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Assistant Secretary of Policy, Research & Strategy

September 30, 2016

Mr. Les Range
Regional Administrator
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment and Training Administration
Sam Nunn Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, SW Room 6M12
Atlanta, GA 30303

Dear Mr. Range,
Attached is the Program Year 2015 Workforce and Labor Market Information Grants to States Annual Performance Report for North Carolina, as required by Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 39-14, dated June 22, 2015. The Labor & Economic Analysis team looks forward to working with the Atlanta Regional ETA Office this year.

Should you have questions or need additional information, please contact Jackie Keener at 919-707-1523, or by email at jacqueline.keener@nccommerce.com.

Sincerely,

Jackie Keener
Assistant Secretary of Policy, Research, Strategy, & Information Technology



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North Carolina's Workforce Information Grant Annual Performance Report – Program Year 2015

North Carolina Department of Commerce Labor and Economic Analysis Division

The Labor and Economic Analysis Division (LEAD) of the North Carolina Department of Commerce met planned program year (PY) 2015 (July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2016) milestones as specified in the Workforce and Labor Market Information Grants to States (WIGS) Policy and Program Guidance (TEGL No. 39-14). The following report provides information about LEAD's accomplishments, by deliverable.

1. Workforce Information Database

Demand Driven Data Delivery

LEAD populated the Workforce Information Database (WID) version 2.6 with state and local data in accordance with guidelines and set schedules. The database provided the latest labor force, industry, and occupation and wage information for use with LEAD's Internet-based delivery systems, including the primary website delivery application: Demand Driven Data Delivery (D4). The North Carolina WID was also used to facilitate responses for special requests for information from state, regional, and local workforce development boards (WDBs), economic development entities, educational partners, other partner agencies, governmental officials, the media, and the general public. D4 is available here: <http://d4.nccommerce.com/>

NCWorks

NCWorks, developed by the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Workforce Solutions (DWS) in PY 2012, provides a one-stop online resource for job seekers and employers in North Carolina. It provides mechanisms by which job seekers can search for jobs, create resumes, investigate and locate education and training options, and explore a variety of career and occupational information using labor market information. In addition, employers can access and utilize NCWorks to find candidates, post jobs, and search labor market information.

During PY 2105, LEAD staff continued to collaborate with DWS to populate the NCWorks database with workforce information, including Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Current Employment Statistics (CES), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW), Occupational Employment Statistics (OES), Industry and Occupational Projections, and Occupations Requiring a License. The NCWorks system utilizes the WID 2.5 data structure. LEAD staff provided assistance in populating the WID database that is utilized in the NCWorks system. NCWorks is available here: <https://www.ncworks.gov/>

2. State and Local Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

Statewide and Sub-State Projections

In PY 2015, North Carolina completed the statewide short-term (2015-2017) and long-term (2014-2024) industry and occupational employment projections as outlined by ETA. Both sets of projections were submitted for public dissemination following the procedures established by the Projections Management Partnership (PMP). Statewide occupational employment projections were published on the PMP [Projections Central website](#). The 2014-2024 long-term employment projections are available at the following Commerce's websites:

[Statewide industry projections](#)

[Statewide occupational projections](#)

During PY 2015, LEAD also added two interactive online tools through [NCCareers.org](#) to provide the public easy access to projections data:

- 1) an Employment Projections searchable application to allow users to easily review growth industries and in-demand occupations by geography, by wage, and by other criteria;
- 2) Staffing Patterns by industry and by occupation to assisted job seekers, training providers, and employers. These publications and tools can be found at [NCCareers.org](#).

In addition to the distribution of employment projections, LEAD developed a series of publications and tools (also available on [NCCareers.org](#)) using the projection data for the public. These include *NC Star Jobs*, *Online Career Clusters Guide*, and *Occupational Profiles*.

LEAD's projections team is constantly looking for ways to enhance the quality of projections data and have participated in various PMP initiatives, such as the Step-Ahead Adjustment, Local Review Application, and Separation Methodology. In addition, LEAD projection team members also volunteer in the PMP's Projections Process and Innovation Committee, Communications & Marketing Committee, as well as Projection Users Sub-Committee. Currently, LEAD's projections team is in the process of developing procedures and tools to aid in ensuring the quality of projections.

Industry and occupational employment projections are widely used by North Carolina's workforce, educational, and economic development partners. Professionals statewide have made it an essential part of their planning for workforce development, programs and budgets, public policy, and career exploration activities. In order to facilitate the accurate interpretation of these data, projections staff members assisted customers by responding to projections inquiries, and through presentations and consultations with stakeholders and customers. Such stakeholders and customers include: workforce development professionals, economic developers, curriculum planners, career counselors, local and state government officials, researchers, policymakers, Chambers of Commerce, educators, businesses, and the general public. In addition, staff responded to several requests for projections materials, including inquiries from private-sector research institutions using projections information for internal publications.

Projections Management Partnership

Staff members participated in the Projections Managing Partnership meetings and trainings. As a member of the Projections Management Partnership group, North Carolina's projection team also served as a primary point-of-contact for state analysts for the PY 2015 statewide short-term and long-term occupational projections. In PY 2015 North Carolina continued to serve as the technical lead for the preparation of states' occupation projection files through the following activities:

- communicated with other states' projections analysts regarding short-term and long-term occupation projections file deliverables;
- provided technical assistance to state projections analysts on the production of occupational employment projection files and related issues;
- monitored ProjectionsCentral.com to ensure states' submission of occupation projection files were completed in an accurate and timely manner in accordance with the TEGl requirements.

3. Statewide Annual Economic Analysis

Annual Economic Evaluation

The North Carolina Department of Commerce annually evaluates North Carolina's economic performance based upon a variety of economic indicators and upon the goals and objectives of the Secretary's Comprehensive Strategic Economic Development Plan. The [2016 Annual Evaluation of North Carolina Economic Development](#) overviews the Plan's background, provides a progress update, and outlines key economic indicators.

WIOA Unified State Plan

As a part of North Carolina's [Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Unified State Plan](#), LEAD provided data and analysis to the Economic and Workforce Analysis section. This section provides analysis of statewide and regional labor market data, job postings, employment projections, educational attainment information, demographic trends, and migration patterns. The Plan also includes an analysis of employment mismatch.

Statewide Prosperity Zone Data Book

LEAD created the [2016 North Carolina Statewide Prosperity Zone Data Book](#) for economic developers, workforce professionals, Business Service Representatives, and local officials. These Prosperity Zones each contain between 10 and 17 counties and vary in population from half a million to more than 2 million. The *Data Book* compares the Prosperity Zones through a variety of current and historical labor market, population, demographic, and educational attainment data.

4. Other Economic and Labor Market Reports and Products

Publications & Analysis

LEAD worked to provide and improve the extensive workforce and labor market information products and services available via the LEAD website in PY 2015. The website was updated with a variety of informational products and publications including:

- [LEAD Feed](#) – The *LEAD Feed* was developed to disseminate timely economic and labor market analysis written by LEAD staff across a variety of audiences, including workforce professionals, economic developers, policymakers, education partners, and the public. After LEAD organized plans to implement the *LEAD Feed* in PY 2013, the site was launched September 18, 2014. A sampling of *LEAD Feed* articles from PY 2015 includes:
 - [Fewer NC Workers Live and Work in the Same County](#) – “The number of North Carolinians who live and work in the same county has dropped significantly since 2003...However, the 2013 data for Private Primary Jobs suggests this trend may have started to level off since the end of the Great Recession in June 2009.”
 - [Overeducated and Underemployed in North Carolina](#) – Over half of North Carolina’s workforce has a more advanced educational credential than is required for entry into their field of work. This article describes who these workers are, where they are employed, and what “underemployment” can tell us about our state’s labor market.
 - [New Labor Market Metric Shows Progress toward Recovery in North Carolina](#) – In this article we examine a new measure introduced by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta—the “ZPOP” ratio—which suggests that 92% of North Carolina’s population is currently in the type of work arrangement they desire. This measure confirms other indicators (such as the unemployment rate) demonstrating that North Carolina’s labor market has made rapid gains in recent years.
 - [Who Creates Jobs in North Carolina?: The Role of New and High-Growth Firms](#) – New and rapidly-growing businesses account for much of the job creation occurring in North Carolina. This article assesses the importance of new and “high-growth” firms and how their recent troubles threaten the economic dynamism of our state.
 - [New Data Shows the Rise in Contingent Work over the Last Decade](#) – Two researchers recently published new data on contingent work across the U.S. labor market. This new information helps us better understand the rise in nontraditional work arrangements and highlights the impacts of employers like Uber through the so-called “gig economy.”
- [Star Jobs](#) – This effort identifies occupations that present promising opportunities for North Carolina’s workforce. *Star Jobs* are identified using labor market information, including average wages, job growth, and projected number of new jobs, and are categorized by minimum education requirements. *Star Jobs* are also identified and published for the state’s regional Prosperity Zones.
- [Occupational Profiles](#) – LEAD created 550 *Occupational Profiles* that provide an accessible two-page summary of each career’s characteristics for youth and adult career planners as well as job seekers.
- [Occupations Requiring a License](#) – LEAD updated our Occupations Requiring a License application and modified its online structure to enhance user experience.
- [NC Today](#) – *NC Today* is a monthly economic analysis of the state’s economy, including analysis of current labor market conditions and workforce trends. This report provides statewide labor force and industry information along with comparative data from the United States and selected

Southern states. It includes analysis of employment and unemployment statistics, industry employment and wage measures, unemployment insurance claims, and job postings.

- [State Labor Market Conditions](#) – Another monthly publication, *State Labor Market Conditions*, delivers a summary of state labor force, employment, and unemployment data in narrative and graphic format and compares current monthly data to the previous month and year.
- [County Labor Market Conditions](#) – In an effort to provide localized information, LEAD also produces and disseminates *County Labor Market Conditions*. This publication is released each month corresponding to the release of the substate unemployment rates and industrial employment.
- [Labor Market Overviews](#) – These monthly-updated fact sheets include economic and labor market data specific to each of North Carolina's 23 workforce development areas, including unemployment rates, unemployment insurance claims, new corporations, and civilian labor force.
- [County Profiles](#) – *County Profiles* provide a glimpse into the business environment and quality of life in each North Carolina county.
- [The Economic Impact of the Military on North Carolina](#) – This new report estimates the impact of the military on the North Carolina economy and details the state's large and important military presence, including its impacts on the private sector.

AccessNC

In addition to D4, LEAD staff continued to develop and produce AccessNC, another web-based application that provides additional economic data and business site information. AccessNC allows economic and business planners to retrieve geographic profiles of North Carolina, its 100 counties, and the state's regional development zones, and to find business properties suitable for location or expansion. During PY2015, LEAD continued to provide web-user guides, which assist individuals in navigating the information available through AccessNC. AccessNC is available here:

<http://accessnc.commerce.state.nc.us/EDIS/page1.html>

Plans for PY 2016 include completion of merging the functionalities of D4 and AccessNC to improve locating and downloading desired information. The combined systems will improve the user experience taking into account modern UI design best practices as well as providing cross-platform support for a mobile audience. The new system will also leverage web services and application programming interfaces to allow Workforce Boards and other workforce agencies to consume workforce data into their websites. To this end, LEAD has successfully issued a request for proposal (RFP) to develop this new solution, which will make data access easier and improve customers' analytical capabilities.

Workforce In-Depth

Until being eliminated on October 1, 2015, LEAD continued to maintain the Workforce In-Depth application, which enabled customers to download various data reports by county or WDB. These reports included employment data, population estimates, commuting patterns, and unemployment insurance activities including initial claims and benefit payment activities. Despite the elimination of Workforce-In-Depth, all of the data previously reported through this application can still be found through AccessNC and D4.

Collaboration with WDBs and Other Partners

During the program year, LEAD continued to provide services and products to its customers and the demand for information, reports, trainings, and other products continued in PY 2015. LEAD staff handled

various requests from economic developers, workforce professionals, educational partners, grant writers, and business community. In particular, LEAD staff provided various services to the state's 23 WDBs, including training on Labor Market Information (LMI) tools and services, responses to impromptu requests for research and analysis, and presentations at the local, state, and national workforce conferences.

LEAD continues to develop and publish custom publications which summarize the economic conditions for individual WDB areas. These monthly [WDB Overviews](#) contain a variety of economic and labor market data specific to each of the 23 workforce development areas and include information regarding civilian labor force, employment, unemployment rates, job trends, online job postings, community investment/job creation activities, and retail sales.

LEAD staff also made presentations and conducted training workshops at local and state conferences for workforce development professionals, WIOA partner agencies, educational partners, economic developers, and the business community. Staff members participated in various exhibit opportunities and provided printed products and demonstrated interactive data tools. They provided numerous training sessions to improve customer understanding and use of labor market information. LEAD also continues to utilize labor market information to develop career related products and tools and help guide students and job seekers in their career preparation and planning. Specific examples of the support provided by LEAD to key stakeholders during PY 2015 include:

- During PY 2015, LEAD collaborated with DWS, the NC Community College System (NCCC), and the NC Dept. of Public Instruction (DPI) to establish [NCCareers.org](#) to bring together all career-related data tools and provide customers with one-stop access to quality, reliable, and current labor market information.
- LEAD collaborated with NCCC and DPI to create the [2015 Career Clusters Guide](#), which serves as a tool for students, parents, counselors, faculty, and career changers targeting career pathways as a means to meet educational and employment goals. LEAD and our partners also worked to create an [interactive online version](#), which was launched in early PY 2016.
- LEAD finalized and continued to enhance the [Reality Check](#) application based on feedback and suggestions received from workforce and education partners. *Reality Check* is an online tool designed to present the cost of various lifestyle options and assist students and job seekers in determining their financial needs. Use of this application will help guide them to choose appropriate occupations to support their desired lifestyle. *Reality Check* was publically launched in July of PY 2015.
- LEAD partnered with the NCWorks Commission to conduct a [2016 Employer Needs Survey](#), an update to the report produced by LEAD in 2014. The commission is committed to tracking the needs of employers over time to ensure that the workforce development system in the state is meeting their needs.
- LEAD continued collaboration with College Foundation of North Carolina (CFNC), NCCC, DPI, and other partners in development of a statewide career information delivery system for students and job seekers. Currently, LEAD is working the NC Dept. of Information Technology to develop and release an RFP to venders.
- LEAD performed various analyses and reports for local workforce development boards and counties; this included an updated SWOT analysis for Triangle South, county economic and workforce profiles for Carteret, Currituck, Hyde, and Jackson Counties.

- LEAD also conducted over two dozen trainings and presentations on regional economic and labor market trends at the local, state, and national levels; this includes presentations to county economic development agencies, local workforce development boards, career venters, community colleges, NCWorks Conference, and the national C2ER Conference.
- In addition to working with the external partners, LEAD provided LMI trainings and data assistance to its internal workforce training partner, DWS, to support its NCWorks Certified Career Pathways initiative.

Enhancing Workforce and Educational Information

LEAD is responsible for the operation of a longitudinal workforce and educational data information system called the North Carolina Common Follow-up System (CFS). The purpose of the CFS is to provide information on the educational and employment outcomes of participants in publicly supported education, employment, and training programs for use in planning, policymaking, program evaluation, resource allocation, and career planning. The North Carolina Department of Commerce received a Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) through ETA in July of 2013. LEAD is leveraging both state and WDQI grant resources to improve, strengthen, and enhance the CFS. These efforts include enhancing the technology utilized for system processing and storage, enhancing data integrity, updating system documentation, enhancing system outputs and increasing collaboration with the participating agencies.

As part of its effort to develop enhanced system outputs from the CFS, LEAD staff worked in collaboration with the NCWorks Commission (North Carolina's state WDB) in developing performance measures for North Carolina's Workforce Development programs. The work resulted in the completion of a report, "[Measuring the Performance of North Carolina's Workforce Development System](#)" that was delivered by the NCWorks Commission to the North Carolina General Assembly in January of 2015 and an updated report "[Measuring the Performance of North Carolina's Workforce Development System](#)" that was delivered to the North Carolina General Assembly in January of 2016.

In addition, LEAD utilized both state and federal WDQI grant resources to carry out the analyses and evaluation of several of North Carolina's Education and Workforce Development programs. Results of this work culminated in the publication of [The Common Follow-up System Evaluation Report](#) that was delivered to the North Carolina General Assembly in May of 2015. During the program year, LEAD produced and delivered [The Common Follow-up System Operational Report](#) that was shared with the General Assembly in May of 2016. Throughout the year, LEAD continued to provide support and training on the use of the [North Carolina Tool for Online Workforce and Education Reporting](#) (NCTOWER) which was launched in July of 2014. The NCTOWER website was developed utilizing both state and WDQI resources and provides a mechanism for the electronic delivery and display of 10 years of employment and wage outcomes for educational programs for each of the University of North Carolina's 16 campuses and for all curriculum programs at each of the 58 colleges of the North Carolina Community College System.