

APPENDIX A
SITE VISIT PROTOCOLS

CERC MANAGER INTERVIEW

OVERVIEW OF VISIT

Describe the purpose of the visit and answer questions.

Review site visit schedule.

COMMUNITY CONTEXT

Please give us an overview of the timeline of plant closings and layoffs in this community.

What is the history of collaboration among service providers in this community?

- Joint projects?
- Service coordination?
- Other one-stop service centers?

What employment opportunities are available in the community?

- For dislocated workers?
- For other low-income or unemployed adults?

What are the main barriers to employment that CERC customers face?

In addition to employment, what are the most pressing needs of typical CERC customers?

- Are services available through the CERC, or in the community, to address those needs?

To what extent do the needs and challenges faced by CERC customers differ from those of dislocated and unemployed workers in the rest of the state?

CERC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

How long did planning for implementation of the CERC take?

- How long did it take for the CERC to open once the initiative was announced?

Who were the key staff at the local VEC office involved in developing the CERC? What were their roles?

Who were the key players in the community involved in the CERC's planning and development?

- How did they get involved in the initiative?
- What roles did they play?

- Are these key players still involved in the CERC?

What kinds of support did the state provide during the planning and development phase?

- Training or technical assistance?
- Logistical support?
- Staff?
- Funding?

Are there other types of support from the state that would have been helpful?

CERC ORGANIZATION

How is the CERC organized?

- What is the management and supervisory structure?
- Which agency has fiscal responsibility for the CERC?

When did the CERC open?

What are the main services provided within the CERC?

What are the hours of operation?

- Usual wait times for clients?

What is the geographic service area of the CERC?

How accessible is the CERC for customers?

- How do clients get to the CERC?
- Is public transportation available?
- From what distance does the typical CERC customer travel to reach the office?

Is the CERC located within the VEC office or in a new location? Why?

How many staff work in the CERC?

- From which agencies?
- Has this changed over time?

Is the CERC staffed by new personnel hired to provide CERC services, or by redeployed personnel?

- If so, from which offices?
- After the CERC closes, will redeployed personnel return to their former jobs?

What is the customer flow during a typical week?

- Has the volume of customers increased or decreased over time?
- If so, why?
- How do you manage staffing levels to match customer flow?

FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

How is the CERC funded?

- By the VEC, or by multiple agencies?
- If by multiple programs, how are costs allocated across programs?
- Across overhead and staff costs?

Did the state provide special funding for the CERCs, or do funds come from existing program budgets?

What are the main costs of operating the CERC?

- Staff?
- Overhead costs such as rent and utilities?
- Equipment?

CERC PARTNERS

Who are the main partners who have participated in the CERC?

- What are the main services that each partner provided?

What non-governmental organizations have participated in the CERC?

Do CERC partners contribute in-kind to the CERC?

- For example, do they provide staff or equipment?

To what extent are the services offered by partners integrated?

Recruitment

How were these partners recruited?

- How did partners find out about the opportunity to participate in the CERC?

Once potential partners were recruited, was there a selection process, or were all interested organizations included?

Coordination

What systems are in place to facilitate coordination across participating service providers?

- Do participating providers have regular meetings?
- Produce regular reports?
- Share electronic data?

How do participating service providers communicate across programs?

- Exchange referrals?
- Information about customer needs?

Do participating service providers use common application or other forms?

- Automated case management systems?
- Shared electronic data?

Do participating service providers report on follow up and customer outcomes? How?

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Has the CERC conducted community outreach to potential customers, employers, service providers?

- TV, radio, newspapers?
- Outreach to other organizations?

What information is disseminated in the community about the availability of services, technical assistance providers, and economic development grants through the CERCs?

Have you conducted outreach to reduce the stigma associated with applying for benefits and services?

- For example, have you marketed food assistance and other economic assistance offered at the CERC as work supports?

Has the CERC developed working relationships with area employers?

- How does the CERC inform employers about the types of assistance and services offered?

SUPPORT FROM THE STATE

What kinds of support has the state provided to the CERC on an ongoing basis?

- Training or technical assistance?
- Logistical support?
- Staff?
- Other resources?

LESSONS

What are the main successes of the CERC?

- Customer outcomes?
- Coordination across service providers?
- Rapid start-up?
- Convenience and accessibility?
- Service co-location? Service integration?
- Other?

What has been most challenging about operating the CERC?

- Recruitment of partners?
- Coordination across partners?
- Information sharing?
- Start-up time?
- Sufficient resources?
- Other operational difficulties?

What strategies have you tried for overcoming those challenges?

Were the resources available to operate the CERC sufficient to meet the CERC's goals?

- If not, what was lacking?
- Were facilities, equipment, and staff for the CERC sufficient?

How useful do you think the CERC has been for customers?

- Is it more convenient?
- Are services more accessible?

Do you think customers accessed services they would not otherwise have received if they were not co-located in the CERC?

Has service co-location enhanced case management? In what way?

If you could, would you want to continue operating the CERC on a longer-term basis?

- Why or why not?

If you could change any aspect of the CERC, what would you change?

- Do you have other recommendations for improvement?

Would waivers of any specific requirements of federal or state programs have improved the CERC's ability to serve customers?

- Do you have suggestions for ways that federal and state programs could better support the mission of the CERCs?

Would training, technical assistance, or other resources have helped you implement the CERC more successfully?

- If yes, what would have helped?

Are there any services that would be helpful to have in CERC that are not available?

What advice would you give to other states and communities that are considering implementing similar initiatives?

Documents to request:

Newspaper articles about the CERC
Brochures and other community outreach literature
Intake, assessment, and referral forms
Procedure manuals

CERC SUPERVISOR INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Describe the purpose of the visit and answer questions.

Tell me about your job as CERC supervisor.

- What are your primary responsibilities?
- Describe the flow of your daily activities.

OVERVIEW OF CERC OPERATIONS

Describe the services provided at the CERC.

- Intake
- Assessment
- Referral to various services (please list)
- Resource room
- Group orientations and workshops
- VEC/WIA services
- Other

Which services are provided most often?

How many customers does the CERC serve in a typical week?

- Has this changed over time?

How long does a typical customer receive services?

CERC STAFFING AND SUPERVISION

How many staff work at the CERC?

- How many are VEC staff?
- How many are staff from other agencies? Which ones?
- Are the CERC staff new hires, or were staff redeployed from other positions? Which positions?
- What are the qualifications of CERC staff?

Has staffing changed over time?

- If so, why?

Describe the main responsibilities of each position.

Have staff received special training or technical assistance in providing CERC services?

What is the CERC's supervisory and reporting structure?

- How are staff supervised across agencies?

CERC PARTNERS

Who are the main partners who have participated in the CERC?

- What are the main services that each partner provides?
- Which services do you think are most useful for customers?

Which partners receive the most referrals from intake workers or case managers?

Do customers request referrals to some partners more frequently than others?

What systems are in place to facilitate coordination across participating service providers?

- Do participating providers have regular meetings? If so, which staff attend?
- Produce regular reports?
- Share electronic data?

How do participating service providers communicate across programs?

- Exchange referrals?
- Information about customer needs?

Do participating service providers use common application or other forms?

- Automated case management systems?
- Shared electronic data?

Do participating service providers report to the CERC on follow up and customer outcomes?
How?

CASE MANAGEMENT

Describe the CERC's case management system.

How are clients assigned to case managers?

What information do staff collect at initial intake?

- How is this information shared with CERC partners?

How are customers informed about the benefits and services available to them and about application processes?

- Do family characteristics influence the types of services offered? If so, which ones?
- Do TANF time limits influence the types of services offered?
- Do UI benefits influence the types of services offered?
- How do intake workers present food and other economic assistance programs to reduce stigma? Are they marketed as work supports?

Do customers receive all services through a single case manager?

- After referrals are made to other service providers?
- Before and after employment?

Once customers are approved for specific services, do they receive ongoing case management through the CERC or through another agency?

- Do they continue to receive services at the CERC office, or at another location?

How do CERC staff follow up on referrals?

- What type of follow up information do you collect?

How do you track customer outcomes?

- Which outcomes do you track? Employment? Service receipt?

Has the CERC set specific performance goals for service provision or customer outcomes?

- If so, what are they?
- Has the CERC met these goals?

WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

Has the CERC developed working relationships with area employers?

What services does the CERC provide to employers?

How does the CERC inform employers about the types of assistance and services offered?

EXPERIENCES WORKING IN THE CERC

Prior to supervising the CERC, what was your position?

What are the similarities and differences between the responsibilities of your previous position and your current position as CERC supervisor?

Have you received any training or technical assistance to support your in your job as CERC supervisor?

- If so, what types of training and technical assistance?
- How helpful was it?
- Are there other types of training and support that would be helpful?

LESSONS

What are the main successes of the CERC?

- Customer outcomes?
- Coordination across service providers?
- Rapid start-up?
- Convenience and accessibility?
- Service co-location? Service integration?
- Other?

What has been most challenging about operating the CERC?

- Recruitment of partners?
- Coordination across partners?
- Information sharing?
- Start-up time?
- Sufficient resources?
- Other operational difficulties?

What strategies have you tried for overcoming those challenges?

Were the resources available to operate the CERC sufficient to meet the CERC's goals?

- If not, what was lacking?
- Were facilities, equipment, and staff for the CERC sufficient?

How useful do you think the CERC has been for customers?

- Is it more convenient?
- Are services more accessible?

Do you think customers accessed services they would not otherwise have received if they were not co-located in the CERC?

Has co-location of services enhanced case management? If so, how?

Has co-location of services reduced stigma associated with applying for food or other economic assistance? How?

If you could, would you want to continue operating the CERC on a longer-term basis?

- Why or why not?

If you could change any aspect of the CERC, what would you change?

- Do you have other recommendations for improvement?

Would waivers of any specific requirements of federal or state programs have improved the CERC's ability to serve customers?

- Do you have suggestions for ways that federal and state programs could better support the mission of the CERCs?

Would training, technical assistance, or other resources have helped you implement the CERC more successfully?

- If yes, what would have helped?

Are there any services that would be helpful to have in the CERC that are not available?

What advice would you give to other states and communities that are considering implementing similar initiatives?

CERC INTAKE WORKER INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Describe the purpose of the visit and answer questions.

Tell me about your job as CERC case manager.

- What are your primary responsibilities?

CUSTOMER CHARACTERISTICS

Tell me about the customers you serve.

- Socioeconomic characteristics?
- Families with children?
- Families on TANF?
- Dislocated workers?
- Other low-income families?

What are the main barriers to employment that CERC customers face?

In addition to employment, what are the most pressing needs of typical CERC customers?

- Are services available through the CERC, or in the community, to address those needs?

How do customers find out about the CERC?

From what distances do customers travel to get to the CERC?

- What kinds of transportation do typical customers use to get to the CERC?
- Is public transportation available?

CASE MANAGEMENT

Please describe your first meeting with a customer.

- Is it usually an individual meeting or a group meeting?
- What topics do you cover?
- How long does the first meeting usually last?

How do you assess customers' needs?

- Is this done during your first meeting with a customer?

- What assessment tools do you use?
- How do you use the results of these assessments?
- Do you share the results with other CERC partners?
- How effective do you think the assessment process is at identifying and understanding customers' needs?
- Do you have suggestions for how the assessment process could be improved?

Do you develop service plans with customers?

- If yes, when is this done?
- What does the plan contain? Goals? Services? Timelines?
- How is the customer involved in developing the service plan?
- Is this plan shared with other CERC partners?

How are customers informed about the benefits and services available to them and about application processes?

- How do you decide which services to offer customers?
- Do family characteristics influence the types of services offered? If so, which ones?
- Do TANF time limits influence the types of services offered?
- How do intake workers present food and other economic assistance programs to reduce stigma? Are they marketed as work supports?

Do customers receive all services through you or do they work with other case managers as well?

- After referrals are made to other service providers?
- Before and after employment?

Once customers are approved for specific services, do they receive ongoing case management through the CERC or through another agency?

- Do they continue to receive services at the CERC office, or at another location?

How do CERC staff follow up on referrals?

- What type of follow up information do you collect?

How do you track customer outcomes?

- Which outcomes do you track? Employment? Service receipt?

Does the CERC have any performance goals for service provision or customer outcomes?

- If so, why are they?
- What progress have you made toward meeting those goals?

WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Who are the main partners that you refer customers to?

- What services do they provide?
- Which services do you think are most useful for customers?

Do customers request referrals to some partners more frequently than others?

How do you share information about customers' needs with partners?

- Do you exchange referrals?
- Do you share intake forms or electronic information about customers?

Do CERC partners use any common application or other forms to facilitate information sharing?

What systems are in place to help you coordinate services with partners?

- Do you have regular meetings with partners? If so, which staff do you meet with?
- Do you exchange regular reports on customers' progress?
- Do you share electronic data?

Do partners report back to the CERC on follow up and customer outcomes?

- If so, in what form? Electronic? Paper?
- How long do they report on customers' status?

WORKING WITH EMPLOYERS

Have you developed working relationships with area employers to place customers in jobs?

What services do you provide to employers?

How do you inform employers about the types of assistance and services the CERC offers?

EXPERIENCES WORKING IN THE CERC

How many active cases do you typically have?

- How many customers do you see in a typical day? A typical week?
- Has this changed over time?

How often are you typically in contact with customers and under what circumstances?

- Does this vary according to customer needs?
- Are most contacts made in the office, by telephone, other?

How long do you work with a typical customer?

Do you feel like you have a good handle on your caseload and the needs of your customers?

How much of your time is spent on paperwork versus working directly with customers?

- Do you have enough time to meet with customers?

Prior to working at the CERC, what position did you have?

- What are the similarities and differences between the responsibilities of your previous position and your current position at the CERC?

Have you received any training or technical assistance to support you in your job at the CERC?

- If so, what type of training or technical assistance?
- How helpful was it?
- Are there other types of training or support that would be helpful?

LESSONS

What are the main successes of the CERC?

- Customer outcomes?
- Coordination across service providers?
- Rapid start-up?
- Convenience and accessibility?
- Service co-location? Service integration?
- Other?

What has been most challenging about operating the CERC?

- Recruitment of partners?
- Coordination across partners?

- Information sharing?
- Start-up time?
- Sufficient resources?
- Other operational difficulties?

What strategies have you tried for overcoming those challenges?

How useful do you think the CERC has been for customers?

- Is it more convenient?
- Are services more accessible?

Do you think customers accessed services they would not otherwise have received if they were not co-located in the CERC?

Has co-location of services enhanced case management? If so, how?

Has co-location of services reduced stigma associated with applying for food or other economic assistance? How?

If you could, would you want to continue operating the CERC on a longer-term basis?

- Why or why not?

If you could change any aspect of the CERC, what would you change?

- Do you have other recommendations for improvement?

Would training, technical assistance, or other resources have helped you implement the CERC more successfully?

- If yes, what would have helped?

Are there any services that would be helpful to have in the CERC that are not available?

What advice would you give to other states and communities that are considering implementing similar initiatives?

CERC CUSTOMER INTERVIEW

How did you find out about the CERC?

How far did you travel to get here?

What kind of transportation did you use?

Is the CERC conveniently located for you?

What resources or services were you hoping to find at the CERC?

Have you received the services you needed? Expected?

What services have you received?

Who coordinated these services for you?

What referrals have you received to other agencies or service providers?

Have you used these services?

How easy or difficult has it been for you to do that?

How useful have the CERC and referred services been?

Have you been able to access services from multiple agencies at the same location?

Are there any services that you would have liked to access that are not available through the CERC?

Do you have any recommendations for improving the CERC?

CERC PARTNER INTERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

Describe the purpose of the visit and answer questions.

BACKGROUND OF ORGANIZATION

What is the primary mission of your organization?

What services do you provide?

What is your service area?

How long have you provided services in this community?

What are your major funding sources?

What are the characteristics of the families you serve?

- Is the client population you serve through the CERC different than your usual client population?

CERC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

How did you find out that the CERC was being planned?

- When did you find out?

Was your organization involved in the CERC's planning and development?

- What role did your organization play?

SERVICES

What services does your organization provide through the CERC?

Which staff from your organization work at the CERC?

How often are staff at the CERC?

- Has this changed over time?
- If so, why?

How are CERC clients referred to your organization?

What information do you receive about CERC clients' needs?

Do all CERC clients have the opportunity to apply for your services, or only those referred by CERC workers?

Once clients are referred to you, what role do CERC workers play in case management?

- Do they continue to receive ongoing case management from the CERC, or does your organization take over the case?

Do CERC staff follow up on referrals? How?

Do you track the outcomes of CERC clients?

- Do you report them back to the CERC?

COMMUNICATION AMONG PARTNERS

What systems are in place to facilitate communication across participating service providers?

- Do participating providers have regular meetings? If so, which staff attend?
- Produce regular reports?
- Share electronic data?

How do participating service providers communicate across programs?

- Exchange referrals?
- Information about customer needs?

Do participating service providers use common application or other forms?

- Automated case management systems?
- Shared electronic data?

LESSONS

What are the main successes of the CERC?

- Customer outcomes?
- Coordination across service providers?
- Rapid start-up?
- Convenience and accessibility?
- Service co-location? Service integration?
- Other?

What are the main success of your involvement in the CERC?

What has been most challenging about providing services through the CERC?

- Coordination with the CERC?
- Information sharing?
- Start-up time?
- Sufficient resources?
- Other operational difficulties?

What strategies have you tried for overcoming those challenges?

How useful do you think the CERC has been for customers?

- Is it more convenient?
- Are services more accessible?

How useful do you think your agency's presence has been for CERC customers?

Do you think customers accessed services they would not otherwise have received if they were not co-located in the CERC?

Has co-location of services enhanced case management? If so, how?

Has co-location of services reduced stigma associated with applying for food or other economic assistance? How?

If you could, would you want to continue operating the CERC on a longer-term basis?

- Why or why not?

If you could change any aspect of the CERC, what would you change?

- Do you have other recommendations for improvement?

Are there any services that would be helpful to have in the CERC that are not available?

What advice would you give to other states and communities that are considering implementing similar initiatives?