Commonwealth of Pennsylvania JobGateway\textsuperscript{SM}:

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Executive Summary

The Pennsylvania Department of Labor & Industry’s (L&I) JobGateway℠ is an external portal designed with one goal in mind: to help Pennsylvanians find jobs and assist employers with finding skilled candidates. JobGateway℠ supports the commonwealth’s job-match initiative (JMI) lead by Governor Corbett and L&I Secretary Julia Hearthway.

In 2012, Pennsylvania was experiencing rising unemployment, significant debt, and structural insolvency with the Unemployment Compensation trust fund. Additionally, the commonwealth began mandating work search requirements for unemployment compensation claimants. At the time, Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate was about 7.5 percent and the state’s job-matching system was too labor-intensive to be an effective tool for either the job seeker or the job creator.

Using commercial best practices in online career services, L&I launched JobGateway℠ to offer simplicity and improved access to re-employment services and new tools, while maintaining seamless integration with existing career services. Since the initial launch in 2012, JobGateway℠ has continued to grow and improve through a series of iterative deployments guided by a cross-disciplinary team of L&I staff, a process that continues even to this day.

As a result of recent enhancements, JobGateway℠ provides a faster and more powerful search engine and identifies employment opportunities early in the process. It uses job skills, past experience, and education to link claimants/job seekers with potential opportunities in real time. Social media and networking tools create communities of support and opportunities for those using re-employment or unemployment services.

JobGateway℠ includes a newly designed state of the art user experience that reflects the expectations of today’s job seekers. JobGateway℠ is Web-based, mobile-ready and social media-savvy. It improves communication between workforce development stakeholders in several ways. The customized user dashboards provide highlights of recent activities and actions needed; workflow alerts and automated email notifications help inform users of program events or job matches. The new user experience and job search engine are comparable to those found on commercial shopping sites like Amazon.com or Cars.com. Additionally, the implementation of the JobGateway℠ mobile solution resonates with job seekers, further improving their job-search experience and thus increasing the convenience and probability of finding a job.
Business Problem and Solution Description

Business Problem:

In 2012, Pennsylvania was experiencing rising unemployment, significant debt, and structural insolvency with the Unemployment Compensation trust fund. Additionally, the commonwealth began mandating work search requirements for unemployment compensation claimants. At the time, Pennsylvania’s unemployment rate was about 7.5 percent and the state’s job-matching system was too labor-intensive to be an effective tool for either the job seeker or the job creator.

Secretary of Labor & Industry Julia Hearthway launched a new Job Match Initiative (JMI) in early 2012 to help Pennsylvanians find work following the economic recession. The purpose of the JMI was to transform how the unemployed find good, family-sustaining jobs and employers find the skilled candidates they need. The JMI, a key element of Governor Corbett’s Jobs First PA strategy, was critical to addressing this challenge, as well as helping unemployment compensation (UC) claimants comply with new state requirements to actively search for work in order to qualify and maintain eligibility for UC benefits.

Solution Approach:

The project team utilizes a working model that employs both an integrated team and an iterative deployment schedule. The result is a continuous improvement delivery model that engages a cross-functional agency workgroup that is willing to be fearless and constructively critical of every decision made and action taken. This best practice model supports an ongoing process of trying to achieve new and better ways of providing reemployment services in Pennsylvania. The model allows the project to take deliberate action to make changes to the site quickly as well as to deliver new functionality to the end user every 8-10 weeks.

The working model for this project supports a proactive approach to fundamental endless improvement and promotes continuous innovation that will ultimately help the state move closer to its goal of consistently exceptional performance. This is evidenced by the model’s success in building a “best of breed” website that is consumer friendly and considers not just governmental policy objectives but also the specific needs of the end user. The team’s delivery approach has been recognized as a success and other divisions within Labor & Industry are considering adoption of a similar model.

Solution Description:

The team designed, developed and implemented a new portal focused on re-employment services using leading technologies to bridge the gap between job seekers
and employers. With the initial portal launched in under five months, an iterative approach was taken to initially provide services to unemployment compensation claimants, then to all job seekers, and ultimately to employers. The new portal, based on commercial best practices in online career services, offered simplicity and improved access to re-employment services and new tools, while maintaining seamless integration with existing career services. The team established a new domain and website, known as JobGateway™, which leveraged the same data and infrastructure as the existing online career services system provided by the commonwealth.

Over the last year, the agency has taken innovation to a new level with value-add services for both job seekers and employers that leverage the latest technology. This includes:

Key Features implemented between April 2013 & December 2013:

– **New search technology** – implemented a new search engine that includes advanced keyword search capabilities, faster and optimized functionality for high-volume web traffic, enhanced filtering capabilities, the ability to sort jobs by relevance.
– **JobGateway™ Mobile** – launched JobGateway™ mobile site for job seekers to address the increased demand for mobile access, empowering job seekers with the ability to search and apply for jobs from where they are via their mobile devices
– **Share jobs via social media** – provided the ability to share job postings via email, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+
– **Saved searches and email alerts** – introduced the ability to save job or candidate searches and set up daily or weekly alerts. Saved searches are set to automatically appear on the user’s dashboard as recommendations and are updated each time the user logs in
– **Big Interview** – integrated an interview tool that provides training and allows candidates to practice answers and receive suggestions
– **Military to Civilian occupation translator** – implemented a tool to help veterans apply their valuable skills in a civilian environment, with the inclusion of thousands of military skills that are “translated” to civilian experiences.
– **Employer questionnaire** – introduced a tool for employers that allows them to attach a questionnaire to the job application process making it easier for them to determine candidates that meet job qualifications
– **UC compliance tool** – implemented a self-service compliance alert for UC claimants to provide the current status of their UC compliance relative to work registration
– **Real-time Labor Market Info** – introduced the ability for employers to see real-time labor market information during the job posting process

Communications Strategy:
The agency has taken a multi-faceted approach to marketing JobGateway™ to public users. The number one marketing tool is a letter that is sent to new unemployment compensation claimants. The letter explains the website and how to register and search for jobs. L&I has issued news releases and developed various marketing materials, including posters and palm cards, to be distributed to the PA CareerLink® offices around the commonwealth. The L&I team has also traveled across the state to talk specifically with employers about using JobGateway™ and to discuss potential future enhancements based on their feedback.

In July 2013, the Governor Corbett conducted a news conference at Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center to publicize the impacts of JobGateway™ and the new mobile features. Another new conference was held by Governor Corbett in January 2014 to promote the release of the Big Interview tool. L&I recently conducted a job fair in conjunction with the Community College of Philadelphia to showcase several of the latest features in JobGateway™.

**Significance of the Project**

**JobGateway™ Mobile**: a simple and intuitive mobile optimized site for job seekers that provides the ability to search for jobs, save favorites, apply for jobs, share jobs via social media such as Twitter and Facebook, and search for CareerLink® from the convenience of their mobile device. Job seekers can anonymously search jobs or CareerLink® offices, or they can log in to view how many applications they submitted in the given week and review a list of job recommendations based on their profile. **Since the mobile web application for job seekers launched in July 2012, there have been over 620,000 visits to the mobile site with more than 280,000 unique visitors.**

**Powerful search technology**: The new search engine tool, which functions similarly to those found on commercial ecommerce sites like eBay and Zappos, has been well received by both job seekers and employers. The search engine provides super-fast, quality results, as well as the ability to quickly filter results in numerous categories. **The job search has been executed more than 48 million times since its inception while the candidate search has been executed more than 280,000 times since July 2012. More than 350,000 searches have been saved by job seekers and employers.**

**Career tools**: JobGateway™ takes job searching to the next level by providing free access to several career tools to help job seekers navigate the process of finding employment. Big Interview, an interview training tool that provides lessons on interviewing and the ability to practice interview skills with video recording, is one of several new tools recently added to JobGateway™. **More than 1,500 job seekers have registered for interview skills training with Big Interview since December**
Another tool recently implemented, the Military Skills Translator, helps veterans transition into the work force by translating their existing military skills into civilian terms. Coming soon to the career tools in JobGatewaySM is a product called cTORQ, a skills assessment tool that captures the full range of job skills based on work and education profiles to help identify skills gaps or discover and explore new occupation opportunities.

**Benefit of the Project**

Pennsylvania job seekers, employers and government staff benefit from the JobGatewaySM website. Since its launch, JobGatewaySM has been a tremendous benefit to UC claimants who must register online for job search activities in order to qualify for UC benefits. JobGatewaySM has streamlined and enhanced the registration process with an integrated solution that captures data, eliminates uncertainty and verifies when UC claimants have completed their registration. Claimants are no longer left wondering if they have followed all the steps required to receive their UC benefits. During the registration process, claimants can view a step-by-step progress indicator and take breaks, confident that their progress will be captured and saved so they do not have to repeat work they have already done. Job seekers who do not require staff assistance have been utilizing a recently added “light” registration process that is very quick and easy. **More than 45,000 job seekers have registered using the “light” registration process since July 2013.**

JobGatewaySM provides employers with a simple, intuitive user interface for posting jobs and searching for candidates. Employers now have the ability to manage their search activities in one location through a dashboard that provides candidate recommendations for the most recent job postings. Employers are also given a summary of candidate recommendations before posting jobs and are able to connect to candidates during the search process. JobGatewaySM also gives employers the ability to manage candidate referrals using various filters and sort capabilities, including the option to sort based on the number of candidate profile elements that match a job posting. Another recent addition for employers is the ability to create a questionnaire for a job posting to assist with filtering out unqualified applicants. **Since October 2013, employers have created more than 900 screening questionnaires to assist them with the screening process to improve their hiring success.**

Pennsylvania has 66 PA CareerLink® offices across the state to assist the unemployed with job-seeking support. With the high unemployment rate in Pennsylvania consistent with the rest of the United States, the workforce development agency needed to provide enhanced services above and beyond what its current staff could support. The JobGatewaySM portal enables the agency to serve more citizens and its value-added
services helps to bring the counseling of the PA CareerLink® offices to the job seekers’ fingertips through online access. JobGateway SM has also improved the productivity of UC Service Center and PA CareerLink® staff responsible for helping claimants with the registration process and confirming their compliance.

Additionally, JobGateway SM benefits our military veterans with the inclusion of a Military to Civilian Translator helps veterans transition into the work force by translating their existing military skills into civilian terms, letting employers know the unique talent and skills our military veterans possess. Veterans who register in the system are identified with an American flag next to their name, making them easily identifiable to employers seeking to hire them.

Some additional cost and efficiency benefits the commonwealth has realized by the successful implementation of JobGateway SM include:

- Increased self-service functionality for job seekers and employers
- Improved constituent service delivery
- Reduced administrative costs
- Reduced data collection and reporting redundancy, affording staff more time to assist citizens to secure productive roles in the workplace
- Improved cycle times of placements for job seekers and employers by tracking the need for, and development of, sought after job skills