

Workforce Information Annual Report – PY2004 CONNECTICUT

This report identifies the information products and services that the Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research developed and provided during program year 2004 to support the State's workforce investment system. The One-Stop Career Center/America's Labor Market Information System funds provided for this purpose are critical to the development of the workforce information on which Connecticut's strategic workforce investments are made, as well as to the decisions made by the workforce development professionals and customers of the State's workforce investment system.

A. Accomplishments Compared to Plan

Core Products and Services

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

In program year 2004, the Office of Research completed implementing and is now maintaining version 2.3 of the ALMIS Database. All core tables are being populated within the guidelines issued by the ALMIS Resource Center.

The Connecticut licensed occupation information has been updated and was submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for inclusion on America's Career InfoNet (ACINet).

The Office of Research continued to play major roles in national research and development workgroups such as the ALMIS Database Maintenance Consortium, addressing national, state, and local customer information needs. Through the consortium, we assisted North Carolina with developing standardized database and application sharing methodologies using the ALMIS Distributed Access Method (ADAM) system. ADAM provides a standard programming methodology for cross-state access to ALMIS data over the Internet.

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

In program year 2004, the Office of Research completed and disseminated State-level, long-term industry and occupational employment projections for 2002 to 2012 and State-level, short-term industry and occupational forecasts for 2004 to 2006, using the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Projections Workgroup and Projections Managing Partnership. Both the long-term projections and short-term forecasts were published on the Office of Research Web site and in print format.

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

The Office of Research continued to enhance its Web applications and print resources in program year 2004.

We began major revisions to our *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* (www.ctjobandcareer.org) and *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* (www.cttraining.info) electronic applications. When completed, the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* will include updated occupational wages and employment projections as well as NAICS and O*NET SOC classifications. The *Education & Training ConneCTion* will include upgraded program and provider information. All of these revisions and upgrades are expected to be completed by late summer 2005.

In program year 2004, the Office of Research maintained a limited quantity of products in paper format. Our popular *Soaring to New Heights... Connecticut Job Outlook by Training Level 2002-2012* publication was updated include the latest outlook on more than 200 occupations in demand. The Office of Research's *Industries and Occupations Forecast 2012* was published, highlighting the industrial and occupational outlook for Connecticut from 2002-2012. Both of these publications are available electronically through the Office of Research Web site and in print.

The Office of Research produced three new print products using the long-term projections and short-term forecast data. *Connecticut's Evolving Economy... Choices for the Career Professional Beyond 2004* outlines the State's growing and declining industries across two distinct periods of time (2004 to 2006) and (2002 to 2012). *Connecticut's Health Care Occupations: "A Window of Opportunity"* details the available supply and projected demand for health care workers to 2012 and beyond. Lastly, *Connecticut's Industries and Occupations Forecast 2007* provides another analysis of the State's short-term industry and occupation growth. These products are available in print and through the Office of Research Web site.

The Office of Research completed extensive revisions to its popular *Job Search Guide* publication to include up-to-date information on posting résumés, accessing to job search tools, and strategies for aiding the job search process. The *Job Search Guide* has become an important tool for career counselors who provide assistance to customers making vocational choices. The Agency's Employment Service division is considering an initial printing of 10,000 copies for use in the local career centers.

Our *Connecticut Career Paths... Road Map to Your Future* publication underwent a major rewrite in program year 2004 to include expanded occupational information and programs and resources to help job and career decisions. Developed through our association with the Connecticut Career Resource Network, the *Connecticut Career Paths* is targeted primarily for secondary school students and education professionals, but is used widely by others, including community colleges, rehabilitation services, correction institutions, and the career centers.

We also continued to produce the *Connecticut Economic Digest*. Considered the most comprehensive source of current data on the workforce and economy of the State, the *Connecticut Economic Digest* is available on a subscription basis or electronically through the Office of Research Web site.

A set of 10 career exploration posters is available for education professionals, *CTWorks* staff, and others. The posters are used to introduce the concept of career exploration, and to create an awareness of the relationships between interests, skills, and future occupations. The career posters highlight a particular industry or career grouping. These include Information Technology, Biotechnology, Sales, Health, Engineering and Architecture, Electronics Manufacturing, Education, Construction, Communications, and Amusement and Recreation. The posters are particularly useful for teachers and guidance counselors who are using career exploration curriculums and for School-to-Work counselors. They were distributed to each of the State's *CTWorks* offices for display in their resource rooms for our job seeker customers.

4. **ALMIS Employer Database**: *Provide public electronic access to the ALMIS Employer Database.*

The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC)* application continues to reference the *infoUSA* database. It has become an important tool for job seekers, students, and others needing contact information for Connecticut businesses. It also helps the *CTWorks* center staff devise methods to better match Connecticut businesses with available workers.

5. **Information and Support to Workforce Investment Boards**: *Provide information and support to state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and provide other special demand information products and services.*

In program year 2004, the Office of Research conducted its annual information session with the State's workforce investment board planners. The purpose was to better understand the information needed to develop their strategic plans. Feedback from the planners is collected and implemented, where applicable, into a number of Office products, most notably, our *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)* publication. In addition to data on the labor force, employment, wages, population, and persons with barriers to employment, the 2004 *IWIP* contained several new data items including *Commuting Patterns*, *Poverty Status by Town and Workforce Investment Area*, *Education Levels and Languages Spoken At Home*, and *Characteristics of CTWorks Clients by Jobs First Employment Services (JFES)*, *Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Act*.

We started developing the *WIA Region-At-A-Glance* that will contain current industry and workforce information, and economic profiles for each of the State's Workforce Investment Areas. When completed, the *WIA Region-At-A-Glance* will give the State's workforce investment providers another resource to information for their respective regions.

6. **Workforce Information Delivery Systems:** *Improve and deploy electronic state workforce information delivery systems.*

The Office of Research continued to upgrade the content of its electronic applications for our business, job seeker, and workforce system customers. Major revisions to our primary electronic applications - *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* and *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* began in program year 2004. Each application is receiving content upgrades and improvements that support the self-service demands of our customers.

The Office of Research added new data and downloadable offerings to its *Labor Market Information* site to deliver information in a more expedient and efficient manner. Based on feedback from our customers, Connecticut's latest workforce and economic news are prominently displayed on the site. Special studies and reports relevant to Connecticut's workforce and the workforce system are accessible through the *Labor Market Information* site.

The Office of Research maintains the workforce investment system's *Approved Training Programs List*. Accessed through the Agency's Home page or at www.ctdol.state.ct.us/wia/wia.htm, the *Approved Training Programs List* enables CTWorks staff, career counselors, and others to assist individuals receiving Individual Training Account vouchers with the selection of training programs.

7. **Workforce Information Training:** *Support state workforce information training activities.*

Local capacity building is a critical element of Connecticut's workforce investment system. In program year 2004, the Office of Research collaborated with the state's Office for Workforce Competitiveness and CTWorks staff to increase front-line staff's exposure to labor market information. In total, fourteen training sessions were provided to more than 500 job seekers, business leaders, counselors, teachers, faith-based organizations, and others. At the request of CTWorks staff, the Office of Research developed a basic labor market information program, "*Hot Jobs and Dream Jobs: What and Where are They?*" for use in their career exploration workshops.

We utilized a variety of new mediums to provide training and market services to our varied customers in program year 2004, including the *Career Express* – the Department of Labor’s mobile career center. Three training events were given to 225 high school students through the *Career Express*.

The Office of Research began developing a periodic newsletter for *CTWorks* staff. The *LMI Notes* newsletter focuses on labor market topics, occupational information, and state workforce issues. We believe the *LMI Notes* will enable *CTWorks* staff to acquire a better understanding of labor market information terminology and concepts.

Other Efforts:

Papers and Reports:

The Office of Research undertakes special studies and projects of importance to Connecticut on topics relevant to the labor market, workforce, and the workforce development system.

The inaugural *Connecticut Job Vacancy Survey* provides information on the current nature of the market for workers and occupational skills in the state. Included in the survey of approximately 3,300 Connecticut firms were details of current job vacancies including job title, hiring wage, benefits offered and the education and experience requirements. From this publication, the State’s workforce investment system can develop training programs to meet the demands of its business and job seeker customers.

An Impact Evaluation of Workforce Development Service Activities is a collaborative effort between the Agency’s Offices of Research and Performance Management, and the University of Connecticut’s Center for Economic Analysis. This report presents an evaluation of the effect of services provided through Connecticut’s public employment service program. Since the services are focused on improving the employability and earnings of job seekers in the labor market, the evaluation focuses on their employment and earnings as program outcomes.

The *Connecticut Job Vacancy Survey* and *An Impact Evaluation of Workforce Development Service Activities* are available through the Office of Research Web site.

Outreach:

The Office of Research continues to be an integral part of the Rapid Response Team’s *Early Intervention* sessions where employees can learn about unemployment benefits, job search assistance, training programs, and labor market information. We participated in eight *Early Intervention* sessions serving more than 900 employees in program year 2004.

Job and Career Fairs:

The Office of Research provides occupational information to hundreds of businesses and thousands of job seekers through the Agency's job and career fairs. Nine fairs brought more than 550 companies and 10,000 job seekers together in program year 2004.

B. Customer Satisfaction Assessment

As required by the Workforce Investment Act, the Office of Research gathers feedback on all of its electronic and print products. We view feedback gathering as an ongoing process of building and maintaining strong, effective relationships with our varied customers. The surveying of our customers uniquely address key challenges and opportunities such as growing customer retention, recognizing and addressing operational problems, and ultimately allocating scarce resources to the areas that will generate the highest benefits to our customers. The continuous monitoring and assessing of our existing products has resulted in new and expanded electronic applications, print publications and reports.

1. Web Products:

The Office of Research Web team regularly reviews website statistics for each of its electronic products to determine customer satisfaction and to improve the overall performance and delivery of information. We pay specific attention to the users' tendencies, number of unique visitors, site sections accessed, and the length of visit. In addition to website statistics, we review user comments through on-line Feedback forms on each of our electronic applications.

In program year 2004, the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* (www.ctjobandcareer.org) experienced a total of 216,000 visitor sessions and 49,000 unique visitors, while the *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* (www.cttraining.info) had 124,000 visitor sessions and 23,000 unique visitors. Our Labor Market Information site (www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi) reported 298,000 visitor sessions - an increase of 52,000 visitor sessions and 93,100 unique visitors from program year 2003.

2. Publications:

The Office of Research developed a *Labor Market Information Activity Report* to identify user demand for our print products. This includes the amount of hard-copy requests and on-line downloads of our products made by users.

In program year 2004, the Office of Research printed more than 167,000 publications, while our users downloaded approximately 369,000 print products and publications – an increase of 130,000 from 2003.

3. Outreach Efforts:

Connecticut Job and Career Fairs:

The Connecticut Department of Labor's *Job and Career Fairs* have a nine-year history of providing the most results-oriented, cost-effective fairs in the state. We offer employers and job seekers a more effective and economical way to solve their employment needs. The success of the *Job and Career Fairs* is attributed to our commitment to customer satisfaction. Participating employers complete exit surveys that capture an abundance of feedback including, but not limited to, the overall rating of the event, quality of the facility and staff support, and suggestions for improvement. Job seeker evaluations are used to measure the effectiveness of our résumé writing and critiquing workshop, Connecticut's Job Bank system, and other support services. Over the past several years, most employers who have attended our events have rated them excellent in customer satisfaction.

Workforce Investment Boards:

Each year, the Office of Research conducts an information session with the Workforce Investment Board planners. The purpose is to better understand their data needs and timelines. In many instances, their data requests create the topics included in our *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)* publication. The most recent *IWIP* includes several new data items and is a necessary tool for the planners.

Training:

The Office of Research uses customer satisfaction surveys for all of its training programs and seminars. The findings can identify satisfaction levels, expectations, and key shortcomings of the training. The participant's comments are critical to helping our Office improve the quality of its training, and for developing future training modules.

C. Recommendations for Improvements or Changes to Core Products

We suggest the addition of an "Other Products and Services" category. This would not be a core product category, but would serve as a place to identify products and services that meet identified needs that are not captured under the existing core products categories.