



BUSINESS SERVICES PLAN

Business Service Strategies

Business First Philosophy

The Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC) is committed to the 'Business First Philosophy' (BFP). The BFP provides the pathway to strengthening community economic health. Providing business services to our local businesses based on their individual and specific needs improves business stability and promotes growth. Improving business stability and promoting growth in turn provides increased job opportunities. Equipping job seekers with skill upgrades and/or job search assistance will expand their opportunities to attain and retain sustainable employment. When businesses and job seekers come together, community economic strength and growth will follow.

In order to put businesses and job seekers on a 'Pathway to Success', NoRTEC and its workforce development partners follow nine strategies that create the "Business First Philosophy."

The Nine Strategies

NoRTEC provides the following business service activities as a framework to assist with the development of a Business Services Plan to meet the needs of employers throughout the eleven consortium:

- Business Start-Up
- Business Expansion
- Business Retention
- Business Information Exchange
- Human Resource Support
- Employee Recruitment
- Employee Training
- Layoff Assistance
- Public Policy

Each of elements shown above are explained below to provide additional detail and clarification of the types of activities included in the above framework.

Business Start-Up

The goal is to provide valuable and comprehensive assistance for all manners of business start-up. Assistance from the initial conception through to launching an operational business is available to local businesses throughout NoRTEC. Below is a list of services offered to assist with the start-up phase of entrepreneurial endeavors as well as activities that address specific business needs:

- Job Posting
 - Post flyer at One Stop Center
 - Send Posting to all WIA programs within NoRTEC
 - Send Job Posting to partner agencies
- Referrals
 - Local WIA applicant pools searched for clients that meet the employer's minimum qualification
 - Qualified individuals referred to job postings
- Customized Recruitment
 - Draft job description
 - Post Job flyer
 - Place job position advertising with media sources
 - Place public service announcement with media sources
 - Collection of applications/resumes
 - Pre-screen applicants and refer top applicants to business
 - Schedule interviews
 - Draft interview questions and rating system
 - Conduct interviews
 - Assist with interviews (sit on interview panel when requested)
 - Draft written notification to applicants/interview participants
- Provision of Interviewing Facilities
 - In each One Stop throughout the consortium, a business may choose to rent a room for conducting applicant interviews
- Information
 - Personnel Policies
 - Employee Benefits
 - Business Loans
 - Tax Incentives
 - Training
 - Marketing
 - Location
 - Obtaining State and Federal Tax ID Numbers
 - Labor Law
 - Workers Compensation
 - Labor Market information (LMI)
 - Business Start-Up Checklist
 - Refer to outside sources for business consulting specific to business' needs
 - Business Resource Center for business plan development and other business resource media

Business Expansion

Businesses can expand through adding employees, space, opening multiple locations, global exposure, or contracting with the government. There are different approaches to serving local businesses for business expansion. The services offered through NoRTEC may be beneficial to businesses needing to expand by adding staff and increasing other business resources.

- Business job postings: Job postings will be distributed to One Stop locations and to partner agencies (as appropriate)
- Applicant pool searches are performed at all relevant locations.
- Information pertaining to: personnel policies, employee benefits, labor laws, workers compensation insurance, and other workforce solutions are available to new and existing businesses.
- Referrals to businesses based on their unique needs such as web site design referrals, reaching out through the internet, global outreach, or contracting through the government.

For businesses wanting to expand, the following services are available based upon program funding.

- Work Experience (WEX): Eligible clients are placed with employers who will mentor to develop and refine transferable work skills. NoRTEC's WIA Service Provider is the employer of record, providing wages and workers compensation insurance. Contracts are for a specific amount of hours with an end date.
- Internships: Eligible clients are placed with employers to explore career opportunities outside the scope of their employment history. NoRTEC's WIA Service Provider is employer of record, providing wages and workers compensation insurance. Contracts are for a specific amount of hours and end date.
- On the Job Training (OJT): Eligible clients or employed workers have an opportunity to further their skill sets with additional training and professional support. Any participating business must commit to employee retention at the end of the OJT contract. The business is the employer of record, providing wages and workers compensation insurance. NoRTEC's WIA Service Provider will reimburse the employer a percentage of the employee wages to offset the cost of training. Wages based on usual and customary employment scale.

Business Retention

Business retention services are provided to enhance and stabilize businesses in local communities within the NoRTEC region. Many of the business services provided in the

Business Start-up section overlap with Business Retention services. These overlapping services are essential to various strategies, which support business vitality.

- Build business relationships and gain their trust in order to identify needs and offer business services as described in this document.
- Job postings and customized recruitment, providing information pertaining to personnel policies, employee benefits, labor laws, work, and workforce solutions.
- Provide training through workshops meeting the common needs of local businesses.
- Offering customized training to serve businesses unique needs.
- On-going business networking meetings, exposing businesses to local services and contacts.
- Prepare workshops to meet the common needs for local businesses and offer one-on-one training when requested.
- Keeping up with the employee training needs of local businesses and increasing employee retention to enhance the success and stability of local businesses.
- Make referrals to lending sources.
- Establish relationships and collaborate with entities that provide services for developing businesses.

Business Information Exchange

Providing information to businesses with the intention of assisting them with their needs is critical to enhancing the business' chances of success.

In order to convey Business Information Exchange to our local businesses the following methods exist to provide information:

- Workshops
- One-on-one customized training
- Customized training at business sites
- On-site business visits
- Resource libraries
- Internet based training
- Community Coordinator reports and newsletters
- Labor market information

“Town meetings” are also useful to discover groups supporting economic development and Chamber meetings where the local businesses network.

Workshops

Workshops are an important way to communicate timely and pertinent information to businesses. Workshops offer essential information that is vital to businesses if they have employees and/or need to meet regulatory compliance. In addition, workshops provide valuable information that support universal needs of local businesses. NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers present workshops through its personnel, local and out-of-the-area industry experts, and other non-profit organizations.

Below is a sample list of workshop topics available to support regulatory requirements and the common needs of our local businesses. The workshops can be offered as open-enrollment events as well as customized workshops (employer specific).

- Sexual Harassment Prevention
- Labor Law Update
- Customer Service 101
- Marketing Tips
- Hiring 101
- Managing People 101
- Communication 101
- Technical Assistance for Businesses (when funded by grant opportunities)
- Customized training
- Legislative Changes (i.e. Healthcare Reform)
- Business Start-up workshops

The Supervisor Series of workshops provide businesses with information that focuses on the improvement of communication to enhancing management skills:

- The Well Managed Meeting
- Time Management
- Performance Coaching
- Motivating Your Employees
- Managing People
- Leadership at Every Level
- Conflicts in the Workplace
- Breakthrough Listening
- The Arts of Criticism

There are many topics accessible via internet based training available. Below are some of the training topics:

- Business Management
- Career Development
- Communication
- Computer Skills
- Health & Safety

Success Stories

As businesses develop through NoRTEC's WIA Service Provider's services, workshops, and other events, the successes should be highlighted and shared.

- Success stories documented for specific grant programs are stored electronically on a Business Assistance Template. The Business Assistance Template and the media release form are located in the FORMS section at the end of this document.

Community Coordinator Reports

Community Coordinator Reports (CC Reports) are an important part of reaching out to the communities.

- As events occur, business and participant successes are documented for the quarterly CC Reports. Photos taken for the CC Report are used to enhance the written document.
- NoRTEC requires each WIA Service Provider to publish a quarterly on-line report to share with the Workforce Investment Board, the Governing Board, and other interested partners and community members.

Job Fairs

NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers collaborate with the local partnering agencies as a team, coordinating job fairs. The job fairs provide job seekers an opportunity to interact with employers for the purposes of obtaining gainful employment.

- Job Fairs provide opportunities to connect with businesses.
- Several job fairs are conducted throughout the NoRTEC region for the following services.
 - New/Start-up businesses
 - Expanding businesses
 - Seasonal Hiring for businesses
 - Collaborative Job Fairs-businesses gather together at one place to promote available positions and conduct on-site interviews
 - Customized job fairs

Human Resource Support

Businesses can rely on Human Resource Support from NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers' Business Service Team. Most of the Business Service Representatives (BSR) meet the minimum certification of the SHRM Essentials obtained through the Society of Human Resource Management. BSRs are equipped with the basic knowledge necessary to answer questions from both businesses and job seekers.

- Consultation/Assistance with personnel policies
 - Review current employee handbooks
 - Develop detailed employee handbooks
- Consultation/assistance with job descriptions
 - Review current job descriptions
 - Develop new job descriptions
- Information on labor law and how to obtain legal assistance
 - Annual Labor Law workshop
 - Employee notices
 - Compliance posters
 - Labor law related forms
- Consultation/assistance with interviewing, hiring and termination of workers
 - Sample interview questions
 - Standard applications
 - Customized recruitments
 - Hiring/Termination forms and checklists

Employee Recruitment

Employee recruitment is a critical service provided to businesses to assist with business vitalization and expansion. Seeking the right employee for placement with an employer includes posting the position(s), and if requested, collecting and reviewing applications while remaining cognizant of the employer's needs and the applicant's skill level. Depending on the businesses needs "standard and customized fee" and "no fee" services are available.

- Job posting
- Customized recruitment (local and out-of-area)
 - Ad creation and media placement
 - Job description
 - Interview questions
 - Collecting applications
 - Prescreening
 - Interviewing
 - Candidate selections
 - Employment Offer
 - Non selection notification
 - New hire orientation
- Job Fairs
- Consultation/assistance with personnel policies

Employee Training

Employee training enhances employee retention. Retaining valuable trained employees is essential to business success. NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers offer different approaches to training depending on learning needs and skill levels. Below are the training resources available to local businesses interested in training employees:

- Skill upgrades
- Internships
- On-the-job training
- Classroom training
- Customized training
- Internet-based training

Lay-Off Assistance

Lay off assistance is available to businesses making difficult decisions regarding lay-offs or closures. "Rapid Response" orientations immediately presented to affected workers explains the services available to them and eases and shortens their transition between jobs. With the assistance of partner agencies often present at the orientations to discuss their services, employees affected by the lay-off receive information regarding the many services available to them.

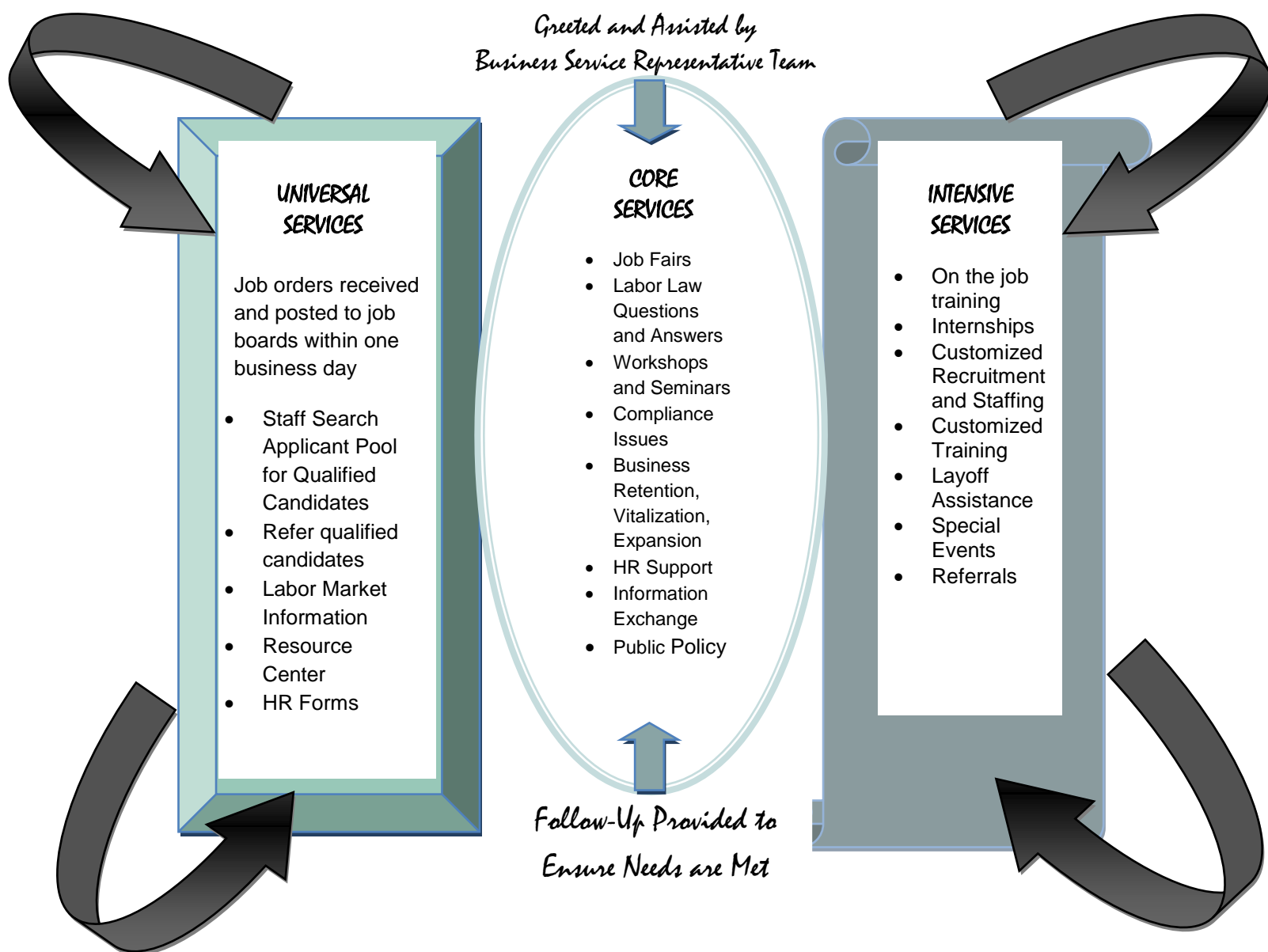
- Employee orientation of services available through the One-Stop Center:
 - Job Search
 - Employment Opportunities
 - Resume writing
 - Interview techniques
 - Training opportunities
 - Filing for unemployment benefits
 - Other social and community based services
- Employer services available through the One-Stop Center:
 - Required documentation for termination
 - Letters of layoff
 - Separation forms
- Information on lawful termination:
 - Complying with federal/state regulations

Public Policy

Communicating public policy information to businesses and community groups is a critical service provided by NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers. Keeping businesses up-to-date with regulatory changes may prevent fines and penalties caused by non-compliance. There are various ways to communicate changes and updates.

- Updates sent via email to business databases providing important information on changes to laws and regulations throughout the year.
- Annual reports presented verbally to each NoRTEC County Board of Supervisors providing measurable results with respect to the number of businesses and job seekers served throughout the year along with detailed services updates. Additional reports may be given on an as needed/requested basis.
- Community Coordinator Reports provide successes, calendar of events and recent information related to new business start-up and closures.
- Local publications relay announcements, scheduled events or Rapid Response resources available at One Stops.
- Annual workshops presented to employers that articulate new labor law changes.
- Rapid Response Services assist businesses by providing access to local, regional, State or Federal public policy decision making that may be of value.

Business Services Flowchart



Business Resource Centers

The eleven county region of NoRTEC contains several Business Resource Centers. Local businesses are invited to use these centers for their business needs, which may include business planning, recruitment information, HR forms, training information, labor law information, computer and software use, labor market information, and referral information to partner agencies. Many of the centers also have the California Labor Law Digest that is utilized to assist businesses with their HR and business development needs.

The Business Resource Centers contain:

Business Start-Up Service

- Developing a business plan is important. A business plan will provide a blueprint to a business and information such as proposed viability. Sales, Marketing, Advertising, Promotion and Location are just some of the categories to consider when creating a plan. Several of the Business Resource Centers offer software for building a business plan.
- Business start-up can be complex. To make the process easier, a Business Start-Up list will be provided to individuals starting a new business. The list will guide business start-ups from filing a fictitious name statement or structure to applying for the necessary tax identification and employer numbers. Included in the list will be the contact information for local and state agencies involved in business filings.

Position Descriptions

- Flyer describing benefits to employer to utilize written position descriptions in their business
- Sample Position Descriptions for review
- Position Description Software to prepare customized position descriptions for the employer.

Applications

- Sample applications offered to the business to assure they are in legal compliance when recruiting applicants
- Flyer describing customized recruitments for the business and/or other recruiting tools available.

Interviewing

- Computer Software that automatically generates interview questions based on the job description
- Sample interview questions available for review

Hiring

- Flyer describing recruitment services
- Hiring Checklist assuring legal compliance
- Sample of Personnel Orientation checklist for employer consideration

Personnel Policies

- Flyer describing importance of having a personnel policy
- Listing of suggested mandatory and recommended personnel policies according to the California Chamber of Commerce
- Sample Personnel Policy for employers review
- Employee Handbook software and computers for use in writing policies. The software is updated and is purchased annually from Calbizcentral by the California Chamber of Commerce

Business Resource Library

- Library of materials available to employers for lending
- List of Training information (I.e.: Customer Service, Sexual Harassment Prevention, etc.)

Labor Market Information

- Up-to-Date Labor Market Information (LMI) obtained through the Economic Development Department (EDD) LMI Department
- Frequently obtaining LMI is important. The website below is provided by EDD as a convenient tool for finding the most current LMI information for all areas in the State.

<http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/countyur-400c.pdf>

Marketing Plan

Introduction

This plan is intended to provide a regional plan for the NoRTEC region, while allowing flexibility for the individual centers. Plan implementation will ensure delivery of a unified message while marketing different programs and services. Ultimately, the goal of this plan is to provide each county with a common direction, while giving them flexibility to tailor strategies for their distinctive communities. Implementing NoRTEC's marketing objectives and serving businesses through various programs will benefit job seekers by providing more opportunities for training and employment.

Executive Summary

NoRTEC's mission is to provide workforce development and human resource services: dedicated to enhancing the quality of life throughout our communities, by assisting businesses, organizations and job seekers with their 'Pathways to Success'.

NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers will provide its clients with a broad range of "Business First" consulting services. These services include business start up, retention, and expansion resources and referrals designed to meet the individual needs of all clients. Through a "team approach," and in collaboration with other organizations, centers are committed to meeting employers' workforce preparation needs.

The business service professionals employed by NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers are dedicated to enhancing economic prosperity by strengthening and supporting area businesses. Employers and prospective business owners can rely on business services teams to: recruit qualified applicants, assist in complying with labor requirements, help with managing and training their workforce, receive marketing and financial planning assistance, research hiring incentives, tax credits, labor market information, plus much more.

Many of the Business Service Representatives (BSRs) are certified by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) in the "Essentials of HR Management." Some centers also have a member certified as a Professional in Human Resources (PHR), including the Program Services Director at NoRTEC.

The target clients of NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers are small businesses that can rarely afford the cost of HR and business development services. Centers will provide a complete range of services including referrals to other professional services based on client needs. The primary focus is to work closely with clients and help them in setting and meeting their business goals. We offer support and a commitment to their needs in a strategic, creative, and cost effective manner.

Keys to Success

- Generate new innovative strategies for our clients that result in high-quality and cost effective business results
- Insure timely response to all client needs
- Have the expertise to assist clients with their business/HR needs
- Be a member of our clients' business team
- Build and sustain a strong referral system of partner groups that will be members of the business team

Funding Situation

As funding fluctuates from year to year, we need to maximize all available resources in order to provide our clients with pertinent and valued business services. This will be accomplished by a close examination of all internal and external tools, and then combining those tools in such a way as to create meaningful and optimal results.

NoRTEC will continue to pursue business related grants to expand its business services and develop customized assistance programs.

Customer Situation

Small business success has decreased in the past several years due in large part to the downturn of the economy and subsequent business downsizings and closures. At the same time, there are new businesses that continue to start up throughout the NoRTEC region.

NoRTEC takes into account the Industry Sector Strategy when targeting businesses and groups of businesses, but due to the large number of small businesses in the region, NoRTEC will continue to provide services to all businesses, regardless of the industry sector the business is a part of. This supports NoRTEC's vision to "maximize employment opportunities in Northern California through a stable and prosperous business community.

Clients

Existing Clients

- Boot Camp Attendees
- RMAP Clients
- Business Services Clients

New Clients

- New Businesses

- Existing Businesses

Service Situation

Business service teams throughout the region are proficient in providing the following services to business clients:

- ❖ HR Assistance
- ❖ Workshops
 - Open-enrollment
 - Customized
- ❖ Training
 - Employer/Business
 - Employee
 - Business Events
 - Job Fairs
 - Seminars
- ❖ Resource Referrals
- ❖ Business Resource Centers
- ❖ Layoff/Closure Assistance
- ❖ LMI/Impact Analysis

Strategy and Implementation Summary

NoRTEC's strategy will be based on systematic person-to-person contact with new, stable, and growing businesses.

Competitive Edge

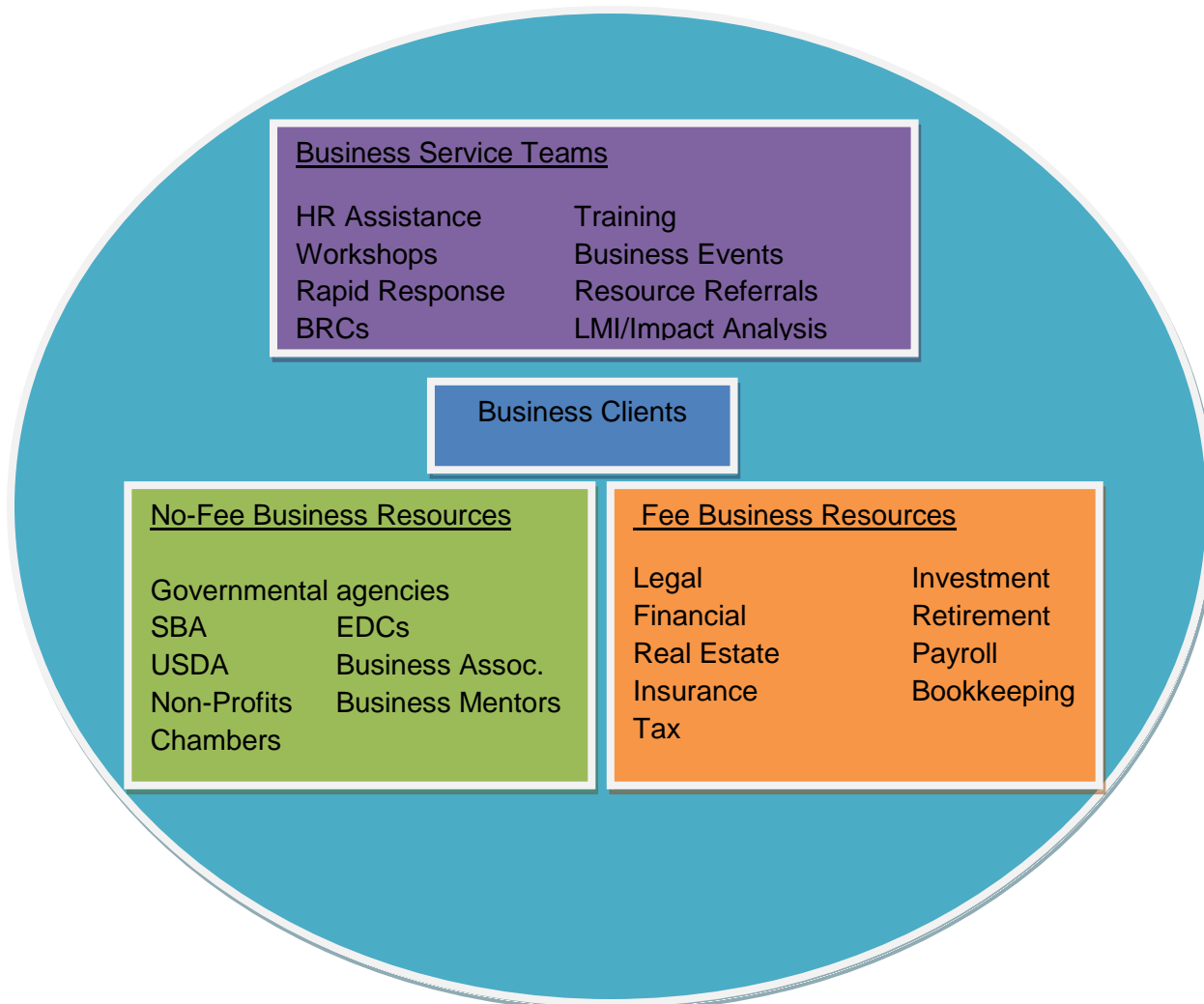
There is no direct competition to NoRTEC business services.

Advantages:

- NoRTEC's WIA Service Providers are targeting clients that other large consulting/business development firms do not pursue.

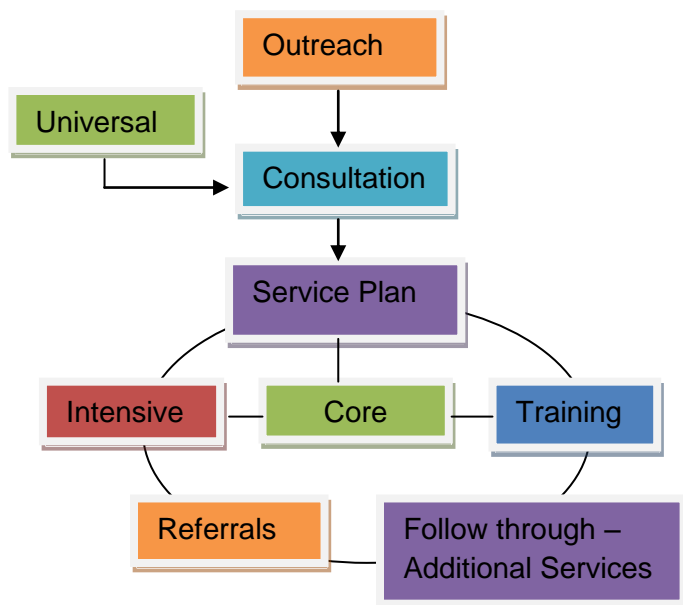
- The full range of services that NoRTEC’s WIA Service Providers can provide to local and small rural businesses services they might not otherwise have access to.

The Business Service Teams have a collaborative, holistic approach that will consist of business service team members, business client(s), and various partners as illustrated in the below diagram:



This model represents Workforce/Labor, Business Planning, Finance, Marketing/ Advertising, HR, Legal, and Industry Specific Technical Consultation/Mentoring, and reflects the circular nature of the long-term relationship with the business client where the business client is center and resources are provided by linking partnerships in a collaborative manner.

The Business First Design (Flow) of Services



Business Objectives

Increase program enrollments and self-sustaining funding. Outreach to local communities promoting business services and job seeker opportunities will allow NoRTEC to meet and exceed performance goals with the State of California that include employment, employment at a self-sufficiency wage, and employment retention.

Regional Marketing Strategies

- Utilize “Service One Sheets” for each business services highlighting benefits to businesses and employees for using business services
- Annual workshops and events
- Continue to develop partnerships with corporations and other community based organizations
- Enlist Board members assistance with presentations to groups/industry associations
- Maximize use of Community Coordinator Report to communicate pertinent information to businesses.

Business Goals

- Serve 1200 businesses in the next 12 months

- Provide recruitment assistance for businesses
- Provide Employee Training

To achieve business goals, the business services team will:

- Present information to relevant local service organizations
- Present information to local Board of Supervisors in each county
- Facilitate or partner with other organizations to conduct local Job Fairs
- Collaborate with community groups to participate in community business related events
- Conduct job search networking sessions for universal customers
- Ensure routing of business mailings and press releases through chamber offices
- Place (paid) advertisements in print and/or on radio for dislocated worker recruitment, Applicant Pool, special events, and fee for service activities
- Utilize business databases and electronic communications to maximize timely and pertinent information distribution to businesses

Before we tell people what we have, we must know what they need. On-going research to maintain an accurate understanding of the region's economy is a critical component of the marketing plan. Inviting local businesses for a networking session is an excellent forum for Q&A to solicit information to help assess the changing needs of businesses and job seekers.

SharePoint Business Services Database

This database enables the business service team to enhance the effectiveness of business development activities and allows:

- Management and tracking of all communication with employers
- Ability to monitor service delivery
- Reporting that quantifies results

Each BSR is responsible for documenting all of their business services into the SharePoint database.

Internal Marketing Strategies

Develop internal communication strategy to ensure consistency in communications with internal and external customers, and to maintain and enhance team motivation.

- Develop and utilize discussion paper describing organization/services
- Communicate message to all staff including board members

- Deliver customer service presentation to (new) staff
- Assign staff to write/contribute success story articles

Business Service Team Staff Development

- Facilitate workshop/training
- Complete CAL Chamber Webinars on HR or business related topics
- Bi-Annual Sexual Harassment Prevention Training

Summary

Promoting services based on identified needs through presentations, mailings, paid advertisements, electronic communications and press releases will draw business and job seeker customers, alike. Meeting the needs of these customers, and the community in general, will generate positive word of mouth advertising that will in turn draw more customers and allow us to assist regional businesses, organizations and job seekers with their 'Pathways to Success'.

The image of NoRTEC and the individual One-Stops is one of professionalism, approachability, willingness to help, and inventiveness. Consistency in the tone and manner of all communications will ensure cohesiveness and unity.

Analysis

The Director of the Business Services in each local area will monitor the plan with appropriate input from the Business Service team.

Forms

Business Assistance Template

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE REPORT

Company Name



Website Address
 Street Address
 City
 Phone
 Contact Person
 Title
 Email

Company Description	One par. overview of company (e.g., what they do, what they're known for, who they sell to, growth history, locations—what's most relevant about this company)
Company Challenge	Briefly describe the reason they were contacted/assisted
Assistance Provided	Describe actions taken to address issue or challenge (bullet points). Be succinct but specific (e.g., dates, amounts, performed by what organization)
Outcome	Describe results (brief bullet points, narrative, and/or quotes from company). Try to quantify, if applicable.
Quote	(Optional quote from company) Topic might include: How their situation changed as a result of the assistance What aspect of the service was most helpful Challenges or rewards related to operating in the North State Why they do what they do, even in the face of challenges An aspect of doing business that came as a surprise to them; something they didn't anticipate Quality of workforce and/or training needs

Media Release

Publicity/Photo Release

On occasions, (insert business name) use success stories from various funding sources to help promote the success of the programs.

I, (insert name) approve relevant information and photograph released to the media for use in promotion of (insert business name).

Participant Signature

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

Date