

#6

COMPLETE

**Collector:** Web Link 1 (Web Link)  
**Started:** Tuesday, January 07, 2020 6:13:17 PM  
**Last Modified:** Tuesday, January 07, 2020 6:17:56 PM  
**Time Spent:** 00:04:38  
**IP Address:** 130.18.214.67

---

Page 1

### Q1 Contact Information for Nomination

Name of Contact	<b>Laura Ring</b>
Full Name of State Agency	<b>Mississippi Department of Employment Security</b>
Email Address	<b>LRing@mdes.ms.gov</b>
Name of Initiative the state (and/or partnership) is being nominated for:	<b>WIOA Case Management Hub</b>

---

**Q2 1.** Provide a brief description of the innovative services, innovative service delivery, or efforts of national impact you have chosen as your primary focus for the nomination. Response Word Limit: 150

To help customers pursue a high-quality career pathway, Mississippi created a no-wrong-door WIOA strategy to ensure coordinated delivery of all workforce, training, and supportive services necessary to achieve occupational goals. To operationalize this strategy, Mississippi developed an innovative, real-time data hub. Mississippi's combined plan partners (workforce, adult education, human, and vocational rehabilitation services) connected their case management systems to this real-time data hub in order to refer customers electronically and share important interagency case management information. The hub ensures the traceability of all inter-agency referrals to eliminate procedural gaps. It automatically generates appropriate referrals based on a simple diagnostic questionnaire designed to gauge a client's needs. The hub is headless; agency staff continue to use time-tested case management systems that have been modified to coordinate with the hub. The hub uses open-source technology and contains single participant records, referrals, an interagency success plan, credentials earned, and interagency service records.

---

**Q3 2.** Provide a statement of results, accomplishments, impacts and any other appropriate information that demonstrates why the nominee's efforts described in question #1 were an exceptional contribution. Response Word Limit: 200

Mississippi is now able to measure interagency referral traffic to ensure customers are served and engage in continuous improvement. Between October of 2018 and October of 2019, there were 52,248 interagency referrals. Among the closed referrals, 54% resulted in services from the target agency, 33% were "no-shows," 9% declined offered services, and 4% were ineligible. Another measure of the hub's impact on service delivery is the level of co-enrollment of customers in all the services needed to fulfill Mississippi's WIOA goal, that is, connecting individuals with a middle-skill career pathway. For example, between October of 2018 and October of 2019, a total of 13,713 workforce customers were referred from Mississippi Works, the labor exchange system used in Mississippi's job centers, to the Mississippi Department of Human Services (MDHS). Of these, prior to referral, 2,946 (21%) already received SNAP to address food insecurity. After the referral date, 5,179 (38%) were SNAP participants. Overall, since 2014 when Mississippi began its WIOA implementation, Mississippi has added an additional 2,047 middle-skill workers to its economy annually and has increased its employment rate for people with disabilities from 77% to 84.3%.

---

**Q4 3.** Provide a brief description of the nominee’s significant contributions in any one of the other two areas listed under “criteria” that you did not focus on above. Response Word Limit: 200

Additional Area: National Impact. WIOA legislation and guidelines for state WIOA plans required all states to specify how coordination of services would be achieved across agency systems. Mississippi met the challenge to create a practical, information technology solution and has shared the resulting model with many states who have requested demonstrations or presentations of the Mississippi WIOA Hub in one-on-one conference calls, multi-state conferences, webinars for multi-state audiences, profiles in trade publications, and webinars organized by federal agencies. Nationally, states implementing WIOA face similar challenges related to the sharing of case data and the integration of legacy systems. Mississippi recognized that replacing agency systems, on which thousands of case workers in multiple agencies have been trained, would be a strategy with high costs and high risk. The Hub system allows existing agency systems to continue to provide a familiar interface to staff while allowing for cross-agency communication. The system itself supports Mississippi’s no-wrong-door policy and reduces data entry for customers and staff. In the process, Mississippi proved the viability of this approach by integrating many different kinds of commercial and legacy case management systems. This has been a valuable example for states attempting to support similar no-wrong-door approaches using technology.

**Q5 4.** Provide samples of work including creative materials, videos, graphics, documents, plans, etc. regarding the efforts and results you outlined in questions #1 and #2. File size limit is 16 MB. Only PDF, DOC, DOCX, PNG, JPG, JPEG, GIF files are supported.

**wioa\_data.pdf (2.9MB)**

**Q6** Sample of Work #2 File size limit is 16 MB.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q7** Sample of Work #3 File size limit is 16 MB.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q8** Sample of Work #4 File size limit is 16 MB.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q9** Sample of Work #5 File size limit is 16 MB.

**Respondent skipped this question**

**Q10** Please upload a statement of approval from the Agency Administrator

**NASWA 2020 Pinnacle Award Approval Statement from MDES Administrator.pdf (46.5KB)**



**MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENT *of* EMPLOYMENT SECURITY**

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JACQUELINE A. TURNER  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 6, 2020

To: NASWA

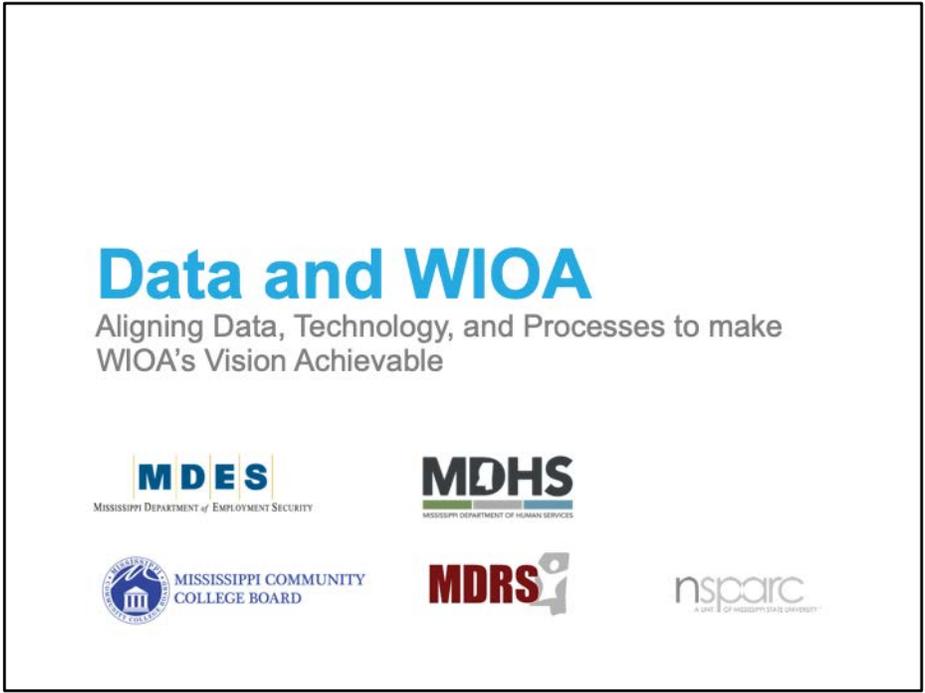
Subject: 2020 Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development

I am pleased to approve the Mississippi Department of Employment Security's submission for the 2020-Pinnacle Award for Workforce Development.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jacqueline A. Turner". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Jacqueline A. Turner  
Executive Director



This presentation is confidential, unpublished property of the National Strategic Planning and Analysis Research Center (NSPARC). Please do not distribute without explicit permission from NSPARC and the Mississippi Department of Employment Security (MDES).

**Contact Information**

MDES: Jackie Turner, Executive Director. [JTurner@mdes.ms.gov](mailto:JTurner@mdes.ms.gov)  
NSPARC: Michael Taquino, Deputy Executive Director. [MTaquino@nsparc.msstate.edu](mailto:MTaquino@nsparc.msstate.edu)

## WIOA Vision

“State Board shall assist the Governor in...”

“The development of strategies for **aligning technology and data systems** across one-stop partner programs to **enhance service delivery** and improve efficiencies in **reporting on performance** accountability measures (including the design and implementation of common intake, data collection, case management information, and performance accountability measurement and reporting processes and the incorporation of local input into such design and implementation, to **improve coordination** of services across one-stop partner programs)”

(WIOA, 101.d.8)

## **WIOA: Three Uses of Data**

### **1. Case Management**

“aligning ... to enhance service delivery” – Real Time

### **2. Continuous Performance Improvement**

“improve coordination” – Real Time

### **3. Reporting**

“reporting on performance measures” – Retrospective

## WIOA Vision for Data Governance

State Plans Must Specify:

“How the lead state agencies with responsibility for the administration of the core programs will **align and integrate available workforce and education data** on core programs, unemployment insurance programs, and education through postsecondary education.”

(WIOA, 102.b.2.C.v)

In addition to the use of data, the WIOA law also discusses data governance – chiefly in the context of aligning and integrating data across partners.

## **WIOA Vision for Data Governance**

- Must have a mechanism for interagency coordination and management of data.
- The Workforce Development Board is the responsible steward ensuring alignment and integration across multiple stakeholders, while maintaining the integrity and autonomy of each stakeholder's interests in the process.

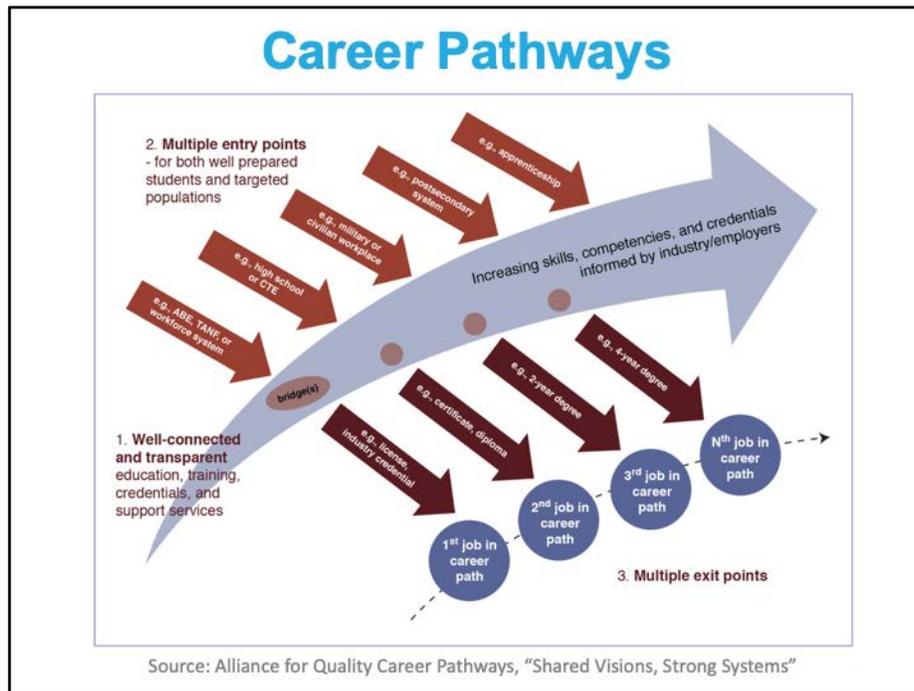
There must be some way to coordinate between agencies in the management of data.

The state workforce development board must ensure alignment of data, but it also has to ensure that each stakeholder feels ownership of the process and feels in control of its data and the way its data is used programmatically.

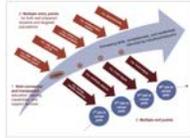
## **WIOA Calls for Making Data Actionable in...**

- Case Management
- Continuous Performance Improvement
- Reporting

To repeat, data must be actionable for case management, for continuous performance improvement, and for reporting.

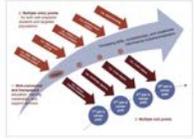


We must start with the end in mind – WIOA is essentially designed to support quality career pathways. This diagram, from the Alliance for Quality Career Pathways, shows the three aspects of career pathways very clearly – first there is a well-connected and transparent education, training, credentials, and support services structure. That’s WIOA – that’s the challenge we have. And this structure will support individuals who come to WIOA partners from all walks of life into multiple entry (and re-entry) points to receive training and assistance with barriers. These individuals will then exit the system at multiple points, each time hopefully gaining professional skills that will result in labor market attachment.



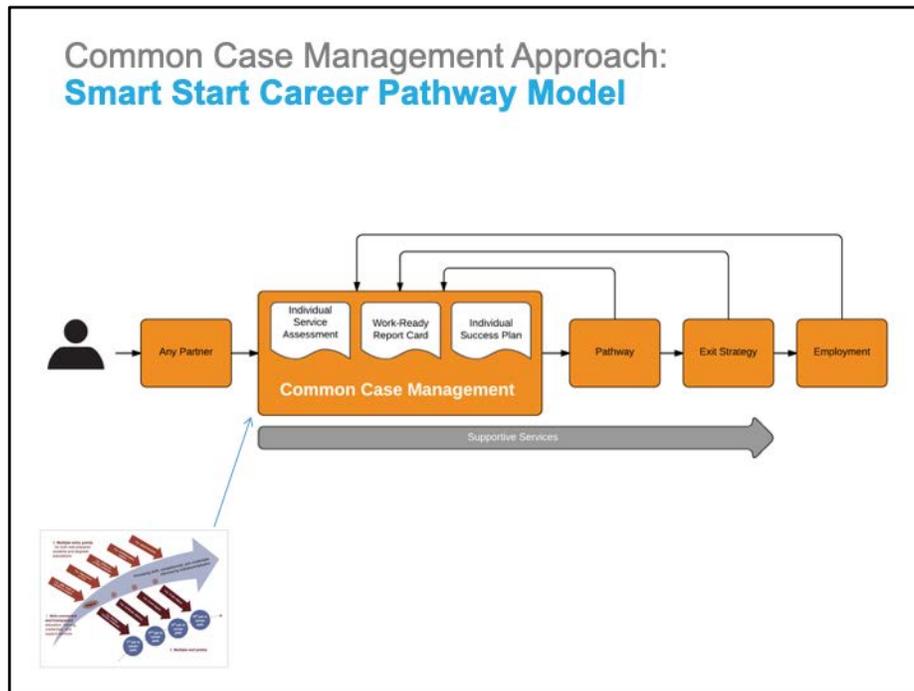
## Career Pathways

Provide opportunities for individuals to gain high quality **degree and non-degree credentials** that lead to further professional development and **employment** opportunities as individuals progress through a **well-coordinated** workforce system.



## Career Pathways

How are we going to achieve this?



To achieve a system that supports quality career pathways, we have to first begin with a common game plan for case management. Before we talk about data or technology, we have to agree on exactly how we want to “treat” an individual who comes to any WIOA partner. In Mississippi, we created the “Smart Start Career Pathway Model” based on successful state efforts with hard-to-serve individuals at the community college level and with SNAP participants.

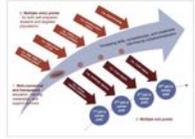
First, there is the common idea of the “no wrong door” approach. The participant should be able to come to any WIOA partner and receive the same approach to case management. This common case management begins with an “individual service assessment” that is essentially a set of questions designed to gauge a participant’s needs and route them to the right partners for further service. Based upon the assessment, the participant will be electronically referred to partners. For example, one of the questions asks if the individual has a high school diploma or equivalent. An answer of “no” will result in the participant’s being referred to Adult Basic Education services.

Based upon the participant’s profile (level of education, work experience) he or she will be shown a “Work-Ready Report Card” – this helps the participant to see how far

away he or she is, training-wise, from careers in the high-demand sectors that each local workforce area will be pursuing as part of their sector strategies. After choosing an occupation, the participant will be guided through the creation of a tentative “Individual Success Plan” that specifies a mixture of training and other supportive services that will prepare the individual for the occupation while ameliorating any barriers faced. This plan will be put into effect by staff members who enroll the participant in services that make up the participant’s “pathway.” There are three main pathways – the Smart Start pathway for individuals without a high-school diploma, the training pathway for individuals with a diploma or equivalent who need training for an occupation, and the workforce pathway that will help individuals who are adequately trained to remove any barriers to seeking employment and obtain job search services.

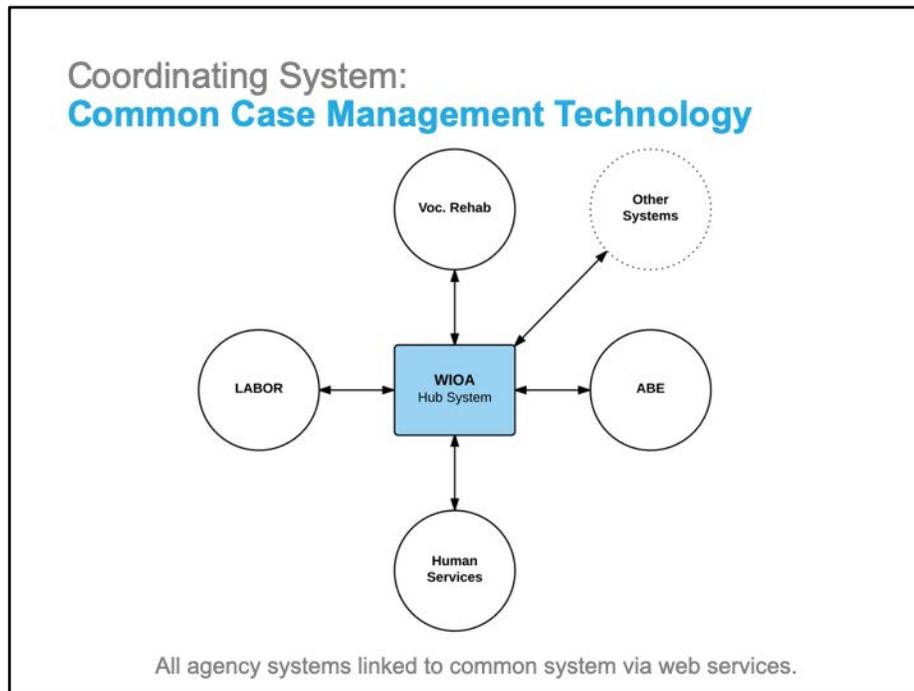
After training, an exit strategy strategy such as on-the-job training or subsidized employment helps the participant overcome the barrier of needing experience for employment. Finally the participant’s goal is entering the unsubsidized employment for which his or her plan was designed.

All through the process, supportive services are meant to be recast in terms of assisting the participant to reconnect with the world of work.



## Career Pathways

What is the technological framework to make this happen?

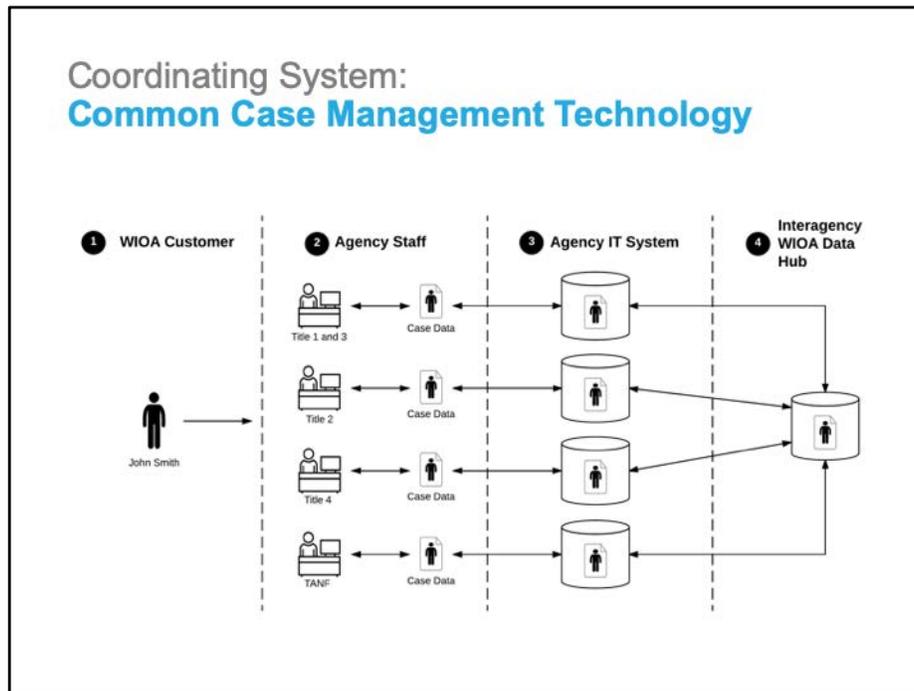


In order to support the goals of the Smart Start Career Pathway Model, partners need to be able to coordinate their activities.

Instead of opting for building a new staff-facing system, Mississippi decided to focus on building a behind-the-scenes system that supports communication between existing agency systems.

This system is “headless” – it has no human interface, but it has a computer interface and each agency’s systems were modified slightly to talk to the hub system. As staff members go about the work that they have always performed in the systems that they have always used, behind the scenes their systems are coordinating with the hub, sending referrals, receiving referrals, sending updates to case management information like addresses and phone numbers, and recording any data needed for performance reporting.

The system is also flexible and can support the integration of new partner systems in the future.



In order to support the goals of the Smart Start Career Pathway Model, partners need to be able to coordinate their activities.

Instead of opting for building a new staff-facing system, Mississippi decided to focus on building a behind-the-scenes system that supports communication between existing agency systems.

This system is “headless” – it has no human interface, but it has a computer interface and each agency’s systems were modified slightly to talk to the hub system. As staff members go about the work that they have always performed in the systems that they have always used, behind the scenes their systems are coordinating with the hub, sending referrals, receiving referrals, sending updates to case management information like addresses and phone numbers, and recording any data needed for performance reporting.

The system is also flexible and can support the integration of new partner systems in the future.

## Coordinating System: What does the WIOA Hub Contain?

### Lookup Tables

- Agencies
- Programs
- Partners
- Local Centers
- Service Categories
- Services
- Assessments
- Credentials

### Data Tables

- Participant Service Enrollment
- Participant Score
- Participant Credential
- Referral
- Participant Service Assessment

### Versioned Data

- Participant Profile
- Participant Success Plan

So, what data exactly are inside the hub?

First, The hub contains some **lookup tables** to provide a common list of items that all partners will be using for reporting case management. For example, one lookup table would be a list of services into which a participant could be enrolled.

Second, the hub contains two **versioned data objects** – the participant him or herself, and the success plan for the participant. These objects are “versioned” because multiple agency partners will be modifying the same participants and their plans. Versioning allows the hub to enforce synchronization of these common records to ensure that no one updates a participant until they have already reconciled the latest version of the participant with their own systems.

Third, the hub contains **data tables that hold other kinds of longitudinal data relevant to one partner or that does not require versioning**. An example would be a participant service enrollment – when an agency partner enrolls a participant into a service, the enrollment is recorded in a data table along with all the data fields required for reporting on that participant’s performance.

Smart Start Case Study:  
**Elvis Presley**

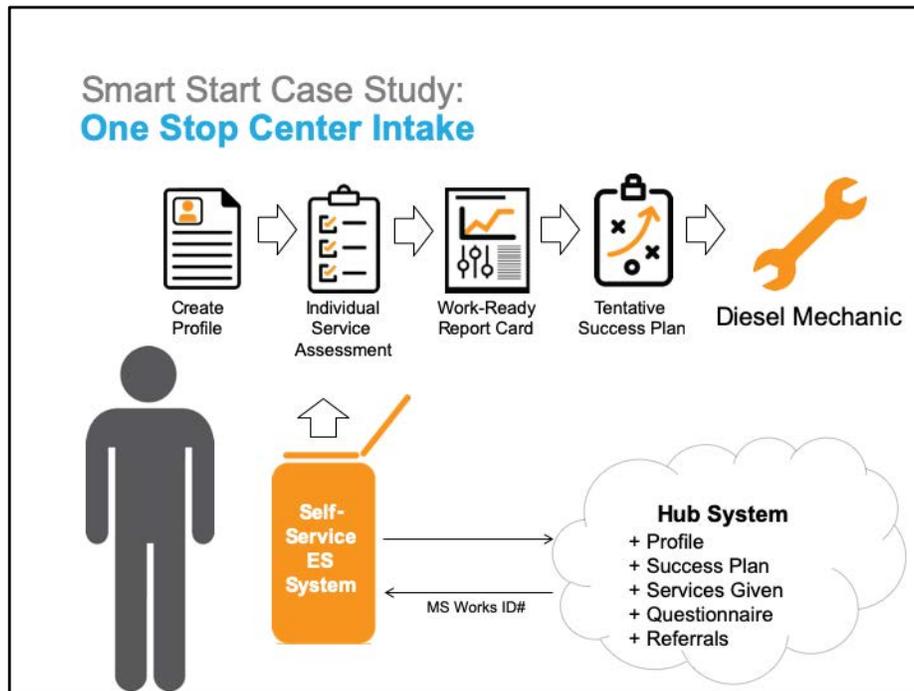
- Honorably Discharged from the Army
- Military Occupation: Truck Driving
- Capable of Passing an Equivalency Exam
- Needs a job in the short term to support a family
- Wants to be a diesel mechanic in the long term.
- Walks into a local One-Stop Center



The best way to see how the hub supports common case management, and by extension, reporting and performance monitoring, is to do through a case study.

This is Elvis – a famous Mississippian who has recently been discharged from the Army where he was a truck driver. He is capable of passing a high-school equivalency exam, wants to be a diesel mechanic in the long term, but also needs to support a family in the meantime.

Elvis has never been previously served by any WIOA partner. He walks into a One-Stop center in Mississippi.



At the one-stop center, as customer capable of using a computer, Elvis will probably sign in and then be brought to a resource room to do his initial sign-up activities.

### **Create Profile**

In the self-service Mississippi Works system (our Employment Services system), Elvis will create a profile that includes his education and previous work experience in addition to other fields required for case management activities and reporting.

### **Individual Service Assessment**

After completing his profile, Elvis will be presented with the six individual Service Assessment questions that will help the system to determine where to initially refer Elvis to a one-stop partner.

### **Work-Ready Report Card**

Based on Elvis's profile and his barriers as determined from the individual service assessment, the system will present Elvis with a "Work Ready Report Card" that will show some good career options along with the minimum time required for Elvis to prepare for the occupation, based on his current skill level. He will be able to explore the careers, all shown because they both align with his background and because they

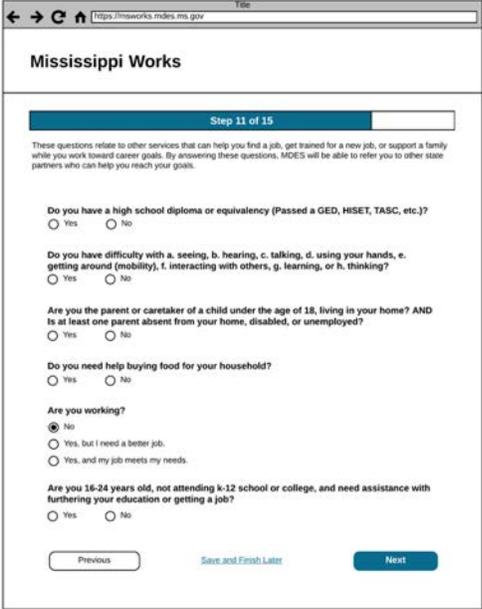
align with the area's sector strategy, and he will then choose an occupation for which to create a plan.

### **Tentative Success Plan**

Based on Elvis's profile, his barriers as determined from the individual service assessment, and his chosen occupation the system will present a tentative success plan. Tentative, because Elvis will need a staff member to actually take actions to fund services and perform enrollments. The plan will include services and training needed to get Elvis to the finish line occupation while ameliorating any barriers he may have to employment.

In this case study, Elvis would like to be a **Diesel Mechanic**.

During the whole process, as Elvis works with the state's Employment Services system, that system is communicating with the WIOA hub, delivering his profile, his success plan, any self-service services given to him, the answers to his individual service assessment questionnaire, and the hub will create any referrals to agency partners needed on the basis of that assessment.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL <https://msworks.mdes.ms.gov>. The page title is "Mississippi Works" and it is labeled "Step 11 of 15". Below the title, there is a progress bar and a paragraph of text: "These questions relate to other services that can help you find a job, get trained for a new job, or support a family while you work toward career goals. By answering these questions, MDES will be able to refer you to other state partners who can help you reach your goals." The questionnaire consists of several questions with radio button options:

- Do you have a high school diploma or equivalency (Passed a GED, HISET, TASC, etc.)?   
  Yes  No
- Do you have difficulty with a. seeing, b. hearing, c. talking, d. using your hands, e. getting around (mobility), f. interacting with others, g. learning, or h. thinking?   
  Yes  No
- Are you the parent or caretaker of a child under the age of 18, living in your home? AND is at least one parent absent from your home, disabled, or unemployed?   
  Yes  No
- Do you need help buying food for your household?   
  Yes  No
- Are you working?   
  No   
  Yes, but I need a better job.   
  Yes, and my job meets my needs.
- Are you 16-24 years old, not attending k-12 school or college, and need assistance with furthering your education or getting a job?   
  Yes  No

At the bottom of the form, there are three buttons: "Previous", "Save and Finish Later", and "Next".

## Individual Service Assessment

Mississippi Works already has a multi-step profile creation process.

Under WIOA, that process will be expanded to have additional screens designed to collect answers to the individual service assessment questionnaire and to assist the participant in building a success plan.

Here is the individual service assessment Elvis would take.

If he answers “yes,” for instance, to “Do you need help buying food for your household?” he will be referred electronically to Human Services to discuss SNAP.

**Mississippi Works**

Step 12 of 15

Based on your answers to the previous questions, we would like to refer you to the following partners. Feel free to uncheck any referrals you would like to decline and then click "Next" below to proceed. You will be contacted by partners to which you've been referred.

- Adult Basic Education**  
Adult Basic Education services will help you to attain a high school equivalency credential.
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services**  
Vocational Rehabilitation Services may be able to help you get to work or keep a job when you have difficulty with seeing, hearing, talking, using your hands, getting around (mobility), interacting with others, or learning.
- SNAP and TANF**  
SNAP can assist you if you're having trouble buying food for your family. TANF can help out if you're the parent or caretaker of a child younger than 18 living in your home and one of the child's parents are absent, disabled, or unemployed. Both programs support education and training activities.
- Youth Services**  
Youth services providers offer programs to help you further your education or find a job if you're 16-24 years old and you're not attending a K-12 school or college.

Previous   Save and Finish Later   Next

## Referrals

Based on the diagnostic questionnaire, the participants may be referred to partner agencies.

In addition, staff from any agency partner can make ad hoc referrals at any time.

Self-service customers are given a chance to see what referrals will result from their questionnaire.

**Career-Ready Report Card**

While Mississippi Works will also contain a more sophisticated report card for participants to view at any time, during the signup flow a simple version of the report card will show the low-skill participant how he or she can work toward a good middle-skill job.

The careers highlighted can relate to the local workforce area's focus areas and sector strategies.

The participant will be able to click and explore these occupation "cards" to find one that is interesting.

Clicking the explore button brings up a detail view of the occupation.

The work ready report card contains the careers recommended to Elvis and allows the Elvis to click to explore more information about the career. For example, clicking the "Explore" button on "Heavy and Tractor – Trailer Truck Drivers" will bring up a detail view (next slide)

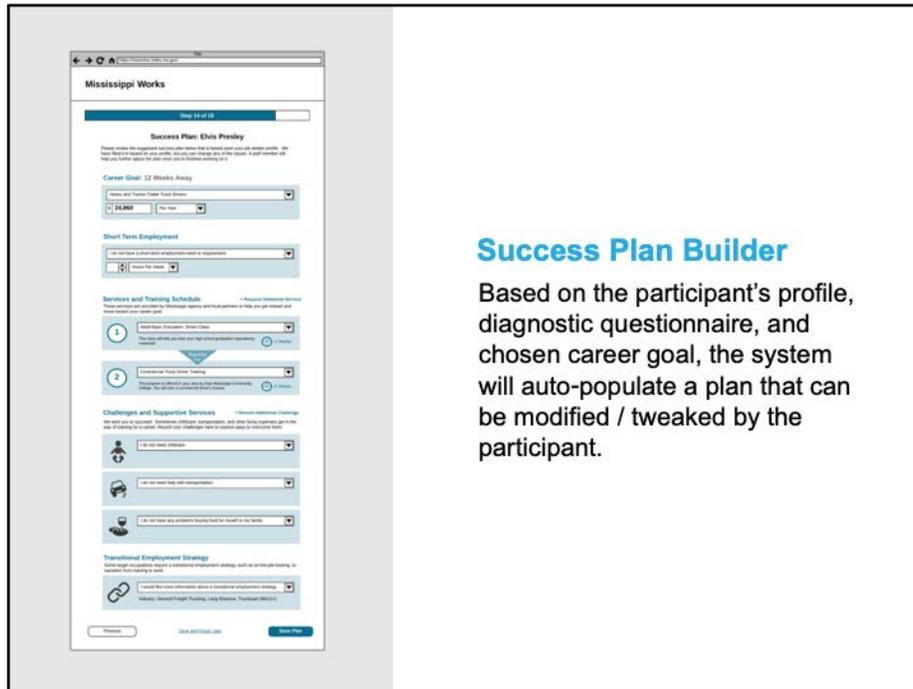
**Career-Ready Report Card: Detail**

Clicking the explore button brings up a detail view of the occupation.

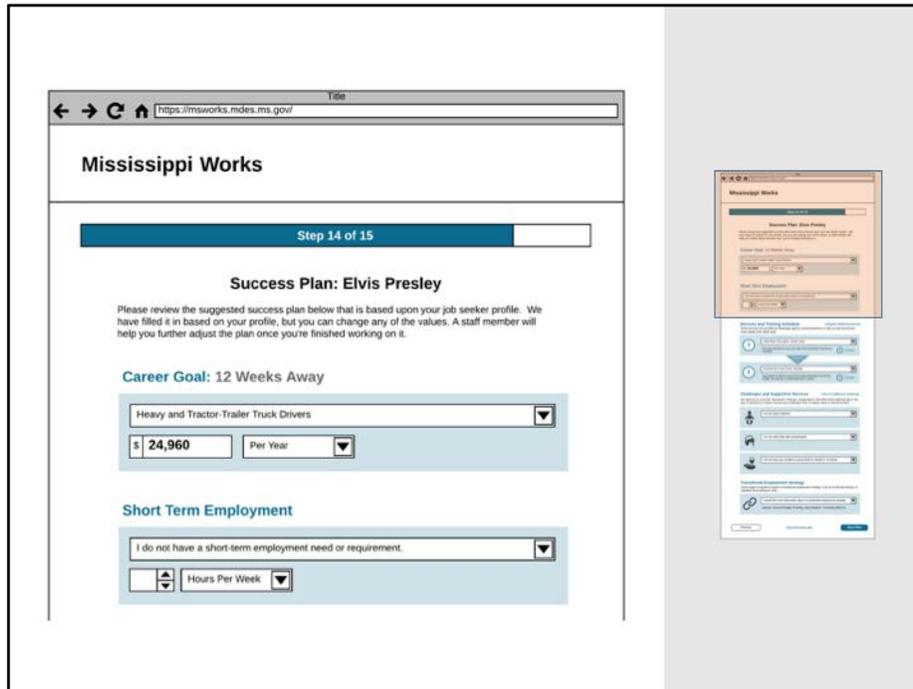
The detail card can have whatever content we prefer, but at least salary expectations and the training requirements for the occupation, tailored to the participant's current level.

Clicking "Help Me Build a Plan to Get There" will begin the process of allowing the participant to build a plan with this career as his or her goal.

This is the detail view that Elvis will see for the occupation, and it includes a description, expected salary, and training requirements based upon Elvis's current skill level. Clicking "Help me Build a Plan to Get There" will bring up the success plan bulider (next slide).

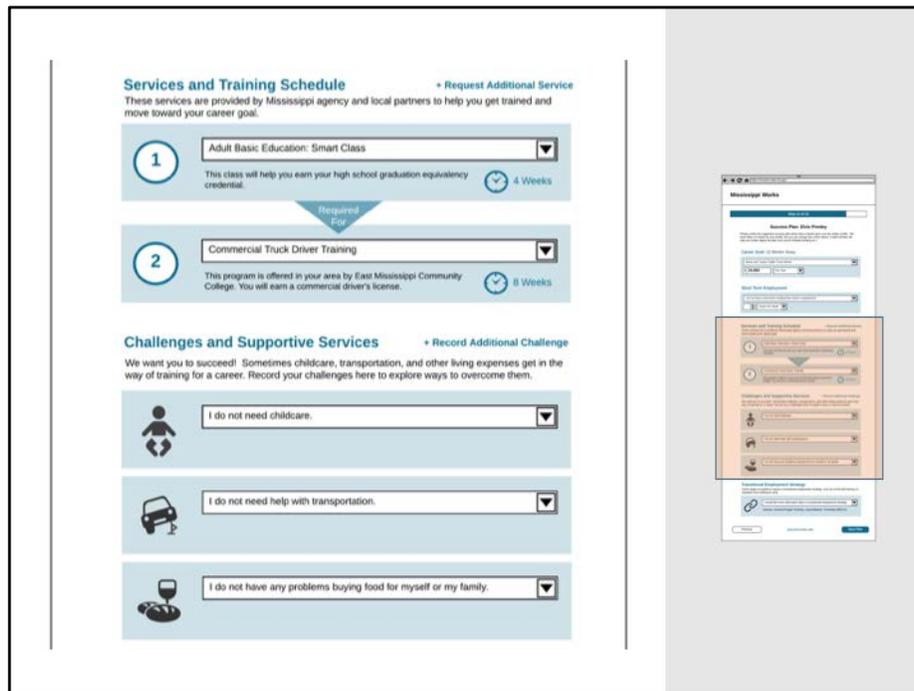


The success plan builder has almost everything it needs already based upon Elvis's profile, the services assessment, and his chosen occupation.



Starting at the top, the success plan has a “Career Goal” expressed in terms of an occupation and a desired salary. The plan is both oriented toward the career goal and contains services designed to achieve training required to meet the career goal.

In addition, the plan can include a “Short Term Employment” goal in case the participant must work to stay eligible for TANF, for instance, or if they need to work during training to support a household.



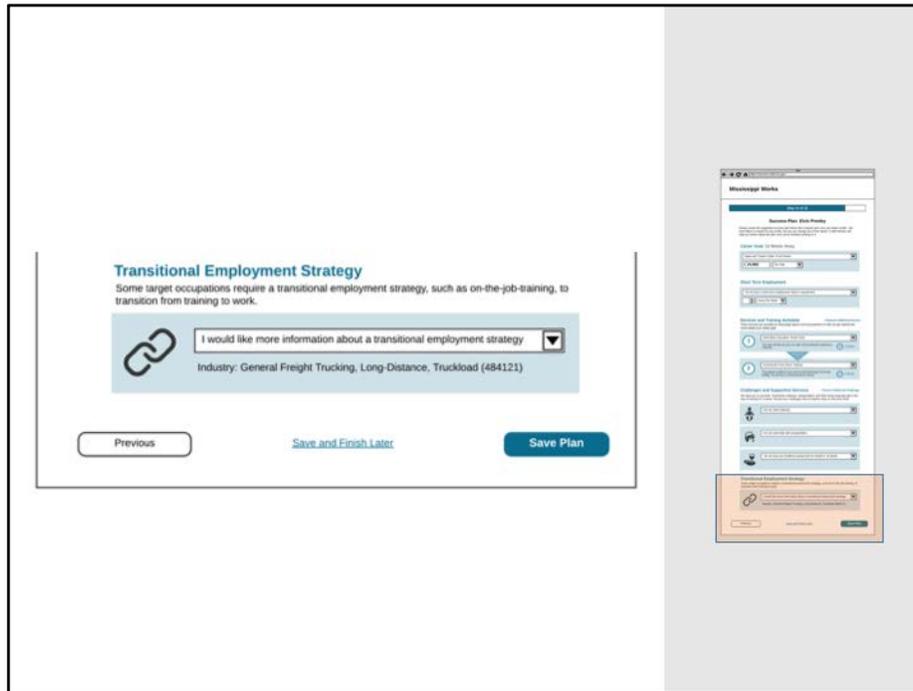
### Services and Training Schedule

Scrolling down, the “Services and Training Schedule” is the next part of the plan – it contains a list of training or other services needed to prepare for the occupation.

In this case, we can see adult basic education services and commercial truck driving training would be required.

### Challenges and Supportive Services

The next part of the plan contains a list of the barriers faced by the participant. As staff later help the participant to sign up for services that ameliorate the barriers, the remedy for the barrier will be shown on the plan. Initially, some of the barriers will be filled in based upon the services questionnaire and the participant can also add or clarify barriers here.

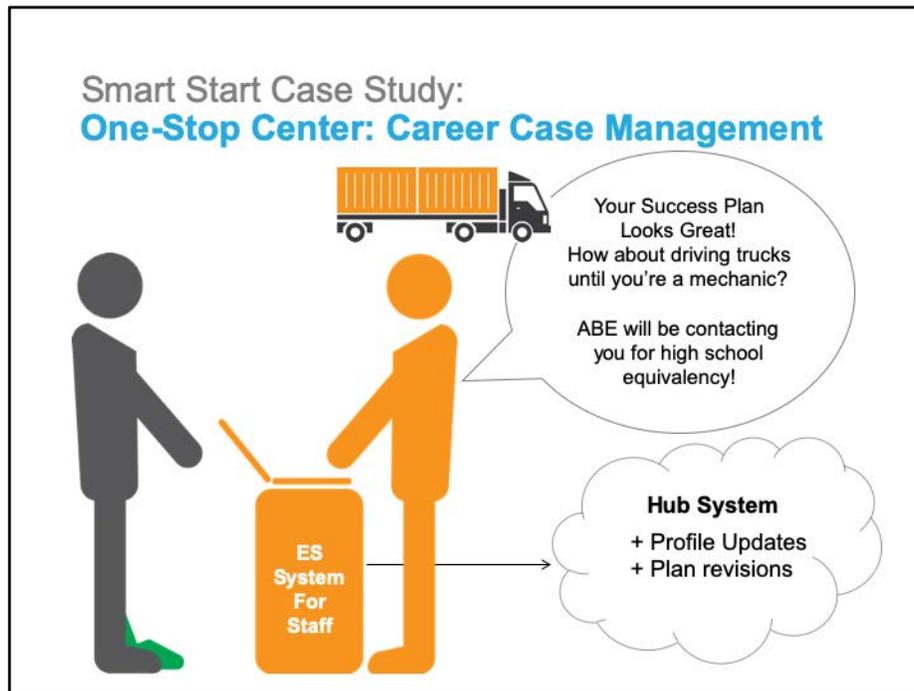


Scrolling down, the last part of the plan is the “Exit Strategy” – called a “Transitional Employment Strategy.”

### **Transitional Employment Strategy**

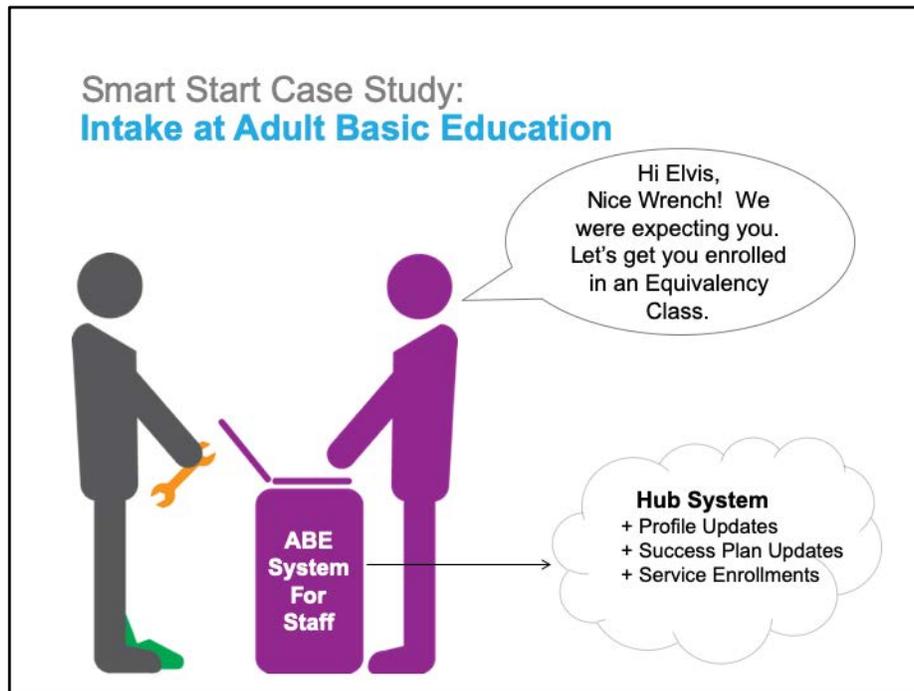
Here the participant will signify an interest in learning more, but staff involved in the participant’s training will be able to formally enroll the participant into strategies such as on-the-job-training, apprenticeships, subsidized work, etc.

That completes the plan.



Once Elvis completes his self-service signup (or staff-assisted at any other agency partner), he will speak to a staff member. Notice the staff member is using the agency’s ES system, and not the hub – remember, the hub stays in the background receiving information from the ES system itself. Any updates made by the staff member will be sent to the hub.

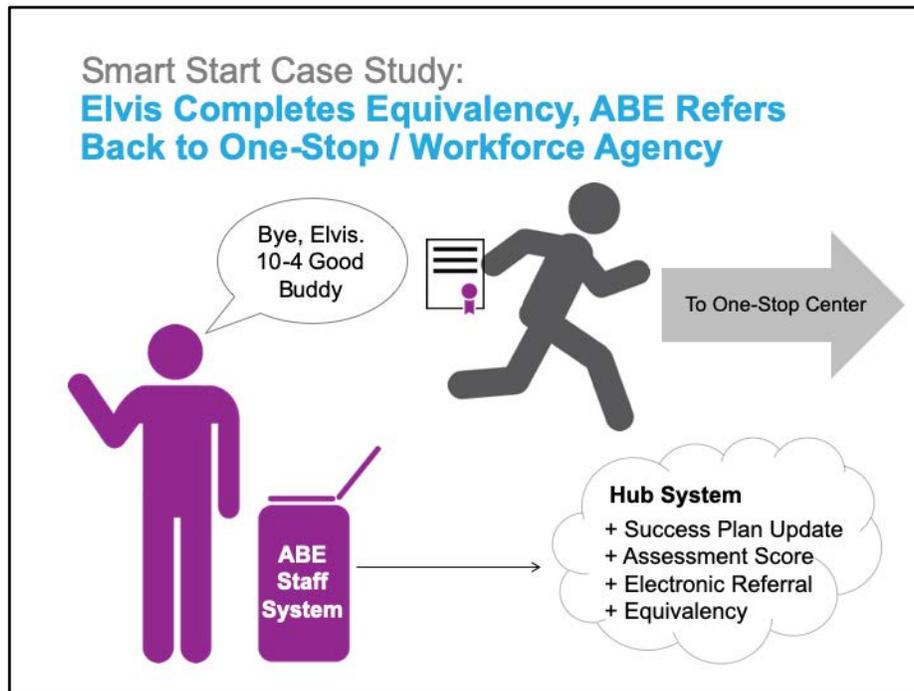
The key next step is for the workforce staff to refer Elvis to the first part of his pathway – ABE training to get his equivalency degree. In Mississippi, this is called the “Smart Class” and combines equivalency training with work-readiness training and assessment.



Elvis is contacted by ABE and goes to a local class. Notice the instructor is already expecting him.

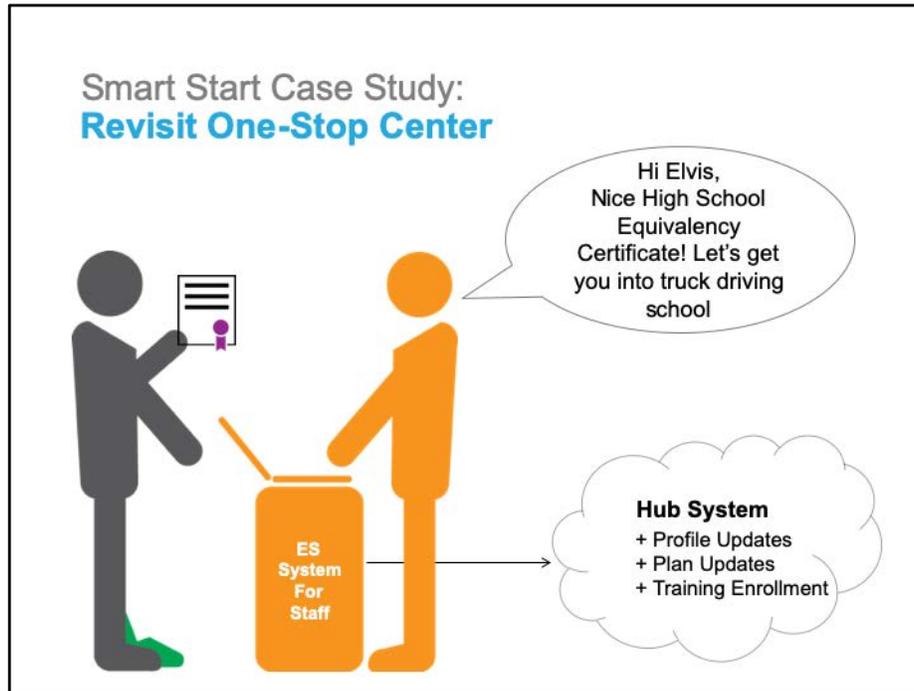
The instructor will not need to do a full intake on Elvis – the instructor can simply get his or her system to bring his contact information over from the WIOA hub and then augment the data with any agency-specific intake requirements.

Any updates to Elvis's profile, enrollments in ABE, changes to the success plan, etc. will be sent to the hub by the ABE system.

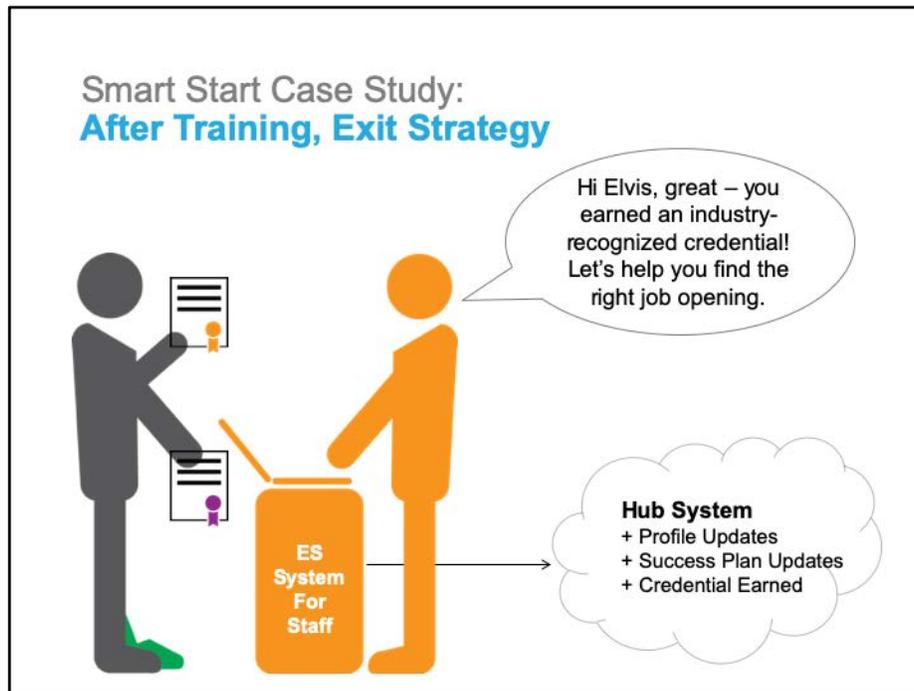


After Elvis completes his equivalency, the staff will enter any assessment scores and credentials into the ABE system that will then, in turn, send these data objects to the hub.

The staff can then refer Elvis back to the workforce agency to get a training enrollment as an Adult under WIOA.



The local one-stop staff will see Elvis again, note that he has completed the first part of his success plan and get him enrolled in truck driving school to complete his next planned service to work toward being a truck driver.



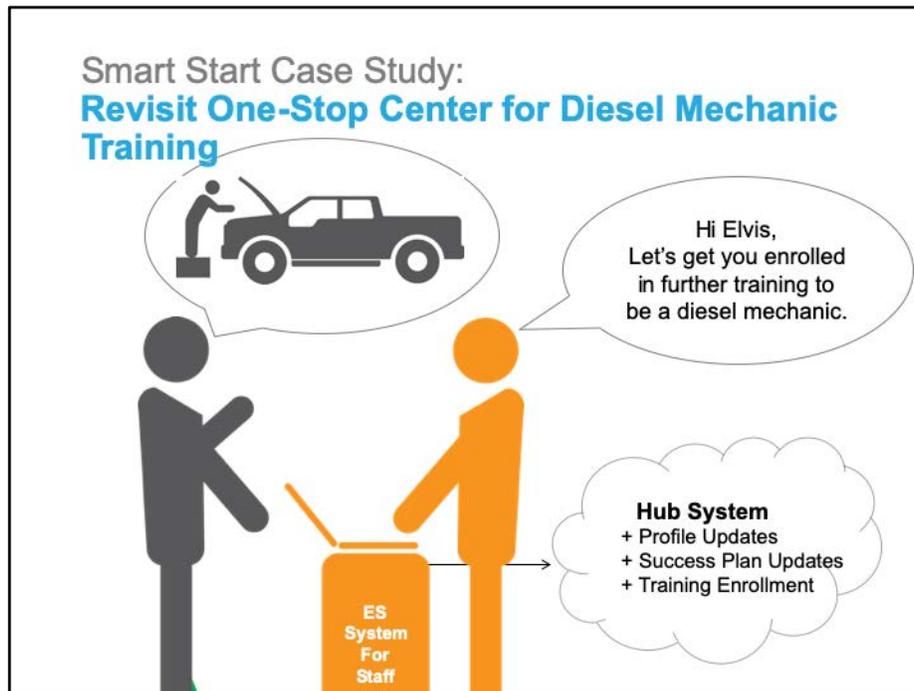
After earning his truck driving certificate, the ES staff will enter the credential, update his profile, and help Elvis to get connected with employment.

Smart Start Case Study:  
**Elvis Works as Truck Driver**



Wage Records

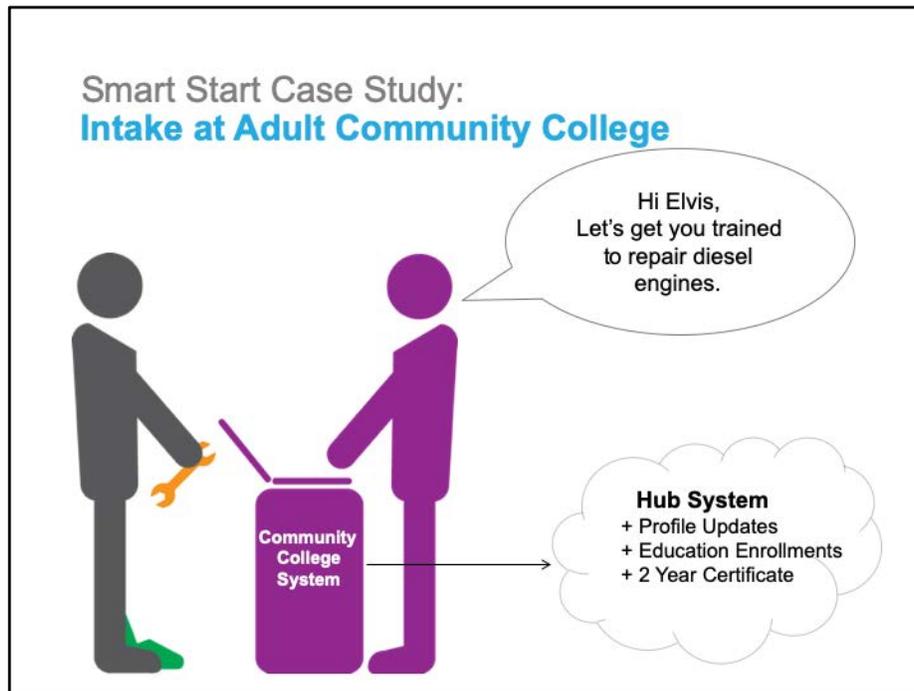
While Elvis works as a truck driver, the WIOA system will not forget him – we will know about his outcomes through wage records that will be employed to do performance reporting and continuous process improvement.



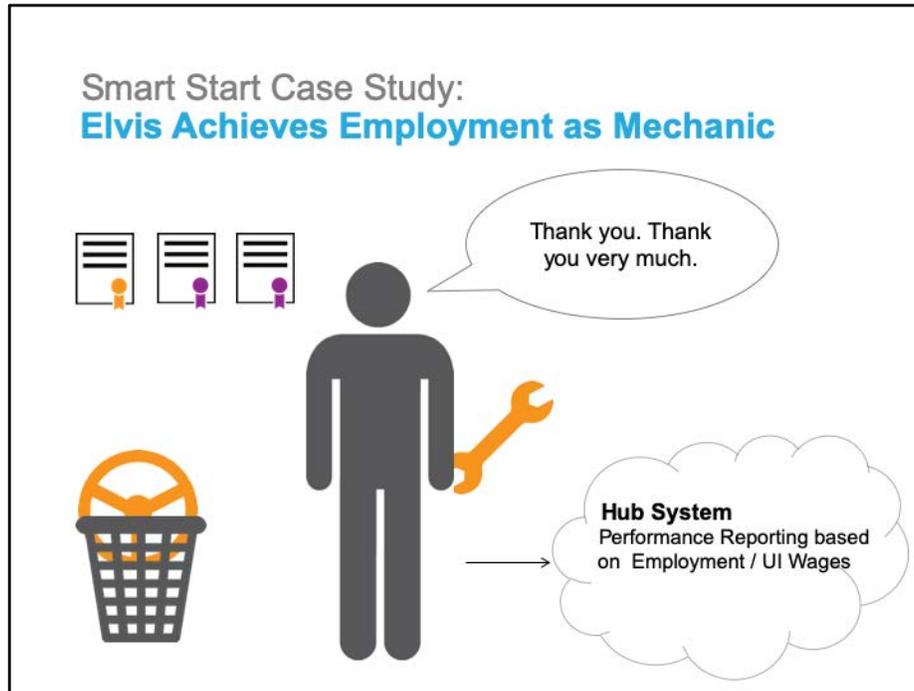
Eventually, Elvis will be ready to get trained for the ultimate career he seeks – Diesel Mechanic.

He can re-enter the system by going back to the one-stop, the worker can revisit his plan, make any profile updates, and find a way to get Elvis enrolled in training.

An electronic referral can connect Elvis with any other additional services from partners that he might need.



The local one-stop has connected Elvis with a training account and he begins to work with a local community college. As he is trained, transcripts will prove his progress toward a credential, and as he completes, his credentials and profile updates will be sent to the Hub from the community college's system or from the local workforce center system.



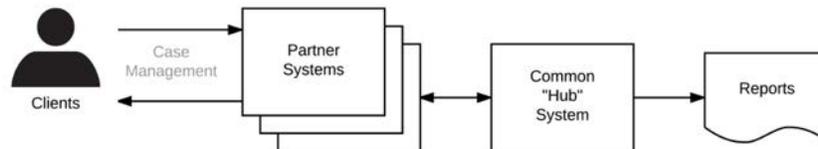
Finally, Elvis has reached his goal, is in unsubsidized employment as a Diesel Mechanic, earning several credentials along the way – high school equivalency, commercial truck driving, and a diesel mechanic credential.

The hub system, along with the state SLDS and wage records will allow for performance reporting.

## Data Required to Support WIOA Implementation

- **Case Management and Continuous Improvement**
  - Common Profile
  - Individual Service Assessment
  - Electronic Referrals
  - Work-Ready Report Card
  - Individual Success Plan
  - Common **service** catalog.
  - Common **assessments** catalog.
  - Common **credentials** catalog.
- **Reporting and Data Tools**
  - Any partner data needed to fulfill state requirements for outcomes (e.g., UI / Employment Data, ETPL Outcome Data, Education Data)

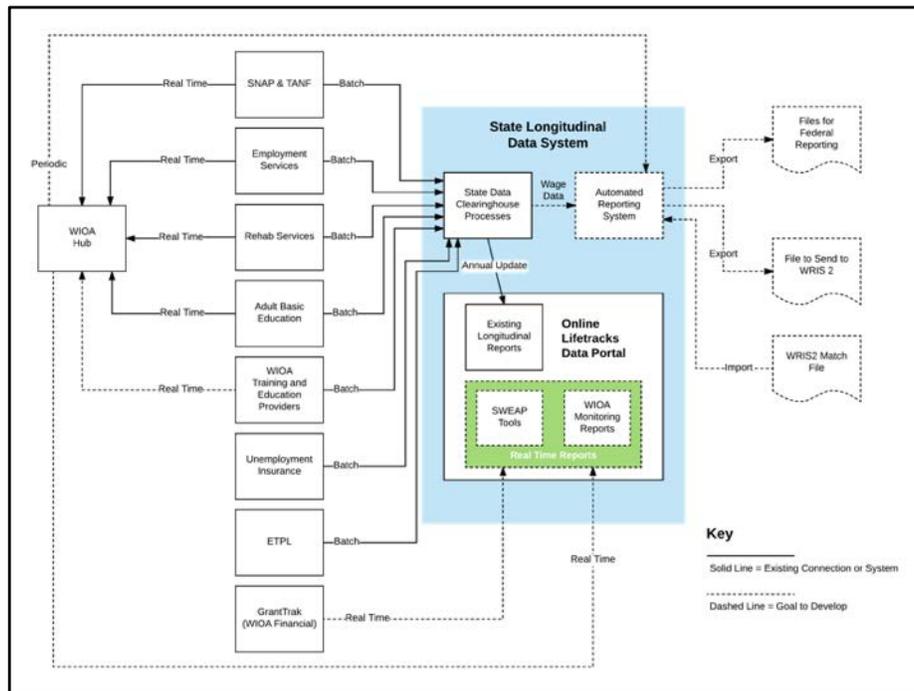
## Case Management Focus that Supports Reporting and Continuous Improvement



Provides:

- ✓ Data for Case Management
- ✓ Data for Continuous Improvement
- ✓ Data for Reporting

Focusing on improving real-time case management means that the hub will also have data required for continuous improvement and reporting – this approach ensures that WIOA’s threefold vision for actionable data has been met.



To connect workforce data and bring the WIOA hub into into the State Longitudinal Data System context, Mississippi is currently working on a Workforce Data Quality Initiative Grant. The diagram above illustrates Mississippi’s progress to date (solid lines) and Mississippi’s current work (dashed lines) as part of this project.

Through our SLDS, we have already achieved batch sharing of data for reporting and research purposes. The WIOA Hub has brought real time coordination of data for WIOA case management.

We are working to achieve several additional items:

1. Build an automated reporting capability in the SLDS that will use data from the hub and from the SLDS to create federal and state performance reports; currently these reports are accomplished through a combination of automation and human labor.
2. Build real-time dashboards that will support continuous process improvement. In this we will be leveraging tools created through the National Skills Coalition’s SWEAP project and will be populating data tools required by Mississippi’s state workforce board to oversee WIOA system performance.
3. Undertake research to compare WIOA performance as reported by staff through

administrative case management systems to the hub with credentials and other outcomes that can be derived from longitudinal data sent by education and training providers to the SLDS.