

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**  
**PROGRESS REPORT FOR WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT**  
**July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010**

**In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) #30-08, Job Service North Dakota submits the following Progress Report on Workforce Information activities for the period July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010. This report is organized into three sections as directed by the TEGL. Section A describes the accomplishments for each core product or service. Section B presents a summary of the Customer Satisfaction Assessment. Section C contains recommendations for improvements or changes to the Suite of Core Products.**

**A. CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

**1. Continue to Populate the Workforce Information Database with State Data**

The Workforce Information Database is the foundation of the workforce information applications for North Dakota's electronic delivery system. It provides an expansive data storage system from which other data delivery systems may retrieve pertinent workforce information. As such, it is important that this database contains the most current and accurate data possible. The LMI Center updated the Workforce Information Database (WID) core tables with new data as it became available, populated new tables, and tested for data integrity. In addition to the basic ETA core tables, North Dakota also populates and maintains the following data tables: building permits, census labor force, commuting patterns, consumer price index, license history, transfer payments, program completers, educational programs, taxable sales, higher education institutions and eligible training providers, short term state industry projections, short term state occupational projections, educational and training completers, tax information, producer price index, oil production.

North Dakota is using the WID version 2.3, which is the version that Geographic Solutions (the vendor for our electronic delivery system) is currently using for its Analyzer product. We have been pushing Geographic Solutions to migrate to the 2.4 version and have been told that the next version of the Analyzer will utilize the 2.4 version of WID. We will upgrade to 2.4 when we receive the next version of Analyzer from Geographic Solutions. However, in preparation for this conversion, we have been examining the 2.4 database structure and are starting to prepare for population of the 2.4 data so that we will be ready to go into development, test, and production modes once Geographic Solutions delivers the Analyzer upgrade.

The LMI Center loaded the most recent version of the employer database from InfoUSA as soon as the CD was available. The database provides users with a current listing of employer data that can be accessed by firm name, city, county, industry, or firm size. The use of the InfoUSA database allows us to provide employer-specific information to our customers without release of confidential employer data from our UI Tax or QCEW files.

## 2. Produce and Disseminate Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

The LMI Center has updated the NAICS history files in both the short-term and long-term industry employment projections programs. As a small state, North Dakota's CES program does not provide adequate industrial and geographic detail to be utilized as the basis of the industry time series. Instead, North Dakota opted to use the QCEW, which provides much more detailed data. However, QCEW data was not available until April 2010. As a result, the statewide and sub-state long-term industry projections for the 2008 to 2018 period were completed in May 2010. These industry projections were then posted to our LMI website in May 2010. Statewide long-term occupational projections were then completed in May 2010 and were submitted to the Projections Management Partnership. The 2008-2018 occupational projections were then posted to our website in May 2010.

The LMI Center also began work on the short term 2009-2011 industry and occupational projections. These were completed and posted to our website in June of 2010.

North Dakota has also produced short and long term occupational projections at the sub-state level for each of the three MSA's and for the balance of state. However, the extremely small OES sample in many of the sub-state industry cells can result in weak or non-existent occupational staffing patterns in some area/industry cells. As a result, we evaluated these sub-state occupational projections for the various sub-state areas and found they were not reliable enough to publish.

The LMI Center has developed several products utilizing the projections data. The *North Dakota Employment Projections to 2018* which provides the full occupational and industrial detail for the 2018 projections along with a variety of other occupational information was published in the summer of 2010. In addition, the LMI Center produced a web exclusive *2009-2011 Projections* publication which was posted on our website in the summer of 2010.

In previous program years, the LMI Center developed a new product designed for students-- *Occupational Trading Cards*. These cards utilized information from our occupational projections and our OES wage information in a colorful baseball card type format. Each of the nine trading cards contain information on wages, training requirements, number of annual openings, and employment for specific occupations within that occupational family. These cards have been extremely popular with schools, career fairs, career counselors, and even in our One-Stop resource rooms. With the completion of the 2008-2018 projections, the LMI Center is working on another update of the trading cards that will include the most recent wage information and 2018 projections data.

The LMI Center has also developed a series of *Occupational Brochures*. These new brochures, designed to complement the *Occupational Trading Cards*, were developed to provide older students and adult job seekers with pertinent occupational information such as the projections data, wage data, training requirements, skill requirements, etc., in an adult format. These occupational brochures are also in the process of being updated with the new 2018 projections data and the most recent wage data from the OES Program.

The LMI Center again provided projections and wage data to the CRN for the *Career Outlook*. The annual publication, which is now in a magazine format is provided to high school students, their parents, career guidance counselors, One-Stop resource rooms, etc. In addition, Marcia Slag and Susan Simonson from LMI have been involved with NDCRN in assisting with the new layout and content of the *Career Outlook*.

### **3. Publish an Annual Economic Analysis Report for the Governor and the SWIB**

In odd numbered years when the Governor's Workforce Summit is held, the Workforce Intelligence Council (WIC) is responsible for the development of the state of the workforce report. This report also serves as the center piece for the Governor's Workforce Summit held in October. In previous years, a consultant (Dr. Richard Judy) had been hired to write this report. However, the Workforce Intelligence Council was so impressed with the previous year's edition of the *North Dakota Workforce Review* produced by the LMI Center, they decided to adopt the 2009 edition of the *North Dakota Workforce Review* as the official workforce publication for the 2009 Governor's Workforce Summit.

This being an even numbered year, there will be no Governor's Workforce Summit. However, the LMI Center once again is producing the *2010 North Dakota Workforce Review*, for its customers. Along with some new expanded analysis of the state workforce supply and demand, this report will again contain a wide variety of workforce information on the state of North Dakota, the eight Governor's Planning Regions, and the 53 North Dakota counties.

### **4. Post products, information, and reports on the Internet.**

Three years ago, the LMI Center launched NDWIN (North Dakota Workforce Intelligence Network), our new electronic delivery system which was purchased from Geographic Solutions. This system has been very well received. We have received very positive feedback from our customers on the capabilities of the system, ease of use, and overall appearance of NDWIN. During this past year, we have continued to make improvements to and add new data items and products to NDWIN. In February 2010, North Dakota implemented the newest version (10.5) of Geographic Solutions Analyzer product.

In addition to the Analyzer portion, NDWIN contains a Publications Section which contains PDF's of all our publications. A third section called the Resource Center contains links to FAQ's, a glossary, list of acronyms, methodologies, contact information, and a related sites section. These sections were designed and populated by the LMI Center's web team. Recently, two new items were developed and added to the Resource Center. An online interactive wage calculator was developed which allows the user to type in an hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual wage and convert it to hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual. A *Methods for Counting Jobs* piece was also developed and added to the Resource Center. This matrix displays the five different employment series (CES, QCEW, LAUS, OES, and Census) and describes the differences among them as far as coverage, data source, frequency, geography, inclusion & exclusions, time delay, advantages, limitations, etc.

With the new Analyzer version 10.5 in place, the LMI Center has begun conducting training on NDWIN for each of our One-Stop offices, and several other partner agencies and user groups during the summer of 2010. This training, which highlights the new features of the version of Analyzer, has served as a good refresher on the use of NDWIN and has been very well received.

The LMI Center has developed several new web-based products for our customers and is continuing to explore ways to utilize the web to minimize the costs and increased turnaround time associated with printing and hard copy distribution. As a result, the *Labor Availability Studies*, *Largest Employer Lists*, *Religious Employment Survey*, *Bakken Oil Formation*, *Demographic Profiles*, and *Affirmative Action* publications are available only on our website. Because of the limited shelf life of some products and the many areas (i.e. users can pick from 24 areas for the *Labor Availability Studies*, 13 areas for the *Largest Employer Lists*, about 75 areas for the *Demographic Profiles*, and all 53 counties for the *Affirmative Action* publications), the use of PDFs was the most efficient and timely method of delivery. All of these web based products can be accessed at the Products Section of NDWIN.

## **5. Partner and Consult on a Continuing Basis with Workforce Investment Boards**

The LMI Center continues to work closely with the Workforce Development Council (WDC). (The WDC is North Dakota's only Workforce Investment Board.) Designated staff have attended the WDC meetings and LMI staff members have made several presentations to the WDC and its subcommittees during the past program year. We have provided technical expertise to the WDC in the development and design of new surveys to provide valuable information on labor availability and occupational skills needs in the workforce. In addition, the LMI Manager is a member of both the Workforce Intelligence Council and the Workforce Intelligence Council Steering Committee, which meet quarterly and monthly, respectively.

The LMI Center partnered with the WDC and the Department of Commerce to conduct Labor Availability Studies in 24 North Dakota communities/areas. This was the fourth round of these very useful and highly requested surveys. The Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota completed the telephone survey in the spring of 2010. The LMI Center then compiled the results and provided the analysis and narrative reports to the 24 communities.

The LMI Center held monthly economic briefing meetings to discuss monthly employment and unemployment data releases, other new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of related topics. Representatives from the Department of Commerce, WDC, Office of Management and Budget, Governor's Staff, Congressional Staff, Dislocated Worker Unit, FINDET, and our Job Service Executive Director were invited to attend.

With the support of the WDC, Job Service North Dakota has joined the LED partnership with the Census Bureau. The LMI Center assembles the history files of wage records and QCEW data and submits them to the Census Bureau each quarter. In return, the Census Bureau provides us with Quarterly Workforce Indicators for the state and each county in North Dakota. The LMI Center provided a link to this very useful LED data on NDWIN. The LMI Center

also provides training to key users, such as the Governor and his staff, Department of Commerce staff, WDC staff, Job Service Senior Management and Customer Service Office staff, and local economic developers. The updated 'On the Map' package from LED has shown to have great potential in providing LED type data at a variety of geographic areas.

The LMI Center worked closely with the WDC and the Workforce Intelligence Council (WIC) on several other projects. The LMI Center provided variety of youth data and developed youth maps by county for the WIC's Steering Committee's Youth in Poverty publication. LMI provided the WIC Steering Committee with relevant occupational employment, wage, and projections information for their health care project and their ex-offenders project. The LMI Center was also heavily involved with the WDC in the formulating the State's WIA Strategic Plan. The LMI staff provided a variety of workforce information and wrote the economic overview section of the WIA plan.

North Dakota was a member of the seven state Rocky Mountain/Northern Plains consortium that was successful in securing a Green Jobs Grant. LMI staff spent several months in working with the other states in writing the grant, planning for grant activities, and later beginning the implementation of the grant plan in North Dakota. Unfortunately, we were unable to secure legislative approval to spend this green jobs grant money, and as a result, needed to withdraw from this consortium.

The LMI Manager is again a member of the advisory committee for the North Dakota Oil and Gas Workforce Needs study being sponsored by the WDC. The LMI Center has worked with the consultant hired to do this study and has provided him with occupational and industry information related to oilfield to serve as a basis for this survey.

The LMI Center has been actively involved in the writing of North Dakota's grant application for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative. As members of the multi-agency grant application team, LMI staff were utilized in the planning stages and later to provide LMI data and technical input in the grant writing process.

The LMI Manager is also a member of the North Dakota's FINDET board, which works on Employment and Training Follow-up information.

The LMI Center continues to handle a variety of ad hoc requests from the WDC for workforce intelligence items, special research projects, and statistical methodologies expertise.

Several special LMI studies and products have been created in support of the state Workforce Development Councils initiatives. These will be covered in section 6.

## **6. Conduct Special Studies and Economic Analysis**

In addition to the special studies and economic analysis products previously mentioned in core products 2-5, the LMI Center has produced a variety of other workforce intelligence products during the past program year.

In 2008, the LMI Center created a very popular career publication called *HOT JOBS*, displaying the top 40 occupations based on a weighted formula that included average wage, projected percentage increase growth, and number of employees. Despite the huge usage and popularity of the publication, there was some feedback from several users that this list contained mostly occupations requiring four year degrees. So in response to suggestions from those users for similar information on occupations that do not require four years of education, the LMI Center created a new publication called *North Dakota Careers by Education*. This colorful tri-fold publication lists the top 25 careers for each of the four education and work experience categories—bachelor's degree and above, associate's degree, vocational training, and work experience. Each occupation has information on typical wage, projected growth, replacement needs, tasks performed, and education/training requirement. In the short time that this publication has been out, it has become even more popular and more widely used than *HOT JOBS*. We have had to reprint *North Dakota Careers by Education* twice during this past year due to many requests from teachers, career counselors, One-Stop Offices, Career and Technical Education, and other customers who have found this very useful in career exploration.

The annual *North Dakota Employment and Wages* was published in June of 2010. This publication displays covered employment and wage data at various industrial and geographic breakouts in an updated format. This is one of the very few sources for employment and wage information for our rural counties.

Another of our most popular publications, *Wages for North Dakota Jobs*, came out in May 2010. This publication provides detailed occupational wage and employment information for the state of North Dakota, the three MSA's, and four substate regions. Based on customer feedback, the format of the publication was changed to list the wage information from all the areas (statewide, MSA's, and substate regions) together for each occupation.

The LMI Center conducts a Fringe Benefits Survey every two years. Based on feedback from our customers, the survey was designed and sample selected in a way that would allow LMI to publish fringe benefits data by area, by industry, and by size of firm. Accordingly, the LMI Center developed the *North Dakota Benefits Guide* to present the results of this survey in March 2010. This glossy brochure contains a compilation of fringe benefits information at the statewide level and in a format that allows easy comparisons of fringe benefits information from city to city, industry to industry, and by size of firm. This publication has been in high demand and print quantities were raised to meet the growing number of requests for this pertinent information.

In support of local economic development efforts and our local One-Stop offices in 13 of our largest cities, the LMI Center continues to produce the *Local Area Profiles*. The *Local Area Profiles* utilize data from the QCEW program and other sources to provide data on industry employment and wages, number of firms, firm size, census information, and other related

information for the current year and the previous year. The response we received from local economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, our business services representatives in our One-Stop offices, and other local civic and business groups continues to be extremely positive. While these profiles have been beneficial to all cities in promoting their communities, those cities that are not MSAs, and as a result, do not have any other source of employment information, found it especially valuable. Printing of the 2009 edition of the *Local Area Profiles*, which contains updated QCEW information, census information, new tax data, and the new top fifteen employers listing for each city, was completed in November 2009. The statewide *Local Area Profile* was also updated and printed. The LMI Center began assembling information for the 2010 edition of the *Local Area Profiles* late this summer.

The *2010 Largest Employer List* was updated on our website in August 2010. This annual listing provides a ranking of the top 100 employers in North Dakota based on total employment. In addition, we updated the listing of largest employers for each of the 13 largest cities in North Dakota.

Using the “IMPLAN” software, the LMI Center has done several impact analysis studies. These studies have varied from the impact of plant closings and major layoffs to the potential impact of new manufacturing plants locating in a community. The LMI Center recently purchased an updated version of IMPLAN and sent an analyst to IMPLAN training.

Job Service North Dakota was able to purchase an occupational analysis tool called TORQ with ARRA funds in the summer of 2009. LMI staff have utilized this software to create new Skills Transfer Analysis (STA) reports tailored for specific occupations in major layoffs events in North Dakota. The STA reports have been utilized by rapid response teams to help laid off workers identify related occupations for which they might qualify with little training, along with related occupational information on job openings and wages.

In response to requests from local economic developers and Native American tribal leaders, the LMI Center completed work on *Demographic Profiles* in August of 2004. Based on the most recent census information, the *Demographic Profiles* contain general demographic information, selected social characteristics, selected economic data, and housing characteristics available in PDF format on our website. Profiles were developed for all the North Dakota counties, reservations, MSAs, selected cities, and the state as a whole. Since no new Census information was available, the guides could not be updated this program year.

To better explain all its products and services, the LMI Center has developed a brochure entitled *Your Guide to LMI*. In addition to being a promotional piece for our LMI Center, this guide provides a brief explanation of all our LMI publications and NDWIN and provides an order form for customers to request publications. This Guide, which was originally distributed in 2007, has been updated this spring to reflect some of the new publications we have recently released and the changes to NDWIN. These new Guides which were distributed in June 2010 are being utilized by our One-Stops in their resource rooms, at career fairs, workshops, and in business services activities.

All of the publications listed above have been loaded on our LMI website as PDFs.

The LMI Center has also utilized these grant funds for training purposes. Several of our LMI staff have attended national conferences and training sessions to maintain currency in the national trends, identify best practices in other states, learn new statistical programs and software, and network with their counterparts from other regions of the country. All of these training activities have added to the knowledge base and technical abilities of the LMI Center staff. This in turn has and will continue to manifest itself in many new and innovative products and services for our customers.

The training of our customers is also a very high priority in North Dakota. Members of the LMI staff have provided over 20 presentations or training sessions for various customer groups during the past program year. These ranged from formal in-depth training sessions of two or three days to short presentations to specific customer groups.

Several LMI presentations were made to the WDC and the WIC Steering Committee, as well as to the North Dakota Youth Council, the Governor's staff, North Dakota Commerce Department, Interim Legislative Committees, and Job Service Senior Management and One-Stop Offices. Many other local presentations/training sessions were provided to a wide range of customer groups such as Career Fairs or classes at Valley City, Rugby, the University of Mary, Bismarck State College, and Valley City State University; Vocational Rehabilitation Conference; Business Services Conference; the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association; Red River Valley Regional Economic Group; etc. In other cases, the LMI Center provided PowerPoints, speaker's notes, and supporting information for our One-Stop staff members to make presentations to local civic or business associations.

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## **B. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION**

North Dakota feels very strongly that customer feedback is extremely important in planning for and developing an efficient and comprehensive workforce information delivery system. North Dakota used a combination of strategies to obtain feedback on customer satisfaction with existing workforce information and services, as well as suggestions for developing new products and improving existing products. As mentioned in the discussion of our activities for the various core products in Section A, the LMI Center has utilized the feedback we have received from our customers to develop several new products and delivery formats. This customer feedback will continue to be the key element the LMI Center will use in evaluating current LMI products and services and in the planning for future LMI activities.

### **1. Customer Satisfaction Surveys**

The LMI Center completed customer satisfaction surveys in the past. However, due to low response rates in the past survey, it was decided to forego a formal customer satisfaction survey. Instead, an emphasis was placed on obtaining customer feedback at the NDWIN training sessions and from informal focus groups, presentation evaluations, and one-to-one conversations with our customers.

## **2. Informal Focus Group and Meetings**

During the past year, staff members from the LMI Center made an effort to sit down and visit several of our key customers about products and services in a very informal focus group/discussion group-type setting. In addition, we have had several one-on-one sessions or group discussions with One-Stop offices, North Dakota Career Resource Network, WIC, Commerce Department, and local economic developers. These conversations have been invaluable in discovering their workforce information needs and how we might be able to help them.

## **3. Feedback From Presentations and Training Sessions**

As previously mentioned we have received valuable feedback from participants in our NDWIN training sessions and other presentations. We closely review the evaluation forms we receive from training sessions and have often received very timely ideas and suggestions from informal discussions with individuals during or after these sessions.

Listed below is a summary of the comments we have received from our customers through various informal focus groups, one on one conversations, training evaluations, and other methods of collecting feedback from our customers.

- Local businesses just eat up those Area Profiles.
- New STA reports are really cool, very helpful in working with laid off individuals.
- Hated to see the Hot Jobs go away, but we really like the Careers by Education.
- Karen has been so helpful with TORQ training and providing TORQ info sheets.
- Need more training on the new NDWIN version.
- Michael has been so helpful in preparing me for media calls.
- How can you do all this with just the funding from the Workforce Information Grant?
- Looking forward to Craig Koch's new North Dakota Career Publication, when is it coming out?
- Can we get more information on Vets?
- Can you put out a publication on Green Jobs?
- Nice job on the Bakken oil study!
- Dashboard products are great idea, can't wait to see finished product.
- Love the new Careers by Education.
- LMI staff have been invaluable in putting together our strategic plan.
- The LMI info you provide for Rapid Response events has been extremely helpful to our clients.
- Can you do Area Profiles for smaller communities?
- State of Workforce Report is very helpful for rural areas like ours—it's the only workforce data we have for our county.
- Michael does a great job of answering my LMI requests.
- Wages for energy occupations are misleading because overtime isn't included in HOT JOBS and Careers by Education. Can you put overtime wages on those publications?
- Really like the new look of LMI publications.
- We are using NDWIN more all the time.
- Careers by Education are great resource for career exploration classes.
- Can you give us a lay person's explanation of LED?
- Interactive Hot Jobs on NDWIN is amazing.
- The Occupational Trading cards are a hit at school job fairs.
- We appreciate the help the LM Center provided for our RIG application.
- Occupational wage data on oil field occupations is out of date by time we get it up here.

- Careers by Education is great. We have schools calling for more copies.
- Like to new look and usability of NDWIN.
- Like new colorful layout—doesn't look like a stuffy government agency put it out.
- LMI Staff is great to work with, very responsive and professional.
- Very few people in our office actually use the Analyzer in NDWIN, they just go to the publications page.
- Methods of Counting Jobs is very helpful in explaining employment difference to customers.
- New LED information has a lot of potential for economic developers.
- Can we get a HOT JOBS for two year degree or less occupations?
- Could use information on skills needs.
- Need to be mindful that not all areas (i.e. rural, tribal reservations) have access to internet.
- New look of the products make us (One-Stop Staff) look professional with our customers.
- Great job on NDWIN. It looks great and is easier to use.
- Love the idea of being able to link to current job openings for each occupation in HOT JOBS.
- Demographic Profiles very useful in Turtle Mountain.
- My students are really using the ND Careers by Education.
- Good to see LMI staff visit local offices, we learn so much from them.
- Like recent changes in LMI publications.
- LMI staff has always been very helpful to me.
- Marcia did an amazing job on the NDWIN training.
- Some publications are too overwhelming –could we get summary sheets.
- The new LMI publications ROCK!!
- Can LMI develop a template that we can use to put together customized packages of local labor market information for businesses looking to locate in our area?
- Largest Employer list is very popular with local civic leaders.
- Does LMI actually use our comments in designing publications?
- Appreciate the support we got from Michael and Duane, I have them on my speed dial.
- Need more localized products.
- Can we get more products—posters, brochures, etc on occupations that do not require a four year degree.
- Great new publications—you are on the right track.
- Can you get us information potential worker pools?
- People like to see graphs, charts, bullets, --it's easier for them to understand.
- Work with local office staff in evaluating new ideas.
- Utilize local office staff in tracking down nonrespondents to largest employer listing.
- Could CSA IV host a focus group of local economic developers and LMI?
- Thank you for coming out and asking us for feedback.
- Would like to see more mapping of data.
- Can you add the Air Force Bases to your mailing lists?
- It's nice to have something professional looking to give to businesses when we call on them.
- Should have LMI products and services info and links to our info, on mini-CD's for handouts.
- Would like to see us there (local office) on a more regular basis.

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### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OR CHANGES TO THE SUITE OF CORE PRODUCTS**

The list of core products and services for the Workforce Information Grant has evolved over the past few years. The current Suite of Core Products provides a relatively concise grouping of the most common categories of products produced by most states while allowing individual states the flexibility to tailor products to the most critical needs in their state. Although it is important for several of the products, such as the Workforce Information Database and Projections to be consistent across the

nation, the many differences from state to state require that individual LMI departments maintain this flexibility to address the workforce information needs unique to their state.

As such, North Dakota does not have many recommendations for changes to the Suite of Core Products.

The following are a few observations we have made based on conversations with our various customers:

- The need for fringe benefit information is becoming more and more of a critical need for our business customers. Fringe benefit surveys should be able to identify differences in fringe benefit packages offered by the geographic area, industry, and size of businesses. North Dakota currently conducts its own fringe benefits surveys as a part of core product 6, but this is one item that not all states currently produce.
- Our customers are constantly requesting more localized products and services. Individual communities are looking for workforce information that they can use to measure the health and growth of their communities and that they can use to promote their areas. We believe that each state needs to develop some series of localized products.
- As we have developed new products and services and made existing ones more useful, our customers are becoming very reliant on many of the products we produce under the Workforce Information Grant. Accordingly, it is critical that adequate funding continues to flow to the state LMI departments through the Workforce Information Grant so that these customers will continue to have access to the workforce information they need and have come to depend upon us to produce.