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**The History and Purpose of NOICC and SOICCs**

Two studies succinctly stated the problem leading to the 1976 legislation that established NOICC and the SOICCs. The first, conducted by the General Accounting Office in 1976, found that: “In the states we visited, vocational educators both at state and local levels had not given adequate consideration to labor market factors. Labor market demand and supply had not been fully assessed, and there was no assurance that the training provided corresponded with manpower needs.” The second report, by D. W. Drews and D. S. Katz of the Center for Occupational Information at North Carolina State University, in 1975, stated that: “There is little linkage between instructional programs being offered and the occupations that manpower data indicates would be in future demand” (NOICC, 1979a).

**Legislation and Mandates**

The originating legislation for both NOICC and the SOICCs was Section 161 of the Education Amendments of 1976 (Committee on Education and Labor, PL 94–142). This legislation charged the committees to develop and implement a standardized occupational information system to serve the needs of vocational education and employment and training programs at the local, state, and federal levels. It further charged the committees to improve coordination and communication among and between the developers and users of...
occupational information, including research personnel. NOICC was structured to assist its state counterparts, both financially and technically.

The Education Act authorized the Secretary of Education to provide funds to NOICC for its operation and established the membership. NOICC’s members were the Commissioner of Education, the Administrator of the National Center for Education Statistics, the Commissioner of Labor Statistics, and the Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training. Membership in SOICCs included a representative of the state board administering Vocational Education, the State Employment Security Agency, the State Manpower Services Council (later called the State Employment and Training Council), and the state agency administering the vocational rehabilitation program. At both the federal and state levels, the membership consisted of developers and users of occupational and educational information needed in the program planning process (NOICC, 1979d).

Before NOICC and the state committees were fully operational, federal legislation was enacted that added to the scope of their activities. The Youth Employment and Demonstration Act of 1977 directed NOICC, among other things, to respond to the occupational information needs of unemployed youth. Next, the Career Education Incentive Act of 1977 required NOICC to become involved in furnishing information “to interested parties on Federal programs that gather, analyze, and disseminate occupational and career information” (NOICC, 1979b).

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) of 1978 expanded NOICC’s responsibilities further. It called for NOICC to give special attention to the labor market information needs of youth, not just unemployed youth. Among the activities it called for was providing technical assistance for programs that use computers and other facilities to improve the match of youth career desires with available and anticipated demand. Importantly, it called upon NOICC to assist and encourage the development of state occupational information systems, including the use of computers. Furthermore, the SOICCs were charged to assist and encourage the development and use of career outlook information for individuals in various settings. This legislation also authorized the Secretary of Labor to provide operating funds to NOICC (NOICC, 1979b).

The Job Training Partnership Act (1982) and the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Educational Act of 1984 (Conference Committee, 1984) retained the original elements of the CETA and vocational education