

Future of AJCs Cohort Overview

WIOA American Job Center (AJC) Services

(With REVISED Timeline)

What's This Cohort All About?

The Opportunity: Changes in customers' needs and advances in technology have significantly altered how customers access AJC employment services. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) made significant changes to the AJC System and presents states and local areas with an opportunity to employ innovative, flexible solutions to better connect workers and employers with services designed to meet their unique needs. These evolutions allow for greater flexibility and present the public workforce system with an opportunity to connect with more workers and employers, helping communities grow and prosper.

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is seeking volunteer state and local teams to **join the "Future of AJCs"** cohort to participate in a twelve-week innovative curriculum designed to help teams re-engineer services based on the needs of their worker and employer customers. The cohort will participate with peers across the nation as we ignite collective, creative brainstorming, in search of our most innovative solutions. We will examine our system, re-think our approaches, and partner with private industry for inspiration.

We will consider our immediate challenges and opportunities, while focusing our efforts on implementing practical, sustainable, long-term solutions. We will also explore how technology can be a tool that aids us in improving service delivery and management of the workforce system, while retaining the value that strong human relationships bring.

The Goals/Deliverables:

ETA through its investments will:

1. Identify 5-9 state/local area teams that have identified service delivery design issues/opportunities for improvement in the AJC system and want to develop innovative strategies to better serve customers.
2. Engage cohort teams in a twelve-week facilitated program of learning that allows them to engage in system design with workforce peers, partners and experts.
3. Infuse learning with business principles from industry representatives that have led similar design processes in an effort to re-think service delivery models/methods to ensure all potential worker and employer customers can readily access services in a user-friendly manner and benefit from a greater reliance on technology (virtual AJC services).
4. Create prototypes for innovation and integrative service delivery through the AJC system that can be tested by participating cohorts and replicated by other states/local areas.
5. Coordinate the sharing of prototypes with the broader workforce system.

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- ❖ **WIIFM? (*what's in it for me?*):** State and local area led teams will learn about peer innovation in technology and service strategies, as well as models implemented in the private sector from industry leaders. There will be many opportunities for peer learning and sharing, including an in-person Innovation Lab that allows you to tap the creative energy of your peers and representatives from the business community.

State/Local Teams Make a Cohort

- ◆ This topic is geared toward state and local/regional workforce system leaders who demonstrate a commitment to providing customer-centered experiences and continuous improvement of the AJC system. We are looking for members to join the cohort as a cross-agency/cross-program team.
- ◆ Teams can be led by either a state or local area.
- ◆ Teams applying commit to bringing together a small team of at least 3 members (up to 10).
- ◆ Teams must include a representative from the Workforce Board, WIOA Title 1 (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth) and Wagner-Peyser.
- ◆ Teams inclusive of diverse partners, especially Adult Education and Vocational Rehabilitation will be scored more highly.
- ◆ Other members of the team may include representatives of the following programs:
 - One-stop Operator
 - Title I
 - Adult Education
 - TANF
 - Voc. Rehab
 - Veterans
 - Job Corps
 - Apprenticeship
 - Other WIOA mandated partners
- ◆ Team selection will be based on a variety of factors. Teams demonstrating a diversity of partners and state/local representation will be given highest consideration.

*Teams of up to 10 may participate in all virtual meetings and interactions. Teams signing up for this cohort commit to self-funded attendance at a 1½ day Innovation Lab. Due to limited space, a cap of 3 members per team will be allowed to attend the in-person Innovation Lab.

Timeline of Activities (REVISED)

The teams will engage in peer learning and sharing activities over a 16-week period:

- ◆ **Virtual Kick Off Meeting** – Feb. 22, 3:00 – 4:30 EST (90 minutes)
 - Overview of cohort challenge & activities
 - Inspire Cohort with presentations by “Futurist Economist”
 - Interactive Activity- “How do you ensure high-quality services are made available to all workers and employers in your community?” What did the needs of customers look like 20 years ago?
 - Prepare teams for their first homework assignment (3 weeks to complete)

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⇒ Overview of accessing and submitting in the Moodle Homework Assignment: State/local teams conduct research around sets of activities designed to explore and identify service delivery possibilities transferrable to the public workforce system.

-Observing service models in private industry environment

-Observing/Interviewing customers within current AJC environment

-Meet with business to gain a baseline view of skills/technology needed in future

◆ Virtual Cohort Meeting- March 15, 1:00 – 2:30 EST (90 Minutes)

- Prior to call: Submit research in the Moodle.
- Team sharing of insights, patterns, and inspirations learned during research (individual and national implications)
- Guide group through discussion and virtual activities; begin to synthesize peer learning to identify common areas of focus
- Preparation for 2nd homework assignment

◆ Virtual Cohort Meeting- April 5, 1:00 – 2:30 EST (90 Minutes)

- Prior to call: Submit research in the Moodle
- Further discussion of synthesis, patterns identified, areas of opportunity
- Preparation for what to expect and logistics during the in-person innovation lab
- Preparation for 3rd homework assignment

◆ Virtual Cohort Meeting- April 19, 3:00 – 4:30 EST (90 Minutes)

- Prior to call: Submit research in the Moodle
- Further discussion of synthesis, patterns identified, areas of opportunity
- Preparation for what to expect and logistics during the in-person innovation lab

◆ Innovation Lab (In-person) – May 15 & 16 (D.C. Regional Office or Cohort team member may choose to host) - Day 1: 9:00 AM-3:30 PM, Day 2: 9:00 AM-12:30 PM)

- Explore team specific challenges, insights, themes and patterns
- Journey Mapping Customer Experience, Creative Ideation, Design Thinking Exercises
- Brainstorm a vision for the Future AJC

⇒ Homework Assignment: Individual teams will take the solutions brainstormed at the in-person Innovation Lab and begin to “test” them at their local AJC

◆ Virtual Meeting – Cohort Check-in – May 31 1:00 -2:30 EST (90 minutes)

- After further testing (with state/local team; partners; customers), teams discuss their strategies, lessons learned, and next step recommendations for ideas they have suggested
- All teams provide feedback regarding how the final set of ideas/recommendations/suggestions/solutions will be presented or made available to the public workforce system

✓ An online learning platform – Moodle, will be used for interactive virtual dialogue and file sharing.

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What is the Time Commitment? The cohort is mostly virtual and will meet as a team at least every other week over the duration of the process. In addition to the larger team meetings, there will be some small outside work required, both individually and in small groups. As a cohort member, you will be asked to review, research, and conduct interviews and focus groups, and work collaboratively on a set of solutions. (Approximately 2-4 hours per week)

Innovation Lab - This cohort will also have one **in-person meeting, where a maximum of 3 persons from each state/local team attends.** Each participating cohort member **must agree to fund all associated travel cost.** The Innovation Lab will serve as an opportunity for cohort members to share with one another, benefit from skilled facilitators in Design Thinking techniques, and be assisted by members of the business community to help brainstorm solutions to individual cohort members' solutions, as well as the national vision. This cohort will launch in February 2018.

Who Should be in the Cohort? The attached application indicates the types of cohort members we are seeking. This topic is geared toward state and local/regional workforce system leaders who demonstrate a commitment to providing customer-centered experiences and continuous improvement of the AJC system. We are also looking for members to come to the cohort as a team across agencies and/or programs.

Why a Cohort? We believe that the cohort model yields innovative and highly effective solutions. By bringing together bright and creative minds, unique perspectives and experiences, and providing a forum that is designed for innovation and free-thinking, the cohort will create something special; something that will enable users of our system to more efficiently and effectively tap into the high-quality services that we provide across programs.

This is a unique and collaborative opportunity for you to represent your local area, state or region. It is a chance to lead the charge of innovation and opportunity, for you and for the country. We hope you consider filling out the application for this unique opportunity!

For more information, please contact Christy Montgomery at cmontgomery@mahernet.com

Applications due January 31st, 2018.