

Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant  
Annual Performance Report  
Program Year 2009  
Labor Market Information Division  
Employment Security Commission of North Carolina

**Accomplishments by Deliverable**

The Labor Market Information Division (LMID) of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina met planned PY 2009 milestones as specified in the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant.

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

**Outcome**

The LMID populated the Workforce Information Database (WID) version 2.4 with 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 LMI's Internet-based delivery systems, including the primary website delivery application D4 – Demand Driven Data Delivery. The North Carolina WID was also used to facilitate responses for special request for information from state, regional and local workforce development boards, economic development entities, partner agencies, and other governmental officials. The occupational licensing data was completed.

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

**Outcome**

Statewide long-term (2008 to 2018) and short-term (2009 to 2011) industry and occupational projections were completed using the methodology, software tools and guidance developed by the Projections Managing Partnership (PMP). Both the long-term and short-term statewide occupational projections were submitted for public dissemination following the procedures established by the PMP. North Carolina projections staff also participated in the Micro Matrix training session held in Golden, Colorado.

In addition, projection staff also completed the preparation work for the development of the long-term 2008 – 2018 industry and occupational projections for local Workforce Development Board (WDB) areas. The staff were also able to complete industry projections for many of the WDBs.

A proto type poster presenting the top demand occupations was produced and circulated to the WDB staff for review and comment. Copies of the finalized poster will be provided to each of the JobLink and ESC local offices. The poster highlights average annual wages, education and training, major occupational industry, and career cluster for each occupation.

Projections information has proven to be particularly valuable in the implementation of Gov. Bev Perdue's "JobsNow: 12 in 6" initiative, which was developed to assist unemployed workers with returning to work. As part of this effort, the NC Community College System and the NC Department of Commerce joined together to develop and implement "12 in 6" to help train North Carolinians in needed job skills within six 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 NC Community Colleges provide training opportunities in these 12 occupational areas that can be completed in six 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 planning for workforce development, programs and budgets, public policy, and career exploration activities. In order to facilitate the accurate interpretation of these data, LMID staff members 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.

As a member of the Projections Management Partnership group, LMID also served as the clearinghouse for the PY 2009 short-term and long-term occupational projections. States were asked to submit their statewide projections to the LMID and NC staff members 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.

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

#### **Outcome**

North Carolina's labor market conditions and workforce trends were analyzed and published in LMID's flagship publication, *The NC Today*. This monthly economic analysis report contains graphs, charts and summary analysis for quick, easy reference. Topics in *NC Today* include employment and unemployment statistics, industry employment and wage measures, business closings and permanent layoffs, unemployment insurance benefits paid, and quarterly updates on employer cost for employee compensation. Following each month's unemployment rate news release, a softcopy of *NC Today* was emailed to the 24 WDB Director as well as posted to the LMID web portal at the following link: <http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>.

In addition to the *NC Today* publication, LMID produces and publishes two additional monthly economic analysis publications: *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions*, and *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions*. The *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions* publication provides a quick overview of North Carolina's current economic conditions including the statewide monthly unemployment rate, industry employment information and highlights of the Unemployment Insurance activities. The *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions* publication provides monthly analyses of the current economic conditions in each of the state's 14 metropolitan statistical areas along with the county labor force statistics.

During the Program Year the LMID developed and continuously updated an extensive PowerPoint presentation that focused on national and North Carolina economic conditions and the impact of the recession on the state, various sub-state geographic areas as well as impacts on the State's Unemployment Insurance System and Employment Services activities. This presentation was updated monthly and customized to meet audiences' interests and needs. During PY 2009, Information from this PowerPoint was utilized in presentations to a number of audiences, including:

- Workforce Development Directors and staff;
- members of the UNC Institute on Aging on the Recession's Impact on the Economy, Employment, and Older Workers;
- delegations of government officials from Northern Ireland and China;
- various State Legislative committees and sub-committees;
- NC Division of Workforce Development grantees, including the Allied Healthcare Regional Partnership and State Energy Partnership;
- Quarterly meetings of the Employment Security Commission;
- Employment Security Commission leadership conference; and
- North Carolina's Workforce Development Partnership conference.

#### **4. Post Products, Information and Reports on the Internet**

##### **Outcome**

North Carolina's LMID continuously strived to provide and improve the extensive labor market information products and services available via the LMID web site in PY 2009. The web site was updated with informational products and publications including: *NC Today*, *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions*, and *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions*, *Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Operations*, *LMI Quick Facts* and *ESC Monthly Activity Reports*.

A large variety of maps depicting North Carolina's population density, industry employment concentrations, unemployment insurance benefits paid by county — both over the month and over the year — regular initial claims filed monthly by county, and monthly and yearly percentage-point change in unemployment rates by county were produced and made available in the *Maps* section on the web site.

Functionality was improved to make locating and downloading desired information more user friendly through LMID's Demand Driven Data Delivery System, or D4. In addition to giving D4 a cosmetic update to complement the agency's new web site, graphing functions were added to both the LAUS and CES data sections. Also, a link was added to the 300 largest private employers in North Carolina in the QCEW section. Enhancements were also made to LMID's Workforce In-Depth application, allowing customers to select data by Workforce Development Board and Economic Development Region.

North Carolina participates in the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) program. During PY 2009, quarterly data files were submitted to the Census for processing and loading into the LED site. 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, NC 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**

##### **Outcome**

In PY 2009, LMID continued to place high priority on ensuring the usefulness of the workforce information provided and maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction.

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 partner agencies. These workforce information specialists were assigned responsibility for providing services to the state's 24 WDBs. They attended board meetings, conducted training on LMID products and services, and served as speakers at national, state and local conferences, meetings and other functions.

LMID continued to customize a *LMI Quick Facts* publication which summarized the local economic conditions for each WDB area. *LMI Quick Facts* contained labor market information selected by each board and each publication was produced on a schedule specified by the board. The local boards posted *LMI Quick Facts* on their respective web sites. The workforce information specialists provided assistance to the local boards in understanding and interpreting the information found in these publications. In addition, many of the local boards invited the LMID specialists to participate in strategic planning meetings in order to provide information on the local economic conditions and to assist the local board member in understand the local economic information presented.

Over the program year, LMID staff members continued to provide consultative services to our customers and, in particular, the workforce development partners. The demand for information, reports, surveys and other products continued to grow and expand as the economic conditions remained precious in PY 2009. The workforce information specialist (as well as other LMID staff) handle various support requests from economic developers, workforce professionals and grant writers. Examples of the support provided by LMID's workforce information specialists include:

- Serving on the Grant Review Team for the NC Rural Center's Community Mobilization Grants. These grants, funded by Recovery Act funds, were designed to provide local or regional responses to dislocated workers in rural communities. This participation included reviewing and scoring assigned Request for Proposals. Worked with Grantee, Regeneration Development Groups/Scotland Neck by participating in onsite résumé, communication skills and job-seeking skills workshops.
- Serving as member of the Winston-Salem Urban League's Business Consortium. Also, presented workshops in effective communications and job-seeking skills in the Consortium's 2010 Claim Your Career Conference.
- Serving as member of Business Alliance of Carroll Middle School in Raleigh. The Alliance helps students to learn which fields will have job openings when they are ready to enter the labor force, and informs parents and teachers with information on in-demand occupations so they will be able to assist their children with career planning.

- Supporting JobLink management teams by attending partner meetings and sharing information and best practices, including Chambers of Commerce and Business Forum functions.
- Providing O\*NET and electronic data tools presentations to Rehabilitation Counseling students at UNC-Chapel Hill.
- Participating in meetings and information sessions held by Community Development Cooperations and faith-based and community organizations that were interested in becoming or housing Share Network Access Points.

The workforce information specialist also made presentations and conducted workshops at more than 20 local, state or national conferences for workforce development professionals, WIA partner agencies, economic developers, and the business community. Staff members also participated in more than 10 exhibit opportunities and provided printed products and demonstrated interactive tools. They also exhibited LMID products and services at four partner job fairs. At least 10 training sessions 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, employers, ex-offender employment re-entry groups, middle and high school students, DOL/ETA representatives, regional and national forums, and the LMID Training Institute.

In addition, LMID's staff was expanded to include three labor market developers who provided services to employers. They focus on such services as employee opinion surveys, turnover consultation, job analysis, specification and various informational seminars. These labor market developers collaborate with the workforce information specialist to blend activities in order to support both the WDBs and employers.

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

### **Outcome**

As North Carolina's workforce development system continued to respond to the challenges of the economic situation, timely information on the state and local economies was needed. PY 2009, brought an increase in the types and frequency of workforce information requests from our workforce development partners and other customer groups. Specifically, these requests focused on local unemployment rates, number of unemployed persons and related information concerning the industries and occupations most impacted by the 2007-2009 recession. Each request was reviewed, the best information collected, analyzed and presented in a format that best met our customer's needs.

As the demand for the special studies and economic analyses grew at a steady pace 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 daily from workforce boards, local economic development entities, legislative staffers, educational partners, members of the press, and other customer groups. The 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.

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 the *NC Today* and the *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions*, for use by the governor, legislators, agency administrators, workforce development officials, economic developers, county commissioners, other policy making officials and the public. Electronic copies of the *NC Today* are available on the LMID web portal via <http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

In addition to the monthly *NC Today* and the *North Carolina Labor Market Conditions* releases, the LMID provided overviews county labor force, employment, and unemployment data in the *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions* publication. This publication is provided in conjunction with the monthly county and Metropolitan Statistical Areas press release. These publications are available via the LMID web portal via: <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 LMID web portal via: <http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

Development work also began on a new publication tentatively titled *County Focus*, which covers additional monthly economic activity not found in *North Carolina County Labor Market Conditions*. In addition to labor force data and unemployment rates, announced business closings and layoffs, new business openings, regular UI benefits, initial claims, and UI benefits paid by county are featured. This publication will included economic analysis for the MSAs, as well as at-a-glance labor force and industry employment data, are included, as well as labor force, unemployment rates and civilian labor force estimates at the city level.

## **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 trainings at conferences, other meetings and via e-mail. LMID's 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 as helped to increase our user community.

## **Recommendation for Improvement or change to the Deliverables**

Efforts will continue to adapt delivery of the products produced under this grant based on the needs of the state and local workforce boards. The delivery of information via electronic means while maintaining high data quality standard and integrity will remain a focus for the LMID. The policy of responding to request for improvement to products and the production of new products will continue within funding and staffing limitations. LMID recommends that ETA continue to promote the sharing of best practices for workforce information delivery and publication.