

# *State of Missouri*

## **PY 2004 Workforce Information Grant Plan**

### **A. Statewide Workforce Information System**

- **The process used to ensure that the 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.**

The development of this plan was initiated by the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC, the LMI unit) staff contacting the Executive Director of the Missouri Training and Employment Council (MTEC), the SWIB.

After initial consultation, a team was formed that included LMI staff, MTEC staff, planning staff from the Division of Workforce Development, and representatives of local WIBs.

This plan was developed by this team, in a series of meetings. The plan was subsequently approved by the executive committee of the MTEC and then by the full MTEC.

This is not the end of the team's work and the MTEC's oversight, but the beginning. The team will continue to meet regularly (usually monthly) throughout the program year to monitor progress and to make adjustments to the plan activities, as necessary during the year.

Regular reporting to the MTEC will ensure that it is kept up to date on progress of LMI activities in support of the plan. The MTEC will have the ability to make adjustments during the year to ensure that the goals of the LMI and workforce information system and of the state's workforce development system are met.

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

The Missouri Strategic Five Year Workforce Investment Plan includes the following critical elements: universal access, lifelong learning/choice, integration, and accountability. Missouri has assured universal access and integration by providing labor market information on the Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) web site and on the Division of Workforce Development web site [www.GreatHires.org](http://www.GreatHires.org). Learning and choice are provided through the publication of Occupational Employment and Wage Data along with Occupational Projections on web sites and computer CD disks. Accountability is provided through directly providing One-Stop Centers and Local Workforce Investment Boards with LMI and requesting their feedback on the quality and usefulness of the data.

- **How the grant activities are consistent with the strategic vision of the Governor and the SWIB.**

The policy development and oversight for the Workforce Investment System in Missouri is provided by the Missouri Training and Employment Council (MTEC - the statewide WIB). Working through this group (and frequent meetings with the MTEC's executive director) provides an expedient method of identifying the data and research needs for the workforce system for both the near term and long term. This allows for better planning of future information requirements for all stakeholders.

**Highlights of the MTEC strategic vision are shown below:**

***Vision:** Missouri will maintain a vigorous economy through a highly skilled and globally competitive workforce that allows all Missourians the opportunity to reach their full potential.*

***Mission:** To provide leadership that creates a world-class workforce system ensuring Missouri's competitive advantage in the global economy, by developing systemic policies, plans and standards that promote best practices.*

***Leadership:** The Governor has called upon MTEC to assess the workforce investment system: publish the State of Missouri's Workforce report; and develop systemic policies, plans and standards that promote best practices and ensure public accountability. The Council, local Workforce Investment Boards, and the Regional Technical Education Councils (RTECs) will work with business, labor and education to identify common sets of essential and technical skills required for effective work in major occupational and industry clusters.*

***Strategy:** Full integration of workforce and economic development functions will result in better outcomes for students, job seekers and businesses and will be evidenced by an increase in market share for the public workforce investment system. Achieving full integration will require excellent working relationships among state departments, local workforce investment boards, career centers, as well as educational and community-based service delivery systems. Quality customer service can be best achieved through community-based decision making that is based on timely labor market information.*

The key role played by labor market and workforce information in decision making and in quality customer service is clearly recognized and articulated. The identification of occupation and industry clusters and development of related skills information are identified as key LMI activities that will support the strategic vision of the SWIB.

- **The strategy of the SWA and the SWIB for consulting with local workforce investment boards and stakeholders in the workforce investment system to determine customer needs for workforce information.**

Local WIB chairs and administrator are active members of the MTEC. In particular, the WIB Chairs Committee of the MTEC will facilitate this consultation. Representatives of local WIBs are members of the team that developed and will oversee the plan for this grant.

Use of these mechanisms in the development of this plan and in the continuing implementation of the plan's activities, including evolving activities as necessary during the year, is the underlying strategy for determining (and meeting) customer needs.

- **The broad strategic approach for workforce information delivery to principal customers.**

Many of the products described below will be delivered to the state and local WIBs through written reports and through presentation at MTEC and other meetings. Ongoing consultation with these groups will discuss findings of the various projects as they develop.

The principal means of delivery of information will continue to be the MERIC web site ([missourieconomy.org](http://missourieconomy.org)), using ALMIS database data and innovative delivery options. To improve usability by the full range of customer groups, a complete revamping of the delivery system is planned (see detailed description below.) Options are currently being considered by the team described above, but the likely course is acquisition of one of the leading edge systems offered by the most experienced developers of these systems. Links to a wider range of unique and innovative products developed by MERIC (including activities beyond those covered by this grant) will be provided through system enhancements. Consideration will be given to the feasibility of local WIB-specific pages as part of this system. Such pages would help ensure that the information needs of local customers throughout the state, as determined by local WIBs and their staffs, are being met.

Again, the active involvement of the team described above, and of the SWIB and LWIBs, will guide the development and implementation of these delivery systems.

- **How workforce information and services are delivered as core services to customers through the state's One-Stop service delivery system.**

The electronic delivery systems described above (and below) will be available to one-stop customers in the career centers; through libraries, schools and other publicly accessible computers; and indeed from anywhere the internet is accessible.

A continued emphasis will be placed on delivery of information to business customers. Ongoing meetings with business service representatives will ensure that needs of business are understood, that appropriate information is being produced, and that one-stop staff are trained and knowledgeable in the concepts, content, and delivery of LMI and workforce information. Indeed, training of WIBs and WIB staff and of one-stop career center staff in LMI (described in further detail below) is expected to be a key element insuring that Labor Market and Workforce Information is used in planning and delivery of workforce services and is available to customers of the one-stop system to ensure that they have access to quality information that will help them make informed choices.

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

The state and local WIBs are both key information customers themselves, and through their unique position representatives of many types of information customers. Indeed, ongoing consultation described elsewhere in this plan is expected to be a key method of collecting and interpreting customer satisfaction. Satisfaction with Labor Market and Workforce information is a part of the broader measures of satisfaction with the state's workforce development system and should be measured as part of that significant effort.

- **A concise 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 2004 including how the plan addresses inadequacies or gaps identified by users.**

The survey on our website ([missourieconomy.org](http://missourieconomy.org)) shows that most customers find navigation on the site easy. Not everyone was able to find all the information they wanted, but many of these were first-time users. This situation is being addressed in this plan by the introduction of a new website, which will contain more information and give special attention to making the information easily accessible by a variety of customer groups. Training described later in this plan should also assist customers in being able to locate and use the information they want, as well as providing feedback to us about the types of information customers want and how best to provide it to them.

We have also incorporated in-person feedback and comments received at meetings, as well as input from the planning team described earlier in this section. The Business Representatives focus group described in section B.6 of this plan has also provided useful information. The fact that MERIC is part of the Department of Economic Development puts us in the position of having constant feedback regarding information needed by the economic development, community development, and business communities.

- **Identify funds leveraged or matched from funding sources other than these grant funds and how these funds will enhance delivery of products and services as part of the state's workforce information system.**

In one sense, the very nature of MERIC involves leveraging of resources in support of the state LMI plan. Information developed in the Bureau of Labor Statistics programs is of key importance in the value-added information produced by MERIC. The same can be said for the information produced by Economic Development-funded activities in MERIC, such as economic impact studies and GIS analyses. In other words, the broad nature of MERIC promotes synergy that benefits all its activities, including those supported by this grant.

This year's plan involves development of a comprehensive and standard set of products generally available to all WIBs. Carry-in funds will allow significant investment in a replacement or expansion of the current LMI electronic delivery system. These funds should also allow for investment in a substantial workforce and economic information conference this year. This initial conference would serve as the springboard for future conferences, where sponsorships and similar arrangements would allow leveraging of funds to carry on excellent conferences with expanded content and customer groups.

The broad strategy for upcoming years will be to build on developments of this year's products for greater customization, additional research, and more innovative products in response to particular needs, as articulated by the SWIB, LWIBs, and other customer groups.

The planned activities and products for this year are designed to help attract leveraging funds from other agencies and sources to develop customized innovative products in response to articulated needs. Leveraging of funds is expected to be a more significant activity in upcoming program years than in this year.

As a specific example, MERIC has received MTEC funding for producing a balanced scorecard (performance benchmarking.) It is anticipated that that activity and support may be continued this program year. Opportunities for leveraging, particularly in expansion of career products, in web-based delivery of information, in economic impact analyses, and in GIS activities, will be investigated.

## **Missouri Work Plan 2004** **Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor**

### **State Workforce Agency Deliverables**

#### **B.1 Continue to populate the ALMIS Database with state data.**

- ***Description of core product, service or other demand activity***

MERIC will deliver five core ALMIS products: (1) continue to populate the ALMIS database with Missouri labor market data, specifically CES, OES, Projections, InfoUSA, ONET, and QCEW data; (2) continue to develop and upgrade the ALMIS database structure by converting to ORACLE 10G and upgrading to ALMIS 2.3; (3) upgrade the memory and storage capacity of the server hosting the ALMIS database; (4) use ALMIS in populating content and data extraction on the MERIC website; and (5) continue participation in various ALMIS consortia and conferences.

- ***Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations***

Customer support for ALMIS products was determined through a series of consultations with the Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB) and the Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA). These agencies indicated the need for expanded and more current labor market information for use in policy development, program planning, and legislative initiatives. Specific recommendations include the need

for an improved web delivery and data extraction system and a protocol to access confidential data. Additionally, ALMIS is considered a core deliverable by the Employment and Training Administration of the US Department of Labor.

- ***Support goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan***

MERIC's ALMIS products support three goals of Missouri's Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan. Activities supporting *universal access* and *lifelong learning/choice* include populating the ALMIS database and deploying it on MERIC's website to ensure labor market information is provided to businesses, job seekers, students, education and training professionals, policy makers, and citizens. Activities supporting *integration* include populating and using the ALMIS database to support the integration of state economic and workforce development policy interventions by: (a) identifying targeted industries and occupations; (b) identifying historic and future economic trends; (c) identifying economically distressed communities; and (d) providing source data for SWIB/SWA analysis products.

- ***Principal Customers***

The principal customers of MERIC's ALMIS products include: (a) Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor; (b) Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB) and all ten local WIBs; (c) Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA); (d) education and training agencies; (e) business and industry; and (f) the general public not served by any of the above customers.

- ***Projected outcome(s) and system impact(s)***

MERIC's ALMIS products are anticipated to have the following outcomes: (a) centralization of Missouri's labor market information data for use in workforce development research, policy analysis, and public dissemination; (b) creation of an efficient and consistent system to allow different levels of user access to ALMIS labor market information, from summary data for public use to unrestricted access for research; (c) migration of ALMIS to a standard database format so that data can be shared across states, and that the database has technical support; and (d) increasing server capacity to ensure that ALMIS data can be accessed quickly and efficiently.

- ***Planned milestones***

September 2004	Upgrade the memory and storage capacity of the server hosting the ALMIS database.
March 2005	Upgrade the ALMIS database structure by converting files to ORACLE 10G.
April 2005	Upgrade the ALMIS database structure by converting files from ALMIS 2.2 to ALMIS 2.3.
May 2005	Populate the ALMIS database with Missouri labor market data, specifically CES, OES, Projections, InfoUSA, ONET, and QCEW.
June 2005	Use ALMIS in populating content and for data extraction on the MERIC website.

- ***Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)***

\$65,000

## **B.2 Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.**

- ***Description of core product, service or other demand activity***

MERIC will deliver a series of projections products centered around three categories: Data Products, Occupation Projections Products, and Industry Projections Products. MERIC will produce the following *Data Products*: (1) long-term industry projections for the state and ten WIAs for 2002-2012; (2) long-term occupation projections for the state and ten WIAs for 2002-2012; (3) short-term industry projections for the state for 2003-2005 and 2004-2006; and (4) short-term occupation projections for the state for 2003-2005 and 2004-2006.

MERIC will produce the following *Occupation Projections Products*: (1) Occupation Highlights, which describe occupational employment and trends statewide and by WIA; (2) Occupational Profiles, which provide in-depth analysis of a given occupation statewide and by WIA; (3) Career Report Cards, which describes a region's long-term occupational outlook statewide and by WIA; (4) A+ Career posters, which highlight top long-term career outlooks statewide; (5) Hot Jobs posters, which highlight top short-term career outlooks statewide; and (6) Target Occupations, which identify nationally competitive occupations statewide and by WIA.

MERIC will produce the following *Industry Projections Products*: (1) Industry Highlights, which describe industry employment and trends statewide and by WIA; (2) Industry Profiles, which provide in-depth analysis of a given industry statewide and by WIA; (3) Industry Report Cards, which describes a region's long-term industry outlook statewide and by WIA; and (4) Target Industries, which identify nationally competitive industries statewide and by WIA.

- ***Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations***

Customer support for industry and occupation projections products was determined through a series of consultations with the Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB) and the Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA). These agencies indicated a need for projections data for use in policy development, research, and marketing efforts. Specifically, customers identified three areas for improvement: (a) better geographic detail than the local workforce investment areas, many of which are large; (b) better industry and occupation detail, which is constrained by data disclosure rules; and (c) better time horizons, with many indicating that ten years projections may be too far out for their purposes. It was agreed at these meetings that over the coming year MERIC will work with various customers to identify solutions and implementation strategies to address these concerns. Additionally, projections products are considered a core deliverable by the Employment and Training Administration of the US Department of Labor.

- ***Support goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan***



MERIC's projections products support two goals of Missouri's Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan. Activities supporting *lifelong learning/choice* include creating projections data and analysis products to assist: (a) job seekers in finding careers with a good outlook; and (b) students in exploring career options. Activities supporting *integration* include creating projections data and analysis products to assist: (a) economic and workforce development agencies in program planning, resource allocation and research; and (b) education and training agencies in curricula planning and resource allocation.

- ***Principal Customers***

The principal customers of MERIC's projections products include: (a) job seekers and students looking for career information; (b) Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA); (c) Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB) and all ten local WIBs; (d) education and training agencies; (e) Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor; (f) business and industry; and (g) the general public not served by any of the above customers.

- ***Projected outcome(s) and system impact(s)***

MERIC's projections products are anticipated to have the following outcomes: (a) assist job seekers and students in making informed career decisions, primarily through career and industry outlooks, occupational profiles, and web-enabled data access; (b) assist governments and businesses in understanding their local economy and labor market today and in the future, primarily through career and industry outlooks, occupation and industry overviews, and web-enabled data access; and (c) assist economic and workforce development agencies in understanding the competitive, emerging or declining segments of the local economy, primarily through target occupations and industries reports and career and industry outlooks.

- ***Planned milestones***

August 2004	Complete long-term industry and occupation projections for 2002-2012 for Missouri. Complete short-term industry and occupation projections for 2003-2005 for Missouri.
November 2004	Complete Career Report Cards for 2002-2012 for Missouri and disseminate reports.
January 2005	Complete Target Occupation reports for 2002-2012 for Missouri and each WIA Complete Target Industry reports for 2002-2012 for Missouri and each WIA.
February 2005	Complete Industry Report Cards for 2002-2012 for Missouri and disseminate reports.
June 2005	Complete short-term industry and occupation projections for 2004-2006.

July 2005

Complete long-term industry and occupation projections for 2002-2012 for each of Missouri's ten WIAs.

- *Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)*

\$185,000

### **B.3 Provide occupational and career information products for public use.**

- *Description of core product, service or other demand activity*

1. Career Guides—Missouri Statewide Career Guide, Missouri Regional Career Guide

Missouri will produce, publish and distribute copies of the Missouri Statewide Career Guide and the Missouri Regional Career Guide. The Career Guides are used in Workforce Development, Vocational Rehabilitation, High School, Middle School, Career School, Community College, University and Corrections environments. These Guides contain occupational profiles, wage data, occupational outlook data, detail the basics of the career development process and searching for employment. The Guides also contain information about what programs agencies offer to Missouri citizens.

2. Career Path CDs targeted to 13-19 year olds.

Missouri will produce (6) six CD's (one for each career path). These CD's will contain 3(three) videos of different occupations associated with that particular career path. In addition to the videos, the CD's will also include occupations you would find in each path as well as educational requirements to acquire these occupations, outlook for jobs in these occupations, and entry and experienced wage data. Middle and secondary schools, community and technical colleges, career centers, etc will use the CD's. They will be mailed to the above entities and made available at career fairs, educational meetings, seminars, and career centers. The data for each career path will also be available on the MERIC website.

3. Star Posters for display in previous settings plus schools.

4. Benefits Survey

Missouri will conduct a statewide benefits survey. This survey will ask employers the types of benefits they offer to their employees and the participation rate of each benefit offered. The results will be published both in a pamphlet format and on the MERIC website. All participants will receive a copy of the survey results. In addition, pamphlets will be made available to businesses, job seekers, students, educational entities, career centers, and at educational meetings.

5. Choices – Career Information Delivery System (or related job seeker assessment/information tools).

Missouri will offer a Missouri-specific Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) to high schools, workforce development entities, vocational rehabilitation offices and higher education institutions. Missouri Choices, the state's current CIDS, offers assessment tools that are O\*Net based, including the Work Importance Locator and the Interest Profiler.

The product also offers occupational outlook data and wage data by local WIA-designated areas. Users can apply important criterion to occupations, the programs related to those occupations as well as to educational institutions. Missouri Choices also contains a financial

aid database users can employ to find scholarship opportunities. Finally, Missouri Choices also offers tools for building a portfolio, cover letters and resumes.

## 6. LMI For Students BY Students

Missouri initiated this program in 2003. Its purpose is to involve students enrolled in vocational/technical graphic arts and printing classes an opportunity to experience a “real-life, hands-on” project that will be distributed to many users. Their assignment is to design and print a brochure/pamphlet containing labor market information relating to a specific topic, such as career paths. These publications will be distributed at both middle and high schools, career centers and made available at career fairs and educational meetings and seminars.

## 7. The Real Game series – Information on careers for grades 3-12 and Adults.

Missouri offers The Real Game Series, which is a set of six internationally recognized career development programs serving both youth and adults. Each is designed for a different age or grade level, and focuses on a specific aspect of community building, workplace success, or individual career planning.

The Real Game Series provides teachers, counselors and trainers with ready-made activities that address the National Career Development Guidelines, fulfill the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Standards for School Counseling Programs in career development, and reflect skills and competencies from the U.S. Department of Labor's SCANS Report (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills).

The Games Are:

<u>Game</u>	<u>Grade Level</u>
The Play Real Game	3rd & 4th
The Make It Real Game	5th & 6th
The Real Game	7th & 8th
The Be Real Game	9th & 10th
The Get Real Game	11th & 12th
Real Times, Real Life	Postsecondary & Adults

- ***Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations***

Customer support for career information products was determined through a series of consultations with the Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB), the Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA), and the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. These agencies indicated a need for career products to ensure labor market information is provided to job seekers, students, education and training professionals, policy makers, and citizens. It was agreed at these meetings that over the coming year MERIC will work with various customers to identify needs and develop strategies to address these needs.

- ***Support goals of the state’s WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan***

MERIC’s career products support three goals of Missouri’s Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan. Activities supporting *universal access* include making career data and products available to job seekers, students, education and training professionals, and policy makers through: (a) web access, (b) print and digital media, and (c) presentations. Activities supporting *lifelong learning/choice* include creating career products to assist: (a) job seekers in finding careers with a good outlook; and (b) students in exploring careers options. Activities supporting *integration* include creating projections data and analysis products to assist education and training agencies in curricula planning and resource allocation.

- ***Principal Customers***

The principal customers of MERIC’s career products include: (a) job seekers and students looking for career information; (b) Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA); (c) education and training agencies; (d) Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; and (e) the general public not served by any of the above customers.

- ***Projected outcome(s) and system impact(s)***

MERIC’s career products are anticipated to have the following outcomes: (a) assist job seekers and students in making informed career decisions; and (b) assist state and local education and training agencies in curricula planning and resource allocation.

- ***Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)***

\$160,000

The costs of conducting the benefits survey are largely being borne by pilot project grants from the Benefits Consortium. Development and delivery of information products from this survey will utilize grant funds.

## State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB)/State Workforce Agency (SWA) Deliverables

### **B.4 Ensure that workforce information and support required by state and local workforce investment boards are provided.**

- ***Description of core product, service or other demand activity***

MERIC will deliver a series of SWIB/SWA analysis products centered around three categories: Career Analysis Products, Industry Analysis Products, and Economic Development Products. MERIC will produce the following *Career Analysis Products*: (1) KSA Clusters, which statistically groups occupations based on similar sets of knowledge, skills and abilities for use in career path and career transition analyses; (2) Skills Profile Analysis, which details the knowledge, skills and abilities of one or several occupations for use in career and curricula planning; (3) Training and Education for Tomorrow's Workforce, which identifies future demand for knowledge, skills and abilities based on projections data; and (4) Dislocated Worker Transition Tool, which assists career counselors in transitioning dislocated workers from declining industries/careers to growing industries/careers.

MERIC will produce the following *Industry Analysis Products*: (1) Labor Shed and Commuting Analysis, which profiles a community's workforce in terms of where people work; (2) Local Employment Dynamics, which provides quarterly workforce indicators on job creation, destruction and turnover by industry and basic demographics; (3) LED Worker Origins and Destinations, which is an interactive mapping tool that displays the labor and commuting sheds at the sub-county level; and (4) Seasonal Hiring Patterns, which is a statistical analysis predicting seasonal hiring patterns by industry and WIA.

MERIC will produce the following *Economic Development Products*: (1) Workforce Investment Area Gap Analysis – Needs Assessment, which provides for each WIA a detailed analysis of the local economy and labor market; (2) Workforce Investment Area Gap Analysis – Custom Research, which provides for each WIA customized research on special issues identified by local WIBs from the Needs Assessments; (3) Workforce System Scorecard, which is an overview of Missouri's workforce system focusing on the economic, education and workforce environments; (4) Job Vacancy Survey, which provides information on the current demand for jobs and skills in Missouri; (5) Self-Sufficiency Standard, which provides an estimate of the required wages to support a household by county and for 70 household types; (6) Economic Conditions and Trends, which provides an overview of Missouri's economy and labor market on a monthly basis; (7) Entrepreneurship Analysis, which provides baseline economic and demographic data on entrepreneurs and self-employed persons across Missouri's regions; (8) Economic Impact Modeling services to estimate the direct and indirect impacts of economic changes in local economies, and for use in fiscal cost-benefit analyses; (9) Census data analysis services; and (10) Geographic Information Systems mapping services.

- ***Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations***

Customer support for SWIB/SWA analysis products was determined through a series of consultations with the Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB) and the

Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA). These agencies identified a wide array of economic and workforce research needs for use in policy development, planning, and marketing efforts. Specifically, customers identified several areas of need: (a) more skills-based analyses, specifically the demand for skills and identifying skills gaps; (b) more tools to assist dislocated workers in transitioning from declining careers/industries to growing careers/industries; (c) more summary and analysis of existing data at the local level, specifically the need to identify and explain current and future needs; (d) labor shed and commuting analyses, specifically a way to get more timely and geographically detailed information of worker flows presented in a usable format; (e) more emphasis on self-sufficiency or living wages, specifically updating the self-sufficiency standard and including it as a benchmark on all industry and occupation wage data; (f) quick access to economic impact assessment services; (g) quick access to GIS mapping services; and (h) the ability to consult and request customized research on an ad-hoc basis.

- ***Support goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan***

MERIC's SWIB/SWA analysis products support three goals of Missouri's Wagner-Peyser Strategic Plan. *Lifelong learning/choice* is supported by providing Missouri's SWIB/SWA with the following products to assist job seekers: (a) skills-based analyses to facilitate training decisions and career transitions; (b) job vacancy surveys to provide more current estimates of labor demand; (c) self-sufficiency analyses to benchmark careers to a livable wage; and (d) labor shed and commuting analyses to identify where jobs are located and estimate commuting costs. *Integration* is supported by providing Missouri's SWIB/SWA with the following products to assist program planning and resource allocation: (a) WIA Gap Analyses to identify current and future needs in the local area, and to research special topics of interest; (b) Local Employment Dynamics to provide quarterly workforce indicators on job creation, destruction and turnover; (c) labor shed and commuting analyses to understand worker flows for economic development policy; and (d) seasonal hiring patterns to anticipate cyclical shortages and surpluses of labor. *Accountability* is supported by providing Missouri's SWIB/SWA with the following products to assist program evaluation: (a) Workforce System Scorecard to evaluate progress in the economic, education and workforce environments; (b) economic impact modeling to conduct fiscal cost-benefit analyses of various workforce programs; and (c) providing program evaluation services as requested by the SWIB and SWA.



- ***Principal Customers***

The principal customers of MERIC's SWIB/SWA analysis products include: (a) Missouri Training and Employment Council (SWIB) and all ten local WIBs in Missouri; (b) Missouri Department of Economic Development (SWA); (c) other local economic, workforce and education agencies; (d) business and industry; and (e) the general public not served by any of the above customers.

- ***Projected outcome(s) and system impact(s)***

MERIC's SWIB/SWA analysis products are anticipated to have the following outcomes: (a) to assist SWIB/SWA in helping job seekers make informed decisions about career and education choices; (b) to provide more current information on the demand for jobs and skills; (c) to assist SWIB/SWA in identifying current and future workforce needs, and to develop strategies to address those needs; (d) to provide information on the performance of Missouri's workforce system; (e) to provide cost-benefit and evaluation services to SWIB/SWA programs; and (f) to provide SWIB/SWA with comprehensive and customized economic and workforce research services as requested.

- ***Planned milestones***

July 2004	Receive LED data from US Census, complete data wheels, and offer analysis services.
September 2004	Complete Training and Education for Tomorrow's Workforce reports.  Complete fiscal cost-benefit analyses for all SWA tax credit and incentive programs.
December 2004	Complete Dislocated Worker Transition Tool and disseminate product to SWA staff.  Complete Workforce Investment Area Gap Analysis – Needs Assessment reports for each WIA.
January 2005	Complete Missouri Workforce System Scorecard and present results to SWIB and SWA.
February 2005	Complete knowledge, skills and abilities cluster reports for use by SWA staff.  Complete several Skills Profile Analyses for key occupational groups.
March 2005	Complete several Labor Shed and Commute Analyses for key WIAs.
April 2005	Complete Seasonal Hiring Patterns report for the state and key WIAs.  Complete update of the Self-Sufficiency Standard for all Missouri counties and major household types.
June 2005	Complete the Job Vacancy Survey and disseminate results.

- *Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)*

\$200,000

## **B.5 Maintain and enhance electronic state workforce information delivery systems.**

- *Description of core product, service or other demand activity*

The MERIC website will be revamped and organized around customer groups, including job seekers, employers, workforce boards, economic developers, and researchers. Special attention will be paid to the ease of navigation of the new site.

Several third-party vendors have been interviewed for this overhaul by a panel that includes representatives from MERIC, DWD, MTEC and WIBs (note: WIB representatives were not able to be in attendance at the recent vendor demonstrations).

Besides new organization and better navigation, new data elements and special features will be added based on the use of Missouri's ALMIS Database, U.S. Department of Labor data, other federal agency data, and private sector generated data.

If hosted by an outside vendor, MERIC will explore the additional option of being able to create and incorporate customized web applications to the site. The ability for WIBs to post their own content will also be investigated.

Finally, a great effort will be made to make the site reinforcing of GreatHires, Missouri Location One, and other web redesign efforts underway (e.g., including the development of a career website through DESE/CMSU), rather than duplicative.

The end result will be the most comprehensive, timely, and user-friendly labor market information website ever produced for use by policymakers and citizens in the State of Missouri.

- *Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations*

Support for a more accessible website, geared around the needs of specific customer groups, has been very positive, through the state and local WIBs. Bringing Missouri

information into a state-of-the-art delivery system is assured of meeting the positive reaction that other states have received from similar efforts.

- ***Support goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan***

This particularly supports the universal access and choice elements of the five-year plan. Labor market and workforce information becomes available to all potential customers of the system through a high-quality electronic delivery system, be they at career centers, work, home, schools, libraries or any other place with internet access. The main purpose of the information available on this system is to allow decision makers to make informed choices. Provision of labor exchange and other services at one-stop centers will be enhanced by the easy availability of high quality information to staff and customers alike.

- ***Principal Customers***

Businesses, job seekers, those planning careers, WIBs and their staffs, career center staff, economic developers and researchers, educational institutions and planners, counselors, news media, the general public.

- ***Projected outcome(s) and system impact(s)***

Immediate access to the most current and localized Labor Market and Workforce information possible, in a means keyed to each customer group. Improved planning through better information. More efficient operation of system, better outcomes through better information.

- ***Planned milestones***

1. September 2004. Team views demonstration of available delivery system.
2. December 2004. Team decides plan of action for system development or acquisition. Desirable elements of a system considered. Procurement issues considered.
3. January 2005. Procurement process begun.
4. February 2005. Decision made as to system to acquire or develop. Work begins on implementing system.
5. Spring 2005. System goes on-line.

- ***Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)***

\$90,000

Development or acquisition of a system to replace the current missourieconomy.org would require about \$200,000 additionally. It is anticipated that this one-time cost would be borne using carry-in funds from this grant. The possibility of developing area-specific pages linked to such a new website will be investigated as development activities occur. Such a development presents opportunities for resource leveraging, as local WIBs or other entities might be willing to support development of web pages specifically devoted to their area or organization.

## **B.6 Support state workforce information training activities.**

- *Description of core product, service or other demand activity*

New approaches are now in the process of being designed and implemented by MERIC to better develop and disseminate labor market information, to better train LMI users on what information is available, and to better gauge the need for specialized training on the use of LMI for policymaking. Major initiatives on these fronts include:

(1) The development of a general LMI Overview CD produced in cooperation with the LMI Training Institute.

(2) The creation of a directory of MERIC staff, contacts and available information.

(3) Hosting an LMI Users Conference in the late spring/early summer 2005. Specific emphasis at the conference will be placed on navigating the new website, recent and upcoming product releases, training on specific research methodologies, feedback and planning sessions with customers, networking with other LMI users, hearing from renowned keynote speakers, and the unveiling of the economic forecast for Missouri for the new fiscal year.

(4) Hosting a series of regional meetings with WIB Administrators and designated staff on the use of LED information, including the new origin/destination mapping information available to Missouri in 2005.

(5) Initiating contacts with WIBs, Career Center Staff, DWD Business Representatives and other key customer groups on their need for LMI products and specialized training. The pilot for this format has already taken place with DWD Business Representatives. A facilitator and structured exercises were used to work through the questions:

*What do you do as a DWD Business Representative?*

*Job duties*

*Demands of job*

*Demands by business contacts*

*Pressures faced*

*What are your information needs?*

*More Specifically*

*If you could provide the employers you contact with labor market or economic information answering their most common questions, what types of information would that be?*

*What are the common features of our thinking?*

*What about the mode of information delivery?*

(6) Following up from these meetings with new LMI product and training offerings.

(7) Participating in various conferences, meetings and functions as requested to explain available LMI or MERIC services.

(8) Signing more people up for our e-mail distribution service and electronic newsletter.

(9) Utilizing our mobile computer training lab and electronic training feedback system to better deliver training services and to improve upon them in the future.

(10) Organizing an “LMI for Workforce Board Planners” course in conjunction with the Labor Market Information Training Institute. The course would provide information about workforce information resources and practical applications of that information for workforce development needs.

- ***Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations***

Customer support for improved training has been very enthusiastic. In particular, a recent meeting of the WIB chairs committee strongly vocalized the need for training. This group voted to undertake this training.

- ***Support goals of the state’s WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan***

Knowledge of LMI and how to use it is key to the planning process as well as to many aspects of customer service delivery. Trained board members and WIB staff, as well as trained front-line staff in career centers, is a key to improving performance of the workforce development system, in support of the Strategic Plan.

- ***Principal Customers***

WIB members and staffs. Front line staff in career centers. Business service representatives throughout the state. Customers of the career centers and the state’s workforce investment programs (businesses and job seekers) will benefit indirectly from having trained, knowledgeable staff assisting them.

- ***Projected outcome(s) and system impact(s)***

Trained board members and staffs. Improved use of latest information in planning activities. Improved use of information in delivery of services to individuals and businesses. Improved outcomes through the use of quality information in informed decision making.

- ***Planned milestones***

Working with MTEC (committees and staffs) flesh out the details of desired training, by December 31.

Work with LMI Institute staff to select and design training meeting the goals of MTEC, by February 28.

Schedule training, by April 30.

- ***Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)***

\$33,974.

## C. Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment

The State Workforce Investment Board (MTEC) has representatives from all major customer groups. The major strategy will therefore be to seek advice from these individuals on the types of information they and their constituencies need.

During the past couple of years we have also solicited feedback from users of the MERIC web site. We will intensify these efforts to consult with customers about the usefulness of the information disseminated through our electronic delivery system so that we are able to respond to changing needs of the customers. The electronic survey on the MERIC web site will be adapted to better collect information about the customer being served, their data needs, how well we satisfied those needs, and how the products can be modified to better meet those needs.

Additional discussions with customers may take place at user conferences or when LMI staff members make personalized presentations. This is a good time for face-to-face interviewing. If the particular product doesn't quite meet the customers' needs, what changes could be made to it so that it would?

Many of our analysts actually talk to customers on the telephone to help answer their LMI questions, or to guide them through our web site. While they're on the phone, the analyst should ask a couple of questions about how the response answered their specific needs and how we can modify what we present to better answer their questions. Additionally, the web site can be better publicized to let customers know where LMI for Missouri is located.

Written surveys can either be mailed to customers on established mailing lists, or handed out at conferences and training to get specific information about what our customers need and whether we are meeting those needs.

Once we have customer data on how well we are satisfying their needs, a team of analysts needs to review the responses and our products to develop new products that answer the questions that have been left unanswered. This may mean developing completely new products or modifying existing products to make them more useful.

MERIC has investigated the addition of a telephone-based information group that answers general LMI questions that come into the section. This group of people would be trained in each of the LMI programs and easily able to respond to requests for readily available information. They will also be able to put together different pieces of information to respond to more difficult questions.

An easily implemented addition to our current system would be to add a "Contact Us" button on the pages of the missourieconomy.org web-site. That way we would be able to promptly respond to users who are unable to find what they are looking for. Through these contacts with users, MERIC will be better able to develop new products.

MERIC will also track customer satisfaction through its project tracking system. The system measures outputs and links them to overall goals, as determined by the ETA work plan and by the DED director. As staff log their work outputs into the system, they will be required to enter the name, agency and contact information of the person requesting the work output. At specific intervals, MERIC will query this data and use it to administer a follow-up customer satisfaction

survey. The survey will gauge customer satisfaction regarding usefulness, quality, timeliness and presentation of the information provided, as well as staff interactions, MERIC name recognition, and LMI knowledge. This data will be compiled and summarized in MERIC's annual report, which will be submitted to ETA and DED.