

Oklahoma Works Together – Centers for Workforce Excellence

Lessons Learned During the Application Process

What caused you the most difficulty when creating the application?

ADVICE:

1. Knowing who had answers to questions that an applicant will have as they work through the process.
 - a. **ADVICE:** Get to know the team assigned to helping applicants as well as coordinators from existing Centers.
2. Interpretation of some items in the (application) guide created some difficulty.
 - a. **ADVICE:** Existing Center coordinators sent a wide array of questions during their application process. Ask away; it may be a simple answer!
3. Gathering input from our area partners
 - a. **ADVICE:** Emails, phone calls, meetings, surveys are all tools that are used to create and maintain business relationships that will enable the gathering of input from area partners.

Sometimes, business relationships become stale because an individual has moved or promoted up, etc. The application process for the Workforce Center of Excellence is a great reason to reach out and seek to get a connection with the new person in position, helping them to build their network and increasing their effectiveness as well.
4. Taking the vast amount of data and information that all regional partners are involved in and compressing down in to the limited number of pages allowed.
 - a. Stay within the 10-page count with your application, but use addendums to give additional information that is necessary to present essential data or information to make the case for you and your local team.

What is the best way to manage both the rubric as well as other performance points that are made outside of the rubric?

ADVICE:

- a. Address each of the points made in the rubric clearly and make sure that your points match up with specific rubric requirements so that the graders have no question as to how your proposed Center will/is handling this.
- b. As you find other elements in the guidelines that make sense for your area to address, do so. However, remember, you are making the case very unique center of excellence. As such, take advantage of opportunities to tell the story inside the confines of the rubric as well as in other portions of your application document.

What other lessons did you learn through the application process that you think should be shared?

ADVICE:

- a. I think the biggest lesson is “collaboration.” I would advise any community considering an application to make sure all stakeholders are identified and involved.
- b. The expectation should be that a business advisory team is already in place and has, in fact, provided input to the application and the direction of the CWE in order to be considered operational.
- c. Do not procrastinate. It is a lengthy process, as it should be.

Miscellaneous:

1. How will re-certification be handled?
 - a. **ADVICE:** A peer review process is being considered for future recertifications of the Certified Workforce Centers of Excellence on or about the second anniversary of the Center's certification date