

Labor Market and Economic Analysis, PO Box 9046, Olympia, WA 98507-9046

## **ANNUAL WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT PERFORMANCE REPORT PY 2010**

July 15, 2011

Washington state is submitting its summary performance report for Program Year (PY) 2010, as required of Workforce Information grantees by 29 CFR 97.40(b)(1). It summarizes accomplishments and the results of assessments of customer satisfaction with the state's workforce information products and services, and recommendations for improvement to workforce information and services.

As agreed to in the Statement of Work Deliverables, Washington State has produced five deliverables in PY 2010. The deliverables include the population and maintenance of the Workforce Information Database (WIDb), the production of industry and occupational employment projections, and other workforce information and economic products and services required to support ETA national needs and those of state, regional and local workforce development systems.

### **A. Accomplishment of Deliverables**

#### **I. Populate the Workforce Information Database (WIDb) with state and local data**

*States are required to implement and maintain the most current version of the WIDb and populate all tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the Analyst Resource Center (ARC) site.*

- *Database content must be updated timely in order to be as current as the state's most recent publications and data releases. Information and technical support are provided on the ARC Website at <http://www.workforceinfodb.org/>.*
- *States are required to populate the database with the license.dbf and licauth.dbf licensing files. Licensing data must be updated every two years. States are required to submit licensing data through the National Licensing Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for inclusion on <http://www.CareerInfoNet.org>.*

- *States are expected to avail themselves of ARC training and support and to use WI grant program funds to do so.*

- **Accomplishments**

*States must provide a concise summary of the outcomes achieved and an analysis that explains the cause of any significant variance from the Grant Certification. Describe any actions required to accomplish the required deliverables.*

### **1. Outcomes achieved**

Throughout the year, Washington State's Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) branch continued to populate and maintain all database tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the Analyst Resource Center (ARC). In addition to the designated core tables, Washington also updated the tables associated with local employment dynamics.

The data updates included, several monthly updates as well as an increasing number of updates at the substate level, including Workforce Development Areas, counties and metropolitan areas.

- **Data Updates**

- County Profiles, written by the Regional Labor Economists, provide descriptions, analyses and summaries of each county. These reports, which were published periodically, are now published on Workforce Explorer every year. All reports are current within the year. This change was driven by customer demand.
- County data tables, which were updated periodically, to synchronize with the County Profiles, are now updated quarterly. This change has made up to 66 data sheets per county available with data refreshed quarterly, where appropriate, to customers who access Workforce Explorer. This change was driven by customer demand.

- Monthly updates of current industry estimates at the state and county levels
- Monthly updates to current labor force and unemployment rates by county
- Monthly updates to unemployment insurance claimants at the state and county levels
- Annual updates of occupational wages for metropolitan areas and Workforce Development Areas (WDAs)
- Annual updates of short-term and long-term occupational employment estimates for WDAs
- Semiannual updates of the Employer Database (InfoGroup)
- Quarterly updates of the Census of Employment and Wages for counties
- Update of training programs, providers and completers
- Annual updates to population estimates

Access to the database was available to users through the Workforce Explorer – LMEA’s main labor market information delivery system. The backup procedures and hosting safeguards allowed virtually uninterrupted access to this data throughout the year.

This database also provides data for other applications, such as Career Clusters, Local Employment Dynamics (LED), Economic and Industry dashboards and the Unemployment Insurance Adjudicator Assistant as well as advanced analytical tools for Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) and Current Employment Statistics (CES).

## **2. Deliverables schedule**

*States must provide a concise summary of the extent to which the activity has conformed to the deliverables schedule, including an explanation for the cause of any significant variance from the schedule.*

- All milestones were completed as planned.

## **3. Aggregate expenditures**

*States must provide a concise summary of the actual aggregate expenditures and an explanation for any significant variance from estimated aggregate expenditures.*

- Actual expenditures were consistent with estimated expenditures.

## **II. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections**

### **A. Accomplishments**

*States must provide a concise summary of the outcomes achieved and an analysis that explains the cause of any significant variance from the Grant Certification. Describe any actions required to accomplish the required deliverable.*

#### **1. Outcomes achieved**

LMEA produced and distributed industry and occupational employment projections for Washington State and 12 local Workforce Development Areas (WDAs) in May 2011. LMEA used a North American Industry Classification System (NAICS)-based historical industry employment time series from January 1990 to September 2010 for this project. NAICS-based staffing patterns were constructed using information from the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey.

The complication for this round of projections was the process of transitioning from the SOC (Standard Occupational Classification) 2000 to the SOC 2010 coding system. Because OES estimations are produced in a revolving three-year period, two years were coded in the older SOC whereas one year was coding in the newer SOC. As a result some miscoded occupations had to be fixed manually. All national data from MacroMatrix were available only in SOC 2000, so it was necessary to convert OES outputs to SOC 2000 for projections. However, for use in the training benefits list, LMEA developed alternative projections in SOC 2010. In cases where LMEA had one-to-many relationships, the most appropriate codes were established. LMEA fully understands that all conversions between coding systems can cause a loss in accuracy, but it was necessary to produce usable outputs.

This transition in coding system and the fact that the MicroMatrix (national data) system did not transition at the same time required a significant amount of extra work for this round of projections. It was achieved only through the use of alternative standard software tools. Washington state used the same methodology proposed by the Projections Workgroup and Managing Partnership, but implemented the methodology internally using the SAS (statistical software) forecasting system and leading economic indicators from the Global Insights Company, rather than consortium software tools.

Past experience indicates that customers expect both accurate and timely industry and occupational employment projections. In this round of projections, significant attention was paid to the ability of the models to predict recovery of state and local area employment trends. LMEA also partially incorporated change factors in occupational forecasts, which was based on detailed analyses of the consistency of national change factors with local trends. Only a very limited number of factors was finally selected. LMEA started with aggregated levels of projections, and then used the Global Insight Model and inputs from forecasting staff from the Washington State Forecast Council and the Washington State Office of Financial Management. The advanced forecasting system from SAS was used to select the best model or combination of the models. The system includes 42 default autoregression models, supplemented with a few customized models with independent variables. LMEA's two main independent variables (regressors) were:

1. Industry employment forecasts for the industries in the Global Insight Model
2. The forecast of total nonfarm employment for the state, using the SAS forecasting system and the Global Insight Forecast of the national total nonfarm employment

The selection of the regression model (or few models), to add to the forecasting system for each industry, was based on standard regression statistics for the parameters. The custom-built models were added to the default models in the system.

The goal of “fitting” in a forecasting system is to build the model that will help predict the future. The main criteria used to select such models are based on different types of prediction errors (the

SAS Time Series Forecasting System includes 13 criteria from which to choose) in and out of the sample.<sup>1</sup> LMEA mainly used the Mean Absolute Percent Error (MAPE) as its criterion. The final forecast often can be improved by combining a few forecasting models. The SAS forecasting system includes a sophisticated tool for combining such forecasts, which is based on optimization of weights of the selection. The selected models (or combination of the models) are used to produce initial forecasts.

The aggregated projections were used in a step-down approach for industry and sub-state disaggregation. In this step, LMEA first used “proc model” in SAS software, which significantly increased the speed of the process. To smooth the results, LMEA used the basic stability controls for dynamic systems. Having flexible software and models permit estimation of the employment impacts of major labor market disruptions, such as plant closings or new plant openings. The state uses the projected outcomes and system impacts for policy decisions, program administration and curriculum development.

## **2. Deliverables schedule**

*States must provide a concise summary of the extent to which the activity has conformed to the deliverables schedule, including an explanation for the cause of any significant variance from the schedule.*

All activities conformed to planned milestones. As indicated in LMEA’s plan, work on the projections continued throughout the program year. Both the short-term and long-term projections were completed in the fourth quarter of PY 2010, and the results became available to the public in electronic form, starting with May 2011. The specific milestones were as follows:

- Refined NAICS-based historical industry employment database - December 2010

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<sup>1</sup> The technique, called ex-post projections or hold-out-sample (in SAS), is used to estimate out-of-sample errors. The idea of this approach is to estimate a model on a sample shorter than the available observations, and then make forecasts and calculate errors for observations that are available, but are not included in the sample.



- Prepared NAICS-based short-term and long-term industry projections - March 2011
- Prepared screened NAICS-based staffing pattern from OES survey data - April 2011
- Prepared short-, medium- and long-term occupational projections - May 2011
- Populated the Workforce Information (formerly ALMIS) Database and the Workforce Explorer home page with state and area projections – May 2011
- Because LMEA did not get any transmission directions from the Projections Workgroup, it transmitted its base files in June 2011 and requested any further directions.

Washington State law (RCW 50.38) requires five-year employment projections by industry and occupation in addition to the two-year and ten-year projections required by this grant. For this purpose, LMEA received funding from the state through the ESD Claimant Placement Program (CPP) to provide this and other specified labor market information. By leveraging these resources with funding under this grant, LMEA was able to provide Washington's labor market information customers with a higher level of service of enhanced quality than would have been impossible if it did not use these funds in an integrated manner. This approach permitted Washington to be among the national leaders in the development and dissemination of labor market information products.

### **3. Aggregate expenditures**

*States must provide a concise summary of the actual aggregate expenditures and an explanation for any significant variance from estimated aggregate expenditures.*

- Actual expenditures for producing the projections were consistent with estimated expenditures

## **III. Conduct and publish relevant economic analyses, special workforce information, and/or economic studies determined to be of benefit to the governor and the state and local WIBs**

### **A. Accomplishments**

*States must provide a concise summary of the outcomes achieved and an analysis that explains the cause of any significant variance from the Grant Certification. Describe any actions required to accomplish the required deliverable.*

## 1. Outcomes achieved

LMEA published a detailed annual economic analysis report to provide statewide information for economic policy development, training program planning, and resource allocation by the governor, the state Workforce Investment Board (WIB, which is known as the Workforce Development Council in this state), local WIBs, Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) regions, state legislators, as well as other partners including community colleges, economic development organizations and other talent development stakeholders.

The annual report included an overview of the national and state economy, unemployment and its dimensions, demographics of the labor force, employment projections, and wage and income information. Greater detail was focused last year and this year on the seasonal, structural and cyclical aspects of employment. The report titled, [2010 Washington State Labor Market and Economic Report](#), can be accessed at the website by *Control Clicking* on the title above to go to the link.

Throughout the year, LMEA staff conducted special studies and economic analyses in addition to the extensive surveys of job vacancies, employee benefits, in-season agricultural employment surveys, occupational wage report and various local and statewide studies. A sample of the reports that are available on the Workforce Explorer follows.

### **Economic Publications** (Control Click to link to reports)

- Special Reports
  - [Employment Projections, Methodology, and Results, June 2010](#)
  - [Five Tools for Rapid Reemployment, June 2011](#)
  - [Introduction to Employment Projections, May 2011](#)
  - [2010 Washington State Green Economy Jobs: Forest Products Industry Focus Group: A Narrative Report, February 2011](#)





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WASHINGTON STATE

- [\*2009 Washington State Green Economy Jobs: Addendum, March 2011\*](#)
- Monthly
  - [\*Agricultural Labor Employment and Wages Annual Report\*](#)
  - [\*Around the State\*](#) (employment-related news around the state from public sources)
  - [\*Current Employment / Unemployment Situation\*](#) (press release)
  - [\*Labor Area Summaries\*](#) (at the MSA and county levels)
  - [\*Washington State Employment Situation Report\*](#)
- Quarterly
  - [\*Business Employment Dynamics\*](#)
  - [\*County Data Tables\*](#)
  - [\*Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages\*](#)
  - [\*Washington Labor Market Quarterly Review\*](#)
- Bi-Annual
  - [\*Job Vacancy Survey Report, Fall 2010\*](#)
- Annual
  - [\*2009 Agricultural Workforce in Washington State, June 2010\*](#)
  - [\*County Profiles\*](#) (38 separate reports; two counties are combined)
  - [\*Occupational Employment and Wage Estimates\*](#) (state, metropolitan and balance of state), March 2010
  - [\*2010 Washington State Labor Market and Economic Report, December 2010\*](#)
  - [\*Washington State Employee Benefits Survey Report, April 2010\*](#)

## 2. Deliverables schedule

*States must provide a concise summary of the extent to which the activity has conformed to the deliverables schedule, including an explanation for the cause of any significant variance from the schedule.*

All planned milestones in the preparation of the annual report, [\*2010 Washington State Labor Market and Economic Report\*](#), were completed successfully on time. After the report was published in January 2011, however, an error was discovered that required rewriting a chapter. The rewrite was completed and the report republished. The revised report was then distributed to the governor's staff and the

legislators on February 3, 2011, after the original deadline. The revised report was then provided to the Workforce Development Council (WDC) staff. The electronic “pdf” version is currently available to everyone who can access the Internet (*Control Click on the title*).

### **3. Aggregate expenditures**

*States must provide a concise summary of the actual aggregate expenditures and an explanation for any significant variance from estimated aggregate expenditures.*

- Actual expenditures were in line with estimated expenditures for this work and involved a number of staff members from several units to develop the data and prepare the narratives for the various chapters.

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

### **A. Accomplishments**

*States must provide a concise summary of the outcomes achieved and an analysis that explains the cause of any significant variance from the Grant Certification. Describe any actions required to accomplish the required deliverable.*

#### **1. Outcomes achieved**

The web-based Workforce Explorer LMI delivery system, in combination with the out-stationed regional labor market economists and the central office economists, continued to provide local area support to Washington State’s WorkSource Centers, Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) and other data users. The tool continues to be the portal for key career and economic information used to make important program and life-changing decisions. In addition to the basic labor market information (LMI) such as employment estimates, wages and occupational information, all major studies and special reports were posted on the Workforce Explorer. The Workforce Explorer was

also used to announce new data sets, job opportunities in LMEA, and online registration to the regional and the statewide annual Economic Symposia.

This program year, LMEA hosted three rather than its typical two regional Economic Symposia. In each of the listed Symposia titles below, *Control Click* to link to the presentations. The Economic Symposia held in this program year include:

1. Spokane County (May 2011) “[Spokane’s Winding Road to Recovery](#)” – attendance 90
2. Snohomish County (new this year in June 21, 2011) “[Partnering for a Globally Competitive Snohomish County](#)” was co-sponsored by LMEA and the Workforce Development Council Snohomish County – attendance 130
3. Yakima County (July 9, 2010) “[Industrial Diversity in a Changing Economy](#)” – attendance 90
4. 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Statewide Economic Symposium (October 29, 2010 in Thurston County) “[Washington’s Economy: Gearing Up, Holding in Neutral, or Winding Down?](#)” – attendance 275

Record attendance was noted at all the economic forums. The statewide Symposium has had to change its venue to allow up to 300 participants, up from 150 or less in earlier years, for the upcoming November 2011 event. Last year, LMEA experience record-breaking attendance in 2010 at its statewide Economic Symposium.

Beyond Workforce Explorer, LMEA also provided information for its Workforce system through its two dashboard products, “Numbers and Trends” and “Industry Trends.” These tools contain key indicators in a graphical format with the ability to compare and extract data. It has been well received as a tool that simplifies and combines key economic indicators for the local areas.

With an emphasis on job developers, LMEA has purchased and is developing a product to aid in the solicitation of job openings into the workforce job matching system. The target audience is business services members who are charged with attracting job listings for better job matching processes.

Finally, LMEA enhanced access to local employment dynamics information through an internal analysis cube aimed at improving the access of the information to LMEA's internal analysts. This dataset is also included in LMEA's Industry Trends tool as well.

Along with information through Workforce Explorer, LMEA has maintained a live connection through web services to provide LMEA's data directly to the state Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (WTECB).. Staff members at WTECB now have a live feed of data being displayed on their website. As LMEA's data is updated, their site will pull the updated data. This enhancement reduced their maintenance, and increases the availability of information throughout the Workforce system. These improvements were based on input from staff in the Workforce system who volunteered to provide input on LMEA's tools and their work activities.

## **2. Delivery Schedule**

*States must provide a concise summary of the extent to which the activity has conformed to the deliverables schedule, including an explanation for the cause of any significant variance from the schedule.*

- All planned milestones were completed in various ways. However, the service provided in each Workforce Development Area (WDA) reflects the diversity of the labor markets in which they are located. This year, LMEA was fully staffed with one full-time regional labor economist for each WDA. The WorkSource Area Directors and the WDA Executive Directors were included in the hiring panels, and their input is solicited for the performance evaluations of the Regional Labor Economists. In addition, for each monthly GMAP session, LMEA reports out on the data requests completed by the Regional Labor Economists as well as input from the directors, Executive Directors and other customers as well as any customer comments and feedback. The accountability is at a high level, and the expectations are that the Regional Labor Economists are responsive to their customer base.
- During this reporting period, LMEA has made significant progress in building closer working relationships with staff in the WorkSource offices and the Workforce Development

Councils. LMEA has been represented in more local planning meetings, and has been making an increasing number of presentations to staff both inside and outside ESD.

### **3. Aggregate Expenditures**

*States must provide a concise summary of the actual aggregate expenditures and an explanation for any significant variance from estimated aggregate expenditures.*

- Actual expenditures were in line with estimated expenditures for this work and involved a number of staff members developing the data, reviewing reports, and preparing them for posting on the Internet.

## **V. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards and other key workforce and economic development partners and stakeholders**

### **A. Accomplishments**

*States must provide a concise summary of the outcomes achieved and an analysis that explains the cause of any significant variance from the Grant Certification. Describe any actions required to accomplish the required deliverable.*

#### **1. Outcomes achieved**

LMEA continued to provide service to Washington's WIRED recipient, Pacific Mountain Workforce Development Council. As well as helping locally, LMEA has worked with its counterparts in Oregon to establish a report for a WIRED region that crosses state boundaries. LMEA provided key data, necessary to create a "combined" area, instead of a Washington section and an Oregon section.

LMEA has continued to coordinate training on occupational and career information among several providers. Other areas of focus included training on the ONET coding system, using automated

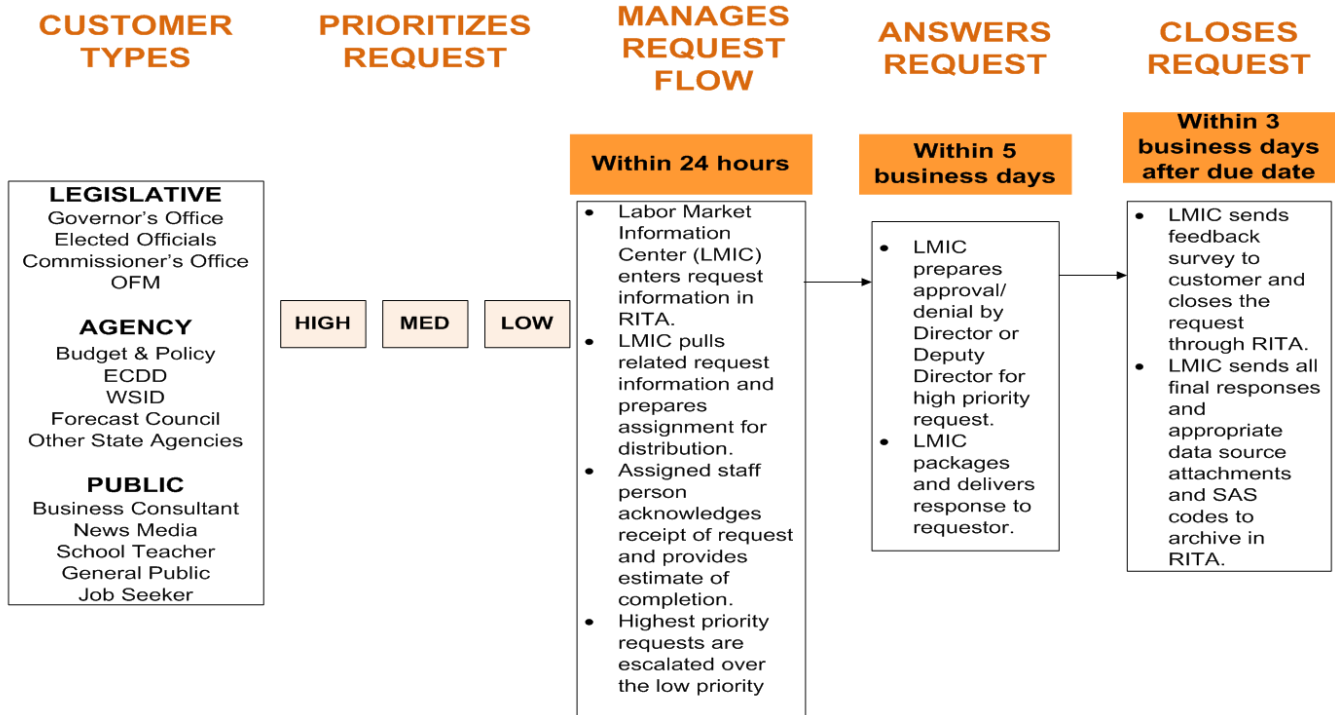
coding tools to improve efficiency and identifying ways for various products and systems to interact more effectively. LMEA also presents a training component in the Agency Training Academy for new hires.

Regional Labor Economists continue to give periodic economic briefings to WorkSource (WS) and Workforce Development Council (WDC) members to keep them current on changes in local labor market conditions. These economists work with local planners and program administrators to identify their needs and to provide necessary information. Their main responsibility is to know the local labor market and to be able to speak, write and answer questions about it.

Since each area has its own distinct way of achieving its employment and workforce development goals, LMEA does not have a blanket strategy for meeting local LMI needs. LMEA does provide the Regional Labor Economists with general guidelines and a list of expectations in their job descriptions for serving local needs. During the past year, the Regional Labor Economists performed their tasks in response to WS and WDC requests, as well as the needs that each of them identified. Their work included preparing special local reports, assisting individuals with information on Workforce Explorer, giving presentations, writing labor area summaries and county profiles, interpreting the employment situation, and providing technical assistance.

This past year, LMEA developed a new electronic tracking system called Request Information Tracker Application (RITA). RITA is a web-based tracking system created to prioritize, assign and monitor individual information requests assigned to LMEA. The Labor Market Information Center (LMIC) serves as the clearinghouse to manage the information request process and coordinate workload issues within the branch. As part of the agency's overall accountability strategy, LMEA economists and analysts enter the data requests and the responses into RITA. The results along with customer satisfaction responses to surveys form the database that are reported out in monthly sessions with the Commissioner and Senior Leadership Team at Government, Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) sessions. *(Please see the workflow process below.)*

## REQUEST INFORMATION TRACKING APPLICATION (RITA) WORKFLOW PROCESS



RITA is also visible to all staff within LMEA on its SharePoint site. It provides transparency and helps eliminate duplication of effort by staff in responding to data inquiries. A RITA request is any type of request that requires:

- Analysis
- GIS Mapping
- Presentation or interview
- Requires Data Sharing Agreement
- Involves programming code

- Involves one level of quality review, at minimum
- Requires quality review from LMEA Director or LMEA Deputy Director
- Impacts policy decisions at the local, state or nationwide level, including any requests related to the legislative session

One of the cooperative efforts of LMEA and the WDCs that has continued is updating and maintaining the occupational “Demand and Decline” list. LMEA created that list using factors such as employment of an occupation, the expected growth rate and the occupational unemployment rate. It is then reviewed, adjusted and approved by the WDCs. As economic conditions changes affected occupational demand, the LMEA economists and WDC staff work together to update that list to reflect current occupational demand and supply conditions. The WDC staff is responsible for changes to that list, but they generally do so by collaborating with the Regional Labor Economists who provide data to substantiate the changes. The “Demand and Decline” list of occupations is used in all WorkSource Service Centers to administer the state’s Training Benefits Program. It is maintained on an LMEA server.

LMEA produced and delivered two additional customer-driven products to the WorkSource Centers and the WDCs during this reporting period. One was the “Job Vacancy Survey,” which was completed in July 2011. That survey was then combined with the short-term occupational projections to provide Workforce Investment implementation staff with insight into the occupational employment hiring needs of local employers. The other product was the “Benefits Survey” report. That report has yet to be published. It will provide useful benefits information on jobs for both employers and job seekers.

To assist in rapid reemployment activities, LMEA updated a “how-to” guide to help people survive layoffs. “Five Tools for Rapid Reemployment” is a booklet that is intended to help job seekers and WorkSource staff members make better use of the WorkforceExplorer.com website. It describes five ways to search for potential employers, using Workforce Explorer. The publication’s five tools describe a step-by-step approach using the job-search related tools in Workforce Explorer to assist in reemployment. The five tools are reemployment in: 1) the same industry; 2) an affiliated industry;



3) the same occupation but a different industry; 4) a similar occupation; and 5) using transferable skills. This publication went through a rigorous redesign this past year that involved the collaboration of many of the Regional Labor Economists, research analysts and the publications unit. The publication has been well received and continues to be one of the top downloads on LMEA's website and one of the most requested publications in its paper form.

## **2. Delivery Schedule**

*States must provide a concise summary of the extent to which the activity has conformed to the deliverables schedule, including an explanation for the cause of any significant variance from the schedule.*

- All of the general milestones that could be envisioned at the start of the year were accomplished. Four feedback collection mechanisms were implemented and used throughout the year
  1. Comprehensive user survey
  2. Article rating
  3. Identification of agency liaisons to assist in needs identification
  4. RITA customer satisfaction survey to data requestors

There were about 1,080,000 sessions logged into the site over the year. Enhancements are now being driven, prioritized and validated by customer input and testing along the way.

## **3. Aggregate Expenditures**

*States must provide a concise summary of the actual aggregate expenditures and an explanation for any significant variance from estimated aggregate expenditures.*

- Actual expenditures were consistent with estimated expenditures.

## B. Customer Consultations

*States must provide a concise summary of the methods used for consulting with customers and customize requirements. States must provide a concise summary of activities to be undertaken to add customer value to the deliverables, where needs for improvement are identified based on customer feedback.*

Throughout the year, LMEA has developed and implemented several systematic methods of collecting feedback from customers regarding their satisfaction, their usage of tools and products, and the timeliness of data and reports. These methods include customer ratings of LMEA analytic articles on Workforce Explorer as well as in-person trainings and presentations that provide a forum to gather feedback from participants and their evaluations. LMEA has also held various information-gathering meetings involving customer groups to help determine usability needs and data gaps. Along with these measures, data is collected and analyzed around usage of products and services including web log analysis, request tracking and a variety of other automated activity capture tools. Many of these automated feedback-tracking systems run continuously, while others are conducted as specific needs or issues arise.

At the start of her administration, Governor Christine Gregoire initiated a comprehensive accountability system called the Government, Management, Accountability and Performance (GMAP) program. It involves continuous performance tracking and monthly progress reports to senior leadership. The LMEA branch has actively implemented that system by tracking a variety of performance measures and communicating its progress through an electronic dashboard, which is a reporting system linked directly to its project and operational plans.

The main distribution channel for the industry and occupational employment projections, as well as most of LMEA's products, has been Workforce Explorer. It provides a count of visits to the Website, as well as an opportunity for customers to indicate their level of satisfaction with the information provided. The results change daily, and they indicate what information is being accessed most frequently.

LMEA has assigned “agents” for key customer groups. Here, LMEA not only collects input, but uses their networking to validate and create an open dialogue that continues to work very well.

The vast majority of the feedback has been very positive. However, LMEA continues to receive comments from customers indicating that they are having difficulty finding specific information. Then, when they find it, they would like additional help in understanding it. LMEA currently has an in-house effort to improve the usability of its Website, focusing on the activities associated with the labor exchange process.

In addition, the Request Information Tracker Application (RITA) has a customer survey component, as described above in the workflow. From January to March 2011, there were a total of 147 survey responses out of 227 total surveys sent to RITA customers. This is a response rate of 65 percent.

From October to December 2010 (first quarter when RITA was implemented), there were 195 surveys sent with a response rate of 62 percent.

Two questions are asked. The questions and their survey responses follow:

1. Did the response you receive answer your request?

January-March 2011    October-December 2010

Yes	94%	88%
Somewhat	5%	11%
No	<1%	1%

2. Overall, how understandable was the response you received?

January-March 2011    October-December 2010

Yes	99%	91%
Somewhat	1%	9%
No	0%	0%

In addition, respondents can include comments. Out of the 147 survey respondents in the first quarter of 2011, 74 percent left comments. In the fourth quarter of 2010, 72 percent left comments. The majority of comments were positive. The majority of comments that reflect any level of dissatisfaction are due to the fact that LMEA does not have the particular data requested, which is typically sub-state or sub-county level detail.

When customers leave less than positive comments, managers often ask staff members who were responsible for the fulfillment of the data request to check back with the customer to find out how they can better assist them. This follow up improves customer relations, and allows LMEA to provide improved customer service.

LMEA uses customer feedback, as described above, to improve both its deliverables and its delivery system. To assist customers in accessing and understanding labor market information (LMI) products posted on Workforce Explorer, the LMEA branch maintains a “Labor Market Information Center” with a statewide toll free number. Trained individuals staffing that center can take a client through the website to the appropriate information and answer questions about that information. In that process, the staff member also looks for ways to best present the ever-increasing quantity of information on the website. In addition to this central toll free number to assist WorkSource Center staff with LMI, LMEA’s branch trainer conducted over 25 training sessions for about 1,000 individuals over the year.

### **C. Recommendations for Improvement or Changes to the Deliverables**

*States may base their recommendations for improvement or changes to the deliverables based on accomplishments.*

In the state of Washington, LMEA accomplished all five deliverables successfully. The deliverables were well received by the intended customers. The deliverables are primarily posted on the web with paper copies available, although printing copies is becoming cost prohibitive. Outreach by Regional Labor Economists and at Economic Symposia is critical to increasing awareness of labor market information.

*States may base their recommendations for improvement or changes to the deliverables based on consultation with customers.*

One of the eight goals for Commissioner Paul Trause set for the next two years was to build an effective and integrated IT infrastructure that helps ESD and the workforce system best serve its customers for the next generation. To that end, the strategy involved assessing the ability of operating information systems, including Workforce Explorer, to meet the business needs of ESD and, where appropriate, of LMEA's partners, and develop an approach for making changes.

In instance after instance, when individuals find out about Workforce Explorer, their first reaction is "Wow, I didn't know this information existed!" Their second reaction is "It's overwhelming - how can I use it?" LMEA had recommended training to assist users navigate the website. LMEA had developed a specific publication, *Five Tools*, to help job seekers and job counselors find the information needed for reemployment. The difficulty in using the existing website prompted a dedicated, in-depth assessment of Workforce Explorer.

The Workforce Explorer website is being upgraded with an expected launch date in the fall of 2011. LMEA contracted with RAMP, an independent company, to conduct extensive user testing of the existing Workforce Explorer website. They studied measured eye movements of subjects as they used the website. Based on this information, as well as other metrics, they made many recommendations for a new website. The new website will replace the existing Workforce Explorer.

In collaboration with the Communications Office and the Information Technology Services Division within ESD, the RAMP recommendations are being implemented to create a new design for LMEA and integrate it with the agency's primary site, [esd.wa.gov](http://esd.wa.gov). The new site will be cutting edge, and LMEA could not have tackled the project without Recovery Act money. (See three screen shots below of the newly designed labor market information website.)



## Employment Security Department

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**Current unemployment rate\***

in Washington	in the U.S.
9.2%	8.8%

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**Employment and economic information**

Data and analysis of Washington's employment situation, economy, job market and work force from Employment Security's Labor Market & Economic Analysis branch.

I am:Figure out what careers mat

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**Report Name Here**

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**Report Name Here**

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**Select Region(s)**

All of Washington State

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**Sorting options**

by Industry Type ▾

**Legend**

- ↑ Green Job lorem ipsum. Nulla facilisi. Donec semper risus
- ↑ A enim pretium molestie a ut urna. Proin vehicula rutrum tincidunt.
- ↕ A enim pretium molestie a ut urna. Proin vehicula rutrum tincidunt.
- ↓ A enim pretium molestie a ut urna. Proin vehicula rutrum tincidunt.

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### Occupations in Demand

The list of local area demand/decline qualifying occupations has been updated to provide a more accurate classification. The classification x of demand/decline is now at the independent occupation level for each area. Learn more about the Demand Decline Methodology and how best to use this tool.

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Demand/Decline	SOC# ▾	Occupation Title	Region
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: red;">↓</span> In Decline	112301	Culinary Job Title	Skaggit County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: gray;">↕</span> Balanced	112301	Culinary Job Title	Yakima County
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: gray;">↕</span> Balanced	112301	Culinary Job Title	Pierce County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: red;">↓</span> In Decline	112301	Culinary Job Title	Skaggit County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA
<span style="color: green;">↑</span> In Demand	112301	Culinary Job Title	Seattle-King County WDA

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