

New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (LWD)

Office of Labor Planning and Analysis (LPA)

Annual Report

For The PY 2003 Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant

Introduction:

In return for the PY2003 federal Workforce Information Core Products and Services grant, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Office of Labor Planning and Analysis has undertaken the following core products and services required by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Funds from this grant were supplemented with monies from other sources. Through this integration of funding, LPA has been able to maximize the quantity and quality of its products and services provided to the One-Stop Career Center community.

LPA has worked to provide the required core products and services in accordance with the state's *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*. Except for those core products that have a national focus, all other activities are within the context of and in support of that plan, which stresses the importance of accurate and timely labor market information in providing the citizens of New Jersey a demand-driven One-Stop system. The *Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System* stipulates that "The Office of Labor Planning and Analysis will, in consultation with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), its partners and the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), be responsible for gathering this [labor market] information and making it available to the SETC, its members and WIBs." The work plan was developed in consultation with the SETC, our Statewide Workforce Investment Board, and local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) directors. That work plan has been supported by both the SETC and those responsible for the implementation of statewide workforce development programs as being responsive to the needs of New Jersey's One-Stop community.

There are four primary mechanisms for the delivery of LMI products to the One-Stop community: the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN) web site, the LPA Internet web site, a variety of printed publications and a staff of field labor market analysts. The WJPIN, LPA websites and printed publications provide career and occupational information while LPA staff continues to focus on capacity building, and LMI skill-enhancement of employment and training providers, employment counselors and planners by LPA staff.

A. Accomplishments Regarding Core Products and Services:

1. Continue to populate the ALMIS database with state data

Work statement: Staff in the Division of Labor Market and Demographic Research (LMDR) will update the ALMIS tables as required using Version 2.0 of the database which conforms to the requirements of our current online LMI delivery system. However, as stated in item #6 below, it is planned that a new LMI web site will be developed during this program year. As part of that project, the ALMIS database will be updated to the latest version.

Achievements and outcomes: *LMDR staff updated all ALMIS tables as data became available using Version 2.0 of the database as required by our present online LMI delivery system. Development of a new LMI web site continues as part of a redesign of the Department's web site. The latest version of the ALMIS operating system will be incorporated into the new web design which is slated for completion in summer/fall 2005.*

Work statement: The Center for Occupational Employment Information (COEI) will populate the ALMIS licensing and school files, and will continue the process of recoding licensed occupations using the O*Net taxonomy. These files will be given to the ALMIS database coordinator. The principal customer for the actual database tables is the COEI. However, the LMI within the ALMIS database will be utilized to provide comprehensive workforce information to the user community via the workforce information delivery system. The ALMIS tables will be populated on an ongoing basis, dependent on the release of updated information from the cooperating data collection units.

Achievements and outcomes: *All three ALMIS licensing files and all three school files were populated by the New Jersey Center for Occupational Employment Information (COEI) and licensed occupations were recoded using the O*Net taxonomy. These files were delivered to the ALMIS database coordinator according to the PY 2003 work statement.*

2. Produce and disseminate long-term industry and occupational employment projections

Work statement: The schedule outlined below assumes no long-term delays or severe problems in developing the software required to create NAICS-based industry projections, and that the SOC-based Micromatrix system runs smoothly. Also assumed is that the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) will be able to provide the states with national employment projections on schedule. Currently, these projections are expected from the National Office by the end of February 2004. Delays in receiving the national projections will set back the deliverable date for the state projections.

It is planned that Statewide industry and occupational employment projections for the year 2012 will be completed approximately three months after the release of national

projections. The state projections will be reviewed for reasonableness and consistency by outside experts prior to release.

This set of employment projections will include the first industry projections developed under the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS). Consequently, a large amount of staff time will be spent developing the time series to be used in this projections round and in testing the applicable software. A statewide NAICS-based time series will be ready by the end of December 2003. Work on these activities is currently underway.

The completed statewide projections will be released on the LPA website and in publication format for selected series. The projections will be provided to the Center for Occupational Employment Information (COEI) for use in the Center's career information products. In addition, the ALMIS database will be updated with these projections.

Achievements and outcomes: *Because of delays in receipt of national projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) until March 2004, preliminary state long-term industry and occupational employment projections for the year 2012 were not completed until June 2004, and released on the LPA website on August 19. On July 19, the projections were reviewed by a number of experts on the New Jersey economy for reasonableness and consistency. Also among the review group were WIB directors and members of WIB and One-Stop staff.*

Employment projections were developed for selected industries at the three- and four-digit industry level based upon a time series that was completed according to schedule (December 2003). These are the first industry projections developed on the North America Industry Classification System (NAICS) coding structure. The occupational employment projections were Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) based.

Highlights of all four projection series, industry and occupational employment plus population and labor force projections, will be summarized and published in New Jersey Employment and Population in the 21st Century. A more detailed review of the projections will be published in the September (2004) edition of New Jersey Economic Indicators, LPA's monthly review of economic activity .

The statewide employment projections were provided to the COEI to populate the ALMIS database and to use in occupational supply/demand and other appropriate analysis.

Work statement: Work on the development of a county level NAICS-based time series will begin in early 2004 and be completed by April 30, 2004. Completion of the county industry and occupational employment projections will be completed approximately six months after the completion of state projections. The preliminary projections will be reviewed by a group of outside experts.

The completed county projections will be released on the LPA website and in publication format for selected series. These projections also will be made available in the format required for the ALMIS database.

The year 2012 projections will also be used in the development of occupational analysis products (See item #3 below). Both industry and occupational projections will provide One-Stop Career Center customers with information that can be utilized in the career decision-making process.

As a part of the substate projections process, ES202 staff will update county time series that will be used as input to the 2002-2012 projections model. ES202 staff will also provide research support on industry location and classification for the Occupational Employment Survey (OES) program.

Achievements and outcomes: *The 2012 county projections will be completed by November 2004. (Delay was caused by late receipt of national projections data.) Staff will conduct a projections review meeting in November where outside local experts including WIB and One-Stop Career Center staff are invited to review and comment on the projections before their release. The data will be made available on the LPA website and county highlights will be published in an article in New Jersey Economic Indicators. The data will also be provided to the COEI to populate the ALMIS database and for supply/demand analysis.*

Work statement: During PY 2003, LPA will continue to update and maintain databases needed for the short-term projections program and test any new software releases, as necessary. In addition, staff will attend training, coordinated by the LMI Training Institute, on short-term projection processes. Since the New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL) is not the state government's source of short-term industry projections, LPA will not be producing short-term projections during this program year. However, as an alternative, LPA will again conduct a job vacancy survey which will more closely fit the needs of the One-Stop community. (See item #3 below.)

Achievements and outcomes: *Short-term quarterly industry and occupational employment projections were not developed since the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development is not the state government's source of short-term employment projections. LPA continued to stay abreast of short-term projections software releases, attended short-term projections training during PY 2003 and maintained databases according to the work statement.*

3. Provide occupational and career information products for public use:

Work statement: The New Jersey Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) will be updated and re-distributed. The career information database will be utilized to present career decision-making information on the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNPIN), the Internet delivery site for the One-Stop Career Center System.

Career information will be coded using the O*Net taxonomy. This activity focuses on the delivery of information services through the One-Stop Career Centers. The use of this information is a requirement of the *Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System*.

Achievements and outcomes: *CIDS continued to be updated and distributed during the planning year. The career information database is used on WNJPIN, the Internet delivery site for the One-Stop Career Center System, to present information to help customers make career decisions. Career information was coded using the O*Net taxonomy. This activity focuses on the delivery of information services through the One-Stop Career Centers. This information is provided in support of the "Strategic Five-Year Unified State Plan for New Jersey's Workforce Investment System."*

Work statement: The *New Jersey Occupational Outlook Handbook* will be re-written and published in both book form and on the LMI delivery web sites by the end of December 2003.

Achievements and outcomes: *The "New Jersey Occupational Outlook Handbook" was published in both book form and as a downloadable .pdf file on the LMI Internet delivery sites in February 2004. Books were distributed to One-Stop Career Center locations for use in career centers. Because of demand, a second edition was printed during the planning year. A total of 1400 copies have been distributed.*

Work statement: New Jersey COEI will complete the *Guide to Labor Demand Occupations* for use by the One-Stop Career Center System based on the 2010 occupational projections. This project supports the goal of the state's strategic plan to provide education and training services in occupations in demand in local labor markets. This product supports the development and delivery of education and training programs in the state and is used to determine the eligibility of a training program for WIA individual training grants. The State Board (SETC) requires the use of this Guide by all WIA partner agencies.

Achievements and outcomes: *New Jersey COEI developed and published the "Guide to Labor Demand Occupations" for use by the One-Stop Career Center Delivery System. The Guide is prepared with the cooperation and with review by local WIBs. This product supports the development and delivery of education and training programs in the state and is used to determine the eligibility of a training program for WIA individual training grants. State policy requires the use of this guide by all WIA partner agencies for program planning and for the issuance of individual training grants.*

It should be noted that other funding sources were used to support the above-mentioned COEI activities.

Work statement: Primarily using funds from another source, LPA will update and reprint *Jobs in Demand*, an easy-to-read brochure that features the top 50 jobs anticipated to be most "in demand" in Workforce Investment Board defined labor areas. Also

included in the publication will be graphs and charts showing projected population, labor force totals and industry growth. These brochures will be developed using 2000 to 2010 county projections and will be designed to meet the needs of the One-Stop customer. *Jobs in Demand* will be distributed to customers at the One-Stop Career Centers throughout the state.

Achievements and outcomes: *LPA updated and reprinted versions of Jobs in Demand, specifically for each of 17 Workforce Investment Board-defined labor areas. These easy-to-read brochures were designed to meet the needs of the One-Stop Career Center customer with lists of the jobs anticipated to be most “in demand” in each of the WIB-defined labor areas. These publications also include graphs and charts showing projected population, labor force and industry growth for each labor area using 2000 to 2010 county projections. Copies of “Jobs in Demand” were printed and distributed to customers at all One-Stop offices throughout the state in April 2004.*

Work Statement: The second edition of *New Jersey’s Hot 50* is currently in production. This easy-to-read, popular tabloid, geared primarily toward New Jersey’s students, features the 50 jobs projected to be the most “in demand,” based on the 2010 occupational projections. The number of copies to be printed will be 750,000 and the publication will be sent to all high schools, One-Stop, unemployment insurance and vocational rehabilitation offices by January 15, 2004.

Achievements and outcomes: *Copies of the updated edition of New Jersey’s Hot 50 were published and distributed to all high schools in New Jersey during the school year. The publication also was provided to customers at all One-Stop Career Centers in New Jersey. After production delays, printed copies were distributed in April 2004. Funds from other sources were used in the production of this LMI product.*

Work statement: Occupational wage estimates for WIB-defined labor areas will be developed using the Estimates Delivery System. Specified geographic areas will be developed in conjunction with the SETC and local WIBS. These estimates will be based on occupational employment and wage data collected from the November 2002 and May 2003 Occupational Employment Survey (OES) wage survey panels. Estimates from the first panel will be released in December 2003, and those based on the second panel in March 2004. These estimates will be reviewed by COEI staff, LPA’s field analysts, and staff in the Bureau of Occupational Research before release.

Achievements and outcomes: *Occupational wage estimates for WIB labor areas were developed using the Estimates Delivery System (EDS) and released in July 2004. The deviation from the original schedule was caused by late receipt of wage panel data from BLS. The occupational wage estimates were based on OES sample data which included data collected from the November 2002 and May 2003 sample panels, the two most recent panels for which estimates are available. The data were reviewed for reasonableness and consistency by office staff.*

Work statement: Using funds from this grant, LPA will conduct a job vacancy survey of

New Jersey firms using the questionnaire and methodology developed by the Job Vacancy Statistical Work Group. Using a telephone survey contractor and in-house staff, LPA will conduct the survey and code the data. LPA staff will analyze the results, which will be made available on the LPA website and in printed publications. Statewide and sub-state results will be published by the end of August 2004.

Achievements and outcomes: *Due to problems in the PY 2002 survey, the PY 2003 job vacancy survey was not conducted as planned. Not only were there continued problems extracting survey data from the PY2002 job vacancy survey, but also the estimating production software supported by BLS would not work. As a result, considerable staff time was spent during PY2003 researching and adapting the Florida-based estimating software to the New Jersey system. From this new production system, staff were able to extract statewide vacancy, benefit and educational requirements data from the sample. From the data, charts, tables and analysis were produced for internal analysis and to prepare for future surveys. In addition, staff made modifications to a RFP that will be used to obtain the services of an outside vendor to collect wage data. Staff are confident that all aspects of data production are working and will use the knowledge gained over the past year to undertake a job vacancy survey in PY2004.*

4. Provide public electronic access to the ALMIS Employer Database

Work statement: The InfoUSA employer database will be delivered through the WNJPIN, the LPA website and the Career information Delivery System (CIDS). The principal customers of this product are job seekers, students, employers, One-Stop Career Center staff and others seeking employer information. The information will be available within two weeks of each InfoUSA release date.

In addition, the ES202 unit will make available, through the LPA web site, an employer name and address listing for the state and its counties using unemployment insurance covered employment data. A confidential version, containing the addition of employment by establishment, will be produced on CD and made available, at cost, to appropriate users.

Achievements and outcomes: *The InfoUSA employer database was installed on the WNJPIN and LPA websites. The ES202 unit provided an employer name and address listing for the state and counties according to the 2003 plan. A confidential version of the address listing containing employment by establishment was produced on a CD and made available to appropriate users.*

5. Provide information and support to state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBS) and produce other special demand information products and services –

During the program year, LPA staff will continue to provide customized LMI and technical support to state and local WIB users. LPA field staff will attend WIB meetings, when requested, and will aggressively seek out opportunities to serve on WIB LMI and

planning subcommittees. This will also provide the opportunity for consultation with WIB members on LMI issues and obtaining feedback on current LMI products. Funding from this grant and from other sources will continue to permit field staff to be out-stationed on a limited basis at selected One-Stop offices to serve the needs of local office staff and customers.

Upon request, and within resource constraints, LPA staff will also make use of geographic information systems (GIS) to develop targeted WIB-based products to be used for planning purposes. For example, analyses showing the various components of available labor supply (e.g., using GIS to show unemployment insurance claimants, WorkFirst clients in relation to work location, transportation, daycare facilities and training sites) could be produced. LMI will be displayed in a GIS format and will include, to the extent possible, other administrative records and ad hoc research.

In addition, LPA staff will develop and provide products based on the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) to the WIBs and other members of the One-Stop community.

Achievements and outcomes: *LPA field analysts continued to work several times each month at 17 One-Stop Career Centers serving as on-site resources and helping train One-Stop Career Center staff in using LMI. In addition all field analysts routinely attended WIB meetings and several served on WIB committees. LMI staff also have developed and presented information on products including Local Employment Dynamics (LED) and other specific information requested by WIBs, including GIS related products. LPA conducted special research on anticipated training needs for the Camden WIB for a major redevelopment project in Camden City. The Atlantic City Labor Area field labor market analyst provided an analysis of summer youth employment using LED data. Staff also worked to provide resource materials to One-Stop Business Resource Centers.*

6. **Improve and deploy electronic state workforce information delivery systems** – A new Internet-based, LMI query and data delivery system using appropriate ALMIS database tables as its information core will be developed. This initiative will be a part of a comprehensive re-design of the WNJPIN, COEI and the Department web sites. In the development process for the LMI site, the WIBs and other data users will be consulted so that the website will meet the needs of the One-Stop community. When a prototype delivery system is created, it will be reviewed by the WIBs, SETC and other potential users. The new website will improve the accessibility and increase the availability of LMI to our constituency groups. In addition, the LMI component of this project will include an update to the latest version of the ALMIS database. Work will be completed by August 2004.

Achievements and outcomes: *LMDR staff continued to work on the department team in the development of the new LMI web site as part of a total redesign of the department's web sites. Plans call for the implementation of the new LWD website by late summer/fall*

2005. During the planning year, staff prepared a detailed proposal detailing the requirements of the LMI portion of the LWD Internet site.

7. **Support state workforce information training activities** - LPA analysts will conduct training, upon request, and within resource constraints, for WIB and One-Stop community data users in the application of accessing and utilizing LMI using the Internet and traditional sources. Staff will conduct and participate in conferences and workshops and will respond to requests for information. These training initiatives will be ongoing throughout the program year. These sessions will also offer the opportunity for gauging customer satisfaction with these core products and initiatives.

LPA will continue staff development by making use of training offered by the LMI Training Institute. New labor market analysts will be sent to the appropriate level of LMI training; selected analysts will attend GIS training offered by the LMI Training Institute and Rutgers University.

Achievements and outcomes: *LPA field analysts regularly were assigned to work in One-Stop Career Centers serving as on-site resources and helping to train One-Stop Career Center staff in accessing LMI on the Internet and in using LMI to better serve their customers. During the planning year, LPA staff took advantage of LMI Institute training and training provided by the Census Bureau on LED.*

B. Customer Satisfaction Assessment

The plan adopted for Program Year 2003 to measure customer satisfaction with labor market information consisted of designing and implementing written surveys, in-person surveys, web-based surveys and conference surveys. The purpose of these surveys was to obtain customer feedback on select LMI products from several customer groups: employers, job seekers and the workforce community (staff providing workforce services) as required under the guidelines of the One-Stop grant of the Workforce Investment Act. The summary sections below highlight the findings from the following survey activities: a Workforce New Jersey management survey for six LMI products, a Workforce New Jersey front-line in-person survey for two LMI products, a readers' survey for the *Employment & the Economy* newsletter, web-based surveys for four LMI products and the evaluation form for the New Jersey State Data Center conference.

1. Workforce New Jersey Management Staff Survey

To measure customer satisfaction among the workforce development system a written survey was developed and sent to Workforce New Jersey (WNJ) managers and administrators and to One-Stop operators. In April 2004, survey forms were sent out requesting feedback on six labor market information (LMI) products. These included

New Jersey Occupational Outlook Handbook, Consumer Report Card (CRC), *Employment & the Economy* newsletter, *New Jersey's Hot 50 – Demand Occupations*, *A Guide to Labor Demand*, and the Career Information web page. Most of the 138 respondents indicated familiarity with these products, even though only slightly over one-half of the staff had been in their position for less than five years. However, many may have been familiar with the product since assuming their current position.

The results of the surveys for each of the products are summarized below:

New Jersey Occupational Outlook Handbook

- Almost all of the respondents were aware of this product.
- A majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions.
- Over 40 percent of the staff were “very” satisfied with this product and almost 30 percent were “somewhat” satisfied.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated more often/material is out-of date.
- Need better distribution/more accessible to field office.
- Need more detailed breakdowns/categories need revisions.

Consumer Report Card

- Over three-quarters of the recipients were aware of this product.
- About one-half of the management staff indicated this product was easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions. Over 20 percent responded in a “neutral” category for these characteristics.
- Over one-third indicated that they were satisfied with this product. Over 20 percent replied with a “neutral” response. Over 12 percent indicated dissatisfaction with this product.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated more often/material is out-of-date.
- Need better distribution/more accessible to field offices.
- Need more detailed breakdowns/categories need revisions.

Employment & the Economy Newsletter

- Over three-quarters of the recipients were aware of this product.
- Over one-half of the management staff indicated this product was easy to understand and use. About 30 percent indicated this product met their needs while slightly less than 30 percent replied with a “neutral” response. Over 23 percent indicated this product was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions while 30 percent replied with a “neutral” response. Over 25 percent did not reply to this set of questions.
- About 40 percent indicated that they were satisfied with this product. Over 26 percent replied with a “neutral” response. Over 29 percent did not respond to this question.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated more often/material is out-of-date.
- Need better distribution/more accessible to field offices.
- Need more detailed breakdowns/categories need revisions.

New Jersey's Hot 50 – Demand Occupations

- Almost all were aware of this product.
- A majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions.
- About two-thirds of the recipients responded that they were satisfied with this product.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated/ material is out-of-date.
- Misleading/people think they are current job openings.
- Need more detailed breakdowns/categories need revisions.
- Good reference material.

A Guide to Labor Demand

- The majority were aware of this product.
- A majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions.
- About one-half of the recipients responded that they were satisfied with this product. An additional 13 percent replied with a “neutral” response.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated/ material is out-of-date.
- Misleading/people think they are current job openings.
- Good reference material.

Career Information web page

- Almost all of respondents were aware of this product.
- A majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions. Over 20 percent did not reply to this set of questions.
- Over three-quarters of the recipients responded that they were satisfied with this product. An additional 10 percent replied with a “neutral” response.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated/ material is out-of-date.
- Web site is difficult to navigate/understand.
- Good Web site for information/research.
- Need more detailed breakdowns/categories need revisions.

Other LMI products, publications or Web sites found useful

- About 60 percent of the managerial staff indicated that they used the WNJPIN and various other Web sites for LMI.
- A few responses included other publications and newspapers.

Other comments about LMI needs

- Over one-third of the responses reiterated the need for updated LMI data.
- Others indicated difficulty in navigating within the Web sites and the need for more detailed/specific information and lists of actual jobs.
- A few commented that field analyst keep them informed about local hiring, openings and layoffs.

2. Front-line Staff Survey

In order to delve more fully into comments that were provided on the PY2002 customer satisfaction surveys, in-person interview were held with a sample group of Workforce New Jersey and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) “front-line” staff at three One-Stop Career Centers in May 2004. The LMI products that were surveyed were the Consumer Report Card and Career Information web page. A total of 24 staff members were interviewed: 12 from Workforce New Jersey offices and 12 from One-Stop Career Centers. An equal number of those interviewed were counselors and the other half were interviewers. Again with this group, slightly more than half of the staff members had been in their positions for more than five years.

The highlights of the comments that were provided about the products surveyed included the following:

Consumer Report Card

- Almost all were aware of this product.
- Over one-third used this product “regularly”, while almost 30 percent used it “frequently” and the remaining users indicated “occasionally” and “rarely.”

- A majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions.
- Twenty-five percent of the staff were “very” satisfied with this product and over 50 percent were “somewhat” satisfied.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated more often/more accurate data.
- Web site not fully operational/sections “under construction.”
- Web site difficult to navigate/design needs improvement.
- Categories should be more varied/better search functions.

Career Information web page

- Almost all were aware of this product.
- One-third indicated they used this product “regularly” and “frequently,” while almost 30 percent responded “occasionally” another 30 percent “rarely.”
- A majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions.
- Two-thirds indicated that they were satisfied with this product. Almost 30.0 percent replied with a “neutral” response.

Major Comments

- Needs to be updated more often/material is out-of date.
- Web site not fully operational/sections “under construction.”
- Design/layout needs improvement.

Other LMI products, publications or Web sites found useful

- Almost 90 percent of the staff indicated that they used the WNJPIN.
- Others commented that they used the Occupational Outlook Handbook and NJ Hot 50.
- A few responses included other publications and newspapers.

Problems with LMI products

- Over one-half of the comments were that the labor demand/list of jobs in demand is not accurate.
- A few responses were about problems with OSOS.
- Reiteration of need to update more often.

Other comments about LMI needs

- Over one-third of the responses were reiterating comments about providing updated LMI data.

- Others indicated the need for more local information, better distribution of publications and training in using the products.
- Some responded that they were satisfied with the LMI products.

3. **Readers' Survey: *Employment & the Economy* Newsletter**

In order to determine the satisfaction with the *Employment & the Economy* newsletter a survey form was developed and inserted in over 2,600 newsletters with a postage-paid return envelope provided for respondents to return their completed form. About 900 for each of the three regional publications (Northern, Southern and Atlantic Coastal) were mailed between March and May 2004. About 400 for each region were actually mailed to recipients on the mailing list while others were distributed to department personnel and field offices. In addition to the hardcopy survey, a survey was offered in a .pdf format on the Labor Planning and Analysis web page for the user to print then return by mail or fax.

A total of 35 surveys were returned which included some from each region. None of the surveys were returned from the .pdf format on the web page. Over one-half of the respondents were government workers or administrators. A few responses were from private sector employers and counselors. The results of the survey are as follows:

How the *Employment & the Economy* is used

- Over one-third responded that they use it for general information.
- Over one-quarter used it for tracking economic trends.
- Others responded that they used it for research and career guidance.

How often the user refers to the newsletter

- Almost all of the responses were evenly split between “frequently” and “occasionally.”

Awareness that the newsletter was available on-line at the Labor Planning & Analysis' Web site

- Two-thirds indicated that they were aware that the newsletter was available on-line.
- Of those respondents, about 30 percent accessed the newsletter “occasionally” while 17 percent indicated “seldom.”

Opinion about the newsletter

- The majority found this product easy to understand and use, met their needs, and was helpful in assisting customers in making informed decisions.
- Three-quarters of the respondents indicated that there was not any information they expected to find but could not. Of those who responded that they could not locate information, the majority were looking for more detailed or specific information.
- Over 70 percent were “very satisfied” with the newsletter.

How to improve this publication

- Almost one-half of the responded that the newsletter was a good source of information in its current format.
- Others commented that there needs to be more detailed/specific information and more details about smaller companies.

Other Comments

- Respondents reiterated that this is a good publication in its current format.
- Others reiterated the need for more detailed/specific information.

4. Web-based Surveys

To assess the level of satisfaction with the websites that have considerable labor market information surveys were posted on WNJPIN and COEI Web sites for the following LMI products: Career Information, Labor Demand Occupations, Nonfarm Wage & Salary and Population & Labor Force Projections. Respondents completed the survey and e-mailed it to a designated staff member for printing results and data entry. Surveys ran from October 2003 – April 2004 although the Career Information survey was not fully activated until December 1, 2003 after assistance of the LWD Webmaster and staff was provided to resolve technical problems encountered in the first two months.

The Career Information survey was a “pop up” survey, while the other three pages posted a highlighted box which the user would need to click on to launch the survey. A total of 1,979 surveys were completed these four LMI products. The Career Information survey accounted for over 90 percent of the total surveys returned. Another 8.2 percent of surveys were for the Labor Demand web pages, while the Nonfarm Wage & Salary and Population & Labor Force Projections pages accounted for a negligible response. Because of the lack of responses for the Nonfarm Wage & Salary and Population & Labor Force Projections web pages, only the results of the surveys for the Career Information and the Labor Demand pages are summarized below.

Over 80 percent of the respondents to the four surveys were job seekers. About seven percent were students. Other categories with minimal responses: private sector employer, academic, researcher, counselor, government worker, media and other.

Career Information Web Pages

- Over 80 percent of completed surveys were from job seekers.
- A majority responded that the page was helpful in assisting them in making informed career, business or other decisions.
- Over two-thirds responded that there was no additional information they expected to find but could not.

- Over one-third indicated that this was the first time they visited this webpage. About 20 percent replied that they “seldom” visit this site.
- Over one-half of the respondents indicated they used this web page for general information. Another notable response was for planning.
- Fifty percent indicated they were satisfied with this LMI product. Over 25 percent replied with a “neutral” response.

Major Comments

- Of those who did not find information they expected, the most common items they were looking for were information on specific occupations, current information (most recent opportunities) and training information. Others commented on needing more detailed information and wages/salary information.
- Need better distribution/more accessible to field offices.
- Need more detailed breakdowns/categories need revisions.

How to improve this webpage to better serve the needs of the user

- Over 25 percent indicated more details about jobs/job openings.
- Over 25 percent replied that the Web site needs to be easier to understand and navigate/more user-friendly.
- Other noted comments: add training information, update the data more frequently, categorize the information differently.
- Some responded that the information was good and very informative.

Other Comments

- More details/better explanation of the information.
- Better step-by-step approach to using the various sites effectively.
- Updated information.
- Information was helpful.

Labor Demand

- Over 85 percent of completed surveys were from job seekers.
- A majority responded that the page was helpful in assisting them in making informed career, business or other decisions.
- Over 50 percent responded that there was no additional information they expected to find but could not.
- Almost 50 percent indicated that this was the first time they visited this webpage. Over 17 percent replied that they “seldom” visit this site.
- One-half of the respondents indicated they used this webpage for general information and 25 percent for planning.

- Over 50 percent indicated they were satisfied with this LMI product. Over 28 percent replied with a “neutral” response.

Major Comments

- Of those who did not find information they expected, the most common items they were looking for were information on specific occupations, current information (most recent opportunities), training information and more detailed information. Other comments included wages/salary information and better links.

How to improve this webpage to better serve the needs of the user

- Over 28 percent indicated a need for more details about jobs/job openings.
- Over 15 percent replied that the Web site needs to be easier to understand and navigate/more user-friendly.
- Other noted comments: training information, update the data more frequently, categorize the information differently.

Other Comments

- Over 28 percent replied that the information was helpful.
- Other comments included more details/better explanation of the information, links to other agencies/professional organizations and update the information more regularly.

5. State Data Center Conference

The 24th annual State Data Center Conference entitled “The Aging of the Baby Boomers – Implications for Healthcare, Housing and the Workforce” was held on October 30, 2003 at the Marriott at Lafayette Yard in Trenton. Approximately 150 attended the conference, including planners, researchers, decision makers, economists and other individuals from the public and private sector. Following the completion of the conference, participants were asked to complete an evaluation form that was included in the conference packet. A total of 58 surveys (38.7 percent) were returned compared with a response rate of 27.1 percent in the previous year. Most participants responded positively to the 2003 conference, location and presentations indicating that the facilities were “excellent” or “good” and conveniently located. Attendees indicated the following about this year’s conference.

Sessions

- The first session, entitled “The Aging of the Baby Boomers,” was rated the best of the conference sessions with an 81.0 percent rating of “excellent.”
- The second session, “Implications for Healthcare, Housing and Workforce,” consisting of a panel of presenters received mostly ratings of “excellent” and “good.”

- Following a lunch break, the session entitled “New Dimensions of the New Economy” received the second highest rating of 75.8 percent “excellent.”
- The last session of the day, entitled “Local Employment Dynamics” received ratings of 22.4 percent “excellent,” 31.0 percent “good” and 13.8 percent “fair.”

Previous NJSDC Conference Attendance

- Most of the people who attended the 2003 conference had attended in previous years.
- Of the 15 who responded that this was their first time, eight learned about it from a flier, five from “other” sources, including supervisors and colleagues, while two cited the department’s Web site.

Reason for Attending the Conference

- Nearly a third of the respondents indicated to obtain general information on the economy, census data, etc.
- Other respondents said that they wanted to get up-to-date with economic, labor and demographic trends.
- Others indicated interest in hearing the speakers and obtaining information that would assist in planning.

Ideas for Topics for Future Conferences

- Two topics mentioned by more than one respondent included topics relating to housing needs and issues and information on uses of Census data.
- Other responses included employment topics by industry, occupation or region, state comparisons, local data resources, transportation issues, migration in NJ, Hispanic growth, topics on cities, education, diversity and information on the 2003 Economic Census.

General Comments

- Participants indicated that the handouts were useful.
- A few respondents indicated that the presenters could have been more interesting or technically knowledgeable.
- Two cited that the presenters could have benefited from more time.