

IOWA
Program Year (PY) 2004
Workforce Information Core Products and Services

A. STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS SYSTEM

1. Process for State Board to ensure workforce information policy is responsive to workforce system

In 1996, Iowa passed workforce development legislation that consolidated several workforce programs into a new agency, Iowa Workforce Development (IWD), along with a new governance and oversight structure for the workforce development system. When the federal Workforce Investment Act was enacted, this governance structure, including the state Iowa Workforce Development Board, was grandfathered in and remains in place. In addition to the functions performed by this Board under the federal Act, the IWD Board serves as the board of directors for the state agency, with approval authority over such things as its budget and administrative rules.

This unique relationship between the Board and the state agency has resulted in a particularly strong working relationship concerning a wide range of services, including workforce information. The Board is consulted concerning new or ongoing workforce information services at virtually every meeting, and has formal opportunities for consultation on the Workforce Information Core Products and Services at least annually. In the past year, the Board received a complete review, with ample opportunities to provide feedback, at its November, 2003 meeting and was consulted formally again at its September, 2004 meeting.

2. Relationship of workforce information system to five-year workforce plan

The workforce information staff members contribute directly to the planning process by providing both data and analysis of the state's economic and workforce needs. In fact, portions of the plan are drafted by workforce information staff. Workforce information products and services are also instrumental in implementing the plan.

The goals of the Iowa five-year workforce plan are as follows:

1. Increase the size of the skilled workforce.
2. Increase Iowans' earned income.
3. Grow targeted industries and needed workforce skills.

In general terms, workforce information products and services support these goals by providing employers, employees, and other customers and stakeholders with reliable information about the labor market so that they can make sound decisions. This information contributes to meeting Iowa's goals in many ways, including helping:

- students and employees make good education and career decisions
- employers make appropriate investments in developing their own pools of workers
- educators and job training officials with their investments of public funds
- employees and employers to make informed decisions involving prevailing wage rates in the labor market
- public and private officials identify existing and potential industry clusters for targeting economic development investments
- community economic development officials to detail the availability of labor in specific labor markets

3. Relationship to Governor's and State Board's strategic vision

The goals in the five-year plan were taken directly from the Board's own strategic plan and are entirely consistent with the strategic vision developed in the "Iowa 2010" plan, developed by the Governor with extremely broad involvement by citizens throughout Iowa. This consistency assures that the workforce information core products and services are specifically designed to meet Iowa's strategic workforce development needs.

IWD's workforce information staff members are routinely asked to provide information and professional support to strategic policy planning initiatives, including each of the ones already mentioned and others such as the Iowa Learns Council, which recently made a series of major recommendations for education and related policies and to advisory groups that advise state policy makers on economic issues and revenue forecasting.

4. Consultation with local boards and other stakeholders

As already noted, IWD's workforce information staff members interact routinely with the state IWD Board, and therefore frequent personal opportunities for consultation and feedback exist. IWD's workforce information unit has offered in-person presentations, training and consultation to local workforce investment boards and the staff of the One-Stop Centers. While some boards avail themselves of these opportunities more often than others, all have taken advantage of them on occasion. Consultation is also done through face-to-face meetings, requests for information, and training for intermediate and end users in how to use workforce information.

Special presentations and discussions take place several times each year at meetings of regional managers of Iowa workforce development system. Typically, these involve new

products and services which the sub-state regions might find especially useful, but they also afford time for consultation on other matters.

Additional consultation comes about in the course of providing staff support and serving as resource experts to key stakeholder groups such as educators and economic developers. Workforce information staff are directly engaged in state and local business/education efforts as well as state education policy reform initiatives. Iowa's workforce information unit receives state funding to help subsidize special "laborshed" labor availability studies for local economic development groups, and several staff members are active members of Professional Developers of Iowa, which provides another avenue for feedback from this key customer group.

Finally, the IWD commissioned a more formal inventory, customer survey, and recommendations by the University of Northern Iowa in the past year, which is described more completely in Section C of this document, "Customer Satisfaction and Assessment."

5. Strategic approach to delivering information to principal customers

IWD has adopted a four-tiered strategic approach to delivering information;

- a. Information is "broadcast" using various media to make the information available to as broad an audience as possible. The primary medium used for this is, of course, the Internet, but press releases, general purpose publications, and occasional presentations to general audiences also come into play.
- b. Information is specifically tailored to assist with service delivery to employers, students and employees through the One-Stop Centers. As noted below, the staff members at these local offices also rely heavily on the Internet delivery system, but special publications and tools have been designed to supplement this resource.
- c. Products and services are targeted to other customer groups as well, notably educators and economic development groups. Iowa provides state funds to supplement federal resources to provide labor availability studies specifically for community economic development groups, which has helped to cement the relationship with this set of customers. IWD provides a wide array of other services on both an ongoing basis and to meet ad hoc needs as well.
- d. In addition to the many presentations conducted by staff members of IWD's workforce information unit, IWD continues to contract for a field workforce information coordinator to distribute information directly to intermediate and end users at the local level. The field coordinator also provides training in how to use the information. This person is a member of the national One Stop Career Consortium.

6. Delivery of core services through the One-Stop delivery system

All of the activities undertaken with the Workforce Information funds will help support the local Workforce Development Centers and partners by providing the underlying

information on the labor markets in which those centers function. For example, the workforce information unit provides data and analysis for needs assessments and to assess the basic economic and labor market trends/environment in which workforce development services are provided

A recent survey of local IWD and other One-Stop Center partner staff revealed that 73.4% of the respondents refer end customers to IWD's workforce information Web site "often" or "very often," making it the clear service delivery medium of choice for local workforce development professionals. Other service methods include hard-copy publications, referrals to workforce information experts, and presentations.

Because the One-Stop Centers often serve as retailers for products and services that are wholesaled from the state workforce information office, we make a concerted effort to make training available to One-Stop Center staff. Even in instances where the workforce information staff act as the retailers, as in the case of our laborshed studies, we make a point of engaging staff from the local office in order to assure coordination of follow up services and to strengthen the relationships between One-Stop Centers and local economic development entities.

7. Customer consultation and satisfaction assessment

IWD routinely integrates invitations for customer input into its publications, and has recently begun to incorporate a short, optional satisfaction survey into the Web-based delivery system as well. We have also begun to track information about the numerous customers who contact us by telephone in order to get a better feel for the types of customers we're reaching and the information they need.

IWD also contracted with a group called the Institute for Decision Making (IDM) at the University of Northern Iowa to conduct a more comprehensive survey of one of our primary customers, the staff who work out of the local One-Stop offices, and to develop a broad set of recommendations. This study and its findings are presented in more detail in Section C of this document, "Customer Satisfaction and Assessment."

8. Summary of customer satisfaction findings and impact on planned products and services

Again, this topic is covered in more detail in Section C of this document, "Customer Satisfaction and Assessment." Briefly, however, we have found that while a significant proportion of staff members are knowledgeable of use the workforce information on a frequent basis, there is clearly room for further improvement. Other customers have also expressed satisfaction with workforce information products and services, but we are still in the process of collecting good baseline information from them in some cases. Findings from various methods of collecting information are addressed in our annual planning process, and specific actions steps are designed to address the ones that are a) most pressing and b) affordable. For example, a review of our customer contact tracking system revealed that broadcast and print journalists comprise a larger share of our ad hoc

requests than we had realized. We have been able to use this information to better coordinate frequently requested information among different workforce information program staff. Other steps include redesigning portions of our Web site, modifying the format of certain publications, and developing additional training packages for local One-Stop staff.

9. Leveraged funds and impact on workforce information system

The funding that Iowa receives from the Employment and Training Administration for the Workforce Information Core Products and Services represents an important but small (less than 16%) share of the total funds available for workforce information. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, our other federal key partner in the nationwide workforce information system, provides a major share of funds.

IWD also receives state funding to partially subsidize laborshed studies on behalf of community economic development groups. These groups also pay a share of the cost of laborshed studies through user fees based on the size of the population to be sampled. Iowa is also a member of the consortium of state and federal officials that are working to develop a valid benefit survey methodology that will be implemented with a user fee approach. The workforce information unit is reimbursed by Iowa unemployment insurance program for statistical and actuarial services, as well. Other funding sources vary depending on particular needs and special projects, but have included state discretionary Workforce Investment Act funds, Wagner-Peyser discretionary “10%” funds and funds from other state agencies in recent years.

It is extremely important to note that the critical mass achieved by combining these funding sources creates a total that is more than just the sum of its parts, because it permits leveraging of knowledge, expertise, equipment, and other resources as well as leveraging of funds. IWD’s laborshed studies, for example, use a methodology that is unique to Iowa, but also integrates information derived from BLS and ETA funded programs. Similarly, BLS funding may pay for the production of certain data, but has the additional benefit of creating a wealth of knowledge among the staff who track industry trends over time that can be leveraged to inform the analysis provided in ETA funded services. These are just a couple of examples to illustrate the point that the expertise derived from each funding stream is leveraged to add value to other products and services.

B. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1) ALMIS Database (*Iowa Workforce Development deliverable*)

a. Description

The ALMIS Database provides the foundation of the national workforce information system. By offering a standard selection of data elements that are important to users of workforce information in a standard format, comparable, reliable information is made available across the entire nation. IWD and the IWD Board understand the critical importance of information that is reliable and consistent, and are committed to going beyond minimum requirements to support the ALMIS Database. In addition to keeping the database up to date in Iowa, IWD staff members participate in the ALMIS Resource Center, a consortium of state and federal officials that sets the database standards and provides training and technical assistance for the nationwide workforce information system.

Iowa has also assumed the lead role in procuring a proprietary employers database for use by One-Stop Center staff and state workforce information staff in all states and territories primarily to assist with job development and placement activities. This employer database is incorporated as a component of the ALMIS Database.

Iowa Workforce Development will maintain version 1.1 of the ALMIS database for our current application (IWIN). We will populate and update as required the crosswalk, look-up and core tables of ALMIS database version 2.2 (or most current version) during PY 2004. Funds will be used for staff time, travel, equipment, programming and database development and related costs.

b. Customer support

Very few customers are sufficiently familiar with the technical underpinnings of the federal/state workforce information system to know that the ALMIS Database even exists, much less to offer an opinion about it. Most customers, however, highly value the reliability and comparability of the information they use to make decisions. For the most part, they (rightly) take for granted the quality of the information in this regard, but some of the more data-savvy customers, including IWD Board members, other policy makers, business people, labor officials, economic developers, researchers, and educators do express their strong support for maintaining the critical mass and structural underpinnings (such as the ALMIS database) of the federal/state workforce information system.

c. Relationship to plan goals

The ALMIS Database provides the basic infrastructure that enables the other products and services to exist, and is therefore essential to achieving all plan goals.

d. Principal customers

Economists, Program Planners, Media, Educators, Employers, Labor, Libraries, Workforce Development (One-Stop) Staff and Administrators, Economic Development Groups, Vocational Counselors, Employers, Local and State Government Agencies, Attorneys, Research and Social Organizations, Other Labor Market Intermediaries

e. Projected impact

Because the ALMIS database is not a stand-alone product or service, it isn't possible to quantify its impact directly. Instead, it provides the foundation for most of the other products and services, which could not provide comparability of reliable information across state boundaries in its absence.

f. Milestones

- Attend meetings of the ALMIS Resource Center consortium, as scheduled throughout the year.
- Attend ALMIS Resource Center consortium - Database Structure Subcommittee meetings as scheduled throughout the year.
- Update the ALMIS Database licensing files: license.dbf, licauth.dbf, and lichist.dbf. (December 2004 and December 2005)
- Provide the populated ALMIS licensing files to the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for display in ACINet. These files will be coded to O*NET SOC. (December 2004 and December 2005)
- Continue to update the core tables.
- Continue to update non-core tables that have already been populated.
- Continue to work with neighbor states and North Carolina on the possibilities for database and application sharing using the ALMIS Distributed Access Method (ADAM)
- Attend applicable ALMIS Database Training.
- See the schedule for updating the ALMIS database on the following page.

g. Estimated cost

\$56,000

1) ALMIS DATABASE (continued): Schedule:

TABLE	Version	LAST UPDATE	NEXT UPDATE	TABLE	Version	LAST UPDATE	NEXT UPDATE	TABLE	Version	LAST UPDATE	NEXT UPDATE
ANNSLRNG	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required	OOHTRNTM	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	PAYTYPE	1.1	Jun-1999	As Required
AREATYPE	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required	OWNERSHP	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	PERIOD	1.1	Mar-2002	As Required
BEAINCOM	1.1	Jun-2004	May-2005	IOMATRIX	2.2	Dec-2003	Oct-2004	POPSOURC	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required
BENCHMARK	2.2	Nov-2003		JOBFAMLY	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required	POPULATN	2.2	Nov-2003	Jan-2002
BLDING	2.2	Dec-2003	Dec-2004	LABFORCE	1.1,2.2	Aug-2004	Sep-2004	PRBPSTAT	2.2	Sep-2003	As Required
CENINCOM	1.1	Mar-2003	Mar-2013	LICENSE	2.2	Jun-2004	Feb-2005	PERIODID	1.1	Oct-1998	As Required
CENIND	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required	LICHIST	2.2	Jan-2003	2/1//2004	PERIODTY	1.1	Oct-1998	As Required
CENLABOR	1.1	Sep-1999	Jun-2003	LOCSTAT	2.2	Sep-2003	As Required	RACEETHN	2.2	Sep-2003	As Required
CENSCODE	1.1	Mar-2002	As Required	LEVELTYP	1.1	May-1999	As Required	RATETYPE	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required
								SCHOOLS	2.2	Jun-2004	As new information becomes available
CES	2.2	Feb-2004	Dec-2004	LICAUTH	2.2	Jan-2003	Feb-2004	SICCODE	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required
CESCODE	1.1	Mar-2002	As Required	MATXOES	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required	SICDIV	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required
CIPCODE	1.1	Jun-1999	As Required	MATXSIC	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required	SICLEVEL	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required
CODETYPE	1.1	Jun-1999	As Required	MATXSOC	2.2	May-2004	Oct-2004	SICXNAIC	2.2	Apr-2004	Apr-2005
COMMUTE	1.1,2.2	Mar-2003	Mar-2013	MLSCCLAIM	1.1	Aug-2001	Aug-2001	SOCCODE	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required
COMPLTYP	1.1	Jun-1999	As Required	MLSEVENT	1.1	Aug-2001	Aug-2001	STAFFPAT	1.1	Dec-2001	Dec-2003
CPI	2.2	Nov-2003	Quarterly	NAICCODE	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	STATTYPE	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required
DOTCODE	2.2	Jun-2002	As Required	NAICLVL	2.2	Mar-2002	As Required	STATTYPE	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required
DOTXCIP	1.1	Jun-1999	As Required	NAICSDOM	2.2	Jun-2004		STFIRMS	1.1	Sep-2001	Sep-2002
DOTXONET	2.2	Jun-2002	As Required	NAICSECT	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required	SUBGEOG	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required
EMPDB	2.2	Jun-2004	Dec-2004	OCCCODES	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required	UICLAIMS	1.1	Jan-2000	Sep-2002
ESDATA	1.1	Apr-2004	Jul-2004	OCCDIR	2.2	Jan-2002	Jan-2003	UNITTYPE	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required
GEOG	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required	OCCPAT	1.1	Dec-2003	Oct-2004	URL	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required
GROWCODE	2.2	Oct-2001	As Required	OCCPRJ	2.2	Dec-2003	Oct-2004	URLLINKS	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required
HUDINCOM	1.1	Apr-2004	Apr-2005	OCCSUB	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required	URLTOPIC	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required
INCOME	2.2	Nov-2003	Oct-2002	OCCTYPES	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	WAGE	1.1	Jun-1999	Oct-2001
INCOMTYP	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	OESCODE	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	WGSOURCE	2.2	Dec-2003	As Required
INCSOURC	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	OESGROUP	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required				
INDCODES	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required	OESLAYTITL	2.2	Nov-2003	As Required				
INDDIR	2.2	Dec-2003	Oct-2004	OESXDOT	1.1	Jun-1999	As Required				
INDDIV	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required	OESWAGE	2.2	Dec-2003	Dec-2004				
INDPRJ	2.2	Dec-2003	Oct-2004	ONETCODE	2.2	Jun-2002	As Required				
INDSUB	1.1	Nov-1998	As Required	OESXONET	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required				
INDUSTRY	1.1	Nov-2003	Mar-2003	NAICSUPR	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required				
INDTYPE	2.2	Mar-2002	As Required	PRVGOVST	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required				
INSTTYPE	2.2	Jun-2004	As Required	PAYMENT	1.1	Jun-2002	Jun-2002				

2) Industry and Occupational Employment Projections (*Iowa Workforce Development deliverable*)

a. Description

Iowa Workforce Development will prepare and disseminate long and short-term industry and occupational employment projections. Data will be prepared using the methodology, software tools and guidelines developed by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership. Sub-state long-term projections will be developed for the 16 Workforce Development Regions

b. Customer support

These projections are among our most valued products, since they are widely used by job seekers and students for career planning, and by program planners as they determine how to invest scarce resources. The evidence of this comes primarily from the volume of requests for this information.

c. Relationship to plan goals

By helping policy makers to focus scarce education and job training resources where they will have the greatest impact, the industry and occupation employment projections contribute directly to all three of the goals identified on page 1. By helping individual students and job seekers to make better career choices, this information also contributes indirectly to the same goals.

d. Principal customers

Job Seekers, Students, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Regional Planning Commissions, Local Governments, Correctional Institutions, Vocational and Career Counselors, Teachers, Educational Administrators, Universities, Elementary and Secondary Schools, Military Recruiters, Grant Writers, Business Colleges, Media, Employers, Attorneys, Local Development Corporations, Workforce Development (One-Stop) Centers, Iowa Department of Economic Development, Iowa Commission for the Blind, Regional Councils of Government, Federal Government, Navy Family Service Center, Army Career and Alumni Program, Iowa Choices, Libraries, Other Labor Market Intermediaries.

e. Projected impact

It isn't possible to directly quantify the impact of improved decision making on the part of thousands of end customers, most of whom access the information anonymously through the Internet or through tools such as Iowa Choices. We can, however, infer something about its impact through customer satisfaction measures and by measuring the level of demand for this information.

IWD has made an additional investment in Web tracking software to help with these measures because we believe that traditional measures of Web services aren't adequate to collect quantitative data for this type of assessment. We are currently implementing an Internet tracking technique known as page-embedding technology. This technology differs from web server log analysis in that it sees through firewalls, proxies and caches and is greater in accuracy, while it excludes false hits created by robots and spiders. It also gives the ability to distinguish one visitor from another, how many are new or returning, and examine a breakdown of their visit frequency.

f. Milestones

- Complete statewide long-term industry employment projections for 2004-2014. (February – April 2005)
- Complete statewide long-term occupational employment projections for 2004-2014. (May – August 2005)
- Complete sub-state long-term industry employment projections for 16 Workforce Development Regions for 2004-2014 (April – June 2005)
- Complete sub-state long-term occupational employment projections for 16 Workforce Development Regions for 2004-2014. (July – October 2005)
- Develop short-term statewide and sub-state industry employment projections for 16 Workforce Development regions with base year/quarter of 2004:Q4 and projected year/quarter 2006:Q4. (May - July 2005)
- Develop short-term state-level occupational employment projections with a base year/quarter of 2004:Q4 and projected year/quarter 2006:Q4 (January – March, 2006)
- Populate the ALMIS database with the above projections data and submit projections for public dissemination following procedures to be established by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership. (December 2005)
- Participate in training opportunities offered by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership. (throughout the grant period)

g. Cost:

\$118,982

3) Occupational and Career Information Products (*Iowa Workforce Development/State board deliverable*)

a. Description

Iowa Workforce Development will continually develop and refine occupational analysis products, which meet customer needs. These products include printed and electronic items as well as presentations on occupations and the labor market. They include information about licensed occupations, the Iowa Workforce Today and Tomorrow report, state and regional Job Outlooks, and supply and demand information for each workforce development region. IWD also contributes Iowa-specific data to customize the Department of Education's Iowa Choices career exploration computer program, which reaches tens of thousands of students and job seekers throughout Iowa.

In addition, IWD provides more intensive services to the extent that resources permit. For example, workforce information staff members are full partners in a public/private partnership called the Business/Education Center (BEC). The BEC recently secured a grant to purchase and customize a semi truck and trailer outfitted as a mobile biotechnology laboratory for schools throughout central Iowa. Workforce information staff provided employment projections and other information to support the grant application and will provide information concerning biotechnology careers directly to students who use the lab.

b. Customer support

Customer support has been expressed through customer satisfaction responses to individual publications as well as by the level of demand for each product and service.

c. Relationship to plan goals

By helping students and job seekers to make good career decisions based on thorough information about what opportunities are available and what the requirements are for each, occupational and career information guides people to higher skill, higher wage careers, which directly supports the planned goals. Special efforts such as the Business/Education Center described above also support the goal regarding targeted industries.

d. Principal customers

Job Seekers, Students, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, local economic development groups, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Regional Planning Commissions, Local Governments, Correctional Institutions, Vocational and Career Counselors, Teachers, Educational Administrators, Universities, Elementary and Secondary Schools, Military Recruiters, Grant Writers, Business Colleges, Media, Employers, Attorneys, Local Development Corporations, Workforce Development (One-Stop) Centers, Iowa Department of Economic

Development, Iowa Commission for the Blind, Regional Councils of Government, Federal Government, Navy Family Service Center, Army Career and Alumni Program, Iowa Choices, Libraries, Other Labor Market Intermediaries.

e. Projected impact

It isn't possible to directly quantify the impact of improved decision making on the part of thousands of end customers, most of whom access the information anonymously through the Internet or through tools such as Iowa Choices. We can, however, infer something about its impact through customer satisfaction measures and by measuring the level of demand for this information.

IWD has made an additional investment in Web tracking software to help with these measures because we believe that traditional measures of Web services aren't adequate to collect quantitative data for this type of assessment. We are currently implementing an Internet tracking technique known as page-embedding technology. This technology differs from web server log analysis in that it sees through firewalls, proxies and caches and is greater in accuracy, while it excludes false hits created by robots and spiders. It also gives the ability to distinguish one visitor from another, how many are new or returning, and examine a breakdown of their visit frequency.

f. Milestones

- Respond to requests for on-site LMI presentations. Requests are typically received from schools, school-to-work staff, IWD and partners, and various other users (throughout the grant period)
- Compile, print and distribute the Iowa Licensed Occupations publication. (December 2004 and December 2005)
- Upload a digital version of the Iowa Licensed Occupations publication to the Iowa Workforce Development Internet Home Page (December 2004 and December 2005)
- Disseminate the 2004 Iowa Workforce Today and Tomorrow (October 2004)
- Design, layout and print Iowa Job Outlooks for the state and 16 regions. (May 2006)
- Continue dissemination of current supply/demand data in existing hard copy and electronic forms for the state and Workforce Development regions. (Quarterly throughout grant period)
- Investigate user need for other occupational analysis products, using SOC and O*NET as appropriate, based on presentations to the Regional Boards. (throughout the grant period)
- Review existing publications for format, content and users need (throughout the grant period)

g. Estimated cost

\$111,593

4) Information and support for workforce boards (*Iowa Workforce Development/State board deliverable*)

a. Description

All of the activities undertaken with the Workforce Information funds will help support the local Workforce Development Centers and partners by providing the underlying information on the labor markets in which those centers function. By providing reliable information to both employers and job seekers, workforce information makes the labor market operate more efficiently and allows customers to make better informed choices. In doing so, workforce information is an important element in achieving the Iowa Workforce Development Board's three goals:

1. Increase the size of the skilled workforce.
2. Increase Iowans' earned income.
3. Grow targeted industries and needed workforce skills.

Workforce information support local workforce investment boards (LWIB) and the operations of the One-Stop Centers in multiple ways. LMI provides data for needs assessments and to assess the basic economic and labor market trends/environment in which workforce development services are provided, thereby helping LWIBs to more effectively oversee services in their regions.

Provision of LMI is a core service in the Workforce Development Centers. We will provide LMI for the centers to utilize with their clients. Workforce information is delivered through the Iowa One-Stop/Workforce Development system through Resource Centers or Rooms at the various centers. Special training classes are also offered to jobseekers and workforce information is used in some of those. The Iowa system also relies heavily on the Iowa Workforce Development website (www.iowaworkforce.org) to deliver information and services. The Labor Market Information page is the prime deliverer of electronic workforce information to users, and a recent survey of One-Stop Center staff revealed that is their resource of choice. We provide users the ability to print hard copy of some products from the website and maintain a more limited number of printed copies for distribution by either the workforce development centers or the workforce information unit.

b. Customer support

Customer support is evident from customer feedback collected for individual products and services as well as the major assessment we commissioned from the University of Northern Iowa. This assessment is discussed in more detail in Section C of this document, “Customer Satisfaction and Assessment.”

c. Relationship to plan goals

Since the state and local boards and the One-Stop Centers comprise the basis for Iowa’s workforce development delivery system, the products and services we provide to them directly support all the plan goals.

d. Principal customers

Workforce Investment Board Members, Regional Service Providers, Workforce Development and Partner Staff, Employers, Media, Job Seekers, Other Government Agencies, Local Development Corporations, Community Colleges.

e. Projected impact

It isn’t possible to directly quantify the impact of improved decision making on the part of thousands of end customers, most of whom access the information anonymously through the Internet or through tools such as Iowa Choices. We can, however, infer something about its impact through customer satisfaction measures and by measuring the level of demand for this information. IWD has made an additional investment in Web tracking software to help with these measures because we believe that traditional measures of Web services aren’t adequate to collect quantitative data for this type of assessment. We are currently implementing an Internet tracking technique known as page-embedding technology. This technology differs from web server log analysis in that it sees through firewalls, proxies and caches and is greater in accuracy, while it excludes false hits created by robots and spiders. It also gives the ability to distinguish one visitor from another, how many are new or returning, and examine a breakdown of their visit frequency.

f. Milestones

- Continue production of Quarterly LMI brochures for each region. (throughout grant period)
- Research local needs through on-site presentations, focus groups, or surveys. (throughout the grant period)
- Develop regional information in either existing publications or new publications. (throughout the grant period)
- Prepare and disseminate quarterly LMI newsletters (Worknet). (throughout grant period)

- Prepare and disseminate 2004 Affirmation Action Data Book for employers. (January 2005)
- Prepare and disseminate 2004 LMI Directory e-card (November 2004)
- Prepare and disseminate 2004 LMI Directory hard copy (January – February 2005)

g. Estimated cost

\$57,575

5) Electronic state workforce delivery system (*Iowa Workforce Development/State board deliverable*)

a. Description

Iowa Workforce Development is currently using the SARAS system for its electronic labor market information delivery system. The Iowa system is called Iowa Workforce Information Network (IWIN) and can currently be accessed at: <http://iwin.iowaworkforce.org/websaras/>.

The Iowa workforce information unit is in the process of exploring options for updating its electronic delivery system, but has been delayed by a recent court case that disrupted certain funding for many state services, including workforce development. At this writing, it appears that executive and legislative leaders may be close to negotiating a resolution to this funding impasse, which would allow us to proceed.

b. Customer support

Customer support is primarily gauged by tracking the level of demand for information on our Web site. IWD is implementing an improved tool for collecting this information (see projected impact, below). We have also begun implementing a voluntary customer survey for users of our Internet site, but have just begun to collect baseline information.

c. Relationship to plan goals

As already noted, reliable information about the labor market helps it to operate more efficiently and allows customers to make better informed choices. In doing so, workforce information is an important element in achieving the Iowa Workforce Development Board's goals. Making this information available electronically, around the clock, to anyone, from One-Stop resource centers or any other Internet accessible site expands its reach and potential impact exponentially.

d. Principal customers

Job seekers, Students, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Chambers of Commerce, Community Colleges, Regional Planning Commissions, Local Governments, Correctional Institutions, Vocational Counselors, Universities, High Schools, Military Recruiters, Business Colleges, Media, Employers, Attorneys, Local Development Corporations, Workforce Development (One-Stop) Centers, Iowa Department of Economic Development, Iowa Commission for the Blind, Regional Councils of Governments.

e. Projected impact

IWD has made an additional investment in Web tracking software to help with these measures because we believe that traditional measures of Web services aren't adequate to collect quantitative data for this type of assessment. We are currently implementing an Internet tracking technique known as page-embedding technology. This technology differs from web server log analysis in that it sees through firewalls, proxies and caches and is greater in accuracy, while it excludes false hits created by robots and spiders. It also gives the ability to distinguish one visitor from another, how many are new or returning, and examine a breakdown of their visit frequency.

f. Milestones

- Update IWIN as updates are made to the ALMIS database. (throughout the grant period)
- Investigate other resources to be added to IWIN. (throughout the grant period)
- Enhance current LMI page on the World Wide Web (throughout the grant period)
- Receive requests for LMI through e-mail on the Internet (throughout the grant period)
- Investigate new LMI Display Systems and secure funding needed to implement.

g. Estimated cost

\$65,867

6) Workforce information training (*Iowa Workforce Development/State board deliverable*)

a. Description

Iowa Workforce Development will introduce LMI to new users and will provide refresher training to other users. We will continue to train LMI professionals and LMI users utilizing a variety of techniques, such as formal classes, on-site seminars, one-to-one sessions, ICN (fiber optics) sessions and user conferences.

We will implement a new series of hands-on LMI training for agency and partner staff. The intended trainees will be Business Service Representative and local Workforce Center staff who are most likely to use workforce information frequently on their jobs.

In addition to training conducted by IWD's workforce information staff members, IWD continues to contract for a field workforce information coordinator to provide training directly to intermediate (workforce development staff, educators, and others) and end users at the local level. This person is a member of the national One Stop Career Consortium.

b. Customer support

Customer feedback gathered at each training session confirms that this training is highly valued by most of the people who participate in it.

c. Relationship to plan goals

The workforce development system, of all groups, understands that skilled and knowledgeable workers are critical to its success in meeting all its goals.

d. Principal customers

LMI Analysts, Economists, Workforce Development (One-Stop) and Partner Staff and Administrators, Program Planners, Media, Educators, Employers, Labor, Libraries, Economic Development Groups, Vocational Counselors, Employers, Local and State Government Agencies, Attorneys, Research and Social Organizations, Other Labor Market Intermediaries, Community Planners, Economic Developers, Grant Writers.

e. Projected impact

This service, like the ALMIS Database, provides the critical underpinning for all the other products and services, so its impacts are difficult to measure directly. Unlike the ALMIS Database, it is provided as a stand-alone service, so customer satisfaction information can be collected and used to determine its effectiveness.

f. Milestones

- Analysts attend training sessions (throughout the grant period)
- Continue “Using LMI On Your Job” training as requested (throughout the grant period)
- Continue refresher training and workshops using modules developed in prior years and updated to fit the audiences (throughout the grant period):
 - Using LMI for Career Decision Making
 - Resources for Building Career Awareness
 - Resources for Serving Job Seekers
 - Resources for Employers and Economic Developers
 - CareerOneStop Refresher
- Develop and deliver new hands-on training to agency staff (October 2004 through April 2005)
- Conduct training on new LMI Electronic Display System (April –September 2005 depending on receipt of any new system)

g. Estimated cost

\$113,551

C. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

As noted in connection with the individual products and services, Iowa workforce information unit uses a variety of approaches to measure customer satisfaction with the products and services described in this work plan. The overall strategy will employ tools including:

- Mail-out survey to customers on our mailing lists and databases;
- Training evaluations;
- Questionnaires included with publications;
- Internet customer satisfaction survey

We will attempt to identify the major customer groups (businesses, job seekers and the workforce community) with each of these tools. Some techniques may prove more effective with certain sectors, and we will continue to determine these differences in order to better tailor our services to different audiences.

Two additional means of assessing customer satisfaction merit particular mention this year. One involves improved tools for tracking usage of our Internet site and the other involves a formal study we commissioned from the University of Northern Iowa.

1. As organizations have come to rely more and more heavily on the Internet to convey information and transact business, they have realized the need for more thorough and sophisticated ways to measure usage of their web sites. This is especially critical given the need to assess the impact of services in a medium as essentially anonymous as the Internet. A key way to measure impact and customer satisfaction in this medium involves measuring the level of demand for the services provided. Ideally, you'd also like to know other details, such as whether you are attracting repeat business.

Typical measurement of Web usage have evolved from notoriously misleading measures such as "hits" to somewhat more meaningful things like "visits," but still often fall short of really meaningful information. That is why IWD has made an additional investment in Web tracking software.

We believe that traditional measures of Web services aren't adequate to collect quantitative data for this type of assessment. We are currently implementing an Internet tracking technique known as page-embedding technology. This technology differs from web server log analysis in that it sees through firewalls, proxies and caches and is greater in accuracy, while it excludes false hits created by robots and spiders. It also gives the ability to distinguish one visitor from another, how many are new or returning, and examine a breakdown of their visit frequency. This new capability will let us establish more meaningful baseline information for assessing customer demand and satisfaction.

2. In 2003, Iowa Workforce Development contracted with the Institute for Decision Making (IDM) at the University of Northern Iowa to conduct an inventory of the data provided through workforce information unit's products and services, to survey key customers about the utility of our workforce information, and to make a series of recommendations that we can pursue over time as resources are available. The IDM was selected because they were already quite knowledgeable of information resources, including ours, but could provide us with an independent assessment to help us with our continuous improvement efforts.

Over 400 One-Stop Center staff people were invited to participate in IDM's on-line survey and 255 actually participated. 40% reported using workforce information on a daily or weekly basis with another 46.7% said they used it on an "as-needed" basis. It appears that these usage rates have the potential to be increased based on their responses to questions about their need for training in workforce information. 83.2% expressed a need for further training and 57.3% said the need was "very important or critical."

Those who use workforce information do so through a wide variety of methods ranging from phone calls or emails to experts to ad hoc queries of databases. The most frequently mentioned media were Iowa's workforce information Web site (73.4%) and printed publications (62.0%).

Finally, of the respondents who reported using workforce information at least monthly, 60.0% reported using it for job seekers, 35.7% for employers, and 18.4% for economic developers. All levels of education customers added up to 22.7%. Further down the list, but still significant, were city and county government (13.7%), other workforce development staff people (12.2%), media representatives (11.0%), and legislators (9.0%).

IDM reviewed these results and offered dozens of suggestions that could be pursued to improve existing services or add new ones. While limits on funding and staff time don't permit us to pursue all of them immediately, management and other key staff of the workforce information unit have reviewed and prioritized the suggestions, and are implementing the ones that a) can be quickly and easily adopted or b) are of particular importance. Those deemed to be especially important include developing new hands-on training for field staff, refining our Web site to make information easier to find, and exploring the options available at different cost points for electronic service delivery systems.