

I AM Workforce Solutions “Bridging the Gap”

Proactive service or bridging the gaps without being asked to do so represents the very best of service in any business. There are endless opportunities for each of us to bridge the gaps by working proactively with each other every day.

Financial aid dollars represents the largest portion of funding that Workforce Solutions introduces to the Houston Galveston Region each year. This funding is contingent upon customer needs and financial situations and all of us explore those areas extensively with our customers, but there is a next step that we do not proactively explore that could potentially bridge gaps for our customers and create better opportunities for them to be successful.

We are proposing to take financial eligibility to the next level and ask our customers if they want additional services in lieu of just making them eligible for financial aid and if they do, better aligning our internal network to refer them to the right location and services without having to tell a customer to go to another location or call somewhere else.

Example of such needs is below:

- Susie called because she is concerned her parent fee increased by \$50 during her recertification period. Upon explaining to Susie how it was calculated and why, did we ask her if the job she was working at gave her enough hours per week to deliver exactly what she needed, and if not, what could we do to help her? By doing this, we are addressing a need that Susie has although Susie didn't directly ask us for help but her concern about the parent fee being higher is an automatic trigger she needs additional help.
 - This is an opportunity to refer her to a Career Office for additional assistance without her having to take extra steps. We would make the referral internally and the Career Office would reach out to Susie.
- Sam called because he needs birth certificates for his two sons and does not have any additional identifiers to assist him in proving citizenship; therefore, eligibility for services is pending and he doesn't have the resources to obtain them at this time. Did we ask Sam if we could help him get those birth certificates?
 - This is another opportunity to extend our reach through making a referral internally and asking a Career Office to extend service to Sam by reaching out to him.

I AM Workforce Solutions represents the very best of what we can do for customers, even when they do not ask for the service because they came here seeking one thing, but we can help them in many more ways. We can bridge the gap for them to be successful on a different level by simply connecting internally to reach out to customers proactively when there is a need.

The concept is not foreign to any of us, but unfortunately, it isn't something we do at this time consistently. Using tools we currently have in place to facilitate a seamless transition for our customer is the heart of the proposal.

- There are no additional costs.
- There are no new services needing to be developed.
- There are no new communication tools needed.
- There are no new staff members that need to be hired.
- There are no new marketing materials needed.

For successful implementation, all we need is an aligned effort to seamlessly transition customers between the Call Center and Career Office. We could best organize this through a workgroup with the objective of establishing a combined effort and vision to extend what one group does by ensuring all groups represent the same goal, Bridging the Gap between one service we provide in one location to all services the customer may need without having to tell the customer we "Don't Do That Here".

The results would be easily measurable through,

- Common reports we already utilize in our current systems and
- We could calibrate the extension of service through electronic surveys or telephone surveys.

Overall, it could not only improve our overall service to customers, it could assist our employers by more readily identifying customers already working but needing something better.

In general, most of the customers are successful in their respective fields but need a better job or be able to transfer their existing skills to a new job. This is a virtually unexplored workforce that we typically provide financial aid dollars to but nothing more.

Bridging the gaps for customers is something we are all committed to but we could do so much more and on a larger scale if we work together proactively to make it happen.