

Co-Enrollment as a Key Workforce Strategy in California

Why co-enrollment?

WIOA places a strong emphasis on planning across multiple partner programs to ensure alignment in service delivery. One key goal is to develop effective partnerships across WIOA programs and other workforce providers, including community-based organizations to provide individuals the employment, education, and training services they need.

Through the use of strategic co-enrollment workforce system partners can maximize resources and better align services with the career pathways and sector strategies at the core of our delivery strategies. Career pathways allow for individuals to succeed in an environment that accounts for their current abilities and skill levels and provides them with an appropriate service structure to advance, not just within an individual job, but within an occupation or occupational cluster. In order to effectively promote and develop career pathways and sector strategies, workforce partners must work together to ensure a customer-centered approach with strategic co-enrollment as a key strategy to service delivery that best benefits the participant.

What is co-enrollment?

Co-enrollment under the federal definition means enrollment in more than one core WIOA program.

Key Principles of an “Ideal” Co-Enrollment Model

Customer experience

- A “no wrong door,” seamless referral system
- Common assessments that are shared across partners
- Process to identify an individual’s need for “Strategic co-enrollment”
- Case management that is accessible across systems
 - Sharing data as a goal; having access to data a must
 - Including shared documentation
 - No restrictions by case managers to access case notes
- All agencies treat the customer as part of one system, rather than individual agencies (and requirements).
- Employees are trained in human centered/customer focused strategies for serving customers and have the ability to remove barriers and ensure customer satisfaction without bureaucratic interference. .
- Customer’s privacy and resident status is protected. Information is provided regarding eligibility, but the experience is done in a safe environment – protecting the customer.
- Navigators and counselors are involved every step of the way with the customer.

Data tracking and sharing

- Opportunities for everyone across the various programs to “get credit”
 - Measurable Skills Gain as an opportunity
 - Program exit that makes sense

- Performance Goals are statewide not by agency
- Follow-up is less resource intensive
- Leverage MIS systems, such as CalJOBS
- Agreements are signed so data sharing is not an issue
- All employees can access critical dashboard and data sets for the most current information to assist customers and agency planning/coordinating.
- Referrals track open spots in classes, workshops & programs in real time so customer & referring agency can see what is available.

Leadership

- Ongoing professional development and technical assistance for staff
- Nuts and bolts toolkit for how to braid program funding
- Process tools are provided to leaders.
- Customer service training (like the Ritz Carlton approach) is provided to the employee that interact with customer – but this mindset goes all the way to the top.
- Human Centered Design (HCD) training

Guidance and communication for service delivery

- Develop joint “information notice” to foster collaboration and encourage co-enrollment
 - Coordinate dissemination
- Develop policy guidance on co-enrollment, including how it pertains to performance accountability
- Guidance is issued across agencies – not separately.
- The no wrong door approach is easy for the customer to follow – marketing how the no wrong door works is critical to rolling this out.

Policy

- Develop a policy brief outlining: shared performance success; measurable skills gain; priority of service
- Develop a Policy Vetting Work Group to strengthen alignment on joint guidance
- Focus in on WIOA core partners
- Build further capacity for the leveraging of resources among local partners

Elevating “What Works”

- Find examples in the field that support and define “principles”
 - Verdugo WFB and partners - universal intake process – lift it up as an example of partners deciding WHY and HOW to co-enroll
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- Encourage innovation and promising practices
- Conduct self-assessments to close gaps in co-enrollment model success
- Incentivize intentional alignment that goes beyond referrals

Examples of Principles

Commitment to Serve Target Populations (or joint Priority of Service Agreement)

Given program year outcomes and local demographics of jurisdiction, identify target populations, including individuals with disabilities, Immigrants/refugees, Re-entry population, individuals on public assistance etc. In collaboration with local workforce and other workforce providers/partners reach consensus on the method of delivery of resources, how to leverage co-enrollment to better serve populations with barriers to employment, and promote examples of best practices to serve target populations leveraging various programs. Modify AJCC Memorandum of Understanding to include commitments to serve target populations through co-enrollment strategies.

Timeline for Achieving Educational/Employment Goals

Allow more time for customers to reach employment goals. Use measurable skills gains and credential attainment as the measures to chart progress from all partners prior to exit (an opportunity to develop joint policy) and take the emphasis off short term employment goals.

Human Centered Design/Participant Informed Processes

Get feedback from customers by using a Human Centered Design approach with grantees in a co-enrollment pilot to get customer input on design of Co-enrollment policy. The view from the customer perspective will identify things staff and managers wouldn't think of, especially around application, enrollment case management and reporting and could help identify how to streamline these activities.

Leveraging the Career Pathway Work to inform Our Co-Enrollment Strategies

Develop and implement a process for co-enrollment that mirrors and facilitates career pathways for movement and co-enrollment across programs. For Instance, moving from a Title I to Title II program, and subsequently to community college—our policies should consider the various transitions that occur, and possible exits/entrances of programs and services.

Supporting and Troubleshooting Implementation of Co-Enrollment

The state partners will support at the state, regional and local level implementation of co-enrollment strategies. This will include support on how to use data systems to track co-enrolled participants, braiding of programs/resources, and other technical assistance as issues arise.

Strategic Co-Enrollment to Achieve Outcomes and Multidisciplinary Case Review/Management

Be morEnsure flexibility in the timing of co-enrollments, allowing for it to take place at any time or whenever it makes sense for the customer. Example: customer may start in Title II and be there for a year before it makes sense to co-enroll them in Title I. While in Title I, they may or may not be active in Title II, but staff should not exit them because they may need additional Title II services. Staff use in-program skills gains measures to chart progress and keep customers engaged until employment outcomes are attained.

Strategic Reverse Referrals and Intentional Strategies to Support Individuals with Barriers

There are target populations with barriers that can leverage additional program resources, including social service programs (CalWORKS, SNAP E&T, and Refugee Programs) and Department of Rehabilitation programs. Given the additional resources, there needs to be enhanced coordination and policies and best practices to show practitioners how to best leverage resources, when to co-enroll and provide assistance in addressing questions from the field.

Shared Data Systems and/or in the Interim Ability to Share Data between Programs/Systems

Ideally all partners would share a system where intake all the way through to assessment, enrollment and tracking was done in one spot. Absent this scenario, partners should have a process in place to share data on customers, share outcomes, and cost. Co-location and comprehensive sites help facilitate this process.

Clarifying Performance Goals and who Obtains Credit for Services when Co-enrolled

Using the SAM and strategic planning data, establish clear goals, and hold entities accountable for performance and encourage co-enrollment and serving hard to serve populations. Ensure that all agencies that provide a service to a customer share in and receive credit for outcomes achieved.