

# **ANATOMY OF TWO ONE-STOPS: CAMDENTON, MISSOURI AND COLUMBIA, MISSOURI**

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **A STUDY OF TWO ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS IN MID-MISSOURI**

A major goal of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) was to develop a “seamless” system of workforce services that would provide employers with a quality workforce by facilitating labor exchange, and by helping job seekers retain employment, increase earnings, and in some cases, improve occupational skill level. To increase accountability of workforce service providers, benchmark performance levels and assess change in those levels, regional and state report of seventeen different performance measures was mandated.

Broadly speaking, the seventeen measures are quantitative, output-focused assessments. They include a count of those who entered employment and an assessment of the employment retention rate and average earnings change in a six month period for adult and dislocated workers and older youth. Measures of skill improvement, education completion, and employment are used to evaluate younger youth programs. Performance data are collected at the local level, and then aggregated by region and state.

Performance measures can indicate the outcome of workforce services, but they give no insight into the individual-level factors that influenced that outcome. Through the 1990s, and especially with the implementation of WIA in 1999 and 2000, the focus of service delivery became the One-Stop Career Center. Yet, we know little of the processes that employers and job seekers utilize to resolve workforce issues, the extent to which clients access the broad array of services within a One-Stop during a given visit, or the qualitative aspects of providing workforce services to clients. Even when administrative data list activities undertaken in the One-Stop and such information is

available to researchers, we know only about those services that are explicitly entered into the system.

To address this gap in current knowledge of One-Stop operations, this report tracks various aspects of the transactions between One-Stop staff and clients and describes job seeker and employer experience within two One-Stops located in central Missouri, one in Camdenton and the other in Columbia. Focus on two One-Stops permits a close examination of the flow of transactions among One-Stop staff, partner agencies, and clients, while minimizing research costs.

The two One-Stop Centers selected for this study have several characteristics that allow for an informative comparison of operation and service delivery. First, the One-Stops share the same state history, but different regional history. Each One-Stop was formerly part of two different Job Training Protection Act (JTPA) service delivery areas (SDAs). Under WIA, a somewhat contentious merger of these two SDAs resulted in the current Missouri Central Region Workforce Investment Area that encompasses both centers. Second, the One-Stops have different locations relative to city center, proximity to partner agencies, and local area economies. The Camdenton One-Stop is located downtown in an older storefront separated from most of its partner agencies. The town has a seasonal economy that depends on summer tourist traffic. The Columbia One-Stop is located a few miles away from the city center in a relatively new building that was expressly designed to facilitate co-location of One-Stop partner agencies. The city has several large employers in various industries, a steady economy, and typically among the lowest unemployment rates in the nation. Finally, the history of local One-Stop leadership differs as well. The Camdenton One-Stop has always been directed by a

single contracted service provider, whereas, until recently, the Columbia One-Stop was under the direction of a consortium of service providers.

### **Research Focus**

Several specific research questions guided inquiry into the inner workings of two One-Stop Career Centers in the Central Region of Missouri:

1. How has the history of the Central Region and the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers shaped the current location, structure, and function of these entities? Given Central Region co-residence and accountability to the C-WIB, what is similar and what is different for the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers? What is the C-WIB's current structure and decision-making process?
2. What can be learned from examination of data used in state and federal reporting activities? What is the statistical portrait of the C-WIB and its One-Stop Centers?
3. What local factors have influenced the current structure and function of each One-Stop?
4. Does the physical layout of the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stop layout facilitate or hinder the flow of client traffic in the center? What is the typical service delivery process at each One-Stop?
5. How can one characterize the flow of clients entering and exiting the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops? Specifically, who is coming into the center? Where do they go? What do they do and what services do they use while in the One-Stop? What can be learned about the employment outcomes

of those who have relatively intermittent interaction with a One-Stop Center as compared with those who have continuous contact?

6. What do job-seekers and employers have to say about their experiences with the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops?
7. What can be concluded from this study?

To establish a context for understanding current operations in the Central Region Workforce Investment Board (C-WIB) and in the two One-Stop Career Centers observed for this study, a brief history of the transition from Job Training Partnership Act to WIA and a short description of the current structure and operations of the Central Workforce Investment Board (C-WIB) are given in the next section.

### **From Service Delivery Areas to Workforce Investment Area**

Implementation of WIA in Missouri in 2000 affirmed some changes already underway in state workforce development. It also fundamentally changed some aspects of workforce service delivery in central Missouri. To understand current operations in the Central Region and the current structure of the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops within that region, it is helpful to briefly examine how the transition from Service Delivery Areas (SDAs) under the Job Training and Protection Act (JTPA) to one workforce investment area under WIA affected these entities.

#### ***History of the Central Region***

The Missouri Employment and Training Council (MTEC) took the first significant steps in the mid-1990s toward establishing a coordinated workforce investment system that could provide seamless service in consolidated centers. Most of

the significant organizational changes specified in the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) were already in place in Missouri by the end of the 1990s, well before WIA's implementation in July 2000. State agencies housing job-training programs of all kinds—including labor exchange, training for the disadvantaged, technical training, and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)—had been designated as partner agencies, closely resembling the structure that WIA would require. The Division of Workforce Development (DWD), established in 1999 in the Department of Economic Development (DED), brought together Wagner-Peyser Act, JTPA/WIA, and related services, and after passage of WIA became the lead agency at the state level in administering the Act.

Under JTPA, Missouri had been divided into fifteen local Service Delivery Areas (SDAs). Except for the Central Region, the local Workforce Investment Areas in Missouri under WIA replicated the JTPA SDAs. Under WIA, SDA 5 (in the north central part of the state, including Columbia) and SDA 9 (in the south central part of the state, including Camdenton) were consolidated into the newly formed Central Region.

The workforce services funding formula channeled relatively few dollars to the northern counties due to the low unemployment rate and high-income levels in that region. Low funding made delivery of workforce services difficult. After the staff was paid, little funding remained for training individuals. When asked about the factors that might have contributed to consolidating the two former SDAs into one Workforce Investment Area, the current C-WIB Chair noted that the consequence of the funding formula was that the northern eleven county area was "a poor performer, and quite bluntly, it was embarrassing to the governor [in Jefferson City, about 30 miles south of

Columbia] to have a poor performer at his back door." At the time the state approached the C-WIB chair about combining the eight southern counties with the eleven northern counties, the Private Industry Council over the northern counties had not met as a whole for over a year and was largely inactive except for an executive committee of three or four people. The C-WIB chair's assessment of the situation was, "If you were looking for a model operation, it wouldn't be there!"

Discussions with those present at the time of consolidation indicated that it was neither an easy transition nor a readily accepted change. A large proportion of the members of the current Central Region Workforce Investment Board (C-WIB), including the C-WIB chair, was previously in the southern private industry council, and many with whom we spoke described the merger as a "takeover." State mandate to create the Central Region from the two former SDA areas added to the hostility since those in the Central Region saw the directive as coming from outside and competing interests were forced to co-exist. When the southern and northern regions were combined, the C-WIB chair recalled that several individuals in the north retorted that they "did not want to be in that Republican controlled [southern] region!" Callaway County made an unsuccessful attempt to stay out of the merger and become part of another region. Over time, however, dissension between the southern and northern regions has eased.

Despite consolidation, important differences in organizational structures remain. Funding allocations to the northern portion of the area increased somewhat after the merger, but still reflect the prior formula to some degree. As a result, the ability to provide service in the northern portion of the region relies somewhat more on bringing in partner resources. Even following recent centralization of lines of authority in the

northern region of the C-WIB, coordination of services and service providers in the northern counties remains somewhat more complex than in the southern counties where a single organization is contracted to operate a One-Stop center. Central WIB management oversight has forced a tighter organization with a more client-focused structure in the northern centers. Some decisions about client services have now been centralized. However, it seems likely that given the local nature of partnerships and the variation in environment and resources within the region, significant differences between the One-Stop centers in the former northern region (including Columbia) and southern region (including Camdenton) will remain.

### ***History of the Camdenton One-Stop***

In the 1980's, Missouri Ozark's Community Action agency (MOCA) was the JTPA service provider in Camdenton. In 1991, the Lake Ozark Employment Service (LOES) bid for and obtained the JTPA contract, and it has held the job training contract (WIA since 2000) to the present. Since 1991, LOES has shared office space with the Council of Local Governments in a small storefront office a short distance from the town center, alongside Highway 54, a main thoroughfare through Camdenton. Initially, Wagner-Peyser services were in a separate office down the street since the DWD director vehemently asserted that co-location with LOES could only take place "over my dead body." Ironically, the DWD director's words proved prophetic. After the DWD director was felled by a sudden heart attack, DWD staff moved into LOES office space in 1998. Also in that year, the LOES office was formally designated as a One-Stop Career Center by the state and the C-WIB selected LOES to be the One-Stop operator for Camdenton

and surrounding counties<sup>1</sup>. The LOES director noted that the move of DWD to their office space was “smooth,” crediting the ease of integrating DWD into the One-Stop to having regular staff meetings to discuss policy and procedures and work out differences in client service issues, a practice continued to the current time. After DWD moved into the Camden One-Stop, other agencies such as the Lake Area Citizen’s Advisory Board (LACAB) also moved in.

For LOES, the transition from JTPA to WIA was relatively smooth and uneventful. When WIA was implemented in 2000, because of WIA rules, the managing board, the Co-PIC under JTPA, could no longer administer programs and do the programming. Consequently, the Co-PIC became the C-WIB, retaining administration of the programs but contracting out service delivery. As the LOES director explained, "Since the former Co-PIC in the southern region (including Camden) had taken in the Northern region...basically [we] worked with the same people.... Our operating dollars used to come from the Co-PIC; now we sign a contract with the C-WIB."

When questioned about the effects of the transition from JTPA to WIA, the director of LOES and the Program Director commented that JTPA had "hard rules; a person was either eligible or not." WIA, in contrast, gave an opportunity to offer more services and to serve more people. The customer focus of WIA harmonized with existing LOES philosophy. Since its inception, LOES had focused on serving the job seeker as much as possible. Developing productive relationships with area employers was part of that service. The WIA funding stream was also somewhat larger than the JTPA funding stream. On the flip side, however, LOES administration noted that under WIA they now had to understand and meet a larger number of measures that assessed performance.

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<sup>1</sup> LOES serves Camden, Laclede, Miller, Morgan, and Pulaski counties.

Seasonal variation in the local economy coupled with factory shutdowns in rural areas in the lake region have occasionally made it difficult to meet performance measures because the number of jobs declined and those that could be obtained often paid considerably less than the former employment.

LOES administration noted several important structural changes that had occurred for LOES between 1991 and 2005. The first was bringing DWD employees to the LOES office location in 1998. After the move, the group of DWD staff was often called off-site for meetings, leaving little time for on-site training. Consequently, they had to learn to fit into the One-Stop operation by "observation and simply jumping in and getting things done." The LOES director commented that bringing DWD into the LOES office when LOES was still the JTPA contractor had allowed them to widen the options offered to clients since those not eligible for JTPA services could be referred to DWD. The co-location also gave LOES and DWD employees an opportunity to better understand each other's role in provision of workforce development services.

The second major change was the implementation of WIA in 2000. As previously mentioned, under JTPA, LOES could only offer training services to those who qualified. The broader scope of available services under WIA core, intensive, and training services, according to the LOES Program Manager, "opened up a whole new door," that is, it became possible to offer WIA services to all job seekers and employers who came to the One-Stop. Utilization of these new service options, however, required understanding and compliance with new performance standards, a task that took some time to master.

The third major change was introduction of Toolbox, Missouri's electronic case management system for workforce development services, and Missouri*WORKS!*,

Missouri's on-line job matching service. Toolbox was developed in 2000 by Division of Workforce Development information specialists to be a central, real-time data entry system for client tracking and case management. It revolutionized record keeping and the day-to-day operation of the One-Stop. Computer entries replaced paper forms in client files. Automation of the job matching services with Missouri*WORKS!*, also introduced in 2000, ended the method of trying to manually match paper-based client files with employer work orders.

Early in 2005, Missouri*WORKS!* was replaced by Great Hires. This event is proving to be another major challenge. Specific problems with Great Hires are detailed later in this chapter. In general, the new system has been more cumbersome and complex than anticipated. Job seekers who were self-sufficient under Missouri*WORKS!* now require considerable staff time to utilize the new system. Anecdotal accounts from One-Stop staff indicate some job seekers and employers were so frustrated with Great Hires that they stopped using One-Stop services.

Currently, LOES is undergoing another significant change. The LOES director and her Program Manager have worked together since 1991. Toward the end of 2004, the LOES director that obtained the original JTPA grant began transitioning to retirement and, over a period of months, gradually transferred the responsibility for directing LOES to the Program Manager, who has worked closely with her for thirteen years. The newly appointed LOES director, in turn, hired a long-time colleague as her new Program Director. Shifting leadership to long-time LOES employees has enabled the Camdenton One-Stop to maintain the basically the same operations, services, and customer-focused philosophy as have prevailed since the early 1990s.

### *History of the Columbia One-Stop*

In the 1980s, the local Private Industry Council (PIC) subcontracted JTPA workforce services in what was then SDA 5 to the Central Missouri Counties' Human Development Corporation (HDC). HDC, through their eight county offices,<sup>2</sup> provided outreach, intake, eligibility, case management, and follow-up services. In the early 1990s, the Private Industry Council became the workforce service provider. The PIC brought all case management and related service in house and hired HDC to continue to provide outreach, intake and referral services. The PIC had two field offices at that time, one located in an office complex near the industrial area in Columbia, and one about 30 miles south of Columbia in Jefferson City, the state capital, across the street from the old job service office. In the mid 1990s, two significant developments occurred in Columbia, one affecting provision of workforce services, the other affecting location of workforce services.

In May 1996, the Columbia Chamber of Commerce and Regional Economic Development, Inc. (REDI) began monthly meetings to develop strategies and form organizational relationships to address un- and underemployment issues. Advent Enterprises, Inc., Missouri's divisions of Family Services and Employment Security, the Columbia Area Career Center, and private employers joined the group. In June 1997, group members adopted the name BooneWorks and defined their mission to be "to promote the effective use of resources through existing organizations and programs to meet business workforce needs while strengthening the economic independence of individuals...[developing]...community-based solutions." In 1998, the PIC and the

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<sup>2</sup> The eight counties were Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Cole, Howard, Moniteau, and Osage, with Boone County in the center and other counties contiguous to Boone.

Division of Vocational Rehabilitation joined the consortium. In the fall of that year, BooneWorks was awarded a \$3.45 million competitive Welfare-to-Work grant from the U.S. Department of Labor and was designated as the Welfare-to-Work agent for the community. In June of 1999, BooneWorks and the PIC received a federal incentive grant that helped them develop infrastructure for joint service delivery by the two entities. BooneWorks received a Governor's Award for its work supporting provision of workforce services.

Also in 1996, a group of executives from several state agencies established an Office of Administration to develop a plan to consolidate state offices in Columbia. The group included representatives from Missouri's divisions of Vocational Rehabilitation, Family Services, Employment Security, Mental Health, Health, Aging, Probation and Parole, and Missouri Veteran's Commission. The group decided that nonprofit social service delivery systems would also benefit from this consolidation and the PIC, HDC, and the Family Health Center joined the group. This group worked together to design an 84,000-foot facility for the express purpose of housing state and local entities that deliver social services to Columbia, Boone County and surrounding areas. Plans for the building were drawn up in 1997. Construction took place in 1998, and the building, known as the Resource Center, opened in April 1999.

Groups moved to the Resource Center as their existing leases expired. The local PIC was one of the initial residents of the Resource Center, occupying a small office suite next to what later became the large, open One-Stop office space. Other residents moving in within the first three months of opening included Vocational Rehabilitation, Advent

Enterprises, Inc., and the Division of Family Services<sup>3</sup> (which occupied about one-fourth of the Resource Center). Later, a family medical center opened on the same side of the building as Division of Family Services, then other smaller state and nonprofit offices were opened in the Center. Resource Center residents have remained relatively stable over time.

Resource Center residents have their own funding stream, paying rent and utilities proportional to the space occupied. Interestingly, when various entities began to relocate to the Resource Center, no funds had been allocated to furnish common areas (e.g. classroom space and conference rooms). Consequently, residents pooled their resources, matching type and color of furniture brought from former offices as best they could to furnish these shared rooms. Regarding this aspect of co-location, the One-Stop director wryly commented that as residents of the Resource Center moved in "we were told that it was 'o.k. to share,' 'all can use all,' 'integrate services,' 'only the customer counts'...until the auditor came. Then, they wanted to know which specific account to charge for things like a ream of copy machine paper."

Differences of opinion existed regarding design of the interior of the Resource Center. Those from state government favored enclosed office space while those from the nonprofits, including the PIC, favored an open floor plan. In the end, state agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health, and the Division of Family Services designed their space to meet clients at a closed and windowed front desk and escort them, one-by-one, behind closed doors to separate offices. One-Stop clients, in contrast, enter an open client service area that is flanked by several private offices and conference room space on the sides of the office opposite the entrance. As they enter, they meet the

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<sup>3</sup> The Division of Family Services was renamed the Family Support Division in 2004.

greeter (a person funded by the C-WIB whose express purpose is to greet customers, serve their needs, and manage client flow) and move either to the resource area to work on the computers, or wait to talk with a counselor.

The transition from JTPA to WIA in Columbia differed from the transition in Camden. As previously noted, the construction of the Columbia One-Stop in 1999 closely coincided with the implementation of WIA in 2000. Consequently, unlike LOES, the Columbia One-Stop did not have a prior JTPA history in the office space that now provided WIA services, although some of the participants in the consortium that formed the original One-Stop operator for Columbia had previously provided JTPA services. In that respect, the Columbia One-Stop did not really experience a transition from JTPA to WIA, per se.

Nonetheless, according to current director<sup>4</sup> of the Columbia One-Stop, whose previous experience was in providing job exchange (Wagner-Peyser) services, the move into the One-Stop Center and implementation of WIA demanded a change in thinking. First, employers were to be explicitly recognized as One-Stop clients, in contrast to a prior focusing on job seekers only. Second, in contrast to simply being "job brokers," One-Stop staff had to now see themselves as advocates for job seekers, helping job seekers remove barriers that kept them from employment.

Regarding funding, the Columbia One-Stop director noted he "gets the same budget [from the state] as the rest of the players in the building [i.e. the Resource Center]." The strength of the economy in the northern part of the Central Region continues to place Columbia at a disadvantage in garnering state funds.

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<sup>4</sup> As of July 2003, the formal role of Columbia One-Stop operator was assigned to DWD. We refer to the individual who acts on behalf of DWD in its role as operate as the "director." This individual is the regional DWD manager and he has his primary office in the Columbia One-Stop Center.

The change to WIA, according to the Columbia One-Stop director, "didn't change the look of what we do," that is, the average customer would not have found the changes engendered by WIA to be obvious. The Columbia One-Stop director agreed with the LOES leadership in Camdenton that, while WIA did give more options for serving customers than JTPA did, it also imposed more reporting standards.

### Central Region Today

In 2000, the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was implemented in Missouri,

administered through

fourteen workforce

regions.<sup>5</sup> Formed

from the combination

of former SDA areas 5

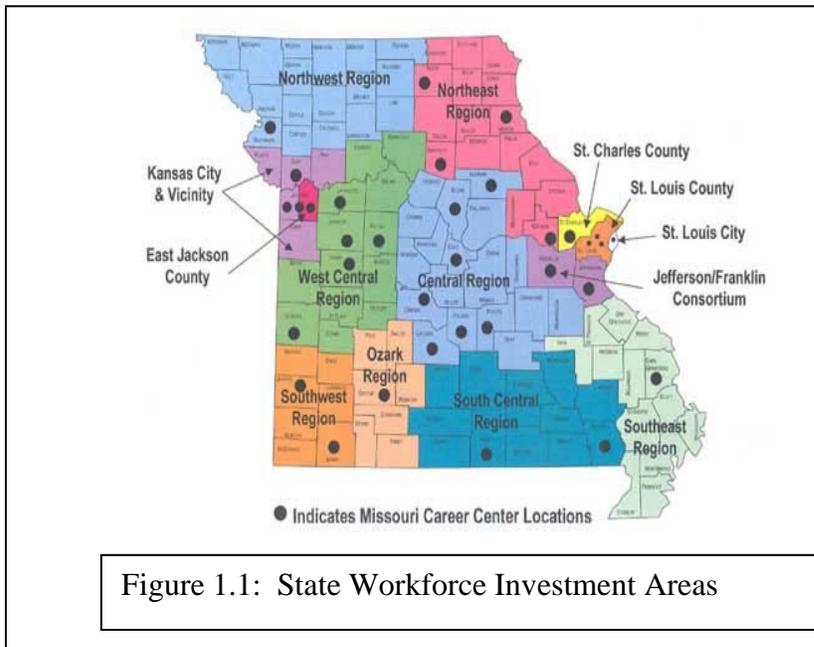
and 9 under JTPA, the

Central Region has the

largest land area of any

Workforce Investment

Area in Missouri, with



the fourth largest population. The size of the Central Region Workforce Investment Area

relative to other Workforce Investment Areas in the state is illustrated in Figure 1.1. The

dots in the figure represent the locations of the various Missouri Career Centers. In the

<sup>5</sup> The fourteen workforce regions are named for their location in the state and are: Northwest, Northeast, Kansas City and vicinity, East Jackson County, West Central, St. Charles County, St. Louis County, St. Louis City, Jefferson/Franklin Counties, Southwest, Ozark, South Central and Southeast regions, and the Central Region. With the exception of the Central Region, all of the workforce regions were identical to the Service Delivery Areas under the Job Training Partnership Act.

Central Region, these Career Centers are located in Columbia, Camdenton, Jefferson City, Ft. Leonard Wood, Lebanon, Mexico, and Rolla. The C-WIB administrative office is located in the Rolla Missouri Career Center.

The Central Region Workforce Investment Board (C-WIB) oversees workforce development activities and the employment and training services offered in the Central Region. Local area economies in this region are quite diverse, ranging from rural farming communities to seasonal tourist and recreational areas to thriving cities. This diversity creates challenges for the C-WIB. Higher-paying jobs are rarely found in the rural areas. Plant closings in small towns can displace a large number of workers in places where little employment opportunity remains. Low unemployment rates in other areas can make it difficult to get program funding, leading to a greater reliance on workforce investment partners. The basic operation of the C-WIB is detailed in the next section.

### ***Current Vision, Structure, and Operation of the C-WIB***

#### ***C-WIB Vision***

According to the By-Laws of the Central Region Workforce Investment Board, the vision of the Board is:

To design and direct high-performance, results-oriented, universal employment services to meet the workforce development needs of employers, workers, and job seekers in Central Missouri.

Specific local strategic economic goals of the C-WIB include: moving customers to self-sufficiency, raising the standard of living for customers, helping employers retrain

employees and upgrade employee skills so they can compete in the global marketplace, and contributing to local economic development by providing a skilled workforce.

Taken together, these statements of purpose indicate that improvement of the local economy is the explicit and ultimate end that the Board is striving to achieve. To help employers remain competitive in both the local and global economy, the Board endeavors to increase the quality and efficiency of worker/employer match and to provide training for qualified job seekers. In effect, the main "output" of the Career Centers is a productive worker, with employers the main "consumer" of that output.

The Board uses this published vision statement, often implicitly, but sometimes explicitly to decide what issues merit attention and action and to direct decisions regarding actions to take to resolve those issues.

#### *C-WIB Structure*

*C-WIB chair.* The current C-WIB chair is actively involved in a number of business and economic development initiatives. He learned the retail trade in his father's clothing store and remains active in private business as a vice president of a local sporting goods and hardware store. In addition to chairing the C-WIB, he has held leadership positions related to workforce initiatives and economic development at national, state and local levels and has received awards from several organizations for his workforce development efforts. As Executive Director of the Lake of the Ozarks Council of Local Governments covering Camden, Laclede, Miller, Morgan, and Pulaski counties and chairman of the Camden County Planning and Zoning Commission, he is directly involved in local economic development initiatives. As former chair of the National Association of Workforce Boards and the Missouri Training and Employment Council

Marketing and Communications Committee, he has also contributed to national and state workforce endeavors.

*C-WIB Executive Committee.* The Executive Committee is appointed by the C-WIB Chair and consists of one member from each county in the Central Region; a majority of those appointed must be from the private sector. The Executive Committee approves budgets in partnership with the Chair, identifies nominees to the Youth Council and conducts the day-to-day business of the Board. The Executive Committee has all powers granted to the full Board except for a small number that are exclusively reserved for full Board action. These powers and their limitations are detailed in the C-WIB by-laws.

*C-WIB Board.* In each county in Missouri, the county-at-large elects a Presiding Commissioner to serve a four-year term. C-WIB by-laws direct the Presiding Commissioner in each of the 19 counties in the Central Region to appoint two Board members to serve two-year terms. Appointments to the 38-member Board are made in even years.

By law,<sup>6</sup> C-WIB Board members must represent various aspects of the workforce community; 51 percent must represent business interests and the chair represents private industry. Labor, education, Economic Development and Community Based Organizations must each have two representatives on the 38-member Board. Also among the 38 must be representatives from the mandated One-Stop partners - a provider of WIA Core/Intensive services, Wagner Peyser, Unemployment Insurance (UI) or Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) services, Rehabilitation Services, Veterans Services, Temporary

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<sup>6</sup> P.L. 105-220 and various implementing regulations developed by the U.S. Department of Labor and the State of Missouri

Assistance for Needy Families, Vocational Education, Community Services Block Grants, Housing and Urban Development, and Title V (Older American). A C-WIB Executive Staff member told us that board members must often be chosen so that they represent the interests of more than one organization. Board vacancies are filled via the appointment process used to originally appoint the vacating member. The nominating and appointment authority decides if a new Board member fills the remaining and subsequent term or just the remaining term<sup>7</sup>.

*C-WIB Operation: Executive Committee Meetings*

The C-WIB Executive Committee meets every other month, alternating with full Board meetings. Location for Executive Committee and full Board meetings rotates among Camdenton, Columbia, Rolla and Jefferson City. Executive Committee meetings typically last about one to one and a half hours, and always include review of various progress and production reports<sup>8</sup>. A guest speaker may talk about a current workforce development program or service. Aspects of the planning budget may be reviewed and explanation given for plan modifications.

*C-WIB Operation: Full Board Meetings*

The C-WIB full Board meets every other month, alternating with Executive Committee Meetings and, as previously noted, rotating meeting location among

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<sup>7</sup> At times, a board slot may remain open for a while. When a board member resigns or the term ends, the CWIB Executive Office asks the county Presiding Commissioner to appoint another person to fill the vacancy. We were informed that some commissioners considered nominations of CWIB Board members a “low priority.” Commissioners cite difficulty in finding individuals that are willing to serve.

<sup>8</sup> These reports are: the monthly traffic report for each One-Stop Career Center in the C-WIB, providing a count of all individuals registered by service category received; WIA Slot Utilization Report, detailing numbers of individuals served under WIA; the Opinion Meter Report, summarizing the results of a continuing survey of those exiting each One-Stop Center; and reports identifying individuals served as part of the CAP (TANF participants), National Emergency Grant, the Rapid Response team, the Career Counselor program; and a report on the Business Representative activities.

Columbia, Rolla, and Jefferson City. Full Board meetings are longer than Executive Committee meetings, usually starting at 10:30 a.m. and ending at 2 p.m., with an hour break for lunch. During the morning, the Planning, the Oversight, and the Budget committees meet sequentially around a large table with members of the Full Board present for each committee meeting. Relevant information and issues are presented to and discussed with the full Board. The Planning Committee often has a speaker present upcoming workforce development issues. A recent example was discussion of a “Workplace Safety” credential as an education option for job seekers. The Oversight Committee presents reports of monthly traffic flow in each One-Stop and counts for various client services.<sup>9</sup> The Budget Committee reports on the monthly financial statements.

After lunch, the full Board, commonly referred to as the Full Council by the C-WIB executive staff, is convened. A business or government representative may present an issue or program related to employee or employer services. A representative from each of the Planning, Oversight, and Budget Committees briefly recaps the morning’s discussions and the actions taken in each committee. This review ensures that the decisions made and actions proposed or taken in each committee are recorded in the Full Council minutes. The Chairman’s report follows the brief individual committee meeting reports, usually focusing on matters affecting the C-WIB as a whole. Since the C-WIB chair is very involved in federal and state meetings related to workforce development, his report frequently provides an update on state and federal economic development issues

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<sup>9</sup> Depending on the meeting rotation, a given month’s reports will be reviewed by either the Executive Committee or the Full Board. With this structure, the C-WIB reports are reviewed monthly. While review of these reports usually generates little discussion, it does provide an opportunity to clarify reasons for occasional anomalies or to examine progress against goals or benchmarks.

and workforce development trends. His report also informs the Board of pending or recent actions taken by state and federal Economic Development and Department of Labor offices.

### *C-WIB Caucus*

As mandated by Congress, each county in a state has a Presiding Commissioner. The C-WIB refers to the 19 Central Region Presiding Commissioners as “the Caucus.” According to federal law, the Caucus is responsible for approving the budget<sup>10</sup> and overall plans of the C-WIB as well as appointing people to fill openings on local Workforce Investment Boards. The C-WIB Caucus meets quarterly, a choice that Caucus members have made and incorporated into the Central Region by-laws. These meetings usually occur at the conclusion of a Full Board meeting, since the Board must approve any modifications of C-WIB plans before they go before the Caucus for approval. Once approved by these two entities, plan modifications are sent to the state. “For the most part,” an Executive Staff member told us, “the Caucus is so busy with county issues, they really rely on [C-WIB Executive Staff] to make sure they are kept informed and that we guide them [in understanding Congressional requirements related to workforce issues].”

### *C-WIB Operations: Relationships with Contracted Service Providers*

The C-WIB contracts with three different workforce services providers. Lake of the Ozarks Employment Services (LOES) serves Camden, Laclede, Miller, Morgan, and Pulaski counties. The Central Ozarks Private Industry Council (CO-PIC) provides workforce services in the Meramec region that includes Crawford, Dent, Gasconade, Maries, Phelps, and Washington counties. In mid-Missouri, the Central Missouri

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<sup>10</sup> The fiscal year of the C-WIB is July 1 to June 30.

Counties' Human Development Corporation (HDC) is the contracted service provider for Audrain, Boone, Callaway, Cole, Cooper, Howard, Moniteau, and Osage counties.

There are seven Career Centers in the Central Region: Camdenton, Columbia, Ft. Leonard Wood, Jefferson City, Lebanon, Mexico, and Rolla. LOES also operates a few smaller, less-than-full-service, "satellite" offices in Eldon, Versailles, and Waynesville (also serving St. Roberts and Pulaski County) to bring workforce services to these less populated areas. To build and maintain positive relationships with their service providers, the C-WIB gives Customer Service Awards each quarter. Each One-Stop recognizes one employee per quarter for excellent customer service.

### **Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops Today**

Current operations of the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops have been shaped by two different factors. Both One-Stops have experienced common changes when responding to the same mandates and program changes issued by the state of Missouri and the C-WIB. At the same time, leadership, location, outreach, and economic climate at the local level have generated distinct differences between the two One-Stops.

#### ***Common Changes***

Changes common to all One-Stops in Missouri include restructure of departments and divisions focused on Workforce Development, mandated service for "work ready" Temporary Assistance clients, and redesign of the state Internet based job match program. Within the Central Region, One-Stops have been encouraged to increase focus on customer service and to support newly created Business Representative and Career Counselor positions.

*Restructure of State Departments/Divisions Focused on Workforce Development.*

In 1999, Missouri restructured oversight of workforce related services. Unemployment Insurance (UI) remained in the Division of Employment Security (ES) under the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations (DOLIR), but the provision of job exchange services (under Wagner-Peyser) was moved to the newly established Division of Workforce Development (DWD), in the Department of Economic Development.<sup>11</sup> UI claim filing was centralized. Previously, UI claims could be filed in job service offices. Now, in sharp contrast, clients could no longer obtain help with UI forms at a Career Center. Client contact with ES was almost exclusively via telephone and Internet. This structural change in UI filing frustrated clients and job counselors alike. Calls to the UI center could take over half an hour just to make an initial contact. Clients accustomed to getting personal service when asking for and receiving help with filing now had to wait in a telephone queue of unknown length in an impersonal system. Job counselors, now prohibited from helping UI clients obtain benefits, often bore the brunt of clients' anger when telling clients that all inquiries had to be made by phone and no other help was available to them. One-Stop staff at Camdenton and Columbia told us that this change in services was very difficult for them to implement due to the need to change long-standing procedures and the frustration of not being able answer even basic client questions regarding UI application.

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<sup>11</sup> The Division of Workforce Development (DWD) brought together Wagner-Peyser Act, JTPA/WIA, and Veterans programs, and related services. DWD replaced the Division of Job Development and training, in DED, which oversaw JTPA. After passage of WIA, DWD became the lead agency at the state level in administering the Act.

### *TANF Work Ready Clients Mandated to Visit Career Centers*

Beginning July 2003, the state mandated that TANF clients judged work ready by their Family Support Division (FSD)<sup>12</sup> case manager had to begin job search through the One-Stop Center. Funds were reallocated to DWD, and, in the Central Region, units providing WIA services were contracted to provide case management to job-ready TANF clients. As the occasion arises, FSD case managers use computer entry to indicate clients judged work ready. This client information is loaded into DWD's computer system and DWD staff receive a list of these FSD clients the following business day.<sup>13</sup> DWD generates and mails letters to clients indicating that they are to come to the Career Center. Among those who respond to the letter, those who have applied for TANF but have not yet received it work with DWD employees in basic job match services. Those who are receiving TANF or those who were rejected are referred to an HDC counselor (in Columbia) or a LOES counselor (in Camdenton). Counselors report that working with this group has been challenging. TANF clients who do not reply to letters must be contacted in their homes before the client can be sanctioned and the process of making home visits is difficult.

### *MissouriWORKS! to Great Hires*

Declines in Wagner-Peyser funding coupled with decreasing costs for technology encouraged use of computer systems for self-directed job search. Missouri contracted development of *MissouriWORKS!*, a web-based electronic job matching service, to a

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<sup>12</sup> The Family Support Division (FSD), in Missouri's Division of Social Services (DSS), is the primary state agency administering TANF. Prior to reorganization in 2003, the unit administering TANF was the Division of Family Services, also in DSS. Personnel and basic administrative procedures were not substantially altered by this change.

<sup>13</sup> FSD and One-Stop staff do not have a common computer system due to FSD's concern about privacy of case notes. Transfer of information between the two computer systems is limited to basic client demographic and address information.

private firm. Missouri*WORKS!* filled a useful niche. It was less costly than a job counselor using paper files to match employer and potential employee. It developed self-sufficiency among job seekers, and extended job match services to clients with Internet access who might never enter a Career Center. Employers complained, however, that the screening in the system was too broad, resulting in too many workers applying for positions for which they did not qualify. In addition, technology changes made the system outdated. In response to staff request, the Director of Economic Development and management in the Division of Workforce Development decided to replace rather than upgrade Missouri*WORKS!* The state released the redesigned system in early 2005 under the new name Great Hires.<sup>14</sup>

Initial reaction from clients and job counselors indicate the state may have moved too far in the opposite direction—at least judging by use in the mid-Missouri job market. The matching process for Missouri*WORKS!* was quite simple, based on a 5 digit numeric identifier from the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC). A 5 digit match was a 100 percent match for employer and applicant, a four digit match was an 80 percent match, etc. There was also a skill word search. Obtaining a match in Great Hires is more detailed and more complex process. Job seekers find the intake screens lengthy, confusing and counterintuitive, and those who were self-sufficient with Missouri*WORKS!* now require considerable staff time to learn how to navigate the system. Job counselors and employers find that the detailed screening severely limits the number of applicants who are referred to a given position. Use of a keyword or term (e.g. welder, sales) in the

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<sup>14</sup> The state paid \$610,563.50 to a private company (not the same company as developed Missouri*WORKS!*) to re-engineer the system. Funds came from various sources: Wagner-Peyser 10% funds - \$22,937.50; WIA Funds - \$22,937.50; CAP (TANF) Incentive Bonus funds - \$43,337.50; Social Services payments from Incentive Bonus funds - \$521,351.00.

old system yielded several employment options in a given field that a potential worker could scan or investigate, whether on-line or in person. Great Hires requires an exact match before employee and job seeker can access information about the other. Keywords are now more detailed (e.g. not just welder, but what type of welder), increasing the probability of missing connections either because an employer or job seeker miskeyed an entry or a job seeker, while qualified in general for a position, did not have the particular specialty that an employer specified. These frustrations have not yet been addressed by the state and are far from being resolved.<sup>15</sup>

State Information Technology Specialists told us that, from their initial release, both Missouri*WORKS!* and Toolbox, the state workforce development data management system, had difficulties. Toolbox, developed by DWD management information staff, was to be the main state data management system, integrating data gathering and management and report generation across several social service agencies. In practice, Toolbox programs have been developed incrementally, focusing first on the programming needed to manage data for Welfare-to-Work and WIA monitoring and reporting. Data collection in Missouri*WORKS!* and Toolbox corresponded exactly. Attempts to add features to Toolbox led to unanticipated problems and errors, largely due to the complex programming used to make data integration possible. Intended as an update to Missouri*WORKS!*, Great Hires, said one staff member “was not what was promised,” and, among other disappointments with the new system, the one-to-one correspondence with Toolbox was lost.

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<sup>15</sup> The difficulties with Great Hires are based exclusively on discussions with users in mid-Missouri. The system may be better suited for use in the large metropolitan areas, where matching specific skills with job requirements may be more feasible.

### *C-WIB Created Career Counselors and Business Representative Positions*

Early in 2004, discussions on ways to improve outreach resulted in the C-WIB initiating two pilot projects, each having a two-year duration: Career Counselors and Business Representatives. Each project targeted a specific need. The Career Counselor position was a response to the concern of several board members that area high school guidance counselors dealt predominately with student behavior and relationship issues, leaving no time for career counseling. Consequently, students had little opportunity to identify their skills and aptitudes, explore career options, and prepare to enter the labor market. In September 2004, the C-WIB hired four Career Counselors – one for each of the three sub-regions in the Central Region and one to work with National Emergency Grant (NEG) clients.<sup>16</sup> Career Counselors establish relationships with area high schools and provide workforce-related services for the student body. Monthly activity reports submitted to the C-WIB indicate that typical activities of Career Counselors include organizing career fairs, conducting mock interviews for students, administering interest inventories to students (e.g., the Kuder exam), and talking with students in groups or one-to-one about career preparation and college selection. The C-WIB views Career Counselors as an early intervention strategy on the job seeker side of the market. They reason that having Career Counselors work with students in local area high schools increases the probability that students get a successful career start. Students are also made aware of Career Center services should they need them in the future.

The Business Representative position made one full-time person in each sub-region responsible for becoming acquainted with area business owners and managers,

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<sup>16</sup> The fourth Career Counselor will work with high schools in the same area that received NEG funding when that funding ends.

offering to assist them with employment needs, encouraging them to use Great Hires to post their job openings and "establish[ing] a relationship of goodwill and linkage with the Career Centers and WIA services."<sup>17</sup> One of the three Business Representatives was also trained in use of the WorkKeys Job Profiling system to help employers in the Central Region identify and list in Great Hires the specific skills they required of their new hires. A likely, though unstated goal, of this training was to provide a way to ease the transition of employers to a newer and relatively more complex job posting system than the one available under Missouri*WORKS!*. To that end, creation of the Business Representative position was well timed.

Business Representatives meet with 4 to 5 employers per week, usually giving employers one-on-one instruction in use of Great Hires to post their job openings. Some employers contacted by a Business Representative were not currently hiring, but were interested in using Great Hires to fill their next opening. A few employers wanted other services such as information on how to use tax credit programs for employers or conduct background checks on potential employees.

Occasionally, a Business Representative met employers who complained about Great Hires, or its predecessor, Missouri*WORKS!*. One employer asserted he "has not had good luck with Great Hires" and was "skeptical about getting qualified people for the job openings." In this case, after the Business Representative instructed the employer in the appropriate way to post openings and screen applicants on Great Hires, the employer decided to try Great Hires again. Business Representatives have also met with employers getting few hits from Great Hires to discuss possible solutions for the low response. Giving presentations on One-Stop services to community organizations such as a local

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<sup>17</sup> These goals were established by the C-WIB.

Chamber of Commerce, or speaking to local media and industry groups is also a responsibility of the Business Representatives.

When the two-year pilot for Career Counselors and Business Representatives ends, C-WIB funding will cease and the C-WIB will require its three subcontractors to fund the positions. Interestingly, initial turnover in the positions has been rather high; several initial hires left for higher paying jobs within a month or so of starting. The C-WIB is hopeful that the replacement hires will have a longer tenure and that they will see value in having this type of outreach to the future job seeker and current employer population.

#### *Customer Service Expectations*

When the southern and northern counties merged under WIA, the southern-based C-WIB chair emphasized the importance of customer service to the former northern counties. In order to assure that those entering the Columbia One-Stop center received focus attention, the C-WIB created and funded a greeter position in the Columbia One-Stop for the express purpose of greeting job seekers and employers and directing them to desired services. Importance of customer service has been emphasized to the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stop administration and staff..

#### *Differences between the One-Stop Centers*

Differences in leadership, location, and local area economy have created distinct differences between the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops. Differences also exist between the contracted WIA service providers at each location.

## *Leadership*

Leadership of the Camdenton One-Stop has been very stable. Now in her mid-70s, the founder and original director of LOES was an African-American woman reared by grandparents who had been slaves. She earned an Associate's degree, worked in business, served on the Chamber of Commerce, was an elected official for nine years in the Iowa state legislature, and had been a planner and an administrator for an Economic Opportunity Board in Las Vegas, Nevada. In Camdenton, she had worked for MOCA and for the Council of Local Governments before bidding for and winning the JTPA contract.

Although this original LOES director had declared that she was retiring in December 2004, she agreed to continue part time for a few more months to help manage the paperwork necessary to continue NEG grant funding for the Camdenton One-Stop. During the months prior to December 2004, she has gradually handed over direction of LOES to a woman who has worked closely with her as second in command for over a decade, maintaining continuity in LOES leadership.

In contrast, the Columbia One-Stop leadership has changed. Until the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2003, BooneWorks, a consortium of workforce service providers, served as the One-Stop operator. During that time, the Human Development Corporation (HDC) was the contracted service provider in Columbia. As an interesting side note, prior to WIA, the Private Industry Council (PIC) initially contracted JTPA services to HDC. Then, a year or so later, the PIC changed the contract so that HDC only determined client eligibility, while the PIC provided client services. After WIA was implemented, HDC took over the client files that the PIC had previously maintained.

According to the Family Resource Program Director at HDC who currently oversees provision of WIA services and who was involved in the transition from JTPA to WIA, client services under the PIC were meager. The Director remarked, "HDC took over a ship that did not have a lot of maintenance...[we were left with] files where no one had contacted the clients for a period of time."

Frustrated with the fragmented leadership inherent in a consortium, in July 2003, the C-WIB named DWD as the operator of the Columbia One Stop Center, with the DWD's Workforce Development Supervisor and Regional Director acting on behalf of DWD.<sup>18</sup> This individual has been a state employee his entire career, with years of Wagner-Peyser experience. He commented that "Having to consider ways to remove or minimize barriers to employment has been a challenging paradigm shift" for him, even though he has been very willing to make the change. Under his leadership, HDC is the subcontractor for provision of WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, Younger and Older Youth programs for Columbia.

### *Location*

The Camdenton One-Stop is downtown in a building some distance away from Social Service agencies such as the Family Support Division and Vocational Rehabilitation. The C-WIB chair maintains an office in the basement of the Camdenton One-Stop. Co-residents of the One-Stop such as the Small Business Administration and the Lake Ozark Local Council of Governments generate a business-focused atmosphere. Linkages with state Social Service agencies as well as local non-profits exist, but are not

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<sup>18</sup> This individual is the supervisor of DWD employees in seven One-Stop centers in the Central region, and, as such, oversees Wagner-Peyser, veterans and related services. In his role as Columbia One-Stop director, he also serves as liaison between the C-WIB and the One-Stop partners.

highly visible. This arrangement is not facilitating for One-Stop clients who also need to access social services.

The Resource Center, which houses the Columbia One-Stop Career Center, is located on the edge of town. Although accessible by city bus, many complain that the location is not convenient. Further, getting to the Resource Center from the bus stop requires crossing a busy street, a problem for some disabled clients. Co-residents of the Resource Center are largely state social service agencies or non-profit entities focused on job seeker services, especially for those needing counseling or training. The director of the Columbia One-Stop noted that proximity to social services agencies and non-profits has greatly facilitated understanding of each other's role in workforce development and has created a more visible integration with partner services. It also creates a somewhat greater focus on job seeker services than on employer services in the Columbia location.

#### *Local Area Economy*

Camdenton has a seasonal economy that is very active just before, during and just after the summer months. Many seasonal workers draw unemployment during the off season, but are not motivated to find new work since they are confident of rehire in the same or a similar job the next summer season. Most jobs are with small employers in the service sector who usually pay little above minimum wage. Poverty rates and per capita income lag behind state averages. In contrast, Columbia has a robust economy that is not subject to seasonal variation. Large, mid-size, and small businesses compete for workers, driving pay above minimum wage even for entry-level work and making it particularly difficult to enroll the requisite numbers in the WIA older youth programs. Ironically the

strength of the Columbia economy has resulted in less formula-based funding for the area under both JTPA and WIA.

#### *Outreach of WIA Service Provider*

LOES, the contracted WIA provider in Camdenton, was originally formed to provide workforce services to the local area, first under JTPA and then under WIA. As a single, local entity, LOES has always focused exclusively on providing workforce services. In contrast, HDC, the contracted WIA service provider in Columbia, provides other community services as well. A private non-profit agency, HDC is one of many Community Action Agencies (CAA) across the nation and one of about 20 CAAs in Missouri. CAAs began in the mid 1960s in response to President Johnson's War on Poverty. In addition to WIA core and intensive services, HDC offers a number of programs for low-income individuals in an eight-county area in mid-Missouri, including Head Start, Foster Grandparents, and emergency energy assistance. Head Start is HDC's largest program, with over 100 of HDC's 180 employees working with Head Start.

### **Conclusion**

Pre-WIA history has shaped the characteristics of the Central Region Workforce Investment Area and the operation of the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops. Difference as well as similarity in the operation of these two One-Stops is detailed in several of the subsequent chapters in this report.

The Central Workforce Investment Board, the entity that oversees One-Stop operation in the Central Region, strives to “design and direct high-performance, result-oriented, universal employment services to meet the workforce development needs of

employers, workers, and job seekers in Central Missouri.” In practice, the specifics of this “design and direction” are proposed, discussed, and decided at C-WIB Executive Staff and full Board meetings. To monitor progress on decided courses of action and on federally mandated performance measures, the C-WIB routinely reviews a variety of statistical reports. Taken together, these reports form a “portrait” of the C-WIB and its One-Stop Centers. This portrait is the subject of the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **A STATISTICAL PORTRAIT OF THE CENTRAL WIB AND ITS ONE-STOP CENTERS**

The two One-Stop Career Centers examined in this study are a subset of the seven One-Stop Centers that are under the governance of the Central WIB. Examining the statistical portrait painted by the various reports generated by all the One-Stop Centers in the C-WIB fosters a broader understanding of the context within which the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Centers operate. This chapter describes the C-WIB and its One-Stops as they appear in state and federal reporting activities. Variation across One-Stop centers within the C-WIB is discussed, with particular focus on the Camden One-Stop and Columbia One-Stop.

#### **Method**

The C-WIB Executive Office is the designated entity in the Central Region for the collection and dissemination of data related to workforce program performance and service delivery. For this report, statistical data produced by the Executive Staff of the C-WIB were tracked for a two-year period beginning January 2003 and ending December 2004. The primary source of our data was the Monthly Traffic Report. The information for these reports flows from the WIA contracted service providers and partner agencies to the regional One-Stop director who, in turn, submits the numbers to the C-WIB Executive Office in Rolla. The numbers reported in the Monthly Traffic Report for each of the seven One-Stop Centers in the Central Region essentially reflect both a head count of the number of clients who visited each One-Stop during the month and a tabulation of the main or presenting reason that each client gave the greeter as the reason for the visit. Each client is entered only one time per day and one activity is recorded, although clients

may utilize several different services during a given visit. Consequently, to the extent that clients engage in more than one service activity during any visit (e.g. use computer in resource center and talk with a job counselor), the numbers in the Monthly Traffic Report are undercounts of actual service utilization.

### ***Obtaining Traffic Flow Data***

When a client enters any of the seven Missouri Career Centers in the Central Workforce Investment Area, a greeter will welcome him or her and verify that the client has been entered into the job matching system (Missouri*WORKS!* prior to the fall of 2004, Great Hires since then). If so, his or her record is updated; if not, it is initiated. Then, the client is asked why he or she has come to the One-Stop. The greeter logs the response on a daily ledger. At both Camdenton and Columbia, the daily ledger takes the form of a spreadsheet grid printed in landscape mode on letter-size paper. In the left-most column, the greeter records the Social Security number of job seekers.<sup>19</sup> Column headers list services, with the basic services common to all One-Stops in the Central Region listed first and services unique to a given One-Stop listed next.

Virtually all who enter the door are recorded in the daily log. Persons not recorded include those who step in briefly to get directions, or small children or friends who accompany a client to the One-Stop. Occasionally, on a very high traffic day, a client familiar with use of the computers in the resource area might slip in, use a computer, and slip out without getting recorded in the log. The greeters and staff do their best to not let that happen and whenever possible will speak to clients who did not stop by the desk when entering to be sure they get recorded in the daily log.

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<sup>19</sup> Social Security numbers are typically not requested from other One-Stop visitors such as employers coming to pick up job applications.

### *Distribution of Basic Services*

Table 2.1 reports, for each One-Stop in the Central Region, the proportion of total basic service recipients who received a specific basic client service over the period January 2003 to December 2004. For example, 4.8 percent listed under Information Only for Camdenon indicates that, for all individual visits to the Camdenon One-Stop between January 2003 and December 2004, 4.8 percent were classified as obtaining information as their primary task.

A short description for each of the activities is provided in the notes to the table. The heading “Resource Center” used in Table 6.1 and below refers to use of an area within the One-Stop Center with computers and published information, which is to be distinguished from the large building in which the Columbia One-Stop Center has office space, also referred to, in the previous chapter, as the “Resource Center.”

Note that, although each row sums to 100 percent, only the basic services common to all One-Stop centers in the C-WIB are considered in Table 2.1. In each One-Stop, the total number of visits coded as providing basic services is smaller than the total traffic count because each One-Stop offers other client services that are unique to a given One-Stop. For example, the traffic report that Camdenon submits each month to the C-WIB Executive Office also includes a count of those who visit the Small Business Administration Office located in the same building with the One-Stop. Similarly, the traffic reports submitted monthly by Columbia, Jefferson City, Lebanon, and Mexico One-Stops to the C-WIB Executive Office includes a count of Family Support Division (FSD) client visits, although FSD is located in a separate office suite in the larger

building within which the One-Stop is housed. Out of the client count for FSD, only a small fraction would have come in direct contact with the One-Stop Career Center.

### ***Unique Characteristics of Ft. Leonard Wood***

The dramatically different service usage pattern at the Ft. Leonard Wood One-Stop Center evident in Table 2.1 merits some discussion. This One-Stop center is located on an active army base. Prior to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11), gaining entrance to the base required a relatively straightforward and brief clearance procedure. Consequently, civilians in the surrounding area would often come to the Ft. Wood facility either because it was closer than the next best alternative or because they believed they received a higher quality of service at that facility. Following 9/11, security tightened, making civilian entrance to the base very difficult. The LOES Director informed us that it was not uncommon for security checks for civilians to take as much as 45 minutes before permission to enter the base was granted. As a result, after 9/11, the Ft. Wood One-Stop Career Center has predominantly served spouses of military personnel and military getting ready to reenter civilian life after completing military service.

Despite the loss of civilian clients, the increase in military activity at the base has caused a large increase in activity at the One-Stop Center. At the end of 2004, the Ft. Wood office, which had been a satellite office under the Rolla One-Stop, became an independent One-Stop Center. During the period of our study, although the Ft. Wood Center is one of the smallest One-Stop Centers in the Central Region both in terms of staff size and physical footprint, it serves a high volume of clients. Funding from the Department of the Army allows Ft. Wood to be a large and well-paying employer (\$12.00

per hour on average). For clients, hiring patterns on- and off-base have produced steady and strong demand: In the fall, on-base hiring has been strong, whereas in the spring the off-base tourist economy picks up.

### ***Main Reason for One-Stop Visit***

Returning to Table 2.1, we can see that—with the exception of Ft. Wood—the UI "four-week check" is the predominant reason given for coming to the One-Stop, accounting for between one-third and a one-half of the foot traffic for basic services across the One-Stops. Use of the resource center—accessing computer job search software and printed materials—is the reason given for about 1 in 4 clients (26 percent). Information only or job applications are each recorded for about 9 percent of One-Stop clients. About one in twenty clients report Veterans services as their primary reason for the One-Stop visit, with the number, not surprisingly, much higher at Ft. Wood.

The proportion of clients reporting that they filled out job applications, received WIA services, participated in the CAP (for TANF recipients) or METP (for Food Stamp recipients), or who visited to obtain office services are around 3 percent each, on average. About 2 percent of clients state TAA/TRA services as the reason for visit. Only two in a thousand clients give Job Corps or PFS as their main reason for their visit.

The number of employers who visit the center is small as a proportion of foot traffic. We see that the relative number of employers visiting is much higher for the Camden One-Stop Center, which may reflect the fact that the WIB chair, who is himself a business owner and is very clearly focused on services for business owners, maintains an office in this center. Employer size would also be smaller in Camden

than in Columbia or Jefferson City, increasing the number of visits for a given number of job postings.

### ***Beyond the Basic Services***

As with clients seeking use of basic services, clients stating use of non-basic services as their sole or primary reason for their One-Stop visit would be tallied once in the overall traffic count. The Camdenton One-Stop offers clients the largest number and widest array of additional services beyond the basic services common to all Central Region One-Stops Centers. Low income clients needing assistance with fuel for heat in the winter or winterization of a home were referred to the Missouri Ozarks Community Action (MOCA), resident in the Camdenton One-Stop until late 2004. Clients could obtain education and training through the Adult Education and Literacy program (AEL) or the Learning Lab (LAB).<sup>20</sup> Clients could also obtain education and training in the interactive video equipment in the Camdenton Telecommunication Community Resource Center (TCRC) in the lower level of the Camdenton One-Stop.<sup>21</sup> Clients primarily interested in economic development issues or entrepreneurship can visit the Lake Ozark Council of Local Governments (LOCLG) or the Small Business Administration (SBA). In addition to other services, the SBA offers small business loans. Finally, clients with substance abuse issues can visit the Lake Area Citizen Advisory Board (LACAB) for counseling. LACAB also provides drug screening services for area employers.

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<sup>20</sup> The Learning Lab is a classroom with 9 student stations and 1 instructor station. The Lab is used to give instruction in basic computer skills, under Wagner-Peyser funding.

<sup>21</sup> Clients participate in a graduate nursing program offered by the University of Missouri-Columbia Sinclair School of Nursing and a horticulture program offered by the University of Missouri-Columbia College of Food, Agriculture and Natural Resources. The Camdenton TCRC is funded by the Central Ozarks Private Industry Council and the Work Connections program in partnership with University of Missouri Outreach and Extension.

Like Camdenton, Columbia offers Adult Education and Literacy classes but does not have a Learning Lab. Staff at Columbia can, however, connect One-Stop clients with BooneWorks, HDC, and Advent, non-profit partner agencies that provide a variety of workforce-related services and basic work readiness activities.

Counts of visits to Vocational Rehabilitation and the Family Support Division (FSD), non-WIA government partners, is given to the Columbia One-Stop director each month. These are tallies of clients who have gone to either agency. A few of these clients may also be in the One-Stop traffic count.<sup>22</sup> Traffic counts are also given for visits to Caring Communities, a nonprofit agency that provides information, referral, and mobilization of community resources, but is not located in the same building.

Ft. Wood does not offer any services beyond the set of basic services. Jefferson City reports counts for several human services agencies, and for FSD. Lebanon reports traffic for MOCA and FSD. In Jefferson City, Lebanon, and Columbia the FSD office shares space in the same building as the One-Stop Center. Mexico reports traffic counts only for FSD. Rolla tallies client visits to MOCA, Adult Education and Literacy, the Rural Missouri Institute<sup>23</sup> (RMI), Vocational Rehabilitation and Welfare-to-Work.

### ***Traffic Count Trends for Basic Services: Comparing Camdenton and Columbia***

Figures 2.1 through Figure 2.12 illustrate trends in traffic count for basic services in Camdenton and Columbia. Unless otherwise indicated, we present graphs of a three-month moving average in order to dampen the effects of random variation over time.

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<sup>22</sup> Where an individual first came to VR or FSD and then was referred to the One-Stop Center, the individual may contribute to both sets of counts.

<sup>23</sup> RMI provides resources for rural Missouri, especially the farm community.

Trends in the numbers for Information Only (Figure 2.1) and Job Application (Figure 2.2) indicate the impact of the local economy on One-Stop traffic. Over the two-year period, the number of persons recorded in both categories was larger in Columbia than in Camden. Columbia had a rather steady increase in this type of traffic from January 2003 to February 2004, coinciding with the timing of construction and staffing of a new major retail establishment in Columbia that opened late October 2003. Management for this retail establishment used the Columbia One-Stop to collect job applications and to conduct interviews, steadily driving up the number of job applications between May 2003 and September 2003. The drop in information only and job application traffic in Columbia from spring through fall 2004 no doubt reflects completion of hiring for the retailer's opening. In contrast, Camden's economy displayed less variation, combined with a seasonal cycle that we will see in other services below.

About twice as many individuals in Columbia as Camden stated resource center use as their primary reason for visiting the One-Stop in each location (Figure 2.3). This fact is probably a simple function of the larger size of Columbia. Interestingly, from January 2003 to May 2003, numbers moved in opposite directions for the two sites, with the number of resource center users declining in Camden but rising in Columbia. This may be due, in part, to Trade Assistance Act services in Camden peaking in the first three months of 2003 (see Figure 2.7 below). After May 2003, traffic counts for resource center use follow roughly the same patterns in both locations.

Figure 2.4 identifies visits by employers to the One-Stops. In contrast to observed visits by job seekers, many more employers visited the Camden One-Stop than the

Columbia One-Stop. As noted above, Camdenon is the outlier among all One-Stop centers in the Central WIB area. A definite seasonal trend is evident for Camdenon, with employer use of the Camdenon One-Stop increasing January through April of each year as businesses begin to prepare for the summer season and then dropping off April through September as workers are secured for summer employment and then laid off. Employer use of the One-Stop trails off September though December as summer businesses winterize and close. It is very clear that the trend is accentuated in 2004, with the maximum number of visits approximately 40 percent higher than 2003.

Although the trend line for Columbia somewhat echoes the general direction of Camdenon's, the peaks and valleys are not nearly as pronounced. The trend line is relatively flat, not surprising, given Columbia's relatively steady economic environment.

Columbia's larger population coupled with the presence of a Veterans Administration hospital may contribute to the number of Columbia center visitors stating Veterans Services as their primary reason for visiting the One-Stop Center (Figure 2.5). We see a dramatic increase in the first few months of 2004 and a decline thereafter. The number requesting Veterans Services as their primary reason for coming in to the Camdenon One-Stop is practically nil.

The One-Stop is not the primary site for Job Corps services in either Columbia or Camdenon, and it is no surprise that relatively few individuals state this as their primary reason for the visit—around ten each month in Columbia and about one in Camdenon (Figure 2.6). Again, the larger population in Columbia may account for this difference. In the last half of 2004, Job Corps services were completely moved from the Columbia One-Stop, causing the observed decline.

TRA/TAA services are designed to respond to plant closings, and the character of such coverage is reflected in Figure 2.7, which (in contrast to the other figures) is not presented as a three month moving average. Here we see that during the first three months of 2003, approximately 100 individuals each month visited the Camden One-Stop Center, whereas in the remainder of the period fewer than 20 people per month stated TRA/TAA as their primary reason for the visit. This pattern is due to a large number of layoffs occurring in those first three months in areas serviced by LOES, and we discuss this below. In Columbia, the number of visits generally remains below ten.

WIA traffic appears to be highly variable from month to month in the Columbia One-Stop, (Figure 2.8) with the moving average varying by a ratio of over three. Camden's variation is slightly smaller, varying by a ratio of about two. The observed cycles do not appear seasonal, nor are they similar for the two One-Stop centers. There is little evidence of trends over time.

The number of visits attributable to individuals completing the four-week check, required for those receiving UI benefits, is very large at both sites. During 2003, approximately 1000 individuals visited the Columbia One-Stop Center for the UI check each month, although the number trends down to fewer than 700 by the end of 2004 (Figure 2.9). Camden numbers are approximately 40 percent lower, and seasonal trends are more pronounced. Overlaid on top of a downward trend—reflecting improvement in the overall economy—we see in Camden a cycle with troughs in the summer months and peaks around the beginning of the calendar year.

Office services are the primary request of between 40 and 100 persons a month in Columbia and between 60 and 80 in Camden (Figure 2.10). The trend lines for both

One-Stops are similar, although the Columbia One-Stop displays more variation from month to month.

Clients requesting services associated with participation in the TANF and Food Stamp programs at both One-Stop Centers track together quite closely, reflecting implementation of the programs serving these individuals in 2003. As seen in Figure 2.11, the numbers participating in CAP (serving TANF recipients) rise steadily from June 2003, when Missouri mandated that the One-Stop serve TANF work-ready clients, until August 2004; held steady for a couple of months; and then declined. Figure 2.12 indicates that numbers of participants in the METP program (serving Food Stamp participants), in contrast, rose quite sharply for both One-Stops between May 2003 and November 2003, then leveled off between 80 and 100 per month in Columbia, but declined to about 40 per month in Camdenton.

### *Services for TANF Recipients*

Frustrations regarding work with the TANF population have been aired frequently at the C-WIB meetings. In contrast to job seekers who initiate a visit to the One-Stop, use of One-Stop services is mandated for TANF clients, and many of them resent the requirement. It is, admittedly, a population with quite different issues, challenges, and motivations than those that DWD and contracted service providers are accustomed to working with.

### *National Emergency Grant Dollars*

In late 2002 and early 2003, five factories in the Central Region closed their doors and moved operations overseas to reduce labor costs, leaving more than 1,400 former employees without jobs. Although the departure of each employer had a negative impact

on the small towns that they left, the impact was probably most severe in the one town where the business that shut down had been a major employer. Layoffs from that one manufacturer alone accounted for about half of the 1,400 who lost their jobs. To have hope of securing other employment, many of these former employees as well as former employees of other former employers, needed to complete a GED and all needed retraining. The C-WIB applied for and received a National Emergency Grant scheduled to run July 2003 to July 2005. As of December 2004, the C-WIB had enrolled 823 individuals (618 of those had been former employees of the clothing manufacturer).

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has described the C-WIB and its One-Stop Career Centers as they appear in state and federal mandated reports. Examining these reports, it is clear that, across all of the One-Stop Centers in the Central Region, the majority of client traffic is due to the UI four-week check and job search activities. The published data records indicate that such clients are more likely to interact with DWD employees than with WIA service providers. Although, in broad, general terms, the traffic patterns across the One-Stops are similar, the Central Region has some anomalies. The limited access to Ft. Leonard Wood alters its service mix dramatically and induces potential clients to travel to a satellite office in Pulaski County.

Comparison between the traffic flows at Camdenton and Columbia highlights the impact of the local area economy on One-Stop operations. Camdenton serves a large number of workers dislocated when local plants have closed and moved operations overseas; Columbia has had relatively higher traffic counts when large retailers moved to the area and used the One-Stop as a central location for job applications.

In the next chapter, we turn to the details of the operations of the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Centers, looking at operations from the “inside.”

Table 2.1: Proportion of One-Stop Visitors Using Specific Basic Services

Locations	Information Only	Resource Center	Job Applications	Employer	Veterans Services	Job Corp	TRA/TAA	Workforce Investment Act	UI 4-week Check	Office Services	TANF (CAP)	Parents Fair Share	Food Stamps (METP)	Total
Camdenton	4.8%	21.5%	3.8%	3.9%	0.1%	0.1%	1.7%	4.3%	45.1%	5.7%	3.6%	0.1%	5.3%	100.0%
Columbia	4.8%	26.6%	9.3%	0.6%	3.1%	0.3%	0.3%	3.3%	41.6%	3.2%	2.7%	0.3%	3.8%	100.0%
Ft Wood	31.2%	29.2%	19.4%	0.6%	12.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	5.5%	1.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Jeff City	3.5%	31.3%	7.8%	0.1%	8.0%	0.2%	0.1%	3.0%	36.5%	1.1%	5.2%	0.3%	2.9%	100.0%
Mexico	6.3%	31.5%	5.9%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	3.6%	1.5%	45.2%	0.9%	1.3%	0.1%	2.9%	100.0%
Rolla	2.3%	12.9%	5.7%	1.3%	5.0%	0.3%	4.5%	5.4%	49.7%	4.1%	4.6%	0.5%	3.6%	100.0%
Average	8.7%	25.5%	8.6%	1.1%	4.9%	0.2%	1.7%	2.9%	37.4%	2.7%	2.9%	0.2%	3.1%	100.0%

*Basic Service Definitions: Primary Reason for Visit*

Information Only: Obtaining general information, usually about programs or services.

Resource Center: Use of computer terminals and printed employment information.

Job Applications: Filling out job applications.

Employer: Employer consultation regarding services, often to pick up completed job applications.

Veterans' Services: Counseling or visit with representative of federal veterans' programs.

Job Corp: Seeking Job Corp information or services.

TRA/TAA: Services under the federal trade acts.

Workforce Investment Act: Counseling or related services under the Workforce Investment Act.

UI 4-week Check: Check in required to receive Unemployment Insurance benefits.

Office Services: Use of photocopying, printing, telephone or related services for job search.

TANF (CAP): TANF applicants or recipients receiving job search/training under the CAP program.

Parents' Fair Share: Services under Missouri's PFS program for noncustodial parents.

Food Stamps (METP): Food Stamp recipients referred for job search/training under the Missouri Employment and Training Program.

Figure 2.1: Information Only, Camdenon and Columbia  
 January 2003-December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

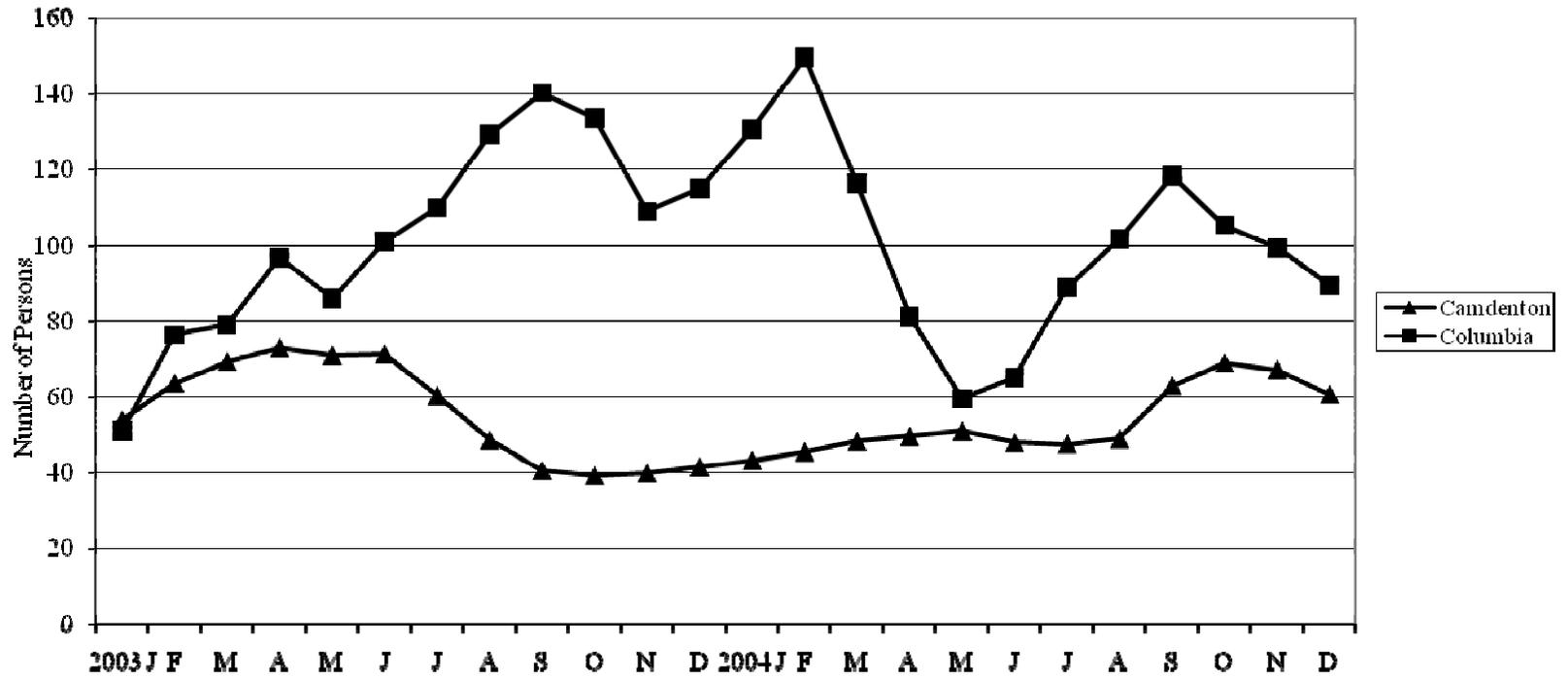


Figure 2.2: Job Applications, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

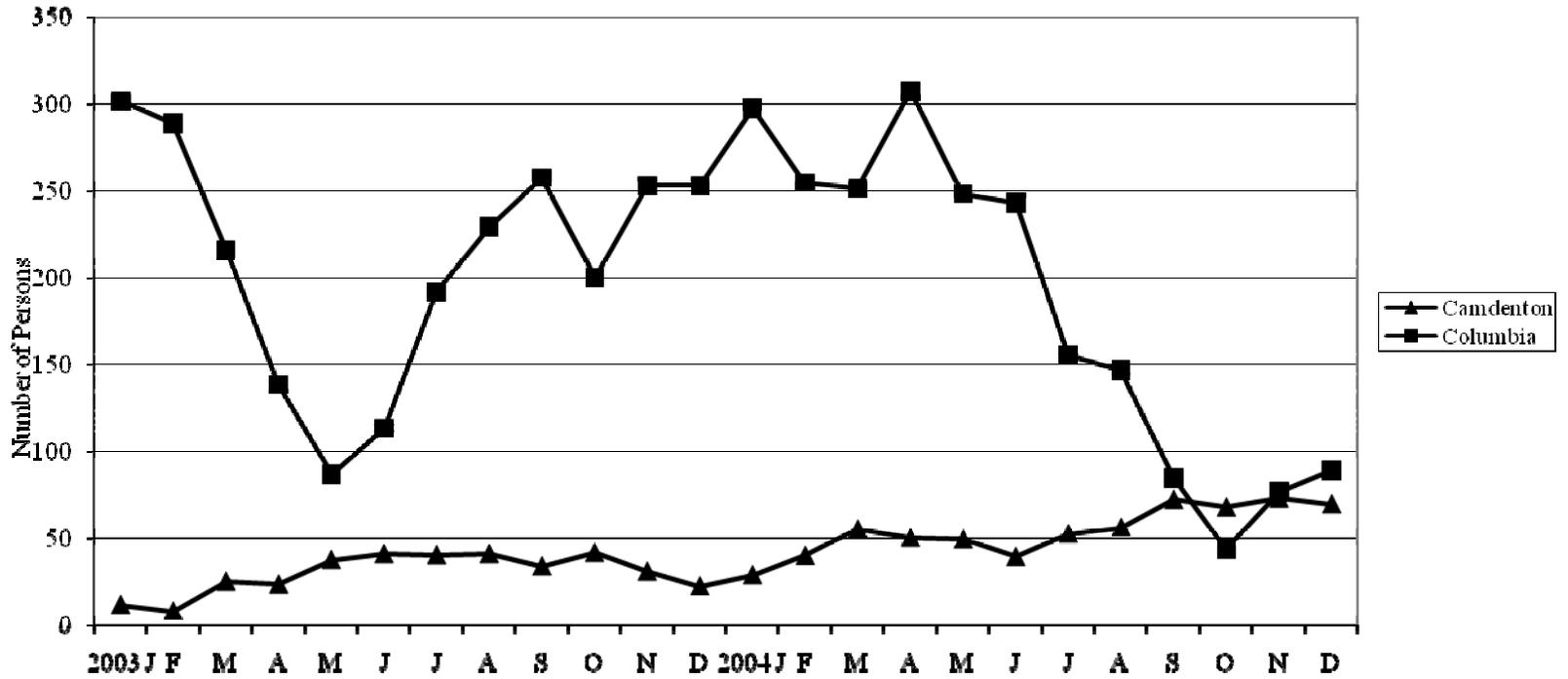
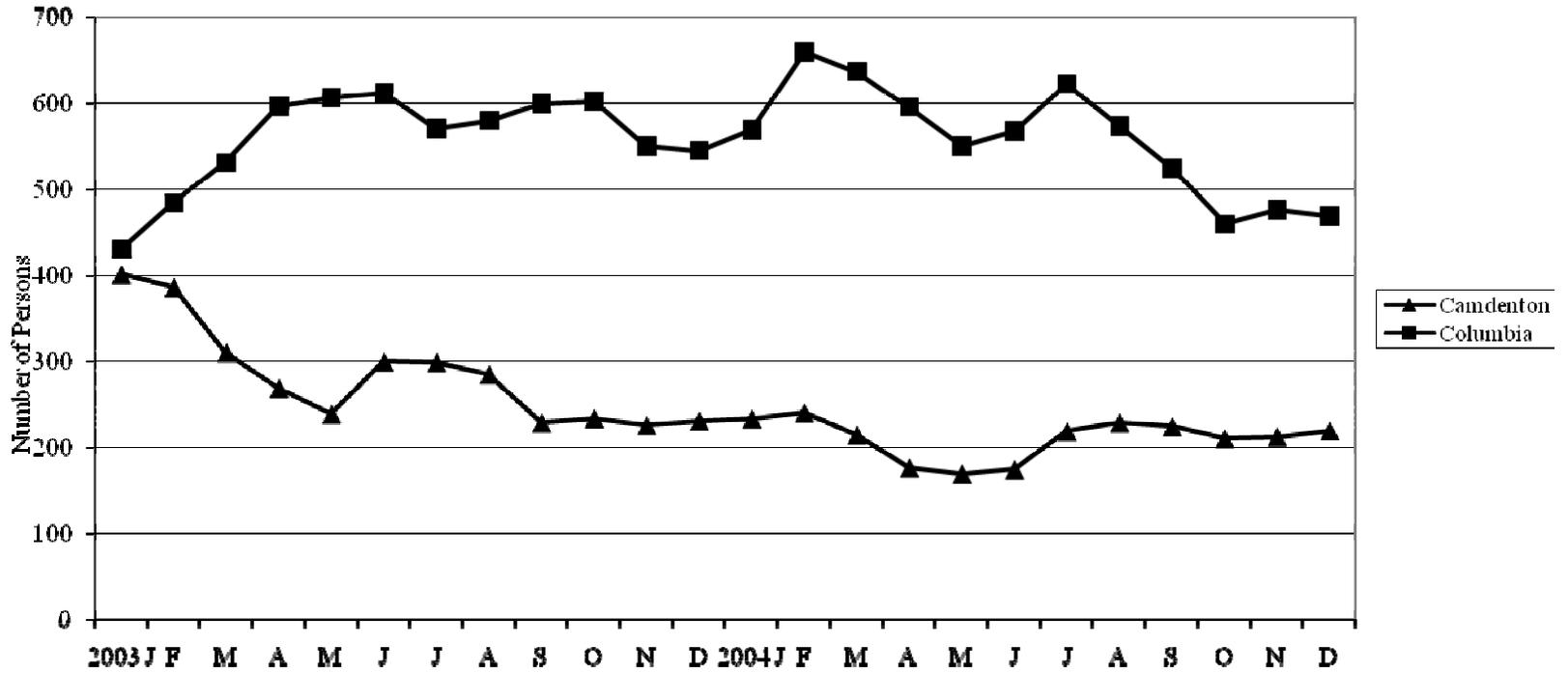


Figure 2.3: Resource Center Users, Camdenon and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average



**Figure 2.4: Employer Use of One Stop, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average**

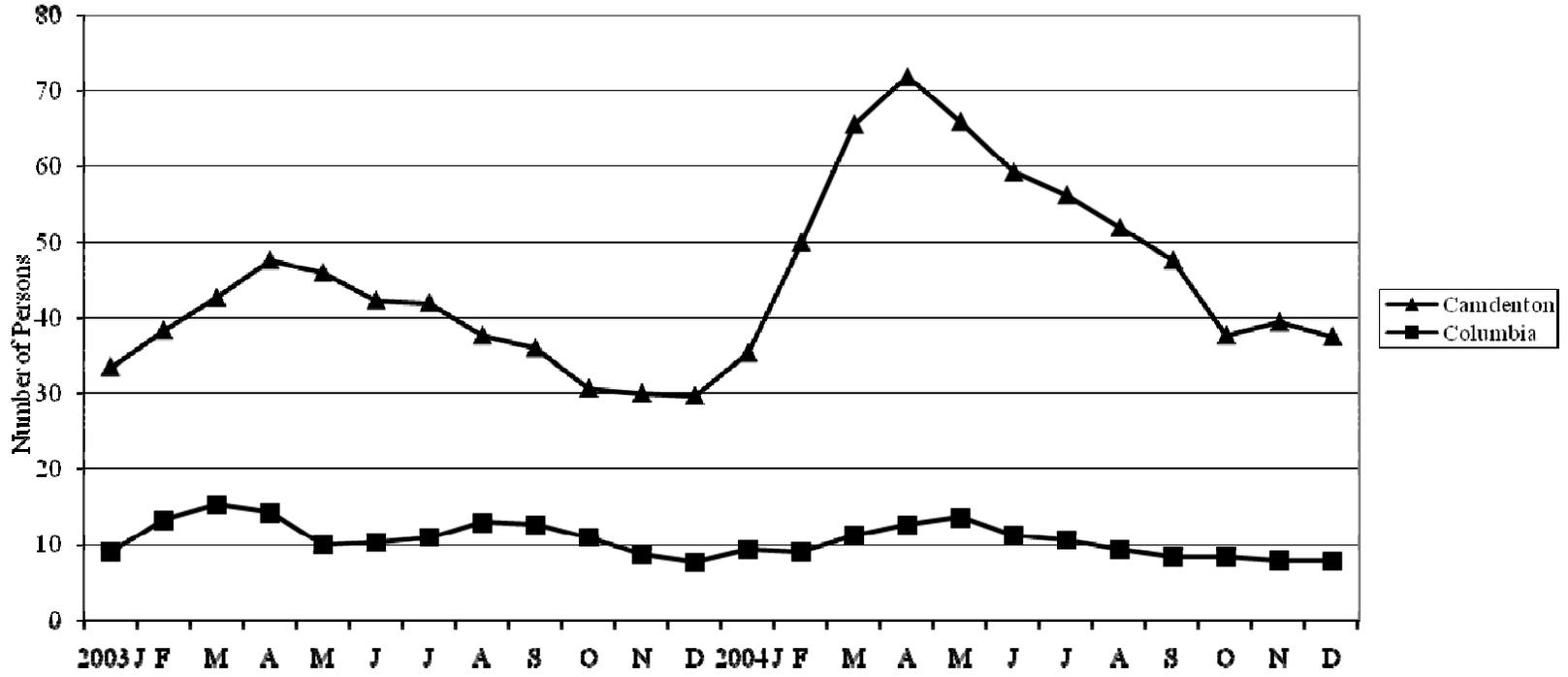


Figure 2.5: Veterans, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

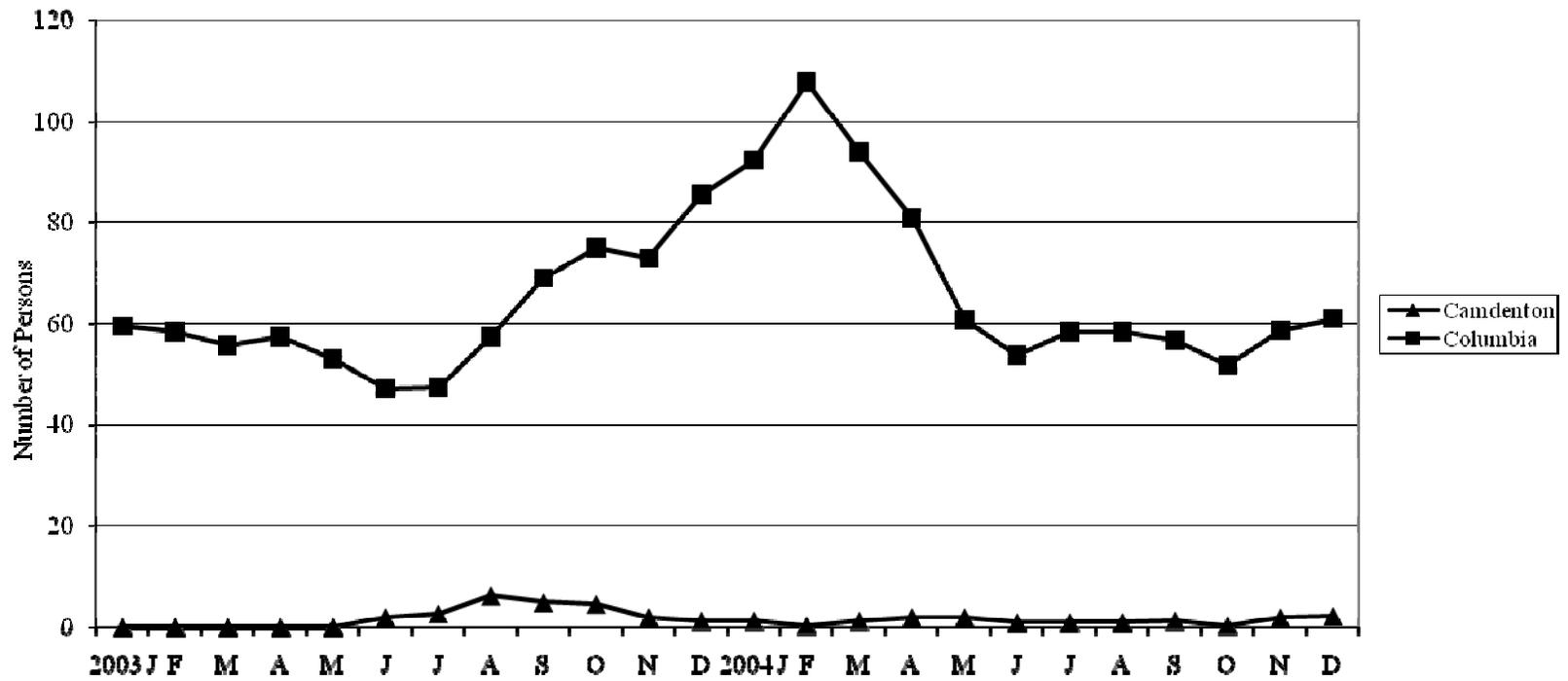


Figure 2.6: Job Corps, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003-December 2004  
 3 month moving average

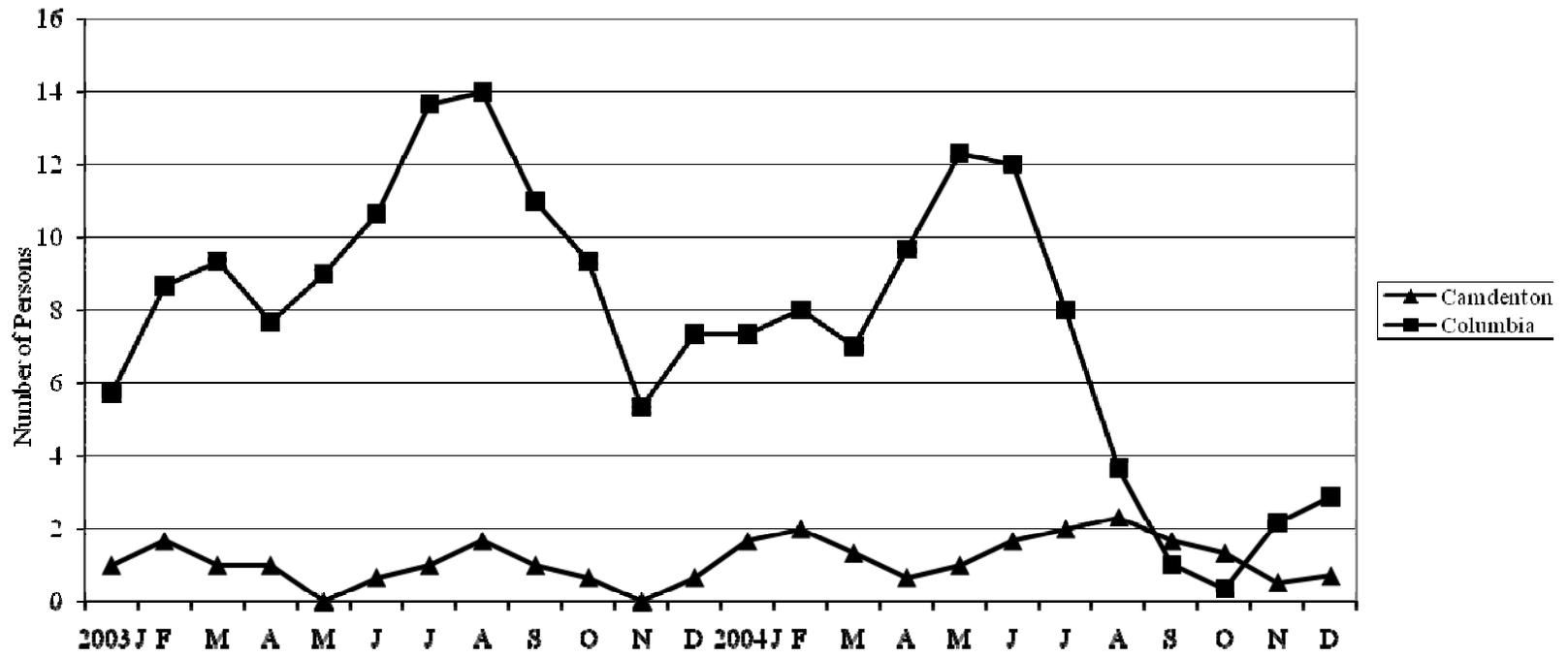


Figure 2.7: TRA TAA, Camdenon and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004

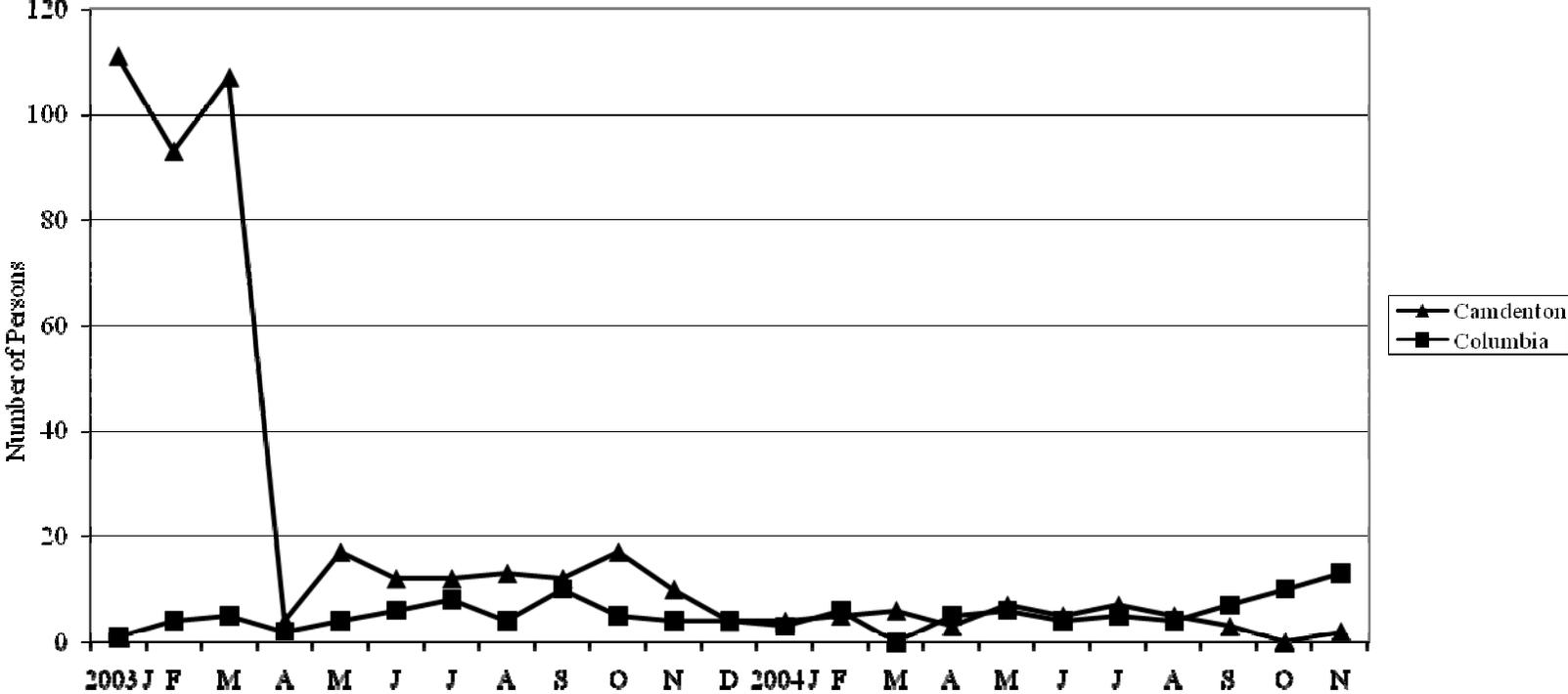


Figure 2.8: WIA, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

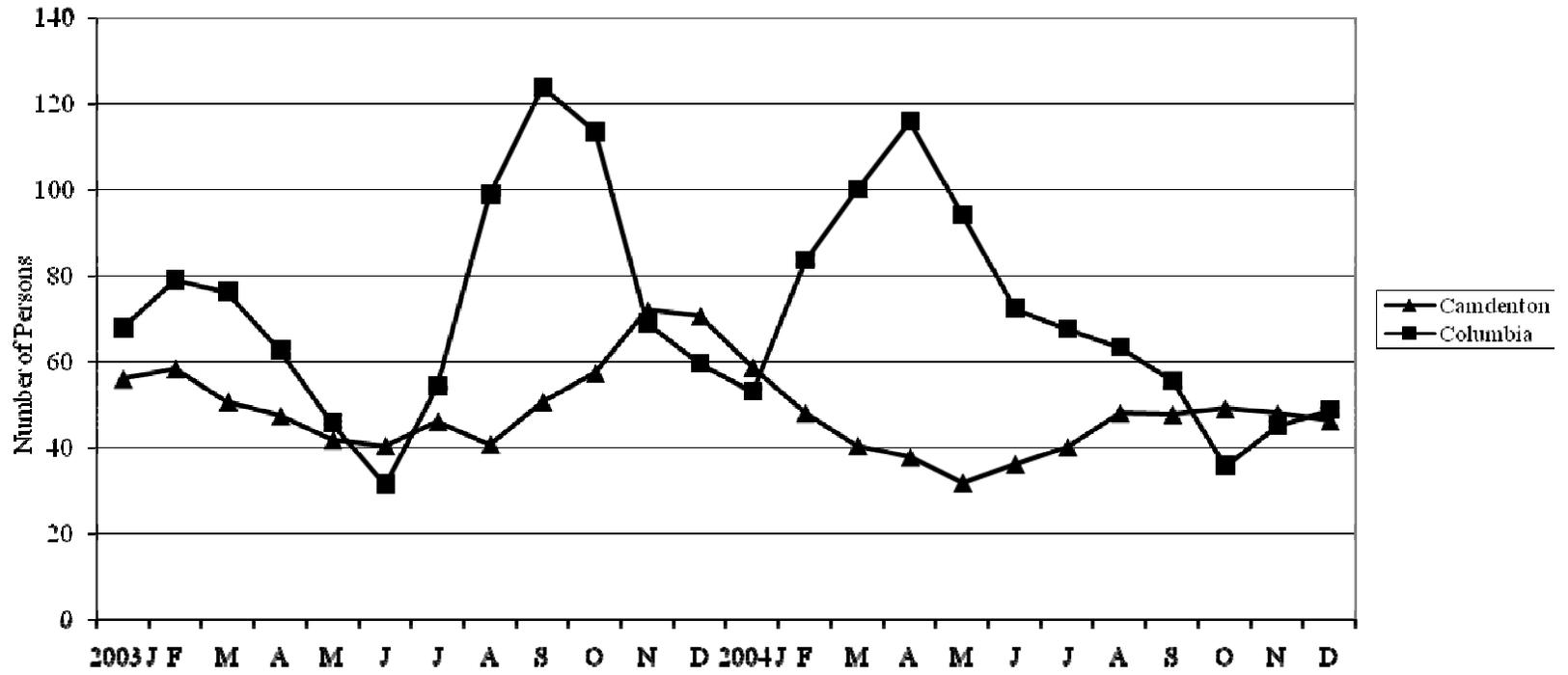


Figure 2.9: Unemployment Insurance 4-week Check, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

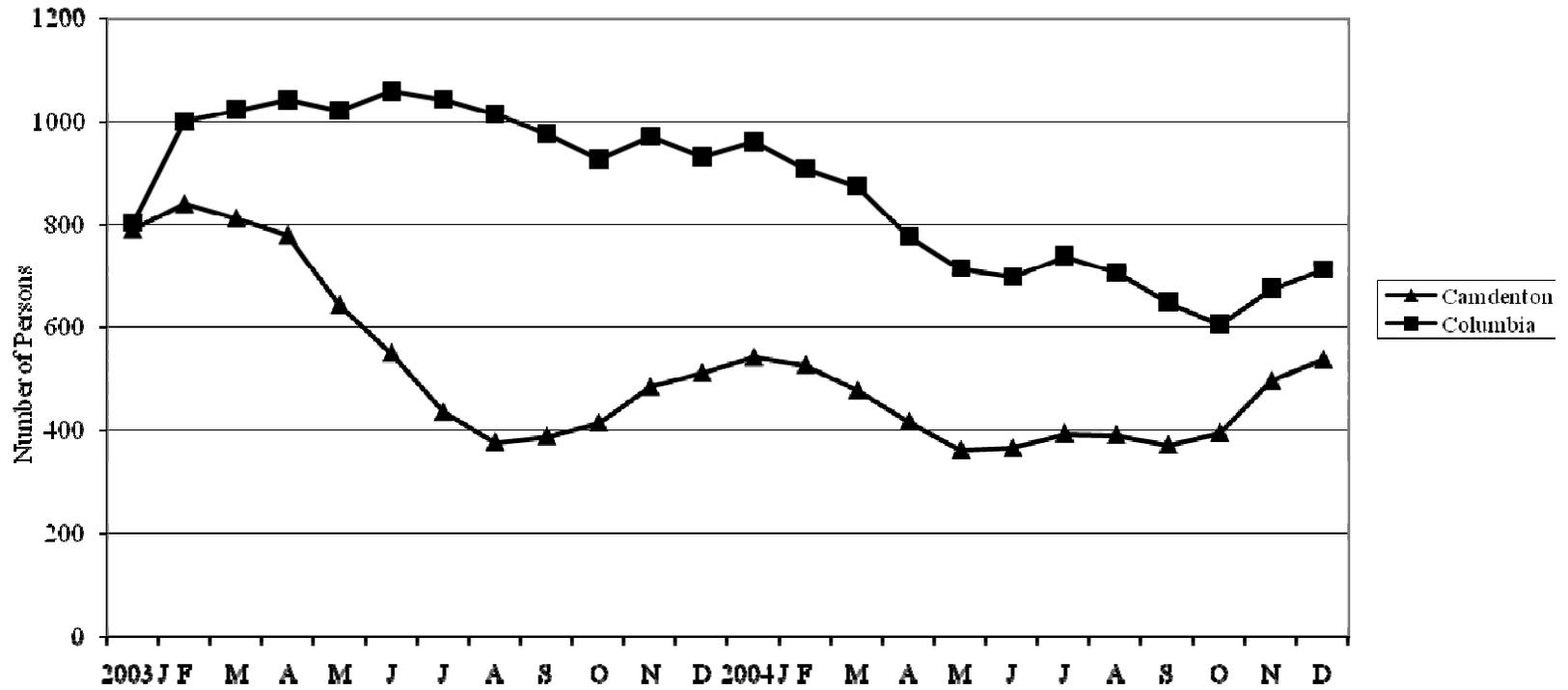


Figure 2.10: Office Services, Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

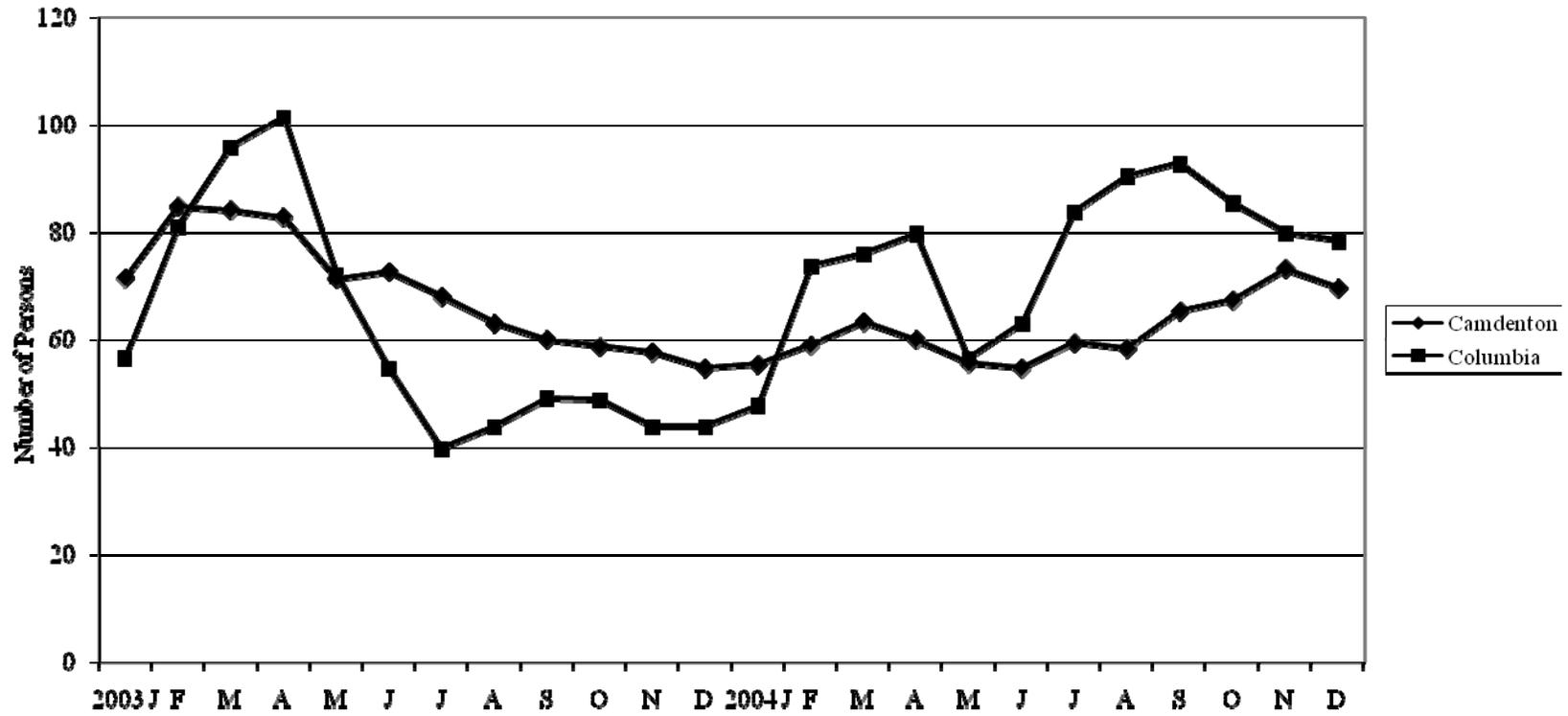


Figure 2.11: CAP (TANF), Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average

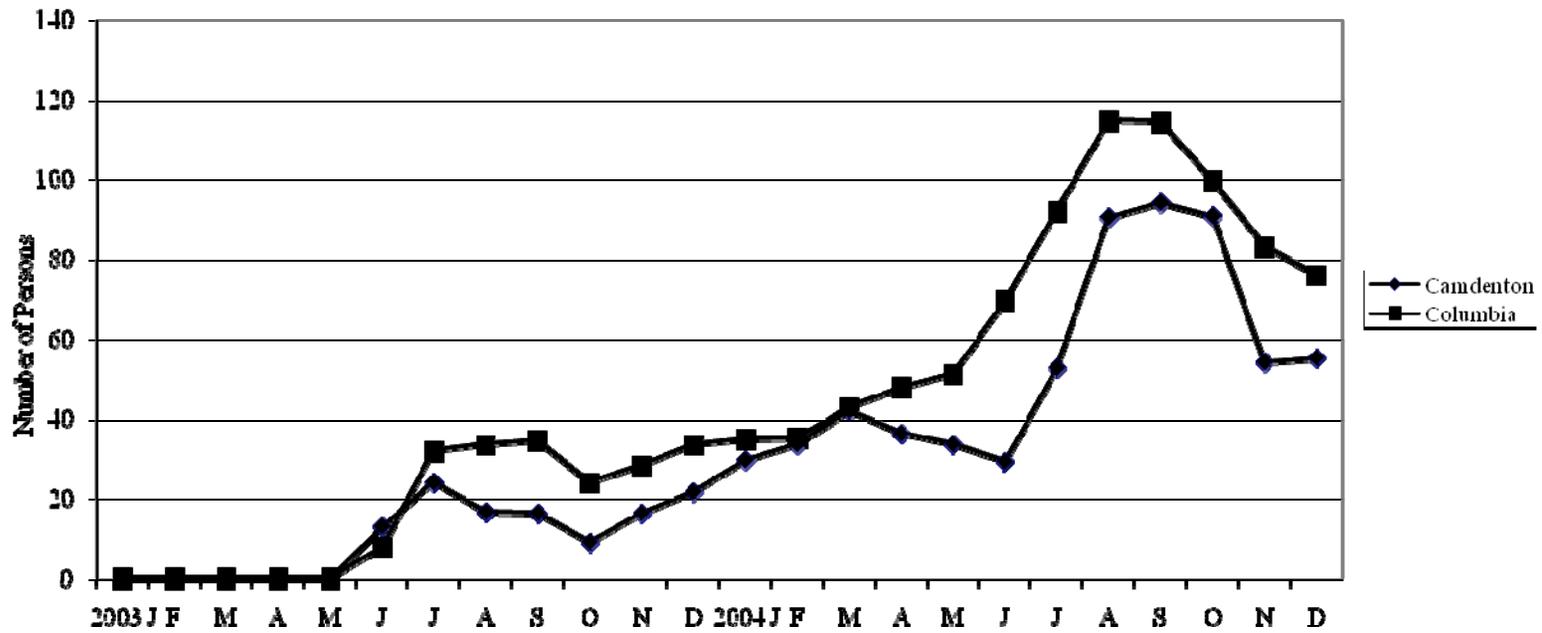
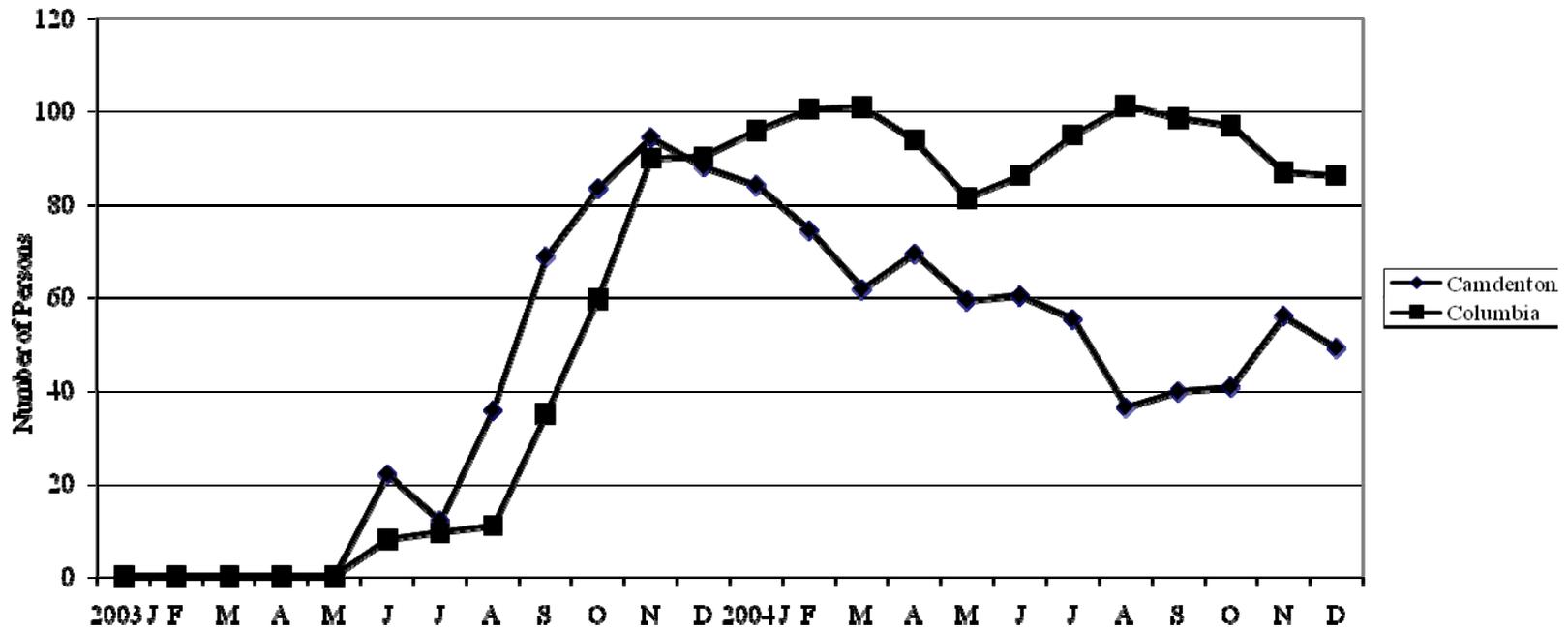


Figure 2.12: MTEP (Food Stamps), Camden and Columbia  
 January 2003 - December 2004  
 3 Month Moving Average



## CHAPTER 3

### LOCAL CONTEXT OF THE CAMDENTON AND COLUMBIA ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS

When the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers are examined in the context of their respective communities, important distinctions emerge. First, each Center operates within a different local area economy. The needs and interests of employers and job seekers in Camdenton's seasonal service-focused economy are not always the same as those of job seekers in Columbia's steady and diversified economy. Second, local area history and the parties involved in the transition from JTPA to WIA have influenced the physical location of the One-Stop Center within each city, the proximity of partner agencies, the array of services offered, and the degree to which each One-Stop extends services to nearby communities.

This chapter will examine these differences as they were observed from January 2003 to December 2004. The goal of this chapter is to enhance understanding of factors that have influenced the current structure and function of the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops. For the most part, it is an analysis that "stops at the front door" of each One-Stop. The next two chapters will provide an in-depth look at the internal workings at each Center, including a description of the interior physical layouts, analysis of client flow, and discussion of service content and delivery at each Center.

#### **Camdenton**

##### ***Local Economic Conditions***

Camdenton, Missouri lies about 30 miles southwest of Lake of the Ozarks, a major recreational area in the state. Although the 2000 Census reports the population of

Camdenton as about 3,000, locals know that figure swells to multiple times that during the April to October tourist season as summer residents return and vacationers arrive in the Lake Region. The additional population crowds roads, fills the local tourist shops, country music shows, amusement parks, restaurants, hotels and resorts, and gives a significant boost to the local economy. According to the local Chamber of Commerce, the Lake area welcomes 4 million visitors per year, is the seasonal home for 40,000 individuals and families and generates about 15 percent of total annual state tourism revenue.

For decades, Camdenton seemed content to be the little town with a few souvenir shops that people drove through en route to Lake of the Ozarks. Recently, however, Camdenton and adjacent communities in the Lake Region have engaged in substantial and aggressive economic development. Among enticements used to draw businesses to Camdenton are low county property taxes and no city property tax.

Effort has been made to entice business to the area that can sustain year-round employment. An initial effort in that direction began in the 1990s, when undeveloped acreage along Highway 54 between Camdenton and the Lake was cleared to construct Factory Outlet Village, a collection of about 150 high-end brand name factory outlet stores selling price discounted merchandise. The Village remains open all year, drawing a large number of shoppers during the Christmas holiday season. Other 'big box' brand name retailers have followed. The most recent businesses coming to the Lake Region include Applebees, Target, Marshalls, Walgreens, Steak-n-Shake, Chili's, Lowes, Wal-Mart Supercenter and Home Depot.

Still, the seasonal quality of the local economy has a major influence on Camdenton's workers, especially those most likely to utilize One-Stop services. About 22 percent of Camdenton's employees work in the service sector, whereas 18 percent work in retail and wholesale. Even with the recent arrival of some large retail firms, sixty percent of workers in Camdenton and surrounding Camden County are employed in establishments with four or fewer employees. Many work for wages that are at or slightly above the minimum wage and employee benefits such as health insurance or retirement savings plans are often not provided. Neither of these factors bode well in helping an individual remain economically self-supporting across the calendar year, highlighting the importance of unemployment insurance in Camdenton and the difficulty of creating any sustainable career path.

Concentration of business interests in the Lake Region could be considered as a series of concentric circles. Lake of the Ozarks has about 1200 miles of serpentine shaped shoreline; 85 miles of this shoreline is open to the public at Lake of the Ozarks State Park. Virtually all of the remaining shoreline is privately owned and a majority of the seasonal business in the Lake Region is located near or on the waterfront. These are generally leisure industry, service-based businesses such as resorts, restaurants, and marinas. The next heaviest concentration of businesses is located along Highway 54, beginning at the town of Lake Ozark and continuing about 20 miles southwest to Camdenton and includes entertainment facilities, restaurants, and merchandise vendors. Local manufacturers are generally located away from tourist traffic, near the outskirts of Eldon to the north and around Camdenton to the south of Lake Ozark.

Living near the outer edge of this expanding circle of Lake Region businesses, Camdenton residents average a 20 minute commute to work<sup>24</sup>. Many likely travel about 14 miles northeast along Highway 54 to work in Osage Beach or 5 miles further to work in Lake Ozark. A few might drive as far as Eldon or Versailles, 30 and 38 miles northeast of Camdenton, respectively.

Listed below are the ten largest employers from all industries in the Lake Region, then, out of the group of the 25 largest employers, the five largest manufacturers in the Lake Region, as reported by the Lake of the Ozarks Regional Economic Development Council. Specific business location, type of product or service produced, and numbers of employees are noted. Major Employers in Camdenton and Surrounding Areas

MAJOR EMPLOYERS RANKED BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES			
BUSINESS NAME	LOCATION	PRODUCT/SERVICE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Factory Outlet Village	Osage Beach	Retail	800-1200
Lake Regional Health Systems	Osage Beach	Health care	1100
Fasco Industries	Eldon	Manufacturing	600
Camdenton R-III School district	Camdenton	Education	575
Tan-Tar-A Resort	Osage Beach	Resort/Hotel	560
Lodge of the Four Seasons	Lake Ozark	Resort/Hotel	460
Wal-Mart Supercenter	Osage Beach	Retail	430
Eldon R-I School district	Eldon	Education	315
Gates Rubber Company	Versailles	Manufacturing	275
School of the Osage R-II District	Lake Ozark	Education	250

<sup>24</sup> Average time to commute to work one-way as reported in the 2000 Census.

MAJOR MANUFACTURERES RANKED BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES			
BUSINESS NAME	LOCATION	PRODUCT/SERVICE	NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES
Fasco Industries	Eldon	Manufacturing	600
Gates Rubber Company	Versailles	Manufacturing	275
Keiper Delta, Inc.	Eldon	Manufacturing	205
Modine Manufacturing	Camdenton	Manufacturing	200
Dixon Ticonderoga	Versailles	Manufacturing	200
ShoreMaster / Galva Foam	Camdenton	Manufacturing	190

It is noteworthy that most of the jobs offered by these large employers are in the leisure and health care industry as opposed to manufacturing. In terms of economic development, this mix positions the Lake Area well for enticing Baby Boomer retirees, at least for the summer months. Although these recent economic development efforts have generated economic growth—at the rate that is 3.7 times the growth rate of the state according to the Camdenton Chamber of Commerce—Camdenton workers remain relatively poor, since a majority of the jobs that have been generated typically pay close to minimum wage. In 1999, local median household income in Camdenton was \$26,649, significantly lagging the national median household income, \$41,994. Considering another income measure, Lake Region per capita income of \$21,802 in 2001 lagged the state per capita income of \$28,221. Poverty in the Lake Region in 1999 was 15.2 percent as compared with 11.7 percent for the state as a whole.

***Location of the One-Stop Center within city.***

Camdenton is a gateway city to the Lake Region, a major tourist area since the construction of Bagnell Dam on the Osage River in 1931 created the Lake of the Ozarks.

It is also the county seat of Camden County. Modeled after the concept of an old town square, Camdenton's city center is carved into four quadrants by the intersection of Highway 54 running northeast-southwest and Highway 5, running northwest-southeast. Most of the businesses serving tourist traffic are on the north and east quadrants, easily accessible for those traveling to and from Lake of the Ozarks. The broad County Courthouse fills the west quadrant. Across Highway 54 on the south quadrant, the Camdenton One-Stop Career Center is almost the end occupant in a strip of retail storefronts. About fifty years ago, the block would have been prime business real estate, doubtless housing some of the city's finest shops. Now looking weathered and somewhat dated, the block marks the beginning of the section of downtown more apt to serve the local residents. To the left of the One-Stop is an antique store, a small Chinese restaurant, and The Prop Exchange (a boat motor repair shop); to the right is a furniture store. The post office is across the street. A few blocks southwest, along Highway 54, is the family owned restaurant where the locals eat lunch. Location of the Camdenton One-Stop Career Center on a busy thoroughfare makes it easy for clients to find. But, the lack of public transportation means that clients must find a way to drive to the One-Stop and contend with other drivers who are also vying for one of the few parking spaces in the small lots in front of or alongside the building.

Prior to the passage of WIA, JTPA services were available in the building that now houses the One-Stop Center. As a legacy of that era, the signage above the One-Stop still reads "Workforce Connections." Retaining the old signage has maintained continuity for the One-Stop. For over a decade now, the locals know that the office under the "Workforce Connections" sign is where job seekers learn about local labor market

conditions and job openings or get help in assessing skills or preparing resumes.

Employers have also long known that they can find workers through this office. When WIA was implemented, the Missouri Career Center logo, mandated by the State, was added to the signage.

### ***Proximity of Partner Agencies***

Partner agencies are not co-located within the Camdenton One-Stop, but rather are found at various locations within the community. For example, Family Support Division and Vocational Rehabilitation offices are in separate offices, each one a block or so south of the One-Stop.

Inside the One-Stop in Camdenton are two floors. Employees of the agencies that provide traditional workforce development services occupy cubicles and offices are located on that main floor. Lake Ozark Employment Services (LOES), the One-Stop operator, employs ten individuals who, in addition to managing the Center, provide WIA services. The Division of Workforce Development (DWD) employs three individuals, all of whom provide services under Wagner-Peyser, as well as the Missouri Training and Employment Program (MTEP), for Food Stamp recipients, and the Career Assistance Program (CAP), for TANF recipients. The activities of these organizations will be the focus of the next chapter of this report. Until relocating to another office in 2004, the Missouri Ozarks Community Action agency (MOCA) was located in the One-Stop, primarily offering low-income households access to emergency energy assistance and housing subsidy programs. In the basement of the building, five individuals work for the Lake Ozark Council of Local Governments, and three work for the Lake Area Citizens

Advisory Board. As will be seen, the location of partner agencies is quite different in Columbia.

### *Overview of On-site Services*

In addition to job search and counseling services offered by LOES and DWD, job seekers can take high school equivalency courses offered by Missouri's Adult Education and Literacy Program or improve computer skills in the on-site Learning Lab. Through a contractual arrangement with University of Missouri Extension, distance education courses in nursing and horticulture are available through Interactive Video, located in the lower level of the Camdenton One-Stop. These and other specific services are detailed on the copy of the Great Hires web page for Camdenton that is reproduced as Table 3.1. Note, however that on that list of center services "DFS Food Stamps" is not correct. Food Stamps are issued by the Family Support Division<sup>25</sup> office, located south of the One-Stop Center.

Most of the other on-site services in the Camdenton One-Stop are located on the lower (basement) level and serve employer interests. Individuals can learn about small business operation and how to obtain small business loans from the Small Business Administration. Information on local area business and economic development opportunities can be obtained from the Lake of the Ozarks Council of Local Governments. The Lake Area Citizen's Advisory Board provides drug and alcohol abuse counseling and can administer drug tests requested by employers.

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<sup>25</sup> The Division of Family Services (DFS) was replaced by the Family Support Division in 2003.

### *Services Provided to Nearby Communities*

LOES is the One-Stop operator in Camdenton as well as the contracted WIA service provider. LOES also provides WIA services in Lebanon, Pulaski County, Eldon and Versailles. Lebanon has an independent One-Stop. The other three locations have satellite offices that offer WIA services only. A brief look at operations at these locations gives some insight into the outreach activities of LOES

***Lebanon.*** The Lebanon One-Stop Career Center provides a broad scope of workforce development services to the city of Lebanon (population 12,155) and surrounding Laclede County (population 32,513, including Lebanon). Its location a few miles away from the town center and near the edge of town is in contrast to the city center location of the Camdenton One-Stop.

Unlike the Camdenton One-Stop, the Lebanon One-Stop Center is co-located with the Family Support Division, a WIA mandated partner. The Lebanon One-Stop occupies half of a moderately sized building. The Family Support Division occupies the other half. The main building doors bring clients to a small common foyer. There are separate entrances to FSD and the One-Stop Center. Entrance to FSD is tightly restricted while entrance to the One-Stop is not. Inside the One-Stop, the Lebanon Center has about twice the floor space of the Camdenton Center, making it seem more open and spacious. Also, a desk near the resource/waiting was set aside expressly for the part-time representative of Experience Works, a work training program for older workers.

Like the Camdenton One-Stop, the greeter's desk and the resource/waiting area are easily accessed and the first thing that a client would encounter upon entry to the One-Stop. DWD and LOES employees work alongside one another to deliver Wagner-

Peyser and WIA services, respectively, to the One-Stop clients. Two DWD employees are Veterans Representatives. Management of client information and client traffic proceeds in much the same way in Lebanon as it does in Camdenton, no doubt reflecting some standardization of operating procedures across the One-Stops and offices that LOES oversees.

*Pulaski County.* The satellite office in Pulaski County has several unique features. First, the building is situated right at the juncture of two small towns, creating some confusion about its address. It is alternately referred to as the St. Roberts office, the Waynesville office, or simply as the Pulaski County office. It is also positioned close to some potential clientele, across a parking lot from the local FSD office, and down the street from Pathways, a halfway house for persons leaving prison or drug and alcohol abuse treatment. The area served is relatively small. In 2000, 45,254 people lived in Pulaski County, including 2,769 in St. Roberts and 3,207 in Waynesville.

The second unique feature of the Pulaski County office is that its services are expressly designed to complement the services offered at the Ft. Leonard Wood office. Since civilian access to the base was severely restricted after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Ft. Leonard Wood office has a only few DWD employees that offer basic Wagner-Peyser services to enlisted personnel and their family members and, of course, Veterans services. Both base personnel and local residents who need WIA or CAP (Career Assistance Program, the TANF work program) services must go to the Pulaski county office.

The director of the Pulaski County office has held that position for the past 13 years. During most of those years, she was the only employee. Under JTPA, the director

matched job to job seeker by hand, cutting out want ads and comparing them with job applicant skills. She also spent one day a week visiting local employers to learn of job listings and to acquaint employers with One-Stop Center services. In 2003, the state transferred responsibility for job counseling for TANF work-ready clients from FSD to the Missouri Career Centers, increasing the need for counseling, and three additional employees were added that same year to the Pulaski County staff. The additional staff has proven useful. The director was recently promoted to Program Manager for LOES, so she her primary worksite is in the Camdenton One-Stop rather than in the Pulaski County office.

***Eldon and Versailles.*** Offices at Eldon (population 4,896 in 2000) and Versailles (population 2,597) each have one LOES employee. WIA services and CAP services for TANF work-ready clients are available. These LOES employees, however, do not counsel Food Stamp recipients, who are serviced by DWD through the Missouri Employment and Training Program (METP). Individuals in this program would most likely be referred to the One-Stop in Camdenton.

## **Columbia**

### ***Local Economic Conditions***

Columbia, Missouri is located near the heart of the state, midway between the major metropolitan areas of Kansas City to the west and St. Louis to the east along Interstate 70. Population in Columbia was 84,531 as reported in the 2000 Census, reflecting a 21 percent gain over the prior decade and over double the rate of state population growth. Columbia makes up about two-thirds of the population of Boone County (135,454 in 2000). Like Camdenton, Columbia is a county seat.

Columbia is often considered “recession proof,” since several hospitals, two colleges, the state university system's main research campus, and the administrative offices of two major insurance companies are located there. In addition, Columbia has numerous small and mid-sized businesses. According to state employment data, most Columbia employees work in firms with five or more employees; just over 2 percent work in firms with 100 or more employees. The ten largest employers in Columbia as well as the five largest industrial firms as reported by the Columbia Regional Economic Development Office are listed below.

Major Employers in Columbia

<b>MAJOR EMPLOYERS RANKED BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</b>			
<b>BUSINESS NAME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PRODUCT/SERVICE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</b>
University of Missouri	Columbia	Education	11,868
University Hospitals and clinics	Columbia	Medical/Education	4,900
Columbia Public Schools	Columbia	Education	3,000
Boone Hospital Center	Columbia	Medical	2,028
City of Columbia	Columbia	Government	1,168
State of Missouri (excluding Univ. Mo)	Columbia	Government	1,071
MBS Textbook Exchange, Inc	Columbia	Distribution	1,006
Harry S. Truman Veteran’s Hospital	Columbia	Medical	1,000
Shelter Insurance Corporate Headquarters	Columbia	Insurance – Corporate Headquarters	991
State Farm Insurance	Columbia	Insurance – Regional Headquarters	952

<b>MAJOR INDUSTRIAL EMPLOYERS RANKED BY NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</b>			
<b>BUSINESS NAME</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>PRODUCT/SERVICE</b>	<b>NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES</b>
MBS Textbook Exchange, Inc.	Columbia	Distributor	1,006
Hubbell / Chance Company	Columbia	Electric utility	908
Columbia Foods – Oscar Mayer	Columbia	Food	700
3M	Columbia	Optical and Electrical	639
Square D Corporation	Columbia	Circuit Breakers	370

Even though the employers listed above represent only a portion of the employment opportunities in Columbia, as a group they contribute to a dynamic, strong and diverse economy in Columbia, providing steady, year-round employment for residents of Columbia and surrounding communities. The large employers give workers some distinct advantages. First, large employers, especially those in health-related fields, are more likely to offer workers career tracks that allow advancement as workers gain experience or further their education. Second, health and retirement savings benefits are more likely to be available, contributing to household economic stability. Finally, the wages and salaries paid to employees of these large businesses, in turn, support other local retail and service businesses, raising the general economic status in the community through a multiplier effect. Columbia often boasts the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. Entry-level wages in Columbia typically exceed minimum wage, bid up by a shortage of labor.

The degree of synergy between the Columbia One-Stop and the city’s large employers is interesting to contemplate. Their jobs are likely to have wide variation in the skills and education level required of applicants. For example, janitors at the

University may only need a high school degree whereas faculty and academic administration positions require a doctoral degree. Recently, the Division of Workforce Development has endeavored to widen the spectrum of job seekers and employers who use Great Hires, the state's Internet based job exchange program, and One-Stop services. Consequently, it is possible that employees of Columbia's largest businesses have learned of job openings through One-Stop services. At the same time, however, these larger employers are likely to have position openings that may not easily fit in a state labor exchange system. For instance, student interns and residents at the University Hospital and Clinics are usually recruited from among University Medical School students. University faculty are more likely to be recruited through professional associations and publications or personal association than through state labor exchange services. Unfortunately, no data were available to validate any of these speculations.

Census 2000 figures indicate that, at least by aggregate measures, Columbia is a relatively prosperous community, especially in comparison with Camdenton. In 1999, Columbia's household median income level of \$33,729 was over \$7,000 higher than Camdenton's household median income level (\$26,649). An even greater contrast exists for family median income levels. Columbia family median income was \$52,288 in 1999, almost \$23,000 higher than Camdenton family median income, over \$6,000 higher than the Missouri family median income, and over \$2000 higher than national family median income.<sup>26</sup>

Poverty levels for Columbia show that families at the bottom of the income distribution fared somewhat better than did individuals. The family poverty rate in

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<sup>26</sup> According to Census 2000 data, 1999 median family income was \$29,342 in Camdenton; \$46,044 in the state of Missouri, and \$50,046 in the U.S.

Columbia is 38% lower than the family level poverty rate in Camden (9.4 versus 15.2), but Columbia has a slightly higher individual poverty rate than Camden (19.2 versus 17.1). Poverty rates in both locales for families and for individuals exceeded the state and national rates (which were 8.6 and 9.2 for families and 11.7 and 12.4 for individuals, respectively).

### ***Location of One-Stop Within the City***

The Columbia One-Stop Career Center is located near the industrial district of the city, in a commercial “strip” of car dealers, landscaping supplies, and office space that is about four miles from the city center. Location of the One-Stop in this part of the city was largely a decision based on cost considerations. The One-Stop occupies space in an 85,000 square foot building that was expressly designed and built to bring together a wide variety of workforce development and client welfare services under one roof. Construction of a new building that could house several agencies required a large, unoccupied space, a scarce commodity in any city.

Although the One-Stop is located on one of the city’s main roads and is easily accessed via other main roads, it is rather isolated from the hub of the city. The One-Stop is located on a bus route, but public transit in Columbia is limited. Disabled clients complain about having to cross a busy street to get to the One-Stop. Most clients drive or obtain a ride from family or friends.

### ***Proximity of Partner Agencies***

The Columbia One-Stop is one office within a larger building that was specifically designed to bring together a number of government social service and

nonprofit agencies. The building as a whole is referred to as the “Resource Center.”<sup>27</sup> When it opened in April 1999, the initial occupants included the Division of Family Services (recently renamed Family Support Division), Vocational Rehabilitation, Missouri Veteran’s Commission, and a family medical and dental clinic for low income households. Current residents in the building include Advent Enterprises, Inc. (recently renamed Job Point), which provides WIA training services, and a local dentist who provides dental services for low-income families provided by on a pro bono basis.

The close proximity of partner agencies to the Columbia One-Stop Center is a great convenience to persons referred to partner agencies. In Camdenton, clients referred to the Family Support Division must travel to a building several blocks distant from the One-Stop. Likewise, clients needing services from the Division of Mental Health, or Vocational Rehabilitation must travel to another location. To access these services in Columbia, however, clients need only walk from Suite occupied by the One-Stop to another part of the building. Administrators at the Columbia One-Stop commented that having the offices of the Family Support Division and Vocational Rehabilitation in the same building had helped each office gain a better understanding of the characteristics, strengths, and limitations of client services offered by these partner agencies. That more open and frequent communication with partner agencies also helps improve co-ordination of client services for the population referred to or from partner agencies.

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<sup>27</sup> Terminology at the Columbia can be confusing. The building within which the One-Stop is housed is named the “Resource Center.” The same term is used to describe the area within each of the One-Stop Centers where clients have access to computers and office services. In this report, where possible, we follow the convention of using a capital R to denote the larger Resource Center located at 1500 Vandiver Drive and a small r to denote the area within the One-Stop that houses job search material such as the bank of computers.

Within the One-Stop itself, employees of DWD deliver Wagner-Peyser services and a contractor (HDC) provides WIA services, as well as services to TANF recipients. These activities are the focus of the following chapter.

Other organizations sharing space within the One-Stop include field auditors working for the Division of Economic Security, an individual working with participants in the Parents' Fair Share program, and individuals from Columbia Public Schools offering Adult Education and Literacy courses and GED classes. The greeter is funded by the C-WIB.<sup>28</sup>

### ***One-Stop Services***

With a few exceptions, the list of services reported on the Great Hires web site as provided inside the Columbia One-Stop are identical to those listed for the Camden One-Stop in Appendix Table 3.1. The exceptions are that the Camden One-Stop offers "Self-Employment Opportunities" and "School to Work Activities" whereas the Columbia One-Stop does not.

### ***Consumer Advocates***

The position of Consumer Advocate (CA) is unique to the Resource Center at Columbia. They are located at the two entrances to the building. At the main entrance, the Consumer Advocates work at two freestanding desks with tall partitions set up in the short hallway between the main doors of the Resource Center and the door to One-Stop Center and at the second entrance they have a two-person built-in desk. The CAs, all of

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<sup>28</sup> This position was originally established when, after the merger of SDA 5 and SDA 9 created the Central Region, the Chair of the C-WIB wanted to create a more "customer service oriented environment" and reduce the "atmosphere of government bureaucracy" in the Columbia One-Stop. Budget constraints mandated funding of the position by the C-WIB.

whom are disabled individuals, have two primary roles. First they provide general information to all visitors to the building, directing them through the maze of hallways to particular locations in the Resource Center and providing explanations of the services offered by the agencies. At times they refer individuals to agencies outside the center, and they often deal with such mundane problems as explaining the bus schedule. Second, they act as advocates to the disabled or other individuals making their way “through the system” for the first time.

One informal but important role that CAs perform is to evaluate eligibility of individuals for benefit receipt, job training, and other supportive services. They act as a liaison between certain job seekers and the bureaucratic structure of several state agencies within the Resource Center and facilitate connecting clients with the appropriate people and services. At a client's request, they will help the client fill out paperwork, arrange meetings, and will even attend meetings with a client. For persons with disabilities, the Consumer Advocates also provide explicit case management, including following-up of clients for extended periods.

Funding for the Consumer Advocates comes from a U.S. Department of Education/RSA System Change Grant that was awarded to Vocational Rehabilitation for the period October 2001 through October 2005. The proposal was designed to take advantage of the co-location of several social service agencies, including the Vocational Rehabilitation district office, Division of Workforce Development, Family Support Division, Advent Enterprises and BooneWorks in the Resource Center. Referred to as

the SUCCESS<sup>29</sup> project, in addition to supporting the hiring of the CAs, it provided for development of a software program used to track and follow-up clients.

The CA program has changed somewhat over time. A CA who had joined the program in the initial pilot stage recalled completing six months of training to learn more about physical and mental disabilities, how to talk to clients and assess their individual needs, and help the client maneuver through “the system.” This included three months of the training in the classroom, with presentations by the Department of Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, Advent and other community organizations and a three month internship. In contrast, a CA who was recently hired received all of his training on the job. Both CAs agreed that they often drew on their own personal experience as disabled individuals.

Although some clients come to the CAs through a referral, most come from an encounter in the halls of the Resource Center. For clients seeking Vocational Rehabilitation services, the CAs can provide special services. Whereas most clients who deal directly with VA may need to make appointments weeks in advance, CAs can usually make an appointment with Vocational Rehabilitation on the same day. The CAs also appear to serve a screening function for VA. Given that even the most disabled individuals often wait up to nine months before receiving any assistance, CAs advise clients who have a relatively minor disabilities to “not even enter VR...because you will never be able to receive services.” Instead, these clients are referred to the One-Stop Career Center. The CAs reported the FSD office can be intimidating for clients with

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<sup>29</sup> SUCCESS stands for Strategies Utilizing Collaboration for Competitive Employment and Self-Sufficiency.

disabilities, and they often accompany clients in FSD meetings and aid them in appeals of FSD rulings.

In our conversations, the CAs were critical of the treatment of the disabled by One-Stop Center staff, stating that such individuals were often turned away or referred to Vocational Rehabilitation, which, according to one CA “is usually not a realistic option at all.” The CAs felt that the SUCCESS program has been “an amazing help” for individuals who otherwise would have “fallen between the cracks” in the social service system. They view the SUCCESS program as an invaluable link that connects the social service agencies.

#### *Workforce Services Outside the One-Stop*

The Central Missouri Counties’ Human Development Corporation (HDC) is the contracted WIA service provider. HDC has offices in Boone County and the 7 counties surrounding Boone. Through each of those 8 county offices, HDC makes WIA Core and Intensive programs available to Youth, Adults, and Dislocated Workers. Additional programs and services that HDC makes available through their county offices include: Early Head Start, Head Start, Emergency Energy Services, Family Support Services, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance, Foster Grandparent Services, Section 8 Rental Assistance, Weatherization, and Housing Developments.

As discussed elsewhere in this report, HDC has some staff in the Columbia One-Stop to provide WIA Core and Intensive services as well as TANF work ready services. Services for WIA youth are provided at Human Development Corporation's main office at 807A North Providence Road, several miles away from the One-Stop Center, in a

section of town that has a relatively high minority population, near the older of the two high schools in town. Center services at that location are listed on the following page.

Youth Services Offered by the Human Development Corporation at the Main Office

Applicant testing	Resume Preparation Assistance	Internet Access
Computer Skills	Support Service Vouchers for	Job Corps Information
Training	Transportation and Child Care	Job Listing Assistance
Education Information	TANF Information	Job Readiness Training
Financial Aid	Training Information	Labor Market Information
Information	Vocational Counseling	Resource Rooms
GED Preparation	WIA information	School to Work Activities
Information Seminars	Career Counseling	Tax Credit Programs
Internship Information	Disadvantaged Youth	Tuition Assistance
Job Fair Information	Programs	Workshops
Job Placement	Employment services	
Assistance		
Job Retention Training		
Life Skills Training		

*Other Services*

In Camden, LOES is both the contracted One-Stop operator and the WIA contracted service provider. In the role of WIA contracted service provider, LOES maintains staff and administrative resources in several locations in other nearby communities. Columbia has a different structure because the contracted One-Stop

operator and the WIA contracted service provider is not the same entity. The DWD, a state agency, is the contracted One-Stop operator in Columbia. The DWD does not operate any satellite offices. Instead, the Human Development Corporation is the WIA contracted service provider and the entity providing WIA outreach services, as previously discussed. It should be noted in this context that the individual designated to represent the DWD to the C-WIB is also a DWD's Regional Manager. In that capacity, he oversees One-Stop operations at the Jefferson City One-Stop, the Rolla One-Stop, as well as at the Columbia One-Stop.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter focused on the local context of the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers as they were observed from January 2003 to December 2004. The location of the Camdenton One-Stop is largely a function of the history of workforce services in that area. The office is in the same location as its JTPA predecessor; in fact, even the signage from that era remains above the entrance, now augmented by the Missouri Career Center logo. The Columbia One-Stop Center, in contrast, has no such history. The One-Stop Center in Columbia coresides with partner agencies in a building expressly designed to embody the One-Stop concept of "seamless service" for clients.

With the exception of Ft. Leonard Wood, all of the One-Stop Career Centers in the C-WIB offer clients a similar set of job search and counseling services. Availability of other services depends, to a large degree, on proximity of partner agencies and focus of other co-residing organizations. Many of Camdenton's partner agencies such as the Family Support Division are located about a mile from the One-Stop. Several co-residents of the Camdenton One-Stop, in contrast, are focused on small businesses.

Proximity to social service partner agencies in Columbia facilitates referrals to these agencies. In addition to location, available services, and degree of outreach, the physical layout of the interior of a One-Stop Career Center can facilitate or hinder client service. The next chapter will focus on the activities inside the One-Stop Center, examining the physical layout and office configuration, as well as providing a detailed description of the processes underlying the workforce development services in the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Centers.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **INSIDE THE CAMDENTON AND COLUMBIA ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS**

The location, history, and partner agreements detailed in the previous chapter have influenced the delivery of Wagner-Peyser, WIA, and other One-Stop services in Camden and Columbia. This chapter provides a more complete view of the service delivery process at each One-Stop Center, starting with a client's likely first impression of the Center's physical location and layout, then describing the flow of clients and services offered within that physical space. Typical client interactions with various types of counselors, based on our conversations with One-Stop staff, are also discussed.

#### **Inside the Camden One-Stop Career Center**

##### ***First Impressions***

A newcomer to Camden walking down the block that houses the Camden One-Stop Career Center might easily pass it without realizing that it is there. Aside from a "Work Connections" sign and a somewhat newer "Missouri Career Center" sign on the shingled awning above the door, there is little on the outside of the One-Stop to mark its location. The simple, plain signage does not deter clients, however. Local employers and job seekers frequently visit the location. Newcomers are referred there when they ask individuals in a government office or area locals where they can find workforce services. Association of this location with workforce service delivery is a legacy of the years that LOES offered JTPA services there under the name "Work Connections." When the state mandated use of the Missouri Career Center logo under WIA, LOES

retained the old sign to maintain the connection between the office and workforce services in the minds of the public.

A client who steps into the Camden One-Stop Career Center<sup>30</sup> observes a hallway and a row of office doors to the right. Ahead is a stairwell leading downstairs, bordered on three sides by a wrought iron railing that is about two and a half feet high and gated at the entrance. From the left side of the room, a friendly, cheerful voice asking “May I help you?” clears up any uncertainty about where to go and directs the client to the left side where the majority of One-Stop services are offered.

Stepping to the left side of the building, a client would soon stand in front of desk that is quite high, coming up to about mid-chest level on the average person. The height makes it easy for someone to fill out or sign forms while standing at the desk. It is rectangular, with the short sides at the front and back, the long sides bordering the stairwell on one side and the client waiting and resource area on the other side. The height and size of the front desk give the impression that it is “command central” in the rather small area that houses the One-Stop operations on this left side of the building. Further observation confirms that the greeters at the front desk do indeed play a significant role in directing clients to the specific counselor who can answer job seeker questions and aid them in their search for employment.

Standing at the front desk, a client would notice on the left a small waiting area and a somewhat larger area with several computers and a printer (the center’s “resource area”). Two smaller tables between the waiting area and resource area hold a computer adapted for use by those with special needs and a phone for making Unemployment

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<sup>30</sup> See Figure 4.1, which provides a floor plan for the Camden One-Stop Career Center.

Insurance-related calls. Beyond the resource area is a small hallway housing some offices. At the end of the hall, the door to the computer Learning Lab is visible. The desks of three DWD and one WIA counselors would be seen arranged in a four quadrant pattern behind and to the right of the back side of the front desk. In all likelihood, counselors would be seen in the resource area, helping a client to structure a basic resume or learn how to navigate Great Hires, the state's electronic job match program.

A client's experience at the front desk and the subsequent path that the client would take through the One-Stop depends on the client's specific needs. The next section will describe the typical traffic flow through the Camden One-Stop. Detail of the specific services offered by the various counselors based on our interviews with staff is provided in the subsequent section.

### ***Traffic Flow***

Two receptionists (or "greeters") work at the front desk. Virtually all clients entering the One-Stop will hear a receptionist ask "How may I help you?" Their response to that question determines where they will be directed next.

Clients who desire to see a DWD counselor for job counseling or to satisfy their four-week Unemployment Insurance check-in requirement are given a "half-sheet" to fill out, which asks a client to report certain basic biographic, demographic, and service-related information. This sheet is most often filled out at the front desk, although some clients take their half-sheets with them to the waiting area in order to complete them. The individual returns the completed half-sheet to front desk workers, who, in turn, place the half-sheet on a clip-board located on the back side of the front-desk, in view of the four counselors.

If a counselor is not yet available, a client will be directed to the waiting area. This area is small, but open and welcoming. The relatively few chairs in the waiting area could lead a first time visitor to think that only a few people at a time come into the Career Center. Observation over time would indicate, however, that the efficient service at the One Stop leaves few in the waiting area for long, even on busy days.

As befits a customer-focused service business, within the waiting area, job seekers have a considerable amount of job-related literature at their fingertips. Brochures that explain such things as the state health insurance program, social service and community resources, and career opportunities in the branches of the military fill racks mounted on the wall on one side of the waiting area. One turn of a carefully organized literature rack in a corner of the waiting area gives clients guidance in virtually every phase of the job search process including such things as writing a resume, conducting successful job interviews, and starting a business.

When a DWD counselor is free, he or she will go to the clipboard at the back of the front desk and call out the name of a client. That client will then follow the DWD counselor back to his or her desk, or into the resource area. If the DWD counselor takes the client into the resource area, the client usually sits at one of the computers. The client will then either work on his/her own or be assisted by the DWD counselor. It is fairly common for a client to spend time with a DWD counselor beside the counselor's desk and then in front of a computer in the resource area, starting and ending in either place. Clients who inquire about training services at the front desk or with a DWD counselor are directed to the WIA counselor to learn about the structure and requirements of that program. Veterans who indicate that status to the greeters at the front desk are directed to

the Veteran's Representative, usually by having a greeter place that client's half sheet on a clipboard that is expressly for the Veteran's Representative and in view of the four counselors.

### ***Wagner-Peyser Services***

There are three DWD employees at the Camden One-Stop. We interviewed one about her position as a Workforce Development Specialist I and the TAA coordinator providing both Wagner-Peyser and TAA services.

This One-Stop staff person has been in her current position for a little over four years. Before her current position, she worked for the Division of Employment Security for seven years, adjudicating Unemployment Insurance claims. Prior to that, she was a bookkeeper for a tax service in the private sector. In her current position, she helps employers fill their employment needs and assists job seekers in finding suitable positions. She will refer clients to supportive services such as GED classes, computer classes, or other types of training programs. In addition, she conducts a job skills/job search class twice a month. The class covers how to prepare a resume, completing job applications, interviewing skills, and helping job seekers utilize the Great Hires program.

She described DWD as the "front line" for clients, the first stop for clients after meeting with the receptionist and filling out a half sheet. Usually, clients are served on a "first come, first served" basis. A very small percentage of clients will specifically request to work with her or be referred directly to her. Occasionally, the greeters will refer a job seeker directly to the WIA coordinator rather than to a DWD employee.

Regarding which program individuals are enrollment in, we were told that initially all clients are registered as Wagner-Peyser unless they fall in some other service

category. Other service categories are relevant for individuals who are TANF (the CAP program) or Food Stamp recipients (METP), or those who are displaced workers (WIA). If, after meeting with a client, the DWD counselor believes the client should receive WIA services, the individuals who agree are directed to the WIA counselor. The DWD counselor noted that clients would still get referred to WIA even when no funding is available because “it is up to the WIA program to deal with issues of funding availability.”

Job seeking clients are given a folder that lists the One-Stop services. Many clients do not look closely at it, however, and so remain unaware of all of the resources that are available. When talking with a DWD counselor, all job-seeking clients receive labor market information. Clients may also receive information about education programs and education funding. But, the DWD counselor noted, clients must directly request the services that they want to have hope of obtaining them because no counselor could possibly bring up all of the many available resources and services at every visit.

Regarding policy changes over time, she noted "in times past, the job seeker was considered to be the customer; now the employer is the customer. But in reality the job-seeker is still the focus because they walk in the door and they get the attention." Changing computer data management programs has been bothersome. In the four years that she has worked at the One Shop, she first learned Sessions for entry of client information. That program gave way to Missouri*WORKS!* (for job match) and Toolbox (for data management). Recently, Missouri*WORKS!* was replaced by Great Hires. Regarding that change, she commented that Great Hires was more time consuming and difficult to use than Missouri*WORKS!* More time had to be spent with job-seekers

because they did not understand how to use the program. The change created a very frustrating environment and obtaining job orders "tended to get put on the back-burner."

She likened client variation to a continuum that ranged from very needy, unskilled workers at one end to seasonal workers in the middle to professional and skilled workers at the other end. She noted that the majority of One-Stop clients were the unskilled. Generally, seasonal workers were not interested in job search, although there were some that wanted to change jobs but had limited skill-sets. A vast majority of clients are white, but recently more Hispanics and Asians have come to the One-Stop, and with those groups, language barriers have been a problem. Not surprisingly, most of the unskilled are young, and most displaced workers are older. She sees "folks from all walks of life." Many clients live in remote areas. She estimated the gender distribution of her clients to be 60/40 women to men and 60/40 older women to younger women. She thought there was a "pretty even split" between single mothers and married couples.

The majority of those who come into the One-Stop are looking for work. Many are not aware of job training programs. She sees about 30 job seekers a day, with as many as 50 on a busy day. Typically, she will make two calls a day to employers for job orders, but if there are a number of clients looking for open positions, she might call as many as 10 to 12 employers a day for job orders to increase her chances of finding a match for a job seeker. She commented that last year, the demand for housekeepers and food service workers were relatively low and blamed relatively slow tourist business.

The exact mix of services that should be provided to clients as part of staff-assisted Wagner-Peyser services remains a live issue. Recently, administrators and staff decided too much detailed help was being given to clients, making them more dependent

on staff than necessary. Now, staff are admonished to approach every client in the resource center with the goal of “teaching them to fish versus giving them a fish sandwich.”

In a typical meeting of counselor and client, job search goals are set based on the circumstances of the individual. Some of the initial screening is based on client demographic information or on client comments about their job history. The counselor notes whether or not the client has a high school diploma or GED. If not, the client is encouraged to enroll in a GED class. If the client has been out of the labor market for some time, the counselor considers whether or not the client would benefit from attending a class on job seeking skills. If the counselor decides that would be beneficial, the client is encouraged to register for the next class. Based on the client’s recount of their work history and recent attempt to find a job, the counselor also considers whether the client might be more successful if skills were updated. If so, the appropriate referrals are made. As part of that first visit, each client receives pamphlet that outlines steps to finding a job. If a client is receiving Food Stamps (METP program), a more in-depth assessment is conducted to identify specific barriers and to evaluate the client’s skills and resources. Once that information has been gathered, however, the goal setting process is much the same as for other clients, however. Single mothers may be referred to a private non-profit agency for help with issues such as clothing and child care.

Client records for the CAP and METP program are kept in Toolbox and in paper files. There is considerable, but not complete duplication of information in the electronic and paper files. The physical file folder will also contain a copy of the appointment letter that told them to report to the One-Stop, a copy of each client's Individual Employment

Plan (IEP) that notes results of discussions regarding goals for education and employment and barriers to acquiring both of those, and a work search log. As with the complaint form, a notation is made in Toolbox that these items are in the client's physical folder, but no electronic image of the contents of that folder exists.

METP and CAP clients are required to register in Great Hires as a condition of receipt of public assistance. They must go to the One-Stop Center every four weeks and contact a counselor in order to receive benefits. If METP clients fail to do so, DWD is to notify the FSD caseworker and the FSD caseworker must deal with the case. Ultimately only the caseworker can apply sanctions. In practice, sanctions are rare, a source of frustration for DWD staff and One-Stop administration. DWD counselors do not have much contact with FSD caseworkers unless there is "something extraordinary that needs to be shared" regarding a client.

Every week, up to 25 "profiled" individuals receive a letter from the state UI office notifying them that they must meet with a DWD counselor in the One-Stop Center. The profiling or selection is made by a state computer system that randomly picks individuals who have certain characteristics typically associated with high probability of longer time to job placement. Clients will not receive their unemployment benefits until they comply with this notice. Those who do comply will receive somewhat more intensive skill assessment and employment preparation services than other unemployed individuals would receive.

The typical meeting with a new client lasts about half an hour, but intake appointments for METP clients can last about twice that long. Usually, clients will meet with a counselor only once. Some clients, however, desire subsequent visits and these

can be scheduled. Clients who need more staff assistance or who just like meeting with a counselor for moral support while going through a difficult reemployment process might meet with a counselor every week or so until they are successfully reemployed.

### ***WIA Services***

LOES has one person designated to work with WIA clients. The job title of this person is "Camden County Career Consultant," but she is known in the office simply as the WIA coordinator. The current WIA coordinator has served in that position for four years, having been involved in various customer service and managerial roles before that.

The Camdenton One-Stop provides WIA Adult and Dislocated Workers services. WIA Youth programs are in a different location. Referral to WIA follows a somewhat indirect process and only a small proportion of Wagner-Peyser clients are referred to WIA. A comment or question from a client to either the greeter or a DWD counselor regarding training or funding for training may initiate a referral to the WIA coordinator. The WIA coordinator told us that she will sometimes go to the front desk where the greeters are located to see if any clients are interested in learning about WIA. Also, when the WIA coordinator learns a group layoff has occurred, she instructs the greeters to watch for those dislocated workers and send them to her desk if they come into the One-Stop Center. According to the WIA coordinator, dislocated workers make up a sizeable portion of the WIA clients. Referrals are also important, which she noted tend to "come in spurts."

We were told that the average Wagner-Peyser client has little interest in WIA as most of those clients are prepared to enter a desired job and are anxious to get reemployed. Also, interest in WIA for many of the clients referred by DWD often

quickly wanes after the client hears the requirements for receiving WIA intensive and training services. The WIA counselor commented that when clients learn that they must commit themselves to the WIA program in some very formal ways (e.g. allowing contact once a month, etc.), it “scares a lot of them off.” Camdenon has a very small WIA population. In a typical week, the WIA coordinator will see four to five WIA clients, with a range of weekly client visits from zero to eight.

When meeting with a new client, the WIA coordinator explains the general characteristics of the WIA program. She then assesses the worker's goals and desires relative to what the WIA program could offer. She explains that WIA basically offers three types of training. There is “On the Job Training (OJT)” where the client is placed with an employer and the WIA program picks up 50 percent of their training wages for one month (160 hours) by refunding the employer. Work time is determined by collecting time-sheets from the employer; no overtime is paid. The WIA coordinator, the employer, and the employee decide on a contractual arrangement. A second program, called “Work Experience,” is for people with little to no work experience (e.g. students, displaced homemakers). The difference between this program and OJT is that WIA issues the check rather than refunding the employer. Also, WIA picks up the entire bill (100 percent of the worker’s wages for the period allotted). Of course, the goal of both OJT and Work Experience is to see the client gain full-time employment in a permanent capacity. There is also “Classroom Occupational Training,” where the client attends formal classes.

The WIA counselor follows a general procedure when serving WIA clients. She first obtains an initial assessment of skills (core level) to help the client determine

employment goals. She will then evaluate results of the Career Scope Assessment (a test of interest and abilities) to determine if the client's goals are feasible. If the client wants to switch careers, she will ask if they are financially stable, if they have the ability to make the switch and if training would be helpful in meeting this goal. She also makes sure that the client agrees to follow program requirements. Great Hires registration is confirmed or initiated.

The WIA counselor makes sure the client can do a job search and typically does one with him or her. She will update the staff-assisted report in the management information system (Toolbox), making sure the information is correct and current.

The initial testing and assessment process with a new WIA client is extensive and time consuming. During the first visit, the WIA counselor will spend about 30 minutes explaining the details of the WIA program for Adult workers to clients. Testing for Adult workers occurs during the second visit and can take 45 minutes to an hour. All adult WIA clients must take the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). If a client's scores are poor, the WIA coordinator encourages the client to go to the learning lab to upgrade math and reading skills and retake the TABE at a later time. After the two visits, the adult worker need not come to the Career Center, but they do have to remain in contact with the WIA counselor.

Dislocated workers must also complete a Work Readiness screening test that evaluates reading and math scores. Skill and assessment testing of dislocated workers can take 45 minutes. The WIA coordinator usually spends another 30 minutes with the client explaining the program and, if it appears the client will benefit from the program,

completing forms. If a client does not have proof of layoff (usually in the form of a letter from the employer), another visit must be scheduled.

The WIA counselor noted that no training can take place in WIA without receipt of intensive services first. Dislocated workers, "by definition" are eligible for intensive services. Others receiving intensive services are generally clients receiving Food Stamps or who have low-income status. For clients receiving WIA intensive services, the WIA counselor will update the client's information record with test scores and note any changes in activities. For both Adult and Dislocated Workers, the counselor develops an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) that states goals and a plan of action and timeline to achieve those goals.

Funds must be available before a client can be approved for training. Although the goal in funding is to direct limited resources to the clients who seem most likely to benefit from program completion, in practice, decisions regarding funding are made one at a time. Consequently, the question of whether or not to fund any one client often reflects a first come, first served decision-making pattern. Once clients begin attending classes, they are moved to WIA training status. The WIA counselor normally arranges for funding for two years, and the client is expected to earn a degree or a certificate within that time period. The WIA counselor receives monthly reports of a client's progress.

The year for WIA extends from July 1 to June 30. Prospective students and the schools they plan to attend complete and sign a form that estimates tuition. The WIA counselor authorizes the program to pay the difference between the tuition amount and any off-setting scholarships or grants. Although funds are approved at this point,

payments can be discontinued during the school year if the student is not making appropriate progress, based on a decision of the WIA counselor, in consultation with the LOES Director. Considerable discretion is available in the decision process, so, for example, a student may be required to maintain at least a C average, allowing a course retake in order to have continued funding. Notably, a client need not be removed from the program for failing to meet a given requirement. As the client nears the end of training, the WIA counselor endeavors to be proactive in helping the client secure employment.

Dislocated workers present a special challenge in the Camdenton area since wages from replacement employment are likely to be much lower than the wages earned prior to layoff. An extreme example would be the American Airlines pilots who earned \$140 per hour before a layoff that could only secure employment at \$30 per hour after re-entering the local labor market. When a client is not willing to relocate to an area with better labor market opportunities, the case is particularly difficult. While the client may be willing and able to accept a reduction in level of living in response to the decline in earnings, the C-WIB is reluctant to close a case when a client is reemployed at a substantially lower wage as compared with that received from previous employment.

Once a client gets a job, the WIA coordinator monitors the client's progress for three months then submits the file to be closed. She is responsible for follow-ups after that for up to two years. Given the desire of the C-WIB that, at exit, a client is financially self-supporting in stable employment, hard exits are preferred to soft exits. When a client is on the soft exist list, contact of that client becomes a priority to the WIA coordinator to ascertain the client's situation and to offer additional services, if deemed necessary.

### *Veterans Services*

Veterans services are also available in the Camden One-Stop. The person providing this service at the Camden One-Stop is a Workforce Development Specialist I, spending half of his time as the Veteran's Representative and half as the Business Representative. Half of his pay comes from the Veteran's Administration and half from State Wagner-Peyser funds. In his role as a DWD Veterans Representative, he provides assistance in job search in much the same way as the DWD counselors previously described. As a Business Representative, he obtains or updates job orders from local area businesses, mostly by phone but also by setting appointments to meet with the employer at his or her place of business. He also spends some of his time in administrative work assisting in payroll. The individual was a professional recruiter for the department of Defense for 23 years and supervised military administrative centers. He has been in his current position for five years.

By law, service to Veterans takes priority over other One-Stop clients. In effect, being a Veteran allows a client to move to the head of the line, even if there are several other clients waiting for service. Most veterans are low-skilled laborers or service workers. Some have experience in mid-level management, for example, working as office managers. About 3 to 10 percent, the Representative estimated, are professional, skilled or technical workers.

### *Other*

Employers can use the One-Stop Center for distribution and collection of job applications. They can also use conference room space at the One-Stop to conduct interviews of potential employees.

Various workshops on job-related skills are available for job seekers at the One-Stop. Job seekers can also use the copy machine, fax machine, computer or phone free of charge for job seeking purposes. In addition, job seekers can obtain training in job-related computer skills through classes in the Learning Lab. Some distance learning programs, available through Interactive Video conferencing, can be accessed at the One-Stop.

### **Inside the Columbia One-Stop Career Center**

#### ***First Impressions***

A client wanting to visit the One-Stop Career Center in Columbia first must travel about four miles out from the city's center to a strip of industrial and commercial businesses. Just past a car dealership, landscaping business, and bakery outlet, the 85,000-square-foot Resource Center<sup>31</sup> that houses the One-Stop comes into view, along with its parking lot commanding all of the real estate on one block. Just inside the door of the Resource Center, an individual at the main information desk asks the first time visitor's destination and directs him or her to the right, to the entrance of the One-Stop Center, located in Suite 115.

Opening the door to Suite 115<sup>32</sup> brings a client into an open area where virtually all One-Stop activities with the exception of WIA and TANF counselors are in full view. Like Camdenon, clients must enter and exit from the same door. Once inside, after checking in with the greeter, the client may take one of several paths in the One-Stop.

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<sup>31</sup> As noted earlier, the building that houses the Columbia One-Stop Career Center is referred to as the "Resource Center," as distinct from the "resource center" or "resource area" inside the One-Stop, which provides computer access for clients.

<sup>32</sup> See Figure 4.2, which provides a floor plan for the Columbia One-Stop Career Center.

The client may “circle through” the resource area and pursue a job search using the computers, printer, newspapers, and phonebooks, and never enter the area where counselors are housed. Or, the client may come in, spend a brief waiting time in the resource area and then move toward the back of the One-Stop to meet with a job counselor. Or, a relative few individuals might request a meeting with an HDC counselor regarding WIA or TANF issues. These individuals would enter a small suite of offices at the back of the open One-Stop area. Once their meeting was complete, they would usually exit through the same door that brought them into the One-Stop. As with Camdenton, it is helpful to examine the physical layout of the One-Stop in some detail to better understand the flow of client services. The physical layout of Columbia is detailed in the next section.

### ***Physical Layout***

Entering the door to Suite 115, the large, open space of the One-Stop Career Center comes into view. It is a rectangular space with the short side to the right and the long side to the left. Directly ahead, the client would see three round waiting tables, bordered on top and left by a bank of computers. To the right of the tables, posters relay information about workforce services while bookcases below the windows contains brochures on federal and state support programs, local labor market information, and military service. Telephones that allow access to Missouri’s Unemployment Insurance office are on the right, at a small rectangular table that sits next to the doorway. To the left of the entry door is the opinion meter, on a stand about waist high.

Making a 90-degree turn to the left after stepping into the door, a client stands in front of the greeter. Counselor desks are arranged behind the greeter’s desk, three deep

and three wide, with enough space to walk around each desk. Unlike Camden, all desks in the Columbia One-Stop are the same height, an arrangement that does not create the imposing, central focus on the front desk experienced in Camden. Indeed, in Columbia, it can take a few minutes of observation to sort out who's in charge. There is a copy machine along the back wall. To the left of the copy machine, there is a short hallway that leads to the area where HDC counselors, the WIA contracted service providers, are located.

### ***Traffic Flow***

The greeter is the gatekeeper to the counselors. She attempts to "catch" everyone who comes in the door and find out the reason for the visit. If the client is a job seeker, the greeter will request a Social Security number. The greeter verifies presence and accuracy of a client record in Toolbox, creating a record if one is not present, and manually records the Social Security number and primary reason for visit on a printed log sheet at her desk. After that, the client's name and Social Security number are written on a post-it note that is placed on an empty file folder. The file folder is dropped into one of three file boxes mounted vertically one under the other on a post behind the greeter's desk. File box order indicates service priority. The top two file boxes are for veterans. Disabled veterans have top priority for service. Non-disabled veterans have the next priority. The bottom file box is for all other clients who are called to meet with a counselor on a first come, first served basis. This system accomplishes in the Columbia One-Stop what the 'half-sheet' accomplished in the Camden One-Stop – notification to counselors that a client requires service. Unlike the Camden system, however, the system used in Columbia gives the counselor no information about the reason that the

client has come to the One-Stop. The counselor obtains this information when they meet the client.

Counselors walk up to the file boxes mounted on the post, pull out the next folder, take off the post-it with the client's name, and place the empty folder back on the greeter's desk. They call the client's name and then walk the client to their desk. The counselor uses the information on the post-it to pull up the client's record in Toolbox. The counselor will again verify contact and employment information and add any updates that have not yet been entered.

When traffic is heavy or when the Center is short-staffed, the greeter may call client names, looking for the clients who may need minimal help on the computers (e.g. , those coming in for the week check required to receive Unemployment benefit, or those who are experienced job seekers). The greeter will help these clients begin working and will check periodically on their progress.

Although the six DWD counselors in Columbia complete the same basic tasks when they meet with clients, the counselors have different personalities and specialize, to some degree, in the services that they render. The licensed counselor in the group emphasizes relating to clients as individuals, finding out their needs and concerns, and empathizing with their struggles and fears. The first priority, this counselor indicates, is listening to clients and giving them hope. Client time with this counselor is not limited to a set block of time and repeat appointments can be scheduled.

Another counselor specializes in services provided under the federal trade acts, working with clients who have lost employment because their jobs moved overseas and may need additional training to be reemployed. This counselor has access to some

financial resources and holds the authority to supplement client wages if they fall short of a client's previous wage level.

The Veterans Representative says he will listen to clients “tell their story,” and that he serves as an advocate for them within the system, but he will remain focused on finding employment for the client. He stresses that he holds clients responsible for shaping their own futures. Another counselor informed us that his primary objective is to motivate clients to engage in job search. He has also initiated a new job skills class that focuses on getting and keeping a job. He also stresses that he holds clients accountable for ultimately seeking and obtaining employment.

Clearly, depending on client personality and the specific counselor seen, clients may have very different feelings about their experience at the Columbia One-Stop Career Center. Many clients who have had a good experience with a given counselor will try to meet with that same counselor in the future. Clients who have not had a good experience with a counselor or who did not seem to fit the counselor’s style can request to meet with a different counselor on a subsequent visit.

The supervisory staff of the Career Center includes the Director and the Supervisor. The Director has little involvement in the day-to-day operations of the Center, but oversees many larger issues involving the One-Stop programs. The Supervisor is present on a daily basis in the Career Center, overseeing the staff and provision of counseling services. Clients are likely to meet with him when the counselors are short staffed or if a particular client is angry or dissatisfied with their experience. A quiet man, his tactic for dealing with irate clients is to listen and validate their feelings.

He endeavors to make sure everyone feels like they left with at least some of their initial needs or concerns met.

### ***Wagner-Peyser Services***

According to the One-Stop staff with whom we spoke, from the client's perspective, the service received should be "seamless," that is, the client should not be able to tell if they were served by a DWD employee or an employee of the HDC, which handles the WIA and CAP program.

As a general rule, new clients without a specific referral are initially directed to DWD employees who provide Wagner-Peyser services. If a client specifically requests education or training, is a dislocated worker, or faces barriers to employment that the DWD counselor cannot address is, the client may be recommended to receive WIA services. In that respect, the DWD employees are the "front line" for clients at Columbia as they were in Camdenon.

### ***Veterans Services***

The Columbia One-Stop has one Veterans Representative, although another Representative works in the local Veteran's Hospital--approximately five miles west of the One-Stop Center—focusing on the specific needs of disabled veterans. The Veterans representative coordinator at the Columbia One-Stop had formerly served in the military in Vietnam. After working as a military recruiter for 15 years, he became a state employee in 1990. He described for us the services typically given to Veterans.

Clients reach the Veterans Representative either by coming into the One-Stop and asking for Veterans services or through referral from other government or not-for-profit agencies. The Veterans Representative commented that his caseload has declined with

the growth of active duty military due to the current war in Iraq. At the first meeting, the Veterans Representative will determine whether the client is a veteran since not all who were in the military are veterans. He can request documentation as proof of veteran status. He will then explain the services offered.

Meetings with clients can take anywhere between 4 minutes to 3 hours, depending on the client's needs. He typically sees two types of clients: those he views as work ready and those he terms "recycled." Work ready clients only need core services to help them obtain employment. Most of his current caseload, however, consists of clients who have difficulty keeping a job. For these clients, receipt of Unemployment Insurance or Food Stamps may decrease their incentive to find employment. They also may simply be hard to place due to barriers to employment. The representative noted that about 1 percent of his clients are truly homeless. Although according to his job description, he is to only work with those needing core services, he also does some outreach work for the clients needing more help. He commented that although he can contact an employer, he cannot tell an employer any information about a client. It rests with the client as to how much to share with a potential employer.

The Veterans Representative does not set goals for his clients. Rather, he assists them in getting work. As part of that process, he ascertains their work history, listens to their problems and helps them get the information that they need. He also connects them with needed services when appropriate. Clients with barriers can require subsequent meetings. He noted that the current system that requires attention to intensive as well as core services is superior to the previous system that seemed to him to simply be a "numbers game" where "the goal was to see how many [clients] they could place." Still,

he noted that for those who have many barriers to overcome, intensive services may fall short since they focus on obtaining employment but do not equip job seekers with other needed skills.

### ***WIA Services***

WIA services at the Columbia One-Stop are contracted to the Human Development Corporation (HDC). The main office for HDC is several miles away from the One-Stop, closer to the downtown. Counts of HDC employees can fluctuate somewhat, depending on staff turnover and funding available to fill open positions. Usually five or six HDC employees are located in the Columbia One-Stop Center, in a short hallway of enclosed offices that cap off the narrow end of the rectangular open space housing DWD employees. WIA Adult and Dislocated Worker services are available at the One-Stop. Youth services are offered by HDC at a different location in Columbia, close to a large high school, in an area with a relatively large minority population.

Virtually all Adult and Dislocated Workers reach a WIA counselor by referral. According to the HDC Client Services Coordinator with whom we spoke, about 10 percent of all referrals come from the financial aid offices of area schools that have previously worked with HDC when trying to help a student cover the cost of their education. Another 10 percent or so comes from DWD's Rapid Response efforts after a business layoff. The remainder are walk-in clients referred from within the One-Stop.

Walk-in clients to the Columbia One-Stop reach a WIA counselor through a referral process that is somewhat passive in nature, and, from the client's perspective, obscure. If a walk-in mentions an interest in training to the greeter, the greeter will refer

the client to HDC. As a general rule, though, it is when a client asks a DWD counselor about training or mentions a recent layoff or when the client has barriers that the DWD counselor believes cannot be addressed within the Wagner-Peyser system, that the DWD counselor will refer a client to WIA. The WIA counselor told us that "all DWD staff are trained to recognize potential WIA applicants as those who mention an interest in training, have experienced a recent layoff or who simply need more help to become job ready." In practice, our observations suggest that the client had to initiate the discussions that led to WIA referral since, as a general rule neither the greeter nor the DWD counselors directly asked clients if they wanted training.

Before meeting with a WIA counselor, a client's name and contact information would have been entered into Great Hires (if a first timer) or updated by the One-Stop greeter. The DWD counselor meeting with that client would have verified the information and perhaps added or updated other employment-related information (e.g. name of prior or current employer).

When a client is directed to HDC, the client meets with the one HDC staff person who is responsible for intake and eligibility assessment. The most critical eligibility factors are recent layoff or economic resource level.<sup>33</sup> Clients recently laid off have "automatic eligibility" for WIA services. Most of those who are referred are eligible in accord with the low-income guidelines or Food Stamp receipt, but some client situations present additional difficulties. Clients who request training but have received WIA

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<sup>33</sup> The state has two measures of adequacy of economic resources: Lower Level Sufficiency Income Level (LLSIL) and the poverty level for the state as defined by OMB. The C-WIB decides which guidelines to use.

training in the recent past are deemed job ready and are given job matching services rather than more training.

The staff person who handles the intake and eligibility process will usually have a client come back a time or two before referring the client to a WIA counselor. At these meetings, program requirements are reviewed and the long-term nature of the program is emphasized. While these initial meetings serve the practical purpose of making clients aware of program characteristics, setting up the return meetings also provides a test of client commitment to the program. Some attrition occurs at this point.

Clients who complete the initial program debriefing are then tested for work readiness skills. Three tests are typically administered: the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE), WorkKeys, and Career Scope. The TABE, which tests reading and mathematics, is given to prospective WIA Adult workers only. WorkKeys, which assesses work readiness skills, is given to both Adult and Dislocated workers. Career Scope assesses interest and aptitude, and is given to both categories of workers. The client completes each exam on a computer in the One-Stop. The HDC intake and assessment staff person administers the first two exams. These two exams can take up to two to three hours to complete. The three exams could all be completed on one day or taken on different days, depending on the client's preference.

Scores from the three exams are sent to HDC's central office, are given to the client and to the WIA counselor. The WIA counselor then checks for alignment of client interest and aptitude. A client who has interest in but no aptitude for something “has a problem if they are in or want to be in training for that area.” The test also does not always reveal a client's main interest. We were told, for example, that if a client only

wanted to be a truck driver and nothing else, the exam would not reflect that specific interest. Rather, an interest like that would only come to light when the counselor talked with the client about their goals.

For clients who want training, the Career Scope exam can help assess the realism of their career aspirations. For clients who only want to do a job search, the Career Scope results can provide some direction for those efforts. After the Career Scope is finished, an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) is completed for the client. The IEP essentially maps out the steps a client is to take to reach their employment goal. According to the HDC counselor with whom we spoke, some clients are impatient and want a job immediately. They do not want to take the time to systematically construct an IEP, define educational and occupational strengths, barriers, and goals and, given those, develop short term and long term objectives.

At this point, some clients go to training while others do not. Even when there appears to be justification for the client undertaking training, training funds may not be available. We were told that, of those who take the Career Scope exam, only 40 to 45 percent go on to training. About one-fourth of those who qualify for training receive WIA support. Among those who qualify for training, some do not know where to obtain the needed training. The counselor will then assess client needs and constraints to find an appropriate school. Based on information about the client's constraints and the results of Career Scope, the Counselor recommends programs that fit the client's needs. Although help in completing applications is offered if needed, the client has primary responsibility for undertaking the application process.

For the most part, training programs are located in the Columbia area, but some training is provided out of town. The truck driving school near Springfield, Missouri is an example. A technical school located in Jefferson City is another example.

Clients may meet with a counselor a few times or many times. Those who do not want to spend any time in training may work with a counselor to draft a resume, complete a job search, and engage in mock interviews. Clients who are dually enrolled in CAP<sup>34</sup> and WIA and engaged in job search come in once a week to turn in job search logs. If a client asks, the HDC WIA counselor can advocate on their behalf with a prospective employer. The counselor's role is circumscribed by what the client asks for.

The intake process is designed to identify the clients who are most likely to be successful in the program, an important consideration given relatively limited program resources. Once in the program, every effort is made to assure the client remains in the program until the C-WIB administrative decides that they are to be exited. If a client who began to receive services fails to fully cooperate and does not communicate with the WIA counselor, the counselor must attempt to contact the client every month. In this attempt, the HDC counselors may call neighbors, employers, or they may make home visits to obtain information on the status of a hard-to-reach client. Direct contact with the client must be made at least every two months.

When a client fails to cooperate, the counselor will try to ascertain the reason for noncompliance. One common circumstance is where a client who was not approved for training is not interested in any other services. In other cases, an individual who has obtained a job may not wish any further contact with the program—which would

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<sup>34</sup> CAP is the Career Assistance Program, the TANF work ready program.

require that the individual be exited from the program. The counselor's goal is to reestablish contact with the individual.

### **Other One-Stop Services**

Employers can use the One-Stop for distribution and collection of job applications. They can also use conference room space at the One-Stop to conduct interviews of potential employees. Various workshops on job-related skills are available for job seekers at the One-Stop. In addition, job seekers can use the copy machine, fax machine, computer or phone free of charge for job seeking purposes.

### **Conclusion**

Location within community, local history, co-location arrangements with partners and physical layout have influenced the traffic flow and service delivery in the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Career Center. The Camden One-Stop is on a main street and easily accessed, whereas the Columbia One-Stop is about four miles distant from the city center. In this respect, the Columbia One-Stop seems more like an "island" of job seeker services than does Camden. In contrast, the co-location of employer-focused services in the basement of the Camden One-Stop Career Center makes the Camden One-Stop appear somewhat more centered on local economic development.

The Camden One-Stop had an established clientele of job seekers accustomed to coming to the One-Stop location as a legacy of JTPA days. Consequently, word-of-mouth advertising was and is a significant form of outreach. The Columbia One-Stop, in contrast, had a new location with no prior workforce history. Initially, partner agency

referrals were useful in engaging clients in One-Stop services. Over time, however, word-of mouth among clients has become increasingly important as an outreach tool.

Both locations offer WIA and Wagner-Peyser services. In addition, Camdenon offers relatively more services for employers, given the co-location of offices serving small business needs. Columbia offers relatively more services for job seekers, especially those facing barriers to employment, given the co-location of social service partners. Tracking the number of clients using the One-Stop services in each location is the focus on the next chapter.

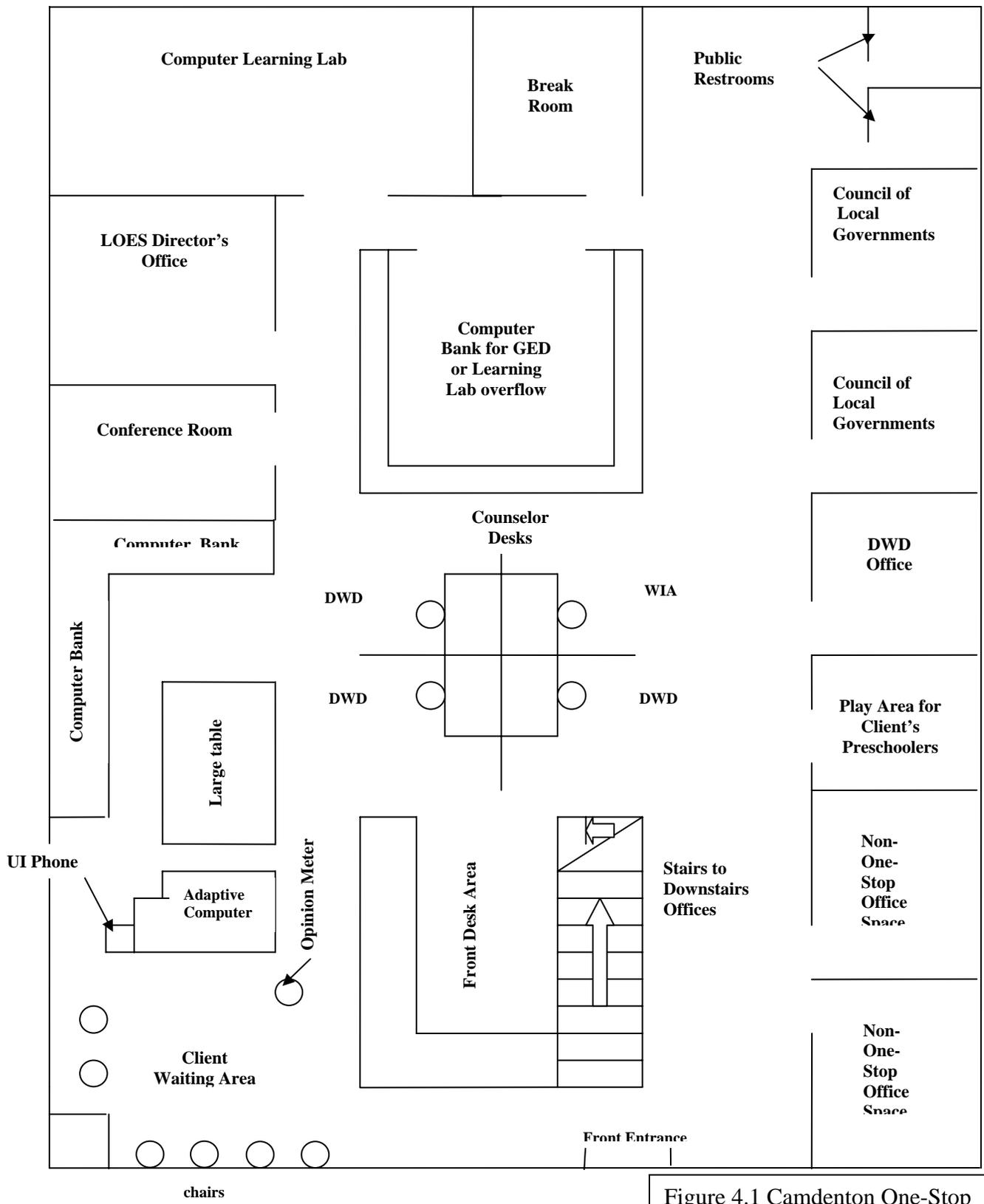


Figure 4.1 Camdenton One-Stop

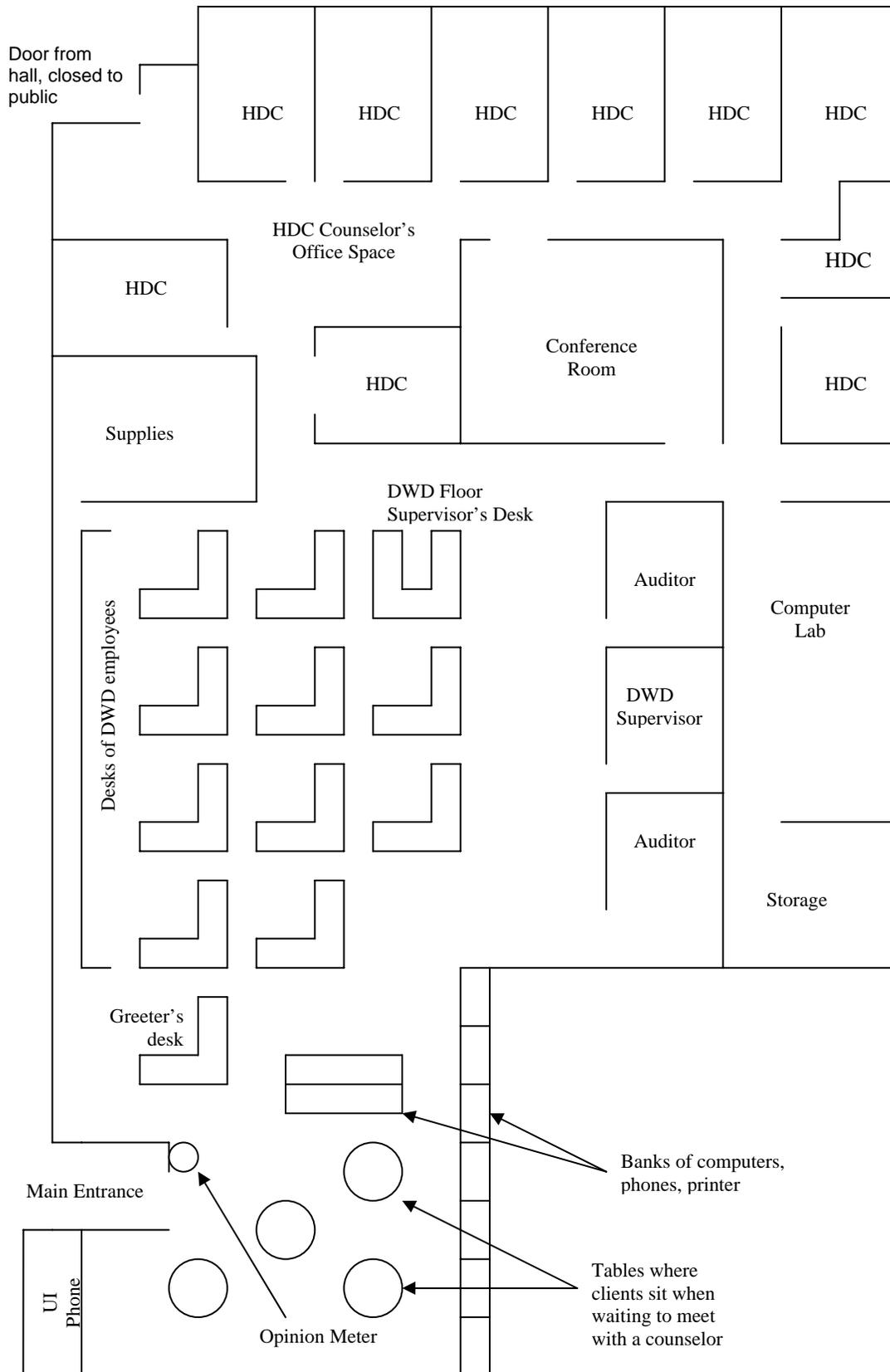


Figure 4.2: Columbia One -Stop

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FLOWS OF CLIENTS IN THE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTERS AND THE C-WIB**

In this chapter, we provide quantitative analyses to help paint a picture of the experience of job seekers in the One-Stop Career Center. Our goal is to provide a different and complementary picture of activities in the Centers than provided by data collected for normal administrative purposes.

The first section of the chapter focuses on analyses of tabulations of data that we gathered from observation of individuals seeking services, combined with data from Missouri's information management system. This is the heart of our analyses, and it allows us to understand the internal dynamics of processes within the One-Stop Centers. The final section of the chapter shifts the focus to statistical analyses of individuals who participate in various programs in the Central Regional Workforce Investment Area, so it includes individuals who received services in all One-Stop Centers in the area, as well as individuals who received services in satellite centers.

#### **Observations in the One-Stops**

##### ***Methods***

We positioned project staff in each of the One-Stop Centers for periods of one to six hours a day periodically over an eight month period to observe client entry and activities in the center. At each center, a receptionist greeted individuals who sought direction and registered all visitors who came to obtain identifiable job services. Our project collected data on all individuals who were so registered as well as some others. We generally omitted individuals who had merely accompanied others and who did not

appear to use any of the One-Stop services, and we omitted children, who occasionally accompanied adults. We also omitted individuals who entered and exited quickly, did not appear to use any services, and did not register at the front desk. With these exceptions, individuals who entered the One-Stop Center were included in our data collection even if they did not obtain any specific job seeking services during our observation period.

We attempted to schedule our observation times to cover varying periods during the day and different days of the week with the goal of obtaining a roughly representative sampling of the One-Stop experience. However, for several reasons, we cannot treat our sample as a scientific random sample. First, we have no way to account for seasonal and secular changes. Second, limitations on our observers' schedules prevented us from fully randomizing the observation times. Third, the level of activity varied greatly across the day, so if the composition of individuals who came to the One-Stop when we were not observing client flows was quite different from the composition of individuals present during observation, our final sample would not have captured the variation that occurred during the times that were not observed. Finally, of necessity, exit times for some clients were censored if they remained at the One-Stop past the time that our observers needed to leave. Consequently, we take our analyses as identifying "typical" experiences in the One-Stop, as illustrated by a selected sample of service seekers.

In Columbia, our method of data collection differed somewhat across observation periods. Methods of data collection were refined in the course of our study as our observers grew to understand the types of client flows they were observing. Also, the Columbia One-Stop is larger than the Camden One-Stop and has a much higher traffic

count. Consequently, especially during times of high traffic volume, even with multiple observers stationed in the One-Stop, there were difficulties in keeping track of some observed individuals, as well as occasional uncertainties regarding the likely activities of some observed clients. For example, if job seekers left the open area of the One-Stop to meet with partner agency WIA or TANF counselors in a suite of offices located at the back of the One-Stop, they were out of sight of an observer stationed in the One-Stop's large open area.

Unless stated otherwise, in all the analyses that follow, the unit of analysis is the visit. Hence an individual who visits a center more than once will be counted once for each visit. Where we have obtained the Social Security number, we can identify multiple visits by the same individual. Considering only those cases with a Social Security number, the count of individuals would be approximately 1 percent less than the count of visits for Camden and approximately 7 percent smaller for Columbia.<sup>35</sup> Although we report some general tabulations that include all cases, most of the analyses that identify individual activities in Columbia are limited to the observation periods when we collected full and standardized information on service activities.

### ***Overview of the Samples***

Table 5.1 provides information on some basic demographic characteristics of individuals observed entering the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers. For age and gender, we report distributions for two samples in each of the centers. The first tabulation reports statistics based on those visits where we were able to match an

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<sup>35</sup> In the Camden One-Stop Center, 97 visits are made by people with Social Security numbers and these represent 96 unique individuals. In the Columbia One-Stop Center detailed information sample, we observe 657 visits of individuals with Social Security numbers, comprising 608 unique individuals.

individual's Social Security number with data in the state data management system. The second tabulation is for visits where no match was found in the state data system. In the latter case, age and gender are based on observing the individual.<sup>36</sup>

Age frequencies of observed clients are quite different for Camden and Columbia. Job seekers in the state data system in Camden are more apt to be either younger or older than those in Columbia. About a third of job seekers observed in Camden were between 21 and 29 years old; a little over twenty percent of the sample was aged 50 or older (21 percent). The proportion aged 30 to 39 was close to 16 percent and nearly a quarter of the sample was aged 40-49. In Columbia, the age spread of observed job seekers in the state data system is much more even than in Camden, with about one quarter of the sample clustering in each of the three age categories, 21-29, 30-39, and 40-49. Just over 16 percent were aged 50 and older.

It is notable that the differences between the two Columbia samples are very small; in Camden, older individuals appear to be disproportionately represented in the sample not matched with the State data system.

Census demographics<sup>37</sup> for each city suggest that both One-Stops tend to draw in disproportionate number of young adults from the community. Those aged 20 to 24 years were 7 percent of the total population in Camden and 19 percent of the total population in Columbia, while those aged 25 to 34 were 13 percent and 16 percent of the total population in Camden and Columbia, respectively. The relatively high proportion of job seeking young adults is consistent with the expected economic life

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<sup>36</sup> At times, an observer was able to overhear a statement of age from the client when the client interacted with the greeter. When age was estimated by the observer based on appearance, the tabulated age is the middle of the range that is estimated (e.g. 20-30 is coded as 25).

<sup>37</sup> All statistics from the U.S. Census used in this chapter are from the 2000 Census and obtained from American Fact Finder on the US Census Bureau web site <http://www.census.gov>.

cycle where labor force participation begins in earnest after completing high school or college. The higher proportion of young job seekers in Camden likely reflects the general employment structure in the area: A seasonal tourist-based economy typically hires college-age students during the summer months as receptionists, waiters and waitresses, and the hospitality and entertainment industries hires various other types of service workers. The relatively larger proportion of job seekers aged 50 and older in Camden may reflect a number of older workers being displaced by plant closings in some of the counties served by LOES in combination with a desire of older, semi-retired or retired individuals to find work during the summer tourist season.

In both Camden and Camden, the observed visits are approximately equally divided between males and females, with those registered in the State data system somewhat more likely to be male. Comparing the One-Stop statistics with those of the U.S. Census for each city, it is evident that males are somewhat more likely than females to visit a One-Stop. Whereas over half of the observed job-seekers were male, males represent only about 47 percent of the total population in each city.

The next panel of the table provides information on the race of individuals who could be identified in the state data system.<sup>38</sup> We see that in Camden, over 90 percent of individuals are classified as white, with the remainder classified as Hispanic, multiple race or Native American. In Columbia, only about three-fifths are white, and, perhaps most significant, nearly a third are classified as Black or African American. The figures for Camden are consistent with the U.S. Census report that 96 percent of Camden is white (the remainder is spread across several other races, with no percentage of those

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<sup>38</sup> Given the difficulty of accurately classifying a person by race based on observation, we did not attempt to identify race for individuals not found in the State data system.

other groups exceeding 1 percent). In contrast, the figures for Columbia suggest, that Blacks use the One-Stop at a much higher rate than whites since, according to U. S. Census report, 82 percent of Columbia is white and only 11 percent of Columbia is Black.

Considering education, we see that, as might be expected, the single largest education category in both centers is of those who have a high school degree and no additional education. That situation applies to just under two-thirds of the Camdenon sample and half of the Columbia sample. Those with a high school education or less are likely to find One-Stop services a large help in securing employment. Those without a high school degree can find the encouragement and resources necessary to complete a GED though programs offered through the One-Stop. Although the proportion with a GED diploma is small in both samples, at 3.7 percent in Columbia it is more than three times as great as in Camdenon.

The educational distribution is far more dispersed in Columbia than in Camdenon, with more individuals with lower and higher levels of education. Attention has been given to those with lower levels of education in the previous paragraph. The proportion with college or advanced degrees is appreciably higher in Columbia, 12 percent versus 4 percent in Camdenon. The greater number of job seekers with higher levels of education probably reflects easier access to institutions of higher education in Columbia as well as presence of young married couples who have high school degrees and are seeking employment opportunities for one spouse while the other pursues a postsecondary degree. Camdenon does not even have a community college nearby,

whereas Columbia is home to the flagship campus of the University of Missouri system and two smaller colleges.

At the bottom of Table 5.1, we see that over 95 percent of the clients in either One-Stop are citizens. This statistic underscores the legal limits on formal employment faced by foreign residents. Although a substantial number of foreign students attend university in Columbia, many of whom have spouses, most face visa restrictions that limit their employment. Illegal immigrants who may reside in these areas—and there is informal evidence suggesting a recent increase in their numbers—are likely to obtain employment through other channels.

In the discussion that follows, we will examine the kinds of services used by observed individuals and the way in which these individuals are recorded in the State’s management information systems. As the previous chapters make clear, there are important differences in the way that the Camdenton and Columbia centers are organized and in the kinds of services they provide. It is therefore most informative to separate the analysis by center. Following the separate analysis, we will provide comparisons between centers.

### ***Job Seeker Services in the Camdenton One-Stop***

#### *Observed Activities and Services Received*

In the overwhelming majority of visits to the Camdenton One-Stop Career Center, the individual registered at the Center’s reception desk, filling out a “half-sheet,” which included personal demographic information as well as the primary reason for the visit. Although we used this reported information in classifying activities undertaken, we also recorded observed behavior. The designation on the half sheet normally permitted only

one activity to be identified, but in those cases where an individual engaged in more than one activity, we coded those additional activities as well.

Table 5.2 reports all of the activities that we observed for visitors in the Camden One-Stop Career Center. The count indicates the number of visits in which a given activity was undertaken (n=167), and so the percent indicates the proportion of visits involving a given activity. If a visit involved more than one activity, that visit will be counted in more than one line. The indented entries (with percentages reported in column (2)) identify subclasses of activities falling under the main activities listed above them.

We see that 29 percent of visits involve a four-week check, the required visit for those receiving Unemployment Insurance payments. We were only able to directly observe whether the four-week check involved staff assistance for a subset of visits, and we provide information on this subset in the lower part of the table (the “limited sample”).<sup>39</sup> We see that over 90 percent of visits involving a UI four-week check (i.e., 25 out of 27 individuals) access Center staff.

Returning to the main portion of the table, we see that the largest activity category on the table is for people undertaking a job search, with 34 percent of visits so coded. Job search normally includes activity on the computer, and it may involve staff assistance at times. Looking at the lower panel, we see that, in fact, two-thirds (i.e., 21 out of 29) of those observed to engage in job search also had staff assistance.

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<sup>39</sup> Note, the larger sample properly identifies participation in the listed activities. In collecting data for the limited sample, our observer identified the portion of time in which the individual was in the presence of a staff member. One-Stop policy is that staff always be involved in a four-week check, but on occasion individuals were permitted to complete a computer check in without staff assistance.

Individuals who come in for the four-week check may also be observed to engage in job search. It is natural to ask how often job search is independent of the four-week check. Our tabulations show that a majority of those who engage in job search, 38 out of 56, were not undertaking a four-week check.

Thirty-seven people are coded as receiving job counseling from DWD staff; 10 of these visits involved a four-week check. Since DWD staff provide Wagner-Peyser and Veterans services, individuals receiving these services are included in this count, but other indicators suggest that the overwhelming majority of counseling visits with DWD staff were for Wagner-Peyser services. We also see in this count that about 6 percent of visits are for services in WIA or METP (Food Stamp) programs.

The remaining categories of service involve relatively small numbers of people. About one in 25 visits involves filling out job applications on paper, which the One-Stop Center collects as a service to those employers that request it. A similar number of visitors are seeking information regarding Unemployment Insurance, and either making contact with the UI office by telephone or computer, or asking a question of the staff.<sup>40</sup> We observed two individuals who took a computer skills/typing test, which the center offers as part of Wagner-Peyser services. For 27 percent of the sample, we did not observe any service utilization at all. These included individuals who made information requests of the receptionist or others, possibly spending little time in the Center. Some were also undoubtedly individuals who merely accompanied others but who were included because this status was not initially clear. Some could have received services

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<sup>40</sup> Staff are not permitted to address detailed questions concerning Unemployment Insurance, and, in fact, clients who want UI information often experienced frustration with difficulties in making contact as required on the Internet or by telephone.

that we did not observe, so in part these cases reflect missing data rather than individuals with no activities.

At the bottom of the main panel of Table 5.2, we have listed the average number of services received in visits where at least one service was received. An average of 1.36 services was received. Clearly, any coding system that only counts a single service for each visit—which is the primary coding system used in the One-Stop—is missing a substantial number of activities undertaken.

Table 5.3 provides information about the time that individuals spent during visits to the Camden One-Stop Career Center. Column (1) presents the mean time spent in the specified activity and column (3) presents the total time spent in the One-Stop Center for all visits involving that activity.<sup>41</sup> As might be expected, those visits for the four-week check are less than 20 minutes, with about 13 minutes devoted to undertaking the necessary activity. The lower panel reports information on the sample for which we identified how much time was spent with staff, corresponding to the lower panel in the previous table. We see that the total time undertaking the four-week check is very similar for this limited sample (also 13 minutes). The second line shows that, of the *total* time spent in the One-Stop Center by those undertaking the four-week check, basically *all* of it is spent with staff. Hence, time undertaking the four-week check involves staff assistance for almost all individuals, and those individuals who spend more time in the center spent additional time engaged in counseling with staff.

It should be noted that unemployment insurance can serve different purposes. For workers who are laid off because of a company restructuring, unemployment insurance

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<sup>41</sup> The numbers of cases in columns (2) and (4) differ because for some visits the total time of the visit was missing. This could occur when an individual left the center without being observed.

can provide at least limited financial stability during the search for new employment. Thus, Unemployment Insurance reduces the financial risk of job loss or job change, and thereby facilitating labor mobility. In seasonal economies such as Camden's, however, workers may have little motivation to look for new employment during a layoff, since they have a high expectation of being able to go back to the same or a very similar job when the tourist season begins again. In this situation, workers have no interest in being mobile or earnestly pursuing labor market options. For these workers, unemployment insurance may provide "bridge funding" between employment spells, often with the same employer.

Returning to the upper part of the table, we see that those who receive counseling generally spend 20-30 minutes on average, both in the center and in the activity. The exception is that the two people observed to receive WIA counseling averaged 33 minutes in counseling, and spent more than an hour in the center. This amount of time in the One-Stop for WIA counseling is consistent with the report of average counseling time per WIA client given to us by the WIA counselor in Camden.

Job search is a fairly extended process. The average time spent in the activity is over 30 minutes and total time in the One-Stop Center nearly 40 minutes. The panel on the lower part of the table provides information on the extent to which job search is supported by staff assistance. In this smaller sample, the total time spent in job search is slightly greater, 37 minutes. Of that, nearly 20 minutes is spent receiving staff assistance.

Waiting time is generally modest, averaging about 6 minutes overall if we include those who did not wait at all, and only about 11 minutes for those with some waiting time (about half of the observed sample). All things considered, this is a relatively short

waiting time, especially considering that several minutes would typically be devoted to completing the “half-sheet” requesting a specific service. The short waiting time suggests that One-Stop staff in Camdenon have developed a relatively efficient system for processing client requests.

### *Recorded Activities*

Up to this point, we have identified services that we observed clients use in the Camdenon One-Stop Career Center. In this section, we consider how individuals are coded in the State’s management information system (“Toolbox”). This allows us to examine prior experience in the system as well as to evaluate the extent to which observed activities are recorded in the system.

The left hand column of Table 5.4 lists various activities that can be identified in the state data system. The analysis is limited to those visits by individuals for whom we obtained Social Security numbers (N=97).<sup>42</sup> Information is presented beginning in calendar year 2003. In each quarter, an individual is coded according to the activity engaged in that is likely to be the most time intensive. Expected time intensity is reflected in the order of activities in Table 5.4. Hence, if an individual is identified as engaging in both the four-week check and in Wagner-Peyser services, the coded activity will be Wagner-Peyser services. This hierarchy is natural, given the way data are collected.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> We reiterate that the unit of analysis is the visit. Hence, if an individual is recorded in our data as visiting the One-Stop Center more than once, the information related to that person is repeated to represent the number of visits. In the case of Camdenon, the count of individuals is probably very close to the count of visits, whereas for Columbia, our estimate is that the numbers may differ by 7 percent. Further details are provided in an earlier footnote.

<sup>43</sup> For example, when an individual participates in WIA, this is counted as a Wagner-Peyser service, as well as a WIA service, as consistent with federal reporting requirements.

As an example, consider column (1), which refers to the first quarter of 2003. Here we see that eight individuals are coded as having received Wagner-Peyser services in that quarter. Two additional individuals are listed as having undertaken the four-week check in that quarter, and five others engaged in self-service job search. Overall, 15 of the individuals we observe received a recorded service in the One-Stop in 2003:1, one to two years prior to their observed activity in the One-Stop. Looking at all of 2003 (column (10)), we see that 30 of the 97 individuals received a service in that year. Hence, nearly a third of those individuals we observed had contact with the workforce development system in the 2003.

Looking across the quarters, the number receiving some service increases in more recent quarters. For the entire period (column (12)), 87 received some kind of service. It appears then, that over our entire period, all but 10 individuals are registered in the State's system.

Focusing on the recorded participation for the period 2003:1-2005.1, we see that the largest category of service receipt is, by far, Wagner-Peyser services. This provides evidence of the effectiveness of procedures to assure that staff assistance (by definition, Wagner-Peyser services) is provided to individuals coming in for the four-week check. No individuals are listed as undergoing only the four-week check in the two year period. So, although the mean time in activity reported in Table 5.3 suggested that many of the visits to the One-Stop by people undertaking the four-week check are somewhat perfunctory, at some point all individuals who visit the One-Stop Center for the four-week check received some other services as well. Even if we consider a single quarter,

there are relatively few individuals listed as *only* engaged in the four-week check, so services were provided to most four-week check participants each quarter.

The lower portion of Table 5.4 provides a separate tabulation that identifies how many of the individuals we observe in the Camden One-Stop participated in staff-assisted activities as compared with self-service activities, as listed in State records. In each quarter, we see that the overwhelming majority of individuals who received some services had received staff assistance. Since this analysis is based on a sample of individuals we observed in the One-Stop center, this is not very surprising. In each period, approximately 5 percent of those observed in our sample engage exclusively in self-service activities. Of this group, the majority appear to have accessed the state Internet job match service using a computer that is outside the One-Stop Center. Hence, even among those who are observed in the Camden One-Stop Center, some are receiving services from a remote access computer. We provide a more extended analysis of staff assistance, self-service activities, and remote computer access in later in this chapter, where we focus on tabulations based on all clients in the Central WIB area.

### ***Job Seeker Services in the Columbia One-Stop***

Table 5.5 provides information on activities observed for visitors to the Columbia One-Stop Career Center. As in Camden, more than a quarter of the visits are for the four-week UI check. We see that nine in ten of these individuals receive some kind of staff assistance.

Job counseling provided as part of Wagner-Peyser services is the most common activity, with nearly half of visits involving such counseling. However, we see that this is partly because those who undertake the four-week check also receive counseling. If we

omit those visits that involve a four-week check, approximately a quarter of visits involve counseling under Wagner-Peyser (column (2)).

Over 10 percent of visits are accounted for under other types of counseling. Just 5 individuals, amounting to less than 1 percent of the sample, are involved in each of METP (Food Stamps) or TRA/TAA (Trade Act Assistance) counseling. WIA and Veterans counseling each amount to 2-3 percent of visits, and TANF counseling accounts for nearly 6 percent of visits.

Job search occurs in 39 percent of visits, and about three-quarters of these (243 out of 316) are not associated with the four-week check.

About 4 percent of visits are associated with job applications, and slightly more than 10 percent of observed individuals are seeking UI services, meaning, in almost all cases, that the client contacts the UI office using the available phones or Internet connection. They may ask for and obtain help in establishing these connections, but, by state law, the One-Stop staff are not permitted to give other types of help to UI clients.

Approximately one in ten individuals that we observe does not appear to participate in any activity. This includes individuals who enter the One-Stop Center and ask a staff member for information, and leave shortly thereafter. It also includes visits where we were not able to identify the activity, as well as cases where an individual was merely accompanying a client but this fact was not initially clear.

If we consider individuals who are reported to have at least one service, we observed an average of 1.56 services per visit, as reported in the bottom of Table 5.5. So, it is true for Columbia as it was for Camden that identifying each visit with one

activity—as is routine in most statistics collected in the One-Stop Center—is an undercount of services received and, thus, is misleading.

Table 5.6 identifies time spent in each of the activities for the Columbia One-Stop Center.<sup>44</sup> Here we see very large differences in time spent by activity. As might be expected, those who come in for the four-week check finish quite quickly, spending about 12 minutes undergoing the check and spending a total of less than 20 minutes in the One-Stop. We also coded these cases according to how much time was spent in staff-assisted activity. We see that 11 of the 12 minutes identified as UI check-in time were spent with Wagner-Peyser staff. The amount of time spent engaged in the four-week check without explicit staff assistance is relatively limited.

We see that counseling with Wagner-Peyser staff lasts about 15 minutes. We have distinguished these visits by whether the individual is coded as undergoing the four-week check at that visit. In slightly more than half the cases, the client is not undergoing the four-week check, and the time spent with a counselor is slightly longer, some 18 minutes on average.

The average time spent on counseling differs across the other types of counseling, and the differences are large. Those who receive TRA/TAA (Trade Act) services spend less than five minutes each; those who spend time with the veterans' counselors spend about 17 minutes, while those in the METP (Food Stamp) program spend nearly 30 minutes. In contrast, WIA and TANF counselors both spend close to an hour with each client. Our interviews with One-Stop staff are consistent with these differences in

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<sup>44</sup> The numbers in Tables 5.5 and 5.6 for a given activity differ because in some cases we were not able to identify time in an activity, even when it was possible to identify the activity. This occurred in the Columbia One-Stop Center but not in Camdenon because the size and layout of the former made it more difficult to follow specific individuals.

average meeting time across various types of clients. The shorter times generally consist of brief information exchanges focusing on communication regarding facts or actions to be taken or completed. The longer times reflect the necessity to not only exchange information but also to conduct or interpret a skills assessment, explore client labor market goals, evaluate client aptitude for reaching their employment-related goals, and explore options for reaching those goals.

Those engaged in job search spend an average of 26 minutes on that search. About a third of that time is spent with staff (almost always Wagner-Peyser staff). There are no important differences between those who are in for the four-week check and others. Job applications appear to require nearly 24 minutes to fill out, whereas those seeking UI services spend only about 7 minutes, on average, in the One-Stop.

Most individuals are observed to spend virtually no time waiting, and the minority who are observed to spend time waiting wait only 6 minutes on average. As with Camden, the short waiting times suggest that the One-Stop administration and staff have developed an efficient system for helping clients meet their needs.

As noted above, there are a substantial number of visits involving more than one activity (see Table 5.5). For a given activity, the difference between time in that activity and total time in the Center is a result of waiting time and time in other activities. Given that waiting time is very short, the primary cause of this difference is the time in other activities. Since most clients spend substantial additional time in the Center beyond that spent at a single activity, it is clear that they are dividing their time among various activities.

### *Recorded Activities*

Table 5.7 provides information on activities that are identified in the Missouri state management information system (“Toolbox”) for all of the individuals that we observed, extending back through 2003. It is clear that a substantial portion of individuals we observed in 2004 and early 2005 had contacts with the system in prior years. Approximately 30 percent of those that we observed received some service in 2003.

Consistent with our earlier observations, the overwhelming majority of individuals coming into the One-Stop received Wagner-Peyser services. Yet it is clear that these tabulations do not identify the variety of activities that individuals undertook in the center, as indicated in Table 5.5.

The lower part of the table gives some sense of the extent to which individuals are engaged in self- or staff-assisted service. If an individual received staff assistance, it is not possible to be sure whether or not observed computer use of the state job search system was part of that staff assistance, so the first line includes all staff-assisted activities with or without self-service activities.

The next three lines identify self-service activity by whether or not the computer used for accessing the state’s Internet job search and match system was inside a One-Stop center. As with Camdenton, we see the importance of accessing services using a computer from outside the One-Stop. Even in this sample, which consisted of individuals who actually visited a One-Stop Career Center, a substantial portion were using the State labor exchange system from a location remote from the Center. It is interesting that we observe 17 individuals for whom the only access over the entire period 2003:1-2005:1

was such remote access to the system. The final section of this chapter, which focuses on data for the entire Central WIB area, provides a more comprehensive examination of the issue of remote access.

### ***Comparing Services Utilized at the Two One-Stop Centers***

As a way to summarize differences, we present a simplified graphic based on patterns of services received at the two centers in Figure 1. For the purposes of this graph, we eliminate those visits where no service was observed. We have grouped services into five categories: four-week UI check, DWD/Wagner-Peyser job counseling, other job counseling, job search, and other services. Recall that, as in Tables 5.2 and 5.5, since individuals can participate in more than one activity, the total across all bars exceeds 100 percent.

The percent undertaking job search is very similar for the two One-Stops, but there are some notable differences among other types of services. The proportion of visits involving the four-week check is proportionally larger in Camden, approaching 40 percent, in contrast to 30 percent in Columbia. The difference probably reflects the relatively larger probability of unemployment due to the seasonal economy in Camden. As we have noted, in Camden some laid off individuals have little incentive to search for a job but rather are using unemployment as a bridge between employment spells. At both sites, 10-15 percent of unemployment insurance related visits involve other activities.

Job counseling, especially by DWD staff as part of the Wagner-Peyser program, is more common in Columbia.<sup>45</sup> As indicated above, the average number of services received by job seekers was greater in Columbia, and this points to the fact that this higher number reflects a greater likelihood of counseling occurring at the Columbia One-Stop.

The proportion of clients receiving other forms of job counseling and other services are also larger at Columbia, although the difference is small. From our analyses, it seems clear that a large part of these “other” types of counseling and service include those who receive Veterans services and WIA clients. The higher proportion of those receiving Veterans services in Columbia is no surprise. There is a Veterans hospital in the city. The Columbia One-Stop has one Veterans Representative on location at that hospital who works for the most part with disabled veterans attempting to reenter the labor market. In addition, the Columbia One-Stop has a Veterans Representative within the One-Stop, who, according to our interview, noted that many of his clients are veterans with multiple barriers to employment other than disability. Some of these vets like to “tell their story,” contributing to some of the time spent with a counselor.

The relatively larger proportion of WIA clients may simply reflect the fact that, with unemployment so low in Columbia, a larger proportion of the One-Stop clientele is made up of individuals seeking extensive services. Having institutions of higher education in the city is likely a contributing factor as well. In our interview with the WIA counselor we learned that financial aid counselors at the area colleges knew of WIA

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<sup>45</sup> The division of the counseling is slightly different for Camden and Columbia, but this does not explain the higher level of counseling in Columbia. Details of the definition are provided in the note to Figure 1.

training dollars and would occasionally refer students to the One-Stop to explore potential for WIA funding if they thought the person was likely to qualify.

Information about time in activities is summarized in Figure 2. For the two centers, the average time spent in the activity is represented by the height of the bar. The graph illustrates the dramatic differences across category of activity and confirms similarities in time-use patterns for the two centers. At both centers, the four-week check is the activity taking the least time, just over 10 minutes. About twice as much time is devoted to job counseling, around 20 minutes per client, on average.

Time spent on job search is more extensive than job counseling at both centers, although some difference between centers is evident. It should be noted that some of the time devoted to job search may have involved staff time clients spent with staff learning how to use Great Hires, the state job match service introduced in early 2004 to replace Missouri*WORKS!* The staff with whom we spoke told us that the new system was more complex than the old and required more data entry. Clients often found it challenging to adapt to the new system and required more time, with and without job counselors, to use the new system successfully. The difference in time devoted to job search is 31 minutes in Camdenton and 26 minutes in Columbia. The time is devoted to filling out job applications is similar, as are observed differences between Camdenton and Columbia; still, the number of such applications is small in each center.

Returning to the tables underlying the figures (Tables 5.3 and 5.6), we see that although clients devote the majority of their time to the specified activity, clients spend time in other activities as well. Waiting time is not substantial in either center.

### ***Observation Inside the One-Stop Centers: Summary and Conclusion***

The analyses in this chapter are designed to provide a quantitative view of the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers, augmenting both the qualitative information we have collected and the quantitative information maintained by the local WIB. The information on actual activities undertaken by individuals allows for an understanding of the client experience that is not otherwise available. We are not aware of any other data on the type of activities engaged in and time spent by One-Stop clients which corresponds to the data we have presented here.

Although there are no true surprises in our results, they confirm a view of the One-Stop as providing services to clients in accord with official policy in an efficient and professional manner. Waiting times are generally short—and most clients do not wait at all—providing a stark contrast with client experiences in many government bureaucracies. Many clients appear to receive more than one service, and the official policy that UI claimants are to be provided with staff assistance whenever possible appears to be successfully implemented.

Of course, it may be “understood” that those coming in for the four-week check, for example, often engage in job search, but, until now, we do not have statistics that confirm this. In fact, our experience is that many observers are quite cynical about services provided to UI claimants, so our results are not “obvious” to many. Even insofar as our estimates of time that clients spend on various activities are consistent with statements by many casual observers, they nonetheless allow us a much sharper and more nuanced image of what is actually occurring. On the one hand, that UI claimants

undertaking their four-week check spend less than 15 minutes supports the view that this visit is quite perfunctory for many clients.

Yet a substantial portion of such individuals engage in other activities at the One-Stop Center. Total time in the Center is greater than time spent in the check process for most clients, and most of the difference is not merely waiting time. Most time at the One-Stop is spent with staff, so it is clear that for most clients the four-week check is not limited to typing in stock entries into a computer. In our analysis of the State's data system, we found that almost all UI claimants received Wagner-Peyser services at some point—even if they did not receive such services at each visit.

Of course, there is nothing in our data suggesting that all, or even most, UI claimants are actively seeking employment in productive ways. Existing procedures cannot assure that meaningful job search occurs in those cases where an individual wishes to simply collect benefits for the full eligibility period. Rather, our data suggest that UI claimants entering the One-Stop are provided with ample opportunities and substantial encouragement to undertake serious efforts to obtain suitable employment.

Finally, we see that, even among those whom we observe in the One-Stop Center, there is some use of remote access services. It is clear that an analysis that considers individuals who do not visit a center will be likely to find that remote access is of much greater importance. The next section considers this issue.

### **C-WIB Clients: Looking at Employment Outcomes and Remote Services**

The first section below examines the extent to which access to job matching services through remote access is important for the State's workforce development

system and whether that has changed in the past three years. We then turn to examining earnings and employment outcomes for individuals who participated in Wagner-Peyser services during the period beginning in 2002. In order to allow a follow-up, most of these analyses refer to participation in the services provided by the C-WIB during an earlier period than the previous section, beginning as early as 2002.

### ***Self-Service and Remote Access in the Central WIB Area***

In the previous section, we presented information on the extent that individuals who visited the two One-Stop centers during our observation periods used the self-service job matching system; we also examined whether they accessed the system in the One-Stop Center or through remote access. We observed modest use of remote access sites, but we noted that individuals observed in the One-Stop Center constituted a specially selected sample of individuals. Infrequent visitors to a One-Stop center are, by definition, underrepresented in this sample, and those who do not visit a One-Stop center at all are missed entirely. It is therefore useful to use State data that allow us to draw a sample of all individuals who received services in the Central WIB area, whether or not they visited a One-Stop center. Table 5.8 provides tabulations for such a sample.

In order to construct this table, we have used the Missouri management information system to identify individuals in the Central-WIB area who accessed the job search software. In each quarter, we identify all computer access by whether it occurred in a C-WIB One-Stop or elsewhere, and we tabulate the number of individuals using

various kinds of access. For comparison, we provide the count of individuals who access staff assisted services in that quarter.<sup>46</sup>

The first column identifies individuals receiving services in the fourth quarter of 2002. Here we see that 8,625 individuals obtained staff assisted services in C-WIB facilities. The next line shows that in the same quarter 12,860 individuals (possibly including some of these same individuals) accessed self-service job search software. Of these, 8,421, approximately two-thirds, accessed these services outside a One-Stop Center. About 1,000 individuals accessed the software both in a One-Stop Center and also at another location.

To what degree are users of self-service job search software independent of the One-Stop Staff? Statistics for individuals who access job search software but do not receive any staff-assisted services are provided in the bottom portion of the table (Self-service only). Here we see that for the fourth quarter of 2002 (2002:4), nearly 9,000 individuals are in this category, with the overwhelming majority using computers outside the One-Stop centers.

The relative importance of staff assistance and self-service over time is illustrated in Figure 3, which reformats the data presented in Table 5.8. The figure divides individuals into those who receive only self-service, those who receive staff assistance, and those who receive both in a given quarter. Over this entire period, 17,000-20,000 individuals receive services of some kind in the Central WIB each quarter, with the

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<sup>46</sup> In order to identify all individuals who are relevant for the C-WIB area, we include those whose addresses are in any of the counties that make up the C-WIB Workforce Investment Area. We also include all individuals whose records indicate that they received services during the relevant quarter in a C-WIB facility. It is of interest that approximately 10 percent of those registered as receiving services in a C-WIB One-Stop Center or satellite center do not have addresses within the counties that make up the area.

highest value at 20,457 in 2004:1 and the lowest value at the end of the period, 17,271, in 2004:4.

We can see that throughout the period, the overwhelming majority of individuals had received some self-service, and that between a third and a half of all individuals received self-service only. The relative importance of self-service appears to have declined near the end of our period, probably reflecting changes in the job matching system: In the last six months of 2004 (quarters 2004:3 and 2004:4), Missouri replaced Missouri*WORKS!* with Great Hires, and as noted in previous chapters, there were substantial transitional costs associated with the change. Most clients required substantial staff assistance to transfer to the new system. This probably explains the dramatic decline in the number of individuals receiving only self-service, as well as the modest increase in the number receiving only staff assistance. Notwithstanding these changes, it is clear that self-service activities remain central to the services provided by the C-WIB; furthermore, we expect self-service to become more important as individuals learn the new system.

Figure 4 illustrates the relative importance of remote access for clients using the self-service job matching system, (these figures are based on lines 3-5 in Table 5.8). The top graph shows that over the nine quarters for which we have data, fully two-thirds of those who accessed the system did so from remote computers only, whereas 22 percent accessed the system only within One-Stop centers. There is little question that remote access dominates the self-service system.

The lower panel of Figure 2 shows that transition to the Great Hires system altered the extent of remote access dramatically. In this last quarter (2004:4), the

proportion of self-service clients who used only remote access had declined to 43 percent, and an almost-equal number—and twice the proportion over the full period—accessed the system only within the One-Stop center. While these changes are clearly substantial, it seems likely that, with time, remote access will again become more common as clients become familiar with the Great Hires system.

These results confirm the importance of self-service in the State's workforce investment system. Nonetheless, it is clear that, for many clients, staff assistance and self-service are complementary. We also see evidence that both computer access within the One-Stop centers and remote access are filling valuable roles, so that any attempt to identify the value of the system that does not consider both will seriously understate the system's impact.

### ***Outcome Analysis: Wage Record Matching***

The analyses to this point have considered the constellation of services offered to clients in the two One-Stop centers and, to some degree, throughout the Central WIB area. Of course, the goal of these services is to improve employment outcomes. We have been asked to consider the experiences of individuals who have relatively intermittent interaction with the One-Stop center and compare them with those who have continuous contact. We would like to know whether clients who formally complete a program differ from those who drop out.

It is not feasible to follow up on employment outcomes for the recent clients who are the focus of the analyses in the first section of this chapter.<sup>47</sup> In order to provide

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<sup>47</sup> Wage record data, which provide information on earnings for individuals in a given quarter, are available with a two-quarter lag. This means that if an individual received services in 2004:4, since we are interested in employment in quarters beginning in 2005:1, data relevant for examining that individual's employment

information on employment for clients, we have chosen individuals who received services in the three quarters 2002:4, 2003:1 and 2003:2. Comprehensive service information is not available for earlier quarters, and any later quarters would have reduced our follow-up period.

For the purposes of these analyses we have limited our examination to individuals who received Wagner-Peyser services, or who were listed as enrolled in WIA during the three specified quarters. We have categorized these individuals on a basis of the continuity of their interactions with the system. Table 5.9 provides counts of the relevant samples. For each quarter, a client is included in only one of the six categories, but a client who receives services in more than one of these quarters will appear multiple times.

Wagner-Peyser and WIA services are treated somewhat differently. Most Wagner-Peyser services are of short duration, so we identify such services by the date the service commences. Although individuals are often subject to follow-up, continuity of service provision is not a central element of the Wagner-Peyser program, so participation in the program is best identified by receipt of a specific service. In contrast, once individuals are accepted into the WIA program, they are subject to active case management. As noted in prior chapters, the Central-WIB follows a policy that staff have the responsibility to continue to provide services to support employment objectives until there is some certainty that clients have been successful. Clients are normally exited from the program only when they are employed. We therefore identify WIA clients in a

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would not become available until after 2005:3. A longer follow-up period, which would clearly be preferable, would imply a longer lag.

given quarter as individuals who were registered in WIA in that or an earlier quarter and who had not exited prior to that quarter.

For each individual listed in Table 5.9, we have determined earnings based on “wage record” data in the quarter we observe them receiving services, in the two prior quarters, and in the six subsequent quarters. These data provide the total dollar earnings paid to each employee during the quarter, as reported by the employer to the State, as part of the reporting requirements associated with the Unemployment Insurance system. We have information for the states of Missouri and Kansas, so earnings obtained from employers outside those states are excluded.<sup>48</sup> These data do not indicate hours of work or other information about the employee’s job, and it is not possible to determine whether an individual worked the full quarter. Nor can part-time employment be distinguished from full time employment. A small number of employers are exempt from reporting requirements, and employees in illegal or informal employment arrangements may be missed. Earnings from self-employment are not included in these data.

### *Wagner-Peyser Services*

As noted above, since Wagner-Peyser services are generally of short duration, we identify them by the date when the service commences. Recall that, by definition, Wagner-Peyser services imply staff assistance, so an individual who only undertakes self-service activities will not be counted. Figures 5-7 provide information on employment and earnings over this nine-quarter period for Wagner-Peyser clients who are not also WIA clients. The two groups considered (see the counts in Table 5.9) are clients who, in

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<sup>48</sup> For individuals who remain in Missouri, the bias associated with omitting earnings from employers in other states appears extremely small. We have found that including Illinois alters mean earnings estimates for most classes of workers by less than one percent. There may be more substantial biases associated with omitting earnings of those who leave the state, however.

addition to receiving services in the particular quarter, (a) also received services in the prior or subsequent quarter, and (b) received no services (either Wagner-Peyser or WIA) in the immediately prior or subsequent quarter. This latter group is then clients who, after receiving services from the system in a given quarter, “disappear” from the system. The former group received staff-assisted services (either Wagner-Peyser services or WIA services) in at least two consecutive quarters.

It should be kept in mind that the horizontal axis identifies the quarter relative to the quarter in which the service was observed in the data. For example, in the case of a service event occurring in 2002:4, quarter -2 is quarter 2002:2, quarter -1 is 2002:3, etc; quarter 6 is 2004:2.

Figure 5 provides mean earnings in each quarter. Since the mean includes individuals who have no earnings at all, it identifies both the effects of obtaining employment and the earnings of those employed. Interestingly, those classified as receiving continuous services have a higher initial quarterly earnings level (two quarters prior to participation) but exhibit a greater dip in earnings during the quarter of service—nearly a two-thirds decline. Those whose contact with the system occurs only in a single quarter experience a smaller average earnings dip during the quarter of service, and their recovery is faster. One explanation for this difference in patterns is that this latter group discontinues contact with the system because many of these individuals have found employment. In contrast, the continuous-use group would appear to be suffering more severe difficulties, explaining why they continue contact with the system. Figures 6 and 7 support this interpretation.

Figure 6 shows the pattern of employment for these same individuals, that is it identifies the proportion of individuals with jobs. It is important to keep in mind that our measure of employment is for the quarter, so the percentage indicates the proportion of the sample that is employed (i.e., receives some earnings) at some point during the quarter. Some of the individuals identified as employed may, in fact, be without jobs for some period within the quarter.

When we consider those with a continuous service experience (i.e., at least two consecutive quarters of services), we see that the basic shape of the figure is the same as for average earnings, which confirms that changes in employment contribute to the dip in average earnings. In contrast, those who receive services in only a single quarter have not experienced an employment decrement.

Figure 7 provides some additional insight into the experience of this latter group: Among one-time participants, the earnings for those *who are employed* decline appreciably in the service quarter. This very likely implies that many of these clients, in fact, lose a job but then find another within the same quarter. Although the continuous service group experiences a dip as well, it is less extreme. In sum, we believe these patterns suggests that, in large part, those who receive services during only a single quarter do not return to the One-Stop Center because they have found jobs, while continuous users are less fortunate.

As described in prior chapters, a large share of clients who receive services enter the One-Stop Career Center to undertake the four-week check, as required in order to obtain Unemployment Insurance payments. The far right column of Table 5.9 shows that of 15,371 Wagner-Peyser service events defined as continuous during the three quarters

we are considering, all but 2,627 were for individuals who entered the One-Stop at some point during the quarter to undertake the four-week check. In contrast, of those receiving Wagner-Peyser services in only a single quarter, over three-fifths did not undertake the four-week check. It is therefore clear that Unemployment Insurance payments are strongly associated with continuous receipt of Wagner-Peyser services. This may reflect the fact that those who expect to be unemployed for extended periods are more likely to go through the process of applying for Unemployment Insurance benefits, and because those receiving benefits face less urgency in obtaining new employment.

Figures 8-10 show patterns for the subset of clients who do not undertake the four-week check during the relevant quarter, classified as continuous versus one-time participants. The most important conclusion is that employment statistics do not vary over the nine-quarter period nearly as dramatically for this group. Furthermore, the difference between the two groups is much reduced. Once we remove those individuals who obtain Unemployment Insurance payments, there is little relationship between service receipt and employment. This is not surprising, since receipt of Unemployment Insurance identifies individuals who have relatively strong prior attachment to the labor force and are facing substantial employment difficulties. As noted in prior chapters, staff in the One-Stop Centers have been directed to assure that UI recipients be provided with staff assistance.

Our conclusion is that differences between those who interact with the system only briefly are likely those whose needs are relatively more limited. Whereas longer-term Wagner-Peyser participants experience substantial and extended employment losses, those with very brief system contact appear to consist largely of individuals who are

successful at obtaining jobs within relatively short periods of time. It therefore does not appear that most of this group would benefit by special intervention. Of course, there are undoubtedly some individuals who simply are lost to the system and suffer severe employment difficulties, but they do not appear to predominate among this group.

### *Workforce Investment Act Services*

Employment information for WIA participants is provided in Figures 9-11. The comparison of primary interest is between individuals who are observed as registered in WIA in a given quarter and in the subsequent quarter from those who are observed to exit. As Table 5.2 makes clear, almost all exits from WIA are “hard exits,” meaning that C-WIB staff made a decision that the client had at least partly achieved employment objectives and therefore was ready to leave the program. A very small number of cases in these three quarters had “soft exits,” meaning that the client was exited automatically from the program because no service had been for an extended period.

Figure 11 provides average earnings for these three classes of individuals. We see that those who are continuing in the program exhibit modest declines in average earnings over the prior two periods, followed by gradual improvements over the six quarters after the reference quarter. In contrast, clients who experience hard exits show dramatic gains over the two quarters prior to the exit quarter, with gains continuing through the quarter continuing for at least one quarter beyond. These exiting individuals not only show great earnings growth but their earnings are nearly twice those of continuing participants.

Perhaps most notable, six quarters after the reference quarter, earnings of continuing participants ultimately catch up to those who exit the program. This would suggest that individuals who enter WIA achieve much improved employment

circumstances in the long run, although for many it takes as much as a year or two. The small number of individuals who have “soft exits” (N=20) appear to do much less well, but since such individuals may be likely to leave the state, the low earnings may be due to missing earnings data.<sup>49</sup>

Figures 12 and 13 display trends for continuing WIA participants and those exiting (hard exits) that are very similar to those in Figure 11. It therefore appears that observed earnings for these groups reflect both number of people with employment and the earnings that employed individuals obtain. That is, those exiting WIA experience improvements in both employment and earnings (when employed) in quarters -2 to 2. Those who do not exit experience a gradual improvement on both measures in the long run.

In summary, the patterns we observe are consistent with the policy of exiting clients when they accomplish their employment objectives. However, in addition, it would appear that, at least on average, WIA participants ultimately achieve improvement employment.

### ***Employment Outcomes and Remote Services: Summary and Conclusion***

The analyses here are designed to answer specific questions about service provision: (1) How important is self-service as compared with staff-assisted services, and remote access as compared with access in the One-Stop centers? and (2) How do employment outcomes compare for those who have one-time or infrequent contact with

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<sup>49</sup> Given the C-WIB’s policy of avoiding soft exits, it seems likely that individuals listed as soft exits may be those who could not be contacted, and we suspect that a substantial number of them may have left the state. We can see in Figures 10 and 11 that the lower long-run earnings for soft exits are entirely due to a decline in the employment rate, which is what we would expect if many of those in the sample moved to another state.

the One-Stop system as compared with those who more extensive contact? In order to address these questions, we expanded our analyses beyond the two One-Stop centers, examining a broader sample of individuals who received services from the C-WIB.

Our results confirm the importance of self-service and remote access for a large share of clients. At the same time, introduction of new job search software near the end of our period of analysis provides evidence that staff assistance in the One-Stop can be of great importance. More generally, it is clear that remote access to the job search system is supported by availability of assistance within the One-Stop center.

Our analysis of clients who had only brief contact with the One-Stop Center did not suggest that these individuals were, as a group, experiencing serious distress in terms of their employment outcomes. Rather, those with brief contact appeared to be individuals whose job searches had been relatively successful. Efforts to follow up such individuals are not justified, it would appear, since these individuals tend to be relatively successful. This does not imply that a more targeted approach to help certain classes of individuals obtain employment would not be beneficial; but to be beneficial, such an approach would best focus on those with identifiable needs.

**Table 5.1: Basic Demographic Data for Observed Individuals in Columbia and Camdenon One-Stop Career Centers**

	Camdenon				Columbia			
	In State System		Other Observations1		In State System		Other Observations1	
	(N=94)		(N=73)		(N=1071)		(N=496)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age</b>								
Less Than 21	3	3.19%	0	0.00%	55	5.14%	44	9.00%
21-29	32	34.04%	13	19.70%	287	26.80%	95	19.43%
30-39	15	15.96%	6	9.09%	270	25.21%	151	30.88%
40-49	24	25.53%	17	25.76%	281	26.24%	126	25.77%
50+	20	21.28%	30	45.45%	178	16.62%	173	14.93%
Missing			7				7	
<b>Gender</b>								
Male	53	56.38%		47.89%	561	52.38%	240	49.08%
Female	41	43.62%	37	52.11%	510	47.62%	248	50.72%
Missing			2				8	
<b>Race</b>								
American Native	1	1.1%			5	0.5%		
Asian	0	0.0%			15	1.4%		
Black or African-American	0	0.0%			314	30.2%		
Ethnic Hispanic	3	3.3%			21	2.0%		
Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0	0.0%			0	0.0%		
White	85	92.4%			633	60.8%		
Multiple	3	3.3%			53	5.1%		
Missing	2				30			

	<b>Camdenton</b>				<b>Columbia</b>			
	In State System		Other Observations <sup>1</sup>		In State System		Other Observations <sup>1</sup>	
	(N=94)		(N=73)		(N=1071)		(N=496)	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
<b>Education</b>								
Less than HS	7	7.4%			126	12.0%		
HS Grad	60	63.8%			530	50.3%		
Some College or AA/AS	21	22.3%			222	21.1%		
College Graduate	4	4.3%			84	8.0%		
Masters	0	0.0%			39	3.7%		
Doctorate	0	0.0%			5	0.5%		
GED	1	1.1%			39	3.7%		
Certificate	1	1.1%			8	0.8%		
Missing	0	0.00%			18			
<b>Citizenship</b>								
Yes	90	95.7%			1006	95.3%		
No	4	4.3%			50	4.7%		
Missing					15			

<sup>1</sup>Age and gender for cases not in the state data system were determined by observation. In most cases, the observer indicated age in categories, and we report the mean for that category (e.g. 25 for 20-30).

**Table 5.2: Services Received by Individuals in the Camden One-Stop Career Center**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<b>Observed Activities</b>	Frequency	Sub-category Percent	Main Category Percent
<b>Full Sample (N=167)</b>			
4-week UI check	48		28.74%
Job counseling: DWD Staff (includes TANF)	37		22.16%
Job counseling: DWD Staff (not 4-week UI check)	27	16.17%	
Job counseling: WIA	2		1.20%
Job counseling: METP	8		4.79%
Job search	56		33.53%
Job search (not 4-week UI check)	38	22.75%	
Job applications	7		4.19%
UI Services	6		3.59%
Computer Skills/Typing Test	2		1.20%
No observed activities (including information requests)	45		26.95%
Average number of services for those receiving at least one services			1.36
<hr/>			
	(1)	(2)	(3)
	Frequency	Sub-category Percent	Main Category Percent
<b>Limited Sample (N=60)</b>			
4-week UI check in	27		45.00%
4-week UI check (no staff assistance)	2	3.33%	
Job search	29		48.33%
Job search (no staff assistance)	8	13.33%	
Job search (not 4-week UI check in)	19	31.67%	
Job search (no staff assistance, not 4-week UI check)	7	11.67%	

**Table 5.3: Mean Time in Activity for Individuals in the Camdenon One-Stop Career Center**

	hours:minutes:seconds	Time on Activity		Time in Center	
		(1) Mean	(2) Number	(3) Mean	(4) Number
<b>Full sample</b>					
4-week UI check		0:13:05	48	0:19:41	48
Job counseling: DWD		0:23:27	37	0:26:40	34
Job counseling: DWD staff and not 4-week UI check		0:25:15	27	0:28:47	24
Job counseling: WIA		0:33:00	2	1:07:30	2
Job counseling: METP		0:21:37	8	0:24:00	8
Job search		0:31:18	56	0:38:53	54
Job search and not 4-week UI check		0:35:36	38	0:45:50	36
Job search and not 4-week UI check: Staff assisted time		0:10:09	38	0:45:50	36
Job applications		0:31:42	7	0:47:40	6
UI services		0:21:20	6	0:21:20	6
Computer skills/typing test		0:09:00	2	0:20:00	2
Waiting time (include wait = 0)		0:05:51	167		
Waiting time (excluding wait=0)		0:11:15	87		
<b>Limited Sample</b>					
4-week UI check		0:13:00	27	0:21:46	27
4-week UI check: Staff assisted time		0:21:18	27	0:21:46	27
Job Search		0:37:18	29	0:43:53	28
Job search: Staff assisted time		0:19:31	29	0:43:53	28
Job search and not 4-week UI check		0:46:28	19	0:55:06	18
Job search and not 4-week UI check: Staff assisted time		0:18:29	18	0:55:06	18

**Table 5.4: Recorded Services Received by Visitors to Camden: State Data System (N=97)**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
<b>Most Intensive Service Received</b>	2003:1	2003:2	2003:3	2003:4	2004:1	2004:2	2004:3	2004:3	2005:1	2003	2004	2003:1-2005:1
WIA training												
WIA intensive												
WIA core												
Worker profiling		2			1	2	1			2	2	4
Wagner-Peyser services	8	3	8	10	23	38	31	41	20	19	79	80
4-week check-in	2		2	7	5	4	6	3	3	4	1	
Self-service job search	5	4	2	5	7	3	3	7	4	5	5	3
<b>Staff Assistance vs. Self-Service</b>												
Staff assistance, with or without self-service	10	5	10	17	29	44	38	44	23	25	82	84
Self-service only												
Access inside One-Stop						1		1	2		2	1
Access outside One-Stop	4	4	2	5	5	2	3	2	2	5	1	1
Access both inside and outside	1				2			4			2	1
Total receiving services in period	15	9	12	22	36	47	41	51	27	30	87	87
Total receiving no services in period <sup>1</sup>	82	88	85	75	61	50	56	46	70	67	10	10

In addition to the listed activities, we searched Toolbox records for participation in Job Corps, Area Vocational Technical Schools, Veterans' programs, and the Workforce for Life (WFL) program. None of our observations are listed as participating in these programs. TANF referrals (CAP) and the Food Stamps job training program (METP) were not available in the data files to which we had access.

<sup>1</sup>This includes all individuals for whom we have Social Security numbers but who were not matched with records in Toolbox as well as individuals with Toolbox records but with no activity in the specified period.

**Table 5.5: Services Received by Individuals in the Columbia One-Stop Career Center**

	(1)	(2)	(3)
<b>Observed Activities (N=804)</b>	Frequency	Sub- category Percent	Main Category Percent
4-week UI check	212		26.37%
4-week UI check (no staff assistance)	23	2.86%	
Job counseling: Wagner-Peyser Staff	380		47.26%
Job counseling: Wagner-Peyser Staff (not 4-week UI check)	199	24.75%	
Job counseling: WIA	16		1.99%
Job counseling: METP	6		0.75%
Job counseling: Veterans	22		2.74%
Job counseling: TRA/TAA	5		0.62%
Job counseling: TANF	46		5.72%
Job search	316		39.30%
Job search (no staff assistance)	152	18.91%	
Job search (not 4-week UI check)	243	30.22%	
Job search (no staff assistance, not 4-week UI check)	0	0.00%	
Job applications	32		3.98%
UI Services	93		11.57%
No observed activities (includes information requests)	79		9.83%
Average number of services for those receiving at least one services			1.56

**Table 5.6: Mean Time in Activity for Individuals in the Columbia One-Stop Career Center**

	hours:minutes:seconds	Time on Activity		Time in Center	
		(1) Mean	(2) Number	(3) Mean	(4) Number
<b>Detailed Information Sample</b>					
4-week UI check		0:11:58	212	0:18:35	212
4-week UI check: Staff assisted time		0:10:55	212	0:18:35	212
Job counseling: Wagner-Peyser		0:15:11	380	0:25:56	380
Job counseling: Wagner-Peyser and not 4-week UI check		0:18:02	199	0:31:59	199
Job counseling: WIA		0:55:30	16	1:01:07	16
Job counseling: METP		0:28:30	6	0:32:50	6
Job counseling: TRA/TAA		0:04:36	5	0:04:36	5
Job counseling: TANF		1:01:11	46	1:10:33	46
Job counseling: Veterans		0:16:54	22	0:26:16	22
Job search		0:26:01	316	0:37:36	316
Job search: Staff assisted time		0:09:34	316	0:37:36	316
Job search and not 4-week UI check		0:29:45	243	0:40:39	243
Job search and not 4-week UI check: Staff assisted time		0:08:43	243	0:40:39	243
Job applications		0:23:31	32	0:38:45	32
UI services		0:07:06	93	0:16:21	93
Waiting time (include wait=0)		0:02:47	792		
Waiting time (excluding wait=0)		0:06:20	348		

**Table 5.7: Recorded Services Receive by Visitors to Columbia: State Data System (N=1297)**

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
<b>Most Intensive Service Received</b>	2003:1	2003:2	2003:3	2003:4	2004:1	2004:2	2004:3	2004:3	2005:1	2003	2004	2003:1-2005:1
WIA training	5	5	4	4	5	5	6	4	4	5	7	9
WIA intensive	1	2	4	4	3	7	17	17	17	4	17	17
WIA core						1						
Worker profiling	2	1	2	2	3	6	19	21	11	6	34	46
Job Corps or AVTS					1						1	1
Wagner-Peyser services	96	107	124	152	258	289	429	495	331	317	787	879
4-week check	20	15	25	28	32	15	9	18	36	18	18	15
Self-service job search	56	74	74	57	59	82	62	64	54	76	46	31
<b>Staff Assistance vs. Self-Service</b>												
Staff assistance, with or without self-service Service	124	130	159	190	302	323	480	555	399	350	864	967
Self-service only												
Access inside One-Stop	24	31	24	25	27	37	11	22	30	28	14	7
Access outside One-Stop	25	35	35	27	29	36	41	27	21	37	18	17
Access both inside and outside	7	8	7	5	3	9	10	15	3	11	14	7
Total receiving services in period	180	204	225	247	361	405	542	619	453	426	910	998
Total receiving no services in period <sup>1</sup>	1117	1093	1064	1050	936	892	755	678	844	871	387	299

In addition to the listed activities, we searched Toolbox records for participation in Veterans' programs and the Workforce for Life (WFL) program. None of our observations are listed as participating in these programs. TANF referrals and the Food Stamps job training program (METP) were not available in the data files to which we had access.

<sup>1</sup>This includes all individuals for whom we have Social Security numbers but who were not matched with records in Toolbox as well as individuals with Toolbox records but with no activity in the specified period.

**Table 5.8: Staff Assistance, Self-Service and the Role of Remote Computer Access: Missouri's Central WIB**

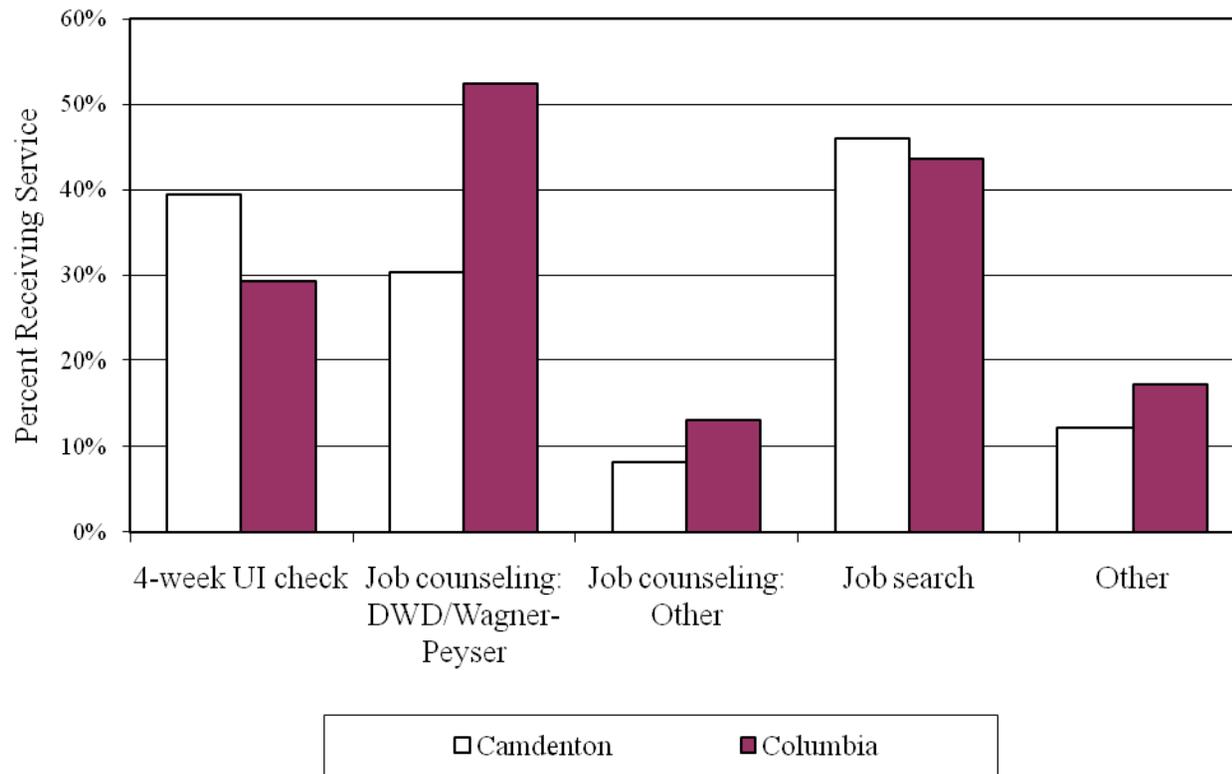
	2002:4	2003:1	2003:2	2003:3	2003:4	2004:1	2004:2	2004:3	2004:4
Staff assistance (with or without self-service)	8,625	8,883	9,202	8,805	8,963	9,437	10,188	9,462	10,889
Self-service (with or without staff assistance)	12,860	14,466	13,836	14,407	13,583	15,269	12,635	13,562	11,744
Access inside One-Stop	3,252	3,332	3,219	3,340	2,968	3,201	1,640	1,336	4,936
Access outside One-Stop	8,421	9,717	9,368	9,599	9,295	10,527	9,974	9,752	5,017
Access both inside and outside One-Stop	1,187	1,417	1,249	1,468	1,320	1,541	1,021	2,474	1,791
Self-service only	8,873	10,299	9,766	10,259	9,545	11,020	8,585	7,919	6,382
Access inside One-Stop	1,461	1,677	1,569	1,710	1,461	1,675	840	727	1,560
Access outside One-Stop	6,922	7,963	7,642	7,878	7,492	8,612	7,369	6,737	4,168
Access both inside and outside One-Stop	490	659	555	671	592	733	376	455	654

**Table 5.9: C-WIB clients Matched to Wage Record Data**

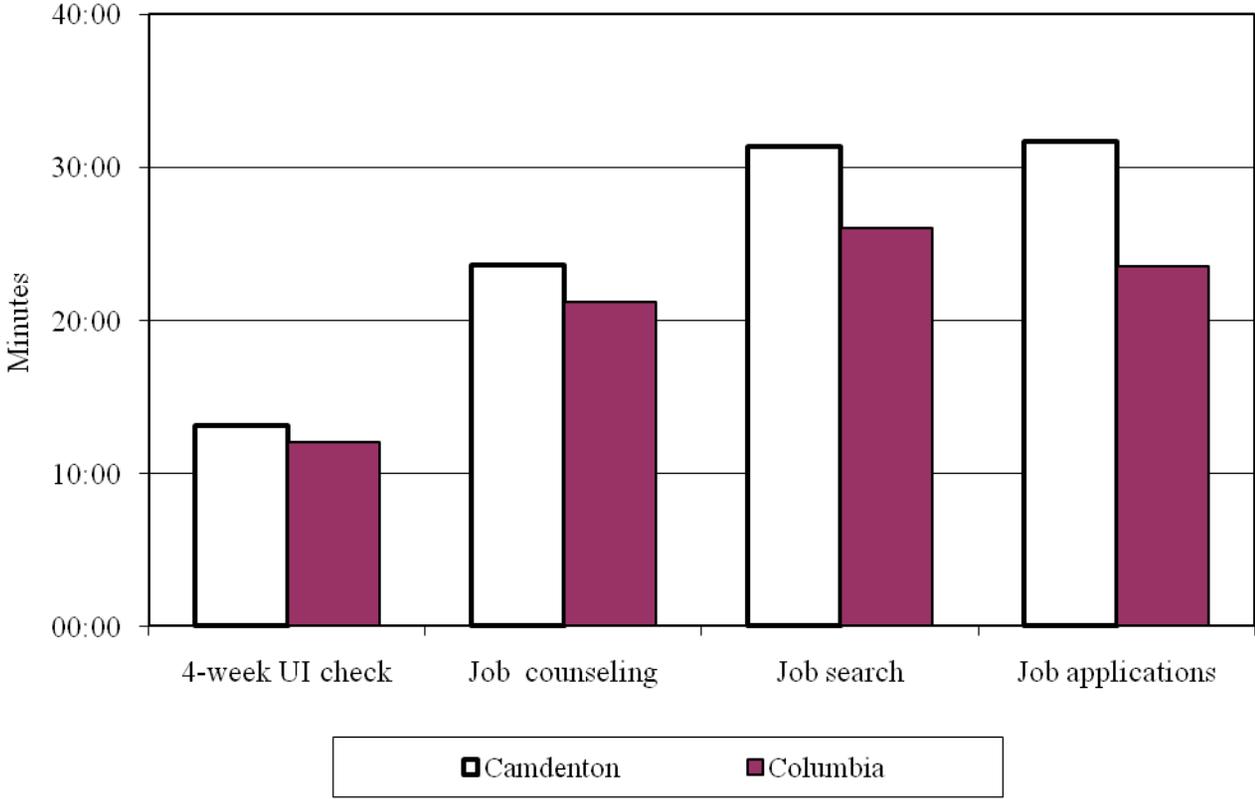
Program Enrollment	2002:4	2003:1	2003:2	Total	Excluding 4-week check Total
a. Wagner-Peyser (not WIA) with activity in prior or subsequent quarter	4,803	5,412	5,156	15,371	2,627
b. Wagner-Peyser (not WIA) with no activity in prior or subsequent quarter	2,812	3,808	3,127	9,747	5,997
c. WIA but no exit in quarter	986	1,037	950	2,973	
d. WIA hard exit in quarter	206	156	163	525	
e. WIA soft exit in quarter	12	3	5	20	
f. Unknown exit type	12	7	12	31	
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,831</b>	<b>10,423</b>	<b>9,413</b>	<b>28,667</b>	

Note: All individuals who receive Wagner-Peyser or WIA services in a given quarter are counted once in the total for that quarter. Sums across quarters count individuals in as many quarters as they appear, so that the total column may count a client up to three times.

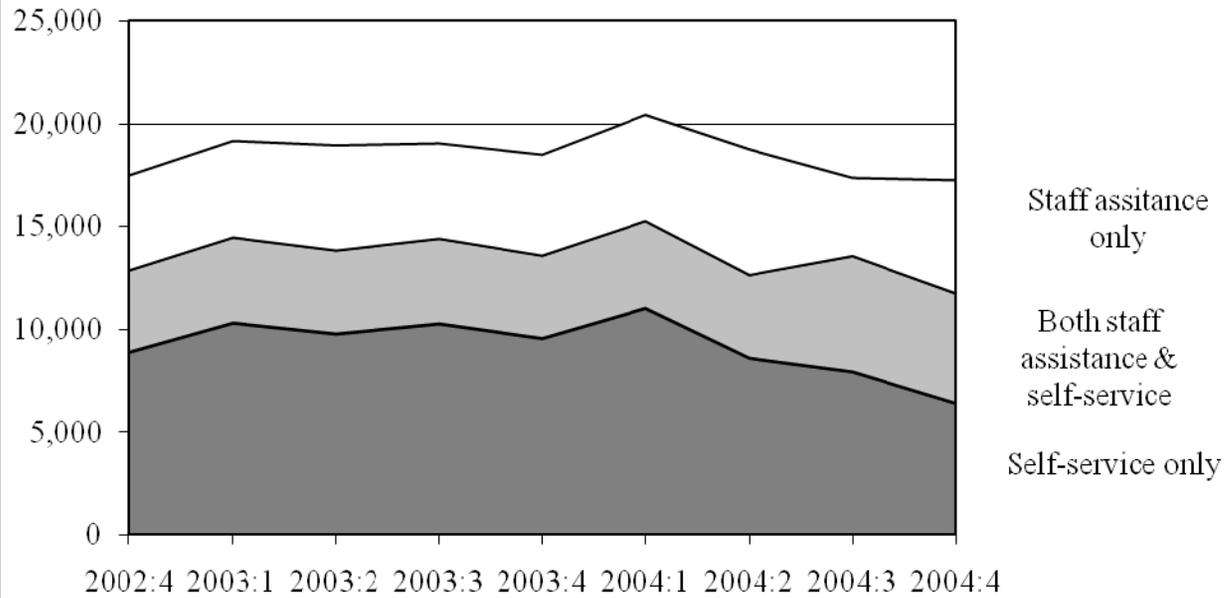
**Figure 5.1: Services Received in the One-Stop Career Centers**



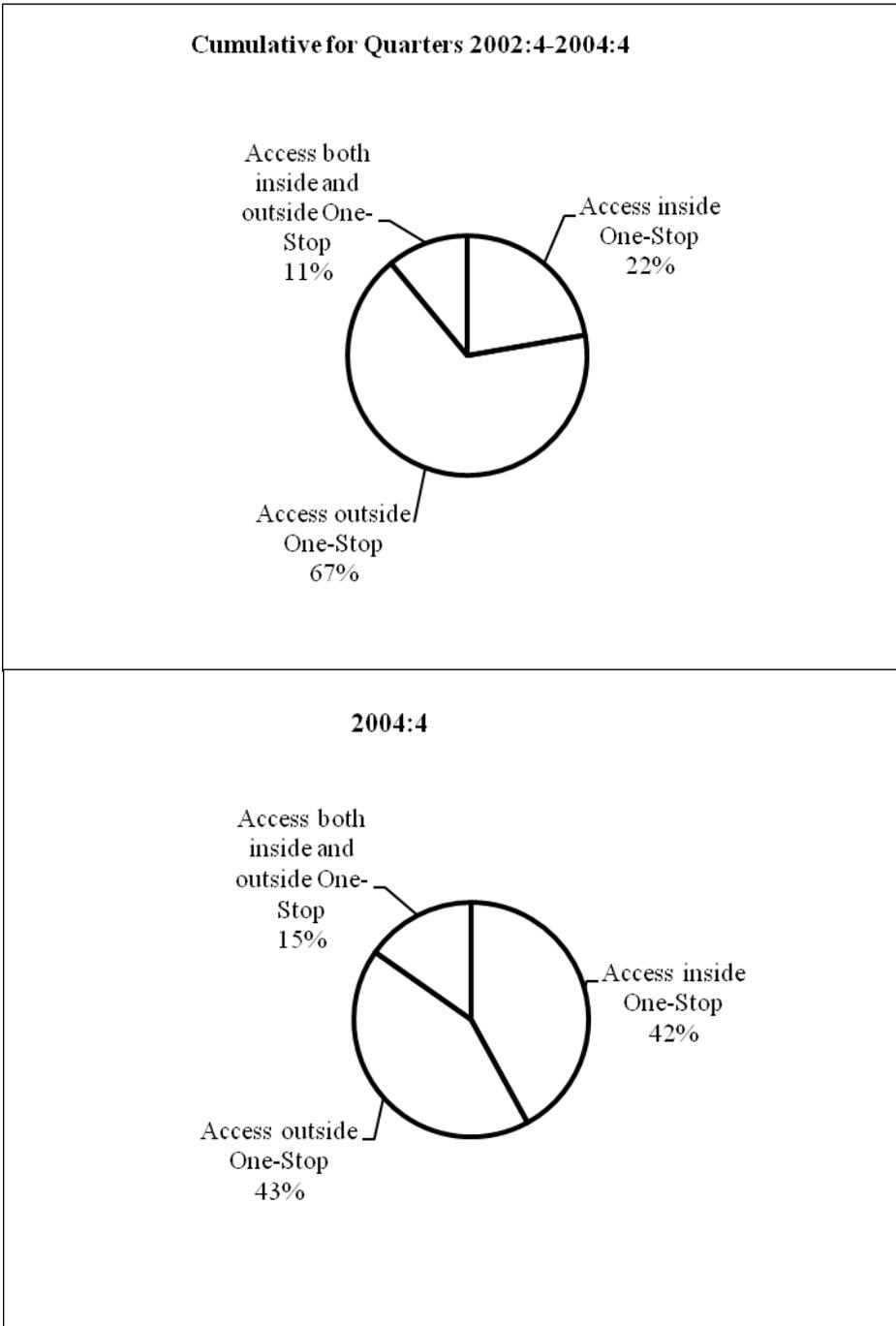
**Figure 5.2: Mean Time in Activities: One-Stop Career Centers**



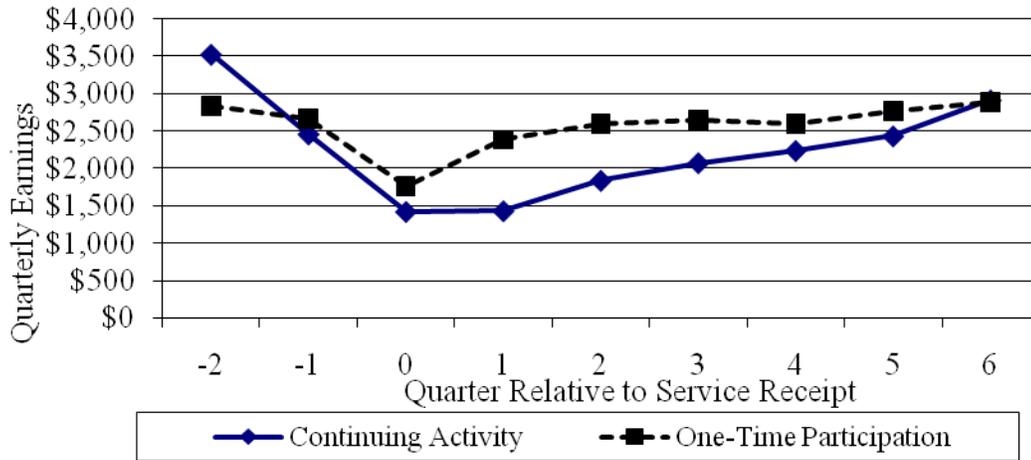
**Figure 5.3: Staff-Assisted and Self-Service in the Central WIB Area**



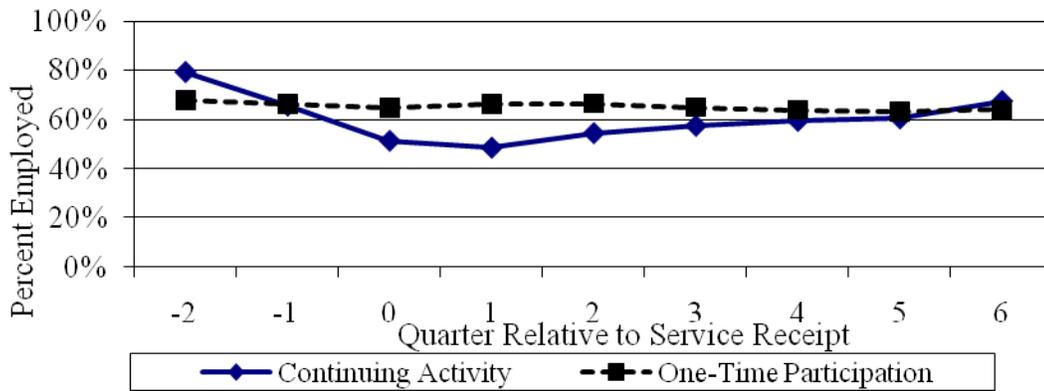
**Figure 5.4: Access for Self-Service Clients in the Central WIB Area**



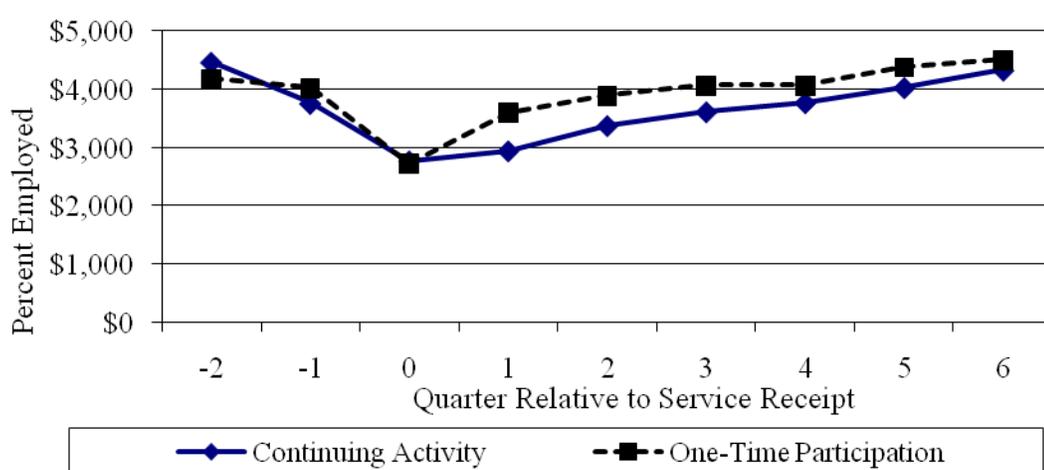
**Figure 5.5: Mean Earnings for All Wagner-Peyser Clients**



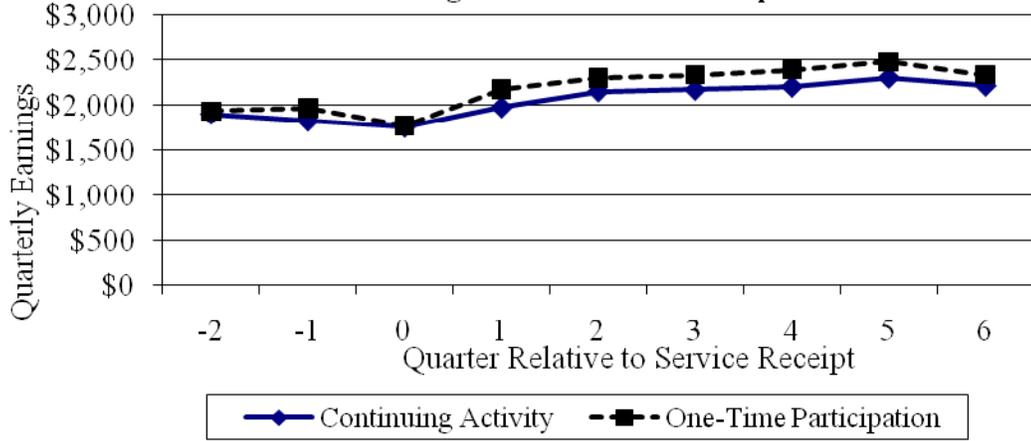
**Figure 5.6: Employment for Wagner-Peyser Clients**



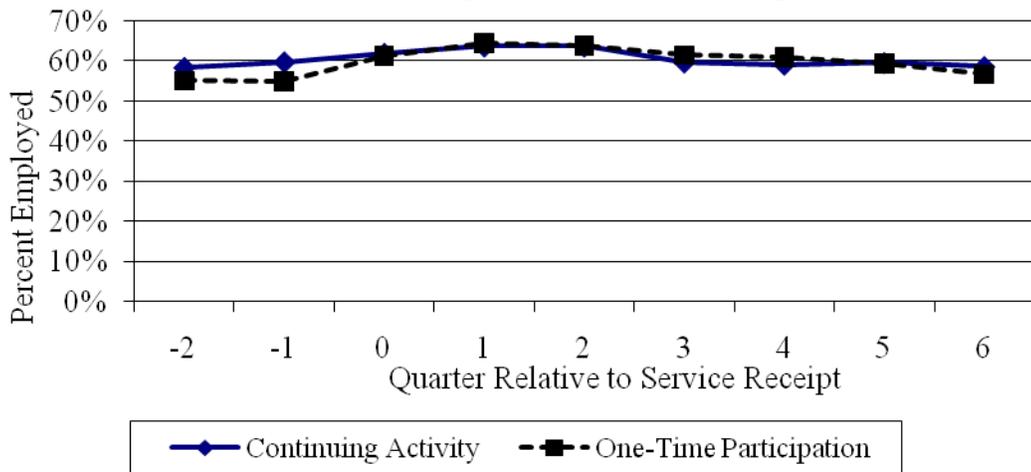
**Figure 5.7: Mean Earnings for Employed Wagner-Peyser Clients**



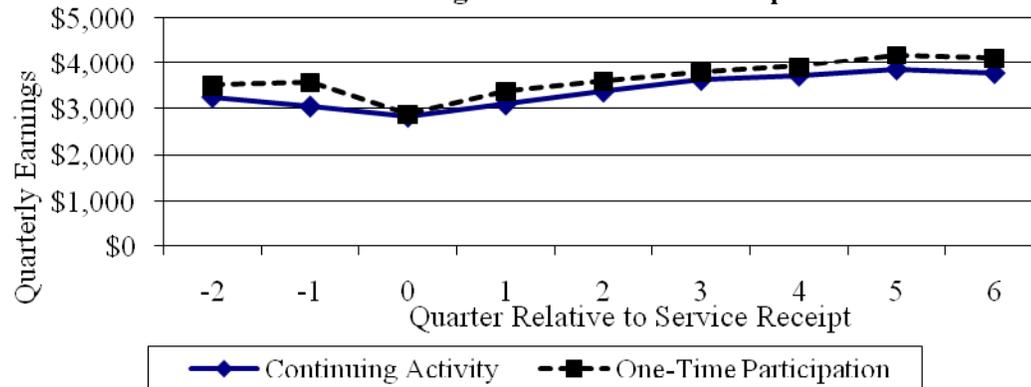
**Figure 5.8: Mean Earnings for Wagner-Peyser Clients, Excluding 4-Week Check Participants**



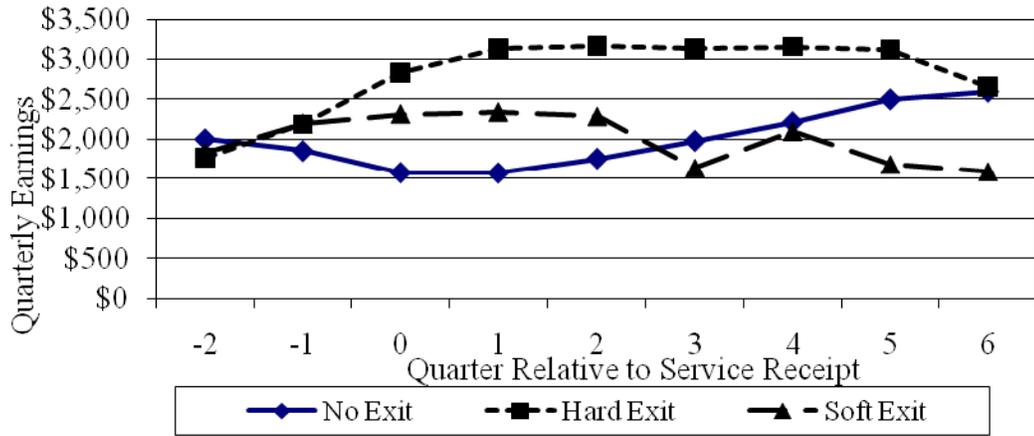
**Figure 5.9: Employment for Wagner-Peyser Clients, Excluding 4-Week Check Participants**



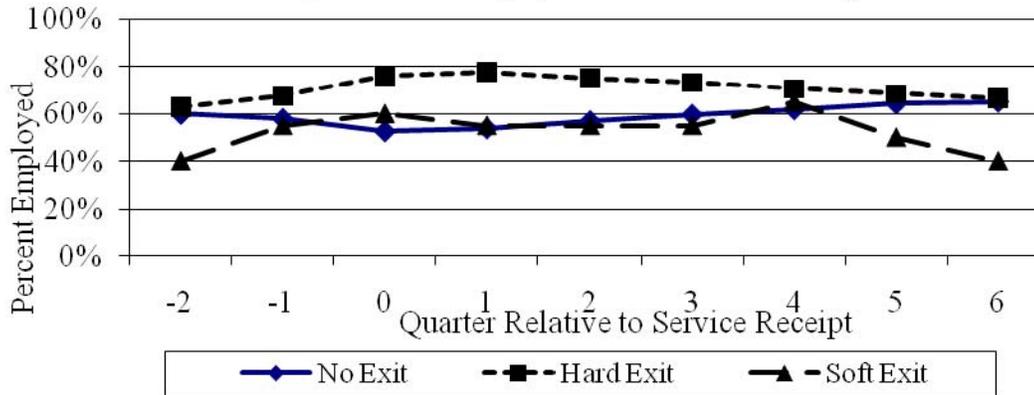
**Figure 5.10: Mean Earnings for Employed Wagner-Peyser Clients, Excluding 4-Week Check Participants**



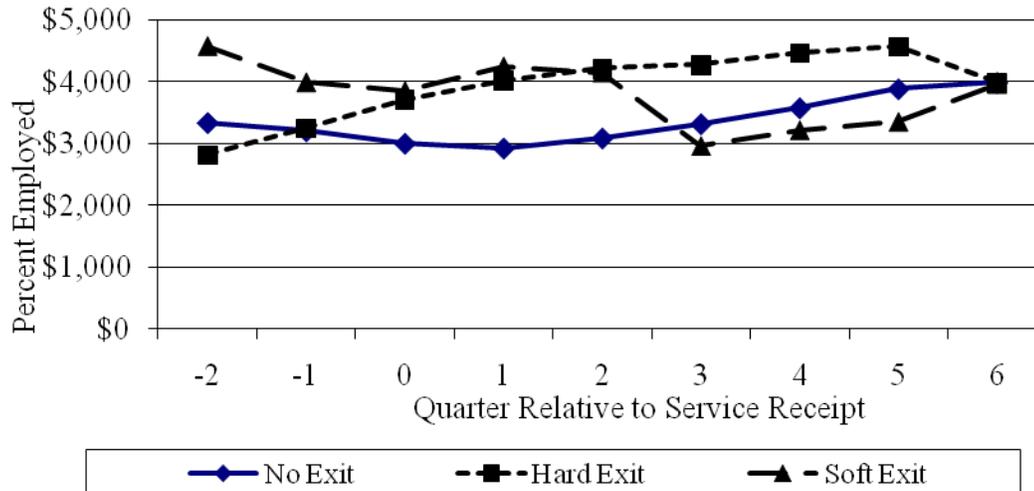
**Figure 5.11: Mean Earnings for WIA Participants**



**Figure 5.12: Employment for WIA Participants**



**Figure 5.13: Mean Earnings for Employed WIA Participants**



## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CLIENT EXPERIENCES: THE STORIES OF JOB SEEKERS AND EMPLOYERS**

To better understand the workings of the One Stop Career Center from the client's perspective, we spent some time interacting with both job seekers and employers at the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Career Centers. Our findings from those discussions are detailed in this chapter. We also explore the differences between the responses we obtained in the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Centers.

The Central WIB has also conducted focus group meetings with employers to gain insight into employer needs and ways that the CWIB and its One Stop Career Centers could help meet those needs. Reported findings from these focus groups with employers are included in our discussion of employers.

#### **The Job Seeker's Experience**

Observation of job seeker activities within each One-Stop Career Center yields an objective record of what they did, which services they used, and how long they spent utilizing each service. Although useful for tracking client flows through the One-Stop, this objective record tells us little about the motivations and personal experience of the persons being observed. Without interacting with clients, it is not possible to evaluate the extent to which clients believe that their needs are being met or whether they experience the One-Stop as a welcoming and helpful place. Talking with job seekers and asking them to complete various surveys at both One-Stop Career Centers allowed us to learn about their expectations of and experiences with One-Stop services and staff and to find out more about the life events that brought them into the One-Stop.

We interacted with job seeking clients in several ways. To learn the extent to which the expectations of first-time visitors were met, we asked a sample of this group to complete two brief surveys during their first visit to the One Stop, one prior to meeting with a job counselor and one after meeting with a job counselor (see Tables 6.1 and 6.2). Another sample of clients was asked to rate the

importance and helpfulness of various One-Stop services on a one-page closed-end form (see Table 6.3). Finally, we used an open-ended interview format to talk with a small sample clients in greater depth about their experience in the labor market and in using One-Stop services (see Table 6.4). All of the clients interviewed were selected at random for interview during the times that observational data were being gathered. This section details the methods that we used to obtain data from clients and what we learned from interviews and discussions with job seekers, focusing separately on each type of client survey used.

### ***Pre/Post Surveys of First Time One-Stop Clients***

To gather data from first-time One-Stop clients, we took advantage of some standard operating procedures and enlisted the help of greeters in identifying first time One-Stop clients and distributing the pre-visit survey to the client before the client met with a counselor. Whenever a client enters a One-Stop Center, the greeter will ask him or her if this is a first or a repeat visit. The greeter will then check Toolbox, the Division of Workforce Development's electronic data management system, to see if the client has a record or not. A client could have a Toolbox record without a prior One-Stop visit if he or she had registered with the job matching system using a computer at a remote location before coming in to the One-Stop. If the greeter finds a record, the client's information is verified and updated, if necessary. If a record is not found, the greeter will initiate one.

First-time clients are given several intake forms to complete before they leave the greeter's desk. During the times that we had client observers stationed in the One-Stop, we asked the greeter to hand first-time clients a copy of the pre-visit survey at the same time that they gave the client the intake forms. Since our pre-visit survey was printed on yellow paper, it stood out from the all the other white forms in a client's hands.

Because there were relatively few first time visitors during any observation period and the pre-visit survey was a distinctly different color than other forms given to the client, first-time visitors were easily identified by our client observers. Observers visually tracked these first time clients while they were in the One-Stop Center and, when the client finished meeting with a career counselor, a client observer approached the client to complete a “post visit” survey. The completed pre-visit survey was usually retrieved from the client at this time, although a few had returned the survey to the greeter.

Given the relatively small sample of first-time visitors obtained during our observation times we were not able to identify meaningful differences between the two One-Stop Centers. We therefore discuss the pre- and post-survey for both centers together.

### ***First-Time Visitor Characteristics***

Eighteen first time visitors agreed to complete a “pre” survey. Out of those 18, 12 also agreed to complete a “post” survey. The sample was split evenly between men and women. Average age of the sample of first time clients was 32 with a range between 17 and 47. Two-thirds of the sample was white, the remainder was African American except for one Hispanic. Seventeen percent of the sample had not completed high school. Close to one-fourth (22 percent) of first time visitors had graduated from high school or earned a GED. Nearly 17 percent had completed some type of technical training. A third had finished some college, but had not obtained a degree. The remaining 17 percent had earned a Bachelor’s degree.

Sixty percent of the sample was currently unemployed. Of those, most had been unemployed for one month. The shortest period of unemployment was one day. The longest period of unemployment was two years.

### ***Pre-Survey Results***

Prior to meeting with a counselor, first time visitors were asked how they had learned about the One-Stop Career Center, what kind of help they expected to receive, what brought them to the Center

that day, what other resources they had used to find work and whether or not they thought the Center would help them achieve their goals.

First time visitors were asked to specify the services that they expected to receive at the One-Stop by checking all the items on a list that applied. Clients could also specify any other reasons that were not listed. Items on the list were: employment/career counseling, information about job training, education information (GED/diploma/college), job search/job referral assistance, information about Columbia's job market, Unemployment Insurance (UI) registration, registration for the Career Assistance Program (the work program for TANF clients) or Missouri Training and Employment Program (the work program for food stamp recipients), Rapid Response activity, use equipment (phone/computer/fax), use resources (books/newspapers) or attend a seminar/workshop. Since first-time visitors could indicate more than one service that they expected to receive, it is useful to consider the percentage that indicated interest in each one of the services.

A third of the sample wanted employment or career counseling and a third desired information on job training, but only one individual of the 18 interviewed expected to find information about obtaining a GED, diploma, or college credit. About three-quarters of the group expected to receive help with job search and job referrals. About half of the group wanted information about local job market conditions. Relatively few of those interviewed said they had come to the One-Stop expecting to complete registration for UI, CAP, or METP.

Client expectations about what the Career Center could do for them fell along a continuum from simply helping the client find immediate employment to helping the client develop a career. A majority of the surveyed clients viewed the One-Stop Center as a means of getting employment now versus a way to obtain training for future employment. Almost all first-time clients who were surveyed wanted to find full-time employment, although a couple of surveyed clients expressed interest in part-time employment. Of those surveyed, two stated that they expected the Center to help them find a "career"

rather than a “job,” implying that they wanted to find employment that had opportunity for advancement within the same field. Not surprisingly, these individuals also expressed hope that they would get information about job training. Close to three-quarters of the sample thought the Center would help them fulfill their goals. The rest were not sure.

### ***Post-survey Results***

After meeting with a Career Counselor, the same first-time visitors who had completed a pre-survey were asked if they were satisfied with their visit and if they found the One-Stop Career Center had the services that they expected to find. Clients who indicated that they were coming back were asked where they expected to spend their time on the next visit. Clients who indicated that they would not return were asked why. Questions about other services the client needed or wanted were also asked.

Following their initial meeting with a Career Center counselor, over 90 percent of surveyed clients agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the visit and found that the Center had the services that they expected. Two-thirds left the Career Center confident that they knew which services would be most helpful to them, whereas the remainder were not yet sure. Seventeen percent planned to return during the week, and 42 percent planned to return during the next two months. Only one said he would not return at all, indicating that he would access Great Hires through a remote access computer. The remainder of the group were not sure when they would return.

Over half of those surveyed expected to spend time meeting with Career Center staff when they returned. The rest thought that they would spend time in the resource room. Spending time in a workshop was marked by one client. Nearly two-thirds agreed or strongly agreed that the Career Center had resources that would help them reach their goals and one-third of the group was not yet sure.

Overall, the results of the pre- and post-surveys indicated that the expectations of first-time clients were consistent with Center offerings. A majority of the new clients surveyed were satisfied with Center staff and services and expressed confidence that the Center resources would help them reach

their employment goals. The demographics of the survey group suggest that the Center is attracting a broad clientele that is consistent with the demographics of the surrounding communities.

### ***Important and Helpful Services***

To learn more about job seekers' opinions of the importance and helpfulness of the One-Stop services, a sample of job seekers was selected at random, given a list of eleven specific services, and asked to indicate the importance and helpfulness of each of these services to them using a four-point scale. Demographic information on respondents was also gathered.

### ***Characteristics of Clients Surveyed About Services***

The characteristics of those interviewed would, of course, influence their evaluation of One-Stop services. For example, those who need childcare or transportation to obtain and maintain employment would likely evaluate services related to these items important and helpful, while those who did not need these items might not judge them to be very important or helpful in their lives. It is important to note that the characteristics of clients responding to questions about services differ somewhat from the characteristics of the average job seeker, making it necessary to use some caution when extrapolating results to a broader group. Because of the small size of the Camden sample, which precluded meaningful comparisons, we have combined analyses of both centers.

A total of 65 individuals filled out the survey. Survey respondents were mostly male (55 percent male, 45 percent female); their average age was 35.32. A majority of the sample interviewed was white; 21 percent of the sample was African-American. The proportion of African-Americans in the sample is somewhat larger than that typically observed in the Camden One-Stop, but somewhat smaller than that observed in the Columbia One-Stop. About 20 percent of the sample had not finished high school, whereas about a third had a high school diploma (36 percent). Eighteen percent had earned an Associate's degree. The remainder had some college (2 percent) or a college degree (18 percent). This level of educational attainment was relatively higher than the level of education of all of the clients that

we observed at either center. Among the full sample of clients that we observed, less than ten percent had completed college and most had only a high school degree (64 percent and 50 percent of observed clients in Camden and Columbia, respectively).

Among those asked to evaluate the importance and helpfulness of various One-Stop services, the number of visits to the One-Stop over the past six months (including the current visit) ranged from 1 to 50, with a median of 6. Fewer than 20 percent indicated they had not visited previously. The unemployed in that group had spent anywhere between one day to almost a year without a job. About 20 percent identified themselves as either dislocated workers, laid off, or unemployed. Only about 3 percent of those interviewed had come to the One-Stop because of requirements of the CAP program (TANF work ready) or METP (Food Stamp work requirement). Close to 15 percent of those interviewed had a job but were looking for a better job.

#### *Client Ranking of Importance and Helpfulness of Services*

Each client who was asked to complete the survey was given a list of eleven specific services and asked to evaluate how *important* each service was to them using a four point scale where 1 indicated “not important,” 2 indicated “somewhat important,” 3 indicated “neutral or not sure” and 4 indicated “important.” Job seekers could also indicate that a particular service was not applicable to their situation. Next, the job seekers were asked to indicate how *helpful* these same services had been for them, again using a four-point scale, where here 1 indicated “have not used service,” 2 indicated “not helpful,” 3 indicated “somewhat helpful,” 4 indicated “helpful” and 5 indicated “very helpful.”

In Table 6.5, the proportion of the sample that indicated whether or not each of these services was “important” to them is given in the first column. The next column identifies the number who had used the service, and the final column reports the proportion of those using a given service who rated it either “helpful” or “very helpful” is given in the second column in Table 6.5.

Results in Table 6.5 make it clear that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to client service would not be effective in either One-Stop. Each service is important to some group of clients, but not all services, or even a subset of services, are important to all clients. Among those surveyed, over three-quarters ranked general information on job resources and services as important, a larger proportion than for any other service. Of course, this implies that one in four of the clients did not value this service. Somewhat over two-thirds of the sample ranked meeting individually with staff for career exploration as important. About half of the sample considered ability to access job openings through the computer job bank, career exploration/help in choosing a career, and assessment of skills and abilities high on their list of important services.

The rather sizeable proportion of clients placing importance on activities requiring a skilled career counselor suggests that the job match function of Great Hires is not likely to decrease the need for One-Stop staff, despite the importance placed by many on access to the computer job bank. Having support services such as childcare and transportation was important to two-fifths of the sample. Insofar as importance is typically a function of need, the lower ranking for support services may simply reflect the fact that our sample captured fewer clients who faced these kinds of barriers to employment.

The high rating of approval by those who obtain general job information suggests that the centers are successful in their core activities. However, the other evaluations suggest a critical role of job counselors in the One-Stop Career Centers. Over 60 percent of clients who had met individually with staff evaluated the service received as helpful or very helpful. Each of these services involved interaction with a job counselor.

The slightly lower evaluation of helpfulness for services such as support services (58 percent) and job training assistance (55 percent) suggest—not surprisingly—that providing these services may not be as easily accomplished. Overall, the helpfulness evaluations given by those who had used a service indicated that most clients found these eleven services helpful to very helpful.

### *In-Depth Interviews*

We used in-depth, open-ended interviews to learn the work history of a sample of clients, to ascertain what resources they had used in this and previous job search efforts, to learn how they found out about the Career Center, and to discover their expectations and experiences during their first visit. If friends or family had used the Career Center, we asked the client to relate their experience to us as well.

Most of the clients with whom we spoke had a history of employment beginning as early as high school, usually in several jobs and often in different fields. Most of the job seekers whom we interviewed had come to the One-Stop Career Center because they were required to, either to undertake the four-week check (UI recipients) or as part of the CAP (TANF recipients). Aside from these, common reasons for coming into the One-Stop included moving to the area and needing work, looking for additional work or for a better job, being laid off, or wanting a different job to escape conflicts with a current supervisor.

The job seekers with whom we spoke had learned about the One-Stop Career Center in various ways. Some had heard about One-Stop services from friends and family who had been previous clients. Others had moved into the area and found out about the function and location of the One-Stop as they discovered the location of various businesses and public services in the area. A look at some of the typical job seekers interviewed in the Camden and Columbia One-Stop Centers follows.

#### *Findings from In-Depth Interviews in Camden*

The job seekers with whom we spoke were, in general, either looking for a better job in their current line of work or were searching for a better match between their skills, and interests, and available job openings. Some of those in the later category seemed quite selective in the employment opportunity that they would consider.

Tim<sup>50</sup> is an example of a job seeker using the One-Stop to look for a better job. Now 30, Tim began working after completing high school. When we spoke with him, he recounted working on a variety of jobs, most of them within the lamp recycling business. Most recently, he had worked for two years as an assistant manager of transportation for a lamp recycling company in Lake Ozark, helping direct a fleet of trucks that traveled nationwide. Previously, he had worked five and one-half years as a laborer and technician in a lamp recycling company in Chicago.

Tim moved to Camdenton three years ago with a job, but wanted to find a better job. When he inquired in the community where to find help with employment, he was directed to the One-Stop Career Center. During his initial visit to the One-Stop, Tim said that staff had helped him learn how to use Great Hires to locate some employment possibilities. After receiving an increase in pay, however, he decided to stay with the company where he was already employed. Six months ago he was in line for transfer to another state. Unfortunately, the promised transfer could not be completed. Since his old position had already been filled, he was laid off. Now, Tim had returned to the One-Stop to find work with a different employer.

While he was not critical of the One-Stop services, he did express frustration about some structural barriers in the local labor market. Tim acknowledged that the One-Stop staff had found various jobs for him, but, Tim wanted to find employment similar—and at a similar rate of pay—to what he had left, which he observed did not appear to exist in the Camdenton area. Pay was also a consideration for Tim. In addition to using One-Stop services, Tim had looked on the Internet (monster.com), cold-called potential employers, and looked at the newspaper for job openings in Camdenton and Jefferson City. He had not been able to locate work that paid what he considered to be a good wage.

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<sup>50</sup> All names in the discussion of client interviews have been changed to preserve the privacy of those interviewed.

Ben had come to the Camden One-Stop to apply for Unemployment Insurance, and he was not optimistic about getting help to find work in his specific field. The 56-year-old had a bachelor's degree in business management and engineering. After graduating from high school, he began work as a boat salesman, a job that he kept for 27 years. While in that job, he earned his college degree. After leaving that job, he had worked for a variety of companies, occasionally filling various management and consulting roles with those companies.

Ben commented that in obtaining his previous jobs, networking, newspaper want ads, and Internet sites such as monster.com and career.com had been "very helpful." In contrast to that experience, he derisively referred to Missouri's automated job matching system (Great Hires) as "NoHires." Nonetheless, he expressed positive views of the One-Stop staff and services and even admitted that Great Hires had provided him with a view of the different kinds of jobs that were available to him in the area.

Brenda, a 29-year-old, had quit her last job after only 2 months of employment. She had worked a variety of sales jobs since high school, spending between one and one-half and three and one-half years on each job. Given that she lived in Camden, she was long-aware of the One-Stop Center. Brenda raved about the high quality of client service, noting that the staff was "very helpful." Her counselor had helped her prepare a resume and had contacted her with various leads on job openings. Brenda admitted that there were many jobs that she chose not to apply for because she either didn't like the job or the supervisor. She also acknowledged that she did not have the experience to get some of the jobs that were available.

Randi, 42-year-old female studying for her GED, was sent to the One-Stop for a four-week UI check. Like Brenda, Randi raised objections to available job options, asserting that she "can't do things that people expect." Although seasonal work is available in the Camden area, she refuses to consider

it because she's "never done that kind of work." She says that she is "mechanically inclined and needs and wants work that fits [her] skills," but admits that type of work has been "hard to come by."

### *Findings from In-Depth Interviews in Columbia*

The job seekers that we interviewed in the Columbia One-Stop Career Center had much the same desires as those in Camden for finding employment that would pay well and align with their skills and interests. The Columbia clients, however, were somewhat more vocal about the things that they did and did not like in the One Stop.

Bob came to the One-Stop in Columbia for the UI four-week check. At 50 years old, Bob had a lengthy and varied work history. He joined the military service after completing high school. Following his discharge several years later, he worked in a warehouse and then as a cook. He has done landscaping and janitorial work. Recently, he has worked as a house painter.<sup>51</sup> His One-Stop visit is not his only job search activity. On the day he talked to us, he was also planning to visit local construction sites to seek employment as a painter or laborer. Although he remarked that it is "a humbling way to find a job," he did not seem to mind.

Bob's wife had been successful in using the Career Center computers to find a job, although she never met with a counselor. Bob's experience was different from his wife's experience, however. He expressed some frustration because, although he was able to find information, he found the procedures confusing. He expressed low confidence in the ability of Career Center staff to find employment for him.

Kim, a 26-year-old female, had visited the One-Stop several times prior to our visit with her. As an Asian, she is a minority in an area that is over 80 percent white and 11 percent African-American. Recalling her past experiences with the One-Stop, Kim said that of all visits to the One-Stop, the first one was "the worst of all." At the time, the visit seemed to her to be just one more bad experience in a

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<sup>51</sup> A job he tells us he like because it is "interesting" and he "enjoys seeing the progress of the work." He says that after completing a few painting jobs, he has discovered that he has "artistic blood."

series of unfortunate events. She had broken her arm. With no insurance to cover the medical expenses, her bills were piling up. She complained that when she sought some public assistance, staff at the Family Support Division office offered her only Food Stamps and a referral to the One-Stop Center. Since she was given no information regarding what the One-Stop could do for her, she assumed that they were going to place her in a job. When that did not occur, she was upset. During that first visit to the One-Stop, she felt that she was “treated like a number,” because Career Center staff emphasized the need to fulfill requirements to continue receiving Food Stamps rather than listening to “her story.”

The degree to which Kim really wanted help from the Career Center became less clear the longer we spoke with her. Kim views herself as “artistic” but feels the Career Center focuses on “traditional ideas of productive employment”—manufacturing jobs. She makes bracelets and sells them to a shop downtown; she aspires to become an author and wants to start her own business as a personal chef; she has designed a line of greeting cards that she hopes to market soon. She substitute teaches and is a volunteer caregiver for an individual. But, she complains that none of these things satisfy the Food Stamp requirements for active job search, despite the fact that she considers herself to be engaged in productive activity.

Kim seemed bitter and frustrated. It appeared that she felt she had been dealt a series of bad deals in life and she resented the fact that no one had come to rescue her, at least, not on her terms. She viewed coming to the Career Center as an imposition, remarking “if I had my choice, I wouldn't set foot in here.” Ironically, Kim admitted that in response to the treatment she received, she was inspired to succeed—even if not in the ways expected by her counselors. Subsequent visits to the One-Stop have been better for Kim. She has found a counselor who listens to her and validates her feelings. Still, it was clear her expectations and those of center staff differed. She complained that the One-Stop staff “wants everyone to do everything themselves,” revealing that she had not internalized the Center’s ideal of self-sufficiency.

Tom, a 36-year-old who had attended college for about a year, came to the Columbia One-Stop Center to complete his four-week check. He reported quite a different experience than either Bob or Kim reported. Tom described his first visit to the Columbia One-Stop as a "ten." He was very satisfied with the information that he received and was "very confident" in the One-Stop employee's knowledge on that first visit. He said that he "got more than expected" when he left with a list of job leads in hand. Tom was glad that using the One-Stop enabled him to broaden his job search. Previously, he had used referrals from friends and relatives and help wanted ads to locate employment with mixed success. Regarding One-Stop services, he cited the help given to him by two counselors. One had been "particularly helpful in the job search and exploring all options available." Another had "given great ideas and help in the job seeking skills class, teaching about job search, applications, resumes, and interviews."

Shamica, a 43-year-old African-American woman, echoed Tom's praise of the One-Stop Center services. Her son-in-law had used the One-Stop Center and had been referred to a job where he was hired. Certified as a Nurse Aide (CNA), Shamica was first referred to the One-Stop when she had applied for Temporary Assistance (TANF). She was back at the One-Stop now, looking for a different position. Reflecting on her previous experience, she said the Career Center "exceeded expectations" when she was hired through a referral from the Career Center. She thought that the most helpful resource was the computer job bank that allowed her to view jobs open in her field. She was also impressed that she has received letters from the Career Center on more than one occasion to alert her to job openings for someone with her qualifications. She noted that meeting with a counselor helped her to find out about jobs that she might not otherwise have thought about.

### ***General Observations Across Both One-Stop Career Centers***

Most of the clients whom we interviewed, not surprisingly, had come to the One-Stop for help in finding reemployment, although a few were looking for a better job while they were employed. Several

of the job seekers had family or friends who had used One-Stop services in the past to secure employment. Many clients had themselves previously used the One-Stop to secure employment.

Considering the results of our interviews as a whole, clients were much more interested in job search than in finding out about education or training options. In this respect, the majority of client needs were met by Wagner-Peyser services rather than by WIA intensive or training services. Of course, training opportunities available through WIA are, in terms of the number of people who can be accommodated, much more limited, so the distribution of clients interests reflects One-Stop resources as well.

Job search clients who came to the One-Stops seemed to “cluster” into several distinct categories. Some computer-savvy clients sought only instruction in use of Great Hires. These clients made very limited use of staff assistance and often decided to access Great Hires from a remote location rather than visit the One-Stop again. They were not dissatisfied with One-Stop services; they simply did not see a need to use them since they felt sufficiently equipped to pursue a job search without further help. Another group of clients were required by a state government agency to conduct a job search at the One-Stop to continue receipt of other benefits. These clients included those making a four-week UI check to meet Division of Employment Security regulations, and those sent from the Family Support Division to enter the Career Assistance Program (CAP for TANF applicants or recipients) or the Missouri Employment and Training Program (METP for Food Stamp recipients). Attitudes of these clients spanned a wide range from those who resented the process and tried to evade as much job-related search as possible to those who welcomed the support and direction provided by the career counselors. Still other clients entered the One-Stop of their own free will, seeking employment or reemployment and needing or wanting more “touch” than “technology” in their job search. These clients especially appreciated their interactions with One-Stop Career Counselors.

Overall, the clients with whom we spoke had high praise for staff. It was clear that staff gave clients several valuable services. First, staff listened to clients who needed to talk about their frustrations and fears as they faced unemployment, especially when it was the client's first stint of unemployment. The simple act of listening often helped a client to regain perspective and encouraged him or her to begin the work of finding a new job. Second, as the staff led clients through job skills analysis and various screening tools, clients gained an understanding of their strengths and weaknesses in the job market. Clients could then use the results of such assessments to focus their job search on opportunities that would utilize their strengths and perhaps consider employment options that they had not considered before. Third, staff members often played the role of coach, encouraging job seekers to keep a positive outlook during the sometimes long and frustrating job search process and helping them to see opportunities that they might have otherwise overlooked. Fourth, staff members enabled clients to become as independent as possible in the job search process.

In contrast to those clients who chose to access Great Hires remotely after an initial visit, for some clients, the ability to meet one-on-one with a job counselor was a primary reason for coming to the One-Stop. For these clients, remote access to Great Hires would not have been an adequate substitute for an on-site visit. Clients who were not comfortable with using computers could rely on the staff to give them nonjudgmental and patient support while they learned to use the system. Staff would also run Great Hires searches for a client, a service that was particularly helpful for older clients who found computers difficult to use. Finally, staff kept alert for job leads that might fit clients' skills and interests and communicated these leads to clients via a phone call, an email, or a letter.

When asked to share anything that they would like to share about their job finding experiences, more than a few job seekers gave advice undoubtedly given to them by the One-Stop staff – “keep a good attitude,” “don't give up on job search, it may take a while to find something, but something will always come available,” “try to keep your head up and don't give up.”

We noted that, to a large extent, the expectations and attitudes that a client had when coming into the One-Stop colored their experience in the One-Stop. Among those we interviewed, the job seekers like Kim who expected to be handed a job or who expected comprehensive support in the job seeking process tended to resent efforts by the career counselors to nudge them to take more initiative in the job search process. Along the same lines, job seekers like Tim and Randi who were very selective about the jobs they would consider usually expressed disappointment in what the staff was able to do for them. Although acknowledging that staff members were friendly, these individuals were typically quite critical of the ability of the One-Stop to get them a “good job” and were particularly critical of Great Hires.

In contrast, those coming in to the One-Stop with little prior expectations often expressed pleasant surprise at the courteous and useful aid they received as job seekers. The job seekers who were more open to various job opportunities also maintained a relatively hopeful attitude in the job search. Those like Tom and Shamica who looked to One-Stop staff to broaden their job search resources were typically very satisfied with the help and the job search tools that job counselors gave them.

This type of experience was also often recounted to us by those coming in to complete four-week UI checks. One job seeker who had been to other One-Stop Career Centers in the state, was "pleasantly surprised by the help" that he received at the Camden One-Stop. It was more useful than he had expected and much different than his experience with a One-Stop in a metropolitan area—an experience that he described as "more DVM like."

### **The Employer’s Experience**

The One Stop operators in Camden and Columbia consider employers to be important clients of the One-Stop Career Centers. Discussing the history of the One-Stop with those operators, however, it soon became clear to us that shifting attention from job seekers to job providers has required change in thought and in operations. Under JTPA, job seekers were given comparatively more attention than employers. Less concern was focused on efforts to encourage employers to utilize their local state

employment office or to accommodate their needs. Employers frequently complained that they could not get the labor quality they desired through state employment offices.

### **Employer Forums Conducted by the C-WIB**

In 2001, about a year after WIA was implemented in Missouri, the C-WIB introduced “Business Forums.” Using local Chambers of Commerce, media, and direct mailings<sup>52</sup> to reach business presidents and owners, the C-WIB extended an invitation to employers to come to a local country club or fellowship hall for a free lunch and “an opportunity to explain [their] problems and discuss the kind of help [they] need and want from the workforce development system.” The forums were held annually in each of the three central region workforce investment regions: Mid-Missouri, Lake Area, and Meramec Region.

Notes from the C-WIB's planning meetings for the business forums stressed the importance of keeping the meetings “short and very much to the point.” Employers were to be assured that “this is a whole new program” and that attending the forums did not commit them to anything. Employers were to be informed about opportunities for funding special projects that addressed their needs. Typically, these “special projects” were tax credits that an employer could receive for hiring a low wage worker.

The common format for each forum was to briefly introduce employers to the features of the job matching software<sup>53</sup> and then engage them in group discussion that was an informal version of a focus group. Employers were asked three questions: 1) What are your hiring issues?; 2) Do you use the Career Center system? Why or why not?; and 3) Are there any other programs we could offer that would be helpful to you? The C-WIB staff made notes of employer responses.

They found that over time and across locations, the main hiring issue was finding qualified employees. Employers complained of applicants not ready to work because they had limited

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<sup>52</sup> The letters were addressed generically to "Area Employer" but were signed by the chairman of the Central Workforce Investment Board and each of the presiding commissioners in a given Workforce Investment Area - Mid-Missouri; Lake Area; or the Meramec region.

<sup>53</sup> The Missouri *WORKS!* job match computer program was replaced by Great Hires in 2005.

mathematics, interpersonal and basic communication skills. The issues that employers found especially frustrating included characteristics of the labor market that were difficult to change, for example, the ability of larger firms to bid labor away from small and medium size firms through higher wages, or the high cost of health insurance for the small employer. Other frustrations centered on labor quality: substance abuse among job applicants (both because of its impact on work quality and because it provided an alternative to “honest work”), lack of qualified applicants for managerial positions and young job applicants who lacked basic education skills or a work ethic.

Employers who did not use a One-Stop Career Center either did not know about the services offered in the Center or had a sufficient number of applicants who applied directly to the company. Some in Columbia, where the One Stop involves a consortium of service providers, did not use the Career Center “because the lack of coordination between state agencies is frustrating.” An employer who used the Center to find potential employees said that it “saves the employer some time” but other employers noted that the electronic job-matching program “returns some inappropriate applicants.”

Employers encouraged the C-WIB to expand the training programs, particularly GED/Adult Literacy and job readiness training, and especially in rural areas. One employer stressed the importance of focusing on mastery of subject matter:

If participants have not mastered job readiness skills, then can't the program operators continue to work with them rather than employers having to? If forty hours is not enough training, extend the programs. Students need to be graded here as well. Failure must be an option.

Other employers called for more specialized training, for example, role-playing ways to handle an irate customer or providing more mentoring opportunities.

In 2004, as part of pilot program, the C-WIB hired three Business Representatives whose job it was to contact local employers, tell them about Career Center services, and provide assistance with posting job openings on Great Hires. One of the business representatives was to be trained in the

WorkKeys job profiling in order to provide help for employers in identifying the specific skills necessary for the jobs listed by employers on Great Hires.

There was much more turnover in these positions than initially expected, with most hires quitting within a few months of their start date to take better-paying positions elsewhere. It is not clear whether the high turnover was due to the relatively low salary, mismatch of hire to task, or difficulty of the task. Nonetheless, the C-WIB is highly optimistic that, with the latest hires in place, the program will be successful. According to the executive director of the C-WIB, at the end of two years, these positions will be given to the C-WIB subcontractors since the federal government prohibits the C-WIB from providing direct customer services beyond the two years of the pilot program. The goal is that practices established during the pilot period will assure success of the program over the long run.

### ***Employer Surveys***

To learn how employers who used the One-Stop Centers evaluated their services, we asked the regional One-Stop director for a list of employers who had used the Camden and Columbia One-Stops. From the lists for each of the two locations, we selected a random sample of employers and conducted phone interviews. We began our interviews by asking employers about the characteristics of the business including type and age of business, number employed and average number of hires per year, as well as seasonality of business and degree of turnover. We then asked about their experience with either the Camden or Columbia One-Stop Career Center, depending on their location. Employers were asked how they had learned of the Career Center, how long they had used it, and what specific services they had utilized. We asked them to evaluate their experience with the Center and to comment about how the Center compared with other methods that the employer had used to obtain employees. Employers were invited to tell us any service that they would like to see the Career Center provide that was not already available.

### *Employers Who Had Used the Camdenton One-Stop*

Attempts were made to contact 34 employers. Of this group, 17 employers were reached and 12 consented to an interview. Among these 12 employers, a variety of industries were represented. The employers were spread throughout the lake region with some in Camdenton and some in the town of Lake Ozark. Not surprisingly, a third of the businesses represented were in the leisure and hospitality industry. A quarter of the businesses were in manufacturing. Two of the businesses supplied professional and business services, while another two were clothing retailers. One, an animal shelter was a nonprofit.

Age of businesses ranged between 5 and 90 years. More than half of the businesses in the sample were 10-20 years old. Four had been in operation between 31 and 45 years. One company was 90 years old. Four of the businesses were run by family and another four were incorporated. Three of the businesses were large chains – one a large clothing retailer, one a resort, and one a restaurant.

Number of employees had a wide range—from 5 to 350. Consistent with federal data on area employment, most employers were small. One employed fewer than 10. Four had between 11 and 20 employees. Two employers had 21 to 30 employees and another two employers had between 41 and 50 working for them. Of the three remaining employers, one had 200 employees, another had 275, and one had 350. A significant amount of turnover existed for these employers. In three cases, the average number hired per year was greater than the number currently employed, implying turnover rates of over 100 percent. Two of these cases were in the leisure/hospitality industry while one was the clothing retailer.

Only four stated that their business was subject to seasonal variations in customer demand for their goods and services. Two of these were in the leisure/hospitality industry. One was a large clothing retailer; the other manufactured sports related items.

When asked how long they had known of the One-Stop Center, most with whom we spoke responded “always.” One indicated learning of the Career Center through the unemployment office, while another had a relative who worked at the Career Center.

When asked the avenues used to obtain employees, all employers responded with the percent distribution across several categories. All had obtained their employees through several different routes. Ten of the employers indicated use of Great Hires, with the proportion of hires made ranging from 2 to 80 percent. Nine employers also used the want ads, with the proportion of hires ranging between 30 and 95. Seven employers—most of them of medium size (around 20 employees)—relied on word of mouth as well. One large business also used word of mouth for about 10 percent of their outreach and spread the rest between want ads (60 percent) and posting job openings on Great Hires (30 percent). Three employers listed other methods such as walk-ins, networking, and use of the website Lakejobs.com.

The employers with whom we spoke had relatively few complaints about the service they had received from the One-Stop. Two noted that they had gotten only a few job seeker referrals from the Career Center. The remaining employers considered the One-Stop to be as good as or better than other alternative ways of reaching potential workers. When asked what, if anything, they would recommend to the One-Stop to improve employer services, all but one said “nothing.” That one employer wanted an Internet site where employers could put up the job listing themselves—an issue already addressed and available through Great Hires. Employees appreciated the “wide range of exposure” of their job ads to “a lot of people” and the fact the One-Stop staff were “proactive in matching employees with appropriate skills to the jobs we have available.”

### ***Employers Who Had Used the Columbia One-Stop***

Eleven employers were contacted in Columbia and all consented to an interview. Among these eleven employers, four were in manufacturing, one was in transportation, two were in the financial services industry, two were local government agencies, and one provided professional services. As a

whole, the businesses contacted had been in operation for quite some time. The two local government offices and one bank had been in operation for over 100 years. The remaining businesses had been in operation for 15-25 years. All but two of the businesses contacted were structured as corporations, either for profit or not for profit. The other two businesses were family run.

The number of employees ranged from a low of 25 for a staffing agency to a high of 1168 for the City of Columbia. The City of Columbia uses a large number of temporary employees, especially in the Park and Recreation department during the summer season for tasks such as lifeguards at local pools and groundskeepers. Of the remainder, three other businesses had fewer than 100 employees. Three companies had between 100 and 500 employees. One manufacturer employed 650.

Most of the employers routinely used a variety of methods to find employees. In addition to utilizing Great Hires, seven employers also reported advertising open positions in newspaper want ads. One also advertised on local radio. Three employers used word-of-mouth or a referral service. Two employers used a Temporary Employee service.

Number hired per year varied widely. A staffing agency hired 600 employees per year, most of these in temporary positions. Most of the employers we interviewed hired around 20-40 employees per year, although the two local government offices hired between 50 and 150 per year. Only two employers, a manufacturer and a bank, noted that turnover was a problem, specifically commenting that college-aged employees left employment after fall and winter graduation.

At least five employers reported having used the One-Stop Career Center's Internet-based job match program "forever." This program was Missouri *WORKS!* in time past, recently, replaced by Great Hires. To a much greater extent than the Camdenton employers, however, the Columbia employers also reported frequent use of job fairs sponsored by the One-Stop Career Center.

When asked how the One-Stop compared with other means of acquiring employees, some employers said "very well," whereas others thought that alternate methods were better at matching

employees with openings. The most common complaint was that job matches were poor, and that too many poorly qualified individuals were matched to a given job. The “wide net” cast for employees in Missouri*WORKS!* was a one of the main motivations for the State’s Division of Workforce Development to develop Great Hires. Many of these employers were interviewed in the early stages of that transition and had not yet had opportunity to judge whether or not Great Hires would better match employee skills to their needs. Those who had used Great Hires listed it as the “most useful feature” of the One-Stop services.

Employers offered few suggestions for how existing services should be altered. One employer wanted the One-Stop to offer employees and potential employees more training options. Another employer would like to see a community-wide job fair that would also involve area high schools and colleges. Employers stated their experience with the One-Stop had been “good,” and praised the “very helpful staff.” One employer mildly chided a One-Stop employee for “sending more applications than needed.” At the same time, another employer remarked having “good interaction” with the same One-Stop employee.

### ***General Observations Across Both One-Stop Career Centers***

Most employers were interested in the basic Wagner-Peyser job match services rather than the training focus of WIA. In general, employers seemed satisfied with the labor exchange services that they had received though use of the Internet job matching service. Employers mentioned liking the ability to post their own openings and monitor hits. It is noteworthy that this general sense of employer satisfaction was conveyed by quite a diverse group of employers, suggesting that the job match system seems to be fulfilling its basic promise to streamline and automate the job match process. Still, employers also gave high praise to the staff. So, it would seem that, as was noted for the job seeker, there are times when employers prefer “high touch” to high tech in the job match process.

It is interesting that Columbia employers spoke of involvement with the job fairs whereas Camdenon employers did not. Job fairs also accentuate human interaction, in this case between potential employees and an employer representative. This difference in the use of job fairs could reflect the fact that with two large area high schools, two colleges, and one university in the town, there are more first-time job seekers in Columbia who would find job fairs helpful. Columbia also has more and broader employment opportunity and more diversity among job seekers than does Camdenon, possibly making job fairs more effective in facilitating job matches. This fact was affirmed by the employer who encouraged the Columbia One-Stop to offer city-wide job fairs rather than those focusing only on certain types of workers or employers.

Columbia employers offered more complaints than employers in Camdenon about referrals of unqualified workers, but they also were more vocal in offering praise for helpful staff. They clearly appreciated having contact with counselors who knew what they needed and who could “filter out” those employees that were picked by the electronic system but were not an effective match.

### **Conclusion**

In general, the job seekers and employers with whom we spoke were satisfied with the One-Stop services that they had received. It was significant that, when asked what the One-Stop needed to change or what additional service should be offered, few of either type of respondent offered suggestions for major changes. Most suggestions offered were largely positive, often suggesting that they successful programs rather than criticizing existing services.

It was clear that neither job seekers nor employers viewed the One-Stop Center as their only resource in the labor exchange process. Job seekers typically engaged in multiple forms of job search—using some traditional methods such as reading want ads and some new methods such as using Monster.com to post a resume on the Internet. Likewise, employers used multiple avenues to locate

potential employees, including local media and word-of-mouth of both employees and other area employers.

The appreciation that both employers and job seekers had of the work of One-Stop staff suggests that completely automating job match services would not provide employers or job seekers the same level or quality of service. Staff are able to individualize service delivery to meet the specific needs of employers and job seekers in ways that even a complex computer program cannot. Employers commented that having One-Stop staff post job openings was a much needed time saver. Job seekers benefited from the familiarity of the staff with local labor market conditions; many valued having the job counselor serve as a coach for in the job search process.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **Summary**

##### ***Need for This Study***

The performance measures mandated by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 generate a broad, aggregate picture of the desired result of activity in the One-Stop Career Center: Getting clients jobs—if at all possible jobs with career opportunities. This picture has limited use, however, if the question is “What activities that take place within a One-Stop influence the level of those performance measures?” To answer this question, this study examined the workings of two One-Stops in the Central Region Workforce Investment Area in Missouri during the 2004 calendar year.

The two One-Stops share the same state history, but have different regional histories. Formerly part of different Service Delivery Areas under JTPA, the two One-Stop Centers were brought under the oversight of the newly formed Central Workforce Investment Board as part of a controversial merger of these two SDAs. As a legacy of their unique regional histories, each One-Stop was positioned differently relative to city center and partner agencies, each operated within quite a different local area economy, and each had a different type and style of leadership both prior to and under WIA. Under WIA, operations at both One-Stops have been shaped by the proactive leadership and customer-service focus of the C-WIB chair.

##### ***Study Findings***

In this research, a variety of data collection methods were used to obtain information about One-Stop operations. Day-to-day transactions among job seekers, employers, One-Stop staff and partner agencies were tracked by observation and by analysis of One-Stop local, regional, and state data records. The extent to which clients utilized One-Stop services during a given visit was assessed. The use of

technology as a complement to or substitute for staff assisted services and the impact of the physical layout of each One-Stop Center on delivery of workforce services was evaluated. We also interviewed clients to obtain their views of their experiences in the One-Stop and their evaluation of the quality of the service they received.

The evidence of this study goes beyond the outcome-based mandated performance measures, giving a broader understanding of One-Stop activity. Close examination of One-Stop operations over a period of time in Camdenton and Columbia, Missouri identified several factors that the federal measures either masked through aggregation or did not consider at all.

### *General Patterns*

Analysis of observational data and of various statistical reports disseminated by the C-WIB Executive Office indicated that most job-seeking clients accessed Wagner-Peyser services. About half of the client traffic at both One-Stops is due to four-week checks, mandated for UI claimants, and job search activities. In these tasks, clients were more likely to interact with DWD staff than with WIA staff. Comparison of client traffic at the Camdenton and Columbia One-Stops also pointed to the impact of the local area economy. Charting traffic count in the Camdenton One-Stop Center as a three month moving average from January 2003 to December 2004, the influence of the area's seasonal economy became evident, as the count rose in the spring and declined in fall. The Columbia Center's traffic count was relatively higher when large retailers built new stores in the city and used the One-Stop as a central location for job applications.

### *Referral to Services*

Greeters at each One-Stop Center form the core of a systematic client referral system, essentially serving as the gatekeepers to the One-Stop services. The client's response to the greeter's question of "May I help you?" determines how the client will be directed. Normally, the greeter will pair a new job-

seeking client with a DWD job counselor, who will provide Wagner-Peyser staff-assisted services, gathering some basic demographic and employment history information, introducing the job seeker to Great Hires and helping the client establish a Great Hires record. The job counselor may also help the client prepare or update a resume. These clients would be initially classified in the state record system as having received Wagner-Peyser services. For many clients, this level of service is sufficient. If a client makes a subsequent visit and still has not made much progress in finding suitable employment and if the job counselor deems it necessary, the client might be asked to complete some basic interest and aptitude exams to help direct the job search and to aid in development of an Individual Employment Plan.

If a client is a dislocated worker or mentions an interest in education or training to the greeter or to the DWD job counselor, or if in talking with the client the DWD job counselor discovers that the client has some serious barriers to employment, the client will be referred to a WIA counselor. Alternatively, because some local education and training providers are aware of WIA services, occasionally they may refer a student needing funding to WIA to be assessed for eligibility.

The coding of a client as Wagner-Peyser or WIA staff-assisted is based on the employee code of the job counselor working with the client. If the employee entering data into Toolbox is a DWD employee, based on the counselor's identification code in the system, the client is coded as receiving Wagner-Peyser services. Once a client is referred to a WIA counselor and meets with that counselor, Toolbox will recognize the WIA counselor's identification code and classify the client as having received WIA staff-assisted core services. If the client subsequently accesses Great Hires without staff assistance, when the client logs in, Toolbox will recognize that the client is a recipient of WIA services, but without the employee code entered, will classify the client as utilizing self-directed WIA services. In essence, once a client has interacted with a WIA counselor, henceforth, the client is automatically coded in the state data system as having received WIA services.

Another form of client referral is through the UI profiling. Profiled UI clients are new UI filers, selected at the state level based on certain characteristics that suggest they may have a harder time finding employment. These filers receive a letter from the state indicating that they must meet with DWD staff, and they are required to receive more extensive services.

Veterans may enter the one stop with a specific referral to the Veterans' Representative. Columbia has a Veteran's Hospital with one full time DWD Veteran's Representative on site. Often this Representative will refer clients to partner agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation or, for employment-related issues, the One-Stop Veterans' Representative. Also, clients who mention being a veteran to the greeter on entering the One-Stop will be directed to the Veterans' Representative.

#### *Physical Layout of the Center*

The physical layout of each One-Stop seemed thoughtfully arranged, given common traffic patterns and the structural constraints of the building. In both locations, the greeter's desk was just inside the door and the first place that one would naturally visit. The greeter's desk physically separated clients from One-Stop resources, visually enforcing the greeter's role as director of client action and gatekeeper to services. Waiting areas were near the greeters' desks and visible from the counselors' desks. In both locations, a system had been established to alert counselors to the presence of a client needing services and to give counselors basic information about the services requested by the client. Resources such as phone books, computers, printer, phones, fax machines were grouped together for easy access. There was ample room in each resource area to accommodate more than one client/counselor pair working on the computers.

In Columbia, the area used by HDC, the partner agency providing WIA services is somewhat hidden from client view, visually reinforcing the need to usually go through two gatekeepers (greeter and DWD counselor) to access those services. In Camden, the WIA counselor has a desk alongside the DWD counselors.

Space in Camdenon is smaller than in Columbia, so the front desk, the resource area, the DWD counselors and the WIA counselor are all in close proximity. Only a desk-high wall partition separates the desks of four counselors, arranged in a cross pattern. We observed that it was sometimes possible to hear client/counselor conversations at a counselor's desk from across the room. Placing higher barriers around the desks, however, would have prevented two of the counselors from seeing clients in the waiting area or monitoring their clients who are doing independent work on the computers in the resource area.

Computer lab space for classroom instruction on computer applications is available at both One-Stops Centers. Conference space is available as well and sometimes used for employment interviews or small classes.

#### *Map of Transactions*

When a client enters the One-Stop, the greeter speaks with him or her, records the client's Social Security number on a log sheet and tallies the initial service that the client mentions wanting to receive during that visit. Consequently, the Monthly Traffic Report that is based on this log sheet reports one service per client per day. Our observation of client flow within each One-Stop confirmed that this record underestimates actual client use of services, since we observed many clients using more than one service in a single visit.

In Camdenon, close to 30 per cent of visits were related to UI. In a sample of UI clients that we observed, about 9 in 10 interacted with center staff. The most frequently received service at Camdenon was job search. In Columbia also a significant proportion (40 percent) of clients in our analysis came to the One-Stop to complete a 4-week UI check. Again, around 9 in 10 received some type of staff assistance.

Wagner-Peyser job counseling with a DWD employee was common in both centers, although in the Columbia the proportion was appreciably higher, with participation of over 50 percent, in contrast to

30 percent in Camdenon (Figure 5.1). At both centers, slightly more than two-fifths of clients were found to engage in job search.

Statistics on other types of staff interaction indicate that, during the times that we observed clients in the One-Stop, there was a high level of interaction with One-Stop staff. Common “sequence” of services would be speaking with the greeter, then going to the waiting area or to the resource area, talking with a counselor, often in the resource area while either posting information on Great Hires or working on a resume.

### *Client Expectations*

Three in four first time clients surveyed indicated interest in job search or job referral; about half wanted to know about local labor market conditions. Following their initial meeting with a counselor, over 90 percent of the first-time visitors surveyed agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that they were satisfied with the visit and found that the Center had the services they expected to find. In general, results of the pre- and post-visit surveys indicated that the expectations of first-time clients were consistent with Career Center offerings. Those who indicated that they would not return usually had either obtained what they desired or said they would access Great Hires at a remote location.

### *Remote Access of One-Stop Services*

Analysis of state data generated by access to the Great Hires confirmed the importance of self-service and remote access of a large share of clients. Even clients who are observed in the One-Stop center (our observed sample) often will access the system from a remote location. When we looked at all individuals obtaining access to the system, the importance of remote access was even clearer. Still, it would appear that remote access does not fully substitute for staff-assisted services for many clients; there is little justification for believing that remote access could further substitute for staff services at present.

### *Job Seeker and Employer Satisfaction with One-Stop Services*

The job seekers and employers who were interviewed were satisfied with the One-Stop services that they received. Suggestions for change or additional services were largely positive and along the lines of expanding successful One-Stop programs to a wider audience. Interestingly, neither job seekers nor employers viewed the One-Stop as their only labor exchange resource, also using word-of-mouth, local media, and the Internet in their searches. The high praise given to One-Stop staff from job seekers and employers alike underscores the value added by One-Stop employees. Complete automation of job exchange services would likely lessen client satisfaction.

### **Further Thoughts**

From our observations and analyses, it appears that the ability of the Camden and Columbia One-Stops to realize the C-WIB's goals of moving customers to self-sufficiency, raising the level of living for customers, helping employers retrain employees and upgrade employee skills so they can compete in the global marketplace, and contributing to local economic development by providing a skilled workforce have and will depend heavily on several factors. First, it depends on the level of success in developing an organizational culture that embraces and strives to reach these goals. Second, it depends on ability to integrate the differing strengths of One-Stop staff and partner agencies into "seamless service" for job-seeking clients. Third, there is a need to secure adequate funding. Fourth, the One-Stops must continue to recognize and effectively utilize the value-added that the staff brings to client relations. And finally, One-Stop leadership must remain open to creative, synergistic, forward thinking.

### ***Developing an Organizational Culture***

Considering the histories of the One-Stops in our study, it became clear that federal mandates are implemented in the context of state, regional, and local history. Although data gathering procedures and

reporting practices can be changed rather quickly, these are external changes that do not involve the heart of the operation. It takes longer for a significant shift in policy—such as seeing the employer as the ultimate One-Stop customer rather than the job seeker and viewing economic development rather than employment as the ultimate end of One-Stop service—to permeate the culture of the organization, especially if the policy shift necessitates a substantial paradigm shift.

Of the two One-Stop Centers that we observed, Camdenton seemed to have an easier transition from JTPA to WIA and an easier acceptance of the economic development focus of WIA. Continuity of leadership during that time certainly was a contributing factor, but it should also be noted that business interests are prevalent in the Camdenton One-Stop. From its beginning, LOES has shared office space with the Lake Ozark Council of Local Governments, and, over time, with other entities dedicated to local economic development. The C-WIB chair is a private business owner who is actively involved in economic development initiatives at local, regional, state, and national levels. He maintains an office in the lower level of the Camdenton One-Stop. The Columbia One-Stop, in contrast, has had a long association with social service agencies that dates back to pre-WIA days. From its inception, the main focus of the Columbia One-Stop has been on using partner services to help job seekers obtain and maintain employment. The current leader at the Columbia One-Stop describes himself as a “lifelong bureaucrat” and has commented that the shift in focus from job seeker to employer as the ultimate customer of the One-Stop has been somewhat difficult to make.

### ***Integrating Job Counselor Strengths to Create Seamless Service***

At both One-Stops, client service appears truly “seamless.” Clients, especially new clients, would not know, nor have reason to care, which type of employee—DWD or WIA—is providing workforce services for them. From the client perspective, all that matters is that their questions are answered and they obtain the help in securing employment that they had hoped to obtain. It was our observation that staff generally worked together to make sure that happened. The relatively high level

of cooperation among different kinds of staff at each One-Stop was likely due to several factors: the customer-focus emphasized by C-WIB leadership, regular staff meetings to discuss issues and concerns, and working along side one another in the same office long enough to understand similarities and differences in the orientations and goals of their respective employers (state government versus private contractor).

### ***Securing Adequate Funding***

Budget issues were an ever-present concerns at each One-Stop during our observation period, but for somewhat different reasons. Local economic conditions have usually allowed Camdenon to meet WIA performance standards with relatively little difficulty. Lately, however, downsized local companies and closed factories have made it much more difficult to meet performance standards related to rehire wage levels. In some cases, it has been impossible to replace wage levels of dislocated workers. In Columbia, the strong local economy has always made it difficult to secure much formula funding. Consequently, the Columbia One-Stop has had to rely relatively more on partner services. Recently, HDC lost several staff positions due to a substantial decline in the level of funding for the state's Career Assistance Program (CAP) for TANF work ready clients, limiting at least this partner's ability provide WIA and CAP services to One-Stop clients in the Columbia One-Stop.

Issues associated with cost sharing of office space have been a concern for the Columbia One-Stop, which shares space in the larger Resource Center with co-located partner and other agencies. This arrangement has required extensive negotiations over expense sharing, especially for common areas in the building. LOES is not co-located with partner agencies and does not have this concern regarding shared expenses.

Discussions in C-WIB meetings during the time of our observation often focused on the increased need to rely on federal grants to fund One-Stop programs. When several factories closed in counties served by LOES, a successful bid for a National Emergency Grant was made to fund education

and training programs for the large number of dislocated workers. State funding has appeared to become less certain over time. In particular, there was considerable uncertainty about the level of funding for the CAP program for some time, making it difficult to budget for service provision.

### ***Value-Added by Staff***

The ability to access job exchange services on the Internet via Great Hires has given job seekers the choice to visit or not visit the physical One-Stop. Given the widespread use of remote access, we speculate that some clients may prefer “hi tech” to “hi touch.” This type of client is likely to be computer savvy and already have marketable skills. Such clients are probably not going to see a need to visit the physical One-Stop. For them, remote access to Great Hires has, in effect, expanded the outreach of the One-Stop to clients it otherwise would not have had. At the other extreme, there are those clients who, for whatever reason, find it difficult to use the computer unaided. These clients will always prefer the high touch of dealing with counselors face to face. Between these two extremes are clients who want technology with teaching or “computer with coach.” These clients would not need the step-by-step guidance of those having difficulty using the computer, but would prefer talking with a job counselor about the opportunities found on the Internet and perhaps getting some basic guidance about how to apply for specific jobs.

It was our observation that the “high touch” of the job counselor that is available within the One-Stop is a major value added for the job searching client. While the client could access basic job exchange services over the Internet, working face-to-face with a counselor, the client also gets up-to-date knowledge of the local area economy and job opportunities, an assessment of skills necessary to help direct job search efforts, and, probably most important for many clients, the encouragement to persist in job search efforts if the job search takes some time.

The staff also provides value added for employers in that they can watch for potential job applicants for a given position among the job seekers that they counsel. Employers who complete a job

order can leave job applications at the One-Stop, making the application process more efficient and more private for the employer. Job fairs sponsored by the local One-Stop partners give employers an opportunity to showcase their employment opportunities for potential employees. One-Stop programs on job-readiness skills can also help improve the quality of labor sent to a potential employer.

### ***Forward Thinking***

One-Stops operate in a dynamic labor market. The number of private sector job match services, especially on the Internet, has increased, creating competition for services such as Great Hires. To the extent that these private sector services serve the job seekers with highly marketable skills, the One-Stop may increasingly be left to serve the harder-to-place worker. Having a relatively large number of hard-to-place workers, especially in times of decreased public resources, can increase difficulty in meeting WIA performance standards. In light of this issue, One-Stops cannot be passive about reaching potential clients. Recent efforts to improve the job match software to provide better selection of applicants—and in particular the replacement of Missouri Works! with Great Hires—reflect an interest in such outreach. Unfortunately, technical problems with Great Hires may have served to discourage rather than encourage Center use.

Perhaps a larger challenge for the One Stop Career Center is a labor market that is shifting demand away from industrial skills toward knowledge and information processing skills and that is becoming more globally competitive. Counties served by LOES have already experienced jobs losses to overseas competition, with little to no opportunity to replace lost jobs with those offering comparable wages. Dislocated workers who were making a good wage without a high school degree before losing their jobs now require education and training before reemployment is possible. This issue is of great concern in rural areas where education and employment opportunity can be quite limited. Both the C-WIB and the One-Stops will need to give attention to stimulating economic growth in rural areas. On a more positive note, the One-Stops could take advantage of the “multiple career” work history that is

beginning to be evident among workers and provide value added services for clients at each job change. Clearly, it is increasingly necessary for One-Stops to track and be responsive to changing needs of job seekers and employers.