

Workforce Information Annual Report – PY2003 CONNECTICUT

This report identifies the information products and services that the Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research developed and provided during program year 2003 to support the State's workforce investment system. The One-Stop Career Center/America's Labor Market Information System funds provided for this purpose are critical to the development of the workforce information on which Connecticut's strategic workforce investments are made, as well as to the decisions made by the workforce development professionals and customers of the State's workforce investment system.

A. Accomplishments Compared to Plan

Core Products and Services

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

In program year 2003, Connecticut played a lead role in the ALMIS Resource Center. In addition to addressing national, state, and local customer information needs, the consortium played a key role in training and support to the states in the implementation, population and updating of data in each State's ALMIS Database. We have completed populating version 1.1 of the ALMIS Database as it supports our existing Internet applications. The Office of Research continued to maintain data including and beyond the core data elements, within guidelines issued by the ALMIS Database Consortium.

The Connecticut licensed occupation information has been updated to include the most current data and was submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for inclusion on the America's Career InfoNet (ACINet) site with the addition of O*Net SOC codes.

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

In program year 2003, the Office of Research completed and disseminated State-level, long-term industry and occupational employment projections for 2002 to 2012, using the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Projections Managing Partnership. The new projections data have been published in print format and on the Office of Research Web site, and were sent to the Projections Managing Partnership. We began work on long-term employment projections for the State's five sub-state regions to 2012.

The Office of Research produced State-level, short-term industry forecasts for 2003 to 2005. The new industry forecasts have been published in the *Connecticut Economic Digest* and an in-depth economic forecast analysis on the Office of Research Web site.

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

In program year 2003, the Office of Research focused its efforts on developing and enhancing Internet accessible tools and resources targeted to specific user groups for identified purposes, while continuing to maintain a limited quantity of products in paper format. Among them is the popular *Connecticut Career Paths* publication. Developed through our association with the Connecticut Career Resource Network, the *Connecticut Career Paths* is targeted primarily for secondary school students and is delivered directly to those schools. It is also widely distributed to the State's One-Stop Centers, community colleges, correctional facilities, and others. In program year 2003, the Office of Research printed 135,000 copies – an increase of 10,000 to target the State's faith-based and community organizations throughout Connecticut.

We also continued to produce the *Connecticut Economic Digest*. Considered the most comprehensive source for current data on the workforce and economy of the State, the *Connecticut Economic Digest* is only available in print format on a subscription basis. However, electronic versions are accessible on the Office of Research Web site.

In program year 2003, we completed extensive updates of our *Connecticut Occupational Employment and Wages* publication to include current employment and wage data by occupation based on the results of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) survey. Our *Soaring to New Heights... Connecticut Job Outlook by Training Level 2000-2010* was updated to include the latest outlook on more than 200 occupations in demand. Both of these publications are available on the Office of Research Web site and in print format.

The *Connecticut Forecast 2000-2010: Our Industries and Occupations* report has been updated to highlight statistics and trends in industries and occupations using the 2000-2010 projection data. From this data, users receive insights into the types of jobs the Connecticut economy will generate over the next ten years. The *Connecticut Forecast 2000-2010: Our Industries and Occupations* is available electronically on the Office of Research Web site and in print format. This publication will be replaced by a new publication on the 2012 outlook later in 2004.

Information provided by the Office of Research is a crucial component of the State's long-term workforce investment strategy and is used by the State's education system to establish instructional programs that meet the needs of the State's businesses. To ensure that the State's workforce investment system is demand-driven requires that Connecticut's training programs focus on job skills requirements and business needs to prepare workers for current and future employment opportunities. The Office of Research produced an important product to address this need - the *Connecticut Workforce Demands and the Implications for Education* publication.

State-specific workforce information was gathered and presented in our *Connecticut Workforce Demands and the Implications for Education* report. Targeted for government policymakers and education professionals, the *Connecticut Workforce Demands and the Implications for Education* describes major economic and workforce trends in Connecticut and their effect upon employment over the next ten years – specifically focusing on labor shortages. This report also identifies areas in which to concentrate its investment in education to assure the most effective expenditure of public monies. The *Connecticut Workforce Demands and the Implications for Education* is available on the Office of Research Web site and in print format.

The Office of Research continues to be an integral part of the Agency's Rapid Response efforts for companies and their workers experiencing plant closure or layoff. In program year 2003, three Rapid Response sessions served more than 250 individuals. We are also recognized as the leading provider of workforce information for other State Agencies, most notably the Department of Economic and Community Development to assist companies considering expanding and out-of-state firms contemplating relocation in Connecticut. The workforce information may include, but is not limited to, labor force statistics, employment by occupation, wages, industry profiles, and business starts, expansions and closings.

The Office of Research maintained its involvement in public events such as job fairs and conferences. In program year 2003, eight job and career fairs brought more than 500 companies and 5,700 job seekers together. When called upon, we take a lead role in coordinating job fairs to assist targeted groups such as college students and individuals with employment barriers. In program year 2003, the Office of Research worked with the Department of Corrections to coordinate two career days at the Webster Correctional Institute for more than 350 pre-release offenders. .

The Office of Research participated in the Connecticut Career Resource Network-sponsored *Connecticut Learns and Works Conference*. Attended by more than 275 career development specialists, counselors, teachers, and others, the *Connecticut Learns and Works Conference* included workshops on workforce trends, education and training resources, current and future occupational opportunities, and the use of workforce information in career decision-making.

Our Office also played a key role in the Center for Faith-Based and Community-Based Outreach's Faith-Based Conference by offering a labor market information workshop to more than 50 attendees from faith-based, grass roots, community-based organizations and the public. The Conference attracted more than 300 people in total.

In support of the Agency's Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) Program, the Office of Research conducted a labor market information workshop at the annual "Women in the Trades Conference" for 75 participants. Attended by more than 300 people, the Conference provides many opportunities for women to identify workforce opportunities in nontraditional occupations and industries in the state and to network.

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

The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC)* Web application references the *infoUSA* database and its extensive listing of more than 140,000 Connecticut employers. We continue to update the *infoUSA* data as new files become available. The *infoUSA* database is an essential job search tool for job seekers, students, and others needing contact information for Connecticut businesses. It also helps the State's One-Stop center staff devise methods to better match Connecticut businesses and unemployed workers.

With the current contract with *infoUSA* ending, the Office of Research, through the ALMIS Database Consortium, played a lead role in selecting the new employer data provider, and the establishment of a new contract for a publicly releasable list of employer names and addresses.

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

In program year 2003, the Office of Research conducted its annual information review session with the State's workforce investment board planners to better understand their data needs for their strategic planning purposes. Feedback from the Workforce Investment Board planners is collected and implemented, where applicable, into a number of Office products, most importantly, the *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)*. In program year 2003, the *IWIP* was redesigned to display State and local labor information into a user-friendly format. Lengthy narratives were replaced with charts and data tables. We believe this new format, along with additional data items, will be extremely useful for the Workforce Investment Board planners and policy makers who make critical workforce system decisions.

The Office of Research coordinated a Workforce Board Retreat for seventy-five staff of the State's five Workforce Investment Boards. A variety of State-specific economic and occupation data were made available for their future workforce development planning efforts.

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

In support of the State's Five-Year Workforce Investment Plan, the Office of Research remains committed to providing universal access to important workforce information through electronic delivery systems that support a self-service approach. By providing access to the data, we also increase access to the Connecticut One-Stop centers and the services available to employers and job seekers. The *Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion* and *Education and Training ConneCTion* continue to be premier electronic information resources within the State's workforce investment system. In program year 2003, the *Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion* averaged more than 23,000 visitor sessions and 4,600 unique visitors each month, while the *Education and Training ConneCTion* averaged more than 14,000 visitor sessions and 2,000 unique visitors during this same period. Our Office also maintains the Workforce Investment Act Eligible Training Programs List (WIA-ETPL), which directly supports the Workforce Investment Board's efforts to register job seekers into WIA-approved training.

The Office of Research continues to add new data and downloadable offerings to its Labor Market Information Web site to deliver information in an expedient and efficient manner to our business and job seeker customers. Based on feedback from our customers, popular subjects such as Connecticut's latest workforce news and economic numbers are prominently displayed on the site. Graphic displays of current LMI publications and newsletters are included on the Home page. In addition, we offer our LMI publications in both HTML and PDF formats. The Office of Research's Labor Market Information site averaged more than 20,000 visitor sessions and 8,100 unique visitors per month in program year 2003.

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

Local capacity building has been identified as a critical element for the implementation of Connecticut's vision under the Workforce Investment Act. When requested, we work with the State's Office for Workforce Competitiveness and the Department of Labor's Training Institute to provide labor market information training for the One-Stop Center's front-line staff serving both individual and employer customers. In program year 2003, the Office of Research provided nine labor market information workshops to more than 350 employees of the State's One-Stop system, community colleges, healthcare providers and faith-based organizations serving individual and employer customers. Through this training, participants are exposed to the various labor market information publications, the content of each, and their availability as information sources. The Office of Research also provides the training curriculum to the workforce development professionals in the State for use in their workshops for job seekers, students and others.

The Department of Labor receives a significant number of requests each year for staff to speak at meetings, conferences and schools. In many instances, staff from the Office of Research is asked to present labor market information before schools, business associations, employers, employees, governmental and international groups regarding labor market information issues and economic forecast overviews. In program year 2003, the Office of Research participated in thirteen training events serving more than 750 people.

Ongoing opportunities for knowledge building is important for labor market information professionals so they can understand and serve the varied information needs of customers. The Office of Research staff builds their skills through the sessions made available by the LMI Institute's Training Consortium such as the LMI Forum and Short-Term Industry Projections (STIP) Software Training. Where applicable, we incorporate the materials presented in the training into our ongoing capacity building efforts directed to field staff. These sessions are valuable training mechanisms for providing our staff with an understanding of the role of the Office of Research and labor market information in the State's workforce investment system.

B. Customer Satisfaction Assessment

The Office of Research conducts numerous workshops, seminars, and other presentations to a variety of groups each year. From these efforts, customer feedback on all the Office's products and services is gathered and used as important input to the further development of similar efforts that meet user needs. Continuous monitoring of feedback has resulted in new communications efforts and improved data download access through our Web applications, and the addition of new electronic and print products.

1. Web Products:

The Office of Research Web team regularly reviews website use statistics for each of its electronic products to identify the tendencies of its users and to optimize their performance. We pay particular attention to such data as the number of unique visitors, the sections of the Web site most used and the length of time spent on the site. Program year 2003 brought a steady flow of visits from job seekers, businesses, and researchers to our Web applications. The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* (www.ctjobandcareer.org) experienced a total of 282,000 visitor sessions and 55,800 unique visitors – the latter representing an increase of 2,637 unique visitors over the previous program year. The *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* (www.cttraining.info) showed a total of 174,000 visitor sessions and 30,000 unique visitors. The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* and *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* applications have on-line *Feedback* forms for user comments and suggestions.

Our Labor Market Information site (www.ctdol.state.ct.us/lmi) reported 246,000 visitor sessions and 97,800 unique visitors - an increase of 22,144 visitor sessions and 37,000 unique visitors over the previous program year.

Each of these Web products includes an on-line *Contact Us* section to report site problems, or ask technical experts for assistance. In program year 2003, the Office of Research responded to more than 240 requests for information and/or technical assistance from the Labor Market Information site.

2. Publications:

The Office of Research produces a number of economic and career development publications. We created a *Labor Market Information Activity Report* to identify the number of printed copies and on-line downloads of our publications were requested. Each publication includes Office of Research contact information for comments and inquiries. Our customers are encouraged to request topics to be covered in future issues. We periodically survey our customers to identify subscriber demand and generate topics for future publications. In program year 2003, the Office of Research printed more than 275,000 copies of its various publications. In addition, our customers downloaded more than 239,000 products and publications during this same period.

3. Outreach Efforts:

Connecticut Job and Career Fairs:

The success of the *Connecticut Job and Career Fairs* can be attributed to their commitment to customer satisfaction. Employers and job seekers complete exit surveys that capture such data as their overall rating of the job fair, areas for improvement, and recommendations. Information from the exit surveys is displayed on the *Connecticut Job and Career Fairs* Web site. Recent feedback contributed to the enhancement of the Web site to enable job seekers to view lists of employers participating at the job fairs and the occupations for which they are hiring.

CT Learns and Works Conference:

This annual conference includes workshops for career development specialists, counselors, teachers, and others. Topics include the needs of workers, work force trends, education and training resources, current and future occupational opportunities, and the use of labor market information in career decision-making. In addition to a *Conference Evaluation Form*, each participant is asked to complete an evaluation for each workshop attended. The conference planners to measure the success of each workshop, to respond to questions, and to design future curriculum, examine the evaluation forms.

Workforce Investment Board (WIB) Planners:

To better understand the data needs of the Workforce Investment Board planners, the Office of Research conducts an annual informational session focusing on the applicability of the data contained in the *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)* publication. The Office of Research uses feedback from this session to determine the data needs of the State's workforce investment planners, and to assist in the layout of the following year's publication. The most recent informational session was responsible for the expanded data topics for each region and the addition of bar charts and data tables.

Rapid Response/Early Intervention:

Working with the Agency's Rapid Response team, the Office of Research provides general workforce information and economic trends, and brief explanations of our print products and electronic applications to companies that are anticipating layoffs. Following each session, the participants are asked to complete an evaluation of the program. Using feedback from the participants allows the Office of Research to examine the quality and applicability of its Early Intervention workshop curriculum and to make necessary improvements.

Training:

The Office of Research provides training to employees of the One-Stop system, Workforce Investment Boards, State Government, education, and the general public. Following each training session, participants complete an evaluation of the course content, instructor, and applicability of the training to their job performance. The feedback is examined to monitor the usefulness of the Web sites and to improve the quality of the instruction.

C. Recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Suite of Core Products

The changes made to the new program year's (PY04) core products and services are an improvement that continues to focus efforts in specified areas while allowing us flexibility in determining the specific products that address identified State priorities. Additional resources would be the prime elixir for expanding our capabilities to more fully respond to the broad range of information needs of the workforce system.