



299 East, 4th North
Rexburg, Idaho 83440
Phone: (208) 356-4524, ext. 311
Fax: (208) 356-4544
Cell: (208) 390-4946
E-mail: terry.butikofer@ecipda.org

June 2, 2021

Wendi Secrist and One Stop Committee
317 Main Street
Boise Idaho

Re: Affiliate One Stop Certification Site Visit – Sandpoint

Dear Wendi,

Attached is my written report based on my on-site visit of Sandpoint's Affiliate One Stop Center and my review of the center's self-certification. I have based my comments on the information contained in the self-certification as well as information gleaned from our discussion on site, and my own observations.

You will see comments on each standard and the sub elements that make up that standard. On some standards, I have added a comment regarding a best practice or an idea for continuous improvement although not on each standard or sub element. Hopefully, this information will aid the One Stop Committee in making certification decisions regarding this affiliate center and the sites' level of implementation of the identified standards.

If there are any questions regarding this review or visit, please feel free to call me at (208) 589-3836.

Sincerely,

Terry Butikofer

Terry Butikofer
Director of Lending and Workforce Development

Affiliate One Stop Certification – Review and On-Site Interview – Sandpoint

Kellye Sharp, Sarah Nash and I visited the affiliate one stop center in Sandpoint Idaho on March 12, 2021. This is the second certification activity that Sandpoint has completed with Kellye and me. We met with Justin Offerman who is the recently appointed office manager in Sandpoint. He has been with the IDOL in the Sandpoint office as the Veterans Representative. We talked to Justin about the certification standards that have been identified by the U.S. Department of Labor and the Workforce Development Council’s one stop committee as important in operating a one stop center. Kellye, Justin, Sarah, and I went through the self-certification that had been completed for this affiliate center.

My observations and comments are as follows.

Effectiveness

The Sandpoint office and their mandatory partners have fewer staff than some offices but are working hard to integrate their services regardless of location. Client services are aligned to common goals and the partners are moving toward serving the customers in a seamless fashion where partners will regard each customer as a shared customer with all system staff having a vested interest in that customer’s success. The COVID 19 Pandemic created some unique circumstances with many of the partner staff members working remotely and customers being served remotely or by appointment. At this same time, it was necessary for IDOL staff to turn their attention to Unemployment Insurance for a period. As COVID requirements relax, the Sandpoint AJC is poised to continue to improve their one-stop partnerships in serving their communities. Based on the criteria identified, the Center has deemed their efforts in this area to rate a five (5) which is defined as achieving the standard and excelling in this area.

5	4	3	2	1
X				

Program Services

Direct Services

During our visit with Justin, I found that center and partner staff are well positioned to provide direct program services to one stop customers as expected by the U.S. Department of Labor and Idaho’s Workforce Development Council. They work well with job seekers and also provide Business Services to employers through Wagner-Peyser (ES), and WIOA Title IB programs, veterans programs, and other available services through the center. AJC partner staff have all received training of what program services each of the partners provide and have been creative in providing these services especially during this past year during COVID as they interact remotely and in person by appointment. Sandpoint seems to be meeting their customers’ needs in providing direct services and are active in their communities.

The AJC partnership has found that remote service provision has improved enrollment and service in the Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) program, and that customers who were having difficulty coming in to enroll in person were more willing and able to do so remotely.

➤ *Best practices or Ideas for continued improvement: Sandpoint seems committed to working as a one stop partnership and are being flexible as business and industry continue to work through COVID and its impacts. The partners coordinate well and have instituted visits via appointments at their center, their own facilities or remotely and have done their best to provide a quality level of service to their customers despite the pandemic. Partners have used remote contacts to their advantage in those programs that now allow remote eligibility determination and sign-up.*

Labor Market Information Availability and Usage.

The Idaho Department of Labor has a vast wealth of Labor Market Information available to partners, employers, and communities both online and via a Regional Labor Economist located in the Post Falls AJC. The Regional Economist is available for in person appointments, by email and phone or instant messaging if needed, and is active in providing information to communities, businesses, and individuals to assist them making informed decisions regarding career or training choice, the feasibility of economic development projects or the expansion and growth of their business.

Access to additional programs and activities carried out by partners through referrals

AJC staff are trained in the programs and services available to their customers through the one stop partners and can connect them to these various programs and services as appropriate. Sandpoint continues to participate in center staff annual training and partners conduct additional training throughout the year to accommodate warm referrals and lessen the chance of clients falling through the cracks. Justin relates great success in making appropriate warm referrals as envisioned by the U.S. Department of Labor as a previous Veteran's representative and expects that to continue under his leadership. The Sandpoint partners participate in a local group made up of most of the state and community non-profit groups who provide social services throughout the region. This group is called SPIN and will now be headquartered in a new facility that is just two minutes away in a newly built HUD Envision Center. These various groups participate together to provide customers a full array of social services.

➤ *Best Practices or Ideas for continued improvement: AJC leadership participates with a local group called SPIN. This group of non-profit providers including most mandatory partners among others reinforces the partnership relationship gained through the one stop model and extends it to many other community services. They work well together and provide many programs to the community through their partnership. Sandpoint is setting an excellent standard of coordination and service particularly for a smaller AJC and are engaged in many additional activities that deserve recognition and could be beneficial if duplicated in other affiliate centers around the State.*

Accepts referrals from comprehensive and network partners

AJC Center staff accept referrals from their network and community partners and use the tools existing to ensure appropriate referrals to the network partners as needed. As noted above partners have good relationships and coordinate their services well.

Service Delivery

Justin reported that all AJC staff work closely together to provide Business Services to employers through Wagner-Peyser (ES), WIOA Title 1B programs, veterans programs and other programs available through the center aimed at assisting businesses. During the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting disruption to the labor force, the one stop center has experienced an increase of new businesses who have turned to the center to help them identify and hire willing employees. The Covid Virus has impacted some direct interaction with business, but the AJC partnership has been innovative in serving business customers. They have scheduled some mini job fairs with businesses such as Kodiak Air, Starbucks which will be drive through job fairs. They have also been involved in virtual job fairs.

Physical location and available program information is online

Although the system will soon be losing the availability of “Live Better Idaho” One Stop Center partners have access to the IDOL website and other partner sites that provide information about available services, program information and their locations.

➤ *Best Practices or Ideas for continued improvement: Continue to engage in partnership training opportunities and work together to refine business outreach efforts. One impressive practice that the Pocatello center has implemented to better serve their business customers is providing virtual job fairs to business and industry customers. These have been viewed as very helpful and widely popular.*

Staff Availability

Both ES Wagner-Peyser and WIOA Title 1B staff are in the center full time hours of operation.

Partner Coordination

Employer/Business Services are coordinated among the partners under a locally developed business outreach plan

I have found that the one stop partners coordinate well and are familiar with each other’s programs. The partners currently use a spreadsheet to track business outreach which they share in their SPIN meetings. Like many of the AJS centers the partners have developed ways to work together as they are conducting their own outreach programs but are looking for and working on a more coordinated way to conduct business outreach together as partners.

Participant outreach is coordinated among the partners.

Participant outreach is coordinated among the partners. They make appropriate referrals with warm handoffs and co enroll when it makes sense. Jason reports that there has been some decrease in co-enrollment as each agency has done their best to continue to serve their clients under the restrictions of COVID. There is not a great deal of co-location between partners at the Sandpoint Affiliate

Center, but the partners have frequent interaction with each other and are effective serving their clients/customers.

As reported above, One Stop Partners are active with other social service community groups and coordinate closely to provide clients/customers with the necessary assistance.

Cost Effectiveness

The Center operates in a cost-efficient manner, as defined by the funding.

Accessibility

This affiliate American Job Center extends services and outreach to all customers who walk through the door and those who have become disengaged in the labor force. Integrated, quality services are provided to all customers within the center and via technology through online or phone access.

Based on the criterial below, this regional affiliate one stop center has deemed themselves as significantly meeting the standard with some work yet to do.

5	4	3	2	1
X				

Programmatic Accessibility

Reasonable Accommodations are available for individuals with disabilities

The AJC offers accommodations based on requests from customers seeking services and accommodate their own employees based upon requests. They deliver their services in the most integrated setting appropriate.

Electronic Materials are 508 compliant

The Department of Labor participates on a committee working toward complying with Section 508. This committee has been actively working on building section 508 compliant web pages and have been testing color schemes and sizing fonts. All web pages are being pre-tested for accessibility, are built with a clear syntactical hierarchy for screen readers to understand. Content is written for a general audience reading level to accommodate diverse cognitive abilities. Images contain descriptive meaningful alt text. All public facing web pages are built by personnel trained in web accessibility.

The Department and AJC use a NVDA Screen reader to verify accessibility to those with visual impairments and use browser testing tools to correct accessibility issues before publishing.

Assistive technology available

The AJC in Sandpoint has a computer dedicated to assisting customers with special needs. This computer has a multitude of software and functions designed to provide customers with special needs with assistive technology aides. These computers have a large screen monitor, and appropriate keyboards and mice.

Materials are printable and available in English and Spanish

All IDOL vital program printable documents are currently available in both English and Spanish. Partner printed materials may not be available in both languages.

Translation services available when needed

Assistance with translation is available anytime through Language Link Services that provide interpreters in multiple languages over the phone. For people with hearing impairments, they use licensed sign language interpreters as listed on the IDOL website. Two staff members in the affiliate center are fluent in Spanish and help with translation services when needed.

Programmatic Assessment is performed/updated annually

AJC management assesses their programmatic practices and processes annually and ensures that all programs and related materials are accessible to all customers.

Physical Accessibility

Center Accessibility

The physical facility is externally and internally accessible and is useable to individuals with disabilities. The building is a single-story facility with plentiful parking that leads to an entrance that is easily accessible. The interior of the building is easily navigable with accessible restrooms, drinking fountain and a customer service desk that is appropriate for all customers. The workstations are adjustable, and the signage is appropriate and meets multilingual needs common to the specific region of the State. The One Stop Center has completed an ADA checklist evaluation provided by the Statewide Equal Opportunity Officer and has corrected any deficiencies that were identified at the time of the assessment. This assessment is updated annually.

Other Building Requirements

Signage and Accessible Conference Rooms

The signage at the AJC is highly visible and includes the AJC logo on the entrance doors and/or windows. My observations show that the Affiliate Center in Sandpoint has complied with the objectives in meeting the accessibility standards. They have visible American Job Center branding, highly visible signage, a conference room with audio/video technology for their use, and the use of their customers.

Co-Location of WIOA Title 1B and Employment Services

The area one stop has been rotating staff through the center during COVID to ensure that they are adhering to the Governor’s safety standards and still have both ES and WIOA Title 1-B staff available during center hours of operation. None of the other mandatory partners are co-located in the center especially during the COVID 19 Pandemic, but they are not far away and stay in close contact.

Center on or near public transportation route

The Sandpoint Regional Transit bus stop is located just outside of Sandpoint’s parking lot.

Hours of Operation

AJC staff are available during normal business hours, via in person, phone, or email.

➤ *Best Practices or Ideas for continued improvement: The Affiliate Center in Sandpoint has done a commendable job in curing any deficiencies that were identified in their last ADA assessment and appear to meet the standards of programmatic and physical accessibility.*

Continuous Improvement

The regional affiliate one stop center has met their goals which reflects the effectiveness of the systems performance and service delivery. The center has been innovative in taking advantage of COVID impacted programs to implement more efficient practices such as remote enrollment and the use of DocuSign for some documents that use to require an onsite visit which at times proved difficult for customers in the past.

The center is always interested in improving their performance and service to their customers. Justin recognizes that there is always room for improvement, but he feels that job fairs continue to improve, and they are talking to and reaching out to more businesses and have a good reputation among the local business community. Based on the criteria below, the regional one stop center has rated their continuous improvement efforts as a four (4) which is defined as significantly meeting the standard with some work yet to do.

5	4	3	2	1
	X			

Customer Feedback

Complaints and Customer Feedback

Affiliate center staff utilizes an Idaho Department of Labor online complaint system that tracks and routes any complaints to the appropriate parties. Sandpoint is willing to seek any additional information that the One Stop Committee or Workforce Development Council develops in the future to increase the opportunity for Customer Feedback.

➤ *Best Practices or ideas for continued improvement: I would recommend that Sandpoint stays engaged with the One Stop Committee and One Stop Operator to implement any new customer feedback initiatives that the One Stop Committee identifies as important. I believe that opportunities for business customer feedback will increase as One Stop Centers implement new ways to reach out to business customers.*

Staff Development

Cross training and referral resources

The affiliate center staff reported that they participate in the annual regional One Stop Training for all partner staff and have good relationships with their partners that lead to successful referrals when needed. They are active in numerous community boards and commissions and management is involved with their economic development and public lending partners. It appears that one stop partner staff have achieved the standards included in the staff development element.

Continuous Improvement Evaluation

Program performance outcomes are made publicly accessible

One Stop staff and management review performance data regarding service to individuals with barriers to employment and reviews customer feedback and any complaints submitted. The One Stop Affiliate Center follows Idaho Department of Labor practice and makes program performance outcomes accessible to the public through the IdahoWorks.gov site.

Program performance meets or exceeds negotiated performance expectations.

The center reports that they have met their negotiated program performance goals.

Final on-site Visit Comments:

Based on our visit, interview and my observations, Sandpoint does a good job in striving to meet all the identified standards to be certified as an affiliate one stop center. I believe that although Justin is a newly appointed office manager that he is energetic and brings a fresh view to the operation of the affiliate one stop center. I feel that COVID has created some difficulties for each of the AJC, but it has also allowed the centers to become more efficient as some activities such as implementing DocuSign for participant usage and allowing some customers to enroll in such programs as the Re-employment Eligibility System remotely makes a lot of sense. I applaud the creativity that the AJC has shown to continue to serve Idahoans who reside in their service area.