

Commonwealth of Kentucky Workforce Information Core Products and Services Annual Report for PY 2008

Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
Department for Workforce Investment
Office of Employment and Training
Research and Statistics Branch
Workforce Information

Kentucky is pleased to present the 2008 Annual Report on the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant achievements.

The Kentucky Office of Employment and Training (OET), Research and Statistics (R&S) Branch, faced many challenges during PY 2008. The continuing cooperation and consultation with our partners and customers enabled us to overcome these challenges and meet our objectives. **Workforce Kentucky**, the Commonwealth's electronic labor market information delivery system, had more than 376,000 visits and approximately 89,000 electronic and print copies of Labor Market Information (LMI) publications and products were disseminated to our customers.

The economic recession caused an increased demand for labor market information from the media, government entities, and other customers. Economic conditions and increasing unemployment relating to Kentucky's Unemployment Insurance (UI) system necessitated the creation of a UI Modernization Task Force. At the request of the task force, the R&S staff provided various statistical information.

Because of the departure of several seasoned employees, some staff assumed new roles within the branch and eight new employees were hired. Staff were encouraged to attend available training classes.

One of the major accomplishments during the last half of PY 2008 was a change in the physical location of the electronic platform for **Workforce Kentucky**. After several months of contract revisions, the website, which had been housed on servers owned and maintained by the Commonwealth, was transferred to servers owned and operated by our software vendor, Ciber.

Ciber's hosting of the website has enabled us to perform system and hardware upgrades more efficiently. It has also minimized time delays relating to site maintenance and security. The ability to implement upgrades, resolve errors, and install patches in a timely, effective manner has become increasingly important as site usage continues to climb.

1. Workforce Information Database (WIDb)

The WIDb is the primary statistical database accessed by the **Workforce Kentucky** application. In PY 2008 significant improvements were made to Kentucky's WIDb.

Throughout the program year, the database continued to be populated with routine monthly, quarterly and annual numbers, and was also updated with historical revisions for many types of statistics. Some of the items housed in the WIDb include Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Current Employment Statistics (CES), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) data, Consumer Price Index (CPI), income data, occupational wages, industry and occupational projections and population data.

Statewide short and long-term occupational and industry projections for 2007-2009 and 2006-2016, originally scheduled to be uploaded during PY 2007, were delayed by security threats that developed late in that program year. As a result, the loading of this data carried over into PY 2008.

Area long-term occupational and industry projections (2006-2016) and statewide short-term occupational and industry projections (2008-2010) were loaded on schedule in PY 2008.

Projections data was loaded into the WIDb according to the following timeline:

August 2008 - Statewide long-term occupational and industry projections for 2006-2016

August 2008 - Statewide short-term occupational and industry projections for 2007-2009

June 2009 - Area long-term occupational and industry projections for 2006-2016

June 2009 - Statewide short-term occupational and industry projections for 2008-2010

Another key component in the WIDb database is the Info-USA Employer Database. The Second Edition, 2009 Version of the database was incorporated into Kentucky's WIDb during PY 2008 and is accessible through the **Workforce Kentucky** website.

During PY 2008, Kentucky had planned to update its licensing files (license.dbf, licauth.dbf, and licxocc.dbf) but was delayed. Licensing files will be updated and submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center for inclusion on ACINet by December 2009.

In addition to the routine data updates to the WIDb, PY 2008 was a year of substantial enhancements and changes to the **Workforce Kentucky** platform. Upgrades were performed, security issues addressed and new maintenance and hosting options explored and finalized.

Security threats continued to be an issue during the first half of PY 2008. In addition to the string of security patches collectively referred to as Workforce Informer (WI) Upgrade Version 4.1 (completed in July 2008), there were a total of seven security updates installed between September 2008 and January 2009.

The upgrade to WI Version 4.0 was also completed during PY 2008. The major component of this upgrade was a Career Clusters module allowing end users to view a list of occupations under a career pathway in a given geographic area. Also applied was an upgrade to provide for an enhanced O*NET data display. The 4.0/O*NET upgrade was completed in January 2009.

Kentucky also completed an upgrade to WI Version 4.3, which updated the existing database to the WIDb 2.4 data structure. The upgrade to WIDb 2.4 was completed in April 2009.

One of the major accomplishments during PY 2008 was a change in the services provided by the WI application vendor, Ciber. Since its launch in 2003, the **Workforce Kentucky** website had been housed on servers owned and maintained by the Commonwealth. In early PY 2008, management approved a proposal to acquire website hosting through the software vendor. Kentucky worked extensively with Ciber to draft and finalize a services contract and, beginning in January 2009, transferred the **Workforce Kentucky** website from Kentucky's servers to servers owned and operated by Ciber. This also resulted in a new maintenance agreement being established, which was finalized in January 2009.

Ciber's hosting of the website has enabled Kentucky to more efficiently perform system and hardware upgrades, resolve site errors and install updates. It has substantially reduced delays related to site maintenance – issues that have become increasingly important as security threats and site traffic increases.

Transfer of the **Workforce Kentucky** website to Ciber's servers was completed in February 2009.

In addition, Kentucky worked to enhance system content and layout. Maps detailing LAUS and other data elements were routinely created and published on **Workforce Kentucky**, and a compilation of maps, which will be used in a future maps gallery on the site, was prepared. Finally, in March 2009, staff began development of a draft Recovery Act/Stimulus page for inclusion on the site. Although work began in PY 2008, these changes have not yet been implemented.

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.

During PY 2008, the NAICS time-series required to produce both long-term and short-term projections was updated to include the most current base year data. The updated annual time series was utilized to develop long-term industry and occupational projections for the period of 2006-2016 at the Area Development District level. The updated monthly time series was used to create short-term industry and occupational projections for the period of 2008-2010 at the statewide level. Short-term projections were submitted to the Projections Consortium prior to the June 30, 2009 deadline and both sets of projections were added to **Workforce Kentucky** as mandated by the ETA.

Printed publications containing 2006-2016 statewide projections were completed in August 2008 as originally scheduled.

3. Publish an Annual Economic Analysis Report for the Governor and the KWIB.

The annual, detailed, state economic analysis report for Governor Beshear and the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB) for PY 2008 was completed and submitted to the national office by the end of August 2009 meeting the submission deadline. Staff performed extensive research and conducted analysis on several economic indicators including employment and unemployment data, income and poverty data, wage data, unemployment insurance data, tax receipts, transfer receipts, educational attainment, data from the American Community Survey (ACS), layoff and closure information, and Local Employment Dynamics (LED) data. The PY 2008 report expands on the PY 2007 review by including analysis of the employment composition in each Workforce Investment Area (WIA) and a glossary of economic terminology. This economic study consists of a combination of narrative, tables, and charts along with an Executive Summary.

4. Post products, information, and reports on the internet.

Publication of the *Kentucky Labor Market Information Newsletter* continued during PY 2008. This publication highlights Kentucky's labor market conditions and provides statistics on total employment and unemployment, industry payroll employment, hours and earnings of workers in selected industries, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) employment, county employment, Consumer Price Index (CPI), unemployment insurance data, and Workforce Investment Area (WIA) unemployment rates. This release is distributed to 172 customers each month.

The *Kentucky Career Profiles* are a holdover originally scheduled to be completed by June 2009 but now targeted for fall of 2009. The 2007 version of this publication was accessed through **Workforce Kentucky** more than 17,000 times during CY 2008 and was provided in hard copy. Paper copies are provided to high school counselors. Electronic copies are provided for our customer base.

The *Kentucky Occupational Outlook to 2016* was published on **Workforce Kentucky** in September 2008. In four months, from September through December 2008 it was accessed 6,120 times, more than twice as many as the 2014 version of the publication, which was available for the previous eight months. In PY 2008, Career Profiles were accessed 27,399 times and the Outlook to 2016 was accessed 18,333 times.

Other materials and information published each month on **Workforce Kentucky** include occupational spotlight articles, unemployment rate press releases, and unemployment insurance data tables and statistical comparison.

5. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards.

Active collaboration and consultation with the KWIB, Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) and workforce staff continued in PY 2008. As a service to the WIBs, staff completed an analysis of the board member representation as a reflection of the stratification of industries in their workforce area. A summary report was provided to the KWIB Executive Director.

The Branch provided recurring support to WIA professionals to meet their requests for workforce information products and services. During PY 2008, the R&S Branch continued to support the business liaison/services staff of the WIBs by meeting their data needs for business prospects and supplying other information.

Collaborative efforts are evidenced by direct links to **Workforce Kentucky** on both the KWIB and LWIB websites. Staff also provided maps for the quarterly KWIB meeting in June.

6. Conduct special studies and economic analysis.

Kentucky continued to conduct special state, local, and regional studies to provide information and support to communities undergoing economic transition, implementing workforce development initiatives or experiencing major layoffs or disasters. In PY 2008, the Branch received many requests for information, caused by the economic recession. In response, Kentucky utilized existing products and programs, and also sought out other avenues and sources of data in an effort to provide the best information to meet the needs of each customer.

Kentucky Workforce Transformation/State Replication Asset Mapping Project

In an effort to quickly provide regional economic data as a response to the economic situation, Kentucky partnered with the ETA and an outside vendor to produce asset mapping reports for eight Kentucky economic regions. The R&S Branch defined the regional boundaries for each of the areas through analysis of commuting patterns and other economic area definitions. The vendor recently completed these reports.

These reports will provide additional resources for the LWIBs as they meet the challenges of our changing economy.

UI Modernization Task Force

Because of the deteriorating economic conditions in the Commonwealth, and the impending insolvency of the UI Trust Fund, the Governor created a UI Modernization Task Force to address the situation. R&S staff provided statistical data and analysis of Kentucky's UI system to the task force and other government officials to aid in decision making.

Collaboration between the Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) Program and Kentucky's Rapid Response Team (RRT)

Ongoing cooperation between the MLS state program leader and Kentucky's RRT continued in PY 2008. Both entities worked together to provide support to Kentuckians prior to and after major layoffs.

Geographic Information Systems – Mapping

In PY 2008, Kentucky continued to utilize ArcGIS mapping to meet customer demand. Maps of labor market information were created to meet the needs of the KWIB, LWIBs, the UI Task Force and in response to requests. Maps were also created to accompany each of the monthly LMI Newsletters and quarterly QCEW releases. Numerous maps were produced for inclusion on the upcoming geography page on **Workforce Kentucky**. Staff attended sessions on ArcGIS mapping at the 2009 LMI Forum and participated in several online training courses offered by the software vendor.

Staff Training

Staff training continued to be a priority in PY 2008. The large number of staff, who are new to their positions, required the continued emphasis on staff training. R&S personnel attended several ETA, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), and other state-sponsored statistical program trainings. Staff learned about a variety of labor market projects and initiatives, new and changing program requirements and various software applications. These trainings also afforded participants the opportunity to interact with colleagues from other states who are employed in similar positions and work with comparable workforce information products and services.

Cooperate and Participate with the U.S. Census Bureau as Pertains to the LED Project

In PY 2008, Kentucky continued to participate with the U.S. Census Bureau and submit quarterly employee and employer data for the LED project. Kentucky also provided customers with access to the Census Quarterly Workforce Indicators via the **Workforce Kentucky** website. Staff also attended the annual LED Partners meeting, which included many informative presentations about the program and innovative uses of the products produced by the program.

Maintain and Cultivate Relationships with Local and Quasi-Government Agencies in Kentucky

Kentucky continued to foster its relationship with local and quasi-government entities in the state, i.e., local economic development agencies, schools and chambers of commerce. The Branch provided analysis of local economic conditions, including local area projections and wage data as requested by these agencies. Kentucky also worked with school representatives, local economic developers, and others to provide detailed research on the current employment situation and the projected outlook for a given area, industry, or occupation.

An analysis was conducted on the economic conditions in Kentucky in CY 2008 and the performance measures in WIAs. Performance goals are based on entered employment rate measures and employment retention measures. Entered employment rate measures are based on unemployment data, while employment retention measures include job loss statistics, layoffs and closure information, and income statistics.

The biennial State Plan, consisting of a detailed analysis of the Kentucky economy, the labor pool, and the labor market context was completed in PY 2008. The impact of the economic downturn on the Kentucky economy, including unemployment data, job loss statistics, layoffs and closure information, industry composition, and percent change by industry, was incorporated into the review. The study also integrated anticipated impacts on employment by sector through assimilating industry and occupational projections over the short-term and long-term (over the next decade), assessed demand for skilled workers by encompassing the number of current and projected (over the next 10 years) jobs by skill level, and determined industries critical to the State's economy. Lastly, the analysis comprised current and projected (over the next decade) demographics of the available labor pool.

Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment

The R&S Branch recognizes the importance of assessing customer satisfaction and the role it plays in the improvement of products and services. Customers were given the opportunity to provide feedback at all meetings, presentations and conferences conducted by the Branch. This feedback was then used to improve the content of products and services offered to users of labor market information. Customer response was overwhelmingly positive regarding support and cooperation received from LMI staff.

Kentucky has also implemented a variety of other measures to facilitate customer feedback. From any page on the **Workforce Kentucky** website, users can access the Help link for our toll-free number. There is also a Feedback option that allows customers to send comments and concerns to the website administrator. Finally, the Kentucky LMI Directory provides contact information for LMI outlets throughout the Commonwealth.

A key component in measuring customer satisfaction is to assess reaction to one of our main products and Kentucky's primary workforce information delivery system, **Workforce Kentucky**. Website feedback has been extremely positive and site usage continues to grow as illustrated by web traffic monitoring. In PY 2008, there were more than four million page views and the number of overall visitors rose by 10% to an all time high of 376,088. Average monthly visits increased as well. In PY 2007, the average number of monthly visits was 28,382. In PY 2008 this number rose to 31,341.

Conclusion

Funding from the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Program is used to provide essential workforce information to Kentuckians. The Program enables the R&S Branch to publish a wide array of print and electronic products that benefit numerous customers and customer groups. Assessing and responding to the changing needs of our clientele will continue as mandated by Section 309 of the Workforce Investment Act.