

# **Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) of the Texas Workforce Commission**

## **Annual Plan Narrative Statement of Work for the PY2005-06 Workforce Information Grant from the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration**

### **i. Introduction**

The activities funded by this grant will support the overall Texas workforce investment strategic plan, as approved by the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) and validated by the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC). In addition, activities planned under this grant will support the Governor's economic development efforts, multiple DOL/ETA initiatives, and support a range of customers delineated by DTI in their recent environmental scan report to the Assistant Secretary's Office, including employers, elected officials and policy makers, labor market intermediaries such as counselors, job placement specialists, teachers and caseworkers, workforce program planners, education and training providers, researchers and individual job seekers.

Three years ago the State of Texas embarked on a strategy for workforce development that demonstrates a major commitment to creating an employer-driven workforce development system, providing training and related workforce services to employers and jobseekers alike. Texas firmly believes that job seekers and employers can best be served by identifying those industrial and occupational areas that offer the greatest promise for employment and growth and then leveraging workforce funds to better align employer skill needs with worker availability. The Governor continues his commitment to targeting the six competitive clusters identified by the state legislature around which to target economic and workforce development activities. And while the Texas Governor's clusters align with many of the DOL/BRG industry sectors, it is noteworthy that labor market information has, and will continue to play a key role in operationalizing those clusters into job creation strategies.

Moreover, future growth opportunities for employers and jobs for workforce customers are increasingly tied to successful community-based economic development initiatives. In an increasingly complex global economy, both groups must have information upon which to make sound programmatic and personal career development decisions. Labor market information is being heavily relied upon to provide direction for all state workforce development initiatives. As such, it is the goal of the Texas state employment statistics system to provide decision-critical information for industry targeting, the identification of regional growth clusters and areas of job opportunity, information relating to the characteristics of jobs and workforce training needs, and other related information products and services to describe and convey the complexities of the state's workforce dynamics.

Just as employers use market research to identify and target customers, or as the armed forces uses reconnaissance to guide military campaigns, labor market information is the lifeblood needed to help guide employer human resource recruitment and retention policy and practices,

inform student educational choices, and guide workforce program initiatives. Therefore, the goals of the Texas state labor market information system must be to create products and services robust enough to describe all facets of a dynamic labor market, be flexible enough to assist a wide range of customers, and easily accessible so that every workforce participant can benefit. Such a system must identify data elements from a wide range of sources and create value added for customers by providing customer-appropriate context and delivery mechanisms for those data. Our information systems cannot just be about data, or even information. We must provide the insight and the intelligence to make labor market knowledge actionable in operationalizing optimal workforce development policies. These are the goals of the Texas employment statistics system and the framework for project activities proposed herein.

### **Background: The Texas LMI Business Model and Labor Market Intelligence**

The Texas economy continues to change markedly, creating an economic climate radically different from what Texans have known for the past several decades. A new level of economic and employment uncertainty has filled the void where job creation and job loss now occur simultaneously within the same industry, occupation or even employer. Once dominant agriculture and mining sectors in Texas have been surpassed by growth in knowledge industries such as telecommunications, semiconductor processing and various service-oriented business sectors.

Even though the knowledge or information economy is in full swing, recent job creation has been uneven. And while manufacturing still holds a revered place as an economic income and job creator, a far-ranging array of service industries has begun to dominate the economic landscape. Globalization is well underway with inexpensive communications and open consumer and production markets leading the way toward unfettered global trade and economic competition among nation-states and corporations alike. In this new marketplace--in technology, business practices, and product mix—change is the one constant. Many businesses are adapting well to the changing production and consumer marketplace and are reaching out to new customers with better and less expensive products than ever before. Others remain frozen in old ways, reluctant to adapt, intimidated by technology, uncertain about future business prospects, and in fear of changing practices or products that have historically proven successful.

These same forces are affecting communities, even entire regions, in the state of Texas. Texas is an excellent example of an area that has prospered taking advantage of natural resources to build engines of wealth creation and job growth. Whole towns have grown up around a single manufacturing plant. Some of these regions will continue to be able to take advantage of those natural resources and other comparative advantages. In other cases, the ability to diversify the industrial base, attract and retain key employers, and optimize worker skill sets will make a big difference in regional standards of living.

In the knowledge economy it is clear that growth flows from innovation, which in turn follows talent. Increasingly, to develop effective workforce development strategies and build regional economies, a state workforce agency must be able to understand the relationships between innovation and job creation, document the connections between talent and innovation, and help grow regional talent to feed the skill pipeline. Many of these connections are not well

documented, nor do they lend themselves to simple answers found conveniently in existing data systems. Simple descriptive statistics will not be enough to help business, elected officials and policymakers achieve these objectives. The labor market information system must offer these customers the value added context to make labor market data meaningful and actionable.

We believe the first step to effective implementation of these goals is making a fundamental paradigm shift in how we think about labor market information and the use of public monies for system development, maintenance and information dissemination. In these times of instant information access, we believe that John Naisbitt's quote from his book *Megatrends*, written 20 years ago, has never been more poignant. When he observed that as a nation, and as a society, we are "drowning in information but starved for knowledge" he might well have been thinking about the national LMI system. Thus, in Texas, our foundation principle is that LMI is not simply data. It is the combination of labor market and economic statistics-from any and all reliable source-, pertinent labor market and economic theory, and automated tools and techniques of analysis that result in the value-added result of *labor market intelligence*.

We are firmly committed to ETA's demand-driven business model, including how it applies to the collection, synthesis, creation, application and dissemination of labor market information. The six ETA workforce system strategic goals for PY2005 apply directly to the projects and activities presented in this LMI statement of work. We continue to align our activities with these goals. Specific examples include:

**1. Generate more current and local information-**

The Dashboard Indicators module of TIP provides information on new hires, job openings, job applicants, claimants and placements with an average lag of only 45 days. Beginning PY2005-06 we will explore mapping these point data sets to offer a spatial display that can be connected directly within the proximity of local One Stop offices.

**2. Deliver better analysis and more sophisticated interpretation-**

The biggest user complaint these days is not that they can't find data but what do the data say and how do they relate directly to issues at hand. Our newest Location Quotient module is an excellent example of meeting this need. The whole concept of comparative advantage is explained in an online technical assistance guide, including how industry clusters interface are built around regional economic growth poles. The software generates regional location quotients by industry, by cluster and by industry sector for all Texas Board regions over multiple time periods. For any given cluster within a region, with a short series of mouse clicks the user can see which detailed industries are cluster drivers and the contact information for employers comprising each industry.

**3. Shift to a skills focus-**

The Workforce division of TWC is emphasizing skills training along multiple places in the education and training pipeline. LMCI staff have a long history of using the O\*NET database to explore skills transferability. These two phenomena will meet in two automation projects proposed in this grant application.

**4. Further enhance information delivery-**

Every aspect of our operation is becoming increasingly web-enabled. But in addition to simply making more databases accessible on the web, we are making more of our applications scenario-driven. In essence, we are continually gathering the kinds of problem scenarios being identified by our customers and developing computerized applications that are directly pertinent to those

scenarios. Moreover, in addition to simply providing canned reports out of these applications, we are concentrating on allowing users to download the results in multiple formats to the data can be more easily integrated into various reports and presentations.

**5. Promote, strengthen and integrate the ability to use LMI throughout the system-**

In addition to sorting out the myriad data that are available on the web, LMCI has a commitment to educating users on the hows and whys of data-driven planning and informed career decision-making. Thus, we are continually engaged in in-service training and authoring users guides to educate our potential customers on the values of information-based decision-making. Examples in this year's project plan include the proposed re-write of *Connecting the Dots* and the authorship of various workforce development monographs.

**6. Stimulate competition and resource leveraging-**

Section II of this grant application discusses the many aspects of leveraging by LMCI. Our proposed projects to purchase several third-party data tools and databases, as well as optimize the use of software and data sets developed by other agency stakeholders and private vendors punctuate our commitment to making the best workforce information available to our customers regardless of the source.

## **Section I: A Description of the Texas Statewide Workforce System and Role of State Workforce Stakeholders**

To transform the workforce information system, ETA has continued to promote a new business model. Below we have listed each DOL/ETA foundation principle, along with Texas strategies and priorities for PY2005-06 for addressing each key issue.

### **Section IA. What process is used or followed 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?**

WIA provides that one of the functions of the state workforce investment board is to assist the Governor in the development of the statewide employment statistics system. 29 U.S.C. 2821(d)(8). In Texas, this function, as provided by WIA, is assigned for implementation and oversight to the TWC. 29 U.S.C. 2944(a)(5); Texas Labor Code 302.002(a)(14). *See also*, Letter to Ms. Katharine Abraham, Commissioner Bureau of Labor Statistics, from Texas Governor George W. Bush designating the Texas Workforce Commission as the state agency responsible for the statewide employment statistics system (November 9, 1998). Although TWIC serves as the state workforce investment board and is responsible for developing a comprehensive workforce development strategy, the strategy for the statewide employment statistics system is developed by TWC. Notwithstanding this delineation, TWC and TWIC work closely to maintain consistency for the Governor's overall strategic vision. In fact, guidelines for Board strategic planning are reviewed and approved by the TWIC, including the labor market plan. Since TWC commissioners are appointed by, and maintain a close relationship with, the Governor, TWC policy is always closely aligned with strategic directives of the Governor.

The majority of the objectives of the Texas state workforce strategic plan developed by the Texas State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) emphasize efforts to enhance collaboration

among key stakeholders with a common goal of preparing a world-class workforce. The creation and use of labor market information does not fall under a single objective within the plan. Rather, it presumes that LMI is ubiquitous throughout as a means to make better-informed education, career development and regional planning decisions. However, within the plan there are six key objectives that clearly apply to the state's labor market information system:

1. Ensure collaboration among partners in the workforce development system by promoting a single, consistent and reliable source of labor market information.
2. Meet current and emerging needs of Texas employers for a globally competitive workforce
3. Span a continuum from career planning and preparation to career development and enhancement
4. Establish a single web-based gateway for the system's primary customers
5. Achieve integration of interagency systems and information sharing
6. Increase collaboration between workforce, economic development and education

Each of these objectives will be addressed multiple times through the various planned project activities under the scope of this proposal.

### **Section IB. How will the statewide workforce information system support the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan for state and local workforce development?**

Given the extreme diversity of Texas labor markets and scarce workforce development dollars, Texas has made a significant commitment to targeting training dollars and activities to demand industries and occupations. Each local workforce board is required to work through a planning process that yields a documented and justified list of target industries and occupations. These targets serve as focal points of ES placement activity and govern the use of WIA workforce training activities. To facilitate the targeting process, the TWC has expended WIA statewide administrative funds to develop an Internet-based software system called SOCRATES. Originally developed by the TWC CDR unit and now a cornerstone product of LMCI, SOCRATES principles and processes have been thoroughly integrated into the WIA planning guidelines. LMCI staff serve as subject matter experts both in the crafting of the planning guidelines and as reviewers of regional plans submitted to the State of Texas. Through a collaborative agreement between the WIA Workforce division and LMCI, final regional narrative reports generated within SOCRATES by local Boards are acceptable for minimum strategic labor market plans.

### **Section IC. How are LMCI Core Products Consistent with the Vision of the Texas Governor?**

In Texas, the TWIC serves as the state workforce investment board and is responsible for developing a comprehensive workforce development strategy. Guidelines for Board strategic planning are reviewed and approved by the TWIC, including the labor market plan. Since TWC commissioners are appointed by, and maintain a close relationship with, the Governor, TWC

policy is always closely aligned with strategic directives of the Governors Office.

Moreover, LMCI staff drafts the TWC Texas state economic overview or “environmental scan”; a document which provides the economic underpinnings for program policy. Communicated to key TWC agency and Board staff alike, this document highlights significant labor market trends around which workforce policy and program operations can be designed. Thus, each major stakeholder starts with a common foundation of economic and demographic phenomena that encourages broader cooperation and integrated goal setting.

## **Section ID. How does LMCI Consult with the State Workforce Agency and State Workforce Investment Board to Determine Customer Needs for LMI?**

It is cliché, but not inappropriate to point out that Texas is a large state. There are 28 local workforce boards, each providing some core services but with different priorities based on their unique macroeconomic conditions, employer community and jobseeker mix. Some of our Boards have developed their own information systems; others have conducted their own job vacancy surveys or engaged consultants to do so. We believe our job with all our customer groups is a two-way street; both learning what information they need, at what level of detail and mode of access, and educating them about the availability of data, the strengths and limitations of existing data sets and approaches to analyzing data that yield meaningful and actionable results.

We take the responsibilities of this two way street seriously. In these times of increased labor market uncertainty, where the impacts of globalization, changing business practices and technology substitution are significantly affecting patterns and levels of job creation, training is an important part of our value-added approach. During PY2004 LMCI staff conducted 108 presentations and workshops throughout the state. Almost a quarter of those related to communicating bigger picture trends affecting the state and regional economies. For PY2005-06 we will continue our emphasis on value-added, scenario-based training to empower our various customer groups to take advantage of the many LMCI automated tools and datasets available.

The LMCI department has multiple avenues for engendering feedback from various user groups. Chief among these sources has been the annual LMI conference. LMCI staff will have multiple sessions at the TWC State Workforce Conference; including three continuous days of informal presentations associated with our conference display booth. LMCI staff also will continue to conduct a quarterly LMI Users Group called the Employment Statistics Committee (ESC), consisting of planners and business services unit (BSU) specialists from local Boards. The agenda for each meeting mixes staff presentations on recent LMI developments with discussions on practical applications of LMCI products and solicitations for suggestions for new product development or modifications. LMCI staff also make frequent forays into the regions providing training sessions, technical assistance or staffing conference booths. Each of these outings provides an opportunity to solicit feedback on products and services.

Even when not invited to present, LMCI staff attend various user group conferences such as the Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM), National Alliance of Business (NAB), Texas Counselors Association and all Texas Education Agency (TEA) counselor conferences to

become more familiar with their respective workforce information needs. All LMCI software products have electronic feedback loops allowing users to contact appropriate LMCI staff for problem solving or simply offering suggestions. Finally, LMCI conducts occasional direct customer surveys, such as that for Texas CARES this year, for individual products to ascertain the value-added experienced by users.

And we will continue to listen. The topic of how to effectively conduct employer outreach has become an increasingly important topic in this new demand-driven system. Thus this past year, for our local board Business Services Unit (BSU) staff, we collaborated with one of our workforce boards to develop a chapter in a new BSU training manual on the use of several of our key automated tools, namely Texas Industry Profiles, WIN and TRACER. We will continue to make modifications to the SOCRATES regional planning software to match policy changes and make it easier for local Board staff to customize their final reports. We will monitor web activity from our various systems to see not just what users say they want but where they actually spend their time on-line. We want our workforce board customers to consider labor market information, from all sources, as critical to program planning—not as a compliance section in a state-mandated annual planning document.

## **Section IE. What is the Broad Strategic Approach for Workforce Information Delivery to Principal Customers?**

The name of the game in providing the kind of labor market intelligence to which we aspire is identifying where LMCI can add value to our customers. Key to this value-added approach is better access and more robust interpretation of workforce information. For too many years LMI shops focused on providing data products without understanding how labor market information could be used to:

- ✓ facilitate workforce program planning,
- ✓ engage in problem solving as regards workforce development issues, and
- ✓ examine how labor exchange and employer outreach efforts could be improved.

The valuable, symbiotic relationship between the BLS fed-state cooperative programs and ETA One Stop LMI grants forms an excellent foundation for state LMI services; but it is only a foundation. The value-added that can be achieved by leveraging other data resources, other program dollars and other workforce and education partners should be the ultimate goal of a state LMI system. In Texas, we start with producing or acquiring diverse and high quality data sets. But is this not our end goal. We are asking the questions:

- (1) what answers do these data offer?,
- (2) what additional questions do they cause us to ask?,
- (3) how can we add value through data manipulation and by providing context through labor market theory and research?,
- (4) how can we best communicate the value-added we identify by exploring which display or dissemination options best fit the most likely customer groups?, and
- (5) how do we couple one data set with others to address specific workforce and economic planning issues?

To achieve our value-added goals we are partnering with numerous sources. We are expanding our connections with private concerns, such as Global Insights and the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank, and engaging in activities such as external review of our long-term industry projections.

We are working closely with other divisions within the Texas Workforce Commission, most notably the Workforce Development Division and the workintexas.com staff, to better integrate our knowledge of external labor market conditions with their knowledge of internal workforce service activities. We believe there is significant value-added to be achieved by linking information on regional labor market dynamics with applicants and openings data received through our workintexas.com electronic labor exchange system, data on UI claimant activity, and information received through workforce participant follow-up. We have created a Dashboard Indicators module within our Texas Industry Profiles website that provides eight measures of agency interface with the regional economy. We are linking labor market outcomes data with targeted industries lists and data on employment growth to assess the degree to which Boards placements are coming in areas of regional demand. These efforts help make labor market information integral to workforce development operations and not relegated to isolated number crunching.

We have also partnered with other state agencies, including acquiring data from our Texas Department of Public Safety to match against UI wage records to assess residence and age of job placements. We have negotiated new hire data from our Attorney Generals Office to assess hiring patterns by industry. We pull data from our Higher Education Coordinating Board to show students and motivated jobseekers which postsecondary courses they can take to enhance their employability skills sets and to which institutions they can go to access those programs. Collectively, combining such data sets, and making them available to the public in multiple media, allows us to address specific issues with high value added intelligence.

There are tremendous demands for workforce information, including customers within the TWC and the local workforce boards and external customers such as employers and those involved directly and indirectly in public and higher education. Some of these customers want routine statistical data without interpretation, while others insist on value-added in the form of narrative explanation or analytical tools. Thus the LMCI delivery strategy must be flexible enough to accommodate the passive inquirer and robust enough to provide value-added workforce solutions.

The LMCI delivery strategy can be communicated in three dimensions; one dimension is whether the customer is active, meaning one who desires interaction and interpretation of data from LMCI staff, or passive, identified as those who simply want to download data or look up a series of statistics through the Internet. The second dimension is whether the customer is internal, in this case associated with the Texas Workforce Network, or external, including the business community, public education, or individual jobseekers. A third dimension is to offer both high-tech and low tech solutions, depending on whether the customer is computer savvy or prefers hardcopy publications or telephone contact. Our goal is to have delivery options to address each possible customer dimension.

<b>Passive Internal</b>	<b>Passive External</b>
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High tech	Low tech	High tech	Low tech
<b>Active Internal</b>		<b>Active External</b>	
High tech	Low tech	High tech	Low tech

For passive customers, the Internet offers an incredible opportunity to get information quickly at any time. LMCI provides general employment statistics through the TRACER software system and structured workforce planning information through SOCRATES and Texas Industry Profiles. Access to LMCI hardcopy products is largely available for viewing or downloading through both LMCI web sites. For active customers, LMCI staff are available by telephone and e-mail, as well as field visits. Both TRACER and especially SOCRATES offer analytical tools to massage data for specific workforce applications. The new Texas Industry Profiles software similarly provides such analytical tools. For internal customers, LMCI offers workforce program-specific information, such as program follow-up, and data critical for resource allocations.

For external customers, LMCI provides a wide array of information describing Texas regional labor market dynamics, including our most popular offerings of short and long-term employment projections and occupational wage data. Occupational wage data, a favorite request of employers, is now available through our WIN system at [www.texaswages.com](http://www.texaswages.com). Although the Internet is our best tool for high tech information delivery, LMCI also provides multiple CD ROM based products such as Texas CARES and the Digital Career Video Show, and a complete product line of hardcopy publications and a toll-free career information Hotline for those without Internet access or who prefer to use the telephone. These are just a few examples of the LMCI information delivery strategy. As new products and services are developed we will use the rubric of these three customer dimensions to provide the most complete coverage possible.

## **Section IF. How is Workforce Information Delivered as Core Services through the One Stop Delivery System?**

LMCI has excellent relationships with both state office workforce staff and regional Board personnel. The Texas Workforce Network (the 'Network' is the Texas workforce services delivery system that includes state office staff, local Boards and contractors) is considered primary, internal customers and as such command substantial staff attention and strong consideration in new product development initiatives. In addition to software tools such as SOCRATES that are targeted expressly to address Board planning requirements, LMCI staff provide on-going customer assistance to Board and workforce center staff on a wide range of topics, including employer targeting, regional planning and site location for economic development. Each new product development initiative takes into consideration the information needs of workforce center staff, either in direct customer assistance or high level strategic planning. Last years' release of the publication *Pathways for Personal Independence* is an excellent example of LMCI products designed with a purpose; in this case the identification of possible career paths emanating from typical entry level positions common to TANF Choices customers. Complimentary copies of these publications, and announcements of new software product releases, are routinely sent to all workforce centers and additional single copies are available free of charge. For large or bulk orders, LMCI charges a cost reimbursable fee to offset

continuous printing, shipping and handling costs. The state workforce conference and the various state education conferences provide additional venues for statewide information sharing and product display and delivery.

Gone are the days when a “core product” could be a single publication, meeting the needs of a single audience. Texas has determined that we have a core of information products and delivery mechanisms that are system foundation products. We could easily argue that many of our most popular monographs, such as our Texas Job Hunters Guide, are system core products. However, despite new project initiatives such as Texas Industry Profiles, and long-time favorites such as Texas CARES, there are three LMCI activities that stand out as critical to our LMI system because they offer the widest array of information services to the broadest range of customers.

One of those items is the state and regional long-term projections. However we’re not referring to a single publication or database but rather to an entire process. The projections cause us to continuously look forward at our changing industrial structure. As importantly, the occupational projections program is powered by the industry-occupation micro-matrix initiative, the core of which yields the industry-occupation matrix. This matrix in turn allows us to draw connections between industries, clusters and employers on the one hand and occupations, KSAs, skill standards, educational program offerings and learning objectives on the other. In addition, our desire to generate accurate long-term projections causes us to revisit the change factor files within the matrix and conduct independent research on emerging and evolving occupations, changing business practices and technology implementation issues that might affect industry staffing patterns. Thus, the projections are more than just a final deliverable. They provide a rubric for research on multiple issues relating to emerging workforce dynamics.

The second core product is our TRACER2 Internet-based LMI system. As an Internet tool, TRACER2 is a general LMI inquiry system that allows any customer to access demographic, labor force, employment and related data anytime, from any place. During PY2003 LMCI migrated the hosting of TRACER2 in-house to increase our flexibility to add features and keep data current. TRACER2 is also our primary dissemination vehicle for the ALMIS database, making it a noteworthy core product. During PY2005-06 LMCI staff will continue to modify that system to accommodate changing customer data needs, new data development and more effective links to related information systems.

Lastly, while there are many other LMCI information products that are very important to specific customer groups, for workforce and economic development purposes our Texas Industry Profiles (TIP) software is the core product that connects us directly to frontline workforce program planning and operations. We have migrated many of the most frequently used functionalities from our SOCRATES software and combined them with new analytical tools to create a software system that is very useful in dealing with issues relating to regional economic development. We’ve maintained the SOCRATES Automated Targeting Process for those Boards accustomed to using that tool to determine target industries and occupations for prioritizing the delivery of occupational training. But in addition, the TIP software more thoroughly answers critical economic development questions ranging from regional clusters identification, the determination of regional comparative advantage to answering questions relating to the availability of skilled labor supply. Texas Industry Profiles provides many tools of regional

labor market analysis, such as interactive shift-share and location quotient modules, interactive manipulation of the various parts of the ALMIS database and the Texas industry-occupation matrix, an on-line portal to the ALMIS employer contacts database, detailed county-specific narrative profiles. Most importantly, the Texas Industry Profiles software, as with SOCRATES, is primarily funded by WIA statewide activities dollars, representing an example of the kind of financial leverage, data leverage, and program integration envisioned by ETA.

**Section IG. Describe the LMCI Customer Consultation and Satisfaction Assessment Method(s) to be Used to Collect and Interpret Customer Satisfaction Information and Document the Principal Customers to be Consulted.**

LMCI has multiple means to conduct outreach and consult with customers. These feedback loops do not exist in a vacuum. They are organized to keep LMCI staff apprised of customer perspectives and underpin future product development.

Thus, in any continuous program improvement process, outreach efforts exist to concomitantly inform the public of products and services and to solicit their input. When such feedback indicates that LMCI is addressing topics of need, activities in those areas can be enhanced or expanded. When feedback indicates that a void exists or that current products or services are not satisfactorily addressing specific needs, activities can be undertaken to improve such situations.

This process of continuous program improvement exists in a collaborative environment. LMCI staff have a responsibility to be knowledgeable in labor market data and data analysis and to communicate to the user community where strengths, weaknesses and limitations exist in the system. The user community has the responsibility to openly communicate their perceived workforce information needs, whether solicited or unsolicited. Only through this collaborative process can the system improve.

As in the case of passive and active customers, LMCI will engage in a combination of proactive and passive approaches to soliciting customer feedback. LMCI analysts record questions asked and responses provided into an ACCESS database. During the PY this database will be broken down into groupings that reflect the preponderance of user questions. Over 10,000 responses have been recorded over the past eighteen months. Analysis of the responses will provide insights into the most prevalent questions asked, the types of information items sent most often and reveal those areas that could be better addressed with new products, data elements or reformatted delivery vehicles.

All LMCI web based applications will include web metrics for user hits, as well as web demographics and additional information on which applications or functionalities users actually engage most frequently. Counts of information disseminated, numbers of inquiries addressed and type of inquiry will help determine user interest and guide product development efforts.

On the proactive front, LMCI will continue to engage the business community through presentations at local workforce Boards and other venues. We will continue to operate

specialized customer satisfaction surveys and proactively consult with LWDB executive directors. We will continue our local workforce board staff outreach by meeting with our Employment Statistics Committee (ESC), a group whose membership is drawn from the ranks of local workforce board planners and data analysts. For PY2004-05 we are conducting a web-based customer satisfaction survey on the use of Texas CARES. Questions selected for this survey are intended to yield actionable information to assist in product improvement rather than simply customer impressions. Other processes for gathering information may be implemented as they are appropriate or as they are needed to fully assess customer satisfaction. Such methods will be consistent with those recommended in the *Customer Satisfaction Made Easy* monograph distributed by the Workforce Information Council.

### **Section IH. Summarize Customer Satisfaction Findings from PY2004 and How that Knowledge is Being Used to Drive PY2005 Projects**

PY2003-04 was a transition year for the entire workforce system in Texas. Reacting to a call from our Governor to better align workforce and economic development, local workforce board staff were clamoring for information that better portrayed the dynamics within regional labor markets and how those dynamics can affect employer recruitment and retention. LMCI has stepped up in several ways, including: 1) serving as project officer for the GIS-based Sites On Texas system to assist Boards in understanding their local demographic strengths and how those strengths compare to other regions, 2) participating in the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) and Business Employment Dynamics (BED) consortia to access new data sets that explain more of the dynamics associated with employment and population movement, 3) began work on Texas Industry Profiles, a software package providing detailed industry data aimed at assisting in regional industrial recruitment, and 4) completed a series of guides and training sessions explaining economic development concepts, such as clusters. This outreach effort is designed to assist Board staff in knowing how and where they can leverage WIA resources in the regional economic development process.

For the TWC BY2006 statewide WIA planning purposes, our Workforce division staff revisited the process by which local Boards targeted training activities. As a part of these discussions, Workforce staff asked LMCI staff to explain the current targeting process, its strengths and limitations, and how it could be modified to place a greater emphasis on regional transferable skills identification. LMCI responded in several ways, including: 1) participating in the drafting of a best practice targeting guidance document, 2) modifying the SOCRATES system to better match current planning expectations, 3) proposing a new, automated approach to target training needs that relies less on the identification of specific occupations in demand as it does addresses the skill needs of various industry clusters. This current grant application includes two project activities that will explore operationalizing these proposals.

PY2004-05 was also a transition year for LMCI in terms of staff restructuring, workload realigning and prioritizing. The primary reason for the merging of Career Development Resources (CDR) and the Labor Market Information (LMI) department was in recognition that our customers expressed a degree of confusion as to which department provided which product or service. Indeed, although there was already considerable data sharing among the departments

internally, we still presented a dual face to the external world. The reorganization, proposed jointly by the LMI and CDR Director, was largely in response to this customer feedback. As a result, the new LMCI department presents a more unified look to both internal and external customers, has allowed us to leverage financial resources from multiple sources, and has resulted in much improved staff synergies and cross-pollination which has significantly improved overall product innovation and productivity.

The merger between the CDR and LMI departments continues to take place at many levels. Many of our customers have told us that we provide excellent tools but there are so many of them, and at so many various web addresses, that they are easily confused. Moreover, our users want to be able to locate our web tools to quickly answer pending issues or scenarios—not just to see page after page of statistics. While the majority of LMCI software products have already been designed to address specific issues or problems, it is increasingly clear that finding the right tool for the job is a problem. To address this issue, work began during PY2004-05 to create a single web portal that will allow users to find all our various software applications in a single location, utilizing both a keyword and a scenario-based inquiry process.

Internally, review is ongoing regarding the types of routine questions answered by our staff and our ability to offer automated solutions to those questions. As such, we hope to minimize through automation the amount of time it takes to answer various routine questions and thus free up those staff resources to engage in more complex, value-added analyses.

On another front, despite a CD ROM install base of over 3,000 sites, many of our customers are increasingly requesting that our Texas CARES system be migrated to the Internet. We conducted a CARES user survey (results pending) during PY2004 to affirm that. Until funding could be identified to create a web-based Texas CARES system, we began developing our newest features as online applications. Our two newest feature additions, the Reality Check budget Calculator and our High School Graduation Planner are both on-line applications that can be launched from within the CD ROM version of CARES. For PY2005-06 we secured funding to migrate Texas CARES to the Internet by PY2007.

## **Section II. Texas LMCI Core Products and Services Grant and Project Deliverables**

Section II of this application describes the core workforce information products and services proposed by LMCI, serving as the Texas workforce information grant recipient. Not every product or service listed will be completed within PY2005. Several proposed activities are either on going or represent forays into new arenas whose deliverable horizon stretches into PY2006 and PY2007. However, as a blueprint for current and future LMCI staff projects, the following list represents our program priorities.

### **Data and Financial Leverage**

For the PY2005 grant application, ETA has requested that each recipient highlight planned areas of data and financial resource leverage. This requirement is consistent with our pre-existing philosophy. We describe the LMCI role as one of value-added information intermediary with a

charge to understand and communicate the changing dynamics of the Texas labor market. As such, we are eager to exploit information resources from a multitude of sources and take advantage of other funding pools whose expenditure either parallels or mandates our products and services.

One of the major reasons the TWC LMCI department was created was to achieve the kind of leverage and synergy envisioned by ETA under the One Stop LMI grant. The Texas CARES initiative is an excellent example of both dollar and data leverage as WIA First Generation funds are being used to migrate that career information delivery system to the Internet. Our Career Orientation Training initiative to teach school personnel how to communicate labor market realities to students is similarly funded by WIA First Generation dollars. WIA Statewide Activities monies fund the SOCRATES and Texas Industry Profiles systems. The Reality Check Budget calculator was funded by Perkins section 118 monies and subsequently revamped to include a Family Plan page to make the tool more useful for TANF case managers. LMCI staff are participating in workgroups designed to organize secondary education courses into career clusters. These career clusters are, in turn, used to guide local One Stop occupational training options for dealing with out-of-school youth. The examples of both data and financial leverage are too many to enumerate them all.

LMCI will serve as the section 118 designee under the U.S. Department of Education Perkins grant, continue to manage the BLS Fed-State Cooperative programs and we will operate a toll-free career information Hotline using funds from the Texas Education Agency. And while we must account in silo fashion for funds received under each grant, it is our goal to create a seamless labor market information system with integrated data elements and the synergy that data leveraging can produce.

Many of the information products and automated services that will be offered through the LMCI department for PY2005-06 will be funded from non-ETA LMI funds. Moreover, many of our proposed activities will represent maintenance or enhancements of existing products or services. LMCI staff will employ ETA LMI grant funds to support staff, purchase data and capital equipment, and conduct services that will contribute to the gestalt of our labor market intelligence system.

Our desire to leverage the ETA grant resources also means the identification of information products that can best be produced through subcontract agreements or MOUs. LMCI staff serve as the project manager for the Sites On Texas GIS system; a software package funded by the TWC designed to provide comparison demographic data across communities for purposes of industrial recruitment. It made little sense to reinvent a similar package, especially given the expense associated with providing detailed, forecasted demographic data at the census block level presented within a GIS environment. Instead of replicating this product, LMCI staff served on the competitive procurement committee and now serve as program administrators.

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

### **1a. Update and maintain ALMIS database**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The ALMIS database will continue to serve as a core set of data files from which we will design, display and disseminate the most frequently requested data items. The CDR/LMI merger makes it easier to put populate both demand and supply side variables in the ALMIS database. All tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the ALMIS Database Consortium will be populated and maintained.

Staff assigned to work on the ALMIS Database activity will coordinate the ALMIS initiative in Texas with the ALMIS Database Consortium. In Texas, the ALMIS database is a critical data bucket for core data items but it is significantly augmented by the SOCRATES database. To maximize the use of both data structures LMCI staff will work to reduce any existing redundancies. In addition, we will take full advantage of the ALMIS Employer Database by formatting the Texas files and integrating them into the on-line SOCRATES, Texas Industry Profiles (TIP), and TRACER2 applications. We will also disseminate a copy of the full national CD ROM sets provided by InfoUSA to all Texas local workforce board areas (LWDA).

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-This is a DOL/ETA required deliverable. Most customers do not know about the ALMIS database since it is primary a “behind-the-scenes” driver for many LMCI automated products.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- The ALMIS database is essential to providing access to labor market data in Texas. It is essentially the engine for the TRACER web application. In addition, it is the primary source of occupational information for jobseekers using the workintexas.com system. As jobseekers express interest in one of more occupations, they are send directly to TRACER2 to access more occupational information.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- Since the ALMIS database is a primary input file to other electronic display engines and not a direct product to the outside world, the primary customer is our own internal TRACER2 staff. However, given the breadth of information within the ALMIS database, one can argue that indirectly the principal customers include, but are not limited to, jobseekers, employers, economic development entities, the media, academia, consultants, career counselors, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, businesses, local and state government, planners, educational institutions, policy makers, people transitioning from one job to another, and the general public.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-Populate required core tables periodically, as data are available, through July 2006. Core tables will be populated no later than 14 days after data updates. As of September 2005, roughly 80 percent of the Texas ALMIS data base structure had already been converted to version 2.3. We will be entirely converted to version 2.3 by the end of PY2005-06.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- The database will be updated as new data becomes available, in most cases on a monthly or quarterly basis. It will be compliant with the latest version of the ALMIS database and serve as the backbone of the TRACER Internet

application. The database will be updated monthly, quarterly, and annually depending on the availability of the specific data items.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-* ALMIS database maintenance requires LMCI staff costs only. Estimated Cost:

LMCI Staff	\$172,155
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$172,155

**1b. TRACER2 maintenance, updates, enhancements. Produce narrative and graphic updates to coincide with monthly release date**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-* TRACER2 will continue to be the primary on-line dissemination vehicle for the ALMIS database. Effective last program year LMCI began hosting the TRACER2 program on internal LMI servers, thus saving money on external hosting. Those savings were incorporated into the purchase of increased bandwidth for LMCI servers to accommodate the increased traffic brought on by our strategic integration with the new workintexas.com labor exchange system. TRACER2 will also continue to serve as the primary electronic dissemination medium for the monthly release of employment and unemployment data. We will use tools in TRACER2 to build graphs and tables to better communicate context of each monthly release.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service-* Customers have applauded the TRACER2 tool through all feedback loops. Customers have routinely asked for the ability to access critical LMI series for grant writing, etc. whose timetables may transcend normal business hours. Due to easy on-line access LMCI dissemination staff now have the option to refer callers directly to their data through TRACER2 and thus reduce the amount of time needed to address each call. Other callers who traditionally want to speak to a staff person are growing more comfortable with the self-service environment offered through TRACER2. This frees LMCI dissemination staff to conduct other value-added activities.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* Data elements in TRACER2 allow WIA planners and One Stop staff to enhance job search and career counseling activities. Regional employment data facilitate environmental scans which help align training offerings to regional labor market demand.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable-* TRACER 2 is designed as our primary general purpose automated LMI delivery system. As such, customers would include, but not be limited to, jobseekers, employers, economic development entities, the media, academia, consultants, career counselors, local workforce development boards, One Stop centers, businesses, local and state government, planners, educational institutions, and the general public.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable-* Customers will have 24/7 access to all LMCI labor market information series.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable-* TRACER2 is currently live and



operational from LMCI servers and will remain so throughout the program year. Monthly updates of the system will coincide with release day for BLS LAUS program data. Updates of articles, special analyses and employment time series will also coincide with the monthly release schedule.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000*-All hardware and telecommunications costs associated with migrating TRACER2 into the LMCI hosting environment were funded from PY2003-04 grant dollars. Monthly telecommunications charges will be a part of our budget but they do not meet the capital expense parameters of this question. Estimated Cost:

LMCI Staff	\$50,368
Telecommunications costs	\$7,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$57,368

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

### **2a. Begin work on the 2004-2014 Texas and LWDA long-term employment projections.**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The 2002-2012 projections were completed and disseminated in April 2005. Long-term projections have become a staple in the LMCI product cupboard. They are instrumental in identifying occupations in demand and are used by the boards to identify targeted occupations for establishing training programs.

LMCI will begin work on producing long-term industry and occupational projections for Texas and its 28 sub-state areas for a time period of 2004 to 2014 to coincide with the National projections. Likely completion date for the Texas 2014 projections is the late Fall 2006 or early Winter 2007. The projections will again be based on NAICS and SOC coding structures. State projections will be submitted in accordance with the instructions to be issued by the Projections Consortium.

The 2002-2012 employment projections will continued to be disseminated via the LMCI web page, end-user applications such as TRACER2, SOCRATES, Texas Industry Profiles and via e-mail in electronic format, on request. Employment projections will be included in the ALMIS Database. They are currently available for downloading in spreadsheet format from within TRACER2. When complete, LMCI staff will submit the projections data for public dissemination following the procedures established by the Projections Workgroup and the Projections Managing Partnership. The LMCI lead projections staff will continue to participate in the national micro-matrix projections workgroup as a means to keep Texas at the forefront of national methodological developments.

Employment projections will also be available in hardcopy, including a narrative analysis, tables with rankings, and a description of the methodology. Employment projections will be available on the ACINet (ETA web site) and the state projections web page. Employment projections will be available in SOCRATES, a web tool for local boards to produce target occupations, in both tabular and graphical display formats.

Work will continue in the production of short-term industry forecasts for Texas and its sub-state areas with an emphasis on six to eighteen months forecast horizons. Thus we will focus on the 2005-2007 horizon. Staff will review and assess short-term projections internally and distribute on a limited trial basis to ascertain the intuitive relationship between forecasts and indigenous regional wisdom. If pilot review projects are successful, short-term forecasts will be integrated into the LMCI web presence. The forecasts are based on the NAICS coding structure and will be generated using the national projections software package.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-The mere fact that the projections program is one of only two required deliverables under this grant and that there remains a federally supported methodology uniform for all states tells us that industry and occupation projections is a high priority data element for all workforce customers. This is especially true in Texas where the demand for employment projections is second only to occupational wage data in terms of most requested data items. The LMCI Department has advised the executive director and a senior policy analyst at the Texas Workforce Investment Council (TWIC) on this initiative and received their support. The Employment Statistics Committee, comprised of local board planners, supports the availability of short-term projections.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*-The state strategic plan emphasizes the need to meet current and emerging needs of Texas employers for a globally competitive workforce. Long-term projections are instrumental in identifying occupations in demand and are used by the Boards to identify targeted occupations for establishing training programs. The strategic plan also promotes the development of policies, services and information resources that allow current and future workers span the continuum from career planning to career enhancement. The projections program is a critical component of any forward-looking career development system. They provide a reality check to the process of career exploration for those seeking to better align their career goals and future earnings aspirations with their chosen path of educational preparation.

Short-term projections have the potential to provide information on industries in demand over the coming two-year period. They could potentially be of value in guiding immediate job placement or “Work First” demand-driven referral activity. This product can impact training curriculum in the short-term for local areas. However, due to the tenuous nature of short-term projections in this volatile global economy, training providers would be discouraged from using these forecasts exclusively to guide large capital-intensive training program investments.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- The ultimate users would include, but not be limited to, jobseekers, employers, economic development entities, the media, academia, consultants, career counselors, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, businesses, local and state government, planners, educational institutions, policy makers, people transitioning from one job to another, and the general public.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-Labor market analysis is inherently a forward-looking process, especially for those engaged in planning training programs that seek to be responsive to evolving regional labor market demands. The projections program

provides a guidepost against which to gauge future training offerings, including capital equipment and facilities investments. Industry projections provide employers with a macroeconomic sense of growing markets, either as future customers or suppliers. Where occupational skills can be practiced in more than one industry the projections offer job seekers, whether unemployed or incumbent workers, information about alternate job sites and which industries, and thus which employers, are most likely to offer future job potential

Occupational employment projections offer career changers and students pondering postsecondary education a glimpse of likely trends, a sense of whether occupational opportunities are likely to increase or decline, and relative estimates of the number of job openings that are likely to be created. As importantly, the projections, in tandem with other data elements such as occupational wages, job tenure and benefits data, provide a holistic view of regional labor markets to guide individual and program decision-making. Expanding or relocating employers can establish a sense of projected labor availability in a region, thus aiding in a variety of economic development decisions.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-LMCI projections staff will begin building appropriate state and regional employment time series data sets during the summer and fall of 2005. Future timeframes are contingent on the release of the national data files and the future of the national micro-matrix products. Based on past experiences we do not anticipate completion and release of the 2004-2014 projections until late Fall 2006 or early Winter 2007.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- Estimated Cost:

LMCI Staff	\$306570	
Publication printing	\$6,250	
Total Cost for Deliverable:		\$312,820

**2b. Integrate projections into all LMCI software applications**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The projections program has many outputs, all of which are critical to the veracity of LMCI information systems and our ability to address customer needs. Thus, although we will produce a hardcopy publication detailing our 2002-2012 projections, the primary delivery vehicle for the projections will be our automated systems. The actual projections will be incorporated into the TRACER2 and SOCRATES systems, as well as integrated into the iOSCAR and SOCRATES occupational profiles modules. The projections and the industry-occupation matrix will be integrated into the Texas Industry Profiles system in various places, not the least of which will be the Labor Availability Estimator.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Although there is always interest in a projections publication, increasingly our customers want to be able to view the projections on-line. More importantly, they want to be able to sort and analyze the data in many different ways and download the data to integrate into their own analyses or information systems. Providing data on-line within automated delivery systems meets this need.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* As discussed previously, the projections are a critical part of the strategic goals of addressing the State's emerging labor force trends and needs. The integration of the data itself into value-added automated delivery systems simply ensures wider access and more meaningful interpretation of those data.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable-*Not unlike the projections themselves, the ultimate users of automated tools which display the projections would include, but not be limited to, jobseekers, employers, economic development entities, the media, academia, consultants, career counselors, local workforce development boards, one-stop centers, businesses, local and state government, planners, educational institutions, policy makers, people transitioning from one job to another, and the general public.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable-* Widespread release of the state and regional employment projections will serve as a common baseline of discussion for policy formulation within the Texas Workforce Network.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable-* By the end of the first quarter of PY2005-06 LMCI staff will have integrated the 2012 industry and occupational projections data into all LMCI automated tools.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-*  
Estimated Cost:

LMCI Staff	\$13,699
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$13,699

## **2c. Pursue emerging and evolving occupations research activities**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-*Emerging and evolving occupations (EEO) research is an important contribution to the understanding of Texas labor markets. LMCI staff will again prepare at least one funding proposal to the TWC Workforce Division to support EEO research. Staff will seek out and reply to other funding opportunities as they are identified. In the meantime, staff will collect pertinent information on EEO research activities as conducted by other parties and seek to integrate pertinent findings into related LMCI publications; not the least of which will be the 2002-2012 projections.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service-*Most LMI is the product of existing occupational taxonomies that are inherently out of date. Research on EEOs allows customers to have some understanding of occupational titles they have heard through the popular media, for example, and provide guidance to job seekers and labor market planners. Education and training entities are especially eager to be aware of leading edge developments in occupational demand so they may prepare new training programs or curricula. EEO research is of particular interest to those working with incumbent workers or related skills transferability programs as it has the possibility to help case managers offer skills training directly related to changing hiring

requirements.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*-The strategic plan is keen on ensuring that the various state partners are connected and working toward integration. EEO research is a prime area in which to increase collaboration between workforce, economic development and education

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Primary customers include education and training providers, workforce board planners, students making education and career decisions, and other researchers.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- Proposals submitted will stimulate action to invest in occupational research that transcends standard Department of Labor occupational taxonomies. LMCI staff will continue to add access to EEO titles and related characteristics as part of the SOCRATES regional targeting process.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-At least one EEO proposal will be submitted to the TWC Workforce division by November 2005. LMCI staff will participate in agency discussions as regards occupational impacts of EEOs on the Governors clusters throughout the program year.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-

LMCI Staff (PY2004)	\$10,000
LMCI Staff (PY2005)	\$15,477
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$25,477

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

#### **3a. Update Texas iOSCAR.org to O\*NET version 8.0, update projections and wage data**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The Texas iOSCAR product was the first end user product in the nation to embrace the O\*NET database. We believe the iOSCAR product continues to have value as an online skills transferability system and we will work to keep the content current and enhance various features as practicable. To remain leading edge we must make modifications in that system to upgrade to the new O\*NET version 8.0 and update, at a minimum, the primary LMI to include 2005 occupational wage data and the 2002-2012 projections. Consistent with this commitment to maintaining the most current O\*NET data, we will work with various TWC Workforce and IT staff to ensure that their automated systems are using the most current O\*NET taxonomy and characteristics data.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-iOSCAR is promoted to jobseekers within the workintexas.com system as the primary vehicle for interest and work values assessment. Because of the high level of integration of these two products it is critical that iOSCAR be as current and proficient as possible in addressing jobseeker needs. Based on changes in Agency policy direction regarding skills transferability, we believe the iOSCAR

product, and especially the Career Development Plan feature which compares KSAs side-by-side for two occupations, will receive greater emphasis.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- Because iOSCAR is a tool used by multiple educational levels in the career exploration and skill transferability process it is a critical tool to span the continuum from career planning and preparation to career development and enhancement.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Primary customers range from middle school students to jobseekers in One Stop workforce centers. The tool has proven especially popular among dislocated workers seeking to assess alternate career paths and within the rehabilitation community since it allows for simple manipulation of the very robust O\*NET database.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-The iOSCAR system will continue to be housed and maintained on the LMCI server network and thus will be another 24/7 internet tool for our customers.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-LMCI staff will not update iOSCAR until all critical data components are available. In this case the iOSCAR updates will not begin formally until after the initial electronic release of the 2002-2012 occupational projections in February 2005. Migration to O\*NET 8.0 will begin roughly during the summer 2005 with expectations that a completely updated version should be online around December 2005.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- This activity will be funded using a mix of dollars from the U.S. Dept. of Education ACRN grant and the WIA statewide activities funds.

LMCI Staff	\$0
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$0

### **3b. Migrate Texas CARES v. 7.0 to the Internet**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-As discussed in the proposal introduction, the Texas CARES initiative is a flagship product in our efforts to provide occupational and career information to our students and out of school youth. Over the past several years the Texas CARES install base has grown sufficiently that it has become a self-sustaining product based on license revenues. LMCI has secured WIA First Generation grant funds to produce the next version of Texas CARES as an Internet-based program.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Almost every state has what is referred to as a state CIDS or career information delivery system. In Texas, that product is Texas CARES. As with most CIDS, the primary customers of CARES are high school students, some college students, and customers of the state One Stop workforce centers.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*-Texas CARES is clearly our flagship effort to assist persons at all stages of their career development in making

superior education and career choices. As with other automated tools that form the core of the LMCI career information delivery system, it helps customers span the continuum from career planning and preparation to career development and enhancement.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-The primary customers of Texas CARES are middle school and high school students, some college students, and customers of the One Stop workforce centers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- Texas CARES is built around the concept of an integrated World of Work and a World of Learning. This allows users to connect between projected job growth, job characteristics and requisite educational preparation. Texas CARES provides the necessary information to facilitate informed education and career decisions. By exposing a greater percentage of our school age population to Texas CARES through the Internet we hope to improve their understanding of the importance of postsecondary education and help them make education and career choices that align with their interests and abilities, while also exposing them to occupations most in demand, most highly paid and other characteristics. By web-enabling that system we will expand the number of customers that will be able to access the system. As important as increased student access, a web version of the program will allow students and their parents to review the same educational and career information to guide postsecondary educational choice and career decision-making.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-Work to design and begin web enabling the Texas CARES product will begin in December 2005 and likely require a full year to complete. Projected roll-out for the product will coincide with the beginning of the 2006 school year.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-This deliverable will be heavily subsidized by funds generated from ACRN Program Income dedicated to maintaining the Texas CARES initiative and TWC's WIA First Generation Grant. Thus little to no direct ETA LMI grant money will be invested in this project. The grant will purchase the college data file that lists all colleges and universities and includes over 100 characteristics variables. No staff costs will be charged to this project from the ETA LMI grant.

LMCI Staff (\$188,000 of non-ETA grant funds)	\$2,049
Purchase of Thomson undergraduate colleges file	\$12,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$14,049

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

##### **4a. SOCRATES maintenance, updates, enhancements**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*- SOCRATES is much more than a software product—it is a system that facilitates employer engagement, connects the local workforce planning and occupational targeting process with appropriate data from multiple sources, techniques of regional labor market analysis and user training. SOCRATES offers

multiple modules and functionalities, ranging from the automated regional targeting process to occupational and county narrative profiles, to interactive shift-share analysis.

For PY2005-06 LMCI staff will update the majority of variables in the County Narrative Profiles (CNP) module, including continuing to add new health-related socio-demographic data. We will also introduce new graph features within the CNP report to augment the narrative text and statistical tables. We will add variables to the filtering feature and also introduce a new side by side comparison report for up to four areas. Staff will also experiment with a new module tentatively referred to as "OCCUVAL" which will combine statistical filtering of occupational data with GIS-based thematic mapping of O\*NET-based KSA data for LWDA's within Texas.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Every workforce board is required to submit a labor market plan that documents regional labor force and economic conditions as a foundation for determining appropriate training services. Many Board staff are not well-versed in techniques of labor market analysis, nor do they have the time to gather the many disparate pieces of LMI to piece together the story of their regional labor market. Local Boards asked that the process of regional labor market targeting be simplified and automated. Thus originated the beginnings of the SOCRATES system.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- WIA requires that Boards deliver training services that are responsive to labor market demand. On one hand, the SOCRATES system allows all Boards to determine which industries and occupations offer the greatest potential for job growth and opportunity. From the state perspective, SOCRATES provides assurances that all Boards take the planning process seriously by requiring standardized reports available only through SOCRATES and allows all Boards to produce labor market plans with a semblance of format commonality to ease the task of state-level plan review. The industry-driven process facilitates the identification of employers within key regional industries that might be contacted for validation of significant training needs and hiring requirements.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-The primary customers of SOCRATES are the local LWDA planners. However, because of the many diverse functionalities within SOCRATES, the tool has become popular among economic development professionals, city and county urban planners and many case managers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-The SOCRATES system allows for standardized analysis and reporting of targeted industries and occupations for each LWDA. These lists are used to guide training and related program decisions to make program offerings more responsive to regional labor market demand. Appropriately targeted training should result in higher job placement rates and higher earnings at placement, which should lead to superior ratings on outcomes accountability measures. Moreover, SOCRATES reports allow Board planners to review job placement outcomes over a program year with the reasons each industry and occupation was placed on the targeted list. Thus, the documentation provided through SOCRATES assists local Boards in monitoring results against planned activities and, when coupled with on-going analysis of changing labor market conditions, lays the groundwork for a process of continuous program improvement.



► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The SOCRATES software will be revisited beginning in October 2005 in consultation with TWC Workforce Planning staff to assure a continuity of SOCRATES analysis and report features with state-issued planning guidelines. The planned program improvements, especially those in the County Narrative Profiles module, will occur in multiple steps throughout the program year. The several modules that show either annual or quarterly QCEW time series will be updated within a quarter of the release of those data by BLS. Thus 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2005 QCEW data will be incorporated into the SOCRATES shift share and industry evaluation modules by no later than December 30, 2005.

► The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-The majority of funding to support and maintain SOCRATES is provided by the TWC Workforce Division through WIA Statewide Activities funds. Since many of the SOCRATES modules are time and data intensive to update, some LMCI staff time will be used to maintain and enhance the SOCRATES program, but none is currently budgeted from the ETA grant.

LMCI Staff	\$0
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$0

**4b. Complete Texas Industry Profiles, including rollout of new Location Quotient module. Upgrades will include adapting system modules to address the Governors cluster initiative.**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*- The Texas Industry Profiles system consists of eight major modules and twenty-five functionalities, each with unique data sets and features. It is designed to support Texas economic development activities by assisting local planners to analyze their regional economies and demonstrate workforce strengths. Each module provides automated tools of regional analysis and includes multiple reports designed to assist in economic development. Since most of the system has now been available for almost a year, staff will begin a data update cycle for key variables. A new Location Quotient module will be introduced that assists in the identification of regional growth poles, comparative advantage and export base.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-The Commissioners of the Texas Workforce Commission, in conjunction with the state economic development team and the Texas Governors Office, expressed a need for information to achieve two major, interconnected goals:

- (1) To provide TWC administrators with pertinent information regarding how the Texas Workforce Commission and the Local Workforce Development Boards are interacting with the Texas and regional economy. Specifically, how the TWC and its several programs interact with Texas industry sectors and employers within those industries.
- (2) To provide persons engaged in Texas regional economic analysis, specifically for economic development purposes, to access decision-critical information about the dynamics of the Texas economy. The several tools must focus on aspects of industry dispersion, dynamics, labor supply, clustering and related analyses to provide a foundation for economic development activities.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* Texas Industry Profiles supports many state SWIB goals, not the least of which is the need to increase collaboration between workforce, economic development and education. The Labor Availability Estimator tool in particular provides a ready tool for employers to conduct proactive market assessments of regional labor supply and the ability to compare prospective occupational demand with available supply.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable-*The primary customers of the Texas Industry Profiles systems are Texas LWDA planners, economic development professionals, city and county planners. Because one module within TIP, the Dashboard Indicators module, shows data for applicants, job openings posted, initial claims, new hires, and employment it has become a valuable tool for TWC managers and others who are required to describe Texas Workforce Network interactions with our intended customer groups.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable-* The economic development modules within TIP will improve the regional industry and occupational targeting process. The system provides a uniform source of information that will help bring together workforce and economic development professionals on issues of company recruitment, leading to the leveraging of WIA training resources to attract and retain businesses in local communities. By promoting and quantifying many aspects of industry clusters, TIP will solidify the relationship between state-level workforce staff and Governor's Office economic development staff.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable-*The Texas Industry Profiles system will be 90 percent complete by November 1, 2005. Much of the remaining original work revolves around providing data for the Governors industry clusters. We hope to have descriptive statistics for all the clusters completed by December 31, 2005.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-* The majority of funding to support and maintain the Industry Profiles system is provided by the TWC Workforce Division through WIA Statewide Activities funds. However, since many of the TIP modules are time and data intensive to update, some LMCI staff time will be used maintain and enhance various modules. For example, ETA funding will support staff creating the Industry Snapshots within TIP, updating the Workforce Information Network or WIN occupational wage module, upgrading the County Narrative Profiles found in both SOCRATES and TIP, and providing in-service training.

LMCI staff (PY2004)	\$20,000
LMCI staff (PY2005)	\$32,707
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$52,707

**4c. Conduct automated follow-up on 2003-04 workforce program exiters, create final report and display on-line**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-* Automated Student and Adult Learner Follow-up (ASALFS)--Using automated record linkage techniques, LMCI staff

follow-up on over 2 million exiting students and workforce program customers to determine their employment and continuing education outcomes. We will also conduct longitudinal study for six different program areas. These data are used for federal and state program compliance reporting but, most importantly, they are the basis for continuous program improvement for local workforce and education service providers. Understanding former participant outcomes gives WIA program planners an opportunity to see how their labor market plan aligned with actual worker post-exit employment outcomes. It also offers teachers and school administrators an opportunity to review curriculum and program offerings based on successful student outcomes.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-When the CDR unit was merged with the LMI unit to form the new LMCI department, certain synergies were expected. One of those synergies was a better connection between information services to Boards and the identification of Board participant outcomes since CDR has been performing follow-up services in Texas for over a decade. In addition, the passage of Texas SB281 transferred the responsibility for conducting student and adult follow-up from the state workforce board to the Texas Workforce Commission, and thus to LMCI. Therefore, we have a state legislative mandate to conduct follow-up services on all workforce and education programs.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- Findings from the automated follow-up system are used for required WIA accountability measures. As important, follow-up data provide additional information to assist Boards in their labor market planning by allowing them to monitor participant outcomes against data about the external economic environment. This ability provides a feedback loop to the planning process and aids planners in assuring that training programs offerings align with local labor market conditions.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-The primary customers of the follow-up reports are workforce and education planners and administrators.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- Follow-up data collection, synthesis and distribution provide all Texas education and labor market participants with knowledge about the relationship between education and workforce program interventions and their respective labor market and continuing education outcomes. This knowledge is intended to become part of an on-going continuous improvement process on the part of program providers and to serve as input in the process of informed career decision-making by students.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The final report for all 2002-2003 program exiters for all education and workforce programs will be completed by November 1, 2005. The final report for the 2003-2004 exiters for all programs will be completed by June 2006.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-The entirety of funding for automated follow-up will come from the TWC multi-agency fund established through the Texas Workforce Information Council (TWIC). The TWC contribution to that fund comes from WIA statewide activities funds. This project is important to ETA as various applications of follow-up data will permeate multiple ETA supported grant activities. Automated

follow-up is another example of both dollar and data leverage to improve information services to workforce boards.

LMCI Staff \$0  
Total Cost for Deliverable: \$0

#### **4d. Participate and provide integrated reports on Texas workforce dynamics through the LED initiative and the BLS Business Employment Dynamics programs**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-*

The nation's LMI system is at a crossroads of providing several new types of data that are superior in describing the dynamics of the state and regional economies. Texas will remain on the forefront of these new programs. There are four major components on which Texas will focus. LMCI staff will continue to use the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages to assess employment changes across all industries in the Texas economy. The new Business Employment Dynamics (BED) data from the BLS will allow us to explore dynamics among firms within an industry, such as differences in employment patterns between contracting and expanding employer groups. Moreover, in our coordination with North Carolina, we will investigate our ability to identify successor-predecessor employers for purposes of examining new business formation and firm birth and deaths in Texas. The Census LED program will allow us to explore employment fluctuations and new hire activity within firms by cross-referencing employment change by age, gender and related variables. Texas will continue our investment in the Census LED mapping project. This project provides an exceptional means to spatially identify Texas and substate commute sheds and labor sheds based on LED origin and destination data.

Lastly, the new workintexas.com system is generating micro transactions data on job postings, job openings and applicants. These data, aggregated by region and industry sector within the Dashboard Indicators module of Texas Industry Profiles, will allow us to view the volume of transactions within detailed industries. Collectively, these data sets will help state and regional Board staff gain a superior understanding of labor market hiring patterns and allow them to better target employer outreach and job training activities.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service-*In this very volatile labor market it is not enough to look at net employment statistics and draw conclusions about employer hiring patterns and related behaviors. Workforce boards have consistently asked questions about the flows of labor market activity, including new hires by industry sector, and detailed characteristics of hiring behavior, including age and gender patterns.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* In order to help workers more quickly gain reemployment it is important to know where hiring activity is taking place. Aggregate statistics can mask many underlying patterns, including where older or younger workers are finding jobs. The BED and LED databases provide such dynamics. On the employer side, firms will have an increased ability to look at hiring and separation patterns of workers as input to strategies to deal with recruitment, retention and issues of succession planning.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable-*The primary customers will be workforce board

planners and administrators, employers, and a variety of researchers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- As an LMI shop we will move out of the realm of simply providing descriptive statistics in different ways and into a new world that explores the movements behind net change data. It will lead to more value-added applied labor market research that will be linked to enhanced Board strategic planning, data-driven placement and training decisions and improved support for the employer community.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-Because the BED and the LED projects are national in scope we do not have much control over timelines or product enhancements. Both of these efforts, much like the new workintexas.com labor exchange system, are very new with data and process anomalies with which to still deal. We will continue our participation in the LED consortium by sharing quarterly data, as required. We will have a set of standardized quarterly LED-based reports designed and in dissemination by December 1, 2005. We will coordinate with North Carolina to test whether their software can process Texas-sized employer files. To achieve this task we will draft a data sharing MOU with North Carolina to send them the necessary test employer master file and wage record data.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- We believe the type of research and data to be made available under this item constitute the value-added analysis expected by ETA under the scope of the PY2005 TEG. Therefore, we will invest considerable staff resources in the design of reports that demonstrate the integration of data from these multiple sources. We will also work with North Carolina to adapt their successor-predecessor software to run Texas employer master file and wage record files.

LED Census mapping project updates	\$10,000
BED software (North Carolina) & Server Hardware	\$40,000
LMCI Staff (PY2004)	\$20,000
LMCI Staff (PY2005)	\$63,760
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$133,760

#### **4e. Develop Users Guide for LED QWI and LED Mapping Software Applications**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-During PY2004 staff made a concerted investment to understand the potential for using data from the LED project. For PY2005, both the LED QWI and the Mapping application are now sufficiently robust to begin indoctrinating users in their application in a wide variety of workforce development activities. Thus, we will develop a Users Guide that explains the QWI and how they can be used. We will include a section on the LED Mapping application that also presents potential uses and limitations of the program.

► *Expressed customer supports for the product or service*- The LED project provides detailed answers to questions that are routinely asked but, until now, seldom taken seriously. Customers want to know where people are finding jobs and how much money they are making. The QWI provides detailed answers to these questions. In the world of economic development, customers

want to see commuting patterns and gain understanding as to where potential labor pools may exist. Access to origin and destination data in LED Mapping, along with its spatial display, can answer these and many more questions.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- In order to help workers more quickly gain reemployment it is important to know where hiring activity is taking place. Now that the data tools are becoming mainstream, one or more Users Guides support the objective of increased access to information for informed career decision-making and integrating workforce and economic development.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- The primary customers will be workforce board planners and administrators, employers, and a variety of researchers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-With a LED QWI Users Guide available we believe we can increase the awareness of these tools among the Texas Workforce Network and improve overall understanding of regional labor market dynamics.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-We expect to have a draft Users Guide written by no later than November 30, 2005 and have printed copies available by the end of calendar 2005.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- Staff assigned to work on the LED data sets and reports will contribute to the Users Guide. Several states have such Guides either complete or largely underway, including the state of Iowa. Texas will investigate some of these pre-existing products to see if we can leverage work already completed by another state. After authoring the content, LMCI graphics staff will create the graphic layout for contract printing.

LMCI Staff	\$13,964
Printing costs	\$5,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$18,964

#### **4f. Continue our investment in GIS related activities including thematic mapping of various workforce data elements, expansion into TWC legacy datasets**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-LMCI has tentatively explored GIS data delivery over the past two years. Most of these early efforts led to various forms of thematic mapping using desktop GIS tools. For PY2004-05 LMCI create a fully operational GIS module to display employer data consistent with the Governors cluster initiative. For PY2005, LMCI staff will continue to serve as the primary producer of GIS based thematic maps within the TWC, displaying various employment and unemployment data elements in addition to a wide array of data items submitted by various customers within the Texas Workforce Commission. As importantly, we will expand our online mapping features by integrating more robust database filtering capabilities and importing larger TWC legacy datasets, including those from WorkinTexas.com for spatial display.

Lastly, LMCI staff will continue to provide technical support for the *SitesOnTexas.com* site selection tool procured through the TWC Employer Initiatives department. This online GIS tool, which offers largely demographic data, will assist Boards and regional economic development staff in developing a strong understanding of their area's demographic composition and comparative advantages relative to other regions in Texas and across the country.

► *Expressed customer supports for the product or service*- One of the hardest things for a novice labor market analyst or planner to do is discern patterns from statistical data tables. The GIS display mode visually depicts concentrations of chosen variables, such as all firms within the core of an industry cluster, to quickly relate magnitude and dispersion. Moreover, GIS engines allow for not only mapping point and thematic data but allow a user to drill down to a specific employer, facility or institution. That makes the data much more actionable for; (1) employer outreach, (2) finding the most convenient or appropriate vendor (such as in the case of child care), or (3) relating proximity of available services (such as the location of a child care provider) to a local One Stop center.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- GIS mapping significantly enhances the integration of interagency systems and information sharing. The child-care application considerably simplifies the ability of case managers to locate appropriate childcare facilities for those working TANF recipients. Other GIS applications will align with regional economic development activities to assist Board planners in quickly showing which firms in their region are a part of the Governors statewide clusters.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- Primary customers will include TWC administrators and staff, One Stop case managers, local Board planners and administrators, and state and regional economic development staff.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- We expect many positive contributions from a better spatial display of data, but none more important than an increased awareness of how useful labor market information can be in making program decisions. Statistical data, once ignored, will jump off the screen or page demonstrating relationships between where people, in particular jobseekers, live and where jobs are located. We expect a whole range of our customers to better appreciate, and demand, more LMI across the spectrum.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- There are two primary thrusts relating to LMCI GIS capacity. The first is to continue our role in providing GIS thematic mapping services within the TWC to support Agency leadership and WIA program staff. The second thrust is the further enhancement of point mapping to the Internet for universal customer access. Desktop thematic mapping services will be provided throughout the program year, as requested. The final iteration of the Clusters GIS module in Texas Industry Profiles should be complete and publicly available by October 31, 2005 (note that interim versions of the Clusters GIS have been available since May 2005).

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-The majority of the capital expenses needed for this activity have already been procured either through the previous ETA grant or via alternative funding sources. The vast majority of expenses

will be for LMCI staff support, with some telecommunications costs associated with increased broadband capacity to accommodate the bandwidth-intensive nature of online GIS services and the update of several of MapInfo product licenses and street map files. Staff development costs for PY2005-06 will largely be borne by WIA Statewide Activities dollars.

LMCI Staff	\$59,739
GIS Software Updates	\$20,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$79,739

#### **4g. Update LWDA regional profiles for TRACER**

- ▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-Each month LMCI staff produce economic profiles for each Texas workforce area. Profiles cover monthly changes in employment, labor force and unemployment, as well as UI claims activity, and selected employer and occupational wage data. These regional profiles are uploaded monthly into TRACER2.
- ▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Local Board staff have expressed considerable interest in viewing a brief snapshot of summary economic indicators. These custom built profiles have addressed this need.
- ▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- This project helps ensure collaboration among partners in the workforce development system by promoting a single, consistent and reliable source of labor market information for each region, leading to a common understanding of regional economic conditions.
- ▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Primary customers are local workforce board planners and administrators, regional and community planners and economic developers, public and private researchers.
- ▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- In many cases a constituent simply needs a quick snapshot of their workforce board area and economic trends without being required to scour multiple databases or websites to compile such a profile. This deliverable provides that quick glimpse. The objectives of the LWDA regional profiles are augmented by the County Narrative Profiles in SOCRATES to give even those with no prior knowledge of an area an intimate statistical familiarity.
- ▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-Regional Board profiles will be updated each month and uploaded in TRACER2 within 2 days of the monthly LAUS release date. For PY2005-06 LMCI staff will also investigate ways to automate even larger portions of the profiles to make their preparation less labor intensive.
- ▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- All costs associated with the regional profiles will be staff costs.

LMCI Staff	\$15,129
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Total Cost for Deliverable:

\$15,129

#### **4h. Update Industry Profile Snapshots for Texas Industry Profiles and TRACER**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-Each quarter, corresponding with the release of the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) industry employment release, LMCI staff produce industry specific profiles for each three digit NAICS industry. Snapshots cover changes in employment, average weekly wages and number of firms, as well as size class by industry and the names of the largest employers. These industry profile snapshots will be uploaded quarterly into Texas Industry Profiles. This is an ongoing maintenance activity.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Local Board staff have expressed considerable interest in viewing a brief snapshot of summary economic indicators by industry. These custom built profiles have addressed this need.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- This project helps ensure collaboration among partners in the workforce development system by promoting a single, consistent and reliable source of labor market information. Industry profiles promote the uniform use of the NAICS coding system as a means for describing the characteristics of the Texas industrial structure.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Primary customers are local workforce board planners and administrators, regional and community planners and economic developers, public and private researchers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- In many cases a business services unit simply needs a quick industry snapshot of the sector to which an employer with whom they are meeting belongs. The ability of the BSU representative to understand and articulate key facts about an employers industry can have a bearing on the establishment of a successful relationship. It is ideal if the BSU representative does not have to scour multiple databases or websites to compile such a profile. This deliverable provides that quick glimpse. The Industry Narrative Profiles currently being developed within the Texas Industry Profiles system will augment the objectives of the Industry Profile Snapshot.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-Industry Profile Snapshots will be updated quarterly and uploaded into Texas Industry Profiles within two weeks of completion. For PY2005-06 LMCI staff will also investigate ways to automate even larger portions of the snapshots.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- All costs associated with the industry profile snapshots will be staff costs.

LMCI Staff

\$7,153

Total Cost for Deliverable:

\$7,153

#### **4i. Pursue collaborative arrangements to conduct a Texas statewide benefits survey**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-* LMCI staff will continue to investigate cost effective approaches to collect health care and related benefits data for a wide range of occupations and regions within the state of Texas. Options to be considered include (1) subcontract arrangements with a university or other survey business to conduct independent data collection or, (2) collaboration with an existing entity already engaged in benefits data collection. Entities such as the Texas Association of Business will be contacted for discussion, and 3) in-house survey conduct based upon models used by other states.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service-* With the cost of job-related benefits rising and their uniform availability diminishing, the subject of whether a job tends to offer benefits, such as health insurance, has become a hot topic. Job seekers and students making career choices are interested to know the degree to which certain occupations offer health care and other benefits in any given community. The increased use of temporary help agencies and contract workers has further complicated the picture to the extent that the availability of health care benefits especially can dictate individual career decisions.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* Under the spirit of WIA, training programs should be offered in occupational areas that not only offer regional labor market demand but that offer career ladders and provide benefits. Despite this expectation, there are no data collection programs in place at the federal level that provide such information. This requires states wishing to address the spirit of the legislation to invest in independent benefits data collection activities.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable-*The primary customers will be jobseekers, dislocated workers, students and others making front-line education and career decisions.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable-* The availability of benefits data will improve the quality of career decisions, improve the match between job characteristics and worker expectations and thus reduce the level of turnover and increase job satisfaction of those changing jobs or newly entering the labor force.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable-*Most of the major milestones cannot be determined at this time since both dollar outlays and staff investments will depend on the route, if any chosen as a result of our investigations. Active investigation will begin in January 2006 with a final assessment by the end of PY 2005.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-*

LMCI Staff	\$48,420
Subcontract	\$140,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$188,420

#### **4j. Produce the Texas Labor Market Review monthly newsletter as the primary hardcopy delivery vehicle for basic state and regional labor market data**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-LMCI staff will continue to produce a monthly hardcopy newsletter. The Texas Labor Market Review (TLMR) is the monthly LMI newsletter that has become synonymous with release of the most current aggregate area employment, unemployment, labor force and industry employment statistics. Despite the fact that most of the same LMI is now released in electronic medium, there remain expectations by a large audience that a hardcopy newsletter will be sent monthly to the 7,000 plus recipients on our current mailing list.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Despite futurist predictions that we will be getting all our correspondence electronically in the near future, many customers prefer having the efficiently-formatted and timely-released information provided through the TLMR. All within a single publication, the TLMR offers a vehicle to not only display a large amount of data for a wide array of areas within Texas but to provide a brief discussion of the most salient trends and employment related research. Collectively, for many customers the TLMR is the primary source for state and regional labor market information.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- In order to ensure collaboration among partners in the workforce development system all must agree to use the same source of data when referring to the status of the employment and unemployment picture of Texas and it's substate areas. The TLMR promotes a single, consistent, reliable and omnipresent source of LMI around which to engage in policy discussion.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-There are no bounds to the audience for the TLMR. Policy makers and administrators, public and private entities, researchers and utility companies all subscribe to the newsletter as a routine source of macro labor market information.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- The TLMR is a "low tech" alternative to put information about labor market characteristics and trends in the hands of anyone interacting with the job market. In continuing to produce the TLMR we expect to influence regional economic development planning, workforce planning, and individual career decision-making.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The TLMR will be authored, printed and disseminated twelve times per year on a schedule that lags slightly the monthly LAUS program release dates. During PY2005-06 staff will investigate means to reduce "time to market" through automation, reduce printing costs through potential outsource agreements and investigate alternatives to publication as a separate newsletter.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- Printing and mailing of twelve issues during the program year of 5,900 copies in each print run at roughly \$2,000 per issue.

LMCI Staff	\$121,148
Printing and mailing costs	\$24,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$145,148

**4k. Produce the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) hardcopy publication**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-LMCI staff will produce four (4) quarterly hardcopy monographs which highlight statewide and county employment by industry, employer counts and taxable wages paid based on the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service*- The QCEW publication provides customers with the most detailed employment, employer count and wages paid data available. The fact that the data are provided at the county level makes the publication an invaluable augmentation to the TLMR newsletter, especially for those customers who prefer hardcopy to electronic data transmission. Many customers maintain time series of these data extracted from the QCEW publication and, although they may also view the data online, they continue to express a desire to see the data in hardcopy as well.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- In order to ensure collaboration among partners in the workforce development system all must agree to use the same source of data when referring to standard data items such as wages paid, the number of employers, the average weekly wage and trends in employment by industry sector. The QCEW publication promotes a primary, consistent, and reliable source of industry employment data around which to engage in policy discussion.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*-The primary customers for the QCEW publication are workforce and economic development policy makers and planners, public and private sector researchers and other state agencies with programs that deal in the labor market arena.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- The desired impact is for consumers of LMI to have a uniform and consistent time series of industry employment data upon which to make sound, empirical policy and program decisions.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The QCEW publication will be authored, formatted, printed and disseminated four times per year on a schedule whereby the publication will lag the official release of QCEW data sets by roughly one month.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-The total costs will combine staff time with actual out of pocket print costs.

LMCI Staff	\$27,038
Printing costs	\$4,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$31,038

**4l. Produce special research reports on applied labor market topics, including clusters implementation relative to economic and workforce development**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The new LMCI department created an Applied Research unit whose mission is to identify current workforce issues and labor market phenomena and provide value-added analysis, information and discussion to aid workforce professionals and policy-makers in effecting appropriate policy response. One such research monograph for PY2004-05 was titled *Employers of Choice*, and offered a rationale for, and strategies to become, an employer that workers respect. It is essentially a publication for employers to help them pursue strategies for worker recruitment and retention. For PY2005 we will release a primer on industry clusters and strategies for identifying and operationalizing cluster activity relative to regional economic development. Staff will reinvigorate the *Beyond the Numbers* series format as a vehicle for research publication.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-The labor market is evolving in myriad ways, many of which are quite foreign to employers, researchers, policy analysts and jobseekers alike. Because of the Internet, consumers have access to more information than ever before but still express concern about what it means in any given policy environment. The *Beyond the Numbers* concept is designed to address these topical labor market issues with a combination of data and explanation that aids in the understanding of how such issues can influence policy and individual choice.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- Applied labor market research is the foundation of almost all the state workforce board goals. The state plan calls for public sector partners to “meet current and emerging needs of Texas employers for a globally competitive workforce.” But that goal presumes that those players are cognizant of the emerging needs and have both the data and the theoretical foundation to devise policy based on that understanding. Our role in applied labor market research will explore various micro and macro economic phenomena and discuss them in a manner that can undergird more effective WIA program design.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Primary customers will include state and local policymakers and program planners, private sector employers, and other researchers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- Applied research is not an academic exercise among only the enlightened. It is intended to first identify poignant labor market phenomena and then offer not only an explanation of the issues but alternative policy scenarios or strategies that can be turned into action. Although the outcomes will vary depending on the topics addressed, our expectation is that greater clarity of the issues and their potential impacts will result in more enlightened or market-responsive human resource or workforce and economic development policy action.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-LMCI management will appropriately staff the Applied Research unit and develop a list of potential research topics. The first monograph exploring the cluster concept with recommendations as to how cluster development can influence regional workforce development policy should be complete by December 1, 2005. Subsequent monographs will examine issues such as the impact of disruptive technologies on job creation, emerging and evolving occupations, and rural economic development.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- The total costs will combine staff time for research and writing with actual out of pocket print costs.

LMCI Staff (PY2004)		\$15,000
LMCI Staff (PY2005)		\$43,869
Printing costs	\$5,000	
Total Cost for Deliverable:		\$63,869

#### **4m. Secure and analyze non-traditional data sets to augment existing information resources**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-A major criticism of the old model of LMI shops is that they tend to be internally focused, relying on those data items produced in-house, largely through the BLS Fed-State Cooperative program. While these core data items are critical, there are gaps that must be addressed if the state LMI system is to be responsive to the needs of employers and economic development professionals.

LMCI will continue to venture down the path of integrating non-traditional data sets with those available through the ALMIS database and Fed-State Cooperative programs. We will continue to work with the Texas Department of Public Safety to acquire drivers' license data to explore worker age and place of residence in connection with new hire activity. We will update our purchase of sales volume data for Texas counties and detailed industries from Global Insights to assist in the identification of regional industry clusters based on sales activity and not just employment. We will explore the acquisition of other "new economy" data sets including patents, venture capital, and R&D expenditures from multiple sources.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-With increasing sophistication of our customers and heightened expectations for the use of data in policy development, the body of traditional LMI resources found largely within the BLS fed-state cooperative data programs simply is insufficient to answer the new generation of questions. Rather than engage in costly in-house data collection efforts, we are endeavoring to acquire new data sets from alternative providers that address questions most frequently posed by customers. Many of these questions concern "what if" scenarios of economic impact. Thus, the proposed new data sets and analytical tools will largely address this issue.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- The strategic plan calls for the integration of interagency systems and processes and the sharing of information to achieve the goals of growing a high skill/high wage workforce. It also calls for better collaboration with community economic development. Although the majority of our staff expertise is in the use of employment-related data, employers and economic developers often are more concerned with information such as evolving business practices, sales volume and inter-industry connections. By extending our range of information resources LMCI is better capable of providing value-added market assessments.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Principal users are expected to be employers, community planners and regional economic development professionals.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-These additional data sets will be integrated into the comprehensive Industry Profile narrative report module within Texas Industry Profiles. They will also be available to LMCI dissemination staff to assist in fielding questions regarding economic impact. In addition, LMCI staff will investigate methods to automate these data into online tools that would allow remote users to play out real and hypothetical “what-if” scenarios.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- Global Insights county sales by industry data for 2004 will be procured and available by mid February 2006. Meetings with DPS to renegotiate record linkage data sets will begin by January 2006.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-

LMCI Staff	\$2,818
Global Insights	\$12,500
Texas DPS	\$1,500
Miscellaneous Data Sets	\$2,500
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$19,318

**4n. Investigate with intent to create O\*NET skills to the Texas Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) and CIP crosswalk for Skills-based module**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*- There is a strong desire on the part of our TWC Workforce division to be able to identify the skills need of specific industries, and then to target training activities to address regional skills deficiencies. There are existing crosswalks between O\*NET or SOC occupations and CIP codes, one of which LMCI routinely uses in our various products. However this crosswalk does not allow us to connect with the technical courses/programs offered through the Texas Community and Technical Colleges (CTCs) which are coded using another taxonomy called the Texas Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM). Moreover, there is no connection between the O\*NET KSAs or task statements and the Learning Objectives assigned to each WECM course. The process necessary to create an industry skill needs report requires that multiple intermediate crosswalk products be developed. The biggest obstacle to making the translation between O\*NET KSAs and task statements, the skills required by employers, and Learning Objectives, as the common currency for communicating what will be taught in any given course is a lack of a crosswalk. For purposes of this project, a Workforce Education Course Manual (WECM) to KSA crosswalk must be developed that will bridge the gap between the way educators view the communication of learning and the way employers and workers view skills necessary to get or keep a particular job. If such a KSA-driven crosswalk cannot technically be developed, LMCI staff will similarly explore the feasibility of creating a crosswalk between O\*NET occupational task statements and WECM Learning Objectives via WECM to SOC linkages.

► *Expressed customer supports for the product or service* –The TWC Workforce Division is very interested in identifying “industry skill needs”. Unfortunately, given the diverse occupational skill sets in most industries, there is no comprehensive approach to achieve this

objective. Moreover, because the concept of skills is different than the concept of learning objectives which governs curriculum development, there is an inherent imprecision between specific employer skill needs and the education and training system. To begin the breach this gap and approximate the industry skill needs concept, small steps, such as a KSA to WECM crosswalk, are required.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* The Texas WIA plan emphasizes the employer-driven nature of our system. This product is one step in making a better connection between employer hiring requirements and the education and training system.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable.* The tool will ultimately be useful to many constituencies in the education community. However, the immediate work product will most benefit TWC/LMCI staff as they attempt to connect industry and O\*NET based skill sets. Local Board staff, employers seeking training for incumbent workers, and community economic development professionals working with relocating prospects are all potential customers of this work product.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable-* This work product will serve as an intermediate tool to operationalize project 4o. of the LMCI workplan. Ultimately, this tool will yield a more concise connection between employer skill needs and those courses available to meet their needs. This is especially true for enhancing the skill sets of incumbent workers.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable-* The work product will be completed in two stages. Stage one will be the mechanical match between keywords in WECM course learning objectives and the O\*NET KSAs. Stage two requires a comprehensive review and editing of the mechanical match. Stage one will be complete before the end of the 2005 calendar year. Stage two will likely require a concentrated effort of stakeholders in the education community and possibly a consultant to guide the process. This will push completion of the work product back into the third quarter of the program year.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*

LMCI Staff	\$13,379	
Consultant subcontract	\$10,000	
Total Cost for Deliverable:		\$23,379

#### **4o. Investigate with intent to create an interactive Skills-to-Training Program software package**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-* The ETA-sponsored Skills Projections software does an excellent job of combining O\*NET KSAs and a state's projections. Texas performed this task in the late 1990's and created similar output reports. Unfortunately, those reports were very interesting but not very actionable in terms of guiding or shaping training program investments. If the analysis does not take the user down to the training program level it cannot help Boards address their objectives of targeting those training programs in their



regions with specific connections to demand occupations.

One major question stands out for the TWC Workforce staff; in moving toward an employer-driven system; how do we identify regional industry skill needs to ensure necessary worker preparation? The easy answer is to simply ask employers, a tack that leads to employer focus groups and surveys with often questionable results. One reason these employer surveys tend to yield inactionable results is that employer feedback is without larger economic context. The labor market represents the complex interaction between employers, or groups of employers, and their demand for productive labor, workers and their indigenous skill sets, education and training providers and their curricula, and the individual learning objectives or KSAs a worker needs to be productive. Individually, each of these “systems” plays a role in creating a match between appropriately skilled worker and job requirement. The synergy occurs when these systems are integrated.

For purposes of this product we will electronically explore the interconnectivity between regional growth industries or clusters, occupations, training programs and KSAs. It is not possible to identify industry skill needs without knowing which occupations dominate the staffing pattern of that industry or cluster. Moreover, in order to address any training needs associated with those occupations, one must relate the employer-based KSAs with the Learning Objectives that typically accompany an educational curriculum. It is our objective that this software development project allows a user to input an industry or cluster and get a frequency listing of KSAs and technical training courses well-matched for that industry. To accomplish this, we will devise a report that lists each of the 133 O\*NET KSAs for all occupations within an identified industry. The number of “skill units” at various levels will be calculated by multiplying the number of projected job openings by the O\*NET importance scale. We will do this for both the 2002 base employment and the projected 2012 employment. A comparison will be done for each KSA based on the difference between the number of “skill units” in 2002 and 2012. The KSAs will be rank ordered depending on the size of the “skill deficit”; e.g. the difference between the number of current skill units and those projected to be in demand. The premise is that those KSAs in largest deficit represent industry skill needs and they will thus be identified and prioritized. But this step is insufficient to meet the overall objective or to prioritize training within a region. For each of the largest skill deficit KSAs, we will match the primary WECM courses using a WECM to KSA crosswalk. By highlighting a given WECM, the user can further see which training institutions offer that particular course and then view enrollments, exiters, contact information and the full set of Learning Objectives that accompany that WECM course. The focus of this tool will be on technical courses represented by the WECM, not all CIP training programs—many of which are largely academic in nature with greater emphasis on general education, soft skills and theoretical knowledge.

► *Expressed customer supports for the product or service* –This product is being developed exclusively for, and at the request of, the state WIA staff to assist Boards in executing the WIA state-developed planning guidelines.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan* - The premise of this project is that those KSAs in largest deficit represent industry skill needs and they will thus be identified and prioritized. This will allow LWDA staff to offer multiple training alternatives

all along the worker education pipeline and ultimately improve the skills available not only to jobseekers but also to incumbent workers.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*-End users are intended to be Board level workforce planning staff.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- With an enhanced ability to readily identify deficit skills needs and those courses that ostensibly address those skills, within a given region, Business Services Representatives can be more specific what type of training they can offer employers, incumbent workers will be able to take fewer, more focused coursework to upgrade their employability and thereby the expenditure of training dollars will be maximized.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- Report design and mechanical construction of the input data files can begin in January 2006. Completion of the WECM to KSA crosswalk must be complete before additional work can proceed on this project. We expect to have a working prototype by September 2006.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)* –This project will be staffed primarily by persons funded by WIA statewide activities funds.

LMCI Staff	\$0	
Total Cost for Deliverable:		\$0

#### **4p. Purchase IMPLAN model for estimating economic impacts**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*- LMCI will explore the acquisition of an IMPLAN input-output model customized for the state of Texas. There is an on-going need to assess the economic impact of plant or military base closings and other economic dislocations. While this has been an identified need for several program years, prior versions of the proprietary IMPLAN model were SIC-based and thus did not match the increasing collection of NAICS based data sets. However, the IMPLAN vendor is promoting a new version of the model which is NAICS based and potentially very valuable in assisting LMCI answer questions regarding impacts of firm recruitment, retention and worker dislocation. This procurement will be combined with an in-house effort to construct economic impact tools for our user community based on a mix of BLS and proprietary data bases.

▶ *Expressed customer supports for the product or service*- LMCI routine receives calls asking our economists about the economic impact of various dislocations, from military bases to plant closures to weather-related dislocations. Our ability to offer thorough insight quickly is limited by available resources. The IMPLAN model will allow our economists to quickly deal with scenario-based dislocations and offer reasoned guidance.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- This project provides information to assist in developing community impact analyses, including issues relating to base closure. It will provide a consistent and reliable source of economic impact

information leading to a common understanding of regional economic conditions and the development of actionable strategies to be jointly addressed by workforce and economic development entities.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable* – Community development professional, Workforce Board staff writing grant proposals in response to dislocations, and LMCI staff economists who routinely are asked to estimate the impacts of employment dislocations.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- By understanding not only the impacts on a primary industry, but also on secondary and tertiary industries, local workforce planners can proactively address potential employment loss ripple effects and work on skills upgrade training for incumbent workers, anticipate job loss in related industries and begin identifying job opportunities for persons expected to become dislocated.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- The procurement of an IMPLAN model and data for Texas will coincide with either new staff acquisition or staff retraining. We expect that the acquisition will be made around January 2006; enough time for the vendor to incorporate 2005 industry time series data files.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-

LMCI Staff costs	\$1,281
IMPLAN model with Texas state and regional data sets	\$7,500
Total Cost for Deliverable	\$8,781

#### **4q. Update and revise DECIDE training inventory tool with TSTC, LMCI and ASALFS data sets**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-It is incumbent on LMCI staff to maintain a ready labor supply and training inventory. Some of these data are routinely constructed and housed within the ALMIS database. However, this repository does not allow for interactive customer access. Economic developers routinely ask for information on available labor supply to answer the critical question of whether a region has sufficient numbers of skilled workers to accommodate a firm relocation. A contract between TWC and the Texas State Technical College in Waco (TSTC), completed during the Spring 2005, organized many key public sector training program data sets and augmented them with some private sector sources. Under the scope of this project we will endeavor to reinvigorate the DECIDE interactive training inventory tool, using the new TSTC data files along with data procured in an on-going cooperative agreement with our Higher Education Coordinating Board.

▶ *Expressed customer supports for the product or service*- The state Eligible Training Providers system only includes training institutions and programs that have proactively submitted applications. This is a severely limited subset of the state's training capacity. Increasingly, workforce and economic development staff are asking the question of whether a region has the capacity to provide particular skills training to meet the needs of both existing and potential employers. This effort will provide the comprehensive list of institutions and programs needed to

answer that question.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan* - The DECIDE software provides the basis for labor supply data, which is an essential component to providing access to labor market data in Texas. This project addresses strategic WIA goals to provide career information for youth in the form of knowledge of the wide range of education and training programs available in Texas. It also provides training inventory data around which workforce and economic development folks can better serve regional employers in helping them meet their skilled labor needs.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- A reinvigorated DECIDE provides direct access to a training program inventory for all inquirers, however we expect workforce case managers will use the data in one manner and Business Services and economic developers will use the same data in different ways.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- A robust, universally available, training inventory should improve the number of persons knowledgeable about educational opportunities in the state and thus contribute to improved postsecondary enrollment rates. Employers, newly knowledgeable about training opportunities for their incumbent workers, should make greater investments in the education of their workforce.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- Considerable database development must occur before the data are ready to populate the DECIDE system. Aggregate data files from the Coordinating Board must be reconfigured to match the DECIDE file structure. The DECIDE screen logic and functionalities will be revisited to simplify the system and provide greater focus on the training inventory component of the system. Although we will begin the database formatting component of this project during the fourth quarter of the 2005 calendar year, as a lower priority work product, we do not expect to begin software modification until PY2006.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*

LMCI Staff (PY2004)	\$9,265	
LMCI Staff (PY2005)	\$8,661	
Total Cost for Deliverable:		\$17,926

#### **4r. Update and revise the *Connecting the Dots* technical assistance guide to align with current TWC Workforce Division objectives**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity* -One recurring theme in the world of workforce development is the constant staff turnover. Many new staff have relatively little direct experience in public sector workforce program planning and other related education and training and labor market issues. Several years ago, LMCI produced a compendium of essays that was well received as a primer on many key workforce issues. This publication has since gone out of print, available only in electronic format. In the wake of policy changes and newly minted labor market analysis tools, we believe the time is at hand to revisit that publication, update several of the existing chapters, remove those less pertinent and add new

chapters on topics more salient in the current environment.

► *Expressed customer supports for the product or service*-The TWC Workforce division has identified LMI-related training as a high priority on their agenda. This priority stems from less than optimal results received from local Boards in the last labor market targeting cycle. It is believed that much of the problem can be attributed to a dearth of training on data driven strategic planning and analytical prowess. The *Connecting the Dots* monograph is designed to address several of these issues and should serve as an excellent training resource for new Workforce staff.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- Understanding how the labor market functions and how to operate training programs within the strategic direction provided by the Texas Workforce Commission leadership is the foundation of almost all the state workforce board goals. The state plan calls for public sector partners to “meet current and emerging needs of Texas employers for a globally competitive workforce.” But that goal presumes that those players are cognizant of the emerging needs and have both the data and the theoretical foundation to devise policy based on that understanding. This publication will address various strategic and operational planning issues in a manner consistent with effective WIA program design.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- The primary audience for this publication will be state and local workforce professionals.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- We expect all Workforce staff at the state and local levels to be exposed to applicable theoretical concepts and applied workforce program practices. By establishing this common understanding, we expect to see improved communication on these issues between state and local staff and more robust strategic planning.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- The first content team will be established in November 2005 to review existing chapters that should be retained and updated and suggest additional chapters that should be added. Editorial work should begin in December 2005. We expect to have a completed draft ready for internal review no later than April 2006.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*  
The editorial process will be a joint venture between Workforce and LMCI staff. As such, much of the staff costs will be borne outside the ETA grant. This cooperative project is another example of both data and staff leverage encouraged by ETA.

LMCI Staff (PY2004)	\$10,000
LMCI Staff (PY2005)	\$41,858
Printing costs	\$5,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$56,858

## **5) Maintain and enhance electronic state workforce information delivery systems**

## **5a. Update and maintain the WIN interactive wage display system and maintain the texaswages.com web presence**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The Wage Information Network (WIN) software acquired from North Carolina has proven to be an exceptional vehicle for interactively disseminating OES survey occupational wage data. In PY2004 staff brought the hosting of this system in-house from the current third party subcontractor. This action has greatly increased our flexibility in improving the screen design and flow from the original template and allowed LMCI staff to easily update the program with each new panel of OES wage data.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Occupational wage data has long been one of the most frequently requested data items by public and private sector customers alike. Static delivery vehicles such as narrative or statistical reports organized by occupational category have proven popular but lack the ability for customer interactivity. The WIN software provides the flexibility for which many customers have expressed a desire by organizing data for substate areas, by multiple levels of occupational hierarchy and by industry sector. The software is especially useful for employers as part of establishing internal compensation packages and various other aspects of human resources management.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- There are many private sector sources of wage data offered by profit maximizing vendors. The value-added they offer tends to be greater detail and access flexibility that makes such sources attractive options. However, with the WIN system, the incomparable data integrity of the BLS-sponsored occupational survey is combined with a dynamic display tool that would makes it a competitive product at prevailing commercial market price. As a free commodity WIN exceeds market expectations.

Moreover, rather than each workforce player sourcing a different occupational wage product or conducting their own surveys, the WIN system is a positive step toward ensuring collaboration among partners in the workforce development system by promoting a single, consistent and reliable source of occupational wage data.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-There are no bounds and no exceptions to customer for occupational wage data. Job seekers, students, public and private policymakers and planners, researchers and employers all have unique needs for these data. Because of this ubiquitous need for occupational wage data, and the various applications of those data, we have already experienced WIN as one of our most frequently accessed automated data systems.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- WIN provides consistent, current and uniform occupational wage data to a wide variety of customers who will, in turn, use those data to make more informed individual and policy decisions.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The WIN system will be updated twice during each program year, corresponding with the official release of each OES wage survey panel.

►The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-Data development costs are covered under the BLS OES grant. Software maintenance costs are covered under WIA Statewide Activities dollars. The original software, as well as the majority of requisite modifications, has already been paid for from PY2004.

LMCI Staff	\$37,146
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$37,146

### **5b. Develop software application that allows for side-by-side examination and inquiry of occupational wage data by Texas LWDA**

►*A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The WIN system allows for pure interactivity for finding occupational wage data. However, within the Texas Workforce Network it is often useful to see how the wages paid for a given occupation compares with wages paid in another region. It is useful to know which region pays the highest or lowest wage for persons in a given occupation. This side-by-side comparison functionality can be automated and put online. LMCI staff will create an online application that allows users to conduct comparison analysis across LWDA regions and within the SOC occupational hierarchy. A draft version of this function was created during PY2004. For PY2005 we will finalize this function and move it into production.

►*Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Many Texas labor market areas cross the boundaries of formal local workforce development board areas (LWDA) or are not coterminous with other political or program-based geographic boundaries. Thus, customers often want to see information for several adjacent Board areas to compare characteristics. This is particularly true of occupational wage data.

►*How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- All of the automated program activities are intended to enhance the availability of LMI for decision-making purposes. As with other software activities, this occupational wage comparison tool is being designed to promote the integration of interagency systems and information sharing, as delineated in the state strategic workforce plan.

►*Principal customers of the deliverable*-Primary customers will include Board planners, case managers and job seekers, and students engaging in career exploration.

►*The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- The side-by-side comparison tool will provide consistent, current and uniform occupational wage data to a wide variety of customers who will, in turn, use those data to make more informed individual and policy decisions.

►*Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The draft software will be revisited in December 2005 with the latest 2005 OES wage panel. It should be available for public release by March 2006.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-All costs associated with this deliverable will be covered by WIA Statewide Activities grant funds.

LMCI Staff	\$0
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$0

**5c. Create a single LMCI web portal that will allow users to find all our various software applications in a single location**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-The merger of LMI and CDR created both synergies and confusions. Customers accustomed to working with one group or the other are slowly understanding that we are now one operation. Both former departments had web-based applications which had been developed for specific purposes. They also had various web hosting arrangements. This project will support the creation of a single web portal from which to access all LMCI software applications. In addition, LMCI programmers will create multiple ways to navigate among the applications including, but not limited to, scenario based tutorials, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), and text-based search engines. Other search features will include the AutoCoder 3.0 utility form RM Wilson Consulting to allow users to enter any common occupational title and quickly identify the appropriate SOC-coded title and view a detailed occupational profile. Finally, a postcard or bookmark or other marketing tool will be designed, printed and widely disseminated to promote the new site.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-LMCI trainers have heard varied complaints about the fact that we offer many wonderful automated tools but the variety has led to some confusion about which tool accomplishes which function. In addition, since each application has its own URL address it is often a challenge for customers to keep track of all the URLs. Customers would like to see one place where they can go to find all the LMCI tools and also be provided methods to quickly find the information they need regardless of which application addresses the need. The bottom-line for customers is how they get the information they need, in a format they require, in the simplest way possible. This single portal and the scenario based inquiry method will be designed around these customer preferences.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- The state workforce plan promotes the need for an integrated technology gateway to better communicate with customers. We have spoken of the synergies created from combining the Texas CDR and LMI shops but some redundancies and potential confusion has also taken place. The development of a scenario or question based single web portal for all LMCI products will allow any customer to know of and access the site, pose an LMI related question and get routed to an appropriate on-line resource. This single portal will provide the system identity recommended in the state workforce strategic plan, provide a single focus for product marketing, and lead to an incremental alignment of features and reduction of duplicate page views that occurred during the merger of multiple online tools.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-The customer base for this project is our universal customer as everyone currently using any LMCI software application and those who have yet to be introduced to any of our online applications will benefit from the improved access and



navigation envisioned under this deliverable.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- The new portal will further promote the ability for customers to move seamlessly among applications, reduce the need for programmers to create duplicate functionalities, and streamline the database management process behind the scenes by maintaining only one copy of each database rather than duplicate sets.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*- From an LMCI priorities perspective, development work for Texas Industry Profiles has dominated automation work activities for most of PY2004. Development work for the new LMCI web page and portal began in March 2005. We expect to roll out a draft of the new portal at the Employment Statistics Committee (ESC) meeting on November 3, 2005, corresponding with the statewide Texas workforce conference. LMCI staff will continue to work with various internal and external customers to assess key features and formats that might be designed into the portal.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-Most of the costs for this project will be in the form of staff costs, however there will be out-of-pocket expenses associated with the printing and dissemination of the marketing component.

LMCI Staff (PY2004)	\$15,000
LMCI Staff (PY2005)	\$49,079
AutoCoder utility	\$9,995
Promotional bookmarks/postcards	\$2,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$76,074

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

### **6a. Provide multiple training options including support for LMCI software products, BSU/LMI training, career orientation curriculum, LMI 101, and the state of job creation in the Texas economy, and staff display booths at various conference events**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*- One of the strengths of the LMCI department has been our product innovation and ability to provide a wide range of hardcopy and electronic information products. Our recent successes in the area of GIS programming is an excellent example of this. Unfortunately, in a state the size of Texas, it is difficult to ensure that potential customers are aware of all these products and how to use them within the appropriate context. Thus, in PY2005-06 we will revisit our outreach effort in terms of the type of training we provide, the customers to whom we offer training, our training and workshop materials, and in-house staff training so that outreach personnel are well-equipped to work with external customers.

LMCI staff plan to conduct roughly 100 workshops and presentations during PY2005-06. Despite what seems like an already significant outreach effort, LMCI staff will pay additional attention to marketing the availability of our new economic development oriented products and providing training to a variety of customer groups on how to use them effectively. New and more

effective methods will be developed for providing staff training and information updates, including online tutorials and the crafting of “user scenarios” for every module in our automated products. We will continue to take advantage of the many customer conferences and events as vehicles to reach out to those respective audiences. For every invitation to provide a display booth we will inquire as to opportunities to be on the formal agenda as well. We will focus on as much “hands on” training as possible, especially where the training venue can be a computer lab, to maximize customer exposure to our stable of automated products.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-Customers are constantly requesting various forms of training on the availability and use of LMI. Requests for training can take many forms, including invitations to speak at larger conferences and events or custom workshops where LMCI staff are featured presenters. In any case, customer education on the availability and application of LMI and LMCI products is a critical component of our customer service plan.

▶ *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- Customer education and training is less a deliverable and more a foundation to the effective use of LMI in the conduct of workforce programs. We believe a robust training agenda can increase collaboration between the workforce, economic development and education communities, as envisioned by the state strategic workforce plan.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*- Training is not limited to any single customer group. Previous training efforts have focused on in-service workshops and conference presentations at events ranging from the rehabilitation community, Texas Placement Association and the Texas Counseling Association to the West Texas Legislative Summit and LMI training for business services units. We will continue to be inclusive in our opportunities to provide training, with a primary focus on workforce board and One Stop Center staff or the workforce side and school counselors and teachers on the education side.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-Training leads to understanding, which leads to use, which in turn leads to more data driven planning and better individual career decisions. We believe the training component will only help rally support for the LMI community and lead to greater collaboration among workforce system partners.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-Training will occur throughout the year, some of which will be by request while other sessions will be planned based other project requirements. For example, we will conduct a minimum of 20 Career Orientation certification training sessions with an average of two per month from July 2005 through December 2005. These sessions will be scheduled in advance. LMCI staff expect to conduct a minimum of one hundred workshops and other presentations during the program year.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-The majority of costs associated with this deliverable will be staff costs. However, funds for curriculum materials development and travel expenses are also included. Training costs will be augmented by U.S. Department of Education grant funds.

LMCI Staff

\$149,500

Training materials development and printing	\$11,000
Travel	\$ 7,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$167,500

**6b. Participate in WIA plan review process by reviewing the Board labor market plans, as requested**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-Local workforce boards are required to submit annual plans or, at a minimum, annual plan amendments, which must include an updated labor market analysis. LMCI staff, as requested, will participate in the process of setting labor market plan guidelines and will serve as subject matter experts (SME) in the review of Board plans to ensure compliance with the guidelines and reasonableness of labor market plan submissions. Such participation is contingent on 1) being invited to do so, and 2) that formal guidelines do not require LMCI staff to make value judgments on the veracity of plans submitted; only the degree to which they are complete and reasonable. Even if staff are not part of the formal plan review process, we will proactively offer guidance and provide editorial expertise in the drafting of any guidelines or technical assistance documents drafted by state Workforce staff.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*- State Workforce division staff are responsible for ensuring that local Boards submit appropriate labor market plans, but generally lack expertise in labor market information. Given the LMI expertise available within LMCI, state Workforce division staff have requested that we review and comment on all draft guidance letters and technical assistance documents. For PY2005, LMCI staff will participate as Subject Matter Experts (SME) in workforce plan review, lending expertise in recognizing reasonable labor market documentation.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- The state strategic plan conforms to the WIA notion that training should align with regional labor market demand. Thus our collaboration with the TWC Workforce division in providing the analytical tools, data, and report formats necessary to identify and document regional labor market demand is very supportive of both the state plan and WIA requirements.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- Our primary customer for this deliverable is the TWC Workforce division.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- The result of this collaboration is that Boards are provided data sets and analytical tools that are designed specifically to meet the Texas WIA objective of identifying subsets targeted industries or clusters and targeted training opportunities. LMCI staff participation in the plan review process further cements our collaboration with the state Workforce division while improving the expertise applied to the crafting of technical guidance letters and review of the LMI section of the workforce plan.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The LMI component of the plan review process occurs during the May-August timeframe this year. Thus our most active participation

will occur during the Summer 2005.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-There are only staff costs associated with this deliverable.

LMCI Staff	\$13,089
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$13,089

#### **6c. Provide live consultive services to answer data questions from workforce board and One Stop staff as well as TWC officials and the general public**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*-LMCI staff will provide on-going technical assistance to address the myriad and varied questions received from internal and external customers. This technical assistance will take many forms, including answering telephone data requests, addressing e-mail and related electronic communiqués, and developing data sets, reports, charts, and thematic maps as requested by the private sector, TWC management, local Board staff, individuals and other workforce system stakeholders.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service*- It is a reality that most of our customers are relative novices at data collection and interpretation. As increasing numbers of our customers are required to provide empirical documentation as a part of program plans or proposals the request for “live” assistance, both internal and external customers, has only grown. The good news is we no longer receive as many routine questions for basic data items, given the availability of so many data sets through the Internet. The flip side is that the questions are increasingly complex, as inquirers are (1) concerned about unique technical notes and methodologies, (2) seeking dynamic data to assess economic impact or job creation, (3) attempting to find or create more sophisticated data display formats, and (4) interested in additional interpretation or value-added comment about trends or other observed phenomena.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*-Technical assistance is an extension of customer training. It does no good to develop data and reports if staff are not available to address questions, suggest possible data uses and warn of pitfalls. In addition, our technical assistance function doubles as a means for customer outreach. By routinely talking with customers and documenting the questions they ask we have a basis from which to develop new data programs, software applications, report formats and new elements for existing in-service training curricula. As such, our technical assistance function helps achieve stronger integration of interagency systems and information sharing among stakeholders of that system and enhances collaboration between private sector, workforce, economic development and education customers.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Just as the Governor’s economic development catch phrase, *Texas... We’re Open for Business* suggests, LMCI staff are available throughout the workday by telephone and electronic media to answers questions from all types of customers. And while we expect greater numbers of our inquiries will come from the workforce development arena, a surprising number come from the private sector and internal TWC customers.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable-* The fact that internal customers represent a growing amount of our technical assistance business is a testimony to the fact that TWC is becoming increasingly market-driven, with more program decisions either based on empirical evidence or requiring empirical justification. Either way, the combination of varied data analysis tools with high caliber LMCI staff support to explain or assist in their use will continue to have an impact on the degree to which workforce and economic development decisions are responsive to regional labor market dynamics and identified needs.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable-* Technical assistance is an ongoing activity throughout the year, undertaken by both singularly dedicated customer service analysts and by others with unique program or analytical expertise.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)-* Technical assistance is an exclusively staff intensive deliverable. Other costs for data sets, analytical tools or related information support will be detailed under that respective product or service.

LMCI Staff	\$158,928
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$158,928

**6d. Produce on-line tutorials of *Texas Job Hunters Guide, Succeed At Work and Your Next Job* as part of a WIA Reemployment Grant initiative**

► *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity-* Using funds from another DOL grant, LMCI will create three online tutorials based on existing LMCI publications. The project will be largely a subcontract arrangement that will involve simplifying the language of three LMCI publications (*Texas Job Hunters Guide, Succeed At Work and Your Next Job*) and also translating them into the Spanish language. The simplified publications will then be automated within a learning management system (LMS) environment to allow users to read and learn online. A subcontract has been let and the project has begun. During PY2005, LMCI staff will manage that contract and create an appropriate hosting environment for the work product.

► *Expressed customer support for the product or service-* This project is being undertaken at the request of the TWC Workforce division as a means to more effectively communicate job search techniques and re-employment methods to a broader audience of Texas Workforce network customers.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan-* The objectives of this deliverable are twofold; (1) to more quickly reintegrate displaced or dislocated workers by providing them with information necessary to make informed career choices and conduct a more fruitful job search, (2) to decrease UI payouts by helping dislocated workers shorten their duration of unemployment. The first objective relates to the state workforce plan goal of improving worker preparation to effectively navigate the continuum between education and employment. The second objective addresses a system effectiveness goal and provides a benefit to employers by assisting in the efficient expenditure of UI trust fund monies and thereby lowering employer tax rates.

▶ *Principal customers of the deliverable*-Job seekers are the primary customers for the tutorials. However, as mentioned previously, employers and the UI system are indirect beneficiaries of the project if sufficient use is made of the online tools.

▶ *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*-This project is being conducted in concert with UI profiling and other efforts to assist workers in getting reintegrated into the labor force quicker and thus reduce the duration of spells of unemployment. The LMS will offer online testing and other means to validate that the job seeker or UI claimant has mastered the material. Mastery of job search techniques, combined with enhanced labor market knowledge, should speed up the process of claimant reintegration resulting in quicker times-to-work for job seekers and reduced outlays from the UI trust fund.

▶ *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-The tutorials project is an 18 month project with staggered deliverables. We expect to have all three publications, in both English and Spanish, available for public consumption by June 30, 2006.

▶ *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*- There will be minimal cost to the ETA contract for this deliverable. All funds will come from the PY2003-04 Texas WIA Reemployment grant. In fact, as another example of financial leverage, increased bandwidth capacity needed for the tutorials will indirectly assist users of other ETA-funded applications such as TRACER and WIN. Some staff costs for project oversight and management will be charged against the ETA grant.

LMCI Staff (PY2004)	\$10,000
LMCI Staff (PY2005)	\$17,713
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$27,713

**6e. In-service training for LMCI staff in areas related to computer system languages, Internet protocols and applications**

▶ *A description of the core product, service or other demand activity*- In this world where knowledge is expanding exponentially it is important to provide training for our own LMCI staff. This is particularly true in the technical areas where staff need to maintain current knowledge in new computer languages, online tools and available third-party utilities to improve the quality of IT applications. This is also true as well of emerging trends in the global economy and the business workplace where staff need to maintain current knowledge if they are to serve as SMEs in a technical assistance role. LMCI management will endeavor to maintain a knowledgeable and technically competent staff through capacity building efforts such as formal education and training opportunities.

▶ *Expressed customer support for the product or service*-External customers want to deal with knowledgeable staff. LMCI staff want to engage in continuous professional development to do their own job better and enhance their personal skill sets. Access to formal staff training achieves both these goals.

► *How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/W-P Strategic Plan*- It is expected that LMCI staff will be knowledgeable about the data requirements embedded in the WIA and related workforce development legislation. It is also expected that those charged with providing labor market information support to One Stop Centers will be knowledgeable in their respective subject matter areas. Thus, maintaining a skilled and knowledgeable LMCI staff not only supports the larger program goals but under girds their effective implementation.

► *Principal customers of the deliverable*- LMCI staff will be eligible for training, depending on identified knowledge gaps and appropriate professional development goals.

► *The outcome(s) and system impact(s) projected for each deliverable*- Formal training for staff is an important aspect of capacity building. LMCI staff will be better prepared to address issues in the evolving Texas labor market and demonstrate enhanced ability to create new technical solutions in support of workforce development programs.

► *Planned milestones for completion of the deliverable*-Staff training will occur periodically throughout the year, as identified.

► *The total estimated cost of each deliverable (w/ any capital expenses over \$5,000)*-

LMCI staff costs	\$34,865
Travel	\$15,000
Formal training opportunities tuition and materials	\$15,000
Total Cost for Deliverable:	\$64,865

**Program Note:** With multiple grants, a varied customer base and a plethora of projects leveraged with other external stakeholders, there is considerable management, education, communication and administrative time necessary to implement the proposed project plan. Apart from general physical plant overhead, LMCI incurs non-project specific staff costs associated with project management and administration, IT overhead, financial and secretarial support etc. Additional costs are incurred for non-project specific overhead including, but not limited to the purchase of furniture and related physical property, consumable supplies, telecommunications, personal computer, printer and copier rental, janitorial service, storage rental, IT break-fix expenses, administrative travel, Windows upgrades and PC refresh. For purposes of this budget plan, these costs have been redistributed across all planned projects based on apportioned staff FTE costs for each project.

In addition, \$109,265 in carry over funds from the PY2004 grant have been incorporated into this plan proposal. Combined with the \$1,893,807 in PY2005 funds, the total budget included in this proposal totals \$2,003,072. Each project denotes the amount of PY2004 carry over funds that have been allocated to it.

### **Section III. Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment**

#### **Provide a description of the strategy to be employed by the state for consulting with customers and for assessing customer satisfaction with state produced workforce information.**

As discussed previously, LMCI has multiple means to conduct outreach and consult with customers. These feedback loops do not exist in a vacuum. They are organized to keep LMCI staff apprised of customer perspectives and underpin future product development.

Thus, in any continuous program improvement process, outreach efforts exist to concomitantly inform the public of products and services and to solicit their input. When such feedback indicates that LMCI is addressing topics of need, activities in those areas can be enhanced or expanded. When feedback indicates that a void exists or that current products or services are not satisfactorily addressing specific needs, activities can be undertaken to improve such situations.

This process of continuous program improvement exists in a collaborative environment. LMCI staff have a responsibility to be knowledgeable in labor market data and data analysis and to communicate to the user community where strengths, weaknesses and limitations exist in the system. The user community has the responsibility to openly communicate their perceived workforce information needs, whether solicited or unsolicited. Only through this collaborative process can the system improve.

As in the case of passive and active customers, LMCI will engage in a combination of proactive and passive approaches to soliciting customer feedback. LMCI analysts record questions asked and responses provided into an ACCESS database. During the PY this database will be broken down into groupings that reflect the preponderance of user questions. Over 10,000 responses have been recorded over the past eighteen months. Analysis of the responses will provide insights into the most prevalent questions asked, the types of information items sent most often and reveal those areas that could be better addressed with new products, data elements or reformatted delivery vehicles.

All LMCI web based applications will include web metrics for user hits, sessions and page views as well as web demographics and additional information on which applications or functionalities users actually engage most frequently. Counts of information disseminated, numbers of inquiries addressed and type of inquiry will help determine user interest and guide product development efforts. An excellent example of this is the Reality Check budget calculator. In review of the CDR web page we discovered that the vast majority of hits and sessions associated with that application were to view the Reality Check budget calculator. Subsequently we have enhanced the features of Reality Check and we are in the process of phasing out the CDR web page in favor of the new LMCI portal page.

On the proactive front, LMCI will continue to engage the business community through presentations at local workforce Boards and other venues. The LMCI Deputy Director routinely speaks at the Texas Business Conferences sponsored by the TWC's Commissioner for Employers. We will continue to operate specialized customer satisfaction surveys and



proactively consult with LWDB executive directors. We will continue our local workforce board staff outreach by meeting with our Employment Statistics Committee (ESC), a group whose membership is drawn from the ranks of local workforce board planners and data analysts. For PY2005 we have added local Business Services Representatives (BRS) to the ESC membership to ensure that those who work most closely with employers have a voice in our data development activities. During PY2004-05 we conducted a web-based customer satisfaction survey on the use of Texas CARES (results still pending). Questions selected for this survey are intended to yield actionable information to assist in product improvement rather than simply customer impressions. Other processes for gathering information may be implemented as they are appropriate or as they are needed to fully assess customer satisfaction. Such methods will be consistent with those recommended in the *Customer Satisfaction Made Easy* monograph distributed by the Workforce Information Council.