



Online Communication for Effective Business Services

Ideas for Structuring Online Communications to be More Accessible to Businesses Every Day and During a Time of Economic Recovery

Workforce development agencies and American Job Centers provide valuable workforce services to employers. However, business engagement can be hindered if the service offerings are not conveyed clearly and defined in terms familiar to employers. To engage with more employers, it is important to ensure webpages are clearly constructed to connect business needs to workforce system services by grouping services by common business functions and using common business terms, as opposed to using agency organizational structure and program names that are largely unfamiliar to employers.

In addition, the coronavirus pandemic has greatly impacted businesses, many of which have been closed for weeks due to social distancing regulations. Federal, state, and local governments have enacted programs to help businesses weather the pandemic, and they have provided specific guidance for essential businesses operating during the pandemic, as well as those in the process of reopening.

Businesses are looking for information and services more than ever, making now the time to provide value to your customers and deepen business relationships. It is crucial that workforce system websites: 1) clearly describe the types of business services offered; and 2) provide current information that organizations can use to face the COVID-19 pandemic safely and adapt to the changing business landscape. This document provides tips for effective online communications for employers, specifically for the Business Services Homepage.

Business Services Homepage

Optimizing the homepage for business services using topics and terms understood by employers will benefit both the employers in your area and your agency, making it well worth the time it takes to refresh your homepage. To support this work, many existing sites were reviewed to discover a logical framework for articulating the services available, all explained in business terms.

Manage Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Train employees▶ Create internal career pathways▶ Downsize or restructure organization▶ Help employees with support resources (childcare, transportation, etc.)
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Find Employees	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Post a Job<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Promote your openings nationally○ Promote your openings at career fairs○ Wage and economic data▶ Find applicants<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Search job seeker database (or we'll do it for you)○ Hire veterans○ Tax credits for hiring from targeted groups and how to find them▶ Process applicants<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Test and screen applicants and resumes
Develop Your Future Workforce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Create career pathways▶ Create work-based learning programs, such as apprenticeship▶ Represent business needs and help manage through Workforce Development Board participation
Manage Your State Business Labor Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Pay taxes▶ Report wages▶ Report new hires▶ Respond to benefit claims▶ Understand state and federal labor laws

Comparing your existing page with the above framework might reveal ideas for making your site more comprehensive and accessible to employers. The following state pages may also provide new ideas to incorporate: [California](#), [Idaho](#), [Massachusetts](#), and [Oregon](#).

Coronavirus Pandemic Workforce Information for Businesses

The coronavirus pandemic is a new and evolving situation that has created the need for effective and timely communication. Research was conducted to see how workforce development agencies and American Job Centers were sharing workforce information related to the coronavirus pandemic and economic recovery. For information on the topic of workforce business services specifically, variations presented themselves for both the location and structure of the page with the topics covered being more consistent.



The location and structure of the information typically fell into one of the following two approaches:

- ▶ One State Site. Some states created a comprehensive coronavirus site and have a section for employers. The information for employers may include services from multiple agencies and link to the state's official reopening plan.
- ▶ Agency Pages. Some states added coronavirus pages within each agency to share information for employers related to their services.

Regardless of the location of the information related to business services provided by the state workforce agency, the topics were typically centered on the following:

- ▶ New Programs and Policies (e.g., CARES Act Information, Paycheck Protection Program)
- ▶ Employee Layoffs (e.g., unemployment insurance, employee support services)
- ▶ Employee Reengagement
- ▶ Other Resources
- ▶ FAQs

Other best practices for creating and managing effective webpages related to the coronavirus and economic recovery include:

- ▶ Placing a prominent link on the homepage for the state agency providing business services to take them to the coronavirus page or section of the coronavirus page where the workforce-related information is posted.
- ▶ Including date information (as of) and positioning the most recent information on top – with anticipated rolling of communications as the situation evolves.
- ▶ Providing translated information in relevant languages.
- ▶ Sharing contact information prominently.
- ▶ For those using Twitter as a prime communication channel, including a Twitter widget feed on the page to show more real-time information as it is posted.

The following state pages may also provide new ideas on how to approach a page on the coronavirus and economic recovery: [Michigan](#) and [West Virginia](#).