffs could work together and address key ISD challenges. Those include addressing UI concerns, bridging the EDD/NOVA cultural divide and solving issues regarding CONNECT! marketing and branding.

Finally, the CONNECT! leadership is working with other Learning Labs to share best practices and discuss ISD modifications. In May 2010, NOVA and EDD hosted a meeting of one-stop leaders from Learning Labs in San Diego and the North Central Counties

Consortium. Discussion topics included addressing concerns about expending resources to enroll customers who do not return for future services and finding a better way of measuring performance without hard exits.

These recommendations are built from the intersection of strategic needs and resources. The goal is to pick the low-hanging fruit that will address the core, foundational challenges identified in this report.

This section is divided in two parts. The first is a set of incremental steps to immediately launch the transformation process and, very importantly, show focus group participants—particularly staff—that they were heard during the process and that NOVA is prepared to demonstrate its respect for their contributions by taking action. These incremental recommendations focus on the importance of shoring up the EDD/NOVA staff foundation before other reforms take place. There should be value in involving staff in joint problem solving forums with an external (customer) focus. The opportunity to address challenging complex issues together should promote team building and joint ownership of all challenges and opportunities.

The second part is a list of future steps that will require more time and resources to accomplish and will provide a beacon for all future activity. None of these suggested activities should proceed without first building the foundation suggested in the incremental step process.

INCREMENTAL STEPS

1. **Assign a NOVA** staff member to oversee implementation phase in order to ensure continuity and integrity.
2. **Share project results** with NOVA workforce board members.
3. **Consider strategy** for sharing project results with other Learning Labs.
4. **Arrange meeting** with appropriate EDD officials to advise of process.
5. **Establish a CONNECT!** stakeholder council consisting of select NOVA and EDD staff as well as volunteers from the employer and job seeker focus groups. Projects could involve:

- gaining a further understanding of customer reactions to and visions for CONNECT!
- developing a set of core principles for guiding CONNECT! and the transformation work, such as:
 - transparency
 - clarity
 - systemic integrity
- reaching out to Learning Lab representatives to understand ISD best practices and consider the applicability for CONNECT!. Areas of emphasis could include:
 - accessing and upgrading equipment, including fax machines, copiers, etc.
 - staff training protocols
 - staff scheduling
 - updating technology
 - one-stop marketing and branding
- making recommendations to NOVA and EDD management for one-stop improvements
- consider establishing subcommittees focused on specific interest areas such as technology.

6. **Invite other state and federal** policymakers to dialogues about the findings of this study with particular focus on the items cited above in the state and federal policy implications. Discussion topics include:
 - the need for resources to enable one-stops to capitalize on ISD opportunities and success stories
 - opportunities to align state and federal policy and practices with the needs of ISD Learning Labs.



FUTURE STEPS

(Dependent upon results of incremental process)

- 1. Survey CONNECT! staff** to assess assets and match staff resources with one-stop needs.
- 2. Train two Spanish-speaking EDD staff members** to become Spanish-language navigators who are aware of details of the entire CONNECT! operation. This pilot would serve as a template for serving others who are not primarily English speakers. Additional navigator positions, part-time or full-time, could be established for Vietnamese and Chinese (Mandarin).
- 3. Establish a pilot period** (two weeks) in which the CONNECT! center closes early for facilitated staff daily debriefs. This would be a problem-solving and team-building tool similar to one employed in San Diego.
- 4. On a pilot basis,** seek EDD support to establish two dedicated telephone lines where both NOVA and EDD CONNECT! staff can address customer UI questions through direct connections to EDD UI staff.
- 5. Hire a facilitator** to establish a team-building process.
- 6. Marketing initiative:** Convene a CONNECT! stakeholder council to address marketing and branding issues. A key question: How to build a clear, recognizable brand around local workforce services while addressing the need to recognize the contributions of all key partners.
- 7. Promoting transparency:** In the welcome orientation and on the website and in other literature, present the entire NOVA/CONNECT! system/training ladder:
 - Levels of service available with outcomes, prerequisites and course content:
 - What we offer, what we don't offer and if we don't, where to find it.
 - Creating a university-like catalogue of options.
 - Formally link CONNECT! to ProMatch and to Bio2Device Group and other networking organizations.
 - Employ NOVA data analysts to map CONNECT! services in a clear manner.
- 8. Encourage ProMatch** volunteers to offer services to CONNECT! members and strategically augment one-stop staff activities.
- 9. Incorporate more** networking opportunities in all CONNECT! activities, including workshops.
- 10. Compile a compendium** of existing networks through which job seekers can connect with employers, colleagues in their fields and training opportunities. These could include:
 - Voluntary associations of workers in similar industries, such as the Bio2Device Group and the list of Silicon Valley groups compiled by University of California, Davis Professor Chris Benner. (andreas.com/faq-networks.html)
 - Unions.
 - Religious institutions and other community groups.
- 11. Seek state and federal** support for CONNECT! technology upgrades.
- 12. Engage Dr. Goodkind** to work with CONNECT! stakeholders to clearly articulate and refine all workshop outcomes with the goal of promoting clarity and transparency and creating more precise success metrics.
- 13. Seek partnerships** with Monster, LinkedIn and other employers to strategically augment CONNECT! services.
- 14. Establish a plan** for following up on this report in September 2011 to evaluate the quality of the recommendations and the value of this qualitative approach to system assessment.

THE FEDERAL/STATE STORY: Analysis and Conclusions

THE STATE EDD'S ISD initiative has been generally positive for workforce customers and for the Learning Labs institutionally. The significance is heightened by the fact that the Learning Labs rolled out new programs and expanded enrollments just prior to the economic collapse which accelerated in September 2008.

While recognizing challenges, particularly with staff integration, the Learning Labs have soldiered on and are committed to working toward the vision of a seamless, integrated one-stop operation. The end results may not be exactly as consultant Greg Newton outlined in 2007, but the broad ISD principles are in place.

But all of the local partner team building, staff dialogue and facilitated self-assessments cannot make up for a lack of strategic workforce integration in Washington, D.C. As shown in this report, silos built on the federal level tend to replicate themselves in state capitals and local one-stops.

In launching this study of service integration from the CONNECT! and statewide Learning Lab perspectives, NOVA has agreed to commit significant resources to address challenges and capitalize on opportunities revealed in this initiative. As stated above, there is much work to be done locally to realize ISD potential and capitalize on opportunities.

But, as noted in the discussion of NOVA and EDD staff conflicts, all CONNECT! stakeholders are working within systems and rules created on the state and federal levels.

Based on this report's data and analysis, the following are recommendations to governmental policymakers. Opportunities represent ISD features which should be retained and supported with additional resources. Challenges should be either jettisoned from the ISD mix or individual workforce boards should have the flexibility to amend these items to best suit local conditions.

ISD OPPORTUNITIES

- **Within the context** of both cyclical and structural economic upheaval, the ability to enroll virtually every eligible adult and dislocated worker in the workforce system. There are no longer “haves” and “have-nots” regarding access to service. At the same time, customers have a choice about the enrollment decision and should feel comfortable to decline enrollment if they do not see a need for extensive services.

- **An integrated approach** to providing interested job seekers and employers with all conceivable employment and unemployment related service under one roof.
- **The ability to** reallocate precious staff resources from a case management-focused system to one where customers have access to a wide variety of skill development workshops designed to meet the challenges of an increasingly dynamic economy. Adding the LinkedIn workshops at CONNECT! is an example of this responsiveness.
- **A focus on skill** acquisition including the entrepreneurial or personal marketing skills required to successfully obtain employment.
- **A more customer-driven** approach where the one-stop has the flexibility to respond to customer real-time needs. One example is the availability of drop-in advisors who can address immediate concerns.
- **There are now** a core group of Learning Labs that provide a repository of real world ISD best practices and assistance.
- **There is no local** authority for the state agency to pursue these integration activities nor are there mechanisms to promote state/local partnerships.
- **There is a misalignment** of priorities between WIA and Wagner-Peyser agencies. While CONNECT! and other Learning Labs are stressing the importance of customer choice in the enrollment process, EDD and other Wagner-Peyser supported organizations are rewarded for the number of customers who access the CalJOBS resume posting site and other activities.
- **There are few** or insufficient resources available locally to help customers navigate UI, usually their major immediate concern when addressing unemployment challenges.
- **Funding cuts have** hurt CONNECT!'s ability to stay technologically in synch with Silicon Valley and have deprived customers and staff of basic needs, such as adequate staffing and basic equipment.
- **With a loss** of case manager-enabled customer “hard exits” from the workforce system, one-stops do not have the reliable and timely data from which to measure performance and make ongoing systemic improvements.
- **WIA and Wagner-Peyser**-funded staff can work at cross purposes because of separate and uncoordinated funding streams from ARRA and other sources.

ISD CHALLENGES

- **Over two years** into the process, full staff integration is still more vision than reality in many Learning Labs, thus undermining ISD integrity with job seekers and staff.

Prioritized Federal/State Recommendations

THESE RECOMMENDATIONS ARE STRUCTURED similarly to the NOVA discussion on next steps, roles and responsibilities. The first section is a set of incremental steps to start immediate action. Recommendations in the second section will require more time and resources. Because they are addressing two separate audiences, the NOVA and federal/state incremental recommendations can proceed simultaneously.

INCREMENTAL STEPS

- 1. Present report findings** to NOVA's workforce board with recommendations that the board's legislative committee prepare an outreach strategy to state and federal legislators and administrators whose constituents are impacted by the local ISD process. Initial focus would be on NOVA's seven-city region.
- 2. Present findings** to California Workforce Association (CWA) and National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) with the immediate outcomes of forming joint strategy teams of CWA/NAWB and Learning Lab representatives to formulate strategies to influence federal and state workforce regulations and rules.

- 3. Present findings** to Tim Rainey, director of California Labor Federation Workforce and Economic Development project.
- 4. Share self-evaluation** findings with U. S. Undersecretary of Education Martha Kanter, a former NOVA board member.

FUTURE STEPS

(Dependent upon results of incremental process)

- 1. Meet with state and federal** decision makers to:
 - Discuss report findings and lessons learned from the ISD pilot.
 - Focus attention on the local service impact of national workforce funding silos with competing goals, requirements and delivery mechanisms.
- 2. Convene stakeholders** from the field to solve the intractable problems regarding governance in the local one-stop systems.
- 3. Examine the potential** for closer alignment of EDD's unemployment insurance, job service and labor exchange functions.
- 4. Promote sustainable** WIA and Wagner-Peyser funding to stabilize the local systems and to leverage the success of ARRA and other temporary investment.

Appendix A–1

Sample Focus Group Guide

Introductions & Roles:

- Hilary Goodkind, Consultant and facilitator
- Luther Jackson, NOVA Economic Stimulus Manager and note taker today
- Your Roles: Expert partners of the Integrated Service Delivery Model/CONNECT!

Purpose :

- To understand how the integrated service delivery model has helped clients gain employment in current economic conditions.
- The data will be used to influence WIA re-authorization and Wagner-Peyser funding allocations.
- We also want to do better by staff and customers!

Other Focus Groups

- NOVA staff
- EDD staff
- Job seekers pre-service integration
- Job seekers post integration

Timing

- One hour

Confidentiality:

- Notes respect your point of view.
- Notes are to be used only for this project.
- Your comments are confidential.
- No names will be attached to any commentary.

Digital recording:

- To serve solely as back up for the note takers.
- Will be used only with your permission.

Appendix A–2

EDD & NOVA Staff Questions/Discussion Topics

1. If the service integration model were a person, what three words would best describe it?

Content prompts:

- Flexibility
- System Responsiveness
- Rigidity
- Characteristics

2. Can you describe an instance when a client reported being surprised by the integrated service model? What surprised them most?

Content prompts:

- Service experience—positive or negative
- Latent needs
- Consistent message
- Real-time/what’s happening

3. If I were to follow you as you tried to serve a client, what problems would I see you encounter?

- Basic supplies
- Lack of answers
- Need for supervisor
- Inconsistent information

4. If you had a magic wand to use to perfect your service delivery system, what would you add?

Content prompts:

- Service integration between NOVA and EDD
- Internal integration of staff
- Use of your talent with this model
- How would the model be different if your skills were fully empowered
- Cross training/role sharing
- Service metrics
- Follow up/tracking

5. What question should I have asked you but did not?

Appendix A–3

Job Seekers, Pre-Learning Lab Questions/Discussion Topics

1. If CONNECT! was a person, what three words would best describe him/her?

Content prompts:

- Flexibility
- System responsiveness
- Rigidity
- Characteristics

2. What surprised you most about the CONNECT! services?

Content prompts:

- Service experiences—positive or negative
 - Personal attention
 - Empathy
 - Knowledge of system
- Latent needs
 - Workshops
 - Alignment with the economy/real time service
 - Facilities
 - Place to be
 - Staff focus on details
 - Job seeker comfort levels
 - How to dress
 - Interview timing

3. What, if any, differences do you notice between your first and second visit to CONNECT!? Can you share an example?

Content prompts:

- What component parts made a difference?
- Compare/Contrast
- Strengths/Weaknesses

4. If I were to follow you through your job search process with CONNECT!, what problems would I see you encounter?

5. If you could wave a magic wand to create an ideal job search process, what would you add to your CONNECT! experience?

Content prompts:

- What would make a difference? Painful/pleasant experiences
- New opportunities
- Weaknesses

6. What question should I have asked but didn't?

Appendix A–4

Job Seekers, Pre and Post Learning Lab Questions/Discussion Topics

1. If CONNECT! was a person, what three words would best describe him/her?

Content prompts:

- Flexibility
- System responsiveness
- Rigidity
- Characteristics

2. What surprised you most about the CONNECT! services?

Content prompts:

- Service experiences—positive or negative
 - Personal attention
 - Empathy
 - Knowledge of system
- Latent needs
 - Workshops
 - Alignment with the economy/real time service
 - Facilities
 - Place to be
 - Staff focus on details
 - Job seeker comfort levels
 - How to dress
 - Interview timing

3. If I were to follow you around CONNECT! as you searched for a job, what problems would I see you encounter?

4. If you could wave a magic wand to create the ideal job search process, what would you add to your CONNECT! experience?

Content prompts:

- What would make a difference?
- New opportunities
- Weaknesses

5. What question should I have asked you but did not?

Appendix A–5

Employer Questions/Discussion Topics

1. If CONNECT! was a person, what three words would best describe him/her?

Content prompts:

- Flexibility
- System responsiveness
- Rigidity
- Characteristics

2. Can you describe an instance when you were surprised by a CONNECT! service? What surprised you the most?

Content prompts:

- Service experiences—positive or negative
- Latent needs
- Expectations? Low/high?
- Real time data and services?
- Perceptions of government offered service

3. If I were to follow you as you partnered with CONNECT! to recruit employees, what problems would I observe?

4. If you had a magic wand to wave to perfect the recruitment process, what would you add?

Content prompts:

- Are candidates prepared?
- Visions of partnership with CONNECT!
- New/additional services
- Niche training opportunities

5. What question should I have asked you but did not?

Appendix B–1

POST ISD GROUP

Extreme creativity is needed to build effective solutions under current circumstances

Allocation of scarce resources is a challenge

CONNECT! is beyond capacity

- “There is a limited capacity. More money to increase capacity would be great.”
- “The size of the (CONNECT!) facility could be almost doubled.”
- “I’d rather see more classes ... I enjoy the participation.”

Clients spend time waiting for services

- “There is a three to four month waiting list to get into ProMatch. It took me five to six months.”
- “If you don’t have an appointment, you have hours to kill (waiting for services).”
- “I was attempting to take advantage of a WIA offering. I found a course ... (but) in the end I gave up. No one could qualify it. It wasn’t on the sacred list of qualified classes.”

Clients would like to be part of NOVA’s support infrastructure

Workshops have the potential to maximize networking among similarly grouped professionals

- “The instructors zeroed in on a diverse background (of clients in workshops).”
- “Track people for workshops ... it means you look at their fields and experience levels and you try to band people together in the same segments ... If we can come up with some way for course filters.”
- “The workshops and classes are the most differentiated instructors to reach all kinds of learning ... (from) all of the 22 students (in a class).”

CONNECT! has a network of customers wanting to help customers

- “Have a place to socialize and network. We need a meet up place where people can access resources, socialize, help each other.”
- “There is tremendous knowledge to help each other, but not a forum.”

Clearly defined outcomes at all levels of CONNECT! are needed

Clients want a clear plan through NOVA/CONNECT! services

- “There is a beginning. Just get into the system ... Then after that it’s left to the emotional and cognitive intelligence of the client to figure out the next step. Right now it’s the client’s job. It could be a little more identified.”
- “I look at the advisors to provide some individualization ... For every person there (should be) a written plan ... something that you can leave with and walk away and start working your plan.”
- “What if there was more online, so you could do your schedule online and know course availability and plan what you worked out with your advisor ... and go back and look at the resources?”

ProMatch and CONNECT! do not meet everyone’s needs

- “The level of commitment for ProMatch made it difficult because I had contract work. Maybe there is a need for programs in the middle.”
- “People are at very different places. These programs have to be differentiated.”

continued

EDD and NOVA agency differences are striking to clients

NOVA's infrastructure is strong

- “Tasks, forms, information is organized and color coded. I attribute it to an infrastructure of CONNECT! There is a design in place. It's very good.”
- “CONNECT! was much better than paid outplacement services (provided by former employers).”

NOVA's (CONNECT!) service breaks government stereotypes

- “Unbelievable ... my expectations coming to the EDD office were bureaucracy and paper work ... the opposite happened. (I found) plentiful information and amazing counselors.”
- “The experience of working with the government has not been pleasant. This has been a great experience.”

EDD service is inconsistent

- “My unemployment insurance benefits were delayed for three months ... the EDD front desk number (at CONNECT!) is how I got through (to EDD).”
- “(When I had a question regarding unemployment insurance) the person at the EDD desk said, ‘Well, from reading the book ...’ He didn't know any more than me!”

EDD and CONNECT! offer contrasting service experiences

- “EDD leaves us in a state of frustration.”
- “EDD was a different story. The opposite of NOVA.”

CONNECT! is a refuge for the unemployed

The pain of the recession is palpable.

- “When I walked in, I was surprised by the magnitude of the downturn ... The human toll, ironically, is inspirational!”
- “I've never come here when there isn't a car, full in the parking lot. And you know that someone is living out of their car.”

CONNECT!'s existence offers emotional support

- “CONNECT! gives us the opportunity to get humbled and appreciated ... to step back from frustration.”
- “CONNECT! is another reason to get dressed up, go meet people, keep your attitude up.”

NOVA (CONNECT!) services are underpublicized

- “I'm amazed how many others don't know about CONNECT!. Their eyes glaze over when I tell them about it. I say, ‘No, this is different, they will help you!’”
- “NOVA is another tool in our tool kit people don't know about.”
- “NOVA is a best practice. I would hope that more centers have learned what you have learned ... You're doing some great stuff here.”

Additional Comments

Two job seekers had significant comments that did not fit neatly into the above categories. One concerned the types of job openings from employers promoted at CONNECT!.

- “Employers that have been coming in have low level jobs. Have employers that have more professional jobs.”

The other spoke positively about accepting contract work in the hopes that – after a “tryout period” – it would lead to a full time position.

- “I did receive a job earlier this year ... We agreed to a contracting mode. Try and buy. It's a great model. It's the ideal.”

Appendix B-2

PRE AND POST ISD GROUP

The “connection” that underpins CONNECT! is challenged

NOVA cannot be all things to all people

Caseloads exceed capacity

- “There are fewer (staff) people (than five years ago) to serve a much larger population. That’s a state funding issue.”
- “Is there a possibility that (NOVA) could establish a satellite office in Gilroy or San Mateo?”
- “There needs to be a business development person to reach out to (employers) and get jobs (for customers).”
- “There should be more staff for Pro-Match. That is where the problem is.”

Counselors struggle to serve everyone

- “In general, if most of the trainers have not worked in high tech recently, they don’t have connections with that group and don’t know what has changed in the last five-six years.”
- “For me, it is a joke when they (counselors) say ‘let me look at your resume.’ You are not qualified to look at my resume. You know diddly squat about this field.”
- “(Regarding differences in service pre and post ISD implementation) I don’t perceive any differences. The services don’t pertain to me. People can’t review the resume and can’t help me with interviews. (It’s) not their skill sets.”

NOVA attempts to help everyone

- “There is a basic level (NOVA) addresses well. Then there are two or three levels above that, that because they are trying to get everything with so many people at once, they are not actually doing this.”
- “It is important for CONNECT! to do what they say they will do. If they can’t do it, don’t advertise it. If you don’t have the capability, leave it to someone else.”

Customers want services that extend the current CONNECT! scope

Clients want the employer market brought to them

- “I would like to see NOVA do more with corporations to work more closely with hiring managers and help with informational interviews. That would help people who are frustrated.”
- “There are a lot of recruiters out there. Bring in a pool through CONNECT! Why aren’t HR people connecting through this organization?”
- “Bring more of the available opportunities to the people that need opportunities. I am frustrated by the job search. It’s win or lose. You lose if you don’t get a job.”
- “There are ways to match opportunities with people in need of opportunities.”

NOVA focuses on turning clients out into the market

- “NOVA focuses on the search and preparation but doesn’t focus on attracting and finding the jobs that are really there for them.”
- “The job market is so saturated, so impersonal, so out of touch with employees, that the connection, that is NOVA CONNECT! is not happening.”
- “I think they (NOVA) are aware (of the current economic environment) but they don’t have power or real connections to make it happen. I don’t think they have the capacity to make a difference.”

Certain customers feel they are misfits

CONNECT! best serves people on a linear career path

- “NOVA addresses the young segment of the population, the people who are linear and don’t have issues, the form fitting (job) candidates.”
- “I think (CONNECT!) is doing a great job for entry – mid level positions. I would like to feel more focus on the (profession/management) side of things to help more people who don’t fit the (linear) mold.”
- “I don’t fit the mold when I come to each aspect of CONNECT! (service). I try and plug myself into that and find it doesn’t work ... they (staff) can’t assist me because I am not in the mold.”

Not all customers fit into the service model

- “I draw a pretty distinct line between the CONNECT! services and ProMatch. CONNECT! is really geared towards entry and mid level positions and people who have had a (linear) career path. For people with more experience, getting on in years or high tech, there is nothing in CONNECT! of benefit.”
- “As far as the type of services I would need ... it’s primarily geared to tech and engineering. My background is general management. I’m having a devil of a time trying to find anyone who’s even interested in what my issues are.”
- “There are a lot of people, especially those who are older and have career changes, that are not addressed by (the linear services).”
- “My son is looking for a job. He came once to CONNECT! and left. He said there are all these old people. Young people don’t necessarily feel welcome.”

The process of becoming unemployed produces fragility

Customers have basic needs that threaten their stability

Health care is a frightening obstacle

- “Most of the services through California have been cut. You can get on these programs, but there is a three-month waiting list. I’ve washed through my retirement. I was told I can’t have (health) insurance at all.”
- “I don’t know if (health care guidance) is the responsibility of CONNECT! ... The fact is that we don’t have that service. I blame the people in Sacramento.”
- “How can I have debt when fraudulently knowing I can’t pay for it (to qualify for health insurance)? Where do you go?”
- “There was someone at ProMatch to help (with social services) ... I do know a couple of people who went to that person who weren’t really helped.”

Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a confusing irritant

- “Most people don’t understand UI. They will put you on and pay you the difference (if you get part-time work).”
- “I cannot get any extension on UI. I’ve been out of work three years. When I applied I got a very perfunctory form letter saying you are no longer eligible. Then I got a back tax bill. We (the government) have the assistance to go after you but not to help you. For most of those (40) years I have paid all the taxes. I was only eligible for six months of UI and workers comp because I had a health issue. Where’s the justice for someone like me that has been and continues to pay taxes, that I can’t get support in my time of need? It’s a huge travesty.”
- “If you can find (work), I try to keep it under four hours because it impacts UI. I have to get at least \$30 an hour or I am losing money ... You don’t want to give up funds you do have.”

The human element is essential

Customers have emotional needs that extend beyond the job search

- “There is nothing more beneficial for a person looking for a job than to feel useful. There is a mental side of being out of work that is hardly addressed by anyone and is completely glazed over.”
- “They used to call it the silent majority. We are in need of strong help and assistance ... I don’t want to stand on a street corner. We want to have some dignity about this (job search).”
- “I know a lot of people who are really desperate right now.”
- “(CONNECT!) also needs to help fill in the gap services – part-time, fill-in and job sharing (work) and how to make your money last longer.”

Counselors could make connections to bridge gaps in services

- “I think you still need the one-on-one counseling. You need the balance of workshops and one-on-one counselors.”
- “The best situation would be to have enough facilitators for workshops and one-on-one counselors for people who need or request one-on-one counseling.”

Peer support saves lives

- “I’ve seen people from ProMatch who were homeless, have gotten booted out and someone took them into their home. I have taken people to the hospital because they didn’t have a car. There is a community in ProMatch where the help has to come from.”
- “The one thing CONNECT! doesn’t have is how to address social needs – I need a ride somewhere, etc.”
- “Another great benefit of CONNECT! is that it provides you with someplace to go. You begin to feel that I am not in here by myself. For me, that is important.”

Customers are acutely aware of the trials they face with the current job market

Customers have an urgent need to accelerate the job search process

- “The time it takes to get a job, especially the more senior you are, has grown from a couple of months to a couple of years. In the meantime, you need something to offset costs.”
- “You can’t wait three months to get into an organization like (ProMatch) ... In employment terms that is like aging in dog and cat years.”

It is an employers’ market

- “What’s different with this job search? I’m supposed to have PowerPoints before I even get the job. I have to pitch something before deciding if I should get the job. It takes 10-15 hours to prepare. ... It’s not just preliminary research.”
- “(Employers) used to put three or four things in job qualifications. Now the degree of granularity is so high ... that you are excluded from the process.”
- “When they put out the Kasier program they needed people to train ... They had us driving here and there across the Bay and we didn’t get (jobs). I invested time, and nothing. I didn’t get (a job).”
- “There is no way to make an employer hire someone. You can build in as many incentives as you like, but at the end of the day (employers) are still calling the shots.”

New skills will only help customers be more desirable to employers

- “I enjoyed re-picking up an Excel class. In my job it was something I always wanted to do. I also took PEP communication. It was fun and reiterated some of the things I haven’t thought about for a long time.”
- “The content of classes is quite good. I didn’t mind coming to classes. I always got things out of them.”
- “I’ve picked up social networking skills and social media in Pro-Match.”

Alternate modes of service delivery can improve services

The function of networking is underutilized

Finding a job requires multiple networks

- “Synagogues in San Mateo started a group called Congregants Helping Congregants. Many engineers and high tech people have gotten jobs within the community.”
- “It’s like all networking things. You have to reach out beyond the walls of NOVA to build a base of connections to build opportunities.”

Highly experienced clients get help from each other in ProMatch

- “One of the ideas around ProMatch was that you do the LinkedIn (social media) thing in person with people in ProMatch. You could network skills together. It made ProMatch into a mentoring organization.”
- “Once you get into ProMatch you can have peers in your field who are qualified to interview you and to look at your resume.”

ProMatch clients want to help CONNECT! clients

- “If you are used to working your whole life and now you can’t find a job and no one wants to have you ... it always feels good to have a purpose.”
- “For people in tech (CONNECT! career advisors) can’t review their resume because they don’t have technical skills. You have a big pool of talent (ProMatch clients). ProMatch people work service hours ... Why don’t you call on ProMatch people to help?”
- “You have a resource of people who could mentor people (in job search).”

Technology is underemployed at NOVA

NOVA’s use of technology is deficient

- “You are at the temporal epicenter (of the high tech world) ... and you use technology of 20 years ago. You have a sign post website, no classes on there, no social networking on there. Where is the connection?”
- “I don’t think CONNECT! is up to date on online or social media in the marketing arena.”

Technology offers opportunity to extend services

- “You could even stream the classes.”
- “I can’t think of very many services that CONNECT! offers that can’t be online ... (including) counseling and ProMatch networking.”

The workshop registration process is exclusive

- “In order to get into workshops, you have to be here physically. I’ve seen people in tears because they have to drop off kids or whatever and can’t be in line for 1.5 hours.”
- “It’s a 60 mile round trip for some (customers). They cannot justify coming here more than twice a week. There should be other alternatives than actually being here and signing up (for workshops). The rest of your life can’t handle that.”

Additional Comments

On the key initial question—what has changed under ISD—this focus group reported that the CONNECT! center was busier than ever.

- “There are more workshops (than before). (Previously) these were services only for ProMatch.”
- “The difference between CONNECT! now ... every computer is used ... signing up for classes in the morning is a big deal!”

Like the other job seeker focus group, one of these participants complained about the nature of jobs posted at CONNECT! by employers.

- “Companies that come in have junior jobs. I’ve never seen a senior job posted here.”

All six participants volunteered to assist CONNECT! in implementing changes recommended this report.

Appendix B–3

EMPLOYER FOCUS GROUP

The potential of NOVA’s employer services is unrealized

The mission of employer services is undefined

CONNECT! offers more for employers than philanthropy

- “Defining a secondary value proposition to my company is a little harder. They know what it means to give back to the community and do that well.”
- “I would put this interaction on par with outplacement firms we use. It makes it easy to do good, to do right by the community. I don’t associate that (level of service) with a government entity.”
- “Most HR people don’t want to make a lot of noise when there is a layoff. If they believe CONNECT! is a trustworthy place, they could use CONNECT! as a resource.”

Employers view CONNECT! services as undistinguished

- “How well does CONNECT! market to employers? Are companies made aware this is a resource?”
- “You could do more marketing (on the web page). I’d love to hear people’s business success stories. You could start putting up people’s profiles that have been hired.”

The value proposition for employers using CONNECT! is not strong

Tracking CONNECT! hires justifies the partnership

- “Internally we would like to be able to justify ... and say which source (gave us the hire). The tracking process is just overwhelming.”
- “We need to see the segments of placements that CONNECT! makes based on industry ... It would help us show how we are helping our community.”

Employers need to appraise the value of CONNECT! services quickly

- “Getting recruiters and hiring managers to attend an event when they are tasked with deadlines ... (they ask) what’s in it for us?”
- “Time is our most important asset (as recruiters).”

Strong employer partnerships can put the unemployed back to work faster

Employers want to come into CONNECT! to recruit from an organized pool of clients

CONNECT! is a resource to pre-screen candidates

- “The screening process ... I’ll get 15-20 people but as I begin my presentation, they begin to walk out. I stress the physical aspect of security (work). People hear that and say ‘it’s not for me.’ I give the reality to working for security.”
- “If CONNECT! were to coach the candidate before sending them to me ... what the requirements are, the culture, what we are looking for ... that would help the candidate and their success speaking with us.”

Employers want control of the screening process

- “I appreciate people who want to send me the resumes, but nowadays my inbox gets so buried, it gets lost. (A CONNECT! resume database/online access) would help expedite.”
- “Is there a resume database that is made public of people who are active in CONNECT!? ... Online would be helpful. The ability to vet that and download it and get it into one’s ATS, particularly if (employers) couldn’t come (to CONNECT!)”
- “We don’t do a lot of postings ... the signal to noise ratio is crazy. There are way more people that don’t fit ... We do outreach and homework and research. So if we could see people’s profiles, that would be useful.”

continued

Successful employer partnerships require personal connections

Personalized serviced for employers makes a valuable connection

- (Joyce Nolan at CONNECT!) creates all the flyers for me. I just have to give her things to add ... It really makes a difference.”
- “We want to create our own flyer and add specific opportunities and roles so we create our own flyer. It was approved really quick. It got the message out.”
- “CONNECT! includes me in additional events that are going on, not necessarily here (at CONNECT!). For example, a vets job fair ... I had a wonderful job fair ... hired five people. If she hadn't told me that, I would not have had that type of opportunity.”

NOVA could broker job seekers among multiple employers

- “There's nothing wrong with partnering with (other) employers. There's a lot (of jobseekers) around and there is the cultural fit as well. ... I don't consider it (partnering to find employees) a threat.”
- “(CONNECT! should) have a little more targeting (of employers) ... (and) specific targeted events (focused on health care, technology, etc.)”
- “What DBM and others (outplacement companies) do is facilitate their own job fair when Cisco, HP, etc. does layoffs ... If (employers laying off employees) knew they should connect with CONNECT!, there's one more touch point.”

It is essential to connect through technology

Employers view technology as a necessary enabler

- “How much of what (employers) share (at CONNECT! workshops) is retained? Are there notes taken, top five takeaways ... to be able to share that with people who do want to learn?”
- “I look at (technology) as a facilitator of relationship building and communication.”

NOVA underutilizes technology

- “(If CONNECT! had online access) I'd log in and screen them and look for different employees ... I would set up alert searches based on key words so I would get flagged every time there is a match.”
- “(It would be helpful if) from the front page (I could) link to CONNECT! and have a link going from that to the resume database.”
- “(I would like) a repository where we could access ... and see a group of people, categories and set up alerts ... It saves us time.”

Employers believe self integrity to be a critical core value of a job seeker

Employers face internal hiring challenges

- “(The challenge) is on our side in terms of hiring managers ... My company has cookie cutter job descriptions but sometimes there are superstars (who don't fit the mold). They just need to realize that. I'm trying to open the cookie cutter beyond the job description.”
- “The actual background check (is a challenge) because of the licensing requirement. We have to be specific as to what we can hire.”
- “Doing credit checks are unbelievable (and an internal challenge to hiring).”

Candidates need to market themselves consistently

- “I've found with some people I've met here (at CONNECT!) that they may have skills on paper but once you meet them in person it just doesn't match up at all.”
- “My closer for almost every interview I have ... as a recruiter, we prescreen and qualify candidates ... but we don't make the final hiring decision ... I tell them now it's your job to market yourself to the hiring manager.”
- “We're having people (interview who are) having other people do the resume for them ... Sometimes the skill set isn't beyond the paper. That's a problem. They've done a good job marketing themselves.”

Individuals who strive to continuously improve themselves professionally are desirable.

- “The mindset of you own your professional development ... do some serious asking of questions ... How do I make myself more valuable? ... What do I need to do? ... What relationships do I need to further nurture, develop or create?”
- “... We see people need ... the ability to own (their) own professional development. Present circumstances not withstanding.”
- “How do you foster (employees ability to develop themselves professionally) from CONNECT!? I wonder if that is being addressed or reinforced as opposed to intermediate Excel skills.”

Skill development is not the deciding factor to hire.

- “We could hire someone with no job skills at all ... and teach them.”
- “If you are in an (industry) segment that rapidly has to change, it requires you to be self learning. We don't do any training because (technology) is moving too fast.”

Appendix B-4

NOVA STAFF FOCUS GROUP

Cause: A lack of fundamentals impairs the entire system

A lack of information irritates the entire system

- “Every single person who comes in has questions about (unemployment benefits). We have no answers for them. We give them the same (phone) numbers.”
- “The bottom line is that we have customers coming to the door we can’t give answers to.”
- “If an employer is looking to apply for TAA, EDD is very responsive in telling what they need to do to apply. If they have specific questions in completing the applications, EDD is not in a position to speak to that.”

Employees lack basic needs

- “That fax machine for clients hasn’t worked in at least over a year and that’s a service we are advertising. And the copy machine for clients. It doesn’t work.”
- “It’s a state building. Nothing works.”

Cause: Service will make or break integration

Customer service is inconsistent between the agencies

- “It’s been a challenge to give consistent and accurate information (to the customers).”
- “Some of them (EDD staff) are more willing to (help) than others, depending upon the day.”
- “My clients go over there and try to talk to someone at the EDD desk. If I have to, I’ll walk over there and talk to a person who will put in the extra effort.”

Customers are forgiving when service is good

- “Our staff (NOVA) will say we can fix it for you (the client). We’ll go above and beyond to go to the back of the building and stand there and send a 20 page fax for the client because the EDD equipment doesn’t work. This happens every day . . . many times.”
- “They (customers) are surprised they get good customer service.”
- “When I meet with a client I go over the paperwork. They’re like, ‘Wow, I’m glad this place exists. It’s very efficient.’”

A partnership with EDD requires workarounds

- “From our vantage point, we’ve been commissioned by (Department of Labor) to complete applications on behalf of the employer applicant. We’ve decided not to play that game. We’ve said ‘That’s EDD’s area.’”
- “We have to look at alternate strategies (for employers). How can we get them EDD information?”
- “EDD is a mystery.”

Cause: Power struggles impede integration

Our cultures are at odds

- “You are dealing with two groups and they are not the same . . . the culture is different. The work ethic is different. We are trying but the division is still there.”
- “In the middle of training (with an EDD staff person), they’ve got to go on break . . . It wastes my time waiting for the person to come back from break.”
- “When a client is using computers inappropriately (e.g. accessing pornography), each agency has its own policy. We don’t know what to do. EDD and NOVA have different policies.”

Organizational differences are obvious to clients

- “It forces the customer to go elsewhere for help which a lot of people won’t do. They walk away. They assume we are the same people working for the same organization.”
- “Even though we are trying to integrate, the clients get it . . . that there are two groups.”
- “You’re dealing with two agencies trying to work together to help clients. One agency has its own beliefs and the other has others.”

Information is power

- “They (EDD) can get into CISRS (Customer Information Services Reporting System), but we don’t have access to their’s (system).”
- “In my mind there’s no reason why we can’t have access to that (unemployment) information if that’s what service integration is about.”
- “They (EDD) don’t want to share what they know.”

continued

Cause: What is CONNECT!? Clients are confused

- “They still ask us questions about EDD. They ask, ‘What are you? What is this place?’”
- “Employers don’t understand that there are all of these resources available. That’s a marketing sort of thing and a branding sort of thing. Even PhD folks don’t get it.”
- “A lot of time people are surprised when they see it is NOVA and not EDD. Most people come in with (unemployment) questions.”

Cause: Staff professional integrity is threatened

Staff feel personally responsible for clients

- “We may be bombarded but our customers come first.”
- “They (customers) say I am a human being to these people, not just a number coming through.”
- “For us, in dealing with a client, if we don’t know the answer, we’ll find it for them.”

Employees protect their reputations

- “(The differences in the agencies) force us to make a distinction as to who the main players are ... I let them know we are NOVA.”
- “When I talk to a client, I let them know I am NOVA.”
- “Some days it may be challenging because we tell them we’re not EDD. It’s not seamless.”

Effect: Staff enthusiasm for integration is waning

Resentment is deepening the divide among agencies

- “It’s more of a challenge with service integration. They just throw more on us. We essentially do everything, which is really pretty frustrating.”
- “They (EDD) breed negativity amongst themselves.”
- “I would take away integration ... we’ve always been in that building together ... really nothing has changed (with integration).”

Alignment around integration is lacking

- “If it’s going to work things have to change. It’s not working as it is.”
- “We need buy in. We just seem more flexible, more open, our culture (NOVA). We are ready for change, they (EDD) are not.”
- “As individual contributors, you are trying to make change ... but it needs to come from the top level.”

NOVA staff did point out a couple of positives.

- “We get a lot more referrals (enrollments).”
- “We do know more about (UI) than we used to.”

Appendix B–5

EDD STAFF FOCUS GROUP

Cause: EDD and NOVA cultures are misaligned

EDD and NOVA cultures are divided

- “I had an incident when they (client) wanted to speak with a manager. I went to NOVA management and they said it’s an EDD issue. So what is integration?”
- “We deal with clients in a more forward way. More black and white. This is the way it is. The rules are the way UI works. (NOVA) is more lenient.”

Management approaches are divergent

- “A NOVA manager is not going to go and take care of these clients. It’s like he or she is afraid. Their policy is that the customer is always right. You cannot upset them (customers).”
- “I have seen many times when (NOVA) managers in the office have changed their rules ... because they don’t want to hear that this client is angry.”

Cause: EDD infrastructure is deficient

Understaffing is limiting

- “We don’t have a manager all day long in the office ... The clients want to talk to a manager. They feel more comfortable talking to them.”
- “We need more people. EDD is not going to change until we get a few more people.”

EDD is void of basic supplies

- “The fax machine, printer, copier, toner ... everything is dead. There are no basic supplies. It is very difficult.”
- “We can’t get pencils ... We can’t order our supplies. We have not had a fax machine in that office for years.”

Information technology is a handicap

- “They used to let us do that (talk about UI). But they took that away from us. We do have access right now to the (UI computer) screens, but it is very limited. We can only view the screen ... one person has access.”
- “The computers aren’t set up very good for trying to help people. I think we need a couple more and configured differently.”

Cause: EDD and NOVA struggle for control of CONNECT!

EDD and NOVA battle to lead programs

- “I wasn’t aware that ProMatch was an EDD program. NOVA thinks it is their program. It’s always been like that. I thought it was a NOVA program.”
- “EDD made a big mistake. The managers. They let it (ProMatch) go for the other people in NOVA to take over.”

NOVA owns workshops

- “I would like to see us given the opportunity to facilitate. They (NOVA) own it.”
- “NOVA facilitates all of the workshops.”
- “We (EDD) are not part of the program (workshops and ProMatch).”

Cause: Unemployment Insurance dominates staff work

UI monopolizes our time

- “Answering UI questions makes a job very unsatisfying. It takes a good 35-40 minutes with that phone in your ear.”
- “99 percent of my day is providing services for UI. Which is not my job.”
- “We don’t have the UI people to answer questions. Some of us have the background. We don’t have any of that. We have to call UI for them.”

Staff are limited by UI needs

- “We should be doing one-on-ones with clients seeking employment.”
- “It is a struggle to sit there for four hours and answer the same questions over and over. What a waste of our skills.”
- “How could we participate (with workshops) when we are so buried with unemployment?”
- “If you don’t use your skills you get rusty. If you don’t use it, you lose it.”

EDD staff potential is unfulfilled

- “If we could be more involved, we’ll get respect from people. From peers and our partners. We’ll have a voice. People will see our skills.”
- “Allow EDD staff to do their jobs. Because when NOVA hires people, they allow them to excel to do their jobs, to have focus time. We don’t.”
- “Only certain people get to facilitate. We all have the skills to facilitate. I would like to see us be given the opportunity to facilitate.”
- “We don’t have focus time to be productive. In training, they (the state) taught me about doing outreach with employers to help our clients find work ... but we can’t.”

Working the front desk is trying

- “Every NOVA staff should come up and work the desk so they know how our day goes.”
- “I’m lucky, I’m not on the front (desk answering UI questions).”

Cause: UI is a misfit within CONNECT!

UI confuses staff

- “We are pretty much consistent with the answers. I am not going to sit and fake it when I don’t know.”
- “Everybody should have the same information, be trained to provide that good information to our clients.”
- “We don’t have all the UI answers. We don’t have 99 percent of the answers.”

UI answers vary

- “It’s a full day of answering the same questions. Sometimes we can’t answer it. Sometimes we fake it. Sometimes we try to help each other.”
- “They (clients) don’t like the answer and they ask another EDD employee the same question. I call it shopping for answers, the ones they want.”
- “NOVA gets a lot of UI questions which they answer quite effectively.”

The public doesn’t know the difference between UI and EDD

- “It’s hard for the public to understand it. We are not unemployment. I think all of the information that goes out from UI says if you have a question, go to unemployment. Now the public is confused.”
- “Since they see EDD (on the CONNECT! building), they assume we will have answers. They get upset.”

Effect: EDD staff are passive participants with integration

Staff have no voice to influence change

- “We didn’t have equal representation on that committee (which established integration). All of the ideas came from NOVA staff. We got just a little of the input.”
- “We’re not really involved in the decisions. We could contribute and do really well.”
- “I don’t think we are ever involved in any major changes or any of the major goals regarding where we feel the CONNECT! center should be going.”

Staff are disconnected from integration

- “We’ve tried to integrate business liaison, EDD and NOVA staff and it has not been very successful.”
- “Service integration is homeless, like you don’t belong or have a place. It needs to blend.”

Integration is lead outside of EDD

- “It’s not just one organization. When we say integration, we mean everyone comes together on an equal basis . . . When people came from Sacramento, they talked mostly to NOVA staff. Whatever is left over, we’ll try to integrate the other side.”
- “It seems to be one sided. It seems like there wasn’t a lot of input from the complete integration unit. It was not as equally planned as I would have liked.”

Like their NOVA counterparts, EDD staff did point out that customer service is a source of pride.

- “We provide excellent customer service from the customer’s point of view. We (attract) people from San Francisco, Gilroy, Marin, Danville, Hollister, Salinas.”
- “Overall, we provide excellent customer service.”

Like their managers, EDD staff spoke of the importance of addressing the needs of all segments of the population. And they also spoke of the value of staff diversity.

- “Our Spanish-speaking clients are not being served. I think they are turned away. There is no Spanish counselor. That concerns me.”
- “Our veterans are really falling through the cracks. We should have services and workshops just focused on veterans issues.”
- “We need more diversity at the front desk. That’s a really touchy issue. I don’t have control of it.”
- “When you facilitate with someone from a different background you get a different flavor. We’re not given that opportunity.”
- “Customers have brought diversity up to my attention. Three or four people (clients) have said that.”

Appendix C

Current CONNECT! Workshops by Category

Basic

- Career Advising (drop-in, one-on-one assistance)
- Managing Change (addressing stress, uncertainty of job loss and job search)
- Planning Your Job Search
- Real-Time Networking
- CONNECT! Library Orientation

Self-Assessment

- Discover You (interactive workshop to help explore interests)
- Who Am I? (survey of career assessment tools)
- Career Assessment (using assessment tools)
- Career Exploration (understanding career information resources)

Resumes/Applications

- Resume Facts (basics)
- Resume Critique (through career advisers)
- Job Applications (how to)

Job Search Strategies

- How to Find Job Leads
- Job Search Tips for the Mature Worker
- Networking
- LinkedIn 1 (basic how to)
- LinkedIn 2 (job search strategies)
- Informational Interviewing

Interviewing/Negotiations

- Ace the Interview (basics)
- Interview Practice
- Presenting Accomplishments
- Behavior-based Interviewing (prepare for specific questions about the past)
- Negotiating the Offer

Professional Effectiveness Program

- Communicating, Team Building and Problem Solving

Computer Skills Training

- Introduction to Computers
- Microsoft Access
- MS Excel
- MS PowerPoint
- MS Word
- QuickBooks

Professional Networking

- ProMatch Orientation

Clean/Green Careers

- Green Careers 101: Exploring the Opportunities
- Green Careers: Engineering, Science, Technical & Mechanical
- Green Careers: Green Building, Energy Efficiency & Sustainable Design
- Green Careers: Business, Enterprising, Law & Education

Self-Employment/Business

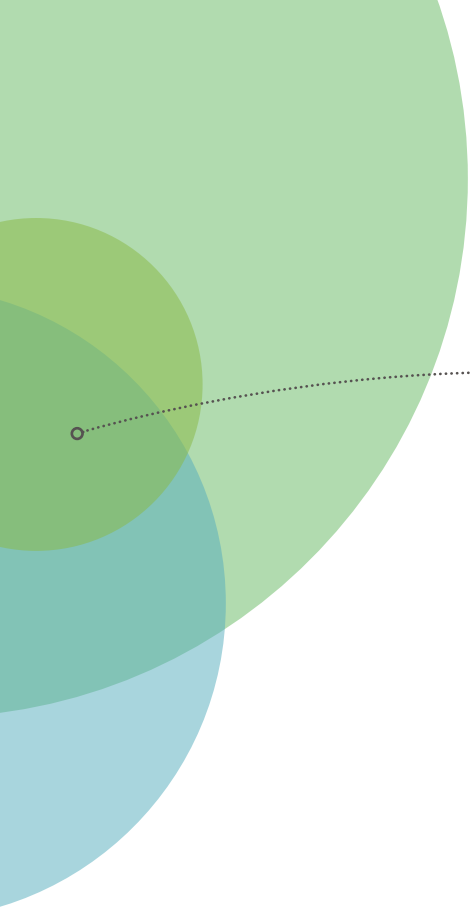
- Should I Start a Business?
- Exploring Franchising

Financial

- Mastering Your Money

Services to Individuals with Disabilities

- Disability Navigator
- Community Work Incentive Coordinator
- Department of Rehabilitation Orientation



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