

# Workforce Information Grant, PY 2013

## Annual Performance Report

### Minnesota Labor Market Information Office

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**Grant Goal: Provide information to support increased employment and sustainable economic growth in Minnesota.**

**Grant Strategies:**

- Contribute to state and local workforce investment system strategic planning, service delivery, and transformational efforts.
- Provide accurate and comparable data, information services, and resources to staff in the workforce investment system, businesses, and job seekers to facilitate informed decisions about the services, training, and career paths that lead to good jobs.
- Provide actionable information, research, analyses, and interpretive studies to state and local policy makers to support the development of data-driven policies and service delivery strategies.

Deliverable and Project	Time Line	PY2013 Status	Web address
<b>Deliverable i. Workforce Information Database (WIDb)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to populate the WIDb with state and local data</li> </ul>	Ongoing	Complete	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/data/">http://mn.gov/deed/data/</a>
<p>This deliverable is integral to the goal of disseminating LMI information because all of the data tools on our website pull directly from the WIDb and by updating the requisite tables in the WIDb we keep <a href="#">our website</a> up-to-date. We also use the WIDb to pull data for research, reports, special requests and presentations. Lastly we give other organizations, including State Colleges and Universities and Metro Council, direct access to our data through the WIDb.</p>			
<b>Deliverable ii. Industry and Occupational Projections</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to develop and post quarterly short-term forecasts</li> </ul>	Quarterly	Complete	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook.jsp">http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook.jsp</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and post 2012-2022 regional long-term employment projections</li> </ul>	Biennial	Complete	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook.jsp">http://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/employment-outlook.jsp</a>

We produced 2012-2022 statewide [long-term employment projections](#) and 2-year forecasts as the national production schedule dictates. We also produced and disseminated [quarterly 1-year forecasts](#).

Long-term projections are one of our most popular data products and are incorporated into a number of career information products

including [www.ISEEK.org](http://www.ISEEK.org), Minnesota’s career information website. Employment projections are also included in [Occupations in Demand](#) and our [OES detailed occupation pages](#) which link from the OES as well as [JobSTAT](#) tools. This round we completed the regional projections early at the request of Minnesota State Colleges and Universities and the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce so that they could be used in their Workforce Alignment project.

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**Deliverable iii. Annual Economic Analysis and Other Reports**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce annual economic analysis: <a href="#">June 2014 issue</a> of Minnesota Economic Trends. Articles listed below.</li> </ul>	Annually in June	Complete	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/publications/trends/june-2014/index.jsp">http://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/publications/trends/june-2014/index.jsp</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce 4 issues of <a href="#">Minnesota Economic Trends</a>. Selection of PY2013 article topics are listed in text below.</li> </ul>	Quarterly	Complete	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/trends">http://mn.gov/deed/trends</a>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce 12 issues of <a href="#">Minnesota Employment Review</a> which includes LAUS, CES, business incorporations, residential building permits, purchasing managers’ index, and help wanted advertising and other data of interest as appropriate, 12 feature articles, and 6 regional spotlights</li> </ul>	Monthly	Complete	<a href="http://mn.gov/deed/review">http://mn.gov/deed/review</a>

The June 2014 *Trends* issue, our annual [state of the state’s economy issue](#), features an analysis of the state labor market and where it’s headed. The main story describes the state of Minnesota’s labor market recovery using a number of different indicators including long-term unemployed, industry employment trends, job vacancies and employment projections. Other stories in this issue focus on the six major planning regions of the state, including regional articles on Healthcare and Social Assistance (Northern MN), Manufacturing (Central and Southwest) and Construction (Twin Cities and Southeast).

We publish two periodicals, our monthly [Minnesota Employment Review](#) and our quarterly [Minnesota Economic Trends](#). *Review* is an opportunity to compile our monthly data and provide monthly and annual analysis for customers. This is also where we publish our Minnesota and U.S. [Leading Index and 10 economic indicator data series](#) including business incorporations, residential housing permits, and the purchasing managers’ index among others. We include a [Regional Spotlight](#) in every other issue on a topic of regional interest. Topics range from regional economic and workforce initiatives, to population and labor force, to career information. We also run a monthly feature article on a topic of interest.

Other PY2013 issues of [Trends](#) featured a roll out of the Graduate Employment Outlook tool, employment and unemployment of people with disabilities, overview of potential impact of a minimum wage increase, alternative measures of unemployment and unemployment rates for subgroups among many other topics.

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**Deliverable iv. Customer Consultations**

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| • Usability testing of LMI website: 7 consultations. 32 participants. Results summarized at end of this document                 | Complete | Full report available upon request.       |
| • Customer satisfaction and feedback survey: results at end of document. Preliminary results summarized at end of this document. | Complete | Survey instrument available upon request. |

Minnesota LMI is undergoing a complete overhaul of our website design including navigation, page design, tool design and text. The first step, undertaken in June and July 2014 was to conduct usability on the existing site including Occupations in Demand and JobStat, navigation, and titles among other things. Based on that feedback we are beginning to implement various aspects of a new design including revised navigation, landing page design/text and addition of data visualizations using Tableau. We are continuing usability testing as we make changes. To make this happen we contracted with a CareerOneStop staff member who specializes in website usability and usability testing. Stay tuned for a better, more usable LMI website.

We have implemented an ongoing customer satisfaction and feedback survey to not only gather satisfaction data but also suggestions and recommendations for improvements. The LMI Customer Consultation survey was launched to all customers (DEED/WFC staff, WSA staff/WIB members, economic development agencies, public, local/county government, schools/colleges/universities, students, guidance/career counselors, media, non-profit organizations, private businesses, Minnesota state agencies, and state agencies in other states) who requested data or information from an LMI Regional Analyst (RA) from January 1, 2014 through June 30, 2014. The survey was launched on July 29, 2014 and was kept open for three weeks with 3 reminders sent. 238 individuals with valid address received the survey and 139 individuals completed all or most of the survey for a response rate of 58 percent. See end of document for results.

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**Deliverable v. Activities Undertaken to Meet Customer Needs**

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| • Update <a href="#">Occupations in Demand</a> (OID) statistics  | Updated July 2013                    | Complete | <a href="http://mn.gov/deed/oid">http://mn.gov/deed/oid</a>                                     |
| • Conduct <a href="#">Job Vacancy Survey</a> , produce statistics and highlights                             | Published August 2013 and March 2014 | Complete | <a href="http://mn.gov/deed/jvs">http://mn.gov/deed/jvs</a>                                     |
| • Produce regional <a href="#">Occupational Employment Statistics</a>  | Updated June 2014                    | Complete | <a href="http://mn.gov/deed/oes">http://mn.gov/deed/oes</a>                                     |
| • Produce Minnesota <a href="#">Business Employment Dynamics</a>   | Updated quarterly                    | Complete | <a href="http://mn.gov/deed/QCEW">http://mn.gov/deed/QCEW</a>                                   |
| • Give presentations and trainings as requested: About 140 presentations and trainings to about 6,300 people | Ongoing                              | Complete | <a href="http://mn.gov/deed/data/talk-to-experts/">http://mn.gov/deed/data/talk-to-experts/</a> |

- Respond to media, legislative, governor’s office and commissioner requests: about 300 requests annually Ongoing Complete
- LMI Helpline: over 2,000 requests annually handled by phone, email and mail. Our goal is to respond to all requests within one business day. Ongoing Complete <http://mn.gov/deed/data/talk-to-experts/>
- Email subscription lists, RSS Feeds and mailing lists: About 4,600 electronic subscribers and 2,500 snail mail subscribers (Trends and Review only) Ongoing Complete <http://mn.gov/deed/> in page footer

The [Occupations in Demand](#) web tool, developed a number of years ago in collaboration with the Dislocated Worker Program and the Youth Services unit, uses JVS data as well as UI Stats and OES. These data, updated annually, are used by Dislocated Worker counselors as well as the iSeek regional web pages.

The Job Vacancy Survey is a major undertaking during second and fourth quarters of every year. Our sample of 10,000 units allows us to produce statistics for 20 industries, about 750 occupations, 13 substate regions and 4 size classes. We publish [data](#) on the website as well as a [summary of findings](#).

Our econometrician compiles [Business Employment Dynamics \(BED\)](#) which measures gross job gains and losses at Minnesota establishments and tracks changes in employment at the establishment level, including establishment openings, closings, expansions, and contractions. These data are derived from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program, linked across quarters to give a longitudinal history for each establishment that allows for tracking employment changes over time at each establishment. BED statistics are available on a quarterly and annual basis by detailed industry at the state, regional, county, and city levels. These statistics provide very detailed information on the dynamics inherent in the Minnesota labor market.

The LMI Office handles media, governor’s office, commissioner and legislative requests as well as questions from the general public. Requests range from short interviews or requests for data to longer-term research projects including number of people and employers impacted by an increase in the minimum wage, number of green jobs, and prospects for youth summer employment. Staff, including regional analysts, handled over 300 special requests in PY2013. These requests take from 5 minutes to a day or two to handle depending on the amount of analysis that is needed. Analysis handled over 2,000 Helpline requests during the same period.

We continue to maintain our website with the most current data and analysis. All publishable data are available for viewing, querying and downloading, and all published analysis as well as many presentations, are available on our website. The new DEED website has several ways for customers to be notified of data and publication availability: Customers can subscribe to an email list and/or RSS feeds for notification of updates and availability.

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**Deliverable vi. New Tools and Resources**

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- Graduate Employment Outcomes Tool Updated annually Complete

The Graduate Employment Outcomes Tool, which was built using primarily WDQI Grant funds and only secondarily WIG funds, links data on post-secondary program graduates and UI wage records to show how many recent Minnesota graduates found Minnesota jobs one and two years after graduation. It also shows the median wages earned and the top industries where graduates found jobs. Users can search by year, location, award type, institution type, and instructional program. Updated every year, this tool will help education planners, career counselors and students make good education decisions.

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**Deliverable vii. Efforts to Create and Support Partnerships and Collaborations**

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- Collaboration and consultation with state and local WIBs Ongoing Complete
- Collaboration with MnSCU - iSeek and CareerOneStop on career information Ongoing Complete [www.iseek.org](http://www.iseek.org)  
[www.careeronestop.org](http://www.careeronestop.org)
- Collaboration with MnSCU Program Planning Office, Office of the Chancellor Ongoing Complete <http://www.iseek.org/lmiwise/>
- Produce monthly economic analysis (for distribution) and highlights (for website) Monthly Complete <http://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/press-releases/index.jsp>

By the end of PY13 the Regional Analyst unit was fully staffed for the first time in several years despite turnover of the supervisor in early 2014. We use the WIG to cover half of the budget for these six positions and the other half is State of Minnesota funding provided through the Job Skills Partnership Board.

The RAs provide presentations and special requests on demand to a wide range of audiences including employer groups, workforce development and economic development groups, students and many others. They also provide over 30 training sessions annually for Workforce Center and partner staff on LMI.

Our SWAs, SWIBs and LWIBs rely on the production and dissemination of regional labor market information for strategic planning. Using the EDS system, we produced regional OES, regional projections, and regional job vacancy survey statistics. These data sets are used in economic and workforce development planning. They are also used in career information including our state career planning website [www.iseek.org](http://www.iseek.org). Besides data, we also provide technical and analytical support for [www.iseek.org](http://www.iseek.org)

We work directly with the MNSCU program planning staff (funded through a contract with MNSCU) to support their efforts toward a responsive, non-duplicative, demand driven set of course offerings across all campuses. This year we've helped MNSCU and Iseek

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take a tool that we developed for program planning and make it into an on-line tool – [LMIwise](#) - that all campuses are required to use when proposing new programs.

We have a strong working relationship with our DEED business services representatives (BSRs) and provide them with training as well as brochures and information to use when they speak with businesses and industry groups. We have also developed a strong working relationship with the staff of the GWDC (SWIB). We hope to continue to build those partnerships.

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#### **viii. Activities to Leverage LMI-WI funding**

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- Minnesota Job Skill Partnership Board support of Regional Analyst team
- Minnesota Office of Higher Education support for WDQI work

The Job Skills Partnership Board contributes admin money earmarked for research to help fund the Research Analyst Unit. Without this \$250,000 over and above WIG funding we would not be able to maintain a fully staffed team with one analyst in each Planning Region (one shared region) and a unit supervisor. There is currently discussion of doubling this contribution due to a surplus of state Dislocated Worker funds and the obvious need for the work that the Regional Analysts perform.

The Minnesota Office of Higher Education in collaboration with DEED and the Minnesota Department of Education has obtained state funding to continue to build on the SLEDS and WDQI grants. Because they see the relevance of the Graduate Employment Outcomes tool they are offering to fund further development of that tool using this funding stream.

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#### **ix. Recommendations to ETA for Changes and Improvements to WIGS Requirements**

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We have two recommendations:

- Some of our customers have identified an update to the Employee Benefits Survey as a serious need in Minnesota. The last survey we ran was 8 eight years ago and customers feel that the data are getting stale. Moreover with the Affordable Care Act coming online over the next two years it is more vital than ever to have a baseline and ongoing time series of employer costs for employee benefits. This survey is a major undertaking and we currently simply do not have the staffing resources to do the job adequately while continuing to do the other work that customers have come to expect. We are currently seeking other support. We urge ETA to support states in their efforts to run an employee benefit survey eight years after the ETA supported Employee Benefits Consortium successfully developed and tested the methodology for this complex survey.
- Provide supplemental support for workforce alignment projects such as a job vacancy survey, the Conference Board's On-Line Help Wanted tool, and skills gap surveys. Workforce alignment is *the* important labor market topic of the day and yet very little data exists. So much of what is reported as fact and used in workforce planning is based on anecdote rather than fact because data have not been collected and compiled in a systematic way. Supplemental funding at this point could lead to a better informed debate and ultimately better decision making around workforce alignment.

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## *Customer Consultations*

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### **Regional Analyst Customer Feedback and Satisfaction Survey**

The Labor Market Information Office in collaboration with DEEDs Policy, Planning and Measures Office developed a customer feedback and satisfaction survey during PY13 with implementation and initial findings available as follows.

The first LMI Regional Analyst Customer Consultation survey was sent out in late July 2014 to contacts who worked with an LMI regional analyst in the first half of 2014. Generally, these contacts are extremely satisfied with the consultations that the LMI regional analysts are providing, with almost all the key survey questions showing high levels of satisfaction.

The MnCSI score for the whole group in regards to overall satisfaction with services was **86.4** (typically our Employer Satisfaction Survey scores are in the high 70's).

90% of respondents would **definitely recommend** a LMI regional analyst to a colleague who needed specific information about labor market data or statistics.

95% of survey respondents received some sort of information or product from the LMI regional analyst and 68% of the survey respondents used the information to help them make a decision.

Other promising information from survey respondents shows:

- 95% responded 'very well' or 'well' that the LMI regional analyst understood what they were asking for
- 98% were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' that the information was presented in a clear and understandable manner
- 97% were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' that the product prepared by the LMI regional analyst was useful to them/a client/their organization

The general tone of the open-ended responses looks very complimentary of the LMI regional analysts as well.

### **Website Usability Testing Report Summary**

In 2013, the Minnesota state legislature mandated the improvement of access and functionality of labor market information offered to the public via the state's Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) website. To ensure that the resulting website redesign would be relevant, useful and understandable to users, DEED's Labor Market Information Office engaged a

consultant to, with the LMI Office, conduct a series of interviews with job seekers and others likely to use the site. Sessions were conducted from June 4 to July 30, 2014. The following is a summary of methods and findings.

Participants were recruited by project team members to represent typical Labor Market Information (LMI) website audiences and their diverse needs. User research was conducted to identify information needs, with task-based usability testing of current web menus, navigation of data tools, and response to paper prototypes of menus. Testing was conducted on site at the users' workplace or where they received services. Metropolitan and outstate views were included.

A total of 32 individuals participated, in the following categories:

- Seven adult job seeker customers at a WorkForce Center (WFC)
- Three recent high school graduates and one current college senior on summer internship
- Ten career counselors from the University of Minnesota, Metro State University, and Saint Paul College
- Four employment professionals from WFCs
- Two LMI regional analysts who also provided a WFC employment counselor perspective
- Three DEED business services representatives
- Two economic development professionals.

Key findings for job seekers

- Job seekers we interviewed were focused on the urgency to find a job. On virtually every page of the current site tested, these users tried to drill down to actual job listings. Links to job sites with actual job listings would demonstrate to jobs seekers that we understand their goal.
- They were generally impatient, quick to assess, and ready to leave pages that are not self-explanatory or clearly related to their goal. To serve job seekers, LMI's pages and tools must show these users clearly and plainly how LMI data can support or focus their search.
- Job seekers wanted more specificity in location, occupation type, and wages. But they also wanted less information overload.
- Recent high school graduates headed for college, and our college senior, had already started exploring careers and wanted help connecting face-to-face with employers through informational interviews and job shadowing.
- Lack of basic computer and internet skills presents a barrier for WFC job seekers. Our high school and college users, however, were skilled and easily navigated websites and tools.
- According to the higher education counselors and the student interviewees, younger users frequently access websites and tools via mobile devices so development needs to support this use.

### Key findings for workforce professionals

- WFC workforce professionals confirmed that most WFC users are focused on finding a job that uses the experience and skills they already possess.
- They felt that job seekers could benefit from a tool that offers a selection of geographic location and desired occupation, then integrates data such as: median wage, lower and higher end wage, demand, training requirements, related occupations, and links to job listings in their area.
- Higher education career counselors caution that focusing exclusively on demand and wages misleads career deciders, and that career choice should reflect a broader evaluation. They recommend that the site encourage awareness of work values, “who am I”, and exploration activities such as volunteering, networking, and internships for career decision making.
- They also highlighted students’ need for help transferring the broad skills they have learned in college to a variety of specific occupations and then to job seeking.

The full report is available upon request.