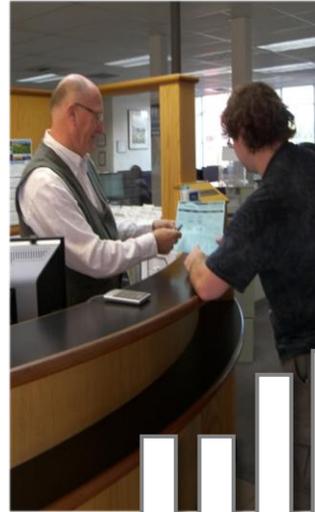


WorkSource Northwest Certification Application



**Northwest
Workforce
Council**

SUBMITTAL INFORMATION

Individual submitting application:

on behalf of One-Stop Operator:

Contributions to this application were made by the following partner organizations:

The following sites are represented by this application:

Date Submitted:

Date Received:

Contact Person:

Organization:

E-mail Address:

Telephone:

Mailing Address:

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SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

One purpose of the Northwest Workforce Council's (Council) strategic plan is to look across agency and program boundaries, to identify opportunities, encourage greater efficiency and cooperation and make it possible for workers and employers in the Northwest region (Island, San Juan, Skagit and Whatcom counties) to prosper. Each partner organization will have its own strategic or business plan. However, to operate well as a system, organizations must strive for an intentional alignment or integrated approach to service delivery and daily operations. The Council's Strategic Plan is approved by the governor and complements the WIA Title 1-B and Wagner-Peyser Plan for Washington State. The Council's plan provides the overarching strategy to achieve the region's prioritized workforce goals.

The Council is a powerful mechanism for comprehensive, community-wide workforce development planning and coordination. The Council promotes the alignment and integration of education, training and employment efforts coupled closely with economic revitalization strategies. The Council oversees a regional workforce development system that provides funding, direction, and a commitment of support where services exemplify a shared set of principles, beliefs, and priorities.

The Northwest region has a rich mix of education, vocational training, apprenticeships, employment services and targeted assistance needed to maintain a dynamic and skilled workforce. The Council coordinates this array of programs, creating a system of workforce development. One important component of this system is known as the "one-stop career center system"¹ which is branded "WorkSource" in Washington State.

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires the establishment of at least one, one-stop career development center in a region. These WorkSource career centers are full service centers created to provide a focal point and readily identifiable access point for job seeker and employer services. Each center provides an array of required and locally determined services to meet the needs of business and job-seeking customers. The mission of the Council is the preparation of a skilled, successful workforce aligned to the needs of business and industry. The WorkSource Northwest system of one-stop career centers and their affiliated sites is one important mechanism to achieve this mission.

WIA assigns and authorizes, with the agreement of the chief local elected official, the local workforce council to designate or certify the operator(s) of one-stop career centers. In the Northwest region, the Council certifies the approved operator(s) of sites wishing to become or remain part of the WorkSource system. Councils are further authorized to terminate an operator's eligibility for cause.

¹ "One-stop career center system" is a collaborative partnership that includes all organizations, contractors, and WIA mandated partners who have entered into official agreements to operate as an integrated one-stop service delivery system as envisioned by the WIA. This structure includes WorkSource Centers and Affiliated Sites and partner programs that provide services at these sites.

THE APPLICATION

The application package defines the information needed to ensure the operator - and its partner organizations - meet the quality criteria to operate a full service WorkSource Northwest career center² or a site affiliated with a certified one-stop center³. The application requires demonstration of the site's progress against each quality criterion. The criteria describe a process model. Six of the seven quality standards ask questions about key processes necessary to operate a high-performing organization. Your responses are evaluated based on:

- the effectiveness of your approaches,
- how widely and consistently they are deployed,
- how systemically they are refined, and
- how well they are aligned to the Council's *Framework for Doing Business*.

The certification application offers partners in the system another venue to affect the critical aspects of a collaborative and high performing system design. The full involvement and active participation of partners in drafting a certification application is essential to achieving and maintaining a well-aligned one-stop career center system.

The Certification application is but one step in the on-going pursuit of growth, quality improvement, and performance excellence. It is not the end of a quality journey, but the beginning. Attainment of certification provides assurance to the public that WorkSource Northwest has achieved a high standard and consistently maintains that standard. Once certified, use of the "WorkSource" brand, in accordance with Council policy and statewide [WorkSource Marketing and Brand Standards](#), is authorized by the Council.

FRAMEWORK FOR DOING BUSINESS

WorkSource Northwest must represent the highest standards of quality in the delivery of employment and training services. The values and concepts evidenced in the Council's *Framework for Doing Business* are the embedded beliefs and behaviors expected to be found within the WorkSource Northwest system of career centers and affiliated sites. They are the foundation for integrating key performance and operational requirements within a results-oriented framework that creates a basis for action and feedback. The Council reviews applicants to ensure the *Framework* is in evidence throughout the applicant's governance and operations and that they are saturated at all levels of staffing and customer experience.

2 WorkSource Northwest Career Center: deliver on site or provide access to core services of all WIA mandatory programs-deliver on site or provide access to all WIA intensive and training services – participate in WorkSource Northwest partnership activities –have a signed Memorandum of Understanding and Resource Sharing Agreement with NWC – align quality improvement practices and processes with WorkSource Northwest products and processes – meet and maintain all the Council's quality standards.

3 Affiliated site: house and deliver on site at least one WIA required program services – deliver all WIA core services of the partners on site – align programs and customer flow with the nearest WorkSource Northwest career center to provide access to the full array of services of all mandatory WIA programs – align quality improvement practices and processes with WorkSource Northwest products and processes – meet and maintain all the Council's quality standards.

- **Visionary Leadership.** Leadership is a catalyst for change and works to remove barriers to change processes. Leaders inspire, motivate, and encourage the entire workforce to contribute, to be innovative, and to embrace change. Senior leaders set direction, create a customer focus, establish clear and visible values, and build high expectations.
- **Market Based.** The system is driven by the demands of customers, particularly employer customers. Employment and training programs should meet an identified need. Time and resources are focused on matters that create customer value or build upon the system's ability to do so.
- **Comprehensive.** The system strives to build capacity of communities to engage each other in partnerships that balance priorities, share resources and work towards improvements. As a whole, the system offers a wide array of services to those in need, whatever their need.
- **Outcome and Results Focused.** The system must produce results to establish and maintain its relevance. The workforce system is driven by the Council's comprehensive plan based on the needs of the local labor market and the system's overall performance to meet outcome-based goals. Each component programs' measurement of concrete results contributes to the performance of the workforce system but they do not define that system in and of themselves.
- **Quality Conscious.** The system provides services of the highest quality. Feedback from customers is measured and acted upon to drive improvements in individual programs. Continuous improvement is achieved by challenging the status-quo and seeking a better way. Creative problem solving and shared learning are embraced, including continuous improvement of existing approaches and significant change or innovation.
- **Customer Friendly.** The system (and all its parts) should be easily accessible, easily navigable, flexible, and adaptable to changing demand. It must be well known and "transparent" to all its potential customers.
- **Integrated Service Delivery.** The system management and oversight is independent of any single program or service provider. A single set of strategic goals, plans and objectives, standards and evaluation criteria apply to all the various component programs. These help keep service providers aware of and focused on *overall* service quality and *overall* customer satisfaction, and working together as an integrated system rather than as a collection of free-standing entities.

QUALITY STANDARDS

Operator candidates must demonstrate outcomes from their sites which meet or exceed a set of quality standards⁴ based on [Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award](#) criteria. The criteria promote proactive growth and thinking and acting strategically. They help align processes and

⁴ The language of quality management may appear confusing and uncertain if not used regularly. Applicants are encouraged to reference the glossary and other descriptive portions of the National Institute of Standards and Technology's [Malcolm Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence \(Government & Non-Profit\)](#) for a helpful understanding of the terminology and context of the quality standards.

staffing talent with customer needs. The criteria provide a valuable framework to improve communication, productivity, and effectiveness while achieving the Council's strategic goals for the workforce development system.

The following three categories represent the leadership triad. These categories are placed together to emphasize the importance of a leadership focus on strategy and customers.

- 1. Leadership** - A commitment to excellence in the WorkSource Northwest system is modeled and shaped by strong public and private leadership. The Council provides the workforce development system with effective private-sector led oversight of the regional system, while agency leaders work collaboratively to provide active and supportive management to achieve system goals. Senior leadership is directly involved in creating and sustaining common values, organizational directions, performance expectations, and customer focus. Leaders remove barriers which deter innovation and quality improvement.
- 2. Strategic Planning** - WorkSource Northwest is managed in accordance with the Council's strategic and operations plans, WorkSource system policies and regional protocols. The Council's plan focuses on ensuring quality and results. WorkSource Northwest one-stop operator(s) develop and use a Quality Plan that demonstrates to the Council strategies for achieving its *Framework for Doing Business*. The Quality Plan sets strategies and objectives for the next one to three years, while containing clear and measurable implementation steps in support of the Council's Strategic and Operations Plan.
- 3. Customer Focus** - The WorkSource Northwest system is based upon an unwavering focus on the needs of its business and job seeker customers⁵. Services are shaped and assessed by attention to customer needs and associated adjustments to strategies, processes, and products. Customer satisfaction calls for the use of relevant data and information as an integral piece of the organization's performance. The Council requires the solicitation and applied use of customer feedback to inform continuous quality improvements.

The Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management category is critical to the effective management of WorkSource Northwest and to a fact-based, knowledge-driven system for improving performance and competitiveness.

- 4. Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management** - In order to ensure WorkSource Northwest system is managed effectively, responds to customer needs, and produces results, consistent use of meaningful data is fundamental. Performance must be reviewed and analyzed and that knowledge then used to lead performance improvement.

The following three categories represent the results triad. The workforce and key operational processes accomplish the work of the enterprise that yields your overall performance results.

- 5. Workforce Focus** - WorkSource Northwest sites are well-integrated, high-performance work organizations. Collaborating agencies reduce duplication of effort, empower staff to make decisions, and invest in staff development. Leadership ensures staff have the tools and skills

⁵ "Customer" is broadly defined as actual and potential users of your products, programs, or services.

they need to provide excellent service. Every staff member has the ability and authority to meet customer needs, either directly or, when appropriate, by helping the customer make the right connections to the expertise he or she seeks.

6. **Operations Focus** - WorkSource Northwest is a high quality, customer service enterprise. To ensure ongoing success, emphasis is placed on continuous improvement of key processes to reduce variability and rework and improve performance. Agility is required to respond quickly, flexibly and effectively to changing requirements. Work systems and work processes are designed, managed, and improved to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success.
7. **Results** - In its oversight role of the workforce development system, Northwest Workforce Council reviews outcomes of the one-stop career centers and affiliated sites of WorkSource Northwest. Each partner organization and program within this system contributes to the system's overall performance, while each is responsible to its funding source for program results and compliance. Program and organizational performance are one aspect of performance results. The Council is also interested in ensuring the collective system of one stop career centers and affiliated sites, known as WorkSource Northwest, contributes to the achievement of its strategic goals for the workforce development system.

SECTION TWO: REQUIREMENTS FOR A ONE-STOP OPERATOR

ELIGIBILITY

A public, private, for-profit, or not-for-profit organization, or collective of organizations delivering workforce development services, may apply for one-stop operator status and subsequent WorkSource certification for the site(s) it operates. The Workforce Investment Act⁶ and statewide [WorkSource system policy 1008 Rev. 1](#) describe the one-stop operator designation criteria, roles, responsibilities and process.

This application helps examine where operators and their partner organizations are regarding the Council's *Framework for Doing Business* and quality attainment and to promote continuous improvement toward achieving the criteria. Certification standards are set purposely high to ensure WorkSource Northwest customers consistently receive the highest levels of service.

DURATION

Certification attained under this process will remain valid for three (3) years, barring intermediate action by the Council in response to underperformance. Applicants are eligible to apply for re-certification no later than thirty four months following their last certification.

CORRECTIVE ACTION

Should an operator, or one of the certified sites it operates, fail to perform to the Council's expectations or in accordance with its agreements or policies, the Council may take corrective action.

- Operator will be notified of the issue or concern,
- a technical assistance report may be provided and may include performance targets,

⁶ WIA section 121(a)(1-3)

- subsequent quarters' performance results will be examined to ensure progress on the issue or concern.

Under-performing sites may be placed on probation, suspension or de-certified by action of Northwest Workforce Council.

SECTION THREE: THE APPLICATION PROCESS

There is a three-step process for becoming certified to operate as a WorkSource Northwest Career Center or a site affiliated with a certified WorkSource Northwest Career Center.

1. *Written application and Quality Plan*
2. *Consensus review by examiners*
3. *In-person reviews conducted on-site*

WRITING THE APPLICATION

Respond to each quality indicator⁷ for each of the seven quality standards. If evidence of an indicator is not yet in place, describe in your Quality Plan your strategy and timeline for how and when processes and strategies will be in place. Pages must be numbered. Appendices may be included with the application if referenced appropriately in the responses. Application responses may not exceed 20 pages in total length. Appendices may add no more than an additional 10 pages. Bulleted lists are not an acceptable response format. Selectively choose your best example(s) to demonstrate your work and accomplishments in achieving the quality criteria.

LEADERSHIP REVIEW AND SITE VISITS

Council reviewers will convene and meet with senior leadership in an executive session to discuss application responses. The leadership review will focus, in particular, on the first three quality standards known as the "leadership triad".

Site reviews with the Council's Certification Team occur after the successful review of the applicant's written application. Reviewers may choose to meet with line staff and customers at each of the operator's current or prospective WorkSource service delivery locations. A site visit may be scheduled by the Council's Certification Team at any time throughout the duration of the three year certification period. Reviewers will provide the one-stop-operator a minimum 30 day advance notice of a site visit, unless such visit is to investigate or follow-up on probation, suspension, or other intermediate action of the Council. Reviewers may identify up to four (4) written responses from the operator and site-based partners as evidence of saturation of the Council's *Framework for Doing Business* and achievement of the seven quality standards. While on-site the reviewers will seek evidence of integration of programs; alignment of services, products and processes; evidence of the site's performance; evidence of quality improvement; and/or explore areas of perceived weakness.

⁷ A quality "indicator" provides an indication of quality standard achievement. It is evidence the quality standard is in place and is continuously improved upon. The quality indicators beneath each of the seven quality standards form the "questions" asked of respondents in this application.

THE QUALITY PLAN

A Quality Plan is required as a part of the application package. The Plan is a central element to continuous improvement and defines how the applicant and its partners will better identify and meet the needs of customers. See Attachment A for required elements of the Quality Plan.

SUBMITTING THE APPLICATION TO THE COUNCIL

A first time application may be submitted whenever ready. Recertification applications are due on the date specified in the Council's letter of certification. Certification applications, if provided by the last day of the first month of a quarter, will be reviewed in that quarter. After review, the Council will consider the recommendation of the Certification Team at its next regularly scheduled Board meeting. Application packages are accepted only with all portions complete and submitted simultaneously.

An Application package is complete when each of the following are submitted together:

1. Complete, written responses to each quality indicator for each of the seven (7) quality standards
2. Quality Plan

Applications and supporting materials must be provided in electronic format, along with five (5) identical copies with original signature on each cover page.

Completed packages
may be mailed to:

NWC Certification Team
P.O. Box 2009
Bellingham, WA 98227-2009
rgafoor@nwpic.bellingham.wa.us

and e-mailed to:

SECTION FOUR: THE APPLICATION

1. **Leadership** - A commitment to excellence in the WorkSource Northwest system is modeled and shaped by strong public and private leadership. The Council provides the workforce development system with effective private-sector led oversight of the regional system, while agency leaders work collaboratively to provide active and supportive management to achieve system goals. Senior leadership is directly involved in creating and sustaining common values, organizational directions, performance expectations, and customer focus. Leaders remove barriers which deter innovation and quality improvement.

The *Leadership* category examines how your senior leaders' personal actions guide and sustain their organizations. Also examined are your governance system and how you fulfill your legal and ethical responsibilities.

Each senior leader⁸ of a WorkSource partner organization⁹ (or his/her leadership designee) shall respond to each of the following questions.

1.1 Senior Leadership: How do your senior leaders lead?

Describe how senior leaders' actions guide and sustain the WorkSource Northwest system.

Describe how senior leaders encourage high performance.

1.2 Governance and Societal Responsibilities: How do you govern and fulfill your societal responsibilities?

Describe how you ensure legal and ethical behavior.

1.3 Innovation, Imagination and Continuous Improvement: What is your best or most innovative idea?

Describe one recommendation you have for improving the WorkSource Northwest system of career centers (and affiliated site(s) as applicable).

⁸ "Senior Leader" for purposes of this application is the one-stop operator senior staff and WorkSource partner organization senior leader (highest local authority).

⁹ "WorkSource partner organization" is any agency, non-profit, or for-profit entity operating any aspect of its program from within a WorkSource Northwest Career Center or a site affiliated to a Center.

2. **Strategic Planning** - WorkSource Northwest is managed in accordance with the Council's strategic and operations plans¹⁰, WorkSource system policies and regional protocols. The Council's plan focuses on ensuring quality and results. WorkSource Northwest one-stop operator(s) develop and use a Quality Plan that demonstrates to the Council strategies for achieving its *Framework for Doing Business*. The Quality Plan sets strategies and objectives for the next one to three years, while containing clear and measurable implementation steps in support of the Council's Strategic and Operations Plan.

The Strategic Planning category examines how you develop strategic objectives and action plans. Also examined are how your chosen strategic objectives and action plans are implemented and changed if circumstances require, and HOW progress is measured.

2.1 Strategy Development: How do you develop your strategy?

Describe how you establish your strategy to address your strategic challenges and leverage your strategic advantages¹¹.

2.2 Strategy Implementation: How do you implement your strategy?

Describe how you convert strategic objectives into action plans.

Summarize your action plans, how they are deployed, and key action plan performance measures or indicators by completing Appendix A, the Quality Plan. Be certain to include strategy in your Quality Plan to achieve an intentionally aligned or integrated approach to service delivery and daily operations.

10 Each partner organization will have its own strategic or business plan. However, to operate within a WorkSource Northwest site, organizations must strive for an intentional alignment or integrated approach to service delivery and daily operations.

11 Address factors that are key to your future success, including the following, as appropriate: your customer requirements, expectations, and opportunities; your opportunities for innovation and role-model performance; your core competencies; technological and other key innovations or changes that might affect your products and services and how you operate, as well as the rate of innovation; your workforce and other resource needs; your ability to capitalize on diversity; requirements for and strengths and weaknesses of your partners; and other factors unique to your organization.

3. **Customer Focus** - The WorkSource Northwest system is based upon an unwavering focus on the needs of its business and job seeker customers¹². Services are shaped and assessed by attention to customer needs and associated adjustments to strategies, processes, and products. Customer satisfaction calls for the use of relevant data and information as an integral piece of the organization's performance. The Council requires the solicitation and applied use of customer feedback to inform continuous quality improvements.

The *customer focus* category examines how you engage customers for long-term success. This engagement strategy includes how you listen to the voice of customers, build customer relationships, and use customer information to improve and identify opportunities for innovation.

3.1 Voice of the Customer: How do you obtain information from your customers?

Describe how you listen to your customers and gain satisfaction and dissatisfaction information.

3.2 Customer Engagement: How do you engage customers to serve their needs and build relationships?

Describe how you determine product offerings to support customers.

Describe how you build customer relationships.

¹² "Customer" is broadly defined as actual and potential users of your products, programs, or services.

- 4. Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management** - In order to ensure the WorkSource Northwest system is managed effectively, responds to customer needs, and produces results, consistent use of meaningful data is required. Performance must be reviewed and analyzed and that knowledge then used to lead performance improvement.

The *Measurement, Analysis, and Knowledge Management* category examines how you select, gather, analyze, manage, and improve data, information, and knowledge assets and how you manage information technology. The category also examines how you use review findings to improve WorkSource system performance.

4.1 Measurement, Analysis, and Improvement of Organizational Performance: How do you measure, analyze, and then improve organizational performance?

Describe how you measure, analyze, review, and improve WorkSource system performance through the use of data and information (including comparative data and information¹³).

4.2 Management of Information, Knowledge, and Information Technology: How do you manage your information and organizational knowledge?

Describe how you manage the WorkSource systems' knowledge assets.

Describe how you ensure the quality and availability of needed data and information for your workforce, partners, and customers.

13 Comparative data and information are obtained by benchmarking and by seeking competitive comparisons. "Benchmarking" refers to identifying processes and results that represent best practices and performance for similar activities, inside or outside of workforce development.

5. **Workforce Focus** - WorkSource Northwest sites are well-integrated, high-performance work organizations. Collaborating agencies reduce duplication of effort, empower staff to make decisions, and invest in staff development. Leadership ensures staff have the tools and skills they need to provide excellent service. Every staff member has the ability and authority to meet customer needs, either directly or, when appropriate, by helping the customer make the right connections to the expertise he or she seeks.

The *Workforce Focus* category examines your ability to assess Workforce capability¹⁴ and capacity¹⁵ needs and build a workforce environment conducive to high performance. The category also examines how you engage, manage, and develop your workforce to utilize its full potential in alignment with the Council's Strategic and Operations Plan, Framework for Doing Business, and the Quality Plan.

5.1 Workforce Environment: How do you build an effective and supportive workforce environment?

Describe how you manage workforce capability and capacity to accomplish the work of the WorkSource system.

Describe how you maintain a safe, secure, and supportive work climate.

5.2 Workforce Engagement¹⁶: How do you engage your workforce to achieve organizational and personal success?

Describe how you engage your workforce to achieve high performance.

5.3 Talent Development: How do you build the skills of workers in the WorkSource system?

Provide your best example of improvement (in product, process or performance) as a direct result of recent training or staff development activity.

14 "Workforce capability" refers to your organization's ability to accomplish its work processes through the knowledge, skills, abilities, and competencies of its people. Capability may include the ability to build and sustain relationships with your customers; innovate and transition to new technologies; develop new products, services, and work processes; and meet changing business and regulatory demands.

15 "Workforce capacity" refers to your organization's ability to ensure sufficient staffing levels to accomplish its work processes and successfully deliver your products to your customers, including the ability to meet seasonal or varying demand levels.

16 "Workforce engagement" refers to the extent of workforce commitment to accomplishing the work of WorkSource Northwest within the context of the Council's Framework for Doing Business.

- 6. Operations Focus** - WorkSource Northwest is a high-quality, customer service enterprise. To ensure ongoing success, emphasis is placed on continuous improvement of key processes to reduce variability and rework and improve performance. Agility is required to respond quickly, flexibly and effectively to changing requirements. Work systems¹⁷ and work processes¹⁸ are designed, managed, and improved to deliver customer value and achieve organizational success.

The *Operations Focus* category examines how you design, manage, and improve work systems and work processes to deliver customer value and achieve WorkSource system success and sustainability.

6.1 Work Systems: How do you design, manage, and improve your work systems (how the work is accomplished)?

Describe how you design, manage, and improve your work systems to deliver customer value, and achieve WorkSource system success and sustainability.

6.2 Work Processes: How do you design, manage, and improve your key work processes (your most important internal value creation processes)?

Describe how your organization designs, manages, and improves its key work processes to deliver customer value and achieve WorkSource system success and sustainability.

17 “Work systems” refers to how the work of your organization is accomplished. Work systems involve your workforce, your partners, your collaborators and others to produce and deliver your products and business support processes.

18 Key “work processes” are your most important *internal* value creation processes and might include service/product design and delivery, customer support, business, and support processes. Your key work processes are those that involve the majority of your workforce members and produce customer value.

- 7. Results** - In its oversight role of the workforce development system, Northwest Workforce Council reviews outcomes of the one-stop career centers and affiliated sites of WorkSource Northwest. Each partner organization and program within this system contributes to the system's overall performance, while each is responsible to its funding source for program results and compliance. Program and organizational performance are one aspect of performance results. The Council is also interested in ensuring the collective system of one stop career centers and affiliated sites, known as WorkSource Northwest, contributes to the achievement of its strategic goals for the workforce development system.

The *Results* category examines your performance and improvement in all key areas; product and process outcomes, customer-focused outcomes, workforce-focused outcomes, and leadership and governance outcomes. When available, performance is examined relative to those of other organizations with similar product offerings.

7.1 Product and Process Outcomes: What are your product performance and process effectiveness results?

Summarize your key product performance and process effectiveness and efficiency results. Include processes that directly serve customers and operations. Include appropriate comparative data, as available.

7.2 Customer-Focused Outcomes: What are your customer-focused performance results?

Summarize your key customer-focused results for customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Segment your results by product offerings and customer groups as available. Include appropriate comparative data, as available.

7.3 Leadership and Governance Outcomes: What are your senior leadership and governance results?

Present all findings and/or areas of concern resulting from any monitoring for any program or organization (operating within a service delivery site represented by this application) during the certification period, or the previous three years, whichever is greater. Identify which are regional in nature and which are location-specific. Include a current status and be prepared to discuss with the Certification Team what improvements were made as a result of monitoring.

