

Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant
Annual Performance Report
Program Year 2008
Labor Market Information Division
Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

Accomplishments by Deliverable:

1. Continue to Populate the Workforce Information Database with State and Local data

Outcomes:

The Labor Market Information Division (LMID) of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina met planned PY 2008 milestones as specified in the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant. The core tables of the most current version of the Workforce Information Database were continuously populated with updated state and local data in accordance with guidelines and set schedules. The database provided the latest labor force, industry, occupation and wage information for use with the NC LMID's Internet-based delivery systems. The Workforce Information Database was also utilized to facilitate responses for information from state, regional and local Workforce Development Boards, Economic Development entities, partner agencies and other governmental officials. Based on the required schedule occupational licensing data was submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center in June 2008.

2. Produce and Disseminate Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

Outcomes:

Statewide short-term Industry and occupational projections were developed for the 2008 to 2010 period. Sub state 2006-2016 long-term industry and occupation projections were developed for several geographic areas including each of the 24 Local Workforce Development Board (WDB) areas. The 24 WDB brochures were developed and made available in print or .pdf on the LMID web site. These brochures were disseminated to each of the 24 Local Workforce Development Boards. Electronic copies of the brochures are available on the LMI web portal via:

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/occupational/occupationMain-new.asp>

Occupational employment projections and wage estimates were included in the annual edition of *Career Choices in NC*, a publication containing an extensive collection of career information. The *Career Choices* publication is available on the LMI web portal via:

http://www.ncesc1.com/lmi/publications/Career_Choices.pdf

Projections information has proven to be particularly valuable to in planning and implementing Governor Perdue's "JobsNow: 12 in 6" initiative. This initiative was developed to assist unemployed workers with returning to work. As part of this effort the North Carolina Community College System and the North Carolina Department of Commerce joined together to develop and implement "12 in 6" to help train North Carolinians in needed job skills within 6 months and help rebuild North Carolina's economy. In support of this effort, the occupational projections were used to assist in the identification of 12 in demand occupational areas. The approved occupational areas include: Nursing Assistant, Phlebotomy, Hospital Billing/Coding, Office/Clerical Support, Masonry/Tile Cutting, Plumbing, Carpentry, Welding, Food Service, Auto body Repair, Manufacturing/Materials, HVAC/Industry Maintenance. The North Carolina Community Colleges provide training opportunities in these 12 occupational areas that can be completed in 6 months.

Industry and occupational projections are widely utilized by North Carolina's Workforce, Educational and Economic Development partners. Professionals statewide have made it an essential part of their workforce development planning, programmatic and budgetary planning, public policy planning and career exploration activities. In order to facilitate the accurate interpretation of these data, LMI staff assisted customers in reviewing projections through presentations to and consultation with workforce development professionals, economic developers, curriculum planners, career counselors, local and state government officials, researchers, policy makers, Chambers of Commerce, educators, businesses and the general public.

3. Publish an Annual Economic Analysis Report for the Governor and the State Workforce Investment Board

Outcomes:

North Carolina's Labor market conditions and workforce trends were analyzed and published in a summary report for the governor, state and local Workforce Investment Boards and all other Workforce development partners. The *North Carolina Economic Analysis Report 2008* examined the impacts the recessionary pressures have had on the state's economy. It specifically examines the labor force and employment trends that have developed since the beginning of the current recession. The final report was posted on the LMID's website under the Publication section.

In addition, each month with the release of the state's Unemployment Rate and jobs estimates the LMI division publishes and disseminates two publications: *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions* and *NC TODAY*. *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions* provides an overview of the current Labor Force, Industry and Claims information. The *NC TODAY* provides critical in depth analyses of state and national labor force statistics, claims information and economic conditions. These publications are prepared for the governor, legislature, governmental officials and the general public.

In addition, with the release of the sub-state unemployment rates a monthly publication *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions* was published and disseminated. This publication provides an overview of the Labor Force statistics and Claims information for each of North Carolina's 100 counties and 14 Metropolitan Statistical Areas. Following each monthly release, .pdf files were emailed to the 24 WDB directors in order to provide them with a readily available reference.

Each month electronic copies of the *NC TODAY*, *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions* and *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions* were made available via printed publications and via the LMID web site.

4. Post Products, Information and Reports on the Internet

Outcomes:

North Carolina's LMID continuously strives to provide extensive labor market information products and services to its customers via the LMID web site. During the program year the website was continually updated with informational products. Publications specific to each of the 24 Workforce Development Boards were grouped together for easy access. A large variety of North Carolina maps depicting population density, industry concentrations and other information relevant to specific geographic areas were made available in the *Maps* section on the website. Functionality has been improved to make locating and downloading desired information more user-friendly. Additional geographic area configurations have been incorporated in several website applications to streamline information access and improve the use.

North Carolina participates in the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) program. During PY 2008, quarterly data files were submitted to the Census for loading into the NC LED site. During the program year, a data issue was discovered and LMID staff, worked to correct the issue. It is expected that Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) updates on the LED site will resume shortly. The LMID web portal page contains two links to assist customers to more easily locate the LED On-the-Map and Quarterly Workforce Indicators functions. Links to useful labor market information web sites such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Census Bureau, NC LINKS, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development plus many more, were placed in an easy to use list in the Statistical Links section on the portal page via: <http://www.ncesc1.com/lmi/industry/industryMain-NEW.asp>

5. Partner and Consult On a Continuing Basis with Workforce Investment Boards and Key Talent Development Partners and Stakeholders

Outcomes:

The North Carolina Labor Market Information Division continues to place high priority on ensuring the usefulness and customer satisfaction with the information disseminated throughout North Carolina's Workforce Development System. Since the mid-1990s, the division has employed two staff members dedicated to providing outreach services, marketing products, consultation and training within the Workforce Development System and to all the partner agencies. These Workforce Information Specialists are each assigned responsibility for providing services to the state's 24 WDB boards. They attend board meetings, conduct training on LMI products and services, and serve as speakers at national, state and local conferences, meetings and other functions.

Publications are created specifically to summarize the current economic picture of each Workforce Development Board area. These *LMI Quick Facts* publications contain labor market information selected by each board and are produced on a schedule set by each board. Individual boards post *LMI Quick Facts* publications on their own web sites. The Workforce Information Specialists provide assistance in understanding and interpreting the information found in these publications as they interact with the local boards. Many of the local boards have invited the Workforce Information Specialists to participate in their strategic planning meetings in order to provide information regarding the local economic conditions and to assist the local board with understanding of the local economic picture.

Over the program year, as LMID staff have continue to provide consultative services to our customers and in particular the workforce development partners, the demand for information, reports, surveys and other products has continued to grow and expand. In addition, over the program year there has been an increase in requests from economic developers, workforce professionals and grant writers.

Program Year 2008 brought a shift in the types of information requested. A large number of requests focused on information regarding unemployment and unemployed workers. Specifically, these requests focused on local unemployment rates, number of unemployed persons and related information concerning the industries and occupations most impacted by the recession. The LMID produced a monthly publication containing local labor market information at the county, MSA and statewide level. Following each monthly news release, .pdf files were emailed to the 24 WDB directors in order to provide them with a readily available reference. In addition the monthly publication is posted on the LMID website.

As North Carolina's Workforce Development System continues to respond to the challenges of the current economic situation, timely information on the state of the

economy is continually needed. Starting in PY 2008, the Leadership of North Carolina's workforce and economic partner agencies started holding period meetings to discuss the impacts of recession on North Carolina's workforce and economic development agencies. The Labor Market Information Division participated in these meetings. The Division's role was to update the agency administrators on the state of the economy and to develop a comprehensive set of information that can be utilized to help guide policy decisions and inform strategic planning. This work is expected to continue into the next program year as is the LMID's participation.

Another project with the North Carolina Community College System integrated occupational projections, employment by occupation, wages and training levels into the NC Career Pathway clusters, which were then configured into the data structure provided by the Peer Collaborative Resource Network. This made the clusters consistent in structure with those used by the United States Department of Education.

North Carolina LMID also participated and supported other key stakeholders with several collaborative projects. These projects included providing information and analyses to the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits for a project which focused on the impact of Nonprofits in North Carolina. A project in which the Labor Market Information Division provided information and analyses to the Research Triangle Park (RTP) for their analyses of RTP's economic impact. The LMID provided regional data and information to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) executives as they plan and prepare for the growth associated with the planned expansions at two North Carolina installations.

LMID participated in regional consultative efforts that extended across state borders. Virginia's West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board was the recipient of a Regional Innovation Grant (RIG). The purpose of this RIG was to develop a transformational plan designed to address the significant layoffs and plant closures in the region's manufacturing sectors. The RIG is being utilized to fund the development of short- and long-term strategies for improving and maintaining economic health of the region by preparing the workforce for jobs in the new economy. NC LMID supported this RIG proposal during the previous program year and continues to play an integral supportive role in this project.

North Carolina, as a member of the Projections Management Partnership group, served as the clearing house for the PY 2008 short-term and long-term occupational projections. States were asked to submit their statewide projections to the NC LMID and NC staff reviewed the submissions to ensure consistency with BLS occupational projections publication taxonomy. North Carolina provided the long-term occupational projections to the BLS and the short term occupational projections to Illinois. Technical support regarding the creation of the MicroMatrix extracts was provided to state analysts across the country. During the Program Year, LMID staff continued to provide presentations and training to customer groups. LMID's Outreach and Training unit as well as other staff worked jointly with customers to develop training and materials targeted to meet their specific needs. In one case,

presentation materials were converted to Braille for use in training sessions with a partner agency's staff and clients. The NC Division of Workforce Development's Training Center requested and sponsored two customized Workforce Information training sessions and various other Workforce Development System partners also requested presentations and/or received training. These sessions and associated materials included overviews of Workforce Information as well as use instruction in the use of various web applications including: job seeker interactive tools; career counselor assessment tools, wage; and industrial data tools.

Staff members made presentations and conducted workshops at eight local, state or national conferences for workforce development professionals, WIA partner agencies, economic developers and the business community. Staff members participated in seven exhibit opportunities and provided printed products and demonstrated interactive tools. They also exhibited LMI products and services at four partner job fairs. Thirty-seven other presentations were provided to further customer understanding and use of labor market information. Participants included: JobLink Career Center staff, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, faith-based organizations providing WIA services, HR professionals, private employers, ex-offender employment re-entry groups, middle and high school students, DOL/ETA representatives, regional and national forums, and the LMI Training Institute.

6. Conduct Special Studies and Economic Analyses

Outcomes:

During the program year, demand for special studies and economic analyses grew at a steady pace and continued to be an important activity funded via the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant. The LMID remained strongly committed to working with state, regional and local entities in order to address and meet their economic analysis and research needs, especially as local economies across the state experienced the impact of the recessionary pressures.

Requests were received almost daily from workforce boards, local economic development entities, members of the press and other customer groups. Requests were often focused on industrial employment levels and average wages, numbers of unemployed workers and rates of unemployment. Reports of available labor in occupations demanded by prospective employers were of great interest to economic developers as were commuting patterns. This information was often requested for the state as well as local area economies.

Monthly and quarterly publications relating to current economic conditions and topics of interest, as determined by user requests, continued to be published. Each month, the state's economic trends were analyzed and the associated implications were summarized in a report for use by the governor, legislators, agency administrators, workforce development officials, economic developers, county commissioners, other

policy making officials and the public. This report, the *NC Today*, contained graphs, charts and summary analysis for quick, easy reference. Topics included employment and unemployment statistics, industry employment and wage measures, business closings and permanent layoffs, unemployment insurance benefits paid accompanied by trust fund activities, and quarterly updates on employer cost for employee compensation. Two of the economic indicators included, the leading and coincident indexes, were revised to deemphasize the national factors and reflect more state and regional economic activity. Electronic copies of the *NC Today* are available on the LMI web portal via:

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

In addition to the monthly statewide and county labor force statistic press releases, LMID provided expanded overviews of State and county labor force, employment, and unemployment data. These overviews compared the current month's data to the previous month and to the same month one year ago. *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions* was released with the statewide unemployment rate press release and *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions* was published with the monthly county and Metropolitan Statistical Areas press release. These publications are available via the LMI web portal:

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

An additional publication: *Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Operations* was published monthly, along with *ESC Monthly Activity Reports*. These publications provided "Highlights" of Unemployment Insurance Claims activities as well as selected ESC Employment Service activities. Electronic copies of these two reports are available on the LMI web portal via:

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

Customer Consultations

During the Program Year the LMID continued to have frequent consultations with workforce information customers. These consultations were conducted primarily through one-on-one on-site visits, telephone calls, discussions following presentations and training, at conferences, other meetings and via email. LMID outreach and marketing efforts have yielded a strong collaborative working relationship with state and local workforce development professionals, workforce development boards and a wide range of Workforce Development system and Education partners. These collaborative relationships have helped to broaden and strengthen the use of Workforce Information throughout the state as well helped to increase our user community.

Recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Deliverables

Efforts will continue to deliver information via electronic means while maintaining high standards of data quality and integrity. Increased automation of products will allow better geographic coverage with less production time. Enhancements will be made to the LMI web site to include interactive mapping capability and area profiles. The policy of responding to requests for improvement and additional products will be continued within funding and staffing limitations.