

**WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT PLAN NARRATIVE**  
**Statement of Work for Job Service North Dakota**  
**Program Year 2002 (Fiscal Funding Cycle July 1, 2002 to June 30, 2004)**

**NORTH DAKOTA'S EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS PROGRAM**

The Labor Market Information Center at Job Service North Dakota has been designated as the agency for employment statistics in North Dakota. In line with the Strategic Workforce Development Plan, the LMI Center has taken a "customer focused" approach toward providing a comprehensive employment statistics program.

The LMI staff has been seeking input from a wide variety of customer groups and workforce partners to obtain valuable information on their workforce information needs. Extensive one-on-one consultations, informal focus group discussions, user surveys, and other communications with customers have emphasized the importance of utilizing the feedback obtained from workforce information customers in planning for and developing products that are useful and timely. Members of the Workforce Development Council, local and state economic development professionals, state agency partners, One-Stop Office personnel, businesses, and individuals have all been involved in providing feedback on both the type of information that is needed and the format that is most understandable and useful.

The LMI staff collaborates with the North Dakota's Workforce Development Council (WDC) in a number of ways. (Because we are a single Service Delivery Areas state, North Dakota has only one statewide Workforce Investment Board—the Workforce Development Council.) Designated LMI staff attend WDC meetings, make presentations on LMI to the WDC, provide LMI to WDC, and partner with the WDC to plan for and conduct special research studies to meet specific needs of WDC. As an example, the LMI Center partnered with the WDC, the North Dakota Department of Commerce, and the Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota to conduct Labor Availability Studies in 14 North Dakota communities. The LMI Center has also conducted a statewide job vacancy study in conjunction with the WDC, North Dakota Department of Commerce, Board of Higher Education, and other state agencies. In further support of the Strategic Workforce Development Plan, we continue to provide answers to labor market related questions to the WDC on an ongoing basis, and have also provided our expertise in survey design and statistical methodologies to support other special studies proposed by our various partner agencies.

Additional feedback received from other customer groups, such as local economic developers and Chambers of Commerce, One-Stop staff, employers, counselors and job seekers, and the North Dakota Career Resource Network (NDCRN), have been extremely valuable in evaluating and planning our LMI products and delivery system. Based on customer input, the LMI Center has begun to revamp our products to make them more customer friendly and to introduce new informational products and services to try to meet the identified unmet needs. Several publications have been completely redesigned to

make them more visually appealing and easier for our customers to understand and use. New products designed to meet the needs of specific customers have also been added.

We continue to make improvements to our web delivery system, the LMI Warehouse, to make our data easier to access and to present the data in a user-friendly format. The LMI Warehouse contains all our LMI products, including current and historical data series, PDFs of our LMI publications, links to other information sources, and the functionality to allow users to see the data displayed in charts, graphs, and maps.

Workforce information is delivered to customers through mailing lists for each publication. In addition, we recently launched a monthly electronic newsletter ([The Wire@jobsnd.com](mailto:Wire@jobsnd.com)), highlighting workforce information from our LMI Center, as well as workforce information from other sources, to a rapidly expanding mailing list of users.

The LMI Center will hold monthly economic briefing meetings with the members of the WDC, Department of Commerce, OMB, Governor's staff, and Tax Department invited. These meetings discuss the monthly employment and unemployment data releases and other new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of other related topics. In addition, the LMI staff will make presentations to WDC, One-Stop staff, civic and business associations, conferences, and other customer groups.

We will continue to work in close coordination with the NDCRN to provide workforce information to job seekers, career guidance professionals, educational institutions, and students. The LMI Center collaborates with NDCRN by providing occupational information, assisting in the development of the OIS and the NDCRN publications, putting on joint training sessions, hosting the OIS on the LMI Warehouse, and assisting with the FINDET program.

We feel strongly that the staff of the One-Stop Offices in North Dakota provides a critical role in the effective delivery of workforce information to job seekers and business customers. The One-Stop staff has daily contact with both user groups. Hence they are in a great position not only to market our products and services, but also to explain how this workforce information can be effectively used in each customer's particular situation.

Accordingly, the LMI Center has been seeking ways of better integrating our workforce information delivery system with the One-Stop activities. Representatives from our One-Stop Offices and the LMI staff attended joint training sessions from Melanie Arthur on how to effectively provide workforce information to One-Stop clients. The LMI staff provides on-site training on how to use LMI products and is working on creating an on-line training package for One-Stop staff. Based on discussions we have had with One-Stop staff, LMI Center is currently working on providing new specialized products to be used in the resource rooms. As an example of the coordination between the LMI staff and One-Stop staff, the LMI staff recently put together a power point presentation and instructor notes based on our *Balancing Act, Challenges for Today's Working Women* publication. Individual staff from our One-Stop Offices have used this product to put on special workshops on working women's issues for their areas.

## **CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES:**

### **1. ALMIS Database.**

Description: The ALMIS database is the foundation of any labor market information delivery system. In order to promote a standard method for delivery and maintenance of occupational and labor market information, North Dakota will focus on continuing to update the core tables in the ALMIS database, upgrade software, populate any additional tables, and test data integrity. This will provide customers access to clean and accurate information no matter what program is used to extract the information. North Dakota will update and maintain the licensing data through the National Crosswalk Center. Job Service North Dakota is currently in the process of implementing NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop, developed by GeoSolutions, agencywide. As a part of that implementation, the ALMIS database will be updated to version 2.2.

Customers: Although not directly used by external customers, the ALMIS database is an important storage mechanism for our web site and delivery system. When combined with our web site and North Dakota's new NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop system, a wide range of internal and external customers will access the ALMIS data.

Focus: The focus of this activity is developing an expansive data storage system from which other delivery systems may retrieve pertinent workforce information.

Customer Input: Very few people outside of LMI know how ALMIS is used. As a result, we have received very little input, except from the data users who see the products created from this database.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: ALMIS is the foundation of all the workforce information applications in the agency's new NDWORKS/Virtual One-Stop delivery system. The state five-year plan does not address the ALMIS database directly, but speaks of LMI in general terms, to give the LMI Center some latitude to meet customer needs.

#### Significant Milestones:

ALMIS core tables updated as needed	Ongoing
ALMIS historical database updated as needed	Ongoing
Job Service North Dakota converts to NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop	Spring 2003
Update ALMIS database to Version 2.2	Fall 2003

#### Measurable Outcomes:

The LMI Center will have 50 percent of the ALMIS core tables updated by June 30, 2003, and 100 percent updated by June 30, 2004.

Cost: \$40,000

### **2. Long-Term Industry and Occupational Projections:**

Description: North Dakota will use the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Projection Consortium and Projections Management Partnership to produce long-term projections for the years 2000 to 2010. North Dakota 2000 to 2010 industry employment projections have been developed. In addition, the historical industry employment time series has been converted to NAICS. However, North Dakota has chosen to delay the production of the long-term occupational projections due to the national problems with the data and programming for the Micro-Matrix system. The delay will also allow us to use a third year of SOC-based occupational employment data, resulting in more accurate and more disclosable occupational projections data. States are also required to produce substate, long-term projections every two years. However, because of North Dakota's small labor force, obtaining useable data at a substate level is questionable. North Dakota will try to test various levels of substate data to see if the data are of any value.

Customers: The principal customers for the industry projections are the businesses, economic developers, and state and local government agencies that use these projections to analyze business trends and make decisions about expansion and plant locations. The occupational projections are used by school and vocational counselors, educational planners, the WDC, the NDCRN, students, One-Stop career resource rooms, and other individuals making career choices.

Focus: The focus of the product is to provide data analysis and forecasts of industrial and occupational trends to be used for planning purposes.

Customer Input: Career guidance professionals, educational and training program planners, and One-Stop staff have found the occupational projections information invaluable. We have received fewer comments on the industry projections. Some customers have requested mid-range (i.e., 5-year) projections rather than long-term (10-year) projections. Occupational projections customers have requested that projections products be formatted so that they are easy to use.

WIA/Wagner-Peyser: The state five-year plan was designed to be broad in terms of LMI, to give the LMI Center ample leeway to meet customer needs. The occupational projections are an integral part of the educational and career planning through the One-Stop Career Resource rooms and the educational and counseling structure.

Significant Milestones:

Long-term industry projections completed	October 2002
Historical time series converted to NAICS	November 2002
Long-term occupational projections completed	June 2003
Long-term industry/occupational projections publication	October 2003
Test substate, long-term industry/occupation projections	April 15, 2004

Measurable Outcomes:

After the statewide long-term projections are completed, the information will be available to the public within 90 days.

Cost: \$25,000

**3. Short-Term Industry and Occupational Projections:**

Description: North Dakota will use the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Short-Term Forecasts Consortium and the Micro-Matrix User's Group to produce short-term employment projections. For PY 2002, North Dakota will produce forecasts using the calendar year 2002 as the base year and forecast to the year 2004. Short-term industry employment projections will be made on a statewide basis and for each of North Dakota's eight Governor's Planning Regions. North Dakota publishes the short-term statewide and substate level industry projections in the *North Dakota RoadMap* publication.

North Dakota will complete the development of a NAICS-based industry employment time series for the state as a whole and for the eight Governor's planning regions. However, because we have not received the NAICS-based occupational data from BLS, we will be waiting to do short-term occupational projections.

States are also required to produce substate, short-term occupational projections. However, because of North Dakota's small labor force, obtaining usable occupational data at a substate level is questionable. North Dakota will try to test various levels of substate occupational data to see if the data are of any value.

Customers: The biggest users of the short-term industry projections are the LMI staff, WDC, state agencies, private and government planners, and employers. The short-term occupational projections will be used by education and training planners, WDC, One-Stop staff, career guidance professionals, and LMI staff.

Focus: The focus of the short-term projections is economic analysis. The short-term industry projections provide data on industrial growth or decline in the short-term. The short-term occupational projections will provide information about the demand for certain types of workers on short-term basis.

Customer Input: Several of the customer groups we have had discussions with feel that the short-term projections are of more value than long-term projections. For example, due to our legislative schedule, most state agencies in North Dakota operate on a two-year budget cycle and find short-term projections meet that need. Because of shifting occupational patterns, some educational planners feel that two-year occupational projections are more useful as well.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: The state five-year plan speaks of LMI in general terms, in order to provide the LMI Center enough latitude to meet specific customer needs. However,

the short-term occupational forecasts can be used by WDC and staff, educational planners, and One-Stop staff to determine the types of training needed, and to guide job seekers toward occupations for which there is a demand.

Significant Milestones:

Create NAICS historical time series for state & eight regions	May 2003
Short-term industry projections for state & eight regions	June 2003
Short-term industry projections published in <i>RoadMap</i>	July 2003
Test short-term occupational projections	October 2003
Test short-term, substate occupational projections to see if data are usable	April 30, 2004

Measurable Outcomes:

The statewide short-term projections will be published in the *RoadMap*, by July 2003.

Cost: \$25,000

#### **4. Develop Occupational Analysis Products and Related Labor Market Information Publications**

Description: North Dakota works with the North Dakota Career Resource Network (NDCRN) to create the Occupational Information System (OIS). This is a web-based program that allows users to access projections data (supplied by LMI) by occupation, industry, or occupational clusters. The system also allows searches of training resources by training programs or by training providers and a variety of other occupational information. The OIS is integrated into our LMI Warehouse.

The LMI Center will also work with NDCRN by providing occupational projections and wage data and by assisting in the preparation of the *North Dakota Career Outlook*. The *Career Outlook* is an annual tabloid provided to high school students, their parents, career guidance counselors, One-Stop resource rooms, etc. It contains information on occupational descriptions, occupational demand, wages, training programs, etc., along with a variety of articles relating how to find a job and making career choices in a student-friendly format.

When the occupational projections to 2010 are produced, based on the new NAICS-based OES data, North Dakota will put together a *North Dakota Industry and Occupational Projections to 2010* publication. We will also produce a *Where Will the Jobs be in 2010* brochure based on the highlights of that publication. This publication is extensively used in schools, resource rooms, and similar settings.

The LMI Center will also produce several related publications. The 2003 edition of the occupational wage survey publication, *Wages for North Dakota Jobs*, will be published in late winter. Our monthly publication, the *North Dakota Labor Market Advisor* will be revamped to include many more types of LMI in an updated customer-friendly format. The annual *Employment and Wages* publication also received makeover and now

publishes covered employment and wage data by both SIC and NAICS. Other related LMI publications are described in sections 6, 9,10, and 11 of this plan. All publications produced by LMI are loaded on our LMI website as PDFs.

Customers: This information is used by a wide range of customers. The users include career guidance counselors, One-Stop staff, WDC and staff, job seekers, businesses, educational and training planners, students, WIA participants, and other state and local government agencies.

Focus: The focus of this activity is to provide information to customers so that they can make informed career choices. In addition, this activity will fill data gaps and create products for the One-Stop delivery system.

Customer Input: The redesign and changes in format of our publications are the direct result of customer feedback. Customers wanted data in a much easier to understand format, and we have incorporated those changes into the revamping of our publications. The customer input we have received on the changes we have made to our publications has been extremely positive.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: One-Stop Offices use these products extensively in labor exchange activities (i.e., career resource rooms, working with special populations such as WIA participants, students, or dislocated workers, working with employers, etc.). Educational planners, WDC and staff, businesses, local economic developers, and state agencies also use some or all of these publications. North Dakota's five-year plan does not address specific products, but speaks of LMI in general terms, in order to give the LMI Center the latitude it needs to develop specific products to need identified needs of their customers.

Significant Milestones:

Maintain OIS system on LMI Warehouse in cooperation with NDCRN	Ongoing
Provide data for and assist NDCRN with publishing <i>Career Outlook</i>	Fall 2002
<i>Industry &amp; Occupational Projections to 2010</i> publication	Summer 2003
<i>Where will the Jobs be in 2010</i> publication	Summer 2003
<i>Labor Market Advisor</i> revised & published monthly	Dec 2002
<i>Employment &amp; Wages</i> Publications revised & published annually	Dec 2002
2003 Edition of <i>Wages for North Dakota Jobs</i> published	Winter 2003

Measurable Outcomes:

Sixty percent of the milestones will be completed by the end of the grant year. The remaining milestones will be completed by December 31, 2003.

Cost: \$35,000

**5. Employer Name and Address List:**

Description: North Dakota uses a customized method of delivering the ALMIS employer database information to the public by means of the Internet. By loading the employer database purchased from InfoUSA on our website, the employer information can be provided in a number of ways. The public can access pertinent employer data by firm name, city, county, industry, firm size, etc. Updated employer databases from InfoUSA will be loaded on the website twice a year as they become available.

Customers: There are a wide variety of users of this database. LMI staff, One-Stop Offices, workforce investment partners, government agencies, local economic developers and chambers of commerce, businesses, job seekers, guidance counselors, students learning about jobs and careers all make use of this database.

Focus: The focus of the product is to provide our various customer groups with an up-to-date and comprehensive listing of all the businesses in North Dakota in an easy to access and understandable format. The use of the InfoUSA database allows us to provide this information without release of confidential employer data from our UI Tax or ES-202 files.

Customer Input: The feedback we have received from customers has been very positive. Most seem pleased with the multiple ways of sorting and accessing employer groups.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: The state five-year plan does not address the employer name and address file, but speaks of LMI in general terms to give the LMI Center ample leeway to meet customer needs. However, this product is used extensively by One-Stop staff for job search, job development, and career exploration purposes. Job seekers operating either from resource rooms or working on-line from home have found this product very useful, especially when used in conjunction with North Dakota's new "Jobs by City" page on our Internet site.

#### Significant Milestones:

The employer database will continue to be maintained and will be updated twice a year as new CDs from InfoUSA become available.

#### Measurable Outcomes:

The employer database will be updated within 30 days of receipt of the new CD's from the vendor.

Cost: \$5,000.

### **6. Information and Support to Workforce Investment Boards:**

Description: North Dakota's LMI staff continually seeks ways to provide pertinent workforce information for the Workforce Development Council (this is North Dakota's only Workforce Investment Board). Our staff works regularly with the WDC to determine workforce information needs and to disseminate information. Designated LMI

staff attend WDC meetings, make presentations to the WDC, and LMI partners with the WDC to plan for and conduct special research studies to meet the special needs of the WDC not covered in our standard package of LMI products.

North Dakota will produce the 2003 edition of the *North Dakota Economic RoadMap*. This annual publication provides a comprehensive look at all of the relevant workforce information from LMI and various other sources. This publication won awards two consecutive years from NASWA as the best publication for Workforce Development. It contains information on population, wages, employment trends, unemployment claims, job creation, location quotients, industrial mix, labor force, per capita income, taxable sales, building permits, employment projections, gross state product, exports, etc., at the statewide and regional levels.

The LMI Center will partner with the WDC and the North Dakota Department of Commerce to conduct Labor Availability Studies in 14 North Dakota communities/areas. The data collection will be conducted by the Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota. However, the survey and sample design, the actual compilation of the statistical tables, and the analysis and narrative of the reports for these studies will be done by LMI staff with input from WDC. Additional studies may be scheduled based on the need expressed by other communities.

The LMI Center will complete the work on the job vacancy survey it conducted on behalf of the WDC, Department of Commerce, Board of Higher Education, and several other state agency partners. We will conduct other special studies for WDC as time and budget allow. In addition, we will continue to provide our expertise in survey design and statistical methodologies to support other special studies proposed by WDC and other partners.

At the request of the WDC, local economic developers, and other state and local government agencies, the LMI Center has done several impact analysis studies for various areas in North Dakota. Using the "IMPLAN" econometric input-output model, the LMI staff has studied the potential impact of new businesses moving into a community or of major employers closing in the community.

North Dakota received a letter of endorsement from the WDC in support of our efforts to become a part of the LEHD partnership with the Census Bureau. If accepted, North Dakota would have access to a variety of pertinent quarterly workforce indicators at a county level from the Census Bureau. This information has been highly sought after by the WDC and many other users.

The LMI Center will hold monthly economic briefing meetings with the members of the WDC, Department of Commerce, OMB, Governor's staff, and Tax Department invited. These meetings discuss the monthly employment and unemployment data releases and other new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of other related topics.

In addition to these special products and services provided in collaboration with the WDC, the LMI center provides many other ongoing products and services designed to meet the needs of the WDC and its local partners. For example, North Dakota conducts local employment survey and fringe benefit surveys in the 14 largest cities in North Dakota. (See Sections A and B of this plan.) In some cases, core products from the BLS programs have been modified or repackaged to meet the specific needs identified by the WDC, such as the local *Economy at a Glance* publications.

The North Dakota LMI Center is doing additional projects not specifically listed in the goals for the Information and Support of WDC activities. The details on those supplemental projects are listed in Sections A-C of this plan narrative.

Customers: The primary customers would be the state and local Workforce Development Council members and staff and those individuals who work closely with the Council, such as other state agencies, program administrators and planners, One-Stop Offices, governor's office, and legislators.

Focus: The focus of this activity is to provide special workforce information and services to fill the information gaps as identified by the WDC.

Customer Input: The customer input we have received from the WDC and related customer groups has been very positive. LMI is recognized as a solid producer of accurate and timely data. Our partnership with the WDC and Department of Commerce on various special surveys has been a win-win situation.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: Many of the special surveys and studies we have done for or in partnership with the WDC have been extremely valuable to our One-Stop Offices as well. In particular, the special localized surveys on labor availability, job vacancies, fringe benefits, local employment, and IMPLAN studies have been used extensively by local One-Stops.

Significant Milestones:

Attend WDC meetings	As scheduled
Make presentations to WDC	As requested
Provide assistance and expertise on survey design and methodology	As requested
Monthly economic briefing meetings	Monthly
Complete job vacancy survey	October 2002
Complete labor availability surveys for 14 areas	February 2003
Apply for LEHD membership	February 2003
Economic Impact Studies (IMPLAN)	As requested
Publish <i>North Dakota Economic RoadMap</i>	May 2003

Measurable Outcomes:

An LMI representative will attend at least 75 percent of all WDC meetings. The LMI Center will complete work on the 14 labor availability studies by February 2003.

Cost: \$60,000

## **7. Support State-Based Labor Market Information Delivery System and Maintain the Web-Based System Support:**

Description: North Dakota uses a customized method of delivering Labor Market Information to the public by means of the Internet. The LMI Warehouse contains all the information on the ALMIS database as well as additional workforce information items produced only by North Dakota. We are constantly making improvements to our website by trying to make the data easier to access, to allow our customers to obtain information in a format most useful to them, and by allowing our users to see graphs, charts, and maps related to our data.

All data items produced in the LMI Center will be published on the LMI website. All hard-copy publications are loaded on the website as PDFs, and all current and historical data series are available in detail. We are continually seeking additional pertinent labor market information that we can add to our website.

The LMI website is integrated with the overall Job Service North Dakota website [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com). In coordination with this website, Job Service North Dakota will be implementing NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop, an enhanced on-line services systems for job seekers and employers in February or March of 2003. NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop will contain basic information on occupational and industry projections, wages, employment, unemployment, employers, schools, demographics, occupational licenses and other workforce information taken from the ALMIS database. However, Virtual One-Stop will provide only a limited number of data items for the most current time period. NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop users will be able to link to the LMI Warehouse for more detailed, complete, and historical information. In addition to going directly the to LMI Warehouse or going to the LMI Warehouse through [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com), users will now have a third way of accessing LMI—through NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop.

North Dakota will continue to make enhancements to its electronic workforce information delivery system to make the system more user friendly. New and updated data will be added to the LMI Warehouse as they become available. The switch from SIC to NAICS will necessitate major changes to allow us to publish industry employment data under the new NAICS coding structure. North Dakota will investigate the possibility of purchasing special LMI delivery systems from private vendors such as the Workforce Informer and Virtual LMI from GeoSolutions.

North Dakota launched a new electronic LMI newsletter in December 2002. Each month “The Wire @ [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com)” will provide a look at North Dakota’s key economic indicators and feature links that highlight a variety of economic and labor market information from other sources. We anticipate the Wire will be an economical way of disseminating data and drawing users to our website and our LMI publications.

Customers: The electronic workforce information delivery system will be used by a wide variety of customers. Job Service North Dakota administrative and One-Stop staff, LMI staff, WDC, businesses, job seekers, partner agencies, local and state economic developers, planners, students, teachers, counselors, private researchers and consultants—in short, anyone with access to a computer and in need of LMI will utilize this system.

Focus: The focus of this activity is the development of an electronic workforce information delivery system that is comprehensive in scope and yet very easy to use.

Customer Input: Based on extensive consultations with internal and external customers, and an independent web consultant group hired by the agency, the LMI Warehouse is generally felt it to be an excellent delivery system. However, some users felt it might be a bit too technical or contain too much data for some users. Customer input will be used to enhance the look and usability of the LMI Warehouse and jobsnd.com site. In addition, customer feedback on the Wire has been used to further refine this new product. Initial feedback on the Wire has been extremely positive with the emailing list expanding rapidly.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: The electronic workforce information delivery system is integrated into Job Service North Dakota's web delivery system and as such is the core system for all the Wagner Peyser and WIA activities in North Dakota. Although not specifically addressed in the five-year plan, an efficient LMI delivery system is implied as necessary for the LMI Center to meet customer needs.

Significant Milestones:

Continue to make improvements to website as needed	Ongoing
Update data items and add new items as needed	Ongoing
Load all LMI publications on website in PDF as needed	Ongoing
Produce monthly LMI e-newsletter (The Wire @ jobsnd.com)	December 2002
Job Service North Dakota will implement NDWorks/ Virtual One-Stop service delivery system	March 2003

Measurable Outcomes:

The LMI Center will have PDF's of all LMI publications loaded on the website within 30 days of publication. The LMI Center will have 75 percent of all the LMI components required by the new NDWORKS/Virtual One-Stop system in place by the end of the grant year.

Cost: \$30,000

**8. Support State Workforce Training Activities:**

Description: There are two primary components to this activity: The continued training of the LMI Center staff and the expansion of training activities designed for our internal and external Workforce Information customers.

LMI staff will continue to attend training to improve their skills and knowledge, to learn about best practices from other states, to interact with other LMI staff from around the nation, and to find out about program changes relating to workforce information development. Staff will attend LMI Institute sponsored training, the LMI Forum, specialized workshops on using new software systems such as GIS, design and layout software packages, statistical analysis packages, wage record analysis, etc. North Dakota is a member of the LMI Institute Consortium and one of our staff (Nelse Grundvig) teaches Beginning Analyst Training and is involved with the development of other Institute-sponsored training. We will utilize Nelse to provide special training to LMI staff and our customers.

Because of our emphasis on becoming more customer focused in LMI, we have utilized Melanie Arthur from the Greg Newton Associates on two occasions to train LMI staff and business services staff from our One-Stop Offices. The entire LMI staff and business representatives from each One-Stop Office attended a Customer Service for LMI training conducted by Melanie Arthur. In addition, last September North Dakota was a pilot state for the LMI @ Work Training sponsored by NASWA and put on by Melanie Arthur. LMI analysts, business services representatives and management from One-Stop Offices, Commerce Department personnel, and WDC members were invited to attend this session which was designed show the attendees how to present everyday applications of LMI products in a understandable and useful way to business customers.

The second facet of this activity is providing training to our internal and external customers. The LMI staff provides a variety of training sessions and presentations to various groups including business associations, WDC groups, One-Stop staff, career counselors, civic associations, Commerce Department staff, etc. on an ongoing basis.

In addition to in-person training sessions, the LMI Center is designing an on-line training package for One-Stop Office staff. This training package, which will be available initially via the agency's Intranet, uses a case study approach for using the Workforce Information on the LMI Warehouse in working with business customers and job seekers.

In partnership with the NDCRN, State Vocational Education Department, and the ETA from Dallas, North Dakota's LMI Center will put on a LMI Users Training Conference designed primarily for career counselors and related professionals. This lab-based LMI training is intended to replace the ICDM training that LMI had been involved with since the 1980's.

Customers: The primary users of this activity are LMI staff, One-Stop Office personnel, the Workforce Development Council and staff, business groups, guidance counselors, personnel for other state agency partners, and generally anyone using LMI.

Focus: The focus of this activity is the professional development of LMI staff, the promotion of LMI products, and the education of our internal and external customers on how to use LMI.

Customer Input: The LMI staff provides input on what types of training they feel is necessary for them to best do their jobs. We also rely heavily on the evaluations and discussions we have had with our customers in planning appropriate LMI training. Based on feedback we have received from our customers, we have revised the ways we are doing some of our LMI training. The revised ICDM training and on-line training modules both resulted from suggestions from customers. Evaluations from the two Melanie Arthur sessions have been very helpful as well.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: Since the One-Stop Offices provide LMI products directly to businesses and job seekers, they are one of the primary targets of our training efforts. It is important for One-Stop staff to be well trained in the LMI products and services we provide, so that they can integrate those products and services into their service delivery. The five-year plan was designed to be broad in terms of LMI training in order to give the LMI Center the flexibility it needs to meet the training needs of its staff and its customers.

Significant Milestones:

LMI Staff to ALMIS Institute Training	Ongoing
LMI Staff to Other Training as needed	Ongoing
Melanie Arthur LMI Customer Satisfaction Training	Spring 2002
Melanie Arthur LMI @ Work Pilot Training for NASWA	September 2002
LMI staff to LMI Forum	October 2002
Training and presentations to customer groups	Ongoing
LMI User Training Conference	March 2003
Develop On-line LMI Training Modules	June 2003

Measurable Outcomes:

LMI staff will conduct a minimum of five training sessions or LMI presentations to various customer groups. At least one LMI staff will attend an ALMIS Institute training session and at least two LMI staff will attend the LMI Forum. All LMI staff will attend at least one of the Melanie Arthur LMI training sessions.

Cost: \$30,000

**A. Conduct Local Employment Surveys:**

Description: North Dakota began conducting Local Employment Surveys (LES) in the 1960's and may be the only state conducting such surveys. The LES survey is a simple, one-page questionnaire sent to a universe of employers within a city in which Job Service has a One-Stop Office. Fourteen cities/areas are normally surveyed, with half the cities

surveyed in even-numbered years and half in odd-numbered years. The data on the number of firms, total number of employees, part-time workers, female workers, female part-time workers, self-employed and unpaid family members are collected and published by industry along with a comparison to the previous survey.

Customers: Economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, One-Stop Office staff, educational planners, LMI staff, local workforce investment boards, Department of Transportation planners, businesses, and prospective employers, all find these localized city-specific data extremely valuable.

Focus: The focus of this activity is to provide a localized employment data product and service for non-MSA communities. It is also one of the very few sources of data on part-time and female employment. The survey provides an economic snapshot for community leaders to use in planning, business recruitment, and other activities.

Customer Input: In visiting with our customers, the one comment we get the most is “we need localized data.” As a result, this is one of our most highly requested products. For those cities that are not large enough to be MSA’s, this is the only source of local employment data available to them as they attempt to compete with large communities in attracting new businesses.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: The state five-year plan is written in general terms in order to provide some flexibility for the LMI Center to meet individual customers needs. These surveys are excellent examples of the types of data provided by North Dakota’s LMI Center to meet customer needs for very localized data. The Local Employment Surveys are done in conjunction with, and as a service to the One-Stop Office in that city and the local Chamber of Commerce. The One-Stop Office staff uses these data extensively when working with business customers and community leaders.

#### Significant Milestones:

Local Employment Surveys are conducted on a two-year rotating basis for 14 cities in North Dakota. Survey results are published throughout the year as the surveys are completed. Results are also posted on the LMI Warehouse.

#### Measurable Outcomes:

At least six local employment surveys will be completed and the results published in the grant year.

Cost: \$35,000.

### **B. Conduct Fringe Benefit Surveys:**

Description: North Dakota conducts fringe benefit surveys for each city in which we have One-Stop Offices. Fourteen cities are surveyed with one half of the cities surveyed during the even numbered years and one half surveyed during the odd numbered years.

Each employer in the sample receives two identical surveys; one for salaried workers and one for hourly workers. Data is collected on a variety of fringe benefits related to paid time off, insurances, retirement, salary policies, and other miscellaneous fringe benefits. The survey results are published by city as each survey is completed as well as a statewide summary publication.

Customers: The primary customers for the fringe benefits surveys are employers, One-Stop staff, local economic developers, local workforce investment boards, Chambers of Commerce, LMI staff, and job seekers.

Focus: The focus of this activity is to fill an identified customer need for fringe benefit information.

Customer Input: Fringe benefit information was one of the major “unmet needs” as identified by our discussions with our customers two or three years ago, before these surveys began. Community leaders also requested localized fringe benefits data.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: Fringe benefits are a key component in any compensation package offered by employers. The One-Stop staff utilizes this information in working with businesses and job seekers in the labor exchange processes. The state’s five-year plan was designed to be broad in terms of LMI to give the LMI Center ample leeway to meet customer needs.

Significant Milestones:

The fringe benefits surveys will be conducted on a two-year rotating basis in fourteen cities. The survey results will be published throughout the year as the surveys are completed. A statewide fringe benefit publication will be produced by the spring of 2003.

Measurable Outcomes:

At least six fringe benefit surveys will be completed and the results published in the grant year.

Cost: \$35,000.

**C. Conduct Special Research Projects:**

Description: Based on needs expressed by customers, North Dakota will conduct a variety of special research projects not necessarily covered by any of the above core product categories. North Dakota will provide a largest employer listing for the state as a whole and for each of its largest cities on our LMI Warehouse.

North Dakota will conduct at least one special topic “white paper” research study relating to some aspect of the labor market and develop a publication describing the findings of that study. Examples of studies done in the past are economic effects of the Grand Forks flood, employment in North Dakota’s religious organizations, business births and deaths,

and North Dakota's youth out-migration problem. This year's study was entitled *The Balancing Act, Challenges for Today's Working Women*.

Other special research projects will be done on an ad hoc basis, to meet the needs of customers. North Dakota is planning to do a publication presenting Census 2000 data in an easy to use county format.

Customers: This activity will have a wide range of customers and will vary based on the topic of the specific research project.

Focus: The focus of this activity is to fill data gaps and to address specific needs as identified by customers.

Customer Input: The products in this category are developed as a direct result of customer feedback. This year's women's publication has been very well received and been used in a number of women's conferences, human resource conferences and various workshops across the state.

WIA/Wagner Peyser: The state five-year plan does not address specific publications or special projects, but speaks in general terms, to give the LMI Center some latitude in order to meet customers needs. These publications are excellent examples of the products designed to meet customer needs for workforce information on very specific and relevant topics in North Dakota. One-Stop staff have used these publications in their resource rooms and, in the case of this year's women's publication, have developed workshops for working women around this publication.

Significant Milestones:

Maintain the largest employer listing on the website	Ongoing
Special research study— <i>The Balancing Act, Challenges for Today's Working Women</i> publication	November 2002
County Census publication	Summer 2003

Measurable Outcomes:

500 copies of the *Balancing Act* publication will be printed and distributed in the grant year.

Cost: \$14,743

## **CUSTOMERS SATISFACTION ACTIVITIES**

As previously mentioned, we feel strongly that customer feedback is extremely important in planning for and developing an efficient and comprehensive workforce information delivery system. Accordingly, North Dakota will use a combination of strategies to determine the customer satisfaction with the workforce information and services provided by the LMI Center.

We will have participants of training sessions and attendees of our LMI presentations provide feedback on evaluation forms. These forms will be reviewed to ensure customer needs and expectations are met and that the goals of the training/presentations are met. Also during these sessions, informal discussions with the participants or audience will help to provide insight into the usefulness of our products and services.

North Dakota will sit down and visit with several of our key customers about our products and services in a very informal focus group/discussion group type setting. LMI staff will have one-on-one or group discussions with personnel from several One-Stop Offices, ND Department of Commerce, state and local economic developers, WDC staff, NDCRN, and representatives from other state agency partners. To begin the dialog, we will ask for their specific comments, evaluations, or suggestions on such things as: what products are useful, which are not, how to improve products, suggestions for new products or services to meet unmet needs, how we can best train users, etc. We will discuss possible solutions or actions we can take based on this feedback.

North Dakota will conduct a customer satisfaction mail survey as well. Individuals, agencies, businesses, groups, or other types of users on our LMI master mailing list will receive a customer satisfaction survey. This survey will ask questions about usage of the various products or services, types of formats that are most useful, timeliness of information, suggestions for improvements, evaluations on the helpfulness of LMI staff, suggestions for new products or services, and any general overall comments on our workforce information. The results of this survey will be compiled and used in conjunction with the other modes of customer feedback for planning and evaluation purposes in the LMI Center.