

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF EMPLOYMENT SECURITY  
ECONOMIC INFORMATION AND ANALYSIS DIVISION**

**ONE-STOP LMI GRANT**

Work Plan Narrative

July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2006

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**Description of IDES' Statewide Workforce Information System**

The Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES) has been gathering and disseminating workforce information for much of its history. In 1933, the Wagner-Peyser Act authorized states to operate statistical programs. In 1968, amendments to the Act called for development of comprehensive information about the workforce at the national, state and local levels. Through cooperative agreements and grants with the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics and Employment and Training Administration, as well as the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Bureau of the Census, IDES produces workforce and career information under a variety of programs.

In 1999, under Section 309 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, IDES was designated as the official administrator of our State's employment statistics program. In 2002, IDES was given responsibility for the delivery of career information programs formerly administered by the State Occupational Information Coordinating Committee (SOICC). IDES is now the primary and most cost-effective source of a wide variety of workforce and career information, and we continue to expand our capabilities to develop, collect, analyze and disseminate workforce information. Because statewide and local data are critical ingredients in public and private sector planning, in economic development, and in education and employment training programs, there is an ever-increasing demand for workforce and career information.

IDES management uses workforce and career information to project workloads and activities; describe the applicant, claimant, and employer populations; validate audits of activities and levels of service around the State; monitor and predict employment

cycles; and target critical industries and identify occupations where skill shortages exist. Administrative data is compiled and published in reports that assist IDES management to better serve customers. Data on future Unemployment Insurance (UI) workloads are produced to plan for future staffing needs and Illinois Employment and Training Center (One-Stop) site studies. UI data is used to monitor and predict economic cycles, and to identify industries releasing large numbers of workers. Information on clients eligible for Federal job training programs is provided to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and its local WIA Program Services Entities (Adult, Youth, Dislocated Worker).

Recent, ongoing initiatives to incorporate workforce information into career decision-making at all levels have significantly expanded and broadened the demand for workforce information, which is a basic resource for information on:

- Industry trends -- current, historical, and projected
- Occupational trends -- current, including employment and wage levels, and projected, both short- and long-term
- Labor force demographics -- including age, sex, and race.

IDES staff provides technical assistance in the use and application of workforce and career information through workshops and seminars or, upon request, individually to the requester. In addition, staff is frequently asked to speak at seminars and conferences and serve on commissions, boards, and committees either as resources or as members. IDES provides a wide assortment of economic and labor market information products as core services to customers through the One-Stop Career Centers in the resource rooms, via the One Source Web-portal page accessible at [www.ILWorkInfo.com](http://www.ILWorkInfo.com).

**Description of the process used to ensure that the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) can exercise its responsibility for ensuring that state workforce information policy is responsive to the needs of the state and local workforce investment system**

IDES continues to collaborate with the SWIB directly and through DCEO to ensure that state workforce information policy is responsive to the needs of the state and local workforce investment system. Since WIA programs were transferred to DCEO in Program Year 2003, IDES has developed and executed shared data agreements allowing for the exchange of information consistent with the state workforce information policy.

During the restructuring of the Illinois Workforce Investment Board, IDES has continued to coordinate with DCEO, providing high quality and reliable workforce and career information, consistent with the needs of the workforce investment system.

**Description of how the statewide workforce information system supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Two-Year Strategic Plan for state and local workforce development**

IDES' workforce information system is geographically-structured to support the primary goals of the State's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Two-Year Strategic Plan for state and local workforce development: individual economic self-sufficiency and competitive businesses. To meet these goals, high quality reliable workforce and career information is made available and used by individuals and businesses to assist them in making informed economic decisions. It is the mission of the workforce information system to establish and maintain a comprehensive, coordinated and effective system for the production, analysis and dissemination of workforce and career information, which is accessible and responsive to all Illinoisans.

IDES' workforce information strategy addresses a number of identified information needs. Our goal is to improve our employment statistics system such that customers receive timely, accurate and relevant information about local, State, and national labor markets. Strategies to achieve this goal include:

- ▶ Further improvement in the systematic provision of expanded geographic detail (e.g., sub-MSA, sub-county, etc.) for various data series (wage data, short-term employment projections, long-term employment projections, etc.).
- ▶ Continued development of occupational skill data, including that provided by O\*NET, Illinois Skills Match System (ISM), and the provision of skills data to customers for career exploration as well as job search.
- ▶ Improved methods for estimating occupational supply.
- ▶ Development of data regarding fringe benefits that will better reflect the true costs and benefits of employment in Illinois.
- ▶ Development of additional information to support all partners in Illinois' Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI) to identify and analyze key Illinois industries facing worker shortages. This may include the development of data on new and emerging occupations, in-depth analysis of occupational supply

issues, and other research needed to appropriately respond to the workforce needs of major Illinois business sectors.

- ▶ Information delivery strategies, including Internet delivery via the virtual One-Stop system Illinois workNet, printed products and other means that provide convenience and ease of use for customers of the Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC/One Stop) system.
- ▶ Built-in customer feedback options to ensure that products from the workforce and career information system are demand driven. Special efforts will be made to market the use of the web site to users and to ensure that information is universally available.
- ▶ Development of mechanisms for customer feedback on efforts carried out under Section 118 of the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act.
- ▶ Strategies on marketing, training and awareness to facilitate Illinoisans' access to data and information necessary for career decision-making.
- ▶ Utilization of new and emerging data sources.
- ▶ Utilization of IETC/One Stop and workforce partners as a source of workforce information (i.e., feedback of customer data, as well as continuous improvement data regarding the provision of workforce information).

### **Description of how IDES' activities are consistent with the strategic vision of the Governor and the State Workforce Investment Board**

To support the Governor's strategic vision for economic development including the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI), workforce and career information and analysis must refine existing data delivery systems and develop new approaches that effectuate industry sector analysis and promote career pathways development. To that end, IDES will deliver several tools to local and regional partners:

#### Identification and definition of industry sectors and clusters critical to economic development

- ▶ Local Employment Dynamics:

*Through a federal/state partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Census, IDES has made available 29 new measures of employment activity to customers. These measures (such as new hires, separations, job gains, job losses, labor turnover, and earnings) are*

*produced by age and gender categories of workers within industry sectors for counties, Local Workforce Areas, Governor's Economic Development Regions, and user-defined regional geographies.*

- ▶ Current industry employment and industry employment projections:

*Monthly job counts and projections of industry expansion and contraction for counties, Local Workforce Areas, Governor's Economic Development Areas (EDR), and user-defined regional geographies.*

Provision of technical assistance in the compilation and interpretation of customized data for the planning and decision-making processes

- ▶ Critical local review of economic and labor market data sets and on-site resource for local economic intelligence:

*Local labor market economists analyze, interpret and disseminate monthly local area labor force statistics for subsequent use by local elected officials, regional planners and other entities responsible for economic development. They respond to inquiries from same regarding economic conditions and forecasting labor market trends for local and regional areas. They review and revise local area employment projections, the components of the Substate Employment Projections System (SEPS), and recommend revisions in the area and industry coding of the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Program to ensure accurate industrial and geographical classifications and employment levels are assigned to all firms and establishments.*

- ▶ Data to support site selection proposals for regional and local economic development entities and partner agencies.

*Working with economic development and private sector representatives, staff economists produce local and regional economic development reports to properly advise executives and elected officials and to anticipate shifts in labor supply, demand and trends. They design and implement special economic analysis and research projects to support site selection promotion, such as supplying industries and available workforce within a defined mile radius, for a wide range of local and state organizations (educational institutions, local governments, business associations, economic developers, etc.).*

Identification and promotion of career progression opportunities within industry sectors

As part of the Critical Skills Shortage Initiative (CSSI), each Economic Development Region and the State as a whole have identified key industries important to the success of our economy. Understanding the critical occupations within each of these key industries, identifying the causes, and contributing to the solutions for skill shortages requires reliable workforce and career information. To that end, IDES will:

- ▶ Provide Industry-Occupational staffing patterns and occupational projections

*For each of the Governor's Economic Development Regions (EDRs), these data identify occupations critical to each selected industry sector and deliver projections of occupational employment changes and job openings in order to assess job skill requirements, current supply, and future needs; and to support sustainable strategic planning.*

- ▶ Collaborate in the development of career pathways

*Staff within IDES' Career Resource Network (ICRN) section will provide technical assistance to the Statewide partners as career pathways are developed and adapted from available resources and verified with local employers, workers, and educators.*

- ▶ Organize and deliver career information by career clusters/pathways

*ICRN deliverables and Illinois workNet, the virtual One-Stop system, will be tooled and annually updated to deliver comprehensive career information for the nationally recognized 16 Career Clusters.*

Moreover, the Economic Information and Analysis Division at IDES recently implemented several projects to facilitate local and regional labor market planning:

Target occupations critical to regional economic success and identify worker shortages and skill gaps.

- ▶ Job vacancy surveys

*Studies consistently highlight the absence of timely information on job vacancies as a key oversight in the offering of workforce information. Job seekers, training providers, job development specialists and other major stakeholders face an information deficit to locate pockets of labor demand in local areas. Building upon the model of the JVS conducted last year for the Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago, IDES will collaborate with and promote the coordination of effort by the Job Training Division of the Illinois*

*Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, State WIB, and Local Workforce Boards in order to conduct statewide industry-specific Job Vacancy Surveys.*

▶ Skills-Based employment projections

*Numerous national and local customer surveys have identified the dearth of skills information as a critical gap in the labor market information infrastructure. In fact, customer satisfaction assessments offered by Illinois employers and training providers are consistent with this finding. In response, IDES will produce skills-based employment projections, for the short- and long-term, for the State, each of the EDRs, and Local Workforce Areas in order to provide skills gap analysis for CSSI deliberations.*

▶ Supply-Demand analysis

*Assist all stakeholders and workforce development partners in the development of an on-line tool to identify the pool of qualified workers and examine projected workforce need by occupational group. The supply side of the equation must be buttressed by seeking additional information such as from unions on those completing apprenticeship; from private vocational training sources including industry training programs from CBOs and the like; and, from innovative measures such as the Wage Record Interchange System (WRIS) and Labor Market Tightness (recommended NGA study).*

Develop a data infrastructure for the production of subcounty labor market information

▶ Current industry employment, local employment dynamics, and industry and occupational employment projections for the City of Chicago and the northern and southern portions of Cook County (LWIAs 7, 8, & 9)

*Cook County, which comprises almost one-half of Illinois' private-sector employment, is rich in its diversity of industry composition across well-defined sub-county geographies. For the three sub-Cook county regions, consistent with Local Workforce Area boundaries, IDES will develop and deliver industry employment estimates, industry and occupational employment projections, and industry demographics that will enable customers to analyze and tailor workforce development strategies these regions.*

▶ Local employment dynamics in a geographical information systems environment.

*Local Employment Dynamics (LED) applies geographic codes (geo-codes) to Illinois firms. These geo-codes are used to project labor and commute sheds that provide planners with critical information on the measures of local employment dynamics by demographic categories of workers within a given radius of a user-defined point-of-origin.*

**Description of IDES' strategy for consulting with state and local workforce investment boards, businesses, individuals and the workforce investment system to determine customer demand for workforce information**

IDES' strategy for consulting with state and local workforce investment boards, businesses, individuals and the workforce development system to determine the demand for workforce information includes the following:

- ▶ Consult local workforce investment boards in the development of local workforce and career information.
- ▶ Provide technical assistance and direction to local workforce investment boards.
- ▶ Provide current analysis of labor market trends, technical and professional skill requirements, and education and training options.
- ▶ Identify policies to expand the availability and use of local, state, regional and national workforce and career information.
- ▶ Collaborate in the development of new products and services that are all-inclusive, demand-driven, dynamic, and that broaden access.
- ▶ Consult with Local Workforce and Economic Development Region Boards to provide specialized data to support their needs.
- ▶ Collaboration with the State Workforce Investment Board to support information required for development of strategies and plans.
- ▶ Disseminate workforce and career information via various media including workforce and career information Internet sites and printed guides and brochures.
- ▶ Coordinate the development of workforce and career information to support Illinois Employment and Training One-Stop Centers, Illinois workNet, Career and Technical Education, economic development activities, and other stakeholders in the workforce system.

- ▶ Develop strategies for long-term funding of workforce and career information at the State and local levels.
- ▶ Develop customer satisfaction surveys and other feedback mechanisms to continuously improve the strategy for providing labor market and career information.

### **Description of the broad strategic approach for workforce and career information delivery to principal customers**

As negotiated through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) process, One-Stop partners make a full array of services available to job seekers and local businesses via the Internet and One-Stop Career Centers. One-Stop centers are designed to facilitate easy access to all customers through appropriate signage, shared waiting rooms, and greeters to assist clients to quickly navigate center services. Each center has a resource room where a wide range of labor market and career information products are available. These products are available in hard copy and computerized formats, including via the virtual One-Stop system Illinois workNet. The resource rooms are open to all populations, and staff is available to assist customers who need help to access the computer systems or other materials. IDES also makes these products available via the Internet at [www.ILWorkInfo.com](http://www.ILWorkInfo.com).

### **Description of how workforce and career information are delivered as core services to customers through the state's One-Stop service delivery system**

Workforce and career information services are delivered through the comprehensive strategy of the virtual One-Stop, Illinois workNet, and Illinois' One-Stop Career Centers. Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIB) are required to assess the opportunities and needs of individuals and employers within their labor market and design a local service delivery strategy that meets the specific needs. Each LWIB and its partner agencies have flexibility in determining the mix of services that will be offered locally through Illinois workNet and at the One-Stop Career Center.

**Description of the customer consultation and satisfaction assessment method(s) used to collect and interpret customer satisfaction information and the principal customers to be consulted.**

Compiled Customer Satisfaction feedback:

Among all three principal customer groups - employers, individuals, and the workforce development system - approximately two-thirds of respondents were "familiar with" or had "used" workforce and career information Web sites, but the remaining one-third had "never heard of it." However, within the business community (employers) the portion of customers that indicated knowledge of our Web sites was dominated by those "familiar with" but not having "used" them.

Utilization of One Source Workforce and Career Information Web sites averaged 36,500 unique monthly visitors during PY 2004. Attribute ratings for Accuracy, Relevancy, Accessibility, Understandability, Geographical Area, Comparability, and Completeness from surveys and questionnaires were generally high, but did solicit several comments that when expounded during subsequent customer focus groups and partner agency interviews provided critical input for the product/service improvement process.

Partner agencies in the workforce development system asked that:

- ▶ Additional information on gender equity issues be incorporated.
- ▶ Training opportunities be expanded

Based upon feedback and initiatives implemented during PY 2004, PY 2005 Plan activities will:

- ▶ In cooperation with local workforce partners business services teams and Illinois workNet outreach, develop and implement a business community outreach initiative to expand awareness and utilization of workforce information Web sites and resources by business and economic development associations, regional and local chambers of commerce, parent-teacher groups, and similar civic organizations.
- ▶ More aggressively raise awareness of all career information products, especially the Career Information System (CIS), Career Click and Countdown Web sites.
- ▶ Assess initial feedback on the on-line e-learning application for Illinois' workforce and career information training modules.

- ▶ Develop an outreach tool that will be used at job fairs, exhibitions, and career fairs whereby the event attendees complete a business reply card asking for contact information and what product/service(s) in which they are most interested.
- ▶ Telephone, traditional mail and email follow-up with job seekers and students who during PY 2004 attended job/career fairs, career resources or labor market exhibits, expos, other outreach events in order to ascertain feedback regarding specifically targeted products that have been enhanced over the past year.
- ▶ Gauge customer satisfaction with the reorganized and redesigned *Guides to Career Choices* (English and Spanish).
- ▶ Gather feedback and implement enhancements to *Kids & Careers*, the new parents' guide to career planning brochure on career planning and information.
- ▶ Expand and promote career information on nontraditional careers, accessibility issues, and ex-offender re-entry initiatives.
- ▶ Refine and redistribute the recommended teaching approach for teachers and counselors to use when working with middle/junior high school and high school students.

**Summary of customer satisfaction findings for the most recent survey of products and services and the effect those findings had on the planned products and services for PY'05 including how the plan addresses inadequacies or gaps identified by users.**

For each of our principal customer groups --- workforce investment boards (including internal customers and local staff of workforce agencies), employers, and individuals - activities during PY 05 will include: reexamination and redefinition of our customer satisfaction assessment statement and objectives; enhancements to data collection technique(s); a research report with the compilation, analysis, and interpretation of the customer satisfaction and survey results; and, a final report based on our findings with analysis and recommendations. Additional activities will include: documentation of demand driven products and services, implementation of ETA recommended strategies, and continuous accountability monitoring.

Feedback collection techniques will include a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches. The customer consultation methods we will use for conducting these studies include: focus groups, individual interviews, Internet surveys, and handout and

mail surveys. The following is a breakdown of the methods we will use and the information to be gathered.

- A. Conduct focus groups that will include:
  - ▶ Key stakeholders in the Illinois business community including leaders from State and Local Chambers of Commerce to ascertain the awareness level and use of our labor market information products;
  - ▶ Workforce investment board members and staff, business community leaders, and partners in the Governor's Economic Development Regions for the purpose of gleaning how effectively our labor market information is being utilized by these groups;
  - ▶ Counselors and students in the Chicago Public Schools who use our career information products to determine how they use our products for career exploration at the high school level; and
  - ▶ Counselors in the public schools (Statewide) who use our career information products with middle school students to ascertain how they use our products for career exploration.
- B. Conduct three or more directed interviews to solicit customer feedback on how they use our LMI and Career Resources products and services. The interviewees will include:
  - ▶ Front-line staff from for profit and government (non-profit) organizations who service business customers and individuals;
  - ▶ Individuals who visit the One Stop Centers; and
  - ▶ Employers who attend agency-sponsored conferences, workshops and seminars.
- C. Distribute handout evaluations to conference attendees and questionnaires and fax back surveys to customers receiving service or printed information through the toll-free assistance line. During the conduct of agency-sponsored conferences, we will provide evaluations that will target specific information regarding the use of our LMI and Career Resources materials. Detailed protocols will be developed for use by our Customer Services Team and Local Labor Market Economists in order to solicit feedback regarding the use of and satisfaction with workforce and career information Web sites and printed materials.

**Funds leveraged or matched from funding sources other than these grant funds.**

In support of the collection, analysis, and dissemination of Illinois labor market and career information products and services, over the last year, the IDES Economic Information and Analysis Division received funding from the US DOL Bureau of Labor Statistics, the US Department of Education, the US Bureau of the Census, the US Bureau of Transportation Statistics, and the Urban Institute. Grants and awards were also received from the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, the Illinois State Board of Education, the Illinois Community College Board, the Workforce Board of Metropolitan Chicago, and the University of Baltimore's Jacob France Institute. To the extent permitted by the grantors, all funds were used in coordination with ETA's One-Stop LMI grant to assist IDES in maintaining as well as developing and enhancing our labor market and career information products and services.