

DEI Evaluation Team Bulletin #3

Overview of Site Visits and Phone Interviews

What is the DEI Evaluation?

The Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) Evaluation is designed to examine the implementation, outcomes, and impact of the DEI. To do this, the DEI Evaluation Team will collect both customer- and systems-level information to determine how DEI grantees improve their workforce development systems in ways that lead to improvements in access to the American Job Center (AJC) system and labor market participation among individuals with disabilities. The Evaluation will assess the impact of the DEI by comparing customer outcomes in participating Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) randomly assigned to implement the DEI and LWIAs randomly assigned to the comparison group. The United States Department of Labor's (DOL) Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) is the administering agency for the independent evaluation of the DEI. The Evaluation is being conducted by [Social Dynamics, LLC](http://www.socialdynamicsllc.com), in partnership with [Altarum Institute](http://www.altarum.com), [Berkeley Policy Associates](http://www.berkeleypolicy.com),¹ and [Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.](http://www.mathematicapolicy.com)

Purpose of the site visits and stakeholder interviews

The purpose of the DEI Evaluation site visits and phone interviews is to document grantee start-up issues; the implementation of the DEI requirements and strategies; the context in which each grant is being implemented; program implementation challenges; the context and activities being implemented in comparison (non-DEI) sites; and “systems change.” This approach allows the DEI Evaluation Team to examine how DEI works—not just on paper or in theory—but *how it actually works when it is implemented*.

Confidentiality

The participation of state and local personnel involved in the DEI, AJC staff, and AJC partners is crucial to the goal of learning about and improving local workforce development systems. Measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality in different capacities. Personnel responses will not be connected to their identity and summaries of the individual calls will not be shared with anyone outside of the DEI Evaluation Team.

What are the DEI Evaluation site visits?

Each grantee and participating Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) has unique circumstances and attributes that the DEI Evaluation Team needs to understand in order to assess the whole system and discover how that system is changing as a result of the DEI. During a site visit, the Evaluation Liaison (see DEI Evaluation Bulletin #1) will schedule time with DEI staff at the state and local levels. Total site visit duration will vary from 2–5 days, depending on the size of each state and number of participating LWIAs. An Evaluation Team of 2–6 individuals will participate in each site visit.

¹ In October 2013, Berkeley Policy Associates merged with IMPAQ International.

What are the stakeholder telephone interviews?

In lieu of site visits, the DEI Evaluation Team may instead conduct phone interviews with state and local personnel. Some interviews will be conducted with some of the same individuals interviewed in previous years.

Who are the stakeholders the evaluators want to interview?

DEI stakeholders include, at minimum, the state DEI staff and Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs). Working with the DEI State Lead, additional stakeholders involved in DEI may be interviewed. This may include LWIB directors and staff, AJC managers and staff, partners, service providers, employers, and/or customers. Because nobody knows your state’s DEI activities better than you and your colleagues, the Evaluation Team is open to suggestions and recommendations of individuals we should interview as part of our visits and phone interviews.

What to expect in the site visits

During site visit, evaluators are interested in:

- *Observing* activities in AJCs (such as workshops, meetings, etc.).
- *Interviewing* AJC staff and managers, DRCs, DEI State Leads, partners, and/or employers.
- *Conducting focus groups* with AJC customers served by DEI.
- *Reviewing documents*, such as meeting minutes, AJC policies, outreach materials, etc.
- *Attending* DEI-related meetings, trainings, or workshops.
- *Answering* any questions that any stakeholders have about the DEI Evaluation.
- Other activities that DEI staff members think would be meaningful in helping us understand how DEI is being implemented in their state.

How will the site visits and interviews be scheduled?

Site visits will be coordinated between the Evaluation Team and the DEI State Lead. The Evaluation Liaison will communicate a time frame (usually late March–early June) during which a week will need to be selected for your state visit or phone interviews. Once the interview dates have been established, the State Lead and Evaluation Liaison will work together to plan the schedule.

Tips for the site visits and interviews

<i>Do</i>	<i>Don't</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give us your honest opinions about the challenges and triumphs of your DEI experiences and experiences with serving customers with disabilities. • Ask us Evaluation-related questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry about feeding us, or driving us around. • Worry about us seeing a “mess”—that’s part of systems change! • Accompany/chaperone the Evaluation Team as they visit sites. The presence of state representatives or managers (even those who have an excellent rapport with their staff) can unintentionally make staff feel less comfortable talking about their experiences.