

**New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development**

**Office of Labor Planning and Analysis**

**Annual Report**

**PY 2004 Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant**

**Introduction:**

In return for the PY 2004 federal Workforce Information Core Products and Services grant, the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Office of Labor Planning and Analysis (LPA) has undertaken the following activities required by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). Funds from this grant were supplemented with monies from other sources. Through this integration of funding, LPA has been able to maximize the quantity and quality of its products and services provided to the One-Stop Career Center community and other users of workforce information.

LPA has worked to provide the required core products and services in accordance with the *New Jersey One-Stop Workforce Investment System Unified State Plan - July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007*. Except for those core products that have a national focus, all other activities are within the context of and in support of that plan, which stresses the importance of accurate and timely labor market information in providing the citizens of New Jersey a demand-driven One-Stop Career Center system. The *New Jersey One-Stop Workforce Investment System Unified State Plan - July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007* stipulates that "The Office of Labor Planning and Analysis will, in consultation with the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC), its partners and the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), be responsible for gathering this [labor market] information and making it available to the SETC, its members and WIBs." The work plan was developed in consultation with the SETC, our Statewide Workforce Investment Board, and local Workforce Investment Board (WIB) directors. That work plan has been supported by both the SETC and those responsible for the implementation of statewide workforce development programs as being responsive to the needs of New Jersey's One-Stop Career Center community.

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

## **A. Accomplishments Regarding Core Products and Services:**

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

#### **Achievements and outcomes**

- LPA staff updated all ALMIS tables as data became available, using Version 2.3 of the database, as required by our present online LMI delivery system. The latest version of the ALMIS operating system will be incorporated into the new Labor and Workforce Development (LWD) website, which is now slated for completion during the summer 2006.
- The Center for Occupational Employment Information (COEI) populated the three ALMIS licensing tables and three ALMIS school tables. These files were given to the ALMIS Database Coordinator.

### **2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.**

#### **Achievements and outcomes:**

- Preliminary state 2002-2012 industry and occupational employment projections were completed in June of 2004. A projections review meeting with WIB staff, regional economists and representatives from academia and the business community was held in July, and the data were released on the LPA websites in August 2004.
- A detailed analysis of the statewide industry and occupational employment projections was presented in the September 2004 edition of *New Jersey Economic Indicators*.
- Highlights of all four projection series (employment by industry and occupation, population and labor force) were presented in *Projections 2012: New Jersey Employment and Population in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. The publication was completed in February 2005.
- Preliminary county industry and occupational employment projections were completed in November 2004. The preliminary county employment projections, together with the preliminary county population and labor force projections, were reviewed in a meeting with outside experts on November 29, 2004.
- The detailed county employment projections were provided to the Center for Occupational Employment Information (COEI) in January 2005.

- The detailed county industry and occupational employment projections were released on the LPA websites in January 2005. In addition, a Power Point presentation, providing highlights of the projections was made available on the LPA websites.
- As a part of the substate projections process, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) staff updated county time series that were used as inputs to the 2002-2012 projections model. QCEW staff also provided research support on industry location and classification for the Occupational Employment Survey (OES) program.

*See 3 below for Job Vacancy Survey.*

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

#### **Achievements and outcomes:**

- The third edition of the “*New Jersey’s Hot 50*” brochure that features the top 50 jobs anticipated to be most “in demand” in New Jersey for the next two years was compiled, printed and distributed to schools and local One-Stop Career Centers. High schools and community colleges throughout the state received 370,000 copies. An additional 330,000 copies were made available to One-Stop Career Center customers.
- Occupational wage estimates for WIB-defined labor areas were developed using the Estimates Delivery System (EDS). These estimates are based on occupational employment and wage data collected from the November 2003 and May 2004 OES wage survey panels. They were reviewed by COEI staff, field labor market analysts and staff in the Bureau of Occupational Research and have been released on the LPA websites. The data will also be used in the *Jobs in Demand* brochures that are designed to meet the needs of One-Stop Career Center customers by providing information on demand occupations, as well as a snapshot of other labor market information.
- Focus group meetings were held with Business Services Representatives, the Office of Marketing and staff from Workforce New Jersey and Labor Planning and Analysis to discuss how labor market information could best be marketed and how to increase exposure of LMI products. The plan calls for the development of posters and a bookmark that can be distributed in local One-Stop Career Centers. Suggested “tag lines” were proposed to be used in the development of the poster and the bookmark. A broader focus group consisting of members of the business and One-Stop Career Center community will be convened in the next program year for final review of both the text and design of the two LMI products.

- Because of administrative and procurement delays, the PY 2004 job vacancy survey was delayed until September 2005 (see April 8, 2005 letter to Douglas F. Small, Regional Administrator, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration from New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Deputy Commissioner Janet Share Zatz). As discussed with ETA staff, the survey will be conducted beginning in September 2005 and completed by December 31, 2005.
- LPA has contracted with International Communications Research (ICR) of Media, PA to conduct a statewide and sub-state job vacancy survey of New Jersey firms. In-house LPA staff has completed sampling and pre-survey work, which included telephone number verification, and the vendor has begun to survey firms.
- The New Jersey Career Information Delivery System continued to be updated and distributed and the career information database was utilized to present career decision-making information on the Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network, the Internet delivery site for the One-Stop Career Center System. Career information is coded using the O\*Net taxonomy. This activity focuses on the delivery of information services through the One-Stop Career Centers. The use of this information is a requirement of the *New Jersey One-Stop Workforce Investment System Unified State Plan - July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2007*.
- *The New Jersey Licensed Occupations Handbook* was published in both book form and as a downloadable .pdf file on our LMI delivery sites.
- The COEI published the *Guide to Labor Demand Occupations* for use by the One-Stop Career Center delivery system. This project supports the goal of the state's strategic plan to provide education and training services in occupations in demand in local labor markets. This product is used to determine the eligibility of a training program for WIA individual training grants. The Guide was prepared with the cooperation of and review by local Workforce Investment Boards. State policy requires the use of this Guide in all WIA partner agencies for program planning and for the issuance of individual training grants.

**4. Ensure that workforce information and support required by state and local workforce investment boards are provided.**

**Achievements and outcomes:**

- During PY 2004, LPA continued to provide LMI and technical support to the SETC and to local WIBs. LPA field staff attended WIB meetings and actively pursued opportunities to serve on WIB, LMI and planning subcommittees. Field staff was out-stationed at selected One-Stop Career Centers to provide direct services and assistance to local office staff and customers.

- Staff provided training in Local Employment Dynamics (LED). A presentation on LED and quarterly workforce indicators was given to SETC members in December 2004. Also, presentations were held for the Thorofare One-Stop Career Center and the Gloucester WIB, for the Atlantic-Cape May WIB and other local organizations in the One-Stop Career Center community.
- LMI field staff participated in meetings to discuss economic developments with WIBs and One-Stop Career Center staff. For example, a field analyst presented on economic comparisons between New Jersey and Delaware data to members of Mercer County's Professional Service Group (a self-help organization of unemployed professionals) and Business Services Account Executives of the local One-Stop Career Centers. Another field analyst made a presentation on employment projections for the retail trade industry and retail trade occupations for the Atlantic-Cape May WIB.
- LMI field staff provided technical assistance to New Jersey's Business Resource Centers. These centers are designed to help businesses with recruiting, business planning and other needs and are located in One-Stop Career Center offices.

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

**Achievements and outcomes:**

- The current LPA websites were maintained and updated as new data and information became available.
- LPA and New Jersey State Data Center staff worked with the Office of Marketing within LWD on efforts to redesign the department website, LPA websites and Workforce New Jersey Public Information Network (WNJPIN). Staff helped write the specifications for the redesign of the LPA and COEI websites. LPA and COEI staff participated in Joint Application Development (JAD) sessions to inform the selected vendor, CIBER, about the needs of LPA and COEI web users and the data to be included on the new sites. Active participation by LPA and COEI personnel in this website redesign effort has continued during this program year.
- Due to delays in awarding of the websites redesign contract, completion dates for the project have been revised. The first parts of the re-designed websites are scheduled to be released in February 2006. The target date for full implementation of the redesigned websites is June 2006.

## **6. Support state workforce information training activities.**

### **Achievements and outcomes:**

- As noted above, LPA conducted training for WIB, One-Stop Career Center community and business data users in the application of LMI (using the Internet and more traditional sources of LMI) and the use of LED data. Labor market analysts trained One-Stop Career Center staff on where to find LMI on the Web. The analysts also made presentations on the availability and use of Local Employment Dynamic (LED) data for local WIBs, and staff and the head of the State Data Center made a presentation for the State Employment and Training Commission.
- At the invitation of the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) Commission, a presentation was made in March to the Commission members by LPA staff on the EEO data tools and the results of the 2000 Census. In addition, a presentation was made in April 2005 to the New Jersey Association of Independent Schools on the Census 2000 results.
- LPA held its 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference entitled “Renewing New Jersey Cities: Challenges and Opportunities” and held several State Data Center network meetings to inform SDC affiliates about new data sources and methodologies. For example, an Annual State Data Center Network meeting was held at Rutgers University’s Alexander Library in June 2005. LPA also participated in conferences and workshops and responded to many informational requests.
- Field staff presented labor market information to local Workforce Investment Boards. For example, a presentation was made to the Middlesex County WIB about area economic trends, employment projections and available LMI products on May 23, 2005. Similar presentations were made to other boards, including the Atlantic-Cape May WIB, the Hudson WIB and the Gloucester WIB.
- LPA continued staff development by making use of training offered by the LMI Training Institute and by others. New labor market analysts were sent to the appropriate level of LMI training. Staff attended “Understanding Federal Statistics” and “Applied Analyst” courses and an analyst attended Geographic Information Systems (GIS) training offered by the LMI Training Institute.

## **B. Customer Satisfaction Assessment**

The plan adopted for Program Year 2004 to measure customer satisfaction with labor market information consisted of designing and implementing direct-mail surveys, e-mail-based surveys, in-person surveys, web-based surveys and conference surveys. The purpose of these was to obtain feedback from employers and job seekers. Since the workforce community had provided valuable feedback and a significant response rate for the past two program years, the plan for this program year was to follow up with this group in the efforts for PY 2005. The summary sections below highlight the findings from the following PY 2004 survey activities: a direct-mail survey sent to the recipients of the *Employment & the Economy* newsletter; an e-mail based survey posted on the monthly labor market information (LMI) product update e-mail; an in-person presentation and survey distributed to the attendees at a statewide New Jersey Employer Council meeting; survey inserts in the *Projections 2012* and *New Jersey Occupational Wages* publications; web-based surveys for seven LMI products; and evaluation forms from the New Jersey State Data Center and the State Employment and Training Commission conferences.

### **1. Direct-mail Survey: *Employment & the Economy* Newsletter Recipients**

To measure customer satisfaction from the business community and other users, a written survey was developed and sent to the recipients of the quarterly *Employment & the Economy* newsletter. In May 2005, about 900 survey forms were mailed with a letter explaining the purpose of the survey, a sample page from the publication and a pre-paid envelope. A total of 110 recipients completed the surveys, and of these, a majority were satisfied with the newsletter, found it easy to understand, easy to use and met their needs. Almost two-thirds of the surveys were completed by government workers or administrators.

Almost one-half of the respondents indicated that they used the newsletter regularly or frequently. Over two-thirds of the respondents were not aware that the newsletter was available on-line. About the same percentage of respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the publication.

Comments about providing more detailed breakdowns and more complete information were noted by the respondents. Others commented that the newsletter was a good and useful publication. A recommendation from this survey includes evaluating detailed comments made by the respondents and incorporating changes, if possible, into the data provided in the newsletter. This is happening now, with changes to the narratives. Other changes will be implemented to reflect the needs of the audience.

## **2. E-mail-based Survey Posted on the LMI Product Update E-mail**

As part of continuing efforts to measure overall awareness of and satisfaction with state-produced LMI products, an e-mail-based customer survey link was posted on the March 2005 LMI product update e-mail that was sent to the 820 subscribers of this notification system. The survey included a list of 10 LMI products and asked the e-mail recipients to indicate whether they had used each product within the last six months. The subscribers included job seekers, the business community and the workforce community. This system allows LPA to notify subscribers monthly of updated or new LMI data, upcoming press releases and upcoming events.

The survey link was posted in a prominent location and included colorful graphics and a request for feedback; however, only 11 subscribers returned completed surveys. Because of the low response rate, conclusions about the usefulness of this LMI product based on the survey cannot be made.

## **3. In-person Presentation: New Jersey Employer Council**

In an attempt to reach out to employers, a customer survey was developed and distributed to the attendees of the New Jersey Employer Council's (NJEC) quarterly state council meeting in January 2005. The NJEC was established to give employers a direct line of communication to the Department of Labor and Workforce Development where they can discuss labor issues and voice suggestions for facilitating business. At this meeting, a presentation was given about labor market information products. Following this was a brief discussion about the department needing feedback from employers about state-produced LMI products. The survey included a list of 17 LMI products and asked the attendees if they were aware of each product and whether they had used each product within the last six months. A request was asked of the attendees to complete the customer survey that was distributed to them. Of the 39 attendees, a disappointing total of 14 surveys were returned by these attendees. This shows the difficulties we have been experiencing in trying to get feedback from employers/businesses, even when asked in-person to complete a short survey.

Verbal feedback from the attendees at the meeting included the need for the department to improve the marketing of the LMI products that are available and make employers aware of what the products can do for them. Of the attendees who completed the survey, most of individuals were aware of the LMI products. Of those who used the products within the last six months, a majority were satisfied with the information provided and found it helpful in assisting them in making informed business, training or other decisions. Overall, a majority of the respondents were satisfied with the products listed on the survey.



Comments from the respondents included that they were not sure when the data was derived and it was easier to get information from outside sources. Comments on improving products to better serve their needs were: providing query reports on the websites, simplifying the websites and improving the marketing of the LMI products to the business community.

#### **4. Publication Inserts: Projections 2012 and New Jersey Occupational Wages**

As part of the customer satisfaction efforts, a survey was developed and inserted in the first pages of two publications and postage-paid envelopes were provided. In March 2005, over 400 copies of *Projections 2012* were distributed to in-house department employees and other local and government agencies. In April 2005, nearly 400 copies of the *New Jersey Occupational Wages* publication were distributed in-house and to other state and local offices, in addition to a small number of attorneys. The response to the surveys was very disappointing. Five completed surveys were received for *Projections 2012* and two for *New Jersey Occupational Wages* publications.

Given the minimal response, conclusions about the level of satisfaction with these two LMI products based on the response cannot be made. Of the few responses received, the respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the information provided in these publications.

#### **5. Web-based Surveys**

To assess the level of satisfaction with the web-based labor market information, surveys were posted on the WNJPIN site for the following LMI products: occupational employment statistics, Census 2000 data, industry & occupational employment projections, labor force estimates, population estimates, employment and wage data, and Census data for affirmative action. The survey link was posted in a highlighted box for each of the seven products which the user would need to click on to launch the survey.

The surveys ran from October 2004 through March 2005. During this timeframe, a total of 50,041 visitors viewed these LMI product pages. A total of 31 completed surveys were received from various customers within the job seeker and business communities and other users. Although the number of completed surveys was quite low, one measure of the usefulness of an LMI on-line product is the number of visits. During the six-month timeframe that the LMI products were evaluated, the majority of these web pages were in the top 20 most popular LMI product pages among all the state-produced products available on-line as measured by the number of visits to each.

The data on surveys received show that over one-half of the returned surveys were for occupational employment statistics and for population estimates. All of the respondents who completed surveys for these two products found the information helpful in assisting them in decision making. Almost all of these respondents were satisfied with these two products. Other LMI products received insignificant numbers of responses.

Comments included requests that we provide the most up-to-date data, properly define various demographic categories, provide more local data and provide the ability to combine data from more than one county.

## **6. State Data Center Conference**

The 25<sup>th</sup> annual State Data Center Conference entitled “Renewing New Jersey’s Cities: Challenges & Opportunities” was held on December 2, 2004 at the Marriott at Lafayette Yard in Trenton. Approximately 125 people attended the conference, including planners, researchers, decision makers, economists and other individuals from the public and private sector. Participants were asked to complete an evaluation form and 44 surveys were returned. Most participants responded positively to the 2004 conference, the facility and its location, presentations and conference materials.

The first session, entitled “New Jersey Cities in the 2000s,” co-presented by James W. Hughes, Dean of the Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy, Rutgers University, and Joseph J. Seneca, Chair of the Governor’s Council of Economic Advisors and Professor at the Bloustein School, was rated the best of the conference sessions. The second session, entitled “Renewing New Jersey’s Cities: Challenges,” consisted of a panel of presenters and received the second highest overall rating. Following a lunch break, the sessions entitled “New Ways to Move Urban Markets,” presented by Andrew Reamer, Deputy Director, Urban Markets Initiative: Metropolitan Policy, Brookings Institution, and “Renewing New Jersey’s Cities: Opportunities,” consisting of another panel, received slightly lower ratings. A notable number of attendees left the conference prior to the last session. Topics recommended for future conferences included: data management and security, employment trends, demographics and economics, small business development and requests to have certain speakers from this year asked back.

## **7. State Employment and Training Commission Conference**

The New Jersey State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) held its conference, entitled “Re-Imagining the Future: Beyond Workforce Consolidation,” on December 14-15, 2004 at Trump Plaza in Atlantic City, NJ. The attendance at the two-day conference was approximately 650 including teachers, trainers, administrators, managers, WIB members, economists and people from both the public and private sectors.

A customer survey was developed and distributed for the session entitled “What’s New in Labor Market Information?” This workshop consisted of three presentations on the following topics: Local Employment Dynamics; Metropolitan Statistical Areas; and Local Area Unemployment Statistics. Following opening remarks by the session moderator Arthur O’Neal, SETC member, the three panelists provided updates on new labor market information products. Of the 25 individuals attending, 18 filled out surveys at the completion of the session.

Overall, participants had a positive response to the content and presentations of the LMI workshop. Generally, positive feedback was given about the information, session length, presenters, and overall satisfaction. A majority of the respondents indicated the information provided during the session would be useful to them in the future.

The Local Employment Dynamics session received the highest satisfaction rating, the Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS) session received the second highest percent of respondents who were satisfied with the presentation and the Metropolitan Statistical Areas session received a somewhat lower rating from the respondents.

Comments about the sessions included: a suggestion that the presenters discuss trends which would hold more interest and would be useful for the audience and that presenters need to liven-up the presentation since the subject matter is very dry and technical. As a result, we are encouraging presenters to join “Toastmasters” and enrolling them in training for presentation and Microsoft Power Point skills.

## **8. Recommendations for Improvement**

The ongoing committee of LMI producers and customer satisfaction staff members continues to meet to review survey findings, make recommendations to improve the quality of LMI products and devise ways of overcoming some of the observed deficiencies in those LMI products. Recommendations that have been implemented include a number of enhancements to products which are regularly published or which are periodically updated on the LWD websites.

Specific actions taken thus far include the following:

- LMI staff are reviewing hardcopy and on-line LMI products to assure that the data provides customers with the most detailed breakdowns and complete information possible;
- LMI staff are actively involved with the Office of Marketing in an effort by LWD to develop a marketing strategy for LMI products and services. Several of the comments received from the various surveys for PY 2004 have focused on improving the marketing of LMI products and we are working with the Office of Marketing to develop new and innovative strategies; and

- LMI staff are currently involved in the redesigning of the LWD websites. Comments received from respondents reiterate those from last program year about the difficulty in navigating around the current websites and the need for search options for specific data and query capabilities. The effort to re-engineer the entire website will resolve these issues and improve users' ability to access the information they need.