

State of Montana

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.**

Montana's State Workforce Investment Board has had a long, successful partnership with the Department of Labor and Industry's Research and Analysis Bureau. Staff from the bureau regularly attend meetings of the State Board and its committees, and in the past year, the board has collaborated with the bureau on several projects customized to meet the needs of the state and local workforce investment system.

For the past two years, the bureau has presented its annual Labor Day Report to the Governor at the fall meeting of the State Workforce Investment Board. Board members actively engage in the presentation and provide feedback and commentary to the presenters and evaluate the usefulness and effectiveness of the presentation upon conclusion.

Looking ahead to 2005, one of the Board's committees will be taking the lead on working with the Research Bureau to continuously improve the state's workforce information policy. The committee will be staffed by the Research Bureau, utilizing existing connections between the Board and individual members of the Research Bureau staff.

- **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 goals for the workforce information system provide a strategic approach to build on the existing strengths of the system while introducing critical improvements. The seven goals, as addressed in the Workforce Investment Council's detailed annual plan and highlighted in Montana's five-year plan, have been adopted by the State Workforce Investment Board. The seven goals in Montana's plan are to: 1) develop a comprehensive set of accurate and timely data to support workforce investment customers at local, state, and national levels; 2) improve analysis to transform data into useful workforce information; 3) deliver useful information on a timely basis; 4) use local, state, and national customer feedback to continuously improve and enhance the system; 5) conduct research and development activities to create and continuously improve workforce information; 6) continuously invest in quality training, technical support, and capacity building, both for workforce information system staff and for those who are involved in providing services to others through a one-stop workforce system within the state; and 7) jointly guide and manage the nationwide workforce information system through a federal-state partnership.

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

Our department staffs the Statewide Workforce Investment Board. Along with the State Workforce Investment Board, we participated in and contributed to the development of the Strategic 5-Year Plan for Workforce Investment, which was approved by the Governor.

- **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.**

Staff of the Research & Analysis Bureau will be attending the Accountability Sub-committee meetings, the Economic Development Sub-committee meetings and the full State Workforce Investment Board meetings. The purpose of participating in these particular committees is to determine the labor market information needs, give expert advice and gather input. We include our workforce investment board members and stakeholders as a part of our customer needs and satisfaction surveys. The staff of the Research & Analysis Bureau will be attending the Customer Satisfaction/Continuous Improvement meetings of the Balance of State (BOS) and Concentrated Employment Program (CEP) Workforce Investment Boards.

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

Montana's electronic delivery system is the Workforce Informer and the major delivery mechanism of labor market information. As part of the 2003-2004 grant plan, Montana contracted with Workforce Informer for a 3-year contract. Training was conducted with Informer personnel and our bureau staff in the spring of 2004. Roll out of the Montana Workforce Informer occurred on August 2, 2004. We have a full time staff person dedicated to maintaining and enhancing this website.

Montana will populate the ALMIS database with the most current data available. The ALMIS database is the basic foundation of our electronic delivery system. We have a full-time staff person dedicated to managing the ALMIS database to provide the most accurate and current data.

Monthly press releases and special reports are released via e-mail, website, and fax. We will be releasing some labor market information in printed format where appropriate.

We also plan to train customers on the use of labor market information and make special presentations to stakeholders and customers.

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

One of the ways these goals will be accomplished will be to provide the priority core products and services as discussed below. Electronic delivery through the Montana

Workforce Informer System will be the main mechanism in providing workforce information through the State’s One-Stop system. Each local Job Service Workforce Center receives the latest labor market information print publications for use by staff and customers.

Another method will be to analyze and implement applicable information provided in the “Local Data Need Work Group Final Report” of April 2002, published by the National Association of State Workforce Agencies and the Workforce Information Council. As a means of tracking this information, a variety of methods will be used: Web Trends to track statistics on websites, requests for information submitted to Webmasters, and evaluations from training sessions. Workforce information and services are delivered through training, regular email and telephone interactions with One-Stop Centers’ staff, dissemination of publications, website for data, research, and information, and presentations by experts and staff.

- **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.**

We have developed a survey instrument that was sent to our mailing list in the summer of 2004 to determine our baseline customer needs and satisfaction. That information was compiled and used to develop the core product priorities listed in this grant. We will continue to survey our customer list to help prioritize future recommendations of workforce information products and services. We have a link on our website (ourfactsyourfuture.org) for customers to contact us directly with comments and questions. We have a staff person who is responsible for checking this e-mail daily and directing the questions to the appropriate staff person for response. Our responses to questions typically are handled well under 24 hour turnaround. In our monthly Economy at a Glance, we have an “Ask an R&A Expert” column where we address customer questions.

- **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.**

We surveyed approximately 2871 customers. Of those who responded to the survey the following numbers represent the percent that have used each product (most customers indicated using several products):

Product	Print	Electronic	Hits
Montana Facts	NA	37%	5,220
Building Construction Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	19%	total PW below
Heavy Construction Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	13%	total PW below
Highway Construction Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	10%	total PW below

Nonconstruction Services Prevailing			
Wage Rates	NA	13%	22,323 Total PW
Statistics In Brief	NA	32%	NA
Prospector's Portfolio	NA	6%	13,194
Occupational projections	34%	24%	13,435
Who Needs Math & Science	NA	5%	653
Job Hunting Guide for Montanans			
With Disabilities	NA	8%	1,341
Profile of the Montana Worker	32%		5,982
Montana Career Resource Network			
Newsletter	10%		1,392
Apprenticeable Occupations	NA	40%	750
Wage Rates by Occupation		40%	8,877
Montana Career Guide	14%	NA	NA
Licensed Occupations in Montana	NA	12%	615
Montana Occupational Injuries			
And Illnesses	10%		2,688
Calendar of Release Dates	9%		NA
Census of Fatal Occupational			
Injuries	8%		397
County Labor Market Information			
Fliers	26%		NA
Labor Market Information Directory	18%		NA
Montana Quarterly Labor Force			
Trends	40%		14,246
Montana Economy at a Glance			
Inside Edition			1,078
Product order form			55
MCIS Brochure			649
Consumer Price Index			988

We asked customers to tell us how they use our data. We've compiled that list into the following categories:

- Business information: helps businesses plan for the future, stay current on their industry
- Hiring: looking at information to help determine reasons for hiring difficulties
- Classroom
- Economic development
- Grant writing
- Job bidding (prevailing wage rates)
- Labor market analysis
- News articles (mass media and newsletters)
- Planning and decision-making
- Presentations: speeches, reports, manuals
- Research
- Trends

WebTrend Statistics on the Increased Usage of LMI via the Internet

Year	Hits
2000	598,610
2001	1,273,476
2002	1,442,171
2003	1,520,000
2004	3,064,273 (year-to-date)

- **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.**

We leverage funds from several different sources to produce information that is disseminated throughout the Workforce Information System. We use Section 118 of Carl Perkins (Career Resource Network) funds to produce our career-related products: The Montana Career Information System, Montana Career Guide, Job-Hunting Guide for Montanans with Disabilities, Inside Edition (job hunting guide for individuals who have been incarcerated), Licensed and Apprenticable Occupations, Montana Career Resource Network Newsletter etc. We have a grant we negotiated with the Montana Student Assistance Foundation to provide home access for parents and students to the Montana Career Information System via the Internet. We are working together with the Montana Hospital Association in sharing data and ideas for an economic impact analysis of the health care industry in Montana. As a member of the National Benefits Consortium, we have leveraged \$40,000 to conduct a Benefits Survey (September 2004-May 2005). This valuable information will result in useful information on employer benefits in the state of Montana. We have also leveraged funds from the Reed Act to help with the license for the Workforce Informer electronic information delivery system.

B. Core Products and Services

State Workforce Agency Deliverables

1. Continue to populate the ALMIS Database with state data.

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

Montana will continue to update the core tables in the ALMIS database with state and sub-state data, upgrade software, populate additional tables, and test data integrity. This allows customers access to clean and accurate information, no matter how it is extracted, and serves as a cornerstone for information delivery, research, and product development. As our ALMIS database delivery mechanism, Workforce Informer provides a standard electronic delivery system that can be assessed 24 hours a day, seven days a week via the Internet. Through this system, customers can access the information that meets their

needs, including wages, projections, commuting patterns, employer name and address database, occupations by skills, unemployment rates and other labor market information. The Workforce Informer officially debuted on August 2, 2004.

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

Customer support is measured by feedback obtained through telephone calls, emails, and survey responses. The Research and Analysis Bureau conducted a mail survey in June 2004. Web-based publications that were the most popular were those that offered a variety of labor market information rather than those that presented one type of information. The exception was the “Montana Wage Rates by Occupation” publication. Print publications followed the same pattern, with publications presenting a variety of labor market information being the most popular, the exception being the “Job Projections for Montana” publication. These results supported the feedback the bureau received from conference participants at the November 2003 state level LMI Conference. While participants expressed a desire for “current and local” information, they wanted a variety of current and local labor market information. The bureau is also tracking questions and information requests submitted through our website and by telephone. These requests cover the entire spectrum of labor market information, indicating there are customers for all the information being produced. The data from the ALMIS database is not readily apparent to our customers as it is the “warehouse” where data is stored for display on our website, therefore, customer satisfaction cannot be adequately measured on this component of the plan. However, indirectly its importance to our customers is apparent from the heavy usage of our website for the data stored in the ALMIS database.

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

GOAL 1: Develop a comprehensive set of accurate and timely data to support workforce investment customers at local, state and national levels.

The workforce information system must have at its core high-quality local, state, and national data. “High quality” means data that meet statistical standards, and are timely, comparable across states and areas, and relevant to customer needs. The data must be organized in standard database formats to facilitate analysis and delivery. Achieving this goal requires building on the current Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) federal/state cooperative statistical programs and the Employment and Training Administration funded products and systems, and establishing new data collection programs in key areas.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Evaluating and improving current data collection programs. Existing BLS programs will be reviewed for their relevance and effectiveness in meeting customer needs. The Occupational Employment Statistics wage program will be revised to meet customer needs for accurate current local information. A plan will be developed to improve the quality of local labor force estimates using data from the 2000 Census, the American

Community Survey and other sources. Methods will be improved for producing universe employment and wage data for use in providing more accurate and timely county information.

2) Initiating new data collection programs. A system will be developed to edit, enhance, and use wage records and other administrative data to provide local employment and wages, consumer reports, performance measures, research, and other local labor market information. A system will be developed to provide “consumer reports,” identifying the track record of training providers for use by individuals in choosing among training options. The O*Net data collection program will be established to complete the database and refresh the data on a regular basis.

3) Developing standards, methodologies, and technical assistance in areas of data collection and compilation. Data collection standards, methods, and technical assistance will be reviewed and evaluated. Conformance to required Office of Management and Budget classification standards for industry, occupation, race and ethnicity, and metropolitan areas will be maintained.

4) Creating appropriately structured databases to contain statistical, administrative and program data. States will continue to populate and maintain the standard database for analysis and delivery to meet Workforce Investment Act requirements. A shared methodology will be developed for building longitudinal files for use in analysis of labor market dynamics.

GOAL 3: Deliver useful information on a timely basis.

The success of the one-stop system mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, as well as other workforce development services, rests on the timely delivery of information about the labor market, using media and formats that are accessible to customers who have varying levels of expertise and access to technology. These customers must also have access to technical assistance in using workforce information. Achieving this requires providing tools to simplify and speed up the delivery of data, developing customer-focused delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies, and providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Improving and maintaining linkages between data production and delivery to improve access to information. This would be done by modifying data production systems to provide appropriately formatted data and linkages to populate the states’ standard database for analysis and delivery.

2) Creating customer-focused products, services, and intelligent delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies. An employer name and address list would be provided that could be accessed by the public. Continuation of funding to states is

necessary to provide information and support to Workforce Investment Boards and other state information products and services. The Workforce Informer system has been selected and rolled out as Montana's delivery system. The ALMIS database is the foundation of this system.

3) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information. Access would be expanded to web-based systems through community organizations, libraries, and schools. Toll-free telephone access would be provided to workforce information and services.

GOAL 6: Continuously invest in quality training, technical support, and capacity building, both for workforce information system staff and for those who are involved in providing services to others through a one stop workforce system within the state.

The skills of the staff who develop, analyze, and deliver workforce information must be maintained and improved through training in data collection methods, analysis, use of technology, and customer support. Training and assistance must be provided to customers in the uses and limitations of workforce information. Achieving this requires expanding the system's capacity and better coordinating existing resources.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Developing a coordinated training and education program for workforce information staff and customers. Increasing coordination between ETA, BLS, the states, and the LMI Institute will help to improve the efficiency, quality, and consistency of training while eliminating duplication for cost savings. Involving BLS and ETA Regional Offices is important in the delivery of customer training. The LMI Institute and other state workforce information training initiatives must be funded. Appropriate delivery systems must be explored for training, including a professional staff of trainers, distance learning, and computer-based training. A set of outreach and education materials must be developed that describe services and products to be provided to workforce information system customers.

2) Delivering quality training to both workforce information system staff and to all involved in providing services to others through a one-stop workforce system.

GOAL 7: Jointly guide and manage the nationwide workforce information system through a federal-state partnership.

Montana will continue to participate in policy councils and consortia that support and recommend improvements to the workforce information system.

- **Principal Customers**

The principal customers of the ALMIS database and related delivery system are comprised of almost any agency and person that needs this data. Be it information for

expanding an existing business, relocating, finding occupations by skill level, comparing wages, or job hunting, this system has the greatest customer base of all of our products. The following list contains the principal customers but it is not exhaustive:

- Workforce Investment Boards (State and Local)
- Job Service Workforce Centers
- Office of Public Instruction
- Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
- Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Governor's Office of Economic Development
- Economic Development Agencies
- Researchers
- Statisticians
- Media
- Legislators
- Job Seekers
- Students
- K-12 Teachers and administrators

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

Montana will populate the ALMIS database with the most current data available. We have a full-time staff person dedicated to managing the ALMIS database to provide the most accurate and current data. With the release of the Montana Workforce Informer, the impact to our customers will be immediate with a much easier interface to accessing the data that resides in the ALMIS database. From our survey of current customers we found that our customers like getting this data from our website but that the old website delivery did not meet the needs of all of our customers and it was difficult for them to find what they needed. We believe that the new delivery system will improve our customers' ability to find the data they are looking for and allow them more flexibility in building reports that meet their unique information needs. We plan to survey our customers 6 months after the deployment of the Montana Workforce Informer to gauge the success of this change.

- **Planned milestones**

October 2004:

- Use the most current ALMIS Database version to supply data for the production website.
- Populate ALMIS Database with statewide 2004-2006 short term and 2002-2012 long term projections data.
- Complete total transition of ALMIS Database to Workforce Informer web software.

Ongoing During 2004-2005:

- Populate and update ALMIS core tables.
 - Update ALMIS with licensed occupations information and provide same to National Crosswalk Service Center.
 - Continue updating with historical data.
 - Continue membership in and attendance at ALMIS Resource Center Consortium activities.
 - Monitor performance of Workforce Informer system and correct problems.
 - InfoUSA Employer database loaded into ALMIS
- **Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)**
\$64,757 – no equipment purchase over \$5,000 are projected.

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.

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

Montana will produce long-term, metropolitan area industry and occupational employment projections for the Missoula MSA, using calendar year 2002 as the base year and 2012 as the projected year in coordination with already produced state and BLS national projections for the same time period. The industry projections will be NAICS based. Statewide 2004-2006 short-term projections and 2002-2012 long-term projections data will be added into the ALMIS database. All projections will be done and disseminated using the methodology, software tools and guidelines developed by the Projections Workgroup and the Projections Managing Partnership.

Montana will produce short-term, state-level employment forecasts using second quarter in calendar year 2004 as the base and forecast through the last quarter of calendar year 2006.

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

We get a large number of requests each year for this data which follows the national trend for information on projections. We are currently developing a database that will quantify the number of customers' requests for this specific product to be included in our yearly report. According to our spring 2004 customer survey, 24% of those surveyed indicated they have accessed our projections on the website and 34% indicated they have used our printed projections publication.

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

GOAL 1: Develop a comprehensive set of accurate and timely data to support workforce investment customers at local, state and national levels.

The workforce information system must have at its core high-quality local, state, and national data. "High quality" means data that meet statistical standards, and are timely,

comparable across states and areas, and relevant to customer needs. The data must be organized in standard database formats to facilitate analysis and delivery. Achieving this goal requires building on the current Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) federal/state cooperative statistical programs and the Employment and Training Administration funded products and systems, and establishing new data collection programs in key areas.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Evaluating and improving current data collection programs. Existing BLS programs will be reviewed for their relevance and effectiveness in meeting customer needs.
- 2) Developing standards, methodologies, and technical assistance in areas of data collection and compilation. Data collection standards, methods, and technical assistance will be reviewed and evaluated. Conformance to required Office of Management and Budget classification standards for industry, occupation, race and ethnicity, and metropolitan areas will be maintained.
- 3) Creating appropriately structured databases to contain statistical, administrative and program data. States will continue to populate and maintain the standard database for analysis and delivery to meet Workforce Investment Act requirements. A shared methodology will be developed for building longitudinal files for use in analysis of labor market dynamics.

GOAL 2: Improve analysis to transform data into useful workforce information.

Analysis adds meaning and contexts to the data in the workforce information system, maximizing its usefulness to job seekers, students, planners, employers, and other users. Achieving this goal requires improving staff analysis skills, providing analysis tools and methods, and carrying out analysis of key topics, resulting in products that are meaningful and provide added value to customers.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Creating and maintaining an analytical human resource capacity by identifying skills and competencies required of workforce information professionals.
- 2) Providing software and related products to support analysis of statistical, administrative, and program data through flexible, easy-to-use designs. The effectiveness of existing software and products would need to be evaluated to see if they meet analytical needs. Software and related products would be provided to support analysis of statistical, administrative, and program data through flexible, easy-to-use designs. Existing software that meets analytical needs would need to be catalogued and shared. Additional or improved software to meet analytical needs would need to be developed and provided.

3) Developing standards, methodologies, and technical assistance for analytical systems and processes.

4) Producing analytical products. A federal/state cooperative state employment projections program needs to be established in which BLS provides leadership, technical methods, and assistance, and states participate with BLS in technical development, and prepare and disseminate the projections. State processes and schedules for producing projections would be established.

GOAL 3: Deliver useful information on a timely basis.

The success of the one-stop system mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, as well as other workforce development services, rests on the timely delivery of information about the labor market, using media and formats that are accessible to customers who have varying levels of expertise and access to technology. These customers must also have access to technical assistance in using workforce information. Achieving this requires providing tools to simplify and speed up the delivery of data, developing customer-focused delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies, and providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Improving and maintaining linkages between data production and delivery to improve access to information. This would be done by modifying data production systems to provide appropriately formatted data and linkages to populate the states' standard database for analysis and delivery.

2) Creating customer-focused products, services, and intelligent delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies. Montana has chosen the Workforce Informer System as its delivery system via the Internet. An employer name and address list would be provided that could be accessed by the public. Continuation of funding to states is necessary to provide information and support to Workforce Investment Boards and other state information products and services.

GOAL 5: Conduct research and development activities that continuously improve and create workforce information.

Research and development is needed to improve the quality of workforce information and to add critical new information sources. Research should focus on data collection methods, statistical procedures, and application of technology to reduce cost, increase timeliness, and improve quality

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Identifying and setting priorities for current research projects by conducting a review and approval of continuation of current research and development activities.
- 2) Identifying new research initiatives in data collection and analysis
- 3) Developing a long-range research and development plan. Tools will be created that increase the speed and efficiency, and lower the costs, of labor market transactions.

GOAL 6: Continuously invest in quality training, technical support, and capacity building, both for workforce information system staff and for those who are involved in providing services to others through a one stop workforce system within the state.

The skills of the staff who develop, analyze, and deliver workforce information must be maintained and improved through training in data collection methods, analysis, use of technology, and customer support. Training and assistance must be provided to customers in the uses and limitations of workforce information. Achieving this requires expanding the system's capacity and better coordinating existing resources.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Developing a coordinated training and education program for workforce information staff and customers. Increasing coordination between ETA, BLS, the states, and the LMI Institute will help to improve the efficiency, quality, and consistency of training while eliminating duplication for cost savings. Appropriate delivery systems must be explored for training, including a professional staff of trainers, distance learning, and computer-based training
- 2) Delivering quality training to both workforce information system staff and to all involved in providing services to others through a one-stop workforce system.

GOAL 7: Jointly guide and manage the nationwide workforce information system through a federal-state partnership.

Montana will continue to participate in policy councils and consortia that review, recommend and enhance the workforce information system.

- **Principal Customers**

- Workforce Investment Boards (State and Local)
- Job Service Workforce Centers
- Office of Public Instruction
- Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
- Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Governor's Office of Economic Development
- Economic Development Agencies
- Researchers
- Statisticians

Media
Legislators
Job Seekers
Students
K-12 Teachers and administrators

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

Projections are one of the most sought after data series we produce. Workforce development planning hinges on having an accurate picture of the future labor force demands. With current short-term and long-term projections educational programs can be created to train for demand high-growth occupations, legislators can devise policies that meet the future needs of people in the state, businesses can project future employment needs and students and job-seekers can prepare for jobs of the future. With the high quality and timely projections provided with this grant, better decisions can be made for the future of individuals in the state. Our mailing list for job projections is approximately 674 each year. The bulk of our customers access this information from our website. We use WebTrends statistical software to evaluate an array of customer information including hits, page views and visits. These statistics also include information on browsers, platforms, referrers, top visitors and top pages. Statistics are compiled on a monthly basis and calculated for yearly measurements. Estimates are made for increased usage of sites and monitored to view progress toward meeting specific goals. Our websites contain e-mail accounts for comment, contact with regard to our publications, general information requests and reporting of website problems. We also include the use of feedback forms on our websites.

- **Planned milestones**

Long-term projections:

- Create a NAICS industry database for Missoula MSA – October 2004
- Forecast Missoula MSA jobs by NAICS sector & self-employed. – December 2004
- Analyze/document industry forecast results. – January 2005
- Produce Missoula MSA occupational forecasts. – March 2005
- Populate the ALMIS database with projections data. – June 2005

Short-term projections:

- Review NAICS-based historical series. – December 2004
- Forecast industry sectors. – February 2005
- Analyze and document results. – March 2005
- Produce occupational short-term projections for the state. – May 2005
- Populate the ALMIS Database with the short-term projections and submit data for public dissemination. – June 2005

- **Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)**
 No equipment purchase over \$5,000 are projected.
 Long-term projections - \$40,000
 Short-term projections - \$35,000

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

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

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

Using the results of our customer service and satisfaction survey it has been determined that our wide variety of customers require occupational and career information in multiple formats. The results show that printed publications and Internet delivery are equally popular. Due to a variation in the statistical knowledge between information users, it appears that multiple levels of information are equally desirable.

We have determined our occupational and career information products will be delivered in printed form and on our Workforce Informer site when it is cost effective. We have leveraged support for some of our career-related materials through a grant with the Student Assistance Foundation. Leveraging other funds we will be producing the Montana Career Guide using funds from Section 118 of Carl Perkins (Career Resource Network) We will also have written analysis in a reading level appropriate for our intended audience. Data tables that can be downloaded and sorted will be provided in our Workforce Informer system to accommodate the data needs of our more sophisticated customers. One of our special projects for this program year is our joint efforts on the Economic Impact of Health Care with the Montana Hospital Association. Not only are the health care fields high paying jobs, there is a projected shortage in skilled workers in the state.

A new project for this year's grant leverages funds from several sources along with our ETA grant. We will be producing career cluster "wheels" that supply occupational cluster information and educational information in an innovative "wheel". We will be working on this project with the Montana ACTE, Student Assistance Foundation, and the Montana Career Resource Network (Section 118, Carl D. Perkins Act).

Recently, the Research and Analysis Bureau reached an agreement with the Department of Health and Human Services that gives R&A access to licensing microdata on health professionals. R&A can merge this data with existing U.I. data to create a very rich data set on the state of health professionals in Montana. The data permits R&A to address issues that have attracted great interest from the healthcare industry and other stakeholders. R&A can now look at the age distribution of nurses, doctors, and other licensed healthcare workers. These age distributions will allow interested stakeholders to assess to what extent the general concerns associated with the aging baby-boomers in the workforce will apply to healthcare professionals in particular. R&A can produce very

accurate wage data for healthcare professionals. For example, R&A can compare wages of nurses in rural vs. urban settings in Montana, track how wages differ in different healthcare settings (hospitals vs. ambulatory care) or see how wages differ among different ages of healthcare workers. R&A can now assess the difference between the number of licenses healthcare professionals and the number actually earning wages, and this permits R&A to look at the demographic and wage characteristics of these professionals which should shed some light on why they left the industry. This data source has the potential to produce several high quality studies if given the proper allotment of resources. We are planning at the least a series of three or four articles for our monthly publication and the Workforce Informer website.

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

The results of our spring customer survey show the following statistics on our occupational and career information products:

Product	Print	Electronic	Web Hits
Occupational projections	34%	24%	13,435
Who Needs Math & Science	NA	5%	653
Job Hunting Guide for Montanans With Disabilities	NA	8%	1,341
Profile of the Montana Worker	32%		5,982
Montana Career Resource Network Newsletter	10%		1,392
Apprenticeable Occupations	NA	40%	750
Wage Rates by Occupation		40%	8,877
Montana Career Guide	14%	NA	NA
Licensed Occupations in Montana	NA	12%	615

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

GOAL 1: Develop a comprehensive set of accurate and timely data to support workforce investment customers at local, state and national levels.

The workforce information system must have at its core high-quality local, state, and national data. “High quality” means data that meet statistical standards, and are timely, comparable across states and areas, and relevant to customer needs. The data must be organized in standard database formats to facilitate analysis and delivery. Achieving this goal requires building on the current Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) federal/state cooperative statistical programs and the Employment and Training Administration funded products and systems, and establishing new data collection programs in key areas.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Evaluating and improving current data collection programs. Existing BLS programs will be reviewed for their relevance and effectiveness in meeting customer needs. The Occupational Employment Statistics wage program will be revised to meet customer needs for accurate current local information. A plan will be developed to improve the quality of local labor force estimates using data from the 2000 Census, the American Community Survey and other sources. Methods will be improved for producing universe employment and wage data for use in providing more accurate and timely county information.

2) Initiating new data collection programs. A system will be developed to edit, enhance, and use wage records and other administrative data to provide local employment and wages, consumer reports, performance measures, research, and other local labor market information. A system will be developed to provide “consumer reports,” identifying the track record of training providers for use by individuals in choosing among training options. The O*Net data collection program will be established to complete the database and refresh the data on a regular basis.

3) Developing standards, methodologies, and technical assistance in areas of data collection and compilation. Data collection standards, methods, and technical assistance will be reviewed and evaluated. Conformance to required Office of Management and Budget classification standards for industry, occupation, race and ethnicity, and metropolitan areas will be maintained.

GOAL 2: Improve analysis to transform data into useful workforce information.

Analysis adds meaning and contexts to the data in the workforce information system, maximizing its usefulness to job seekers, students, planners, employers, and other users. Achieving this goal requires improving staff analysis skills, providing analysis tools and methods, and carrying out analysis of key topics, resulting in products that are meaningful and provide added value to customers.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Providing software and related products to support analysis of statistical, administrative, and program data through flexible, easy-to-use designs.

2) Occupational analysis products would be developed that encompass employment trends, educational attainment levels, wages, job openings, job market conditions, major employing industries, geographic distribution of jobs and other information. Skills-oriented information products would be provided using O*Net and other skills research and databases.

GOAL 3: Deliver useful information on a timely basis.

The success of the one-stop system mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, as well as other workforce development services, rests on the timely delivery of information about the labor market, using media and formats that are accessible to customers who have varying levels of expertise and access to technology. These customers must also have access to technical assistance in using workforce information. Achieving this requires providing tools to simplify and speed up the delivery of data, developing customer-focused delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies, and providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Creating customer-focused products, services, and intelligent delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies. Montana uses the Montana Career Information System to provide career-related information and the Workforce Informer System to provide labor market information. Access would be expanded to web-based systems through community organizations, libraries, and schools. Toll-free telephone access would be provided to workforce information and services.

GOAL 5: Conduct research and development activities that continuously improve and create workforce information.

Research and development is needed to improve the quality of workforce information and to add critical new information sources.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Identifying and setting priorities for current research projects by conducting a review and approval of continuation of current research and development activities. Coordination with other public and private sources such as the Montana Ambassadors, the MSU Extension business retention studies, and others of a similar nature, by providing staff review and expertise in survey design and research areas as necessary.

2) Identifying new research initiatives in data collection and analysis. Occupational supply information will continue to be developed, including information on the output of education and training programs, identifying relationships between these programs and occupations, and other topics. Development of data and analysis methods will be continued for occupational supply information. State and local educational agencies will be consulted to meet the information needs of secondary and postsecondary school students. Local needs will be determined for benefits information and methodology for providing it. Research will be conducted that identifies alternative aggregation approaches, such as industry clusters, as part of enhanced universe employment and wage data efforts. O*Net research will be continued, including developing methods for collecting occupational skills data.

- **Principal Customers**

Workforce Investment Boards (State and Local)
 Job Service Workforce Centers
 Office of Public Instruction
 Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
 Department of Public Health and Human Services
 Governor's Office of Economic Development
 Economic Development Agencies
 Researchers
 Statisticians
 Media
 Legislators
 Job Seekers
 Students
 K-12 Teachers and administrators

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

One of our largest customer groups for career and occupational information is K-16 schools throughout the state. We provide approximately 16,000 sophomores each fall with the Montana Career Guide publication. This career guide provides information on each step of the career development process, occupational wage and projection information, all 2- and 4-year schools (public, private and proprietary) in the state, financial aid, writing resumes, interviewing and keeping a job.

The Montana Career Information System is available in all Job Service Workforce Center offices for public access, in 154 schools (70,166 students), and 103 other agencies for use with the public. Through our grant with the Montana Student Assistance Foundation, we have opened up free access to parents and students at home. There are 366,000 households in Montana with 68,000 students age 13 through 17 that can be reached with this resource through these leveraged funds.

MCIS Impact Statistics

Year	Agency Sites	Web Hits	Home Users (SAF grant)
2000	308	NA	NA
2001	308	NA	NA
2002	257	NA	NA
2003	224	43532	6,656
2004	257	64618	10,618
2005	280*	85296*	14,547*

*estimated increase in users

- **Planned milestones**

August 22, 2004: Handbook for Finding Jobs for People with Disabilities posted to Workforce Informer

September 1, 2004: Montana Career Resource Network Newsletter
 October 1, 2004: Release of Montana Career Information System for 2004-2005
 (home and agency use)
 October 30, 2004: Mail out of Montana Career Guide for 2004 to all sophomores
 November 2004: Update of Licensed Occupations and Apprenticeship Occupations
 publications published to website
 January 15, 2005: Montana Career Resource Network Newsletter
 January 2005: Career Cluster Wheels distributed
 April 15, 2005: Montana Career Resource Network Newsletter

- **Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)**
 No equipment purchase over \$5,000 are projected.
 \$67,624

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**
 - Labor Day Report: Profile of the Montana Worker: Presented to the State Workforce Investment Board at their annual fall meeting.
 - Replication of industry workforce study model developed for health care worker shortages, with expansion to other industries as identified by the Board and its partners.
 - Replication of economic impact studies of key industries in Montana, using the 2004 study of the economic impact of health care in Montana as a model.
- **Customer support for product or service as indicated in customer satisfaction survey results or other customer consultations**

Consultation with the State Workforce Investment Board members and staff have increasingly become the greatest consumers of data and information from the Research and Analysis Bureau. The Economic Development and Accountability sub-committees both have been actively involved in working with the bureau on specific information needs.

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

GOAL 1: Develop a comprehensive set of accurate and timely data to support workforce investment customers at local, state and national levels.

The workforce information system must have at its core high-quality local, state, and national data. “High quality” means data that meet statistical standards, and are timely, comparable across states and areas, and relevant to customer needs.

This will be accomplished by:

Working with the State Workforce Investment Board to come up with the strategic labor market information plan that addresses the local and timely information needs for the state. Staffing the Accountability committee of the State Workforce Investment Board and providing technical expertise to the Economic Development Committee is the bureau's plan for providing that support.

GOAL 2: Improve analysis to transform data into useful workforce information.

Analysis adds meaning and contexts to the data in the workforce information system, maximizing its usefulness to job seekers, students, planners, employers, and other users. Achieving this goal requires improving staff analysis skills, providing analysis tools and methods, and carrying out analysis of key topics, resulting in products that are meaningful and provide added value to customers.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Occupational analysis products would be developed that encompass employment trends, educational attainment levels, wages, job openings, job market conditions, major employing industries, geographic distribution of jobs and other information. Skills-oriented information products would be provided using O*Net and other skills research and databases.

GOAL 3: Deliver useful information on a timely basis.

The success of the one-stop system mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, as well as other workforce development services, rests on the timely delivery of information about the labor market, using media and formats that are accessible to customers who have varying levels of expertise and access to technology.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Creating customer-focused products, services, and intelligent delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies.

2) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information. The One-Stop Operating System would be maintained to support delivery of services through access to web-based systems, such as the Montana Career Information System and Workforce Informer System. Access would be expanded to web-based systems through community organizations, libraries, and schools. Toll-free telephone access would be provided to workforce information and services.

GOAL 4: Use local, state, and national customer feedback to continuously improve and enhance the system.

Continuous improvement of the workforce information system depends on input from its customers through a comprehensive customer satisfaction and outreach program. Achieving this requires building on the experience of individual agencies and states in gathering customer satisfaction information and using other customer feedback strategies and incorporating customer feedback in planning, budgeting and implementing system improvements. The many diverse groups of individuals who need to provide important feedback must be kept in mind as one survey instrument to collect this feedback may not meet the assessment goals related to data sought from all these individuals.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information. Current and prospective customer needs would be analyzed. Development of a customer contact tracking system, customer satisfaction standards, and dedicated customer relations staff would take place. Customer needs and input would be summarized, and the results would be incorporated into the annual plan.
- 2) Incorporating customer feedback, as appropriate, into the workforce information system and products.

GOAL 5: Conduct research and development activities that continuously improve and create workforce information.

Research and development is needed to improve the quality of workforce information and to add critical new information sources.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Identifying and setting priorities for current research projects by conducting a review and approval of continuation of current research and development activities.
- 2) Occupational supply information will continue to be developed, including information on the output of education and training programs, identifying relationships between these programs and occupations, and other topics. Development of data and analysis methods will be continued for occupational supply information. State and local educational agencies will be consulted to meet the information needs of secondary and postsecondary school students. Local needs will be determined for benefits information and methodology for providing it. Research will be conducted that identifies alternative aggregation approaches, such as industry clusters, as part of enhanced universe employment and wage data efforts. O*Net research will be continued, including developing methods for collecting occupational skills data.

- **Principal Customers**

Workforce Investment Boards (State and Local)

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

The State Workforce Investment Board has historically engaged in meaningful and productive interaction with the Research & Analysis Bureau. The Research and Analysis Bureau and State Board participated in ongoing discussions involving uses and application of labor market information for the strategic vision for the workforce system. This grant process strengthens the day- to- day interactions and relationship with the Board. The State Workforce Investment Board will be able to affect the workforce system by ensuring that labor market information is available to help them make meaningful and strategic decisions. With accurate, timely and local information, the workforce system dollars, training and efforts will be more likely to be efficiently administered and participants in the system will have more success in the labor market.

- **Planned milestones**

August 9, 2004	Executive subcommittee meets to discuss grant plan with R&A staff.
September 1, 2004	Presentation on ETA LMI Grant to SWIB accountability committee.
September 1, 2004	Presentation on Health Care Study to SWIB Economic Development sub-committee.
September 2, 2004	R&A presents the Profile of the Montana Worker to the full State Workforce Investment Board and Governor Martz.
October – December, 2004	R & A staff work with the SWIB on the development of grant applications through the President’s High Growth Job Training Initiative. R & A’s role with the applications will be to supply workforce information for the grant applications.
January – April , 2005	Prepare information highlighting the potential economic outcome of proposed state legislation that may impact Montana’s workforce system
May – June 2005	Conduct follow-up studies of economic impact of key industries, as identified by the SWIB.

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

No plans to purchase equipment over \$5,000 for this core product
\$10,000

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

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

Montana’s electronic delivery system is the Workforce Informer. As part of the 2003-2004 grant plan, Montana contracted with Workforce Informer for a 3-year contract. Training was conducted with Informer personnel and our bureau staff in the spring of

2004. Roll out of the Montana Workforce Informer occurred on August 2, 2004. We have a full time staff person dedicated to maintaining and enhancing this website. Montana will populate the ALMIS database with the most current data available. The ALMIS database is the basic foundation of our electronic delivery system. We have a full-time staff person dedicated to managing the ALMIS database to provide the most accurate and current data. We have leveraged Reed Act funds to help provide this valuable electronic delivery system.

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

With the release of the Montana Workforce Informer, the impact to our customers will be immediate with a much easier interface to accessing the data that resides in the ALMIS database. From our survey of current customers we found that our customers like getting this data from our website but that the old website delivery did not meet the needs of all of our customers and it was difficult for them to find what they needed. We believe that the new delivery system will improve our customers’ ability to find the data they are looking for and allow them more flexibility in building reports that meet their unique information needs. We plan to survey our customers 6 months after the deployment of the Montana Workforce Informer to gauge the success of this change. We found from our first survey that of those people who were unaware of our website, all indicated that they would use it in the future now that they know about it. We will be focusing on getting people more familiar with the new site and survey them again about their satisfaction with Workforce Informer.

We surveyed approximately 2871 customers. Of those who responded to the survey the following numbers represent the percent that have used each product (most customers indicated using several products):

Product	Print	Electronic	Hits
Montana Facts	NA	37%	5,220
Building Construction Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	19%	total PW below
Heavy Construction Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	13%	total PW below
Highway Construction Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	10%	total PW below
Nonconstruction Services Prevailing Wage Rates	NA	13%	22,323 Total PW
Statistics In Brief	NA	32%	NA
Prospector’s Portfolio	NA	6%	13,194
Occupational projections	34%	24%	13,435
Who Needs Math & Science	NA	5%	653
Job Hunting Guide for Montanans With Disabilities	NA	8%	1,341
Profile of the Montana Worker	32%		5,982

Montana Career Resource Network			
Newsletter	10%		1,392
Apprenticeable Occupations	NA	40%	750
Wage Rates by Occupation		40%	8,877
Montana Career Guide	14%	NA	NA
Licensed Occupations in Montana	NA	12%	615
Montana Occupational Injuries			
And Illnesses	10%		2,688
Calendar of Release Dates	9%		NA
Census of Fatal Occupational			
Injuries	8%		397
County Labor Market Information			
Fliers	26%		NA
Labor Market Information Directory	18%		NA
Montana Quarterly Labor Force			
Trends	40%		14,246
Montana Economy at a Glance			11,590
Inside Edition			1,078
Product order form			55
MCIS Brochure			649
Consumer Price Index			988

WebTrend Statistics on the Increased Usage of LMI via the Internet

Year	Hits
2000	598,610
2001	1,273,476
2002	1,442,171
2003	1,520,000
2004	3,064,273 (year-to-date)

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

GOAL 1: Develop a comprehensive set of accurate and timely data to support workforce investment customers at local, state and national levels.

The workforce information system must have at its core high-quality local, state, and national data. “High quality” means data that meet statistical standards, and are timely, comparable across states and areas, and relevant to customer needs. The data must be organized in standard database formats to facilitate analysis and delivery. Achieving this goal requires building on the current Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) federal/state cooperative statistical programs and the Employment and Training Administration funded products and systems, and establishing new data collection programs in key areas.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Creating appropriately structured databases to contain statistical, administrative and program data. States will continue to populate and maintain the standard database for analysis and delivery to meet Workforce Investment Act requirements. A shared methodology will be developed for building longitudinal files for use in analysis of labor market dynamics.

GOAL 2: Improve analysis to transform data into useful workforce information.

Analysis adds meaning and contexts to the data in the workforce information system, maximizing its usefulness to job seekers, students, planners, employers, and other users. Achieving this goal requires improving staff analysis skills, providing analysis tools and methods, and carrying out analysis of key topics, resulting in products that are meaningful and provide added value to customers.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Providing software and related products to support analysis of statistical, administrative, and program data through flexible, easy-to-use designs. The effectiveness of existing software and products would need to be evaluated to see if they meet analytical needs. Software and related products would be provided to support analysis of statistical, administrative, and program data through flexible, easy-to-use designs. Existing software that meets analytical needs would need to be catalogued and shared. Additional or improved software to meet analytical needs would need to be developed and provided.

2) Producing analytical products. A federal/state cooperative state employment projections program needs to be established in which BLS provides leadership, technical methods, and assistance, and states participate with BLS in technical development, and prepare and disseminate the projections. State processes and schedules for producing projections would be established.

3) Occupational analysis products would be developed that encompass employment trends, educational attainment levels, wages, job openings, job market conditions, major employing industries, geographic distribution of jobs and other information. Skills-oriented information products would be provided using O*Net and other skills research and databases.

GOAL 3: Deliver useful information on a timely basis.

The success of the one-stop system mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, as well as other workforce development services, rests on the timely delivery of information about the labor market, using media and formats that are accessible to customers who have varying levels of expertise and access to technology. These customers must also have access to technical assistance in using workforce information. Achieving this requires providing tools to simplify and speed up the delivery of data, developing customer-focused delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies,

and providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Improving and maintaining linkages between data production and delivery to improve access to information. This would be done by modifying data production systems to provide appropriately formatted data and linkages to populate the states' standard database for analysis and delivery.

2) Creating customer-focused products, services, and intelligent delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies. Montana has selected and rolled out the Workforce Informer System to deliver labor market information and the Montana Career Information System to deliver career-related information. An employer name and address list would be provided that could be accessed by the public.

3) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information. The One-Stop Operating System would be maintained to support delivery of services through integrated access to web-based systems, case management, scheduling, and tracking. Common Systems/Web-Based System Support would be maintained. Access would be expanded to web-based systems through community organizations, libraries, and schools. Toll-free telephone access would be provided to workforce information and services.

GOAL 4: Use local, state, and national customer feedback to continuously improve and enhance the system.

Continuous improvement of the workforce information system depends on input from its customers through a comprehensive customer satisfaction and outreach program. Achieving this requires building on the experience of individual agencies and states in gathering customer satisfaction information and using other customer feedback strategies and incorporating customer feedback in planning, budgeting and implementing system improvements. The many diverse groups of individuals who need to provide important feedback must be kept in mind as one survey instrument to collect this feedback may not meet the assessment goals related to data sought from all these individuals.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information. Current and prospective customer needs would be analyzed. Development of a customer contact tracking system, customer satisfaction standards, and dedicated customer relations staff would take place. Customer needs and input would be summarized, and the results would be incorporated into the annual plan.

2) Incorporating customer feedback, as appropriate, into the workforce information system and products.

- **Principal Customers**

Workforce Investment Boards (State and Local)
 Job Service Workforce Centers
 Office of Public Instruction
 Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
 Department of Public Health and Human Services
 Governor's Office of Economic Development
 Economic Development Agencies
 Researchers
 Statisticians
 Media
 Legislators
 Job Seekers
 Students
 K-12 Teachers and administrators

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

Increasing the number of users to the Workforce Informer System as measured by WebTrends. The following chart shows a steady increase since 2000:

Year	Hits
2000	598,610
2001	1,273,476
2002	1,442,171
2003	1,520,000
2004	3,064,273 (year-to-date)
2005	3,100,000 estimated
2006	3,150,000 estimated

- **Planned milestones**

August 2, 2004: Roll-out of the Montana Workforce Informer System
 August 22, 2004: Handbook for Finding Jobs for People with Disabilities posted to Workforce Informer
 Monthly: Each month the latest LAUS and CES data will be posted to the Workforce Informer. Economy at a Glance and County Profiles to be updated.
 Quarterly: Quarterly Current Employment and Wages will be posted to the Workforce Informer
 Ongoing: Special reports released as written
 August 2004: OSH publication posted to the Workforce Informer
 September 2004: CFOI publication posted to the Workforce Informer
 November: Completer data will be posted to the Workforce Informer

May 2005: Benefits survey data report posted to the Workforce Informer

- **Estimated costs (identify equipment purchases of \$5,000 or more per unit cost)**
No equipment purchase over \$5,000 are projected.
\$60,000

6. Support state workforce information training activities.

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

A major component of training activities is the training staff on the collection and analysis of labor market information and data series. Montana will be using \$4,000 of our grant for membership in the LMI Training Institute and for ongoing LMI training of our staff. Leveraging funds from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Cooperative Agreement, we will be sending the appropriate staff to BLS conferences and training to maintain a highly trained and qualified staff who produce the data that is used in analysis, publications, ALMIS database and Workforce Informer website.

The bureau will be making presentations at State and Local Workforce Investment Board meetings, conferences and subcommittee throughout the grant year. We will be presenting at economic development, education, SHRM (Society of Human Resource Managers), and workforce development conferences and meetings. We will be sending expert staff across the state to present specific LMI training to customers. We will be working directly with our diverse customer groups to tailor our training to meet their needs.

We will be developing and training our Job Service Business Advocates to be labor market liasons in our local Job Service Workforce Centers. Our local Job Service Office Workforce Centers are active participants as business consultants and work with economic development agencies. They field many local labor market questions and compile information for use by businesses and economic development agencies. Our plan is to provide for the training of their business advocates in in-depth labor market information and our website and publications to better assist them in their ability to help these specific customers of the workforce development system. Our plan is to start the selection process and curriculum building in mid-September and deliver training throughout the grant year.

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

The workforce development system has conducted focus groups and customer surveys and a major reoccurring request is for more training on labor market information. We will be working directly with our diverse customer groups to tailor our training to meet their needs.

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

GOAL 3: Deliver useful information on a timely basis.

The success of the one-stop system mandated by the Workforce Investment Act, as well as other workforce development services, rests on the timely delivery of information about the labor market, using media and formats that are accessible to customers who have varying levels of expertise and access to technology. These customers must also have access to technical assistance in using workforce information. Achieving this requires providing tools to simplify and speed up the delivery of data, developing customer-focused delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies, and providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Creating customer-focused products, services, and intelligent delivery systems using the Internet and other emerging technologies and provide training and outreach on who to properly use and access these products.
- 2) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to training on workforce information products.

GOAL 4: Use local, state, and national customer feedback to continuously improve and enhance the system.

Continuous improvement of the workforce information system depends on input from its customers through a comprehensive customer satisfaction and outreach program. Achieving this requires building on the experience of individual agencies and states in gathering customer satisfaction information and using other customer feedback strategies and incorporating customer feedback in planning, budgeting and implementing system improvements. The many diverse groups of individuals who need to provide important feedback must be kept in mind as one survey instrument to collect this feedback may not meet the assessment goals related to data sought from all these individuals.

This will be accomplished by:

- 1) Providing a variety of innovative approaches for universal access to workforce information and training. Current and prospective customer needs would be collected and analyzed. Development of a customer contact tracking system, customer satisfaction standards, and dedicated customer relations staff would take place. Customer needs and input would be summarized, and the results would be incorporated into the annual plan.
- 2) Incorporating customer feedback, as appropriate, into the workforce information system and products.

GOAL 6: Continuously invest in quality training, technical support, and capacity building, both for workforce information system staff and for those who are involved in providing services to others through a one stop workforce system within the state.

The skills of the staff who develop, analyze, and deliver workforce information must be maintained and improved through training in data collection methods, analysis, use of technology, and customer support. Training and assistance must be provided to customers in the uses and limitations of workforce information. Achieving this requires expanding the system's capacity and better coordinating existing resources.

This will be accomplished by:

1) Developing a coordinated training and education program for workforce information staff and customers. Increasing coordination between ETA, BLS, the states, and the LMI Institute will help to improve the efficiency, quality, and consistency of training while eliminating duplication for cost savings. Involving BLS and ETA Regional Offices is important in the delivery of customer training. The LMI Institute and other state workforce information training initiatives must be funded. Appropriate delivery systems must be explored for training, including a professional staff of trainers, distance learning, and computer-based training. A set of outreach and education materials must be developed that describe services and products to be provided to workforce information system customers.

2) Delivering quality training to both workforce information system staff and to all involved in providing services to others through a one-stop workforce system.

- **Principal Customers**

- Research & Analysis staff
- Workforce Investment Boards (State and Local)
- Job Service Workforce Centers
- Office of Public Instruction
- Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education
- Department of Public Health and Human Services
- Governor's Office of Economic Development
- Economic Development Agencies
- Researchers
- Statisticians
- Media
- Legislators
- Job Seekers
- Students
- K-12 Teachers and administrators

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

Each Research and Analysis research specialist will attend specialized training and conferences in their area of expertise as well as related areas as appropriate. Our most intensive training will happen in our Job Service Workforce Center Offices with the Business Advocates. After this intensive training, these Business Advocates will be able to handle the requests of business customers and economic development groups more quickly and in more depth. This should assist these groups in making better business and planning decisions. We project that we will have them trained by the end of the fiscal year. By the end of the fiscal year, our customers will see a higher visibility of labor market information, be better trained in accessing and using, and will know how to contact the appropriate staff when they need more information. Our partnerships will increase to include economic development agencies, education and human resource groups.

- **Planned milestones**

Ongoing:	Bureau staff attend training and conferences put on by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, ETA, and the LMI Institute as they become available.
August 2004:	Consultation with the State Workforce Investment Board staff on the ETA LMI One-Stop Grant Plan
September 1, 2004:	Presentation to State Workforce Investment Board Accountability Sub-committee of the ETA LMI One-Stop Grant Plan
September 2, 2004:	Presentation to State Workforce Investment Board on the Montana Economy.
October 2004:	Curriculum is started for training business advocates.
December 2004:	Curriculum is complete.
March-May 2005:	Training for business advocates delivered.
Ongoing:	Specialized presentations to conferences and other groups as they come up.

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

No equipment purchase over \$5,000 are projected.
\$61,247

C. Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment

The Research and Analysis Bureau will continue to survey their customers to assess customer satisfaction as well as customer needs. These results will be used to determine how well this year's plan worked and what changes and /or additions need to be made for next year. Assessment plans include:

- Online customer satisfaction survey
- Mail out customer satisfaction survey

- Creation of customer satisfaction database for survey compilation and customer contacts
- Focus groups

The Research and Analysis Bureau will provide expert assistance to the State Workforce Investment Board's Accountability Sub-committee and Economic Development Sub-committee. These are the committees that makes the most use of labor market information for SWIB activities.

No equipment purchase over \$5,000 are projected.
\$15,000

Total Grant Plan: \$353,628