

**State of Utah**

**PY 2010 Workforce Information Core Products and  
Services**

**Annual Performance Report**

This report is a description of the activities conducted by Utah's Workforce Research and Analysis Division (WRA) during PY2010 for each of ETA's core products. The goal of these activities was not only to meet the requirements of the PY2010 TEGL 3-10, but to also deliver superior customer service through the production and dissemination of labor market information. As demonstrated in this report, WRA has set high standards in this endeavor. To do so, WRA leverages financial resources from our state's workforce administration and other one-time grant monies. For each core product, the portion of ETA grant money expended on that product is listed. However, this does not necessarily reflect the total cost of that activity.

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

**PY2010 Expenditures: \$66,250**

WRA is currently operating the latest version of WIDb software, including all the core tables as prescribed by ETA. During PY2010, 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. Additionally, eight Utah-specific WID tables were populated and updated. WRA updated the content of the database in a timely manner. Utah maintained the occupational licensing data and updated the required files.

In addition, Utah developed new ways to browse the Utah Economic Data Viewer (UEDV). Customers can now choose to search an alphabetical listing of industries and an alphabetical listing of occupations to find the information they need. This enhancement was the result of customer feedback. Customers have a difficult time finding information using the standard coding systems and this is another way to help them find what they need while using the coding structure. Generally, it is helpful to have different methods of searching for information.

WRA invited a Certified Public Management (CPM) group of students to research ways to expand the use and influence of Utah's LMI resources in the UEDV. The CPM group accepted our proposal as a project and provided a report based on six weeks of research. The group reported that the primary reason more customers don't rely on the UEDV is that they perceive the data are too old and not posted quickly enough. They

recommended that WRA post the data more quickly, provide a “last updated” statement, provide an FAQ page, and post a schedule of updates to improve customers’ perceptions. WRA plans to implement these recommendations during the PY2011 as well as review and update the look and functionality of the UEDV.

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

### **PY2010 Expenditures: \$103,517**

WRA 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 and published statewide short-term projections for the 2010-2012 period and substate long-term projections for the 2008-2018 period. This data was used to update the WIDb and was also submitted to the national projections group for review and public dissemination.

Both long and short-term occupation projections were presented to Utah’s customers in many formats including the UEDV, a full-listing spreadsheet on the state website and on the new utahfutures.org website which is the State’s new career information delivery system (described further in Core Product E below), and many articles in Utah’s *Trendlines* magazine. Additionally, Utah’s UWORKS system (our employment counselors’ client career planning tool) links directly to the appropriate occupational information in the Workforce Information Database. This makes it easier for employment counselors to use the projections to help their clients make informed career decisions.

Utah reviewed its job outlook publications this year and decided to produce a new brochure targeting adult job seekers and students who are trying to make career decisions and/or get a job. It is for the general public and can also be used by employment and/or school counselors. The goal of the publication is to provide people with quick, accurate, applicable, and local information to help them decide which job to pursue, and provide information they can immediately act on or use as a tool with other information. If appropriate, they should be motivated to use other tools/resources to help them meet their goals such as finding a training provider. The brochure should convey the message that we have important resources that can assist them in career planning and getting a job. This publication has been primarily distributed through the mail, the employment centers, job fairs/workshops, through our education partners, electronically to subscribers, and is published on the Web.

In addition, Utah is producing a job outlook publication geared toward those who make decisions on policy and therefore need to understand the occupational projections in the context of the broader state or local economy. Such people may include: economic developers, the governor’s office, DWS Economic Service Area Directors, DWS Executives, and educational planners. Broad findings surmised by those who produce the projections are provided in addition to the results of the industry and occupational projections in context of the state of the economy, current business cycles, and recent

trends in local labor markets. In presenting the results in a broader context, the hope is that policy makers will be able to make informed decisions that take into account the realities of Utah's labor market. This publication shows decision makers a way for sound policy decisions to be made based on labor market projections without having to exactly predict the occupational mix of the future. Generalized trends can inform policy and effective policy does not need to necessarily single out specific occupations. Because this publication has a more limited audience than most other WRA publications, distribution will primarily occur through our partnerships with those in the audience delineated above.

In addition, in order to continually educate our customers, we are evaluating and developing tools and trainings that will provide explanation and guidance on the new products and the occupational outlook information.

***Core Product C: Conduct and Publish Relevant Economic Analyses, Special Workforce Information, and/or Economic Studies Determined to be of Benefit to the Governor and State and Local WIBs***

**PY2010 Expenditures: \$49,688**

WRA was somewhat limited in its ability to independently fulfill this deliverable because of the preestablished existence of an annual economic analysis report for Governor Herbert. 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).

For this year, DEA has decided to hold off on publishing the full report until all of the 2010 data for all contributing agencies has been finalized. In its place, a shorter economic analysis report was published. At this point, the full report has not been published.

WRA provided written economic analysis for all eight Economic Service Areas (ESA) designated by DWS in the state. The ESA directors used this information in the annual plans they are required to write using data to justify their decisions. Written analysis and appropriate information in tables and graphs was provided at the county level for each area. In addition, regional economists followed up with each director to ensure they had the information they needed for their specific plan in their areas, assisted them in utilizing the data in the plan, and answered any questions. This information was compiled into a

single report entitled “Counties in Review” for other users who may want to refer to this local analysis provided to the ESAs.

Two special requests resulted from the agency’s economic service area planning process: a list of Occupations for Training and identifying industries that played an important or significant role in the ESA economies. WRA developed these lists at the ESA level. There has been some discussion about developing lists at the county level, where possible, next year. This process enabled the regional economists to work closely with ESA directors and gain a better understanding of their needs and objectives. It also provided an opportunity to contribute significantly to the DWS planning process.

Utah witnessed continued momentum regarding the Targeted Employment Areas (TEA) program led by the United States Customs and Immigration Services agency. WRA staff continue to devote time and resources to the identification and certification of TEAs for local private entities wishing to receive the designation. Members of the WRA staff met with many different TEA designation seekers. Through outreach to BLS national office and other states’ LAUS programs, WRA then obtained official clearance through the governor’s office to provide LMI for TEA proposals. WRA then created an informational website to help economic developers and investors interested in participating in the program. The website is updated on a regular basis and includes contact information for those wanting to connect with WRA staff in developing their TEA proposals. WRA has also consulted with legislators in the state who have shown interest in supporting the TEA program.

An extensive study on the training services administered by DWS was conducted by WRA in PY 2010. Sophisticated econometric and statistical techniques were used to estimate the causal effects of various training services received by DWS customers. The research is presented in a full report, a policy brief, and presentations given across the state. All of these products are available on the web.

WRA also studied the employment impacts resulting from ARRA stimulus funding for the remediation of the radioactive waste associated with the Moab Tailing Project. Research was carried out as part of the ETA-funded Green Jobs consortium and consisted of data collection and the economic modeling of labor market impacts using a statewide input-output model. Results were summarized in 17-page report with relevance for local, state, and national audience, and addressed the policy issue of the effectiveness of stimulus funding.

Monthly Labor Review - Book Review: WRA economists reviewed a recently published book that examined the effects of NAFTA on the labor market and labor unions in the affected countries. While the book did not specifically address Utah’s labor market, building knowledge of trade environments is beneficial to the Utah economy as the governor pursues expansion of export activity in the state. The review was published in the December 2010 issue of the Monthly Labor Review.

WRA economists also wrote an article on economic factors influencing prisoner recidivism: Research on analyzing prisoner recidivism among parolees from the Utah

State Prison system. Used several advanced statistical methods and focused on economic factors influencing recidivism, and results were summarized in a 14-page article published in the Papers and Proceedings of the Joint Statistical Meetings for an international audience. Highly relevant to development of corrections policy.

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

#### **PY2010 Expenditures: \$82,814**

For program year 2010, WRA posted numerous workforce information tools on the Internet through several different modes, including publications in downloadable formats, data and statistics in the Utah Economic Data Viewer and in downloadable 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 2010 and made available to our customers on the web.

Utah’s career publications are still made available on the web and hardcopy. The labor market information contained in them has been updated. To better align with activities within the agency, WRA will be working with the communication division to develop content that supports the current goals of the agency.

WRA 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 above), the Counties in Review (discussed in Core Product C above), the Occupational Outlook brochure (discussed in Core Product B above), and the monthly employment report (discussed in Core Product E below). WRA is now also devoting resources toward making text versions of as many publications as possible, so as to accommodate readers of all unique abilities.

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 (all of which are discussed in Core Product E below).

All web products are placed on the web within days of their production, and for some hard-copy publications, even before the publications are printed. WRA 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 Other Key Workforce and Economic Development Partners and Stakeholders***

### **PY2010 Expenditures: \$111,799**

On a continuing basis, WRA partnered on a continuing basis with the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) and the supporting regional workforce councils in program year 2010. The reorganization of the agency has led WRA to partner with local economic development groups and key workforce stakeholders through our work with the Economic Service Area directors. Our economists continue to support what activity remains in the regional councils and also the new industry workgroups that will likely take the place of the councils in the near future.

In response to the Department's change in direction concerning workforce development, WRA leveraged funds from other SWA resources, and in partnership with the SWA, developed a new position within the WRA unit. Enough funds were leveraged to create one new FTE and to restructure the duties of an existing FTE. The incumbents of these positions, called 'Labor Market Information Specialists' focus their work on connecting with internal (primarily, but not exclusively) users of WRA's LMI products. WRA's goal is to utilize the LMI Specialists to increase the transparency within the SWA, be more responsive to the Department's needs (especially at the local level), and to provide custom-fit products and services in order to meet the Department's demand-driven perspective.

WRA also supported talent development efforts in Utah by participating in the UtahFutures Steering Committee. UtahFutures is Utah's official career information system as well as the tool used for career development by all of the committee partners, who primarily represent public and higher education. Labor Market Information is an integral part of the system which is delivered to customers in a user-friendly manner that will assist them in making career decisions. In PY2010 enhancements were made to the system that include Utah's star rating scale and the short occupational outlook descriptions. Users will now have more labor market information presented to them within the system.

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.
- Economists in WRA update a daily blog with local and state information about the economy, economic development activities, and highlight new WRA products and information as it is released.

- 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.

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 to refine mailing lists and ensure effective distribution of hard copies.

Regional councils each had access to a Regional Economist and LMI Specialist assigned to their region that developed and produced information and responded to the needs of the particular region. The Regional Economists and LMI Specialists 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 and LMI Specialists provide a range of services, from data requests to economic reports to informational presentations.

WRA continued partnering with The Governor's Office of Economic Development (GOED) in updating the custom labor market information (in both table and map formats) for the NAICS defined economic clusters, and provided data for verification of minimum wage requirements GOED incentives recipients must meet. WRA provided verification that the requirement was met (actual data not shared, although data sharing is covered by Utah statute) in over 200 instances during PY2010.

WRA also assisted the USTAR (Utah Science, Technology and Research) group, a GOED partner, by providing quarterly information on new establishments from the QCEW program for PY2010.

### ***Feedback***

WRA 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. WRA 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. The Certified Public Management (CPM) group gathered customer information and feedback regarding the UEDV as part of their study. Below are findings that we are going to use to help guide us as we make changes to our website and our data delivery systems during the upcoming year.

Most common customers of the UEDV:

- DWS Workforce Development Division
- Governor's Office of Economic Development

- Utah State Vocational Rehabilitation
- Private sector human resources staff
- Financial institutions
- Universities

59.7 percent of users reported that they felt they understood economic data well or very well

Most users learn about the UEDV through state websites

Tool most commonly accessed on the UEDV from most accessed to least accessed:

- Utah Occupational Wages
- Utah Occupational Explorer
- Firmfind
- County & Statewide Information
- Utah Industry Employment and Wages
- Utah Labor Force Data Viewer
- ETA-Provided Employer Database from InfoUSA
- Utah Population Data Viewer

Survey responses show that information respondents have looked for include:

- Wage/salary information
- Job openings
- Jobs by industry
- Unemployment
- Industry information
- State demographics
- Companies for a specific industry
- Employers by county

There are themes that emerged from responses to the open-ended question: “What would improve your experience or satisfaction with the UEDV.” Respondents would like to feel as though they are accessing the most current data available, they would like the navigation of the site to be easier, and they would like the information to be more accessible—it is hard to find.