Virtual American Job Center Phases of Growth

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Phase I - Pilot Program and Process Development

Housing representatives of all agencies with roles in building the workforce in one physical location is logistically improbable at best. The numerous federal, state and local agencies that are stakeholders in the workforce system are as diverse as the participants that they serve. This can cause confusion and prevent individuals from having access to the programs that can best serve them. However, given the interconnectivity of the American Job Center system in the State of Tennessee, the Department of Labor and Workforce Development has developed a Virtual American Job Center (V-AJC) program to leverage existing technologies in a way designed to, proactively, put people in touch with available services. The current phase of this program relies on the use of the Virtual One Stop, available for public use as Jobs4TN.gov, working in conjunction with Zopim Chat and the Zendesk CRM platform. In this context, "virtual" refers specifically to the use of the internet as a medium for service delivery. Using those tools, state staff is able to deliver a number of participation triggering services, which a person would normally receive only if they walked into an AJC (**Table 1, Title III Participant Service Codes for V-AJC**). The design of the V-AJC includes the flexibility to accommodate partnerships with agencies outside of the TDLWD. The flexibility of the framework is most important for the future success and expansion of the program. Phase I of the Virtual AJC includes the pilot area and the gradual expansion of the program across the State. Implementation of this Phase began on January 2, 2019 will be complete by the end of December 2019.

Table 1, Title III Participant Service Codes for V-AJC

Service Code	Service Name	Service Description
100	Unemployment Insurance meaningful assistance	When a job seeker was provided staff assistance in filing a UI claim (Assisting an individual directly when filing a claim within the GUS system)
102	Initial Assessment	Record when an individual is given an assessment of their interests, abilities and potential training benefits
115	Resume Preparation Assistance	Providing instructions on the content and format of resumes and cover letters and providing assistance in the development and production of the same.
123	Job Development Contacts (working with Employer and Job Seeker)	Record when you bring an employer and job seeker together for a specific employment opportunity within the company.
125	Job Search/Placement Asst., Inc. Career Counseling	**Job search activities** with staff involvement and which are designed to help the participant plan and carry out a successful job hunting strategy. The services include resume preparation assistance, job search workshops, job finding clubs, and development of a job search plan. **Career counseling** services include the provision of information (Including information on local performance and eligible training providers), materials, suggestions, or advice intended to assist the job seeker in making occupation or career decisions.
133	Referred to Wagner Peyser (WP)	Record when the individual is referred to Wagner Peyser (WP)
134	Referred to WIOA Title I (Adult, DW and Youth)	Record when the individual is referred to WIOA Title I (Adult, DW and Youth)
135	Referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)	Record when the individual is referred to Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)
136	Referred to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)	Record when the individual is referred to Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)
137	Referred to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Record when the individual is referred to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

138	Referred to Adult Education (AE)	Record when the individual is referred to Adult Education (AE)
200	Individual Counseling	Record when an individual is provided counseling to support achieving the individual's education and career goals.
202	Career Guidance/Planning	Record when an individual is provided a wide range of information, materials and suggestions and advice intended to assist in a vocational decision regarding employment and training with staff assistance.
203	Objective Assessment	objective assessment of academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, which includes a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs
205	Develop Service Strategies (IEP/ISS/EDP)	Record when the individual is given a plan that identifies the employment goals, achievement objectives and a combination of activities/services for the participant to achieve their goals
206	Referred To Apprenticeship	Record when you refer an individual to an apprenticeship program.
207	Referred To Job Corps	Record when you refer an individual into the Job Corp program.
208	Referred To Other Federal (Non-WIA/WIOA) Training	Participant referred to a training program supported by the **Federal Government, such as WIOA-funded projects, TAA, Adult Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Job Corps**
209	Referred To State And Local Training	Referral to local training
210	Referred To Educational Services	Record when you refer an individual to educational achievement services which include, but are not limited to tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential
212	Other Intensive Services Not Otherwise Classified	Record when you assist an individual for any other reasons that are not present within the activities in VOS. Make sure to record in the comments of the activity what services were provided
216	Out-of-area job search asst.	Record when you assist an individual in conducting a job search in a geographic area outside the individuals labor market area
500	Referred To Job Over 150 Days	Record when a job seeker is referred to a job over 150 days long in duration
501	Referred To Job 4 - 150 Days	Record when a job seeker is referred to a job that is 4 to 150 days in duration
502	Referred To Job 3 Days Or Less	Record when a job seeker is referred to a job that is 3 days or less in duration
505	External Job Referral by Staff	Record when a job seeker is referred to a job that is external to JOBS4TN

Phase II – Integration of Partner Programs

The TDLWD is already moving forward with the development of phase II of the Virtual American Job Center system (**Chart 1, Virtual AJC Phase Development**). As the state's Workforce System Strategic Goals indicate, there is a need to integrate services across multiple partner agencies. To achieve that goal the department is building a Career Readiness Integrated Service Platform (CRISP) that centers on a visually appealing, customer focused web page. CRISP allows the V-AJC to expand the range of services that a participant can expect to receive by speaking to the current or potential participant with common language that describes the services TDLWD provides. Additionally, this platform will adopt the "No wrong door" philosophy of service. A participant will never hear that they have reached the "wrong department" as it is the V-AJC's job to put them in touch with the correct person. *"Let me put you in touch"* is the motto of the V-AJC. Because, in order to build a world class Workforce Development System, the State of Tennessee must begin by providing a world class level of customer service. For the TDLWD, that

means removing the anonymity behind the internet and providing real world contact information, personalized services and clear communication to all participants and potential participants.
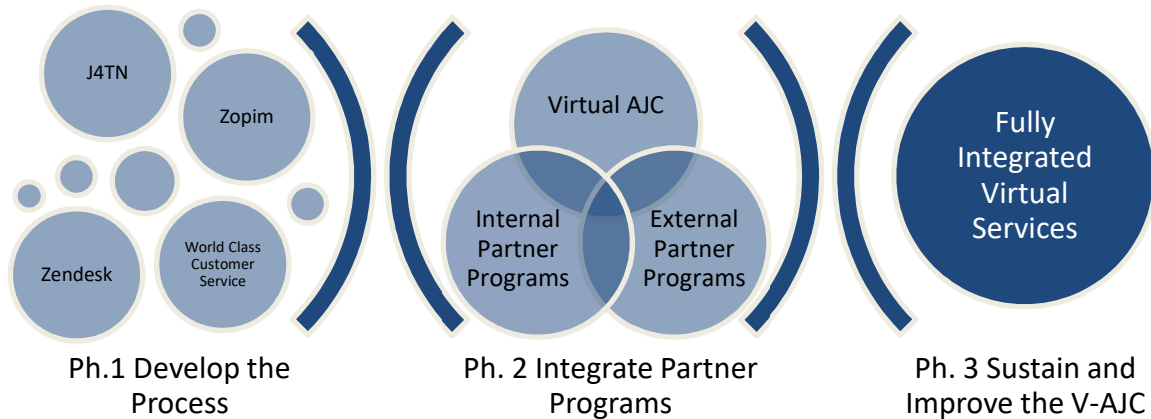

Chart 1, Virtual AJC Phase Development

Starting with TDLWD internal partners including Title II Programs (Adult Education and Family Literacy) and Title IV (Vocational Rehabilitation) programs outside of Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and Title III (Wagner-Peyser), will be available for referral. CRISP will provide a virtual space for all of our partner programs and agencies. Representative information is not enough. These programs must have human points of contact behind them. This will require collaboration between the departments in order to maintain an active representation of state staff members, non-state Title I staff members and external organizations. Ideally, TDLWD will handle this with minimal requirements from partner agencies. The only requirement from partner agencies will be that they provide an individual who will take responsibility for referred participants in each area or Statewide.
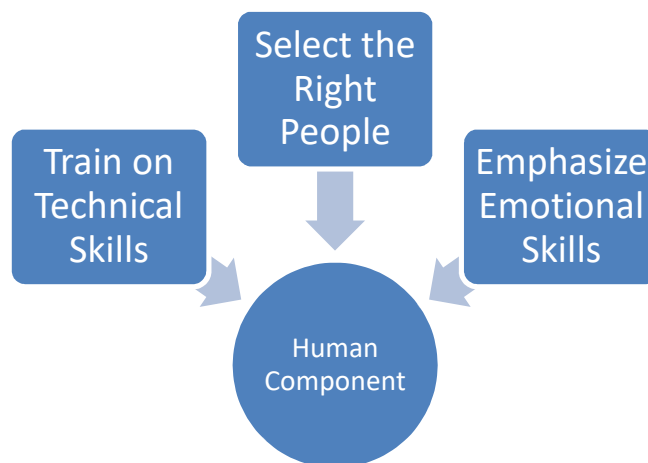

Chart 2, Elements of the Human Component

Phase II will be the most demanding Phase of the program's development. With current staffing Phase II, will to take at least two years to be fully implemented. As the capabilities of the V-AJC increase there will be several components of the program that will require in-depth analysis and ongoing improvement and refinement. The first and most critical will be the Human Component (**Chart 2,**

Elements of the Human Component). The Human Component will include selecting the right people and training staff on how to utilize the V-AJC effectively. The human component will also focus on developing a dedicated staff of people who have the heart to serve the needs of the participants.

Achieving the human component will require a culture shift across the State. It will challenge the contracted service providers to align their organizational values with those of the TDLWD. The goal is to address the discriminatory practice of "cherry picking" the most likely candidate to complete a program and ensure that the department attempts to provide services to those who are the most in need. The V-AJC will provide access to those who are disenfranchised because of past poor service and allow the department to address shortcomings in the quality of service.

The next component is the technical side of the V-AJC. Currently the services provided are limited to three avenues of communication; text, email, and telephone. While much is accomplished over these media, the department can do better. By incorporating more sophisticated communications techniques including video chat, teleconferencing, document sharing and digital signatures the department will be able to broaden the services that the V-AJC can provide. Because the numbers of greeter check-ins double or sometimes triple the numbers of unique individuals checking in (**Graph 1, PY18 Greeter Check-Ins vs. Unique Individuals**), with improved technology the V-AJC is a tool that will reduce unnecessary visits to the AJC. The reduction in foot traffic will allow case managers and career specialists to provide better assistance to those who come through the doors while reducing the wait time for participants in the waiting room.
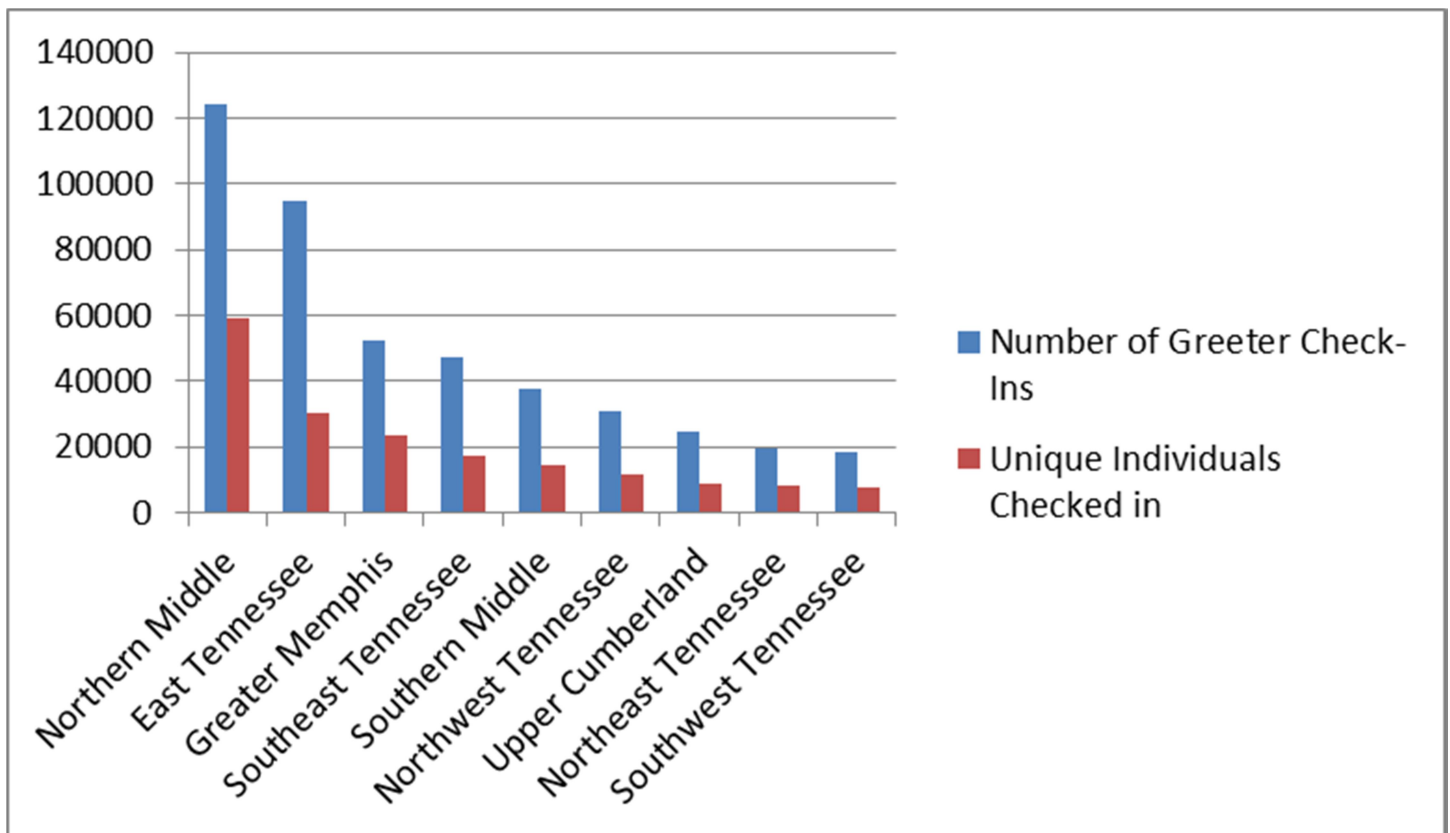
Graph 1, PY18 Greeter Check-Ins vs. Unique Individuals

Improved hardware and software will enable the third component of ongoing analysis and improvement, which is the information gathering and quick reference component. The department requires staff to be knowledgeable about internally administered programs. Outside of TDLWD services, there must be a system of recording and cataloging available resources available for our participants. CRISP will handle this function and internally, staff will have a searchable catalog of available resources and the associated point of contact. V-AJC staff will gather information and maintain up to date contacts for outside partners.
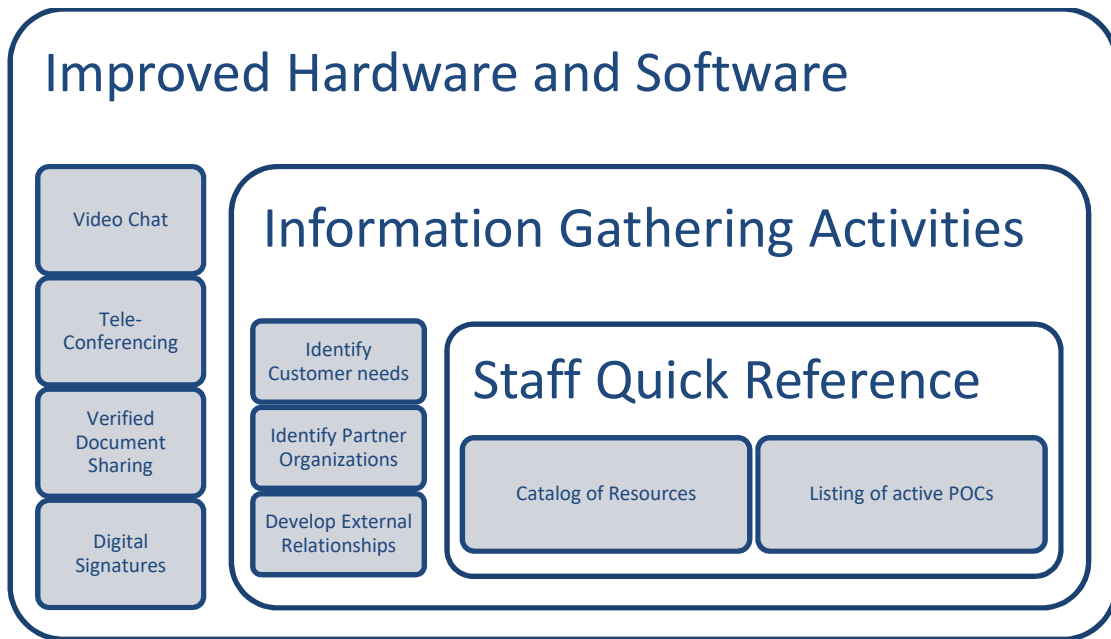

Chart 3, Information Gathering and Quick Reference Component

With all of the necessary components in place, the V-AJC will be prepared to integrate partners who are external to TDLWD. By creating a unified landing page, the Department will have an expandable digital infrastructure, purposefully built to accommodate both already identified and future partners. TDLWD will have the tools to be able to lead partner agencies in the workforce development system. By using internal partner programs as the model for expansion, the V-AJC will be able to identify best practices in relationship building between partner agencies. Once external agencies have been incorporated, the V-AJC Phase 3 will begin.

Phase 3 – Program Sustainment and Service Delivery Improvement

After the integration of partner agencies, the V-AJC will be seeking to integrate non-governmental organizations, faith based organizations and Non-profit organizations who serve the same demographics of clients. By building forward facing partnerships with Non-governmental Organizations (NGO), TDLWD will provide the opportunity to stretch WIOA funds while adding an external layer of service availability to the participant. The V-AJC is furthering the commitment to put the client in touch by making a promise that if the department cannot serve you, it will try to find an agency that can. Generating a competitive atmosphere among service organizations and career service providers TDLWD

can further reduce the practice of "cherry picking" thereby increasing the number of individuals who are served. By creating lines of communication between Governmental agencies and NGOs, TDLWD is ensuring the broadest range of participants receive service. Further, by controlling the platform used to make and maintain connections, TDLWD will write the narrative of what a Future American Workforce Development System looks like (**Chart 4, Future Partnerships configuration for the V-AJC**).
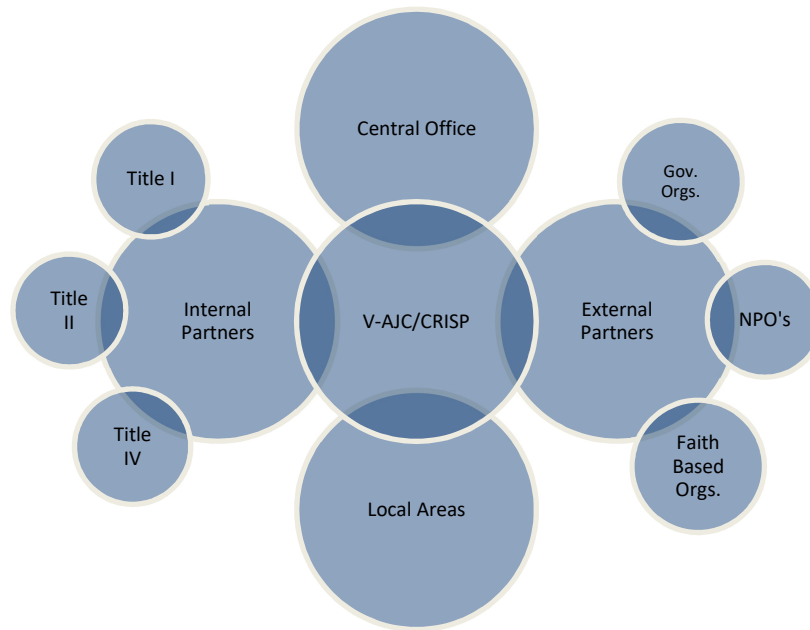

Chart 4, Future Partnerships configuration for the V-AJC

As the V-AJC gains contacts external to TDLWD, the challenges facing the program will become more complex. Relationship management between internal and external customers becomes muddy as partner agencies join. Shared responsibilities will result in customers being lost in the flow of communication. However, as the processes are built these problems can be navigated as they arise. By maintaining focus on serving the people most in need as the department's mission the V-AJC will modify operational procedures. V-AJC Staff can collect best practices from local area staff and make adjustments to better facilitate provision of services and partnerships. Sustainment of the core V-AJC model will become easier allowing improvement to be the driving factor of the V-AJC operational model. Improvements will come in the form of refining interagency partnerships, creating programs centered on the V-AJC as a service delivery platform and adding NGO's to our network of outside partner organizations.