

WYOMING

PY 2005 Workforce Information Grant Plan

A. Wyoming's Workforce Information System

1. Workforce Information Boards and Councils

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services (DWS) was established in 2002 as the State Workforce Agency. As appropriately instructed by the US Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, DWS will carry out the activities outlined in section 309 of the Workforce Information Act.

DWS is intimately involved with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC), which serves as the sole workforce investment board in this single-service-delivery-area state. In Wyoming, there are currently six standing subcommittees of the WWDC. These subcommittees are populated by full WWDC committee members. Labor Market Information activities fall under the Communications Subcommittee. This subcommittee is tasked with providing staff with the programs and content they consider to be of the highest need in the state, as well as developing strategic recommendations for the WWDC in terms of information and communication activities. For the allocation of the LMI funds, the subcommittee was directed to compile a program list and allocate funds for the WWDC Executive Committee. This list of suggestions was presented to the Executive Committee of WWDC for a vote, as planned in the June, 2005 quarterly WWDC meeting, and received unanimous support. DWS provides staff and administrative services to this council, as well, oversees activities of the State's workforce development professionals, and strongly supports the business community and individuals in the process of determining state workforce information needs. As well DWS works closely with the Wyoming Department of Employment (DOE) in general, and specific to this grant coordinates closely with DOE's Office of Research and Planning in the development and implementation of a comprehensive employment statistics program. DWS staff meets with the Wyoming Workforce Development Council and its Communications Committee, and reviews the core products and services to be produced at the Council's request on an ongoing and annual basis. As new products are developed, DWS staff will attend the Wyoming Workforce Development Council meetings to make presentations on the new products. These meetings provide excellent opportunities to gain insight into the needs of the state and local workforce investment system.

2. Wyoming's Unified (Strategic Plan, PY05 & 06) Plan for Workforce Information

The workforce information grant plan will support Wyoming's conditionally approved 2 Year Plan for Workforce Investment in several ways. Communication of information is a major focus of this plan. In the Economic and Labor Market Information portion, the plan provides substantial analysis of key economic and laborforce information. As well, the Overarching State Strategies section identifies current and needed activities for program, service, and strategic policy directions to be implemented at the state and local levels. Wyoming is currently experiencing demand and growth in extraction and construction sectors and related occupations, among other areas. This opportunity, coupled with very low unemployment rates, provides a focus similar to the previous year, of discovering hidden or emerging labor populations.

The strategic plan continues to require a system that is reasonably available to anyone who wants to participate. It requires that accurate and current workforce information is provided to enable individuals to make their own decisions regarding their training, education and work related needs. Access to and development of relevant labor market information is critical for both employers and job seekers. DWS will use multiple sources of input to help determine the labor market information needs of those customer groups. The strategies section also discusses several basic workforce development needs and initiatives in Wyoming, that we will aim to meet.

Those needs include the following: (1) Meeting labor demands of businesses is a key part of the strategic plan; research in this area has shown that the number one factor influencing a company's decision to move to or start up in a community is labor supply, quality and cost. This focus aligns with the Governor's goal of diversifying Wyoming's economy to assure some stability beyond current industry imbalances; (2) Occupational Information: the ability to access and use labor market information must be expanded. The ability to understand this information will assist in the targeting and development of needed skills to assure business needs are met over time; (3) Economic Challenges: over the past two decades, Wyoming went from one of the best performing economies of the 1970's and 80's to one of the worst in the 90's, due to failure to diversify the economy. Understanding of this history and the dynamics of the cyclic nature of Wyoming's economy are becoming a major component in policy, program and service delivery; (4) Workforce Challenges: among many reasons, use of information can help to mitigate demographic trends, special population workforce needs, training investment strategies, and training provider curriculum.

Three things have to happen for Wyoming to continue to have solid job growth and diversify its economy. First, additional residents have to be attracted to the state. Second, demographic groups with historically low participation rates in employment, such as older residents and older youth, need to be attracted into the workforce. In addition, workers in rural areas need to be retrained so they can continue to meet the workforce needs in their area.

Because attracting new workers and jobs to the state is a very important part of workforce development, DWS will produce several products and services designed to assist with economic development efforts for both community groups and individual businesses. Those products include economic indicators, community labor profiles, benefits information, and a set of specialized reports for targeted groups.

In addition, Wyoming's Strategic Plan, under the Service Delivery section, establishes how LMI will contribute to achieving the state's workforce investment goals. LMI provides one of the few opportunities for objective measurement with respect to the direction of the economy. LMI data programs permit goals to be set and progress toward them to be measured, because the data is independent, objective, and meets recognized statistical standards. In achieving solid job growth and diversification of the economy, LMI programs remove barriers which help to understand the costs of decisions and create a more effective market processes. Given these Strategic Plan requirements and goals, this proposal clearly supports the purposes of Workforce Information Core Products and Services (TEGL 33-04) and those established by Wyoming.

3. Governor's Strategic Vision for Wyoming

Governor Freudenthal has implemented the Children and Families Initiative which DWS is helping to implement. With this initiative's vision of improving the lives of Wyoming's children and families are five goals. Goals include "A diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality," and "Students successfully educated and prepared for life's opportunities" have several objectives. Objectives of these goals include: 1) increasing the percentage growth in non-extraction industry jobs, 2) increased percentage of families earning Family Economic Self Sufficiency Standards (as established by the Governor), 3) decreasing the rate of gender/wage disparity, and 4) decreasing the rate of multiple job holders, raising the rate of average state wage compared to Federal Poverty Level. DWS will meet with other agencies in the Cabinet to develop and provide the labor market information they need to fulfill their service objectives. This information is quite diverse and includes providing labor trends and projections, information on current business needs, economic indicators for use on DWS's website, community labor profiles application to determine labor supply, research on industry clusters, and research on college graduates leaving the state.

4. Statewide Workforce Information Board Consultation With Local Boards and Stakeholders

The Wyoming Workforce Development Council meetings provide a forum for the discussion of local issues and provide a venue for businesses, government agencies and individuals to provide input on their needs. It should be noted that the WWDC functions in Wyoming as both the Statewide and Local Board, as Wyoming is a single-service-delivery area. The Workforce Center Regional Managers confer with the Office of the Director, who is a member of the Council and relays customer needs to the state council through regular meetings of the council and its various committees. DWS also participates in a group known as the Wyoming Workforce Alliance, which as a core group includes members of the Workforce Council, Wyoming Business Council, and Wyoming Community College Commission. This group is structured both at a state level and at a regional level throughout the state, and includes active participation from Chambers of Commerce, local business operators, and a variety of other key stakeholders. These groups examine and address both immediate and long term economic development needs, training needs, laborforce needs and education needs. These needs are incorporated in the strategic delivery of services. DWS Labor Market Information staff and Department of Employment (DOE) Research and Planning, as a contractor, will continue to have one-on-one meetings with staff from economic development, Workforce Centers, Tech Prep, vocational education, adult education and vocational rehabilitation to discuss workforce information needs. In addition to these one-on-one meetings, DWS will conduct periodic roundtable community meetings gather input from other members the Council and Wyoming's communities in general. DWS Labor Market Information staff and contractors will also seek input from business groups, educators, teachers, students and workforce development staff on workforce information needs. The WWDC and its Communications Committee are highly involved with the identification, strategic design, and dissemination of products. They are currently directing resources to develop key data sets for WWDC policy consideration.

5/6. Delivery of Workforce Information/One-Stop Service Delivery

There are basically three different strategies Wyoming is using for delivering workforce information to each of the three principal customer groups (job seekers, businesses, economic developers). First, businesses contact us directly about publications that we produce; where

possible, products will be made available both in hard copy and on-line. Second, mailing lists are used to distribute publications to businesses. Most of the publications are also available through a link on the DWS website or the Department of Employment's website in either pdf format or html files. Economic indicators and trend information can be found on the DWS website or the Department of Employment's website in interactive databases or html files. Presentations to business groups are also used to provide workforce information to employers. Third is the use of the One Stops or Workforce Centers: businesses contact us directly through the Workforce Centers with requests for information. In Wyoming, approximately 25% of employers utilize Workforce Centers for various types of assistance, including labor market information. Workforce information is delivered to individuals through the websites mentioned above, career counselors, mailing lists for products, and direct requests. Workforce information is also provided to Workforce Center customers through the resource centers at the offices and through one-on-one meetings with customers. DWS Labor Market Information professionals and contractor professionals deliver workforce information through presentations at conferences, training sessions for staff, mailings of products, the websites and requests for information.

7. Customer Consultation and Satisfaction Assessment

The Wyoming Department of Workforce Services plans to further develop a formalized process for consulting with its customers and assessing satisfaction in at least three ways: 1) a series of focus groups including businesses, economic development professionals, and job seekers (*principal customers*) will be convened to assist the Department in determining the type and nature of workforce information products and services are most beneficial; 2) additional questions specifically related to Labor Market Information will be incorporated into our WIA and Wagner Peyser customer satisfaction survey process, which will be conducted, collected, and analyzed; and 3) general comments will be collected into a matrix, which will be analyzed for future LMI program enhancement. The Department views these methods as being fairly comprehensive in gathering key information which will drive continued improvement in LMI products and services in meeting demand.

8. Customer Satisfaction Findings

In the past, three basic strategies were employed to determine customer satisfaction with DWS workforce information. These strategies were used by Research and Planning, the entity which had at one point been administratively responsible for LMI under Workforce Information Grants. While methodology will be changing for PY04, activities of which are just beginning and will be continued for PY05, the results of recent satisfaction activities are as follows:

1. A matrix was compiled of solicited and unsolicited qualitative feedback. This matrix revealed that governmental and economic development entities were largely pleased with the product that was produced. Many comments come in reference to specialized projects. As such, it would appear that there is a high level of responsiveness to these two groups. There was little feedback from private industry or individual job-seekers.

2. WebTrends hits on the Department of Employment's labor market information website, as a measure of self-accessing workforce information, indicated that 75,989 unique visitors paid a total of 123,894 visits to the site.
3. Another indicator of satisfaction considered recently was the number of solicitations to Research & Planning for paid research activities. This research was provided to a number of state government entities, chambers of commerce, community college organizations and an economic development entity. Under the Department of Employment's Research and Planning Unit, solicitation for customized research was considered to be a strong indicator of satisfaction, to wit, customers 'voted with their checkbooks'.

As to the effect of these findings, feedback indicates a need to modify products, delivery, and expand LMI training across Wyoming. While comments appeared to be generally positive in nature, it is clear that outreach to the private sector, including private sector involvement in the design of products, services and other communications could expand the beneficial role of LMI. Simply stated, customized LMI products appear to be reasonably well produced, but the scope of standard product and service users could be expanded. The Department has considered WebTrends information, and at this time, aside from tabulating numbers of site visits, this method does not provide much useful information for planning or otherwise improving products or delivery. As well, DWS does not now consider a volume of fee-for-service to be a valid measure of satisfaction, but rather, an indicator of isolated or specialized need.

The Department has incorporated several strategies in its current and two-year business plan which should expand usage of LMI. Among these strategies are the re-alignment of services to have a higher focus on businesses. This strategy involves in-depth assessment of business customers in determining which services are in greatest demand, followed by the acquisition of those skill sets in Workforce Center personnel, and the delivery of those products and services. A second strategy involves identifying tiers of business customers which could access appropriately grouped levels of services. Services will be flexibly designed to meet true growth and demand in Wyoming counties, regions, and at a state level, as appropriate.

The Department plans on maintaining basic core products, but will, as a result of customer satisfaction historical information and current focus group activities, be developing more user-friendly and localized information pieces. One product will be fairly comprehensive for all targeted user groups, and should assist with both short-term decision-making and longer term business and career planning. Other products will be specific to high-growth and demand industries, as identified by the State's Workforce Council. These other products are planned to be very useful in meeting the immediate needs of Wyoming's top three growth and demand industries, again, as a direct result of LMI gap assessments as conducted by DWS. It is very likely that these publications will focus on construction, extraction, and retail/hospitality workforce information. It is currently planned that products will be available in a variety of media.

A variety of leveraging activities are underway. Already, the Department has partnered with the Wyoming Business Council in a substantial business and workforce survey, the results of which are available at: <http://www.tamerica.com/wyoming/> This survey becomes a part of the Department's LMI, as well as activities conducted with regional groups in developing strategies on growing local economies. While this survey did not involve

PY04 grant funds, it is directly related to the Agency's and Council's LMI expansion plan. The Customer Satisfaction Survey LMI portion will be integrated into similar duties performed through Wagner Peyser and WIA Title IB. This study was released in March, 2005.

An additional new activity supports and is planned to add continuity to a study conducted through the Governor's office. This study, "The Self Sufficiency Standard for Wyoming" (http://wyoming.gov/governor/policies/documents/WyomingSelf-SufficiencyStandard2005_000.pdf), was produced to establish a standard and allow citizens, service agencies, and policy makers to understand what levels of income, by county, need to be achieved in order to enjoy a basic quality of life. DWS, at the direction of WWDC, plans on using the results of this study to develop a simple web-based calculator for customers' use in career planning with a goal of self-sufficiency.

B. CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1. Populating the ALMIS Database with state data:

a. Description of product or activity:

The Wyoming Department of Employment, Research & Planning (hereafter R&P) will continue to populate and maintain all tables designated as core tables. R&P has transitioned to Version 2.2 during PY2004, and will continue to keep current as newer versions and resources allow. Workforce Informer, also called ANSWERS has been developed as the state ALMIS Internet delivery application. Wyoming will continue to submit licensing data through the NCSC. Files provided to the NCSC for licensing will include SOC codes as specified.

b. Customer Support for Product or Service:

Since the ALMIS Database is not used directly by customers, there are very few customers who know about or are interested in the ALMIS Database. However, products and services which customers use that rely on ALMIS data provide a tacit support for this activity.

c. Support of WIA/Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan:

Maintaining the ALMIS Database and its electronic delivery will significantly enhance quality of LMI use. Keeping this database current, coupled with training and other efforts to raise overall understanding of LMI will translate to improved decision making for customers and staff, in terms of strategic targeting in meeting Wyoming's needs. Section VI of Wyoming's 2 Year Plan has great emphasis on utilizing workforce information in taking a demand approach with services; current ALMIS data is critical in making sound demand decisions.

d. Principal Customers:

The ALMIS data base is not directly used by any external customers. The primary user of this product will be the R&P staff. When the ALMIS data base product is expanded to include the information available on the DWS and R&P web sites, the user audience expands to Workforce Development Boards, Workforce Center staff and customers, businesses, placement counselors, career counselors, teachers, students, and other

individuals. This system powers ANSWERS and serves as a repository or source for a variety of other LMI publications.

e. Projected Outcomes and System Impact:

All planned milestones will be completed by the end of the grant. The greatest impact of the ALMIS database is the storage of data to be used in information delivery systems. The significant measurable outcome for this activity will be the availability of the ALMIS database to the general public via R&P's web-based application, "ANSWERS".

f. Planned Milestones:

Continuously populate ALMIS Database core tables with state data; submit licensing data as periodically appropriate to NCSC; plan to implement/populate the most current version of the ALMIS Database by 6/30/07.

g. Estimated Cost for Maintaining/Populating ALMIS Database: \$35,667

2. Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

a. Description of product or activity:

The Department of Employment, Research and Planning Division will produce for public dissemination long-term (2004-2014) and short-term (2005-2007) industry and occupational projections at the statewide level during PY2005 and then populate the ALMIS database with these projections. The historical NAICS industry files (Covered Employment and Wages or CEW) will be produced. These files allow us to produce industry and then occupational projections. Necessary data elements to produce the projections for sub-state areas will also be produced using the methodology, software tools, and guidelines as established via BLS, R&P, and focus groups.

b. Customer Support for Product or Service:

Primary support for this activity comes from Workforce Center staff, the Workforce Development Council, the Wyoming Business Council, and businesses/job-seekers. These groups use this type of information in assisting with decision-making in the investment of training dollars as well as a source of information in developing general information products for the public. Customers use this information in career planning, business expansion planning, and a variety of other ways. Recent feedback from customer groups indicate a desire for county level projections to be made available, which will be investigated.

c. Support of WIA/Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan:

Industry and occupational projections support several sections of the Wyoming Strategic 2 Year Plan by supporting broad economic, education, training, workforce development, and related goals. An understanding of the short and longer term need of industries supports knowledge-based decisions for individual persons, employers, and customers about their potential roles in the labor market. Section V of Wyoming's Two Year Plan

calls for the use of targeting workforce development activities using local data; projections supplement the ability to focus on growing and declining areas of need.

d. Principal customers:

Customers or recipients of the two projections publications include the following: state and local educators, One-Stop staff, employers, job-seekers, career counselors, WIA providers, policy makers, and legislators. Specific associations and organizations include the Wyoming Business Council (main state sponsored economic development entity), the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, the Wyoming Community College Commission, the Wyoming Economic Development Association, and the Society of Human Resource Managers. The Workforce Development Training Fund is a state worker training program administered by the Department of Workforce Services. State regulation require the use of occupational projections to document training in high-growth occupations as part of the application process for training providers where no job is guaranteed at the end of training (e.g., training dollars applied for by a community college).

e. Projected Outcomes and System Impact:

The long-term industry and occupational projections have a major impact because they are a critical part of providing workforce development information. The Department of Workforce Services and key partners including the Wyoming Business Council, Wyoming Economic Development Association, and Wyoming Community College Commission have begun work in earnest to drive their respective systems in targeting demand. Short and long term projections provide key and valuable information in determining which courses to offer, which investments to make, which strategies to employ in broadening the array of businesses which operate in the State. In line with our Governor's charge to expand the non-extraction jobs in the state, this information helps with the significant efforts under way to diversify.

f. Planned Milestones:

- i) Populate the ALMIS database with statewide and substate projections by 4/15/06.
- ii) Necessary data elements to produce the projections for sub-state areas will also be produced by 4/15/06.
- iii) The historical NAICS industry files (Covered Employment and Wages or CEW) will be produced by 4/30/06.
- iv) Produce long-term (2004-2014) and short-term (2005-2007) industry and occupational projections at the statewide level by 6/30/06.

g. Estimated Costs for Long-term Industry & Occupational Projections: \$71,795

3. Occupational and career information products

a. Description of product or activity:

1. Funds will be used to produce and disseminate occupational and career information products, incorporating related information such as occupational

projections; demand occupations and supply indicators by geographical area; wages and benefits by occupations; career ladder information and skills and education requirements, all compiled into a state workforce report.

In June of 2004, Wyoming Governor Dave Freudenthal hosted the first ever Workforce Summit. The summit brought together private sector employers, economic development, workforce and employment professionals from across the state to address Wyoming's workforce issues. One of the Governor's goals has been to do a better job of gathering and disseminating labor information to current and potential customers in the state. In May of 2004, the Department of Workforce Services and WWDC released the Wyoming Workforce Report to the Governor. The report was also released to all governmental departments, school administrators, economic development entities, private sector customers and all media statewide. The report was a professionally produced 12 page summary of the full report conducted by DWS and the WWDC, and for PY04, the WWDC plans to release a much more comprehensive report in the fall of 2005. The goal is to continue to produce this report in greater depth, more tailored, yet equally easy to comprehend for customers. After the main component of the report is published, the product would be sent to counties in the state to use as a resource in matching economic development with workforce. Where practical, these products will have direct ties to the ONET system.

'Pullouts' will also be published and made available to address specific issues and top growth sectors unique to Wyoming's workforce. For PY04, the WWDC selected two top issues affecting the state's workforce which are currently being developed:

- a) Aging workforce – In the State of the Workforce Report the issue of a rapidly aging workforce in stark contrast to a rapidly decreasing population of those Wyomingites under the age of 18 will have a large impact on workforce numbers.
- b) Career Exploration- The process of educating youth early, planting the seed of career planning, is a recognized and ongoing need. By placing tailored labor market information in the hands of young people the state is helping to eliminate the stigmas attached to vocational training and community college coursework. This is a good example of how to utilize wage records to educate citizens on the diversity of pay scale, job vacancies, and conversely job saturation levels.

Three additional 'pullout' concepts include addressing the top three growth occupations in the state which are:

- c) *Construction- Pullouts may include where job vacancies are located, what is required for employment, definition of a target hire, and what the traditional wage has been for the positions, including benefits offered. Information on available training programs and funding for employers may also be included.

- d) *Service Industry - Pullouts may include where job vacancies are located, what is required for employment, definition of a target hire, and what the traditional wage has been for the positions, including benefits offered. Information on available training programs and funding for employers may also be included.
- e) *Health Care - Pullouts may include where job vacancies are located, what is required for employment, definition of a target hire, and what the traditional wage has been for the positions, including benefits offered. Information on available training programs and funding for employers may also be included.

The WWDC plans to have a similar set of pullouts on evolving important issues for PY05, and is currently developing a list of topics for further consideration and development through focus groups, general feedback, and observation of current data. In order to facilitate the production of the expansion report and the pull-out deliverables, the state is budgeting for staff to assist with development of products, as well as associated costs with convening customer focus groups.

2. The self-sufficiency calculator will incorporate cost of living standards for each county, for a variety of family sizes as identified by the Governor’s report, and will allow individuals to easily calculate a basic income target needed to enjoy a basic quality of life in their communities. Using this figure and other planning assistance from service agencies, particularly local One-Stops, individuals can then assess occupations and industries which will likely be able to meet their income needs, making fuller use of employment and wage workforce information. They can then work with the One Stops to find training and jobs in those occupations. This product will add to the value and usage of LMI in planning and decisionmaking. Currently, DWS is coordinating with Wyoming’s Governor, Departments of Health, Family Services, and Corrections to establish realistic monetary goals for its various public assistance clients. Use of this calculator, as a common denominator, will allow for a greater level of goal-setting consistency among the partnering agencies.

Products developed will be SOC based, where possible, and special focus groups, including the Workforce Development Council’s data sub-committee, businesses, and LMI users will be convened to assist in developing products that are user-friendly and meaningful.

b. Customer Support for Product or Service:

1. The abridged report has been extremely well-received by various entities in the state, especially the state WWDC that called the Workforce Report, “what they had been waiting for.” Due to the popularity of the report and a voiced need for more detailed and industry specific information, the state WWDC will continue to expand this report, as well as provide ‘pullouts’ (inserts or brochures on special current demand topics).

2. The WWDC, as a customer, has determined to make available for individuals a means to easily and realistically determine their income needs, a web-based calculator will be developed to accomplish this.

c. Support for WIA/Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan:

1. Career products will provide information about occupations that will help customers make informed decisions about those occupations. The development and distribution of the products mentioned above relate directly to many sections of the Wyoming Strategic 2 Year Plan by supporting broad economic, education, training, workforce development, and related goals through informing individual persons, employers, and customers about the workforce, to assist in making decisions about their role in the labor market. Section IX of Wyoming's 2 Year Plan, beginning on page 46, describes the use of information to target workforce investments, through service delivery, as a means to increase customer knowledge in influencing better customer decision making.

2. The self-sufficiency calculator will greatly assist staff and customers in the ability to make informed choices. This tool will serve to focus career planning by reducing job-seeker goals, in part, to clear dollars and cents. At this point, reality in terms of self-sufficiency, can serve as a basis for job search, career planning, and training plans.

d. Principal Customers:

1. Occupational and career information will be used by a wide range of workforce development professionals, businesses, career decision-makers and individuals. Users will include Workforce Center staff and customers, the Workforce Development Council, workforce development planners, job seekers, students, counselors, employers, legislators, and WIA training program participants. The Department is excited to see expansion to public education, community college curriculum developers and guidance workers.

2. Principle customers utilizing the web-based self-sufficiency calculator will be career counselors, service providers, and the job-seeking public to be used as a guidance tool for establishing career goals.

e. Outcomes and System Impact:

The outcomes and system impact of both of the products and activities described in this section are hoped to be a large step in the direction of finding a middle ground between the hard science of LMI and the principal customers for which information is generated. It is hoped that these products will both raise the working LMI knowledge of users while also making LMI more useful to customers. Wyoming continues its commitment to turn LMI from data to customer-usable information. It is hoped that real needs can be met more quickly and more effectively in this migration.

f. Planned Milestones:

1. Workforce Report

- (i) Project teams established by 7/15/05.
- (ii) Council briefed on projects by 9/30/05.
- (iii) Data sets and topics identified by 10/1/05.
- (iv) Targeted messages developed for pullouts by 4/30/06.
- (v) Targeted messages distributed to principal customers by 6/30/06.
- (vi) Draft developed for expanded workforce report by 4/30/06.
- (vii) Report published and distributed to principal customers by 6/30/06.

2. Calculator developed and made available by 1/31/06.

g. Estimated Costs

- (i) Expanded Workforce Report and Pullouts/inserts: \$80,154**
- (ii) Calculator development and implementation: \$7,000**

4. Information and Support for Workforce Investment Boards

a. Description of product or activity:

While all products and activities under this plan directly respond to or occur under the direction of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council, there are some specific activities that bear further description. The Workforce Development Council has established a standing committee to focus on workforce information needs for Wyoming. This committee is composed of Council members, agency staff, LMI professionals, businesses and other key users of LMI. The Council uses this committee to gather poignant information for policy-making, proposed legislation, as well as determining which products and information can best be compiled and distributed for the benefit of Wyoming.

Key activities include active participation from the audience at council meetings, at the committee meetings, and in other forums as the Council and its LMI committee request. Specific activities have included education and presentations on various trends, such as aging issues, education issues, poverty issues, wage issues, retention issues, community infra-structure issues, service performance, investment planning and recommendations, and a variety of other areas. Other activities involve inclusion of council members on distribution lists of a variety of publications, and involvement in LMI product planning.

To assure the success of correct product design, as well as to learn from customers, the WWDC has committed to support customer consultation and satisfaction processes. These activities include convening focus groups as well as conducting targeted satisfaction surveys to assure the relevance and quality of information developed and made available. These activities will be conducted by DWS with the oversight and coordination of the WWDC's communications sub-committee.

The key summary of these activities is that LMI professionals are responsive to the variety of LMI needs as become identified by the Workforce Development Council. *The Council*

and Agency consider LMI to come from a variety of sources, including census professionals, economic analysis professionals, workforce professionals, traditional labor statistic sources, education entities and economic developers, among other sources.

Accordingly, in PY05, the Council is developing a need for policy making information. Such activities include developing and/or investigating customized data sets. Such customized data includes information, by county, on multiple wage earners, gender of multiple wage earners, which allows for informed policy making on wage disparity. Other data sets to be developed include in/out-of-state migration patterns, by county, and commuting patterns, which may assist in policy toward future economic development and program support for depressed or rapidly expanding communities. The Council has identified a need for looking at new ways to apply wage information, including ways to gather more current wage information than wage records has historically allowed. There are a variety of other data sets under consideration, and discussion and coordination with information partners is ongoing.

b. Customer Support for Product or Service:

Activities support the planning, analysis and program operations needs of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council. Wyoming continues to evolve its decision-making and policy-making processes on a foundation of solid data and information. As issues are addressed, the Council is very supportive of involvement from appropriate LMI sources.

c. Support for WIA/Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan:

This activity assures that the Council, the programs overseen by the Council, service providers and the customers served through these programs have access to the most currently available information in a format which is very usable to assist in short and long term planning and decision making, as established by the service strategy section of the state's 2 Year Plan.

d. Principal Customers:

The primary users will be the state workforce development board and staff.

e. Outcomes and System Impact:

The primary focus of this core product and service is to meet the needs of the Wyoming Workforce Development Council and local Workforce Centers. The board makes important decisions about workforce development, especially in training programs and economic development areas. In addition, other local groups such as economic development groups and individual businesses request a wide range of economic indicator, workforce and trend information. Staff will conduct workforce development research and produce the products and services identified in this plan. Project staff and contractors will provide information to the workforce investment board on a request basis. Workforce Center staff will be trained on the uses of LMI, and knowledge of LMI will be available to customers on a much different level than has traditionally existed in Wyoming.

We will seek input from workforce investment boards and other stakeholders to determine unmet labor market information needs. Much of the unmet needs are for localized labor market information.

f. Planned Milestones: Milestones relate to the entire project, having customer focus and WIB direct involvement.

- (i) ALMIS Database will be maintained.
- (ii) Short and Long-Term Projections will be maintained
- (iii) WWDC and Workforce Center staff will be trained on uses of the ALMIS software application. Software application will be maintained and enhanced.
- (iv) LMI products, such as the Workforce Report and associated publications will satisfy the identified LMI needs as identified by focus groups and the WWDC.
- (v) WWDC will continue to enhance uses of LMI in its policy development.
- (vi) WWDC tabular data will be developed and made available by 4/31/06.
- (vii) Grant administration will be coordinated with ETA.
- (viii) focus groups will be convened and results made available to WWDC by 12/31/05.
- (ix) customer satisfaction survey and analysis will be complete by 6/30/06.

g. Estimated Costs are:

- (i) Customized data tables and evaluation: \$20,000**
- (ii) Customer satisfaction assessment: \$9,000**
- (iii) Customer consultation focus groups: \$1,924**

5. Maintaining and enhancing electronic state workforce information delivery systems.

a. Description of product or activity:

1. Comments DWS has received indicate that while customers of LMI products and information consider LMI to be accurate and statistically correct, it was not distributed in a user-friendly format. Wyoming is evolving to adapt this request in several ways. The launch of the ANSWERS program (A National and State Workforce Employment Research System) is one product that will serve as a solution to the void of clear and coherent packaging. ANSWERS is an internet application that allows non-scientific customers to query and access labor market information in a point-and-click format. The user can access information relevant to both the job seeker and the job provider. ANSWERS is the software application through which ALMIS data is made available in Wyoming. Currently the website is linked to America's Job Bank to supply jobseeker information but in time the link will connect to the Wyoming Job Network at <http://wyjobs.state.wy.us>. The ANSWERS program and website are expected to be fully operational by early Fall of 2005.

2. An additional enhancement to the State's workforce information delivery system will also be developed. This activity, the exploration of '**GIS-type Mapping**', responds to the WWDC request for more specific information with regard to geographic issues. LMI customers want to know where the state workforce is strong

and where it needs resources. The economic development representation on the WWDC and members of the Wyoming Business Council, in particular have suggested the use of mapping out these areas. Uniting economic opportunity and demand with a workforce trained in the industry being pursued is paramount to linking economic development with healthy job growth. The University of Wyoming currently houses a substantial GIS mapping system with a GIS Development Plan focused on building a stronger partnership with state and local governments. Investigation of this product has revealed that GIS is cost-prohibitive. A much simplified application was discovered through consultation with DWS's Chief Information Officer, which will produce the same result as desired by the Council, and will be implemented, and the WWDC believe that this effort is a perfect example of leveraging resources.

3. In order to assure success and accuracy of the above activities, having a well-maintained and complete group of data is a necessity. A substantial behind-the-scenes activity is administrative records database maintenance and development. This activity entails periodic updating/upgrading/maintenance, as records become available, of electronic records which allow for a wide variety of study. Simply put, LMI services and products are only as good as the information from which they are drawn.

b. Customer Support for Product or Service:

1. As was noted in Customer Satisfaction comments and comments provided by the WWDC and from a variety of sources, this type of LMI has not traditionally been easy to access or understand. It is hoped that continued improvement will allow for better data extracts, presentations, reports, and other product development

2. The ANSWERS application and GIS-type mapping have been identified as good solutions to this problem for potential users by the Department of Employment's Research and Planning office, the WWDC, and a selection of other outside sources, including other states who are addressing this same issue. Putting pertinent data in a format that relates to a users geographic area of interest has been identified by many users as a way of giving greater meaning to the information.

In the coming two years, qualitative feedback will be captured and analyzed to determine the extent to which continued support exists for such solutions, as well as the exploration of other solutions. The WWDC is committed to assuring that data is kept current and maintained in a method which lends to a variety of uses.

3. The WWDC, departments of Employment and Workforce Services are highly supportive of the activity of maintenance of data records. It is clear to these customers that such an activity is necessary to support the wide variety of uses which are derived from the database, including specialized studies and longitudinal comparisons.

c. Support for WIA/Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan:

While the current strategic plan identifies the importance of information to workforce professionals, policy makers, job seekers, and a variety of potential users in decision making, Wyoming sees all three activities under this section as a logical evolution as to how key information can be made more readily accessible to those who may benefit. For both activities identified in this core product area, the combined 2 Year Plan calls for: the ability to do current analysis (Section IV), the ability to use information by way of comparison (Section V), use of workforce information in identifying and addressing demand (Section VI), and the incorporation of many levels of workforce information to target service delivery (Section IX).

d. Principal Customers:

1. The principal customers of the ANSWERS activity include job seekers, employers, economic developers, policy makers, workforce center professionals, educators, and a variety of workforce related groups. The ability to access information quickly, have some customizable reporting features, and understand what it is one is looking at will have a high value among users.
2. The principal customers of GIS-type mapped information includes: One Stop staff, job seekers, businesses, policy makers, and economic developers.
3. The principal customers of the maintenance of data include policy makers, agency planners, and to some extent, readers of publications resulting from specialized studies.

e. Outcomes and System Impact:

1. The ANSWERS website will be updated by end of grant period and will meet or exceed standards for private-vendor career information software. It will be available for customer use 24/7. Current economic measures will be available the same day they are released to the public in other format.
2. The GIS-type mapping initiative will be explored, and if found to be feasible, will have identified key data sets, resources needed to fully implement, and a full plan will be developed to make this concept a reality for user groups.
3. The administrative records database activity allows for study which positively influences longer-term planning, strategic policy decision making, and service adjustments.

Principal customers will have easy access to current data and information, and will be better prepared to make decisions based upon solid information.

f. Planned Milestones:

1. By August, 2005, the ANSWERS application will be fully functional, to the extent data is available in a usable format.

2. By April, 2006, GIS-type mapping will have been explored, developed and a determination will be made as to making this LMI product electronically available. With an ongoing assessment, feedback will be provided to DWS and WWDC as to the strengths, weaknesses, barriers, and other areas which will improve records database maintenance and enhancement.

3. By June, 2006, work will be substantially completed on administrative records database maintenance.

g. Estimated Costs:

i) The total cost associated with the continued development and implementation of our GIS-type Mapping initiative is estimated at \$2,000.

ii) The total cost associated with maintaining and enhancing the ANSWERS application is \$10,000

iii) The total cost associated with Administrative Records Database Maintenance and Development is estimated at \$50,000

6. State workforce information training

a. Description of product or activity:

With the functionality of the ANSWERS product nearly completed, DWS will, via MOU with Research and Planning, provide for two levels of training for Workforce Center staff. The first level of training will consist of ‘train the trainer’ training presentations by R&P staff to Workforce Center staff and other workforce development professionals on the nature and types of LMI offered through R&P. The training will emphasize how to use labor market information and career information and attempt to help workforce development professionals better understand labor market trends. We plan to conduct formal presentations at periodic Statewide WIA/Workforce Development Training Sessions, and at a second statewide Workforce Summit, currently planned for June, 2006. We will contact each Regional Manager and ask them to schedule a time and a date for R&P staff to conduct a presentation at their location. The meetings will include a short presentation to all staff and then small group meetings with Workforce Center staff needing specialized LMI skills.

The second level of training will be at a more local level. This training will be conducted by DWS participants from the ‘train the trainer’ sessions, and will be intended to assist local customers in making greater use of LMI in decision making.

In addition, the WWDC intends this funding to include their participation in LMI training with other key partners. Although dates and locations have not been set, these training sessions are intended to reach Community Colleges, Economic Developers, and WIB members.

b. Customer Support for Product or Service:

A majority of the training for workforce development professions will be on a request basis. Many of the Workforce Centers are developing business outreach strategies. Since labor market information is an important core product, the Workforce Center staff will need to be knowledgeable about labor and career information. We will attempt to tailor the training to the unique needs of the specific audience, and the region which the audience conducts services.

c. Support for WIA/Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan:

The Wyoming Strategic 2 Year Plan calls specifically for workforce professionals to be highly proficient in the use of information which enhances customer choice. This includes the ability to ‘train’ or otherwise educate service users from the WIA and Wagner Peyser customer base as to current local trends, potential career trends, and other areas that lend to informed customer choice. Also, with the Department’s growing focus on business services, there is a significant call among business service staff to provide LMI among other services, to assist those customers in recruitment, retention, location, and expansion.

d. Principal customers:

The primary users of training will be state and local workforce development boards, staff and Workforce Center staff.

e. Outcomes and system impact:

Training is a critical product and service. Since the world is changing and since the way labor market information has to be delivered is changing, training staff is a critical step. DWS Staff will attend a professional-level training session, including general LMI uses, sources, and ANSWERS operation. With the uncertainty about the LMI Institute and it’s legacy, determining what types of training will be available is difficult. DWS plans to subscribe to the LMI Institute training group, if and when that possibility exists. R&P Staff will conduct a minimum of 6 presentations/training sessions for workforce development system staff and business groups. The presentations will include on-site training for Workforce Center staff on LMI applications and resources. The exact locations and date are yet to be determined. Training will occur in at least each of the 6 Workforce Regional Offices.

f. Planned Milestones:

LMI ‘train the trainer’ session(s) conducted by 6/30/06. Local LMI community training as directed by DWS by 9/30/06.

g. Estimated Costs:

- i) One-Stop staff LMI/ANSWERS professional staff training is estimated at \$17,000;**
- ii) \$7,000 for DOE’s R&P to ‘train the trainers’, and**
- iii) \$10,000 for new trainers to expand LMI knowledge in their communities (DWS Staff).**

C. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

As mentioned in Sections A.7 and A.8 of this plan, DWS intends to develop a more useable set of customer satisfaction assessments and consultations to more fully align LMI products and services with customer needs. These methods, which will be more fully developed under the guidance of the WWDC and Agency Director are three-fold:

- 1) Establish a process which convenes a variety of LMI user groups. Utilizing a form of the logic model, user groups will identify a series of problem statements and solutions which will be incorporated into action steps and measurable objectives for future LMI activities. This process assures that, aside from ETA-required activities, all grant-related products and services maintain a direct tie to the needs of LMI users.
- 2) A series of LMI customer satisfaction questions will be developed. These questions will be analyzed as to usefulness, meaningfulness, and will gauge a true level of customer satisfaction. The Department will incorporate these questions in customer satisfaction surveys as conducted for Wagner Peyser and WIA performance. A similar methodology to the ACSI will be deployed, benchmarked, and in subsequent years, goals will be established for the purposes of improving satisfaction among LMI users. The Department utilizes LMI in services for its broad base of customers, and improvement in LMI services provided by both the Department and its LMI contractor are desired.
- 3) A matrix, similar to that employed under previous LMI/WIG grants will be developed to collect and analyze both solicited and unsolicited comments received by DWS and R&P, relative to products and services in the scope of this grant.

These methods will be utilized to conduct analysis on the value of LMI services. Opportunities to improve services as well as the identification of new products and services will be incorporated, where possible, to current and future activities.