

**WORKFORCE INFORMATION ANNUAL PLAN
STATEMENT OF WORK – PY2004
CONNECTICUT**

This statement of work identifies the information products and services that the Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research is planning to produce to support the State's workforce investment system. The One-Stop Career Center/America's Labor Market Information System funds provided for this purpose are critical to the development of the workforce information on which Connecticut's strategic workforce investments are made, as well as to the decisions made by the workforce development professionals and customers of the State's workforce investment system.

The Workforce Investment Act provides a valuable framework through which to organize and coordinate a broad range of undertakings to support State and local workforce investment activities and Connecticut is making every effort to fill as many of the identified information needs as possible with the funding available. To that end, following is (a) a description of the workforce information system, (b) a description of the products to be developed and services, and (c) a description of the strategy to be employed for assessing customer satisfaction with the workforce information produced.

a) The Workforce Information System

Strategy for Consulting with Workforce System Professionals and Customers

Since the initial implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, our strategy for consulting with the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC, the State workforce investment board) and the local workforce investment boards (local Boards) has been to continuously engage them concerning the needs of the State's system. We regularly attend CETC committee meetings, actively participate in workforce system matters that require or can be enhanced with relevant workforce information, and report on LMI activities that support the State's workforce development initiatives. We also consult with the staff of the CETC in the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) to discuss the information needed to meet the planning requirements of the system. This has included such areas as WIA funding allocations to the local Boards, the list of WIA-eligible training programs, system performance measures for the CETC's annual report to the State legislature, the occupations most needed to be filled by employers, and a proposal for implementing a job vacancy survey. We also meet annually with local Board planners to review their planning information needs and modify our products to meet their needs accordingly.

This year, in accordance with new requirements, we met in early September with representatives of the State and local workforce boards to discuss and get input to the Workforce Information Plan for the current program year. Modifications were made based on the comments received and the Plan was subsequently presented to and

approved by the CETC at its meeting on September 23, 2004. In the future, it was agreed that this meeting would be held in early spring in advance of the program year.

We consult directly with representatives of the business community through CETC committee meetings, job fairs, phone contacts for information, and LMI Web site emails. We have also directly participated in Agency-sponsored employer focus groups. We further identify business needs through meetings with local Boards and CTDOL Business Services staff, and have provided LMI training to each group. Valuable secondary sources of information on business needs have been obtained from surveys conducted by the State's business and economic development organizations, by various national associations and organizations, and by other states.

The information needs of the individuals served by the State's workforce development system are most effectively obtained through the professionals that serve them. We maintain frequent contact with Job Center Directors and other field staff regarding workforce information materials in the resource centers and respond to the needs of employment counselors for understanding and using workforce information products to assist their clients. Along with feedback from the front-line employees of the *CTWorks* system, direct contacts with individuals are made through job fairs, telephone and email requests for information.

We maintain frequent contact with workforce development professionals, as it is through them that the needs of the system are constantly being assessed. In addition to the meetings with the State and local Boards, with the CTDOL administrators of the public employment service, with the Job Center Directors and other such groups, we have provided LMI training to all front-line workforce development system staff and have received valuable feedback in the process. We established an advisory committee of career counselor experts from the Job Centers to review and improve the *Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion* Web site. We also conduct an annual conference for career and education counselors and regularly provide presentations and training on LMI resources to State and local organizations and agencies involved in providing workforce assistance to individuals and businesses. Included among them are individuals from the education community, welfare client service providers, rehabilitation services providers, and the corrections system.

Support for the State's Five-Year Strategic Plan

The economic, workforce and career information gathered from many sources and disseminated throughout the State's workforce development system provides the core information used by system administrators and service providers to plan, evaluate and continuously improve the system, and to effectively serve the business and individual customers of the system.

Workforce information is provided for planning and staying abreast of the services delivered by the State's workforce investment system. Career exploration resources

are available and used by individual customers of the system and the counselors that assist them, as well as by training providers to identify the programs needed to meet the current and emerging training needs of employers. Also available is a comprehensive source of education and training programs offered throughout the State that both individuals and employers use to find the training of their choice. Providing the fuel for continuous improvement, system performance evaluation measures are produced and used to assess the success and progress of the State's workforce system investments.

These uses of workforce information for planning, delivery of services and evaluation are key components of Connecticut's *Strategic Five-Year State Workforce Investment Plan*. Included in the Plan are direct references to Office of Research products that supplied the information used in the workforce development system needs assessment, including information on economic and workforce trends over the last decade, identification of the industries that are growing in the State and the occupational demand from that growth that the workforce system will need to address, and information on the supply of education and training graduates that can be matched to the demand for workers so informed decisions can be made on the need for expanding, reducing, or initiating new programs.

Also in the Five-Year Plan are products and information supplied by the Office of Research for determining funding allocations to the local Boards, for providing electronic access to occupational information (*Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion*), for developing an eligible training provider list and accompanying consumer report information, and for producing workforce system performance measures. These contributions of the Office of Research have played a significant role in Connecticut's effort to establish and advance the State's workforce investment system.

Delivery of Workforce Information to Customers

We are focusing efforts on developing and enhancing Internet accessible tools and resources targeted to specific user groups for identified purposes, while continuing to acknowledge the need to maintain paper products. With resources limited, advances in the delivery of workforce information electronically is needed to enable the workforce investment system to serve its many customers as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Among the Internet-accessible workforce information resources currently available are a career exploration tool for job seekers and students, an education and training search tool for individuals and businesses, and a data supply site for planners, policy-makers and other data users. In conceptual stages are information resources focused on the needs of education and training providers and businesses.

We work directly with the State and local Boards to meet their system planning and management needs, as described earlier. We also supply many types of hard copy products to the One-Stop Centers for use in serving their customers and continue to

work directly with front-line workforce development service professionals to meet the needs of the broadest range of business and individual customers of the State's workforce development system. The information and service needs of the system are broad and varied and need to be addressed in a multifaceted way. To do so, in addition to Internet information delivery systems and paper products, we provide training to facilitate the understanding and use of workforce information, and engage in numerous customer outreach initiatives through job fairs, conferences, and targeted (direct mail/email) and broadcast (media) communications.

To meet all of the information needs of the workforce system as effectively as possible, the Office of Research maintains ongoing collaborative relationships with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, the State Department of Education, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education and the University of Connecticut. The Office of Research houses the Connecticut Career Resource Network, and through it maintains regular contacts with, and provides significant support to the products and services delivered to, the local education community. Finally, in addition to the State and local Boards, we have established working relationships with the Wagner-Peyser, TANF and WIA program administrators, the State University System, the Community College System, the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, and other partners in and contributors to the State's workforce investment system.

b) Products and Services

1. ALMIS Database: *Continue to populate the ALMIS Database with State data.*

America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) is a dynamic system that produces quality, standardized labor market information and tools in a wide variety of media and formats to job seekers, employers, and the workforce development community. It provides the critical infrastructure to support the workforce investment system nationwide with the primary goal of serving the customers of the local one-stop service delivery system. A key piece of that infrastructure is the ALMIS Database, which provides states with a common structure for storing information in a single database in each state.

During program year 2004, we will continue to maintain version 1.1 of the ALMIS Database as it supports our existing Internet applications. We also plan to implement and maintain version 2.3 of the ALMIS Database and populate all required core data tables. Included will be the specified licensing tables, which will be transmitted through the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for inclusion on the America's Career InfoNet (ACINet) site.

We will remain involved in the continued development of the database structure through ALMIS Database workgroup, and will continue to take advantage of the electronic

resources and training opportunities available if considered valuable to building experience among staff.

2. **Projections**: *Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.*

The Office of Research will prepare a publication of the long-term and short-term statewide industry and occupational employment projections that were completed and submitted in June. In PY2004, we will produce and disseminate sub-state industry and occupational employment projections for 2002 to 2012, and new statewide projections for 2004-2006, using the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Projections Workgroup and the Projections Managing Partnership. Following their completion, the new projections data will be published on our Web site and in print format, and will be submitted following established procedures. We will participate in the various training opportunities provided by the Projections Workgroup and the Projections Managing Partnership if considered valuable to building experience among staff.

3. **Occupational and Career Information Products**: *Provide occupational and career information products for public use.*

The Workforce Investment Act requires the provision of accessible and relevant labor market information as one of its core services. In program year 2004, the Office of Research will continue to enhance its Web applications, publications and related resources to deliver workforce information to specific user groups. Improvements to our electronic products have become essential to enable the workforce investment system to serve its many customers in an efficient and effective manner. These Internet-accessible resources are discussed in section 5.

Our Office will continue to produce a variety of workforce and career publications in electronic and print format. Among them is the *Connecticut Economic Digest*, published through a collaborative effort with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development. Through the *Digest*, users receive the most current, up-to-date data available on the economy of the state and its labor markets, with perspectives of the northeastern states and nation.

We will also produce printed versions of our *Connecticut Career Paths* publication in program year 2004. Developed through our association with the Connecticut Career Resource Network, the *Career Paths* is targeted to secondary school students and educators, but contains information that has been valuable to many adults seeking opportunities. It is widely distributed to middle and high schools, the local *CT Works* centers, community-technical colleges, correctional facilities, and others. Through funding from the Agency's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, we

anticipate printing 135,000 copies – an increase of 10,000 for community and non-profit training providers throughout the State.

We also plan to develop career posters to be displayed in the State's fourteen One-Stop resource rooms for job seeker customers. The posters will display career, education, and wage information for taking "job journeys" in Connecticut's leading industries.

The *Soaring to New Heights... Connecticut Job Outlook by Training Level* will be updated with the latest 2002-2012 outlook on occupations in demand. This three-page leaflet provides a synopsis of occupations organized by education and training requirement, and includes forecasted annual job openings and mid-range hourly wages for each occupation. We will also update of the popular *Connecticut Occupational Employment and Wages* publication to include the most current information available. As with all our printed products, these will be available on our LMI Web site.

In program year 2004, the Office of Research will conduct a statewide job vacancy survey. From this survey, we will be able to identify current hiring demand for the occupational skills and abilities needed by State businesses. The job vacancy survey is planned to be completed in the fall of 2004 using funding from another source and the report available in print and on the Office of Research Web site.

In the spring of 2005, if resources allow, we would like to conduct a statewide survey of employers to identify benefits given to workers in Connecticut. The results would determine the benefits generally available by industry and size of firm and, coupled with wage information now available, will be useful in providing information on total compensation. This can be valuable to workers making career choices and employers evaluating their competitiveness in the workforce marketplace.

4. Information and Support to Workforce Investment Boards: *Provide workforce information and support to State and local Workforce Investment Boards.*

State and local Workforce Investment Boards are important customers of the workforce information system. They need information from the Office of Research for strategic planning, evaluating services, and developing programs. In program year 2004, we will again prepare the *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)* publication. The *IWIP* includes information on the population, labor force, industry, and groups in need of workforce system support for each of Connecticut's five Workforce Investment Areas. We will subsequently conduct our annual planning information review session with the State's workforce investment board planners to review their data needs and discuss the usefulness of the *IWIP*. These sessions are valuable for identifying changes that may be made to the *IWIP* to better meet the planning needs of the local workforce boards.

We are planning to create an Internet accessible resource of economic profiles for each of the State's Workforce Investment Areas. The proposed *WIA Region-at-a-Glance* will contain up-to-date local workforce and industry information and serve to keep the local

Boards informed of current conditions in their regions. Our objective is to enable the planners to more quickly find pertinent information on their areas. When completed, this feature will be available through the Office of Research's Web site.

5. **Workforce Information Delivery Systems**: *Maintain and enhance state workforce information delivery systems.*

The Office of Research's two award-winning Internet applications, the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* (www.ctjobandcareer.org), and the *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* (www.cttraining.info), are key resources for the State's workforce investment system. Their success can be attributed to our collaboration with the State Departments of Education and Higher Education, Workforce Investment Boards, *CT Works* partners, and others, resulting in Web applications designed to meet the needs of users. We plan to continue to maintain and enhance these as time allows.

The Office of Research will continue to add new data and downloadable offerings to our Labor Market Information Web site to deliver information in an expedient and efficient manner to our business and job seeker customers. We will also explore new interactive capabilities to allow users to specify and retrieve data, and analytical capabilities offered by graphing and mapping functions.

The Office of Research is looking into the development of a new customer-focused Internet resource to provide businesses, planners, researchers, policymakers, and other data users with a source for local economic and workforce data. The *Connecticut DataSource* would use a map-based interface to select specific regions in Connecticut for which data is desired, including labor market areas, workforce investment regions, counties, and individual cities and towns. Area profiles include information such as the size of the population and labor force, unemployment, income, and jobs by industry.

In addition, the Office of Research is considering the development of other customer-focused Internet resources. One would be a resource for Connecticut businesses, through which employers would be able to identify and compare themselves with the characteristics of other employers in their industry and use this information in making relevant business decisions. We are also exploring the development of a planning resource for education and training providers. This application would allow education planning professionals to quickly and easily view workforce needs for occupational skills in a variety of ways and compare this demand to the number of programs and graduates available to meet those needs. It is uncertain if these will be able to be pursued, but significant value to State workforce development efforts would clearly be provided by each. Additional resources from other sources would be needed to consider pursuing these.

6. **Workforce Information Training:** *Provide workforce information training for LMI professionals and stakeholders.*

The information and service needs of the State's One-Stop system are broad and varied. As part of the State's Workforce Investment Act capacity building effort, we will continue to work with the Office for Workforce Competitiveness, the local Boards and the One-Stop Centers to increase the LMI knowledge of the workforce investment system's front-line staff serving both individual and employer customers of the One-Stop system.

In program year 2004, the Office of Research will provide LMI training on the use of our electronic and print products to the workforce investment system's employment counselors and business service representatives on request. We will also promote the training offered by the LMI Training Institute and coordinate any sessions desired. With many new staff additions to the One-Stop offices, this effort will be essential in helping them understand labor market information concepts and terminology, and to increase their ability to effectively provide this valuable information to their customers. Through this training, participants are exposed to the various labor market information publications, the content of each, and their availability as information sources. Hands-on instruction in use of the Internet applications will be available as well. These instructional materials prepared by the Office of Research are available to One-Stop staff for use in their workshops and for local capacity building efforts.

We also plan to develop a periodic *LMI Notes* newsletter for One-Stop staff and other workforce practitioners, focusing on LMI topics and occupational and workforce issues. The *LMI Notes* will be made available through the LMI Web site.

We will give Office of Research staff the opportunity to attend the training sessions made available by the LMI Institute. Where applicable, we will continue to incorporate the materials presented in the training into our ongoing capacity building efforts directed to field staff. These sessions are valuable informational mechanisms for providing LMI professional staff with better understanding of the role of labor market information in the workforce investment system.

Related Services: *Workforce information services not included in the categories above.*

The Office of Research will continue its involvement in public events such as job fairs, conferences, trade shows, and similar outreach efforts in program year 2004. Through partnerships with local chambers of commerce, educational institutions, business organizations, and the media, we will administer seven regional job fairs throughout Connecticut, bringing hundreds of companies and thousands of job seekers together. We will also work with a consortium of Connecticut and Massachusetts education and business leaders to oversee the development of a college and career fair for the communities located near the state borders. As needed, the Office of Research will coordinate job fairs with sister agencies such as the Department of Social Services and

Corrections to assist targeted groups such as college students, individuals with employment barriers, *Title5* recipients, veterans, and ex-offenders.

We will play a lead role in the annual Connecticut Career Resource Network-sponsored *Connecticut Learns and Works Conference*. Consistently attended by hundreds of career development specialists, counselors, teachers, and others, the *Connecticut Learns and Works Conference* includes workshops on workforce trends, education and training resources, current and future occupational opportunities, and the use of workforce information in career decision-making.

The Office of Research continues to be an integral part of the Agency's Rapid Response efforts for companies and their workers experiencing plant closure or layoff. We also provide important workforce information and analysis to the Department of Economic and Community Development, our One-Stop partners, economic developers, realtors, and others for use in assisting companies considering expansion and out-of-state firms contemplating relocation. Workforce information typically includes, but is not limited to, employment by occupation, wages, industry profiles, and business starts, expansions and closings.

The Office of Research continues to respond to a significant number of requests each year to speak at meetings, conferences and schools. Staff from the Office of Research speak before local and national groups including government organizations, business associations, and schools regarding economic and workforce information issues. In program year 2004, we will offer a workshop on opportunities for women in the trades at the Permanent Commission on the Status of Women's Nontraditional Occupations Conference.

Summary of Products and Services Significant Milestones, Estimated Costs and Measurable Outcomes

<u>Product/Service</u>	<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Measurable Outcome/Demand</u>
ALMIS Database		\$57,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Populate Database 	Throughout year		
Projections		\$110,000	
Long-Term:		(+ other \$s)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State industry & occupation publication Substate industry Substate occupation 	10/04 3/05 5/05		Information requests via mailing list, telephone, email, Web site downloads
Short-Term:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State industry State occupation 	11/04 and 5/05 8/04		Information requests via mailing list, telephone, email, Web site downloads
Occupational & Career Information Products		\$38,000	
Electronic Products: (see Workforce Information Delivery Systems)		(+ other \$s)	
Print products:			For all products (except posters):
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career Paths CT Economic Digest CT Job Outlook by Training Level 2002-2012 CT Occupational Employment & Wages Occupational Posters 	9/04 Throughout year 1/05 3/05 11/04		Information requests via mailing list, telephone, email, Web site downloads
Job Vacancy Survey	12/04		Posters created & sent to O-S Centers
Benefits Survey	Spring, if able		Survey completed, response to results
Information & Support for WIBs		\$85,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Info. for Workforce Investment Planning WIB Planners IWIP Review Meeting WIA Region Profiles 	10/04 Spring/05 12/04		Feedback from WIB Planners Web downloads; feedback from WIBs
Workforce Information Delivery Systems		\$231,000	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Job & Career ConneCTion</i> <i>Education & Training ConneCTion</i> LMI Web site <i>CT DATAsource</i> 	Throughout year Throughout year Throughout year 4/05		Web site user sessions Web site user sessions Web site user sessions Application launched, site user sessions
Workforce Information Training		\$31,072	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LMI User Training LMI Notes LMI Professional Training LMI Forum 	As requested Periodic As available 11/04		Events, attendance, exit surveys Feedback from recipients LMI staff participation LMI staff participation
Related Services			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job Fairs/Conferences/Presentations CT Learns & Works Conference Business downsizing assistance (Rapid Resp) Economic development assistance 	Throughout year 5/05 Throughout year Throughout year		Events, attendance, exit surveys Attendance, exit surveys Events, attendance, exit surveys Number of requests

Customer Satisfaction Assessment

The Office of Research looks at all types of customer feedback, including phone, mail and email requests, Web site emails and usage statistics, and the information needs identified at meetings with the State's workforce boards, partners and others. We routinely conduct exit surveys at training events and job fairs.

The Office of Research conducts numerous workshops, seminars, and other presentations to a variety of groups each year. Collaborative efforts are also initiated with other State agencies, education, business, and others. The voiced and written response, as well as the continued high participation rate by both employers and job seekers, has indicated the high value these have achieved. Solicited feedback on the Office's products and services is regularly gathered and used as important input to the further development of similar efforts that meet user needs.

The Office of Research will continue to seek and respond to feedback from customers to improve and enhance the delivery and content of products and services to make them meaningful and practical for users. Each of our Web sites contain feedback links that make it easy for users to submit questions, comments and suggestions. Each year we solicit comments from customers on our mailing lists regarding the products they are receiving. This feedback is used to identify subscriber demand and to generate ideas for improvements to the publications. We also meet with local workforce board planners annually to review their needs for planning information and how the content and design of *Information for Workforce Investment Planning* publication can be changed to better meet their needs.

The impact of a Web product is determined not only by the usefulness and applicability of the content, but by its layout and design. As a part of the development process, the Office of Research gathers potential users to review elements of the site's design and content. This enables our Office to produce Web applications such as the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* and the *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* that can be used by a variety of customers with varying degrees of computer literacy.

We regularly review Web site user statistics for each site. From this information, we can identify user tendencies in order to optimize the performance of the particular site. We give particular attention to the number and length of user sessions, types of users and popular Web site segments.

The success of the career fairs can be attributed to their commitment to customer satisfaction. Employers and job seekers complete exit surveys that capture such data as their overall rating of the job fair, areas for improvement, and recommendations. Recent feedback contributed to the enhancement of the career fairs Web site. From this site, employers can register on-line and job seekers can view lists of participating employers and the occupations for which they are hiring.

We will continue to assess customer satisfaction through all of these means.