

South Carolina's Workforce Information System

The Employment Security Commission's Labor Market Information (LMI) Department is the designated entity for management of the statewide workforce information system.

Ongoing strategies are being maintained and enhanced for collaboration with the state and local WIBs, as well as other primary workforce development customers, to strengthen the employment statistics system. Customer support operations within the LMI Department are continually being enhanced to provide better information support and services to the WIBs and other customers.

The LMI Department works with ESC's State WIA Administrative Department (SWIAD) to ensure that ongoing information products and services support the five-year strategic plan for state and local workforce development. Comprehensive WIA area profiles are maintained and updated quarterly by LMI to provide necessary information for strategic planning. LMI also collaborates with SWIAD on data delivery via SC Virtual One-Stop, the statewide WIA operational and tracking system.

The official point of communication between the LMI Department and the state Workforce Investment Board is the state Policy, Planning and Coordination Committee. Reports on the status of LMI products and services will be submitted to the committee on a quarterly basis for review, discussion and transmittal to the full State WIB, as appropriate. The LMI director, assistant director, and/or designated staff will attend and make presentations at meetings of the committee and full board, as appropriate.

Ongoing communication with local WIBs is maintained through local visits, attendance/presentations at local WIB meetings, and presentations at monthly meetings of the WIA administrators association. Workshops are also conducted regularly at annual state Workforce Development conferences, which are widely attended by administrative, state and local workforce development staff and partners. The broadcast e-mail service for announcements of new or updated products and services will be continued and expanded.

Information product and service delivery to business customers, individuals/job seekers, and workforce development partners is facilitated through a wide range of printed publications and brochures, a comprehensive LMI website, and the in-depth web-based Palmetto Economic Analysis and Research System (PEARS). The use of LMI products and services in the state's One-Stop service delivery system is facilitated through liaisons in the LMI Department for each One-Stop Workforce Center. These liaisons maintain regular contact with One-Stop Center directors to provide products and services as needed for each center's operations.

From January to August 2004, South Carolina's LMI Department had over 25,000 contacts with customers through direct provision of its products and services in response to phone, mail or email requests. LMI's web sites were accessed over 28,000 times during this period. Responses to our customer satisfaction surveys were overwhelmingly positive. Specifically, responses were almost unanimously "good" or, in most cases, "excellent" in regard to support and cooperation received from LMI staff, timeliness/ promptness of staff service, usefulness of the information, and overall experience. Follow-up conversations with customers showed the consensus to be that

we do a very good job in following up on requests and responding to customers in a timely manner.

State workforce information system communications will continue through formal and informal contacts with business, education, economic development, and local workforce development representatives. The goal of this communication effort is to provide input and feedback to help the LMI Department improve responsiveness to customers through enhanced products, services, and dissemination. New avenues of communications will be explored in PY04 to obtain comprehensive feedback that is more fully representative of the customer community such as participation in group/association meetings involving various customer groups.

A point of emphasis in PY04 will be providing more localized products and services better meeting the needs of workforce information customers. The LMI Department will explore new data sources and more effective utilization of current sources such as unemployment insurance data. Development of new or improved products and services will be done in consultation with customers, including state and local workforce board members and staff, so as to be targeted to their needs. There will be continued emphasis on the development of customized products for the state's One-Stop Workforce Centers.

To further enhance South Carolina's workforce information system, the LMI Department will pursue opportunities to obtain leveraged funds or services. The LMI Department will continue to offer its Employment Tracking and Occupational Database on a fee basis to educational institutions. Continued funding of the LMI Training Institute will be pursued through various means. While the Institute is a national training entity, administering it through the SC LMI Department provides benefits to SC's workforce information system through increased staff capacity. Leveraging will also be pursued through in-kind services.

Customer Consultation and Satisfaction Assessment

The LMI Department will continue to focus on providing excellent customer service in PY 04. The Marketing and Workforce Statistics Unit within the LMI Department has primary responsibility for handling customer relations, customer service, electronic dissemination, and marketing of available information products and services. Customer-service operations include a toll-free telephone line for enhanced access. Information requests and responses are continually monitored, documented and evaluated to assess customer information needs, as well as their satisfaction with existing products and services.

In PY 04, the process for customer satisfaction assessment will become more structured and comprehensive. Customer Service Satisfaction Survey cards will continue to be distributed to customers. This effort will be examined to determine improvements that could be made to the process, or feasible alternatives. An electronic customer survey will be maintained on the LMI homepage. Additionally, telephone calls will be randomly made to customers after information requests have been filled to determine their opinions of the information and service received. Follow-up calls (and possibly personal visits) will be made, as needed, to ensure customer satisfaction and to foster relationships. Customer visits to the LMI homepage and PEARS will continue to be monitored to determine volume of access, as well as information components accessed most frequently. The current broadcast e-mail service for customers will be continued, with customer consultation and satisfaction assessment components.

All customer contact information will be kept in a database for review and evaluation. Continuing strategies will be implemented to ensure improvements in areas of deficiencies, as noted by customers, throughout the satisfaction assessment process. Ongoing improvements will be made to the consultation, assessment and evaluation process, based on experiences and information gleaned.

Core Products and Services

1) Continue to populate the ALMIS Database with state data: Work will continue on populating and updating the ALMIS Database in PY 04. The database will be populated/maintained to the fullest extent possible, including all specified core data tables. The database update will continue as new versions are released. Occupational licensing data was updated as required, and submitted to the NCSC in February 2004; the next update will begin in PY04 with data transmittal planned for early 2006.

Ongoing coordination will be maintained for data delivery via the state's new WIA operational and tracking system, SC Virtual One-Stop. Workforce information from the database will be accessed for integration and display via various components of this new web-based system, which is now being used in local WIA areas. The system will serve as another means of information access for program staff, partners, and customers. Further opportunities for use of the state's ALMIS Database for information sharing, analysis, and delivery will be explored in PY 04. Specifically, efforts will be made internally to establish appropriate database access for LMI analysts working on research projects and customer requests.

All available resources and tools to enhance database work and information delivery will be utilized in PY 04. A major emphasis will be evaluating and improving services to customers, and the ALMIS Database will be used as a primary resource. All other opportunities for training and information sharing will also be fully utilized throughout the year.

South Carolina will continue to participate as a member of the ALMIS Resource Center Workgroup, and will continue to coordinate national education and communication activities related to the database.

2) Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections: Work will continue in producing state and sub-state industry and occupational employment projections using the methodology and tools provided by the Projections Workgroup and the Projections Managing Partnership. A major effort will be the continued building of the historical employment database in NAICS coding. Technical problems were encountered in PY03 in accessing the required mainframe employment data files, due to the conversion of all files to NAICS.

Due to these technical problems and department reorganization during PY03, statewide industry and occupational projections were not completed as planned by June 30, 2004. All work is currently progressing, and the planned timeframe for completion of statewide long-term (2002-2012) projections is October 15, 2004, with the required transmittal and loading to the ALMIS Database completed on or before October 31, 2004. Statewide short-term (2003-2005) projections will be completed by November 15, 2004, with transmittal and loading to the ALMIS Database by November 30, 2004. Short-term projections for 2004-2006 will be initiated when the necessary employment data become available.

Long-term (2002-2012) industry and occupational projections will be produced for the 12 WIA areas in South Carolina by December 31, 2004. Beginning in January 2005, the WIA area

projections will be validated through an extensive process of internal review and collaboration with partners in each of the local areas. Following this detailed review and revision process, area projections will be loaded to the ALMIS Database, for dissemination via the state's web-based PEARS system.

State and local projections data will be disseminated in a number of products and formats, to be developed in collaboration with state and local WIA partners, and other customers. Focused efforts will be directed to linking occupational projections to occupational skills data. All projections data will also be displayed in PEARS and the LMI website.

3) Provide occupational and career information products for public use: Continued emphasis will be on the development of customer-focused occupational and career information products. Information brochures highlighting demand occupations, wages, educational requirements, and licensing requirements will be produced and widely disseminated. Brochures based on statewide 2002-2012 projections will be developed and disseminated by December 1, 2004. Brochures based on workforce investment area 2002-2012 projections will be developed and disseminated within two months of completion of validated, final projections.

Customized area brochures and posters highlighting occupational information and projections, with associated wages and educational requirements, will be produced and made available for use in One-Stop Career Centers and other customer service settings. Localized information on nontraditional occupations for males and females will be provided to fulfill local needs. Other products will be explored in consultation with local WIBs and other stakeholders. Efforts will be increased to incorporate skills-based information into occupational analysis products, using O*NET and other resources. Occupational analysis products will be delivered via a combination of printed/electronic media, as deemed appropriate through coordination with local WIBs and other LMI customers. All products will be O*NET/SOC-based.

Ideas for new or enhanced products will be also explored, in collaboration with state and local customers. LMI's Employment Tracking and Occupational Data system will be continued for education customers.

The LMI Department will continue to focus on providing excellent customer service in PY 04. Information requests and responses will continue to be monitored, documented and evaluated to assess customer information needs, as well as their satisfaction with existing products and services.

In PY 04, the process for customer satisfaction assessment will continue to be reviewed and revised. Customer satisfaction surveys will continue via mail and electronic means. Additionally, telephone calls will be randomly made to customers after information requests have been filled to determine their opinions of the information and service received. Follow-up calls (and possibly personal visits) will be made, as needed, to ensure customer satisfaction and to foster relationships. Customer visits to the LMI homepage and PEARS will continue to be tracked to determine volume of access, as well as information components accessed most frequently. The current broadcast e-mail service for customers will be continued.

All customer contact information will be kept in a database for review and evaluation. Continuing strategies will be implemented to ensure improvements in areas of deficiencies, as noted by customers, throughout the satisfaction assessment process. Ongoing improvements will be made to the consultation, assessment and evaluation process, based on experiences and information gleaned.

4) Ensure that workforce information and support required by state and local workforce investment boards are provided: Ongoing communication with local WIBs, WIA staff, partners, and other stakeholders will be maintained to assess their needs for workforce information and services. The LMI Department will take an active role in meeting with local WIA administrators and boards to discuss their planning and policy development activities, and associated information requirements. More formal statewide communication and strategic planning will take place through coordination with the Policy, Planning and Coordination Committee of the State WIB, as well as staff of the State WIA Administrative Department (SWIAD).

WIA Area Profiles will be revised to better meet local needs, with updates disseminated via the LMI website to facilitate ongoing availability of information for planning. Additional information projects and products will be initiated as requested to meet the needs of the individual WIA areas. Collaborative efforts and fee-for-service projects will be explored to better fulfill the workforce information needs within the WIA areas. LMI Department staff will continue as liaisons for individual areas of the state, providing more streamlined and responsive service.

Ongoing coordination will be maintained with the agency's Communications/Media Department to ensure that labor market information is promoted as one of the premier SCESC services available to customers. Work will continue on joint agency promotional projects such as job fairs, business/education expositions, management presentations, and marketing materials. These will include projects such as Job Link with a local TV station and Carolina Works with state ETV.

The monthly *Workforce Trends* newsletter will continue to serve as the primary published document for delivery of comprehensive workforce information to meet the needs of a broad range of customers. LMI will work with the agency's Communications/Media Department to use the *Trends* to promote workforce investment activities and services. The distribution of this free newsletter will be expanded in PY 04.

Other initiatives to improve services to field staff and One-Stop Workforce Centers around the state will be continued and strengthened in PY 04. As part of the local customer-service effort, several LMI staff will continue as the points of contact for multi-county areas around the state. They will be responsible for communications and awareness of the economies and workforce needs of their local areas, in order to provide better service by functioning somewhat like in-house "area analysts."

LMI will continue to support Business Solutions Centers in their two existing locations, and explore establishment of centers in other areas of the state.

5) Maintain and enhance electronic state workforce information delivery systems:

PEARS will be maintained and enhanced in PY 04, and the system will be strongly promoted as the most comprehensive electronic source of information for research and planning in the state. This system provides public electronic access to information in the SC ALMIS Database. New avenues for improving the system's delivery and customer access will be explored. Training and technical assistance for system users will be ongoing throughout the year. Collaborative efforts will be maintained for the integration of LMI into the state's web-based WIA operational and tracking system, SC Virtual One-Stop.

The LMI website will be continually improved to offer new features and an enhanced format for more customer-friendly access to workforce information. Emphasis will be directed toward more streamlined information access for various customer groups, incorporating universal access and customer choice as key components. LMI staff will continue to work closely with web development staff in the agency's IT Services Department to ensure that LMI web delivery is compatible with other agency operational and information systems. Greater emphasis will be focused on measurement of customer access to web-based information as a means of monitoring performance and customer satisfaction. Additionally, potential new applications for information delivery and customer access will be explored in the coming year. Technologies for data sharing with other states will also be explored.

6) Support state workforce information training activities: Ongoing collaborative efforts will be maintained with other agency departments, as well as state and local WIA staff/partners, to provide workforce information training for staff and customers. The basic "LMI Resources" curriculum that has been developed will be continually enhanced and customized for use in training various customer groups. In addition to a basic overview of workforce information resources, the training includes modules on accessing information, national information resources (Career OneStop and O*NET) and PEARS, as well as case studies that illustrate the use of information in workforce development settings. Information and resources available through the LMI Training Institute, ALMIS Resource Center, and other sources will be continually added to LMI training provided to customers, staff, and partners.

Presentations and training for customers will be ongoing throughout the year. Workshops will be provided at agency-sponsored and other conferences, including the annual Workforce Development Partnership Conference and the Education and Business Summit. Other venues for promoting the availability and use of workforce information will be explored. Ongoing LMI staff development will be emphasized through participation in training offered by the LMI Training Institute and other providers, as funding allows.

**Core Products and Services
PY04**

Products/Services	Schedule	Principal Customers	Measurable Outcomes	Estimated Costs
ALMIS Database	Database population requirements to be completed in PY04; updates ongoing	Local workforce centers, education officials, WIA state/local planners, one-stop staff, economic developers, employers, WIA staff, general public	% of total database population completed; timeliness of data updates; timeliness of file updates in PEARS; customer satisfaction	\$86,383
Industry and Occupational Employment Projections	Statewide long-term to be completed by October 15, 2004; statewide short-term projections to be completed by November 15, 2004; WIA area projections to be completed by December 31, 2004	WIA and educational planners, economic developers, local workforce center staff, career counselors, general public	Timeliness of projections completion/transmittal; timeliness of projections data dissemination; quality of data; extent of partner collaboration; customer satisfaction	\$108,083
Occupational and Career Information Products	Ongoing enhancement/dissemination in PY04; statewide projections brochures published by December 1, 2004; WIA area projections brochures published by March 1, 2005	Local workforce center, education officials, career counselors, students, WIA staff, employers, jobseekers, general public	Timeliness of dissemination; volume of dissemination / number of requests; customer satisfaction	\$56,677
Support to State and Local WIBs; Other Information Products/Services	Support to/coordination with state/local WIBs ongoing; collaboration with other agency departments/partners ongoing; customer service/marketing enhancement ongoing; feedback/input from customers ongoing; "Workforce Trends" published monthly; other product development /dissemination ongoing	State/local WIA planners, partners and staff; State and local WIBs; business community; education groups; economic development groups	Timeliness of data delivery/technical assistance; quality of products/services; timeliness of response/ support; development of new or revised products and services; customer feedback	\$188,974

**Core Products and Services
PY04**

Products/Services	Schedule	Principal Customers	Measurable Outcomes	Estimated Costs
Electronic Workforce Information Delivery Systems	PEARS enhancement/marketing ongoing; enhancement of website ongoing; collaboration on Virtual One-Stop ongoing; customer training/technical assistance ongoing; collaboration/exploration of new applications ongoing	Economic developers/planners, businesses, researchers, local workforce centers, one-stop customers/staff, WIA planners/staff, State and Local WIBs, general public	PEARS access; website access; inputs to Virtual One-Stop; customer satisfaction	\$94,487
Workforce Information Training Activities	Training for WIA partners/one-stop staff/workforce centers/other front-line staff upon request; training/presentations for customers ongoing; LMI and other agency staff training ongoing	WIA planners/staff/partners; workforce center and central office staff, career counselors, educators, businesses, general public, labor market analysts	Number of sessions; training participant feedback; quality of training curriculum/materials; customer satisfaction	\$47,262