

State of Utah

PY 2008 Workforce Information Core Products and Services

Annual Performance Report

Below you will find a description of the activities conducted by Utah's Workforce Information Division during PY2008 for each of ETA's core products. The goal of these activities was not only to meet the requirements of the PY2008 TEGL, but to also deliver superior customer service through the production and dissemination of labor market information. As you can see, Utah sets high standards for itself in this endeavor, but to meet those standards, it was necessary for us to leverage financial resources from our state's workforce administration. For each core product, the portion of ETA grant money expended on that product is listed. However, this does not reflect the total cost of that activity. Delivering quality core products cost us an additional amount of just under \$400,000, which was leveraged from Utah's state agency.

Core Product A: Continue to Populate the Workforce Information Database with State and Local Data

PY2008 Expenditure: \$69,507

Utah has completed the transition of its Workforce Information Database core tables to version 2.4 as prescribed by ETA. During PY2008, all of the core tables were populated with current data. The core tables were populated in accordance with guidelines issued by the Database Consortium. In addition, Utah also populated six non-standard WID tables—mostly geared toward O*NET and skills. Eight Utah-specific WID tables were populated and updated as well. Utah updated the content of the database in a timely manner. Utah maintained the occupational licensing data and updated the required files. In addition, Utah made several enhancements to the Utah Economic Data Viewer (UEDV) over the program year, including:

- Further streamlining the data update process by implementing automation to the editing and summing of the QCEW data
- Updating and improving the download and print functions
- Improving the printable view of the occupational reports
- Adding a linking path from the job listings in an occupational profile to the FirmFind employer database
- Adding BED tables as a preliminary step to displaying the data for our users (we are still exploring this as we better learn the BED data and its best uses)

Many of these changes were implemented to address feedback, both formal and informal, that Utah had received from users. In working with our customers, we found that we

were able to implement these changes in the most effective manner, ensuring a value-added outcome.

A significant project Utah completed in PY2008 was to integrate Utah's FirmFind tool into UEDV. (This project started in PY2007 and was mentioned in that year's annual progress report.) FirmFind is similar to InfoUSA in that it is a database of Utah employers which includes industry coding, and location and contact information. FirmFind, however, is a more powerful tool in the following aspects:

- Source data is the QCEW microdata (as allowed by Utah law)
- Database is also searchable by occupation (using the staffing patterns generated by the Estimates Delivery System [EDS])
- Data can be searched by county or Workforce Services regions

FirmFind was originally built before the inception of ALMIS (now WID), using computer language which was cutting edge at the time, but has now become outdated. Some users of the UEDV had suggested linking from an occupational report to the FirmFind output for that occupation. Because of FirmFind's old language, we were unable to do so. Utah's WID administrator examined the FirmFind structure and concluded that it would be possible, and quite advantageous, to move the FirmFind system into the WID. Work was started on this project in April of 2008 and was completed in December 2008. Testers were used in phasing the project from beta to production in order to address any bugs in the system. Further improvements have been implemented as feedback is collected while training internal and external customers on the new interface. A pop-up internet survey will be used in PY2009 to gather additional feedback for changes and improvement.

Utah also added a tool in the UEDV specifically aimed at reemployment activities. This tool was inspired by the data discussions at ETA's reemployment conference held in Baltimore at the beginning of 2009. This new tool, called the transferable skills module, is aimed at allowing users to quickly view pertinent labor market information related to an occupation of interest (maybe one they have just been laid off from) and compare that occupation to related occupations as identified in the O*Net taxonomy. While the data is presented as a quick-view table, all of the data is linked to more in-depth information, including training providers. The goal is to open job seekers to searching for employment not only in their current occupation, but also occupations for which they may also qualify with little or no additional training. Utah's regional economists visited every Utah one-stop facility to train staff on this new tool, and currently work is being done with the unemployment benefits staff to include this tool as part of the information that is disseminated to Utah's unemployment benefit recipients.

Core Product B: Produce and Disseminate Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

PY2008 Expenditure: \$98,595

Utah developed and disseminated long- and short-term industry and occupational employment projections, using the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership. Utah successfully developed statewide short-term projections for the 2008-2010 period and sub-state long-term projections for the 2006-2016 period. Utah continued to populate the WID Database with the 2008-2010 statewide short-term and 2006–2016 sub-state long-term projections data and submitted the data for public dissemination.

In the last few years our Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) sample has been expanded to support more sub-state areas. As such, work began during PY2007 to increase our sub-state projections divisions from two to five. This included building the historical industry employment data for the new sub-state areas since our QCEW data needed for the models was lost some years ago. Work on this was completed in PY2008.

Because Utah introduced new projections areas in PY2008, a concerted effort was made to train internal customers on how to use the data, and how it compared to the statewide projections data. This effort came in two forms: 1. a new, detailed projections publication entitled *Utah's Job Outlook*, and 2. trainings conducted at each of the 36 one-stop facilities in Utah. In both cases, information to describe the projections (and star-ratings derived from the projections and wage information) was extremely detailed to ensure that the user clearly understood the data and especially how to use that data in the job seeking process. Both the trainings and the publication have been extremely popular and well received, and have resulted in additional customer contacts and many scheduled presentations to both internal and external LMI customers.

Both long and short-term occupation projections were presented to Utah's customers in many formats besides the primary *Utah's Job Outlook* publication, including the UEDV, a full-listing spreadsheet on the state website and on the new utahfutures.org website which is the State of Utah's new career information delivery system, and many articles in *Utah's Trendlines* and *Workforce News* magazines.

In consideration of the current economic climate, Utah chose to highlight the short-term projections to expand their local use beyond the usual economic analysis purposes toward current career planning. To this end, Utah published a "Best Jobs in a Cold Economy" list to be used by our state agency customers and employment counselors. This was also discussed in the one-stop training sweep to ensure that customers understood the difference between the short- and long-term projections data. To address the quickly changing nature of the economic downturn, the projections have been updated quarterly since March of 2009. To further help our internal customers, Utah's UWORKS system (our employment counselors' client career planning tool) links directly to the appropriate occupational information in the Workforce Information Database. This has made it much

easier for employment counselors to use the projections to help their clients make informed career decisions.

Core Product C: Publish an Annual Economic Analysis for the Governor and the state WIB

PY2008 Expenditure: \$15,500

Utah was somewhat limited in its ability to independently fulfill this deliverable because of the preexistence of an annual economic analysis report for Governor Huntsman. This report, which has been produced yearly for at least the last two decades, is led by the Department of Economic Analysis (DEA) within the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget (GOPB). DEA compiles the census data (as the state's Census program managing agency) and writes the overarching analysis. For the economic sector-specific analysis (e.g. labor market, tax revenues, industry analysis, etc.) the DEA turns to the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors (CEA). This is a group of statewide economists who together provide the governor with council regarding pertinent economic issues for the state of Utah. Our chief economist is a primary member of the CEA and it is through him that we contribute the labor market and industry analysis for the annual Economic Report to the Governor (ERG).

In the 2008 report, our chief economist provided data and analysis on such topics as job growth, unemployment rates, industry projections, and specific key industries such as agriculture; construction; defense; energy and minerals; high technology; and tourism, travel, and recreation. He also attended work group sessions where the content of the report was discussed, and he contributed to the editing process for the final report.

To circumvent some of the limitations Utah faced in completing this deliverable by not being the sole owners of the governor's report, Utah produced a supplementary report focusing on each of the 29 counties in Utah. The goal of this report, entitled Utah Counties in Review: a 2008 Report, was to touch on more region-specific information instead of the exclusive statewide view taken by ERG. The general approach of this report is to give a year-end review of Utah's counties in terms of economic change and development. Each county has its own section in the report. Within each section a report is given which relies on both data generated through our LMI programs and other agencies throughout the state. These data include population, gross taxable sales, construction permitting, and demographics. Along with reporting this data for the year 2008, an article is included for each county, written by the respective regional economist, which discusses major economic events in 2008 for that county. This report was made available to our customers through our web site, both in the complete 29-county form and individually on each county's web page.

Core Product D: Post Products, Information, and Reports on the Internet

PY2008 Expenditure: \$81,772

For program year 2008, Utah posted a vast array of workforce information on the Internet through several different modes, including publications in downloadable/printable formats, data and statistics in the Utah Economic Data Viewer and in downloadable/printable formats, press releases of the latest labor market information, and economic news directly within the web pages themselves. Users are alerted to the postings when they sign-up for our e-mail subscription service. Additionally, our web site is designed so that “headlines” rotate on our front page highlighting a new article or press release as they are published.

Trendlines, a bi-monthly publication devoted to current topics important to the Utah economy, was published six times during PY 2008 and made available to our customers on the web. Customers were also able to access *Workforce News* on the web. *Workforce News* is a quarterly publication devoted to discussing regional labor market information and current events. Eight versions are published each quarter, each devoted to a different economic region of the state. The eight regions together cover the entire state, and are arranged as follows: Wasatch Front North, Bear River, Wasatch Front South, Mountainland, Uintah Basin, Southeast, Central, and Southwest. Both *Trendlines* and *Workforce News* are also made available to customers through hard copy distribution.

Utah’s Career Publications (created and published in PY 2008)

- *Career Guide for Teens*, a guide specifically tailored to providing career information and dispelling occupational myths for teens in Utah. Topics covered include, but are not limited to: dream jobs, general career planning, the education payoff, and unique ways to gain work experience.
- *Utah’s Job Outlook* is Utah’s primary projections publication. This guide includes the statewide projections, as well as the projections for the four sub-state regions. Statewide and regional tables for the five-star (highest wages and best outlook) jobs by training level are the primary focus of the publication. Supplemental articles touch on the star-ratings system, Utah’s highest paying and fastest growing jobs, highlighted occupations (chosen by hot topics such as green occupations, popular occupations, declining occupations, emerging occupations, etc.), and labor supply.

Each of these publications was distributed in hard copy format, and made available on the web in a downloadable/printable full version and by individual articles, graphs, and tables. All source data for these publications is also made available in a downloadable format for the “higher-end” users which allows them to use the data for their own statistical research.

Another major change made to the catalog of tools made available on the web was the move of the Area Wage Tables to the UEDV. Prior to this move, tables were produced for each wage area, listing every publishable occupation and the corresponding wage information. Realizing that this data was all within the UEDV, and noting that the web hits to the tables had dwindled over the years, Utah decided that the efficiency gains of modifying the UEDV to create an electronic “wage table” were worthwhile. To that end,

an additional function was added within the existing occupational wage module, where, with a single click, a user can essentially download the full list of an area's occupational wage information, thereby creating an electronic version of the tables that were previously produced by the LMI staff. The benefits to this are the printing and time savings for LMI staff and the ability of the user to sort the data in whatever manner works best for them. To prepare users for this change, the wage table web links were maintained, but were replaced with dialog explaining to the user how to create the wage table in UEDV. This has been received positively by our users, especially the employment counselors who were the remaining (albeit dwindling) customers of the static wage tables.

Utah also made available on its web site all reports, special studies, and associated publications. This includes the Economic Report to the Governor (discussed in Core Product C), the County Annual Report (discussed in Core Product C), the newly produced *County Economic Snapshots* (discussed in Core Product E), the *Hard at Work: Women in the Utah Labor Force* publication (discussed in Core Product F) and the Utah Job Vacancy Survey (discussed in Core Product F).

County-level data was also produced and made available on the web. These data were delivered in a few different formats, including county fact sheets, county economic and demographic profiles, and county largest employers lists. (These products are all discussed in Core Product E.)

Utah also produced some web-only products, such as the monthly employment report and Trendlines Extra (discussed in Core Product E).

All web products are placed on the web within days of production, and in some instances of hard-copy publications, even before the publication is printed. Utah continually encourages our customers to go to the web to access our products and the latest labor market information. In our publications we often promote our web links, either in relation to an article or as a stand-alone advertisement.

Core Product E: Partner and Consult on a Continuing Basis with Workforce Investment Boards and Key Talent Development Partners and Stakeholders

PY2008 Expenditure: \$102,216

Utah partnered on a continuing basis with the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) and the supporting regional workforce councils in program year 2008. Utah continues to maintain a close working relationship with its state and regional councils that is, in part, assisted through the organizational structure of our state agency (Department of Workforce Services, DWS). During PY2008, Utah's SWIB continued to pursue its extensive state-led targeted industries campaign which was initiated in the previous program year. Through this project, the regional councils have been advised to work with their designated regional economist, council liaison, and workforce development

lead on identifying industry targets specific to their local economies, then creating partnerships and marketing campaigns geared toward recruiting workers for key shortage occupations.

In support of this campaign, updates to the following products and services (established in PY2007) were provided to the SWIB and regional councils:

- Expert council on the local economy in preparation for roll-out of campaign, including extensive participation in planning meetings
- Participation in regional campaign kick-off presentations
- Informational packets addressing questions of labor force, unemployment, industry job growth and occupational wages specific to targeted industries and local economies
- Presentations tailored specifically to the regions' chosen industry targets
- Consultation on marketing materials, including providing relevant labor market information and analysis

Utah also continued to provide labor market information in support of our Generation II WIRED grant for biotechnology. The data were used in presentations to industry partners, in informational publications created by education partners, and in reports submitted to ETA.

In response to numerous related requests from regional council officials and SWIB board members, Utah developed a tool in PY 2008 called the County Economic Snapshots. This two-page flyer is a quick reference showing the most current labor market and general economic data for the county. The information is delivered in the form of numbers, graphs and tables. Each of the 29 snapshots is updated monthly. This is a very new tool; plans have been made to collect feedback from our general customers regarding the usefulness of the tool, but those in the WIB system whose requests inspired this tool have responded positively and reported that the snapshot is exactly what they were looking for when requesting a "quick reference" and help in quickly locating "the most current" county economic data. This is a web-only tool and has been advertised through the LMI homepage and articles in both *Trendlines* and *Workforce News*.

Additionally, Utah successfully published several newsletters to communicate information to customers at the state and local levels.

- The magazine-style newsletter *Trendlines* was published every other month and contained state and local information along with articles of general information. Themes were, at times, driven by target industries such as construction. The intent of *Trendlines* is to give the reader a general idea of what is happening in the economy.
- *Trendlines Extra*, a Web-only bullet point listing of economic information, was updated each month and was made available only on our web site.
- The *Workforce News* newsletters were published quarterly providing the reader general economic information at the region and county level. These newsletters are supported by detailed tables, charts, and graphs available only on our web site

quarterly. This publication has been integrated with a DWS Business Services publication in order to leverage resources within the department. Readers can now see LMI along side schedules of region-specific events such as career fairs and chambers of commerce meetings.

- Web products were updated regularly including: Fact sheets for each county, demographic and economic profiles for each county, major employer lists for each county, and occupations with training potential lists for local areas.

Regional councils each had access to a regional economist assigned to their region that developed and produced information and responded to the needs of his/her particular region. The regional economists worked closely with regional councils, employment centers, schools, and a wide variety of other local stakeholders and customers to develop and continually improve products and services to meet customer needs. To partner and serve the needs of the regional councils, our regional economists do a range of activities, from data requests to economic reports to informational presentations. The regional economists also provided council to workforce development planning that was conducted by the regional councils during the 2008 program year.

Utah's regional economists produced hard-copy newsletters called *Workforce News* for each county and updated information on the web site four times during PY 2008. Utah published the *Trendlines* newsletter every other month and published *Trendlines Extra* each month. The regional economists updated county fact sheets for each county and the economic and demographic profiles for each county. Utah's target industry career ladder information was updated with the latest wage and outlook information during PY 2007. Utah continues to gather customer feedback by sending out a card every other year to customers receiving hard-copy publications, to see if the customer wants to continue his/her subscription. This helps us refine our mailing lists.

Utah also partnered with the Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) on a few projects:

- GOED's new website launch—Utah worked with GOED's marketing and IT teams to create direct links from GOED's new website to different modules in UEDV. Utah cooperated with GOED and allowed for them to "skin" some of the LMI data into their own design, so as to make the movement of their users from their site to UEDV seamless. Utah also wrote many descriptions, directions, and explanations of the data geared especially to GOED's, and their customers', needs.
- Utah produced custom staffing patterns for GOED's unique targeted industries (based on the NAICS definitions created in partnership with GOED during PY2007). These patterns were used for internal analysis by both GOED and Utah's LMI division for the purpose of finding key occupations to develop training, investment, and public awareness efforts.
- In continuation of the effort to NAICS define GOED's economic clusters (which began in PY2007), Utah employed it's newly acquired ArcGIS skills to map the concentrations of the clusters throughout the state.

- GOED's economic development incentives programs have minimum wage requirements that recipients must meet. Utah provided verification that the requirement was met (actual data not shared, although data sharing covered by Utah statute) in over 200 instances during PY2008.
- Utah also helped USTAR (Utah Science, Technology and Research) group, a GOED partner, by providing quarterly information on new establishments from the QCEW program for PY2008.

Utah also participated in the state workforce agency's development of a cluster acceleration program in conjunction with Utah's Higher Education Association and GOED. The purpose of this program is to align workforce services resources with the research and development activities currently being pursued by local colleges and universities, with the end-goal of creating pathways and programs that will allow Utah's workforce to participate in the technologies of Utah's future. Utah's LMI division provided information in deciding the key industries to focus efforts, and to identify the potential regional synergies for each industry (again, using ArcGIS).

Core Product F: Conduct Special Studies and Economic Analyses

PY2008 Expenditure: \$41,272

During the 2008 program year Utah conducted four major state, local, and sub-state regional studies and economic analyses to provide information support for communities in economic transition and state and sub-state workforce development initiatives.

Utah was asked by the state's chamber of commerce to conduct an extensive study of the role of immigration (both legal and illegal) in the state economy. To do so, Utah relied not only on data produced in-house, but also data from partner agencies such as the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, the Chamber of Commerce, and the U.S. Census Bureau. The research was requested as part of the background work on a legislative measure that the Chamber of Commerce was considering backing and as such was a private study, not published on any website, nor made available to the public.

A major economic development opportunity came about during PY2008 and four different Utah cities were being considered as possible locations for a major corporation to begin a large production plant. Regional economists in the Utah LMI division provided extensive data and analysis pertaining to these very specific locations and specific industry with the goal of painting a clear picture of the viability of each city for site location. As was the case with the immigration study, the research was part of a confidential program, and therefore the results were not made public. Utah's LMI division received great praise from the local economic development groups who had requested assistance in assembling the economic profiles.

To fill a void in the array of publications pertaining to Utah's work in projecting future occupation and industry labor demand, a preliminary publication was developed to

assemble a broader view of the results of the projections data. The idea in developing this document was to deliver the outlook information in a more aggregate manner, targeting not the usual customer of occupational projections (the job seeker and employment counselor) but the audience of economic developers, regional planners, and local policy makers. For these groups, the broader implications of the projections data are more relevant, and therefore this publication takes a step back from the individual occupation/industry projections calculations and instead comments on how those growth levels affect the broader policy measures such as training investments, economic development incentives, and the Utah talent pipeline.

Hard at Work: Women in the Workforce is a publication dedicated to providing key demographic and labor market data and analysis. This publication was created in the 2006 program year, and updated in each program year thereafter (including PY2008). Topics addressed in this web-only publication include female labor force participation rates; occupations of Utah's working women; and hours, wages, and marital status of working women in Utah.

The reason for creating this publication was to separate out the career advice and career information provided in the *Women's Career Guide* from the data and harder-hitting analysis. This allowed Utah to better focus its efforts on the specific needs of individual customer groups. *Hard at Work* provided the data needed by many policymakers in our state congress who grappled with women's issues when addressing many different pieces of proposed legislation during the last legislative session. Our regional economists worked in conjunction with the Director of DWS's office of communication to ensure that state legislators who were requesting this type of information were provided with a copy (electronic or hard) of the publication along with direction on how to find the data most important to them.

Furthermore, Utah began conducting the Fourth Quarter 2008 Job Vacancy Study (JVS) in August of 2008 and published the study's findings in April of 2009. The JVS is designed to quantify and characterize the demand for labor in Utah. The JVS is labor intensive and requires a significant amount of resources to produce. The study's conclusions were presented in the publication entitled *Utah Fourth Quarter 2008 Job Vacancy Study* which presented results from the geographic regions covered by the survey: Statewide, Uintah Basin, North, and Southwest. The study had limited distribution of the hard copy version, and was made available on the web site and advertised through email distribution lists. Presentations were also conducted for different customer groups and agency partners in order to educate them on the survey results.

Feedback

Utah is keenly aware of the value that can be gleaned through effective feedback data collection. Some of our most successful enhancements have been motivated through feedback, collected both formally and informally. This year, two key tools were developed with the specific aim of meeting informal customer feedback: the transferable

skills module in the UEDV and the County Economic Snapshots. In both cases, it was the strong working relationships with our customers that brought about the feedback for these tools. Utah has learned the value of partnering and has found that the strength of a partnership will bring about honest commentary on the performance and helpfulness of LMI, and unstructured feedback collection can create the best ideas for data dissemination enhancements.

One cannot, however, discount the value of formal feedback. Utah chose this program year to gather feedback on two major publications: Workforce News and Older Workers Guide. In both cases, customers on our mailing lists to receive hard copies also received a customer feedback card which has rating-type questions and an open-ended question on the quality of the publication. Responses were somewhat limited, but the feedback was useful and will be reviewed and implemented in the planning of the revamping of both publications in PY2009.

For the Older Workers publication:

- 85% of respondents found the information and articles outstanding
- 90% of respondents found the publication very easy to read and understand
- 85% of respondents were likely or very likely to share the publication with others
- 95% of respondents gave the publication an overall rating of outstanding or above average.
- Respondents listed the following as the most valuable information in the publication:
 - Knowing others in their age group are also looking for work
 - Ideas on resume writing, interview conduct
 - Contacting various agencies representing older workers
 - Insurance information
 - Employment after retirement
 - Social security information
 - Finding employment
 - Rights and responsibilities
 - Education opportunities

For the Workforce News publication:

- 82% of respondents found the information and articles outstanding or above average
- 92% of respondents found the publication very easy or easy to read and understand
- 77% of respondents were likely or very likely to share the publication with others
- 82% of respondents gave the publication an overall rating of outstanding or above average.
- Respondents listed the following as the most valuable information in the publication:
 - Employment statistics and trends

- Unemployment data
- Local news section
- Local economic indicators and analysis
- Background on forces driving the numbers
- Information to inform business
- Charts and wage data
- Area comparisons