

# LESSONS LEARNED: NEWARK'S WORKFORCE INNOVATION FUND GRANT

By: Tolu Lanrewaju, Adriana Crawford, Adam Albanese,  
and Yuemeng Zhang



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*Newark Workforce Investment Board*

*990 Broad Street*

*2<sup>nd</sup> Floor*

*Newark, New Jersey 07102*

*Phone: 973-733-5995*

*[info@newarkwib.org](mailto:info@newarkwib.org)*

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## WIF PROJECT AND VISION

The NWIB's Managing for Success Initiative, funded by the United States Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF), was borne out of the idea that local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) need improved data analytics. In order to better understand what is happening in the local workforce investment area (LWIA) and efficiently leverage resources to drive the system, the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and now the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) point to data as the best means to becoming a successful and integrated workforce system.

The goal of the NWIB's WIF project was to use the USDOL grant funds to modernize the Newark One-Stop Career Center<sup>1</sup> by investing in technology, performance management, and customer service strategies. The vision was futuristic: friendly staff members (system coordinators) greeting customers when they walked into the Career Center – like Apple Store Geniuses eager to assist them – and recording their critical information directly into a state-of-the-art workforce database. This data would be recorded into a database running on a mobile tablet, which would ultimately allow the coordinators to better direct customers to the appropriate department and programs. The system would also link customers to other key workforce systems, like the unemployment claims and wage database, so that Newark One-Stop Career Center (NOSCC) management staff could identify successful employment and training interventions. This data collection and analysis would lead to strategic

conversations taking place during data-driven meetings for management staff, locally called "WorkStat," where senior staff members could share best practices. Managers and supervisors would also be tasked with identifying the Career Center's high-performing staff members who would ultimately be recognized and rewarded for their efforts. The theory of change was that staff recognition would eventually incentivize more staff members to provide excellent service to customers and improve workforce outcomes.

Simply stated, the NWIB's Managing for Success WIF goals were to welcome customers, record their key data points, strategically connect them to resources and programs, use data to inform management decisions, discuss the Center's progress during regular performance review meetings, and identify and reward staff members from each workforce agency that were doing well. Each stage of the NWIB's WIF plan brought challenges that were unforeseeable and at times, insurmountable. This paper serves to outline what the NWIB was able to accomplish and what risks were mitigated along the way. It also discusses the activities and goals that did not ultimately come to fruition, while explaining the reasons and outlining important considerations for organizations interested in spearheading or funding a similar initiative.

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<sup>1</sup> The NOSCC is made up of three divisions of the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJLWD) — the Division of Unemployment Insurance, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, and Division of Employment Services — plus the City of Newark's NewarkWORKS and Newark Workforce Investment Board.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE WIF TEAM AND PROJECT PARTNERS

The first step for the NWIB to develop the capacity of Newark's workforce system, as described in the WIF Managing for Success grant proposal, was to create an implementation plan after the grant was awarded. The implementation plan clearly outlined the known phases of the project, necessary tasks, and timeline to complete each action. Tasks and deliverables were assigned to an individual who was responsible for ensuring that it was completed in a timely fashion. The NWIB's implementation plan was one of the key ingredients for mapping out a complex innovation project. It served as the best tool for the WIF project manager to:

1. Document and track progress, and at times lack thereof
2. Pinpoint any potential or realized causes of delay
3. Make a sound argument when requesting timely action or providing project updates to local, state, and federal partners.

The WIF project required the support of many disparate, yet connected groups of people in order to reach fruition. Often times, change was welcomed slowly, if at all. The following is a list of several key players who helped the NWIB's WIF staff introduce critical changes to the Newark One-Stop Career Center:

1. Staff Members and Contractors
2. Senior Agency Staff
3. Steering Committee
4. Board of Directors
5. USDOL (Federal), NJLWD (State), and NOSCC (Local) Partners

The WIF Team worked consistently to ensure that each partner was purposefully

engaged and motivated to support the success of the project as supporters and champions.

## Staff Members and Contractors

Recruiting motivated and talented staff members is important for all workforce organizations. Innovation projects take this one step further because they require project staff members who can be particularly flexible and welcome the difficulty of pioneering new systems and processes for the first time. The NWIB's senior staff spent a considerable amount of time designing roles, revising organizational charts and structures, preparing job descriptions, screening applications, interviewing potential candidates, and hiring colleagues that could work well together.<sup>2</sup> Once this was accomplished, it was important to revisit the Implementation Plan and expand on it by devising project-specific goals and deliverables and updating responsibilities.

The NWIB's WIF project staff members worked collaboratively with consultants and contractors to handle highly specific, time-limited projects. For the WIF project, the NWIB made the decision to enter into deliverables-based contracts that included the requirement of the NWIB formally accepting contractual work before payment. This provision helped monitor the inherent variability and introduce the needed flexibility for an innovative project designed to implement systems change that required the buy-in of state and local leadership.<sup>3</sup> The NWIB's deliverables-based

<sup>2</sup> The NWIB hired a WIF Program Manager, Manager of Data Analytics, Senior Strategist, two System Coordinators, Data Analyst, three Customer Service Associates, and Database Development Project Manager. The initial hire of the WIF Program Manager was managed by the NWIB's Executive Director, Senior Policy Advisor and Chief Operating Officer. Recruiting and retaining each additional project staff member was the responsibility of the WIF Program Manager, with advisement and final approval coming from NWIB senior staff.

<sup>3</sup> The NWIB's contracts also stated the maximum length of time allotted for the approval period and payment submission.

contracts ensured that the project staff members constantly communicated with the consultant teams about changes, updates, and clear requirements for project deliverables. The contracts emphasized successful outcomes, rather than time and effort. The NWIB's WIF project staff members worked collaboratively with four consultant teams and the structure and challenges for these collaborations are detailed in the section entitled "Managing for Success Contracts".

## Senior Agency Staff

Engaging internal senior NWIB staff members was one of the most important project management tasks for the project. The WIF Team greatly benefited from agency-level support and champions. By involving senior NWIB staff, like the Executive Director, Chief Operating Officer, WIB Planner, and Chief Financial Officer, in recruitment, budgeting, implementation, and procurement exercises, the WIF Team was able to ensure that their expertise could be leveraged for the duration of the project. This also allowed for the project's goals to be very intimately understood, improved, and continuously shared and championed by local senior staff.

## Steering Committee

After the NWIB's first Implementation Plan was drafted, it became clear that assembling a Steering Committee would ensure that the Newark WIB was held accountable to the original grant proposal, budget, and project goals. Thus, the NWIB called upon local business officials, academics, workforce professionals, state workforce partners, and local nonprofit professionals to serve on the Committee. Assembling a Steering Committee helped the NWIB keep fidelity to the original project design, recognizing that the project could

easily spiral out of control once ideas were combined and initial priorities forgotten. Once the Steering Committee was formed, NWIB WIF staff organized several meetings and sent numerous e-mails to provide updates on progress and solicit feedback throughout the life of the innovation project. Appendix B has a copy of the Steering Committee Commitment Form that was distributed.

## Board of Directors

Early on, the NWIB's Board of Directors was solicited to be project partners, decision-makers, and champions. To further facilitate their involvement, WIF staff prepared written and verbal reports that were delivered during Full Board and Committee Meetings. The Board's Executive and Finance Committee reviewed WIF senior staff job descriptions and approved new hires. The Committees were also invited to review Request for Proposals (RFPs) before they were published and the proposals after firms submitted them to the NWIB. A final version of each deliverables-based contract was approved by the Board after all details, updates and revisions were incorporated. Although this prolonged the procurement process, the end result was a fully informed Board of Directors and an ironclad RFP process that resulted in four strong contracts for the NWIB's WIF project.

## USDOL (Federal), NJLWD (State), and NOSCC (Local) Partners

As the NWIB's WIF grant received funding from the United States Department of Labor and focused on updating the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's NOSCC, it was imperative that federal, state, and local partners were involved in the project. Communication efforts with external federal and state partners included quarterly reports,

scheduled conference calls, regular e-mails, and informal dialogues.<sup>4</sup> Keeping an open and constant line of communication allowed for dynamic relationships to build internally and externally. The NWIB WIF Team realized that even after partnerships began to form, every effort had to be made in order to ensure that the collaborative nature was maintained. This resulted in collaborative problem-solving with project partners to bring about positive changes for the workforce development system.

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<sup>4</sup> Informal dialogues included impromptu meetings around the One-Stop, phone calls, e-mails, etc.

## MANAGING FOR SUCCESS CONTRACTS

### Evaluation Contract

The NWIB contracted with Rutgers University's John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development to evaluate the NWIB's Managing for Success WIF Initiative. This included an evaluation of how well the NWIB implemented each strategy and a separate evaluation of the effects of these strategies on a series of system- and individual-level intermediate outcomes.

Each report, including the final evaluation report, contained the implementation evaluation findings and recommendations related to the implementation of the WIF project, providing the NWIB team with specific and neutral suggestions during the implementation of the initiative. Bi-weekly phone calls with Heldrich evaluators supported project implementation and also allowed the evaluator to constantly collect qualitative data and documents that further explained the project's progress. This ultimately ensured that the evaluation report provided accurate findings and recommendations. By working closely with the Heldrich Center, the NWIB also became aware of and aligned with similar implementation efforts and additional workforce research activities, like NJLWD's Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI). This allowed the NWIB to strengthen partnerships and learn from other workforce efforts.

The Heldrich Center did encounter and identify some challenges with the NWIB's WIF projects. In order to evaluate the system changes, there was a heavy reliance on interviewing and surveying stakeholders, including senior staff and Board Members who were often very busy. In addition to working with scheduling

conflicts and cancellations, the Heldrich Center also noted that staff survey participation rate was low because many staff members believed that filling out the survey was not essential to their job, would not result in positive changes for them or their work, or was not an officially sanctioned activity. As the project shifted (due to technical proposal changes, budget modifications, and no cost extensions requested by the NWIB), the schedule for the evaluation reports also had to be changed which did not allow the WIF Team to receive evaluation insight and feedback when originally expected.

Another challenge for the WIF's Evaluation Team arose from the changes in personnel and leadership during the initial three-year implementation period. During the course of the NWIB's grant project, there were three mayoral changes, one major Board re-composition, two NWIB Executive Directors, and four One-Stop senior management changes. The transitions complicated consistent data collection and evaluation conclusions. Post-implementation data were almost always collected from different individuals and compared to baseline data and feedback.

### Systems Requirements Contract

The NWIB's Systems Requirement Contractor, Urban Policy Development (UPD), was responsible for engaging stakeholders to build consensus on performance metrics and system functionality for the new workforce database that was at the center of the WIF Grant. UPD was responsible for determining critical data elements and technical requirements of each system that the database needed to interface with, developing a technical Systems Requirement Document and Database Developer RFPs, and managing the

development of the database and pilot testing.

Despite the challenges of working with staff members from several different departments to understand the business requirements (and thus the system and technical requirements) before the WIF Team had built trust with partner staff, the UPD team successfully completed a complex Systems Requirements Document that outlined the requirements for the proposed Newark Workforce Management System (NWMS). All proposal respondents to the Database Development Contract RFP, a document that was largely based on UPD's System Requirements Plan, agreed that the document was very well written and planned, thus making it easier to apply and put forth high-quality technical proposals. Ultimately, the NWIB was provided specific information on how different firms would develop the NWMS for the Newark One-Stop Career Center.

Originally, UPD had planned to support the NWIB with the testing of the Newark Workforce Management System (NWMS) before the NWIB made the strategic decision to build a labor market information tool because of time and resource limitations and data access. Instead of supporting the development of the NWMS and the Project Sustainability Plan, UPD supported the NWIB by producing a Dashboard Metric Alignment Report, which identified key re-entry, literacy, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and workforce metrics after stakeholder interviews. UPD then mapped the critical metrics to the NWIB's 2014-2018 Strategic Plan Goals.

## Database Development Contract

The NWIB procured the services of IMPAQ International to build the NWMS in order to

provide NOSCC staff with the data and tools necessary to evaluate performance and effectiveness. The NWMS was designed to:

- Ensure that One-Stop Managers and WIF data analytics staff could effectively identify and prioritize the workforce development initiatives, training programs, and staff members that had the biggest impact.
- Promote collaboration between agencies and data-driven decision-making by establishing common data definitions and more fluid and frequent data sharing with enhanced reporting capacity and regular WorkStat performance management meetings.
- Pull in data from eight different workforce systems to create a querying and warehouse suite for the NOSCC.

The NWIB was not able to secure data-sharing agreements for more than one case management workforce database and this was executed after two years of meetings and negotiations. It is important to note that some of the systems originally proposed to be a part of the NWMS were discontinued. Others were considered obsolete and were in the process of being replaced or completely revamped by NJLWD.

Once it became clear that the NWIB would not receive critical data files for the NWMS (explained further below), the WIF Team and IMPAQ turned their efforts towards creating a labor market demand estimation tool for the NWIB to support data-driven decision making by NOSCC Staff and NWIB Board and Committee Members.

IMPAQ also supported the NWIB with a metric analysis report that showed the

current quality of data in the NOSCC's most widely used workforce database, America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS), which was the one data source that the NWIB received data extracts from for the NWMS. The goal was to provide an in-depth analysis of the data that the NWIB *currently* has via AOSOS, such as important categories of information, often missing (but needed) data points, trends, patterns, and inconsistencies with important data categories. The report can be found in Appendix C. IMPAQ's Survey Team also supported the NWIB's WIF goal of improving customer service by designing and later conducting a customer satisfaction survey.

## Performance Management Consultants

The overall goal of the engagement with the NWIB's Performance Management Consultant, Public Consulting Group (PCG), was to develop and implement a Performance Management System for the NWIB to better align with partner staff at the NOSCC. The project was designed to address three primary areas of work in pursuit of achieving this goal: organizational culture, performance management system design and processes, and performance incentive system design and implementation.

To get started, the PCG team focused on early wins that could help motivate staff participation for the organizational assessment. The NWIB and PCG also organized a meeting with key local and state partners who were able to pledge support of the project and successfully launch the WorkStat Initiative, the key component of the NWIB's performance management strategy. In addition, PCG helped develop the initial WorkStat metrics despite the fact that the data-sharing agreements for the NWMS were pending.

The project scope of the Performance Management Consultant changed several times as the NWIB was dealing with real-time updates on data-sharing agreements and the aforementioned leadership changes. The original contract work had many challenges, false starts, and delays as many of the deliverables were contingent on the NWIB securing data-sharing agreements for the eight data sources that IMPAQ needed for the NWMS. In addition, discussions with City and State human resources officials uncovered that the incentives given to staff would have to be nominal and focused on recognition, rather than incentivizing, thereby essentially nullifying this part of PCG's contractual work with the NWIB.

As the WIF project team realized some of the real performance management needs at the NOSCC, PCG supported the NWIB with these areas in an effort to ingrain system changes. This included support with the Board Retreat facilitation, staff training, executive coaching, and regional planning.

## PROJECT CHALLENGES

### Stakeholder Engagement/Local Champions

Involving stakeholders and attracting local champions presented itself as a large task for the NWIB's Managing for Success WIF Initiative. Thus, the WIF Team dedicated a considerable amount of time and effort when trying to understand ways to engage stakeholders and present information about the WIF project. Key considerations revolved around messaging, tone, and relating the importance of specific initiatives to that person's individual or department's work. It was critical to spend time thinking of the value proposition of different requests and explaining the initiative from the standpoint of how the One-Stop would be enhanced. Essentially, the WIF Team focused on building and sustaining staff relationships with two-way communication. In the end, the WIF Team noted a large turnaround when approaching staff to attend meetings, participate in focus groups, take surveys, talk with evaluators and other contractors, and provide information that could inform the WIF Team's work. This increased level and ease of participation was especially true for the activities rolled out during the Performance Management Consultant Contract.

### Availability of Public Workforce Data

Having access to workforce data was a key component of spearheading the NWIB's performance management work. The NWIB's WIF Team conducted a "data sweep" to better understand where critical customer information was being housed at the NOSCC after recognizing that the systems of record were minimally used for

performance reporting purposes. Staff members found that these systems were overbearing and it was difficult for users to extract information when needed. As a result, many NOSCC staff normally only inputted the required data points in their appropriate fields. Most of the other explanatory, data-rich information was entered into the comments section thus disqualifying it from being aggregated and analyzed.

Using a combination of state-run workforce data systems, locally managed spreadsheets and databases, publically available data sources, and customized Crystal Reports requested from the NJLWD, the NWIB's WIF Team was able to provide analysis of several activities and programs at the One-Stop while tying in labor market information gathered from traditional and real-time sources. These analyses were presented to a range of stakeholders including the Mayor, Deputy Mayor, NWIB Executive Director, One-Stop senior staff, NJLWD senior staff, NWIB Board of Directors, and others. They further allowed the WIF Team to show the value of strong data analytics and make a case for the importance of eventually bringing on a system like the NWMS and later the Labor Market Demand Estimation Tool, so that strategic conversations can be had at all levels (and more seamlessly and effortlessly than manually pulling disparate data sources together).

### Budget and Contract Modification

Monitoring the grant's budget and contractual shifts were two major risk management areas for the NWIB. By keeping in close contact with DOLETA and the NWIB's assigned Federal Project Officer, budget modifications were almost always pre-discussed and introduced. Each quarterly programmatic report gave a

detailed account of recent updates, changes, successes, and challenges. The NWIB also set up quarterly calls with the assigned WIF Team coach and Federal Project Officer to have tactical conversations about challenges and to outline suggestions and next steps to move the WIF Grant forward. The same level of communication was kept with contractors, usually at bi-weekly basis. As the WIF contracts were all set up as deliverables-based contracts, it was always important to keep an open line of communication with the four contract teams to ensure that the deliverables discussed at the beginning of the partnership still made sense based on senior staff transitions, organizational needs, priority shuffles, and cultural shifts.

## Change in Local Leadership

During the course of the NWIB's grant project, there were several important personnel transitions, starting from the mayoral level and including the Board and agency leads, which threatened the success and sustainability of the Managing for Success WIF Initiative. There were also senior management changes at the NOSCC. Thus, it was mission critical for the WIF Team to think strategically about the project and craft the right messaging to new and existing leaders to ensure that the team continued to make progress towards the goals. Providing transparency and explaining the importance of the project was important for the continuation of the WIF grant. Over time, trust was won and the WIF Team continued with the management of project tasks and achieving the program goals.

## MITIGATION CHALLENGES

### Performance Incentives for One-Stop Staff Members

Introducing performance incentives to the NOSCC was one of the key components of the innovation outlined in the WIF proposal. The NWIB's WIF Team and PCG worked together to ascertain NJLWD's policies on issuing incentives for performance and recognizing employees for their service. The NWIB discovered that individual gifts or incentives were not allowed, except for nominal awards like small trophies or trinkets, since cash gifts were not acceptable. NJLWD maintained that payroll checks could be the only form of compensation for employees performing their work duties according to long-established state policy. NJLWD expressed that staff appreciation luncheons would be allowable, if nominal in value, and had to have an element of team building, technical training, or professional development included.

The NWIB's WIF Team learned there were similar limitations for the City of Newark staff as well. The City expressed that luncheons were acceptable, and that gift cards could be given to city employees but could not exceed \$25. This essentially disallowed the NWIB from following through on one of the performance management components of the original grant proposal.

### Data-sharing Agreements

The development of the Newark Workforce Management System relied heavily on gaining access to external and state-run workforce databases. The unemployment and wage data requested were critical in evaluating the performance of the NOSCC and introducing continuous improvement

strategies. While the NWMS was well-intentioned, the federal Unemployment Insurance (UI) law ([20 CFR 603.4](#) and [20 CFR 603.5](#)) prevents the sharing of "any unemployment claimant information which reveals the name or any identifying particular about any individual or any past or present employer or employing unit, or which could foreseeably be combined with other publicly available information to reveal any such particulars." Each state UI law must be consistent with federal provisions on UI sharing, but with the authorization of state law and as stated in the subpart of 603.5 of federal UI law, certain exceptions are allowed. Among them are sharing data with public officials and agents, or contractors of public officials.

State legislation change is often needed to allow for data-sharing, especially to entities defined as an agent or contractor of public officials. Similar changes have happened in the states of New York and Rhode Island. New York State Law § 537 was amended in 2013 to enhance NYSDOL's ability to share UI data with qualified entities for certain authorized purposes. Such change allowed government agencies and contractors of these agencies to receive and use UI data for evaluating program effectiveness thus improving the quality or delivery of program services.

Similarly, House Bill 5701 of Rhode Island in 2013 amended General Laws in Chapter 28-42 entitled "Employment Security – General Provisions" to allow Rhode Island State Department's designated research partners to use UI data for the purpose of its Workforce Data Quality and Workforce Innovation Fund Initiative, with an approved data-sharing agreement between the two parties to ensure data security and confidentiality. Providence Plan, an innovative nonprofit think tank which houses the comprehensive database

(DataHUB) and supports the Workforce Data Quality Initiative in Rhode Island, drove for the change to happen. The process took more than two years and heavily involved the legal team of the organization. State agencies would need to push for a similar change in order for local areas, like the NWIB, to be in a position to receive the data needed to make decisions locally. Advocates at all levels of state government would have to work together to see this change to fruition. It is, without a doubt, a transition that would thrust New Jersey into the 21<sup>st</sup> century world of open data and data-driven decision-making.

## Grant Timeline

Early in the grant, the NWIB's Senior Leadership and WIF Team expressed that the success of the innovation project was contingent on the timely execution and implementation of data-sharing agreements between the NWIB, IMPAQ and the NJLWD. While the AOSOS data-sharing agreement was executed two years into the grant, the NWIB was never able to acquire the additional data-sharing agreements. This was a critical matter that needed to be addressed and could have benefitted from additional support and intervention from funders, advocates, and workforce leaders.

## CONCLUSION

When the NWIB received notice in May 2012 that its Workforce Innovation Fund proposal was going to be funded by the USDOL ETA, the organization was ushered into a new world of politics, relationship building, and trial and error. The project goals were ambitious and would challenge old and, at times, ineffective ways of accomplishing tasks at the NOSCC. Early on, the project was described in shorthand or interpreted as an initiative that would provide more data about the work of the One-Stop and reward staff members who performed well. This made a healthy amount of staff members uncomfortable about the potential consequences and others skeptical about the ability of a small team to bring about mighty change with a time-limited budget.

Navigating the naysayers, understanding the doubters, reassuring the skeptics, corralling the champions, and engaging colleagues was a part of the daily routine for the WIF Team. It was soon learned that while it is best to incorporate advice from supporters and lessons learned from similar efforts, understanding and addressing the challenges identified by naysayers was a mission critical task. The WIF Team was

warned about the daring scope of the project, the amount of time to effect and sustain change, the true amount of funding and advocacy needed, and the ultimate reliance on the state to move things forward. Dealing with this information better positioned the Newark Workforce Investment Board to revise communication and implementation strategies and adjust timelines and expectations.

As outlined in this report, the NWIB's Workforce Innovation Fund Managing for Success project demonstrates the complexities of spearheading a data quality and performance management project at the local level at a state-led co-located center, using federal funds. All of the lessons learned point to one conclusion: state-led efforts, with local involvement, are the most effective strategy for improving the quality and access to performance data at the local level. As states start to develop and publish their statewide plans for implementing WIOA, bold database development projects need to be highlighted as the only way to champion a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce development system that incorporates data-driven performance management strategies that truly promote continuous improvement.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A: List of Recommended Project Management Questions Based on Our Lessons Learned

The following section lists important risk management areas and highlights key questions that should be asked periodically to mitigate risk when implementing innovation projects. In general, being proactive, keeping a formal meeting structure, and engaging all project partners will be the way to manage the majority of project risks.

#### Stakeholder Engagement/Local Champions

1. Have we scheduled regular and appropriately timed meetings with each major stakeholder group to ensure that project staff members are held accountable?
2. Do the appropriate people have the latest project descriptions, governance and implementation plan, project one-pager, 30-second pitch, quarterly report (financial and programmatic), RFPs, job descriptions, organizational documents, etc.?
3. Is there an ongoing review of outreach strategies? Have many different communication channels been explored and/or offered?
4. What have we found to be particularly attractive about the work to potential champions?
5. What reservations, risks, and potential issues continue to come up in conversations with stakeholders?
6. Are we making decisions about next steps before or after we consult project partners and champions?

#### Availability and Usefulness of Public Workforce System Data

1. Do we know the current availability and quality of data? Do we know the strengths and weaknesses of currently available performance reporting tools?
2. Are there other data sources, public or private, that are not collected in the systems of record but may help us gain a better understanding of workforce development programs?
3. Have we been able to identify local data experts who can tie together the front end of the system with the back end? Are we gaining information about usage and behaviors when inputting data?

#### Contract/Budget Modification Process

1. Are we always assessing our budget and spending so that we can requests budget modifications in a timely manner?
2. Have we been updating our Federal Project Officer (or Grant Officer) frequently about successes and challenges so that all contract and budget modifications are foreseeable and supported?

#### Changes in Local Leadership

1. Are we transparent about the development of the project?
2. Have we created a high-level overview for new senior staff and incorporated their feedback?

### **Performance Incentives for One-Stop Staff Members**

1. Do we know if incentives, of any kind, are allowed for the target populations?
2. If so, what are the parameters and can we work within them?
3. Have we done a literature review that suggests incentives will produce the results that we want to encourage? What does the literature suggest are the most likely risks associated with incentive systems, and what actions can be taken to mitigate them?

### **Data-sharing Agreements**

1. Do we know if there have ever been data-sharing agreements for the requested systems that we can review and adapt? Can we learn lessons from previous negotiations about the timeline and major challenges, if any?
2. Have we identified local, state, or federal policies or procedures that will hold up or halt the data-sharing agreement process?
3. Have we created a document that makes clear the types of information that should be covered within the data-sharing agreement, and the precise purpose and intended use of the collected data? Have we accounted for potential security concerns regarding the collection and storage of, and access to, personally identifiable information (PII)?

### **Grant Timeline and Goals**

1. Have we set up a realistic timeline? Are the goals also achievable and consistent with the original plan?
2. Have we created a robust recruitment strategy that will attract and maintain the team needed to carry out the project?
3. Are our RFPs and contracts well-written, specific, and deliverables-based?
4. If there are changes, have we provided an update to our key stakeholders (specifically, funders and the Board of Directors)? Are the changes well justified and agreed upon by the majority or approved formally according to the governance plan?
5. After the project is underway, are we using real-time estimates to revise the timeline?
6. Are we being clear with stakeholders about the urgency and deadline for their responses to messages and requests for support?
7. Have we reached out to partners and colleagues to create a sound mailing list that can be used when advertising positions, sending updates, and requesting proposals?
8. Do we know how to appropriately and respectfully elevate requests as needed?
9. Are we always identifying multiple ways to accomplish tasks, starting with the path of least resistance or the quickest route? Are we brainstorming and considering potential back-up plans to ensure that many different avenues can be explored simultaneously to yield impactful and timely results?
10. Do we have a good sense of what local, state, and/or federal policies will need to be addressed for us to move forward with our project?
11. Can we reach out to other local areas or states to learn from their efforts so as to champion our change here? Are we attending webinars, work groups, and conferences to learn as much as possible?
12. Is the innovation project aligned with the organization's strategic plan? Is it mentioned in the document, website, and marketing materials?
13. Are we having discussions about sustainability and succession plans for the innovation so that it can live on, if proven successful (including funding)?

## Appendix B: Steering Committee Commitment Form

### Managing for Success

Title: Steering Committee Member (Workforce Innovation Fund)  
Division: Operations  
Collaborators: WIF Leadership Team

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The Newark Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (NWIB) is a non-profit 501c3 organization created pursuant to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). Incorporated in 2002, the NWIB through WIA and the New Jersey Unified Plan, is responsible for system-wide operational planning, policy development, and strategic analysis in the local Newark workforce investment area, including:

- Partnering with state and local elected officials
- Oversight of Workforce Investment Act funds
- Newark One-Stop Career Center development and oversight

In July 2012, the Newark Workforce Investment Board received approximately \$3 million through the U.S. Department of Labor's (USDOL) Workforce Innovation Fund (WIF) grant program. The NWIB will use this funding to improve data assessment, collection and analysis, and to build a workforce system using techniques pioneered in law enforcement and city government to better deliver services to Newark's job seekers, including underserved communities – representing the first time these techniques will be applied to the workforce system. The NWIB seeks Steering Committee Members to oversee the most critical operational components of the grant and to ensure the project stays on task, on time, and on budget.

#### **Responsibilities include:**

1. Weighing in on project scope.
2. Contributing resources on-hand.
3. Completing outreach for focus groups and stakeholder engagement.
4. Attending and hosting focus groups.
5. Participating in conference calls and in-person Steering Committee meetings.
6. Reviewing draft RFPS, proposals, contracts, and plans generated for the Managing for Success project and provide key advice in areas of expertise.

## Appendix C: Metric Feasibility Analysis Report

Attached.