



Impacts of the March 2013 Sequestration on the Workforce Development System: Evidence from a Survey of State Workforce Agencies

September 30, 2013

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies recently asked members of its Employment and Training Committee, who are leaders in their state workforce development agencies, to participate in a survey to detail the impacts of sequestration on the workforce development system. With nearly a 76 percent response rate among the 37 states represented on the Committee, the survey results provide a representative snapshot of the impacts of the March 2013 sequestration on staffing, job center access, and services and programs. The states also report on innovations and cost-saving measures they used to reduce the adverse impacts of sequestration.

Taken together, the survey responses provide an indication of the future of the workforce system under ongoing budget constraints. Cuts to services include cuts in areas considered of high priority nationally, especially training, but also, in at least a couple states, initiatives related to UI claimant work test enforcement and reemployment. If trends continue, additional staffing reductions will result in fewer staff-assisted labor exchange services, less access to staffed job centers, and continued growing reliance on technology solutions for labor exchange activities. How the shift away from labor and toward technology impacts the quality of customer services will depend on a number of factors, such as the quality and sustainability of the tools and information, particular customer needs, and how well technology is adapted to populations who have difficulty with access.

With the caveat that the workforce development system is a state-local administered system, and the ability of states to provide information on their local areas on short notice varied, we present the findings below. As one state noted, "We attempted to provide an inclusive response; what we have provided gives a small snapshot of a few areas and by no means represents the experience/impacts of the entire state."

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