

2005 One Stop LMI

**West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs
Division of Research, Information and Analysis**

Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant Plan

Part A. A description of the statewide workforce information system.

The West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs is a component agency of the West Virginia Department of Commerce. Among other agencies within the department and aligned under WORKFORCE West Virginia is the Governor's Workforce Investment Division (GWID) with which the Bureau of Employment Programs shares administrative functions and personnel and maintains a memorandum of understanding regarding the execution of Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Act programs and delivery of services. All of this involves the Research, Information and Analysis (RIA) Division in planning for, developing and producing labor market information that serves workforce investment, economic development, the business community, career exploration and employment assistance.

Within the Research, Information and Analysis Division, the task of implementing state workforce information rests with the Office of Labor Market Information and the division director's office. From this structure is assembled into finished products the raw information provided as a primary source by the division's Office of Bureau Labor Statistics Programs. Also produced is much information independent of BLS-derived statistics, as well as planning and coordination of new information types and strategies. Functions included in the Office of Labor Market Information are programming and web design and support, analytic and production, training and supervisory. Accordingly, the division serves as a representative on the Governor's Workforce Investment Division's Labor Market Information Committee where it is able to propose informational solutions and respond to expressed needs. This allows the division to offer long-term systemic approaches to developing and maintaining viable and useful information sources and to provide practical data and information as requested by GWID and the state's seven workforce area staffs. The division also works with GWID's Business & Economic Development and Marketing & Collaboration committees.

Likewise, the division cultivates direct relationships with local workforce investment boards through which regional information analyses and training may be produced from consultation or on demand. Quite often, the production of local information may be situational in response to immediate or special circumstances. The division encourages interaction among local workforce boards in determining their information needs and in working with the division in realizing them.

The division provides training on all information it produces and on the systems it has in place to deliver this information for the best use to be made of it. Training is an ever on-going activity each year and involves state and local workforce development staff, job placement specialists and counselors, school career and guidance professionals, business services specialists and anyone else who may be interested in or benefited by receiving it.

1. *The process used to ensure that the SWIB can exercise its responsibility for ensuring that state workforce information policy is responsive to the needs of the state and local workforce investment system.*

The director of WORKFORCE West Virginia is also the director of the Governor's Workforce Investment Division and as such has authority over any and all workforce information produced through the annual workforce information core products and services grant. Subject to the deputy secretary's approval and to review and recommendation by the state's Workforce Investment Council and its subcommittees, workforce information products issued by the RIA division are thoroughly examined for their relevancy and may be adapted to reflect the needs of the state and local workforce investment system.

Additionally, the division's annual plan is reviewed by the deputy secretary, by staff of the state workforce investment office and is submitted for review, comment and modification to each local workforce investment area director.

Feedback and submission of suggestions for additional types of information continues throughout the program year from all interested or allied parties.

2. *How the state workforce information system supports the goal of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan for state and local workforce development.*

West Virginia's Workforce Information Core Products and Services Plan aligns with the WIA state plan in the sense that they are derived from the overall design of the state workforce training and guidance definition and process. Within each of the six activities described in the ETA training and guidance memorandum for workforce information, there is an emphasis on the participation of and service delivery to the state and local workforce investment system. In this regard, each component activity in whole or in part contains elements intended to support workforce development.

West Virginia utilizes the latest edition of the America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) database; both industry and occupational projections are produced for short and long-term periods for the state, MSAs and workforce development areas; occupational analyses and career products are produced in conjunction with occupational projections; individual services are directly provided to local workforce boards; the Virtual Labor Market Information (Virtual LMI) system and the division's regular web site are continually updated and expanded; and workforce

and labor market information training is conducted throughout the year or in any special circumstance upon request.

West Virginia's population average for 2004 was 1.8 million; in 2004, the civilian labor force average was 788 thousand; nonfarm payroll employment averaged 736.2 thousand; and there were approximately 46,000 employers in the state that year. During 2004, the labor market information web sites (including the electronic workforce information delivery system—Virtual LMI) maintained and operated by the Research, Information and Analysis Division recorded over 1.3 million hits, according to the state's Information Services and Communications Division. In light of numbers like these, it is apparent that the timely and accurate dissemination of workforce information for West Virginia is hitting its mark and reaching across all sectors of the state's demographics.

To fulfill its obligations and the expectations due it of the workforce investment system in West Virginia, the Research, Information and Analysis Division proposes to complete the following activities over the course of Program Year 2005:

- a. Economic forecasts: Short-term and long-term economic forecasts with analysis are offered annually for the state and seven workforce regions for strategic planning purposes. A long-term forecast for the state and regions is produced in even years for use in developing state and workforce area occupational projections. Short-term forecasts are particularly useful in planning for training programs and for making career and employment choices. Forecasts are necessary as well when changing economic conditions occur within the state or within a region. Both industry and occupational forecasts are available on the division's website/career information delivery system and on its regular website.
- b. Labor market studies: Monthly analyses for each local workforce investment area are prepared and published via the division's websites and in its *Economic Summary* publication. Special studies have been produced for local boards on demand to assist them in developing their annual plans, as have other products. The division promotes the availability of its on demand services and encourages their use by local boards.
- c. Industry studies: Many of West Virginia key industries can be found centered in specific regions of the state; therefore some local workforce boards are particularly sensitive to their ups and downs. Regular analyses are conducted of key industries such as coal mining, steel, chemicals, and wood products to examine their current stability and their influence within their native workforce regions. Other industries subject to review by virtue of their economic importance to the state include information, communication, travel and tourism,

health services, and high technology. Industries with development and employment potential likewise are studied for their occupational structures, the availability of a qualified labor force for them, and the skills or training required to attract or maintain them.

- d. Location quotient analysis from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) program and other special studies: The division will undertake analyses and reports based upon geographic location quotients which can now be produced through the QCEW program. This may permit local boards to clearly determine what their regional industry and business composition is like in comparison with surrounding areas or states. Local boards may specify their particular needs or requirements by choosing narrow or broad concentrations for detailed industry and employment information at a preferred geographic level. Other special studies that may be undertaken more likely would be focused upon labor supply issues and development of occupational cluster information. More timely demographic material from the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) project and the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey will be used for studies linking occupations with industries and areas.
 - e. The arrival of the Skills-Based Projections Application allows for analysts and other users to identify knowledge, skills and generalized work activities that are needed to meet occupational employment demands over the short and long-term (ten year) projection periods. Combining these O*Net work elements with occupational projections, analysis can be obtained on current supply, projected demand, skills gaps and replacement levels. Currently available geographies include national and statewide; inclusion of local workforce investment areas and other custom area designations should be available by late 2005.
 - f. Local Employment Dynamics (LED) studies: In cooperation with the U.S. Bureau of the Census the launch of the LED project in West Virginia enables linkage with surrounding states and with data relating to their labor markets. But more importantly, from a local perspective, this new information brings the opportunity to examine and analyze the workings of local labor markets in terms of hiring and other employment trends that previously has not been possible. The division regularly publishes in print and on its website quarterly workforce indicators for the seven workforce areas based upon LED data along with a vigorous analysis of what trends in employment, wage level structures within and between industries and other information are being revealed in this data.
3. *How the grant activities are consistent with the strategic vision of the governor and the workforce investment board.*

Grant activities provided under this training and guidance letter fully embrace and augment "A Vision Shared," promulgated by the governor's

office and the state development office by insuring that the breadth of labor market information includes complete aspects of its work force, employers in businesses and industries across the state and sub-state availability of as many data sources as possible. Also, grant activities as described and elaborated upon in this document have been fully expounded in the white paper "Work Force West Virginia: An Integrated Team Approach to West Virginia Labor Market Information," as prepared by the Governor's Workforce Investment Division. Workforce information as developed by Research, Information and Analysis is fully elaborated upon in West Virginia's 2005 Workforce Investment Act Plan.

4. *The strategy of the SWA and SWIB for consulting with local workforce investment boards and stakeholders in the workforce investment system to determine customer needs for workforce information.*

The division maintains an "always open" policy for all local workforce boards to request advisory services, training, customized information or any other type assistance at any time. As well, the division has cultivated close working relationships with a majority of local workforce board staffs and continues to offer its support and expertise to others. Furthermore, the division is the state's sole research resource with the capability of producing information and analyses from administrative data originating in the Mid-Atlantic Career Consortium (MACC) operating system, from the state's unemployment insurance system, and from the variety of reports derived from the division's federal/state cooperative statistical programs via BLS.

5. *The broad strategic approach for workforce information delivery to principal customers.*

The foundation of the division's approach is a three-fold process formulated with an information system providing up to date and state of the art products as embodied in the Virtual Labor Market Information (Virtual LMI) web site that serves as our career information delivery system and our regular web site, which serves as our home base. The regular web site is maintained with new material and also is the historical repository of past years' data. The second level is direct service on demand of analysis, reports and information products responsive to individual user needs and requests. The third level consists of information policy in terms of continuous and flexible planning for effective information bases and the involvement at this level of state workforce investment leadership and professional staffs.

6. *How workforce information service are delivered as core services to customers through the state's One Stop service delivery system.*

Workforce information services are delivered through the One Stop delivery system primarily via the division's regular web site, its Virtual LMI career information delivery system web site and through One Stop staff across the state who are regularly trained and kept up to date on the uses and latest developments in state and local LMI. One Stop clients have the opportunity of creating personal user accounts with Virtual LMI either on site at the One Stop or from any other location and assembling a thorough reference point for their career and employment plans. Virtual LMI is being used at One Stops this year to assist persons accepted in the Personal Reemployment Account (PRA) pilot project.

7. *Description of customer consultation and satisfaction assessment.*

In the recent past this division has conducted customer consultation, feedback and assessment through several means. We intend to continue with random queries of persons initiating information requests via telephone, e-mail, or correspondence and have user registration and feedback options as a feature on our Virtual LMI system. We will continue to offer opportunities for focus groups and interchanges both with state and local workforce boards, One Stop center administrators and staff, and with other agency staff. Business and media users will be consulted by personal contact and documentation. Survey methods that have been used to measure customer satisfaction include mail out cards, questionnaires in our regular publications, focus group assessment within LMI training sessions and a web-based survey. Findings from the survey have identified the level of satisfaction for users, frequency of use, how helpful the information was and the ease or difficulty encountered with accessing or using the data. The results of findings include identifying gaps in data sets beyond what was required by the previous plans, determining how to make the data more user-friendly for workforce investment staff and developing the most useful method for preparing LMI training for WIA staff, businesses and individuals. Recommendations provided through the surveys may be directly incorporated into the process or gradually integrated into a product as preparation time allows.

Part B. Products and Services

As a condition for receipt of funds in support of the development and maintenance of a comprehensive system of labor market information, West Virginia will perform the following activities during program year 2005.

1. *Continue to populate to the ALMIS database.*

The current database in use is ALMIS Version 2.2, which has been populated with core tables 100%, as has been the case each year. Version 2.3 will be adopted and populated when vendor software to our Virtual LMI system has been upgraded to accomplish this task which is anticipated to occur within the program year. Revision of licensed occupations will be completed and the updated data transmitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for inclusion on the America's Career Information Network (ACINet). Access to the ALMIS database can be obtained at either our Virtual LMI web site (URL www.wvlmi.com) or at our regular web site (URL www.state.wv.us/bep/lmi). The Virtual LMI system has made information from the ALMIS database accessible electronically to our customers twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Principal customers for this activity include clients of One Stop centers, the general public, employers and business owners, business organizations, public officials and employees, public and private education professionals, job and economic development interests, state and local workforce investment officials and staff, the media, job seekers, and others. Utility of the ALMIS database has been an element in all labor market information training we have presented in the past several years and will continue to be in training activities presented this program year. Milestones for completing this activity: 100% completion of ALMIS (Version 2.2 with Version 2.3 as a bonus), 100% completion of licensed occupations update, and continued training on ALMIS utility to principal customers. The cost of this activity is estimated to be \$69,532.

2. *Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.*

Industry and employment projections for the state and seven workforce investment areas are available for the periods 2004-2006 (short-term) and 2002-2012 (long-term). Occupational projections for these same periods are available and accessible both through our regular web site and through our Virtual LMI system. Short-term industry and occupational projections for the state and seven workforce investment areas for the period 2005-2007 will be produced by the middle of the year. Long term industry and occupational projections for the period 2004-2014 will be produced following the release in January 2006 of national projections for this period by BLS and will be available via our regular and Virtual LMI web sites. All projections are produced using the standard Consortium and MicroMatrix methodology and software. Skills-based software and techniques will be introduced this program year on existing and forthcoming projections. Principal customers are job seekers and those planning career preparation, training or education, the general public, business and media interests, public and private educational

professionals, and state and local economic development officials among others. Milestones for completion of this activity are completion of short-term industry and occupational projections (2005-2007) with their electronic dissemination and creation of new long-term projections (2004-2014). Completion of this activity is estimated to cost \$73,505.

3. *Provide occupational and career information products for public use.*

New projections (both short and long-term) will be augmented by extensive analysis on job viability, training and educational requirements, wage and salary levels (with wage histories), employment activity tied in with Longitudinal Employment Dynamics (LED) analysis and the availability of skills analytical tools. Occupational wages have been expanded to a new dynamic website format utilizing the Estimates Delivery System (EDS) publishing module that which allows data users to access and compare occupational employment and wages across various industries, industry levels and geographic regions. The system lets users search for specific occupations by keyword and download information as a spreadsheet for personal use and customization. A formula-driven narrative analysis is provided for each occupation. Short-term industry and occupational projections will be analyzed to ascertain emerging occupations within the state and seven workforce investment areas. An occupational profile for the state and all sub-state areas will be developed. This report is designed as a One Stop resource for comparative wages, employment, forecasts and industry make-up of occupations. Training for principal customers on the types and uses of occupational data is a fundamental part of our training regimen. Principal customers include job seekers and persons exploring career planning, state and local workforce administrators and staff, education officials and professionals, and job and career counselors. This is an open-ended activity and one that is hoped will generate the participation of principal customers in defining the types of occupational and career information of most use and value to them. Milestones for this activity are on going as information is continuously added through the year. Estimated cost for this activity is \$67,545.

4. *Ensure that workforce information and support required by state and local workforce investment boards are provided.*

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Services and information provided by the Research, Information and Analysis Division have been closely associated with the state's workforce investment system since its inception at which time all possible data sets were reformatted to offer each local area a complete informational base. This practice has been continued and expanded in succeeding years.

Most types of information the division produces for the state as a whole—whether economic, occupational, or other labor-market related—are produced in the same formats with a completely local context. Information developed by the division meets criteria established in the “Work Force West Virginia” white paper issued by the Governor’s Workforce Investment Division in terms of the specific areas where the division is the sole source of this information. All new products developed by the division are first considered for their ability to provide useful and up-to-date data for local data users. Over the past several years, the division has expanded its analysis and presentation of LED data entirely with local emphasis in examining local economies, primarily with turnover and hiring trends analyses in local areas. Much labor market information requested by local workforce investment boards, however, is by nature related to specific circumstances and time frames for which it is difficult to plan. The division is experienced in responding to these special situations with the best information available from all sources possible. Full support of local workforce investment efforts remains a high priority to the division. Principal customers for his activity area state and local workforce investment board officials, administrators, their staffs and clients. Milestones for this activity will be determined as regular local information series are prepared through the course of the year and as local information needs are described to us by local administrators and their requests are resolved. Cost of this activity is estimated to be \$67,545.

5. *Maintain and enhance electronic state workforce information delivery systems.*

The Virtual LMI system and our regular web site are the centerpieces of our labor market information/career delivery system. In the past calendar year these two sites recorded 1.3 million hits, which is remarkable in light of the size of the state’s population and labor force for the same period—1.8 million and 788,000, respectively. West Virginia helped the vendors of Virtual LMI perfect the installation of the latest versions of occupational projections, an assist to the twenty or so other states that use this system. Virtual LMI for West Virginia will be continually expanded and refined through this and forthcoming program years. With its emphasis in serving job seekers, those searching for career information and guidance and its structure to provide information at the most localized level possible, Virtual LMI fulfills a long-standing need in labor market information accessibility for West Virginia. Our regular web site remains available with new information regularly added and stands as a repository for statistical and economic information. Principal customers for this activity are all data users as this system embraces nearly the totality of the information we produce or otherwise make available. The system is designed for local and individual use. Milestones will be the continuous improvement of this system. Cost of this activity is estimated to be \$47,679.

6. Support state workforce training activities.

Division personnel conduct regular training sessions for state and local workforce investment staff at such venues as the annual state workforce conference, at statewide locations in cooperation with the state's Higher Education Policy Commission, and on site at One Stop Centers across the state. Continued training is an available option that local boards may request on demand. Training can be conducted on an overview of state and local labor market information products, on occupational information such as projections, wages and wage histories, skills analysis, employment prospects and training requirements, on operating the Virtual LMI system and other web sources to their capacity, on the usage of LED data at the local level, or on other topics the local board may choose. Principal customers of this activity are local workforce investment board members, local workforce investment administrators and staff, other One Stop Center staff, employment service interviewers and counselors, employment service business services team members, secondary school and other career guidance counselors, vocational education and rehabilitation counselors, and staff members of other agencies. Milestones of this activity are developing the planning and scheduling phases, then the execution of each separate training presentation. Cost of this activity is estimated to be \$71,518.

Part C. Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment

Throughout the program year, the division will collect customer satisfaction information and customer feedback from this option on the Virtual LMI website. This information will be reviewed for content and courses of action. The division will also perform customer satisfaction measurements using questionnaires within monthly and other publications and random polling of callers making information requests. Customer feedback and satisfaction will be addressed at all labor market information training sessions conducted by the division. Administrative officials of the Governor's Workforce Investment Division and of local workforce investment boards will be invited and expected to participate in the customer satisfaction process. Suggestions and requests deriving from this process will be incorporated into the division's strategies for and production of labor market information.