

**MARYLAND
WORKFORCE INFORMATION CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES PLAN
PY 2005**

Section A: Statewide Workforce Information System

The SWA, by focusing on infrastructure integration and the coordination of service delivery strategies, has set the stage for Maryland to become a leader in workforce development. Cooperation and communication among system partners is critical to continuous improvement efforts, efforts which must take front and center if the system is to achieve its goal of providing a wide audience of users with the information necessary to ensure that Maryland's workforce will meet both the current needs and future demand of established and prospective employers.

The current administration has challenged Maryland's leading workforce and economic development, education, faith-based and other non-profit organizations to be proactive in their support of and commitment to aligning the broad array of federal and state resources available for workforce initiatives in order to develop a seamless service delivery system.

- **Process to ensure that the SWIB can exercise its responsibility for ensuring that policy is responsive to needs of state and local workforce investment system**

Maintaining an open dialogue with and reinforcing the relationships between the SWA, the SWIB and system stakeholders through meetings, focus groups, conferences and training will promote the regular exchange of ideas between workforce information data developers and users. The newly established Center for Industry Initiatives and the coming together of employer groups to focus on industry issues is a critical step that has been taken to develop linkages with and solicit input from the business community in an attempt to promote and facilitate economic development in Maryland.

The formation of an SWIB Subcabinet to coordinate workforce development programs among individual departments and to develop joint practices, policies and solution-based strategies that help meet the demands of Maryland businesses is another attempt which has been made to put critical stakeholders on the same playing field.

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

Creating a dynamic and progressive workforce information system, one that aligns both educational and economic goals, is the force driving state and local workforce development. In order to achieve this mission, the statewide workforce information system must be:

- Customer driven – the ultimate customers being employers
- Focused on economic development
- Business-led
- User-friendly
- Locally planned and controlled
- Committed to maximizing worker potential
- Accountable for results and continuously improving

The SWA will, through One-Stop funded grant activities and through fee-for-service activities, make a concerted effort to bring participating partners together in order to focus on integrating systems, initiatives and services currently in place. This integration will facilitate information/product development and help to guide marketing and dissemination activities.

- **How the grant activities are consistent with the strategic vision of the Governor and the SWIB**

The mantra of the current administration is “workforce development is economic development.” The creation of a demand-driven workforce development system that links workforce preparation and training to economic development is critical to achieving sustainable economic growth in Maryland and will help to favorably position both Maryland workers and employers to meet the demands of global competition. In working toward this vision, the SWA’s responsibility will be, through its data and information development activities, to provide stakeholders on both the supply and demand side of the economy with timely, accurate and relevant information about local and regional labor market dynamics and demographics – information that can be used to encourage worker skills upgrading and to foster economic development/business expansion.

- **The strategy of the SWA and the SWIB for consulting with local WIB’s and stakeholders in the workforce investment system to determine customer needs for workforce information**

In PY 03 a significant step was made to bring the SWIB staff and SWA into the same State Department (Labor, Licensing and Regulation) in order to provide a more collaborative and focused approach to consultation with system stakeholders. This joining of forces has enabled a unified approach to needs assessment by bringing together critical system players. Through attendance at WIA directors’ meetings, semiannual state board and LWIB chair meetings, SWA/SWIB outreach efforts have increased and the role of LWIB’s and other stakeholders in planning processes have been strengthened.

Within the SWA, the creation of three new regional field representative positions to serve as liaisons between the state and local workforce investment areas is an additional step taken to strengthen the communication network. Each field representative will be responsible for providing a direct link for ensuring that local

workforce investment areas receive guidance and technical support and critical planning data in a timely fashion.

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

Increasing awareness and providing easy access to information will be accomplished through aggressive marketing of products and services. While the release of select print based publications will continue, the SWA web site will remain the primary vehicle for information/product distribution. The ongoing practice to apprise preferred customers of new releases via e-mail notification has effectively enabled the WIA community to keep a finger on the pulse of emerging information resources available for planning and sharing.

SWA staff will continue to rely on its analysts to proactively market products, services and information through training and technical assistance efforts and through routine communications with users. SWA staff will remain active participants in the SWIB's Industry Cluster Initiative Project, assisting in the development of specialized strategic planning information data and its interpretation. The SWA will continue to promote its capabilities as a resource for demand-driven data delivery services.

- **How workforce information and services are delivered as core services to customers through the state's One-stop service delivery system**

The SWA will reinforce its role as an active information/service provider in the One-Stop system by providing training, consultation and technical assistance to One-Stop intermediaries, focusing on LMI products/systems and their utility in serving clients and in improving employer outreach.

- **Description of customer satisfaction and assessment methods to be used to collect/interpret customer satisfaction information and the principal customers to be consulted**

The previously used mail-out procedure employed in years past will be abandoned because the mailing list used for solicitation has dwindled markedly as more users have become acquainted with and opted to use our website as their first point of contact for informational needs.

Several methods have been employed to solicit customer feedback/suggestions on products and services. An on-line website survey, point-of-service assessments through e-mail, phone, one-on-one/group meetings with users and repeated requests for information/services provide an ongoing source of opportunities to obtain valuable information concerning customer needs and levels of satisfaction. The combination of these methods allows interaction and assessments from a much

more diverse set of users, including business, economic development, WIA and education among others.

- **Summary of customer satisfaction findings for the most recent survey of products/services and the effect those findings had on the planned products/services for PY 05 including how plan addresses inadequacies/gaps identified by users**

Based on results from our Internet survey, a customer satisfaction rating of 88% on website presentations was received. In those instances in which comments were provided, customer follow-up occurred. Through one-on-one contacts with the customer, SWA staff were able to appropriately resolve issues, with resolutions sometimes involving specialized data development or interpretation.

Through involvement with the SWIB's Industry Cluster Initiative Project, SWA staff had the opportunity to involve users in the publication planning process, incorporating information users identified as being critical for operational planning efforts. Some of the comments concerning presentation of industrial and occupational demand will result in specialized product development during the upcoming program year.

Section B: Core products and Services

1. Continue to populate the ALMIS database with state data

The SWA will ensure the integrity of the dynamics of ALMIS core table data through ongoing maintenance activities during PY 05. The updating of licensing data and the required submission for inclusion on ACINet will also be undertaken. Relationships will be maintained with both the private vendor and the agency's IT staff in order to resolve system issues expeditiously and ensure system operability.

The staff person assigned ALMIS responsibilities will be encouraged to take advantage of system training opportunities in order to become familiar with the availability of system changes and/or upgrades.

Tasks for this objective are:

Continue to populate the ALMIS database with state data

Task	Task Focus	Milestones	Principal Customers*
Routine Update of Core Tables and Licensing Data	Data update	Ongoing	Employers, WIB's, Economic Dev., Educ., Job Skrs, Students
Input Info USA updates into ALMIS	Data update	Upon Availability	Same
Input industry/occupational projections (statewide)	Data update	4th qtr PY 05	Same
Input short-term industry/occupational projections (statewide)	Data update	3rd qtr PY 05	Same
Participate in ALMIS training	Capacity building	Upon Availability	SWA staff
Estimated Cost	\$56,269		

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections

The development of substate long-term and statewide short-term and long-term industry and occupational projections, using the methodology, software and guidelines provided by the Projections Consortium will be the focus of activities during PY 05. Additionally, a recently released skills based application will be utilized to enhance data production capabilities during PY 05.

The population of the ALMIS database with projections data will be undertaken as required.

Tasks for this objective are:

Task	Task Focus	Milestones	Principal Customers
Develop long-term industry/occupational projections by WIA	Data Development	Carry over from PY 04 2nd qtr PY 05	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Develop statewide short-term industry/occupational projections 2005-2007	Data Development	3th qtr PY 05	Same
Develop statewide long-term industry/occupational projections	Data Development	4th qtr PY 05	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Attend appropriate projections training seminars	Trg/Capacity Bldg	As offered	SWA staff
Estimated Cost	\$182,000		

3. Provide occupational and career information products for public use

SWA staff will continue to produce regularly released publications and generic types of labor market information to facilitate the decision-making processes and data needs of multiple users. Other specialized studies and informational directional tools will also be developed. Data development activities, initiated via special requests, will also be an important component of the PY 05 work schedule.

Tasks for this objective are:

Task	Task Focus	Milestones	Principal Customers
Demand occupations by educational requirements by WIA	Information Delivery	2nd qtr PY 2005	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Publish latest OES occupational wage data for state and by WIA	Information Delivery	1st & 3rd qtrs PY 05	Same
Occupations with greatest skills gaps by WIA	Data Development/ Analysis	3th qtr PY 05	Same
Publish latest OES occupational wage data for state and by WIA	Information Delivery	1st & 3rd qtrs PY 05	Same
Develop specialized LED products	Data Development	Ongoing	Employers, WIB's Economic Development,
Respond to requests for specialized data /information production Ex. Industry/industry Cluster Staffing Patterns	Data Development	As Requested	Same
Estimated Cost	\$175,522		

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

Facilitating state and local WIB planning needs is at the core of the SWA's efforts. While generic labor market information (LMI) products may well satisfy the "need to know" function relative to labor market conditions/indicators, a blanket strategy in product development may fail to address individual needs. Since each WIB has its own distinct way of approaching/achieving its workforce development goals, data customization has become a popular marketing strategy in developing and maintaining working relationships with the local WIBS. Interaction with stakeholders involved in the Industry Cluster Initiative will remain an ongoing priority during PY 05.

Tasks for this objective are:

Task	Task Focus	Milestones	Principal Customers
Fact Sheets by WIA and County	Information Delivery	Qtrly	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Unemployment by WIA	Data Development	Mnthly/Qtrly/Annually	WIB's
Industry Cluster Chartbooks* Business Services Finance & Insurance Communication Information Technology Manufacturing	Information Delivery Data Development	July 2005 September 2005 November 2005 January 2006 March 2006	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Cluster Publication Updates**	Information Delivery Data Development	August 2005	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Cluster Employer Committee Meetings	Technical Assist. & Data Development	As Requested	Employers, WIBS
Employer Listings by Clusters	Technical Assist. & Data Development	As Requested	Employers, WIBS
Target Group Data Development	Data Develop./Info Delivery	As Requested	WIB's
Performance Measurement Analysis	Technical Assist. & Data Development	Ongoing	LWIB's
Estimated Costs	\$192,000		

* Publication order tentative - may be changed to accommodate SWIB needs

** Cluster Publications produced during PY 2004 will be updated with 2004 annual average employment data

5. Maintain and enhance electronic state workforce information delivery system

LMAI will continue to work with the agency's IT staff and Web Team to ensure access to Virtual LMI. Ensuring that labor market information and products are web accessible as they become available will remain an ongoing priority. The website customer satisfaction tool will continue to be used as an assessment tool in determining user comfort with website offerings, both in terms of content and presentation.

Tasks for this objective are:

Task	Task Focus	Milestones	Principal Customers
Work with IT to ensure public access to ALMIS through Virtual LMI	Information Delivery	Ongoing	NA NA
Install available updates to Virtual LMI	System Update	As available	NA
Upload various publications/data series to website	Information Delivery	Ongoing	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Work with Web team on web presentation and updates	System Update	Ongoing	Same
Estimated Cost	\$34,540		

6. Support state workforce information training activities

SWA staff has, over the past few years, engaged in extensive LMI user training, focusing on data availability/uses and data development capabilities. Additionally, training on Virtual LMI and LED applications has been provided. The primary training recipients were WIA and One Stop staff. As a spin-off of this training, a number of requests for technical assistance/training to groups partnered with the WIA's occurred during PY 04.

During PY 04, SWA staff became involved with providing training and technical assistance to the subcommittees developed in conjunction with the Industry Cluster Initiative. This provided SWA staff the opportunity to reinforce relationships with the employer community and to encourage an open door policy for further communication. As a partner in the Industry Cluster Initiative, the SWA will remain available to provide ad-hoc training/technical assistance to employer cluster subcommittees. Other training/technical assistance will be provided, upon request, and tailored to meet user group needs during PY 05.

Tasks for this objective are:

Task	Task Focus	Milestones	Principal Customers
Internal Virtual LMI and LED training	Training Development	1st qtr PY 05	SWA staff
General LMI training for Cluster Employer Committees	Training	Ongoing	Employers, WIBS
Provide training/technical assistance as needed/requested	Training	Ongoing	Employers, WIB's Economic Development, Educ, Job Skrs, Students
Attend relevant LMI training	Trng/Capacity Bldg	As offered	SWA staff
Estimated Cost	\$37,000		

Section C: Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment

Multiple assessment tools will be used to gauge customer satisfaction with products and services during PY 05.

Internet Survey

Since its inception, response rates on the web-based customer satisfaction survey have been somewhat sparse and sporadic. Those responses received have, however, been quite valuable in suggesting additions to the SWA website and have provided guidance in publication content/presentation planning. SWA staff will work with Web Team members to increase the visibility of the survey instrument, making it a pop-up on all website selections.

Web Metrics

Web metrics will be examined quarterly to determine focus areas of user interest. This analysis will help to guide the planning process for the development of new publications/data presentations.

Point of Service

Dealing with customers via phone and e-mail has helped to identify presentation issues and has resulted in multiple specialized data development activities. In “preferred e-mailings” to WIA Directors notifying of new publication releases, responses received have provided the opportunity to assess their reactions and to follow-up with technical assistance and/or additional data development.

One on One with Customers

In instances where this type of contact has occurred, SWA staff has taken the opportunity to actively involve customers (WIA Directors, Cluster Committee Members, etc.) with the design of specialized publications/studies. Involving customers in the planning process has been quite effective in ensuring that final products are directly targeted to expressed needs.

Training Critiques

During PY 05, a specialized survey document will be developed to assess the effectiveness of the SWA in labor market information training efforts. Comments will be used to modify/expand curriculum or to cull ideas for future training.

Estimated cost \$35,600

Total Grant \$712,931

