



“Government Works” Doesn’t Have to be an Oxymoron:

*How Empowering Local Leaders Created an Integrated
and Effective One-Stop Career Center in Camden County*

Prepared by:

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Section I

Executive Summary

The Camden County Workforce Development Board (WDB) is responsible for the performance of all activities in Camden County, New Jersey that support employment opportunities for its residents through the provision of job training, educational-related programs, access to the region's employers and other employment related services. Included in these responsibilities is the management and operation of the Camden County Career Center ("One-Stop") that serves to bring together these services and our Partner Agencies in a singular, centralized location.

Starting in 2019, the WDB, along with its Partner Agencies, faced significant challenges initially brought about by the relocation of the "One-Stop" facility from its former Mt. Ephraim Avenue site in Camden City to its current Cherry Hill location just adjacent to the PATCO Woodcrest Station. To ensure a successful relocation, the WDB along with its Member Partners established a series of working groups to program manage the details pertaining to facility layout, office outfitting and customer accommodation. In addition, cross-functional Teams between the Partner Agencies were established with special attention given to resource sharing, integration of systems and communications along with workflow efficiencies. Resultant from these unparalleled collaborative efforts, the Camden County "One-Stop" outcomes have clearly demonstrated the value gained through the empowerment of leadership at all levels to define mission objectives and implement positive, process-focused changes to best meet established operational objectives.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic beginning March 2020 further introduced significant changes to WDB and Partner Member operations. With the closure of the "One-Stop" and related NJ State and Partner Agency offices, a series of unprecedented steps were required to maintain operations. Fundamental to maintaining our operations was the shift to delivery of services via electronic means using in-place technology resources and platforms. Results of this shift included: Enhanced virtual access to "One-Stop" services, Virtual Job Fairs, Special COVID-19 driven outreach to meet employer's needs, facilitation of staff telework arrangements and particular focus upon workflow and integration of operations between WDB and Partner Agencies.

This White Paper serves to highlight the 'Best Practices' developed and implemented by the WDB along with its Partner Agencies from 2019 to the present, the results of which have enabled a series of high-value outcomes for both job seekers and employers. Central to this success was the empowerment of key leaders at all levels to drive innovation and implement process streamlining along with other related improvements. It is the recommendation of the authors that the culture of leadership empowerment continue to be supported and incentivized to advance attainment of our employment-focused objectives for the residents of Camden County.

Section II

Primary Mission and Operational Objectives

Primary Mission Description

The primary mission of the One-Stop Career Center is to provide services that are accessible to *all* participants of the workforce system, including a wide range of customers falling into many categories, employers, training providers, and career counselors and coaches. We also seek to assure that our customers have access to important data such as job openings, key industry activity, career pathway information and training opportunities.

Access to Services

The geographical location of the One-Stop Career Center is an important determinant as easy access is key to serving Camden County residents, along with proximity to public transportation and parking. These and other factors were major considerations prior to our relocation of the One-Stop Career Center as described in Section III of this paper.

Collaborative Services / 'One-Door' Model

It has always been a focus of the One-Stop Career Center to deliver all employment services via a seamless, 'One-Door Model.' With multiple agencies (NJ LWD, Camden County Career Services, NJ Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, and the County Board of Social Services) engaged to deliver similar services, effective assessment and inter-agency cooperation has been the key to success to direct customers to the agency that can provide the best and most appropriate services.

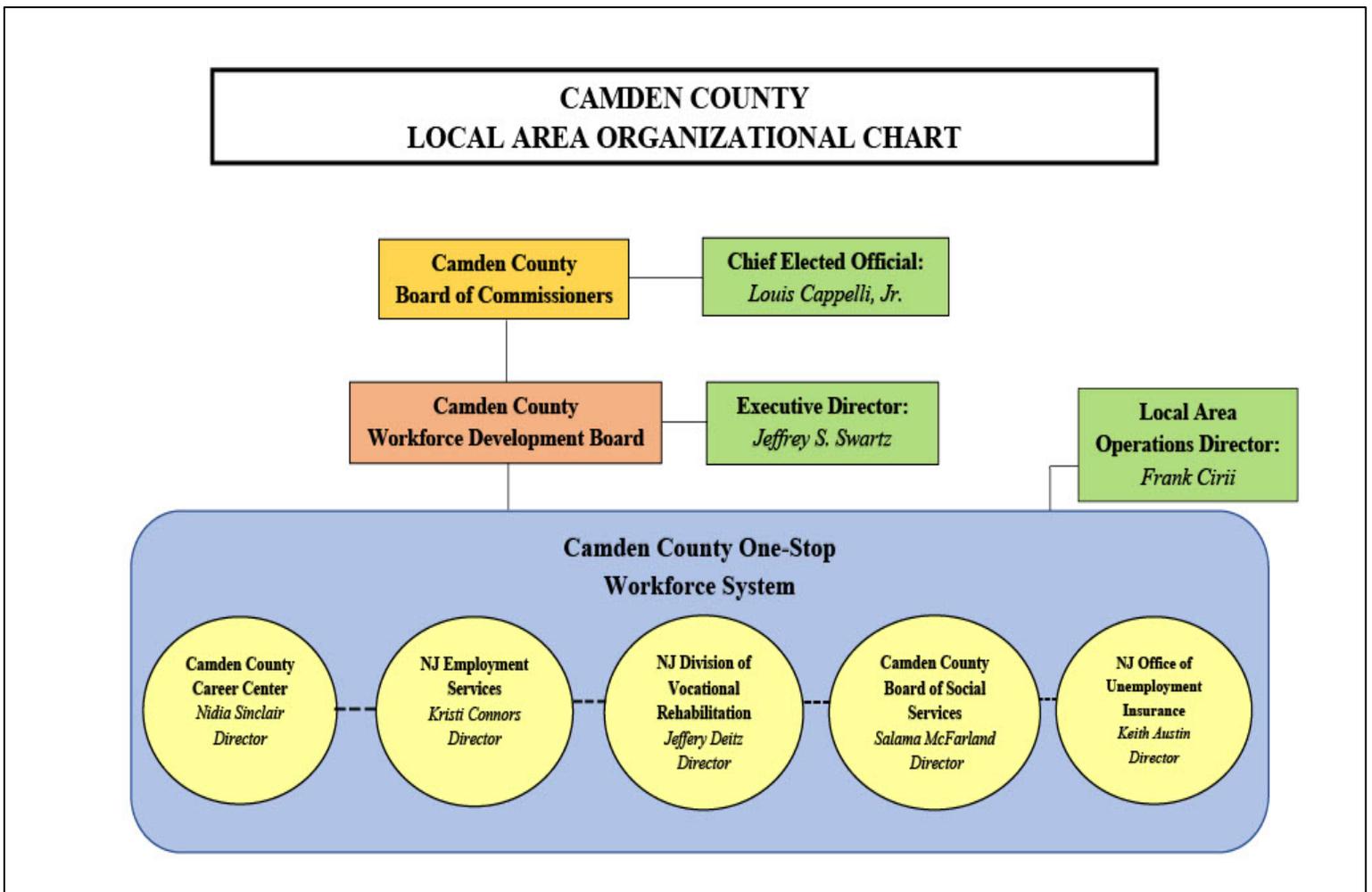
Ahead of the One-Stop Career Center relocation, all of the Partners met on a regular basis to conduct comprehensive planning and coordination discussions to assure minimal disruption while achieving a functional, welcoming layout that promoted comprehensive assistance and avoiding multiple disconnected reporting systems and referral processes.

Community and Regional Outreach

In order to assure that the members of our community are aware of our services, outreach has always been an important priority of the One-Stop Career Center. Ahead of the One-Stop Career Center relocation, move, fliers were created, e-mails and postcards were sent, phone lines were forwarded, and a shuttle bus was provided as detailed in Section III of this document.

Continuous Process Improvement

It is the policy of the WDB that we encourage and empower our local staff to develop and implement new processes and methodologies to better serve our customers. In doing so, it has been our experience that serving our customers has become considerably more effective as validated by measured results to include timeliness and quality of both customer and employer outcomes. We have demonstrated that teamwork across all functions and Partner activities can yield significant organizational efficiencies.



Background

In early 2019 it was recognized that both structural and operational issues were becoming of increasingly greater concern at the former One-Stop's leased office space located at 2600 Mount Ephraim Avenue in Camden City. As a result, the County decided to investigate a short-term lease arrangement at an alternate site while a new facility was under construction at 2600 Mount Ephraim Avenue. The County secured a 3-year lease at the former American Water Company administrative office site located in Cherry Hill that would provide ample space for One-Stop Partner operations. While initially there was much concern regarding moving the One-Stop from Camden City to Cherry Hill, the new location's proximity to the PATCO high-speed rail line's Woodcrest Station and better access to the population in the southeastern part of the county proved to be advantageous. The physical relocation took place in September of 2019, ultimately driving significant changes in the workflow dynamic between Partner Agencies for the better.

Leadership and Staffing Realignment

To realize a true One-Stop concept, the Partners agreed that County and State staff would be collocated by similar occupation titles (Case Manager, Career Coach and Counselor) which would promote seamless inter-agency referrals and comprehensive assistance. Employing the One-Door Model of all customers entering through a shared door echoed the idea of open access to collaborative Partner services. A staggered moving plan ensured there were only a few days of disrupted services. Square footage and furnishings were allocated according to a consistent formula along with data lines, printers, and VoIP phones. Files containing PII were stored in an existing file room and cabinets. Additional funds were added to EBT cards that enabled preferred usage of transportation, and a shuttle service was established for front door customer drop-offs.

Integration of Services & Results

Committing to the integrated One-Stop Model, the Partners agreed this was an opportunity to create one system that could capture all customers using available services instead of the multiple disconnected reporting systems. The Camden County One-Stop Career Center Customer Check-in Form FY20 was created to guide the customer to needed services, as well as capture service delivery data including zip codes. This system documented how many total customers used our One-Stop services, where they resided, why they were coming to the One-Stop and how they accessed the One-Stop site (car, bus, shuttle, PATCO, other). The Partners had the ability to manage the "real-time" workflow for their program area, as well as view the results for the entire One-Stop.

The cooperative efforts of all the staff resulted in particularly meaningful data gathered from this 71-day project, which was shared with the WDB's Operations Committee as well as the NJ SETC. The data also allowed us to identify that NJ Unemployment customers were underserved at our location, as they represented 57% of our customers during this time period (12/2/19 through 3/13/20), and up to 80.9% of services offered during the peak season following the holidays. We were also able to determine improved participation by our southeastern zip codes as well as the utilization levels of the shuttle service.

The Customer Check-in system was also used as an inter-agency referral tool among the Partners. Staff could refer assessed customers to the appropriate Partner agency for additional services. Creating a clear path for staff to seamlessly provide comprehensive services to shared customers avoided the conflicts of

multiple approaches, methods and boundary issues as had been previously experienced under legacy processes.

Marketing Outreach

The Partners worked together to create a flier design that included all agency services offered at the relocated One-Stop. The flier was email blasted to all customers registered in the AOSOS system as well as several group mailing lists from each agency. The Partners networked with Camden County's Community Outreach department so the One-Stop's relocation info could be posted on Camdencounty.com, as well as all of their highly followed social media platforms. The WDB also utilized its social media platforms and website to communicate with businesses, customers, and neighboring counties. On a grass roots level, staff reached out to current and former clients to inform them of our change of venue.

Success Factors & Lessons Learned

By empowering local leaders who were seasoned experts in their respective program area to include operations and staffing, innovative processes were developed to meet customers where they are and move them forward. Front-line leaders utilized their significant institutional knowledge to propel innovation with measurable outcomes, proving that the One-Stop system can be relevant by building a strong customer service infrastructure from the ground up. Continuing to promote the local development of pilot programs led to the ongoing implementation of best practices and boosted services that benefit our community.

Section IV

The Pandemic Pivot

An Unprecedented Challenge

The onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic in mid-March of 2020 marked the second event which was out of our control and required much greater changes and adaptations in the performance and delivery of our work and mission. This event brought with it a whole new set of challenges, but coming off of the implementation of new processes and best practices following the move, our staff was in a good position to meet these challenges head-on. Many agencies, such as DVR, experienced a sharp drop in referrals, and in-person meetings could not take place. The environment made it difficult for businesses to fill their staffing needs while simultaneously creating a historic jump in unemployment at the same time. CDC guidelines and protocols placed challenges on our customers and staff. At the Board of Social Services, traditional pen-to-paper and face-to-face methods for servicing clients were no longer viable. State and Federal decisions to lift the mandatory work requirement caused the Board to shift focus to encouraging voluntary work activities through extensive outreach efforts.

Early in the pandemic, we recognized that in-person venues would have to be replaced by telephonic and virtual venues such as Zoom or MS Teams. Technology was utilized to conduct job search skills training remotely, schedule clients to be served in a contactless process with appointment scheduling applications and create videos with scanned documents that were utilized for orientation and onboarding processes. We learned that certain services were more effectively delivered in a one-on-one telephonic environment, while others were delivered more effectively by video.

Creating the Go-Forward Plan

The Virtual Re-Opening Working Group was formed in July of 2020 to look at all career services, determine re-engagement delivery methods and obtain needed resources. The County re-engineered their incumbent worker training program. The State ES group held weekly process conversion meetings, called customers using *67, Google Voice, or MS Teams, developed a virtual Google check-in form, and analyzed on-site versus virtual service delivery statistics. The use of DocuSign for eligibility documents was implemented and experiences shared with the Partners. Throughout this whirlwind of uncertainty, our local leaders once again rose to the occasion, waiting for no one as they moved forward to virtual service delivery.

Meeting the Challenge

Out of necessity, staff residences served as alternate workspaces. To avoid disruption in services, staff volunteered to use their personal computers and telephones until agencies were able to issue tech equipment. The Board of Social Services developed a process for staff to pick up and return paper files for processing at home. Using Google Voice, MS Teams and *67 proved effective in assisting customers through phone calls and sidestepped the possible barrier of Wi-Fi access. MS Teams, Zoom and teleconferencing among the Partners continued the model of being located together, but now it was a shared virtual space that provided a platform to map out the delivery of comprehensive services.

Inter-Agency Collaboration

Following the formation of the Virtual Re-Opening Working Group, Inter-Agency processes were established to connect open pathways of providing services to shared customers. Training referrals were shared and tracked, leading to a monthly then a weekly follow-up email including detailed guidance to potential candidates. A Voluntary Work Activity Campaign was created to assist WorkFirst clients in pursuing educational and employment opportunities that encompassed all program areas (2021 Camden Voluntary Work Activities SNAP/TANF/GA). A statewide Virtual Services Center request system provided a pipeline of customers reaching out for local services that promoted an efficient hand-off to the appropriate Partner(s) for additional services. A Google Form (CCOSCC Customer Check-in form FY 2021) was developed to document virtual services provided to customers and measure outcomes (CCOSCC Virtual Services Check-in System FY 2021 Outcomes). A new appointment system was procured to capture the information of all customers using our One-Stop.

Innovation – Technology Applications

Videos in English and Spanish that provided an overview of available virtual services were created and posted on Camdencounty.com, as well as sent directly to customers as a link. The Partners contributed descriptions with direct contact information for their program areas, providing customers with streamlined access to appropriate services. A Virtual Services Directory one-pager with a QR code was developed enabling comprehensive One-Stop information to be made available directly to the customer. At the County level, in-person Job Fairs became virtual Job Fairs, and Veteran services as well as Employer services were included in the Camden County Virtual Services Directory. Robust teleconferencing and virtual meetings were held with disciplined regularity, focusing on adaptation to telephonic and virtual venues for inter-agency communication and measurable process improvement.

Networking – Sharing Best Practices with Other Counties

The One-Stop Virtual Services video was shared with colleagues in different counties. A generic video was created and voiceover copy was provided to GSETA so each county didn't have to reinvent the wheel. Also, we collaborated with one county and generated a video specifically for their website. The Customer Check-in system, VSC Outcomes, and Staff Attendance forms process was shared and utilized by ES colleagues across the State. Relevant fillable Adobe and MS Word forms were exchanged with DOL and local staff in other counties. The grassroots movement of sharing information among regions empowered local managers to employ any available virtual tool to assist their customers.

Section V

Outcomes and Quantitative Data / Embedded Links (Open with Chrome Browser)

Measuring Performance Outcomes

We have always sought to evaluate the attainment of our goals through meaningful performance measures, per the old saying “figures don’t lie.” The strategic plans that have been developed by the Operations Committee in the past have always included measurable outcomes, so we could quantify progress toward the attainment of our goals. Since both of these unprecedented events led to new forms, new reports, and recent studies regarding the delivery of services, we thought it would be useful to share these documents via embedded links. (Open with Chrome Browser)

The links and a brief description are as follows:

[Camden County One-Stop Career Center Customer Check-in Form FY20](#)

This customer check-in form was utilized for 71 workdays (12/2/19 to 3/13/20) to determine the reason for a customer visit, the agency they needed to see, the zip code they came from, and their mode of transportation to the new facility. Most importantly, this form helped front desk personnel guide customers to appropriate services in an efficient manner.

[Camden County One-Stop Career Center Customer Check-in Outcomes FY20](#)

This is an eye-opening summary, much of it in graphical format, which shows the outcomes of the data gathered by the check-in form, including a breakdown of services delivered, non-UI services delivered, breakdown by zip code and a breakdown of transportation mode.

[Camden Voluntary Work Activities SNAP/TANF/GA FY21](#)

This report, in chart form, summarizes the outreach efforts for a full plan year by the Board of Social Services. It also includes a description of services, waivers, and best practices learned and developed.

[Camden One-Stop Career Center Customer Check-in Form FY21](#)

This is the virtual version of the check-in form currently in use at the One-Stop Career Center.

[Camden County One-Stop Career Center NJDOL ES Virtual Services Check-in System FY 2021 Outcomes](#)

Another eye-opening summary of a full year of virtual check-in forms that assured us that NJ ES (only) services were reaching our county residents effectively. The report shows how many customers used NJ ES services, which virtual services were used, how services were delivered, and where the customers resided. We were able to confirm that we reached residents in the southeastern section of the county.

[Camden County One-Stop Career Center NJDOL ES On Site 12/2/19-3/13/20 vs Virtual 12/2/20-3/13/21 Comparison](#)

This report compares pre-pandemic and pandemic NJDOL ES activity for the same time period, showing the impact of virtual service offerings in one-on-one and group settings. The services provided and residential zip codes served were almost identical whether delivered virtually or on site. The volume of customers, where they reside and types of provided services is illustrated.

<https://www.camdencounty.com/service/employment/one-stop-career-center/>

This is the County's website page which includes the One-Stop's Virtual Services Videos (E/SP) that provides an overview of all program resources as well as direct contact information for each partnering agency.

Section IV

Summary Conclusion and Recommendation

The cross-functional approach taken by the WDB and the Partner Agencies proved the effectiveness of resource sharing, integration of systems and communications along with reconsidering workflow processes and applying 'lean' methodologies. Stemming from these unparalleled collaborative efforts, the Camden County "One-Stop" outcomes over the past three (3) years have clearly demonstrated the value gained through the empowerment of leadership at all levels to define mission objectives and implement positive, process-focused changes.

Meeting the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic beginning March 2020 further introduced significant changes to WDB and Partner Agency operations. With the closure of the "One-Stop" and related NJ State and Partner Agency offices, a series of unprecedented steps were required to maintain operations. Through the creative use of in-place technology resources and platforms, operations were able to continue in an effective and efficient manner. Special arrangements to allow for staff telework orchestration along with sharing of responsibilities by WDB and Partner Agencies proved to be highly effective. Establishment of 'Best Practices' underpinned the successes that were achieved.

It is the recommendation of the authors that the culture of leadership empowerment continue to be supported and incentivized to advance attainment of our employment-focused objectives for the residents of Camden County.