

West Virginia Bureau of Employment Programs
Division of Research, Information and Analysis

PY2002
Workforce Information Grant Plan

Part A. A description of the statewide employment statistics system

The Division of Research, Information and Analysis comprises three offices in addition to its administrative office—the Office of Bureau of Labor Statistics Programs, the Office of Labor Market Information and the Office of Workers' Compensation Research. By title, each office's function is self-explanatory.

The Office of Labor Market Information is wholly responsible for implementing state workforce information services. It takes the raw material developed within the Office of Bureau of Labor Statistics and refines it into finished data products as well as developing other information products from broad and varied sources. This office consists of programming, analytic and supervisory staff.

The Office of Labor Market Information issues regular monthly, periodic and annual publications and informational releases; it designs, maintains and refines the division's web site; it prepares special reports and responds to all information requests. It develops new informational products and services, receives customer feedback for the division as a whole, conducts training for data users, and undertakes special projects.

Web site content developed by this office consists of the following categories: Latest monthly data, employment and unemployment data, on-line publications, wage data, occupational data, workforce investment area data, occupational safety and health statistics, other (primarily federal and national) information, and link to related and associated web sites.

Latest monthly data includes news releases, labor force estimates by industry, by historical series and seasonally adjusted, U.S. employment and unemployment, county emphasis, labor statistics by county, nonfarm payroll employment by county and labor market area statistics.

Employment and unemployment data is presented for the state, counties, MSAs, workforce investment areas, labor market areas and for the U.S. This information contains monthly reports on the civilian labor force from year to date to 1980, monthly reports on employment and unemployment, labor force statistics from 1976 to date with other series from 1960-1975 and 1939 to current.

Occupational data consists of short and long-term projections and occupational wage data. All are available for the state and workforce force investments areas; occupational wage data is also available for MSAs and is updated quarterly in all formats.

Employment and wage data has added a new quarterly feature and is available on annual basis in 2, 3 and 4-digit industry configuration from 1995 to most current. This section also contains Affirmative Action information and revised nonfarm payroll data/

On-line publications recap the monthly *Economic Summary*, Affirmative Action with occupational supplement, a directory of publications, occupational wages, occupational projections, licensed occupations, special reports on veterans and youth, and special articles.

The wage data section contains employment and wages 1995 to present, occupational wages for the state, MSAs, workforce investment areas, the United States, all states and all national MSAs.

Occupational data contains occupational wages for the state, MSAs, workforce investment areas, United States, all states and all MSAs.

Workforce investment areas reprises much of the above information arranged by the state's seven workforce development areas and by the counties located within them. It contains as well extensive population information from the 1990 and 2000 Census.

The web site also contains occupational illness and injury statistics from 1998 to current by counts, rates, and characteristics as derived from the Occupational Safety and Health survey.

Other data includes the consumer price index, producer price index, employment by size class of the state's employers, the top 100 employers in the state, the top ten employers by county, per capita personal income and an employer name and address list.

Links are provided to related sites operated by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Bureau of the Census, the Bureau of Economic Analysis, ALMIS, LMI sites in all states, and to associated agencies in the state such as the Governor's Workforce Investment Division, the West Virginia Development Office, the Bureau for Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University and the Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University.

1. The state's strategy for consulting with state and local workforce investment boards, the business community, individuals and workforce development professionals to determine customer's workforce information needs.

The Division of Research, Information and Analysis is represented on the Governor's Workforce Investment Division's Labor Market Information Work Team which has as its mission the determination of the types and kinds of information needed by local workforce investment boards. Additionally, the division regularly assists local boards by providing complete occupational information and helping in their planning processes.

The division has enjoyed a long-term information exchange and maintains a data sharing agreement with the Bureau for Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University, as well as with the Center for Business and Economic Research at Marshall University, both entities also being represented on GWID's Labor Market Information Work Team.

The division regularly produces standard and special information for state business publications, business editors in the state media, and business development organizations such as the State Business Roundtable, the West Virginia Statistical League, and the Business and Industrial Development Corporation. Local development organizations are regularly assisted as well. Individual businesses are continual customers through direct contact with data analysts, whether by telephone, fax, e-mail or correspondence. The division maintains a high reputation within the state's employer community and is a well-known and well-regarded source of information meeting businesses needs.

Through the division's web site, publications and direct assistance services, individual customers are served on day to day basis.

New directions for this office include its recent acceptance into the Bureau of Census' Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) partnership and involvement with the national Supply/Demand Consortium. Both of these involvements promise long-term workforce information benefits, particularly the LEHD project for which we have just begun to look at products that may derive from this.

We also hope within this program year to acquire and launch Virtual LMI as our career information delivery system on the Internet and repository of nearly all information we produce. We have targeted late 2003/early 2004 as the time when Virtual LMI will be completely functional and up-to-date on our web site.

The division assists the educational community and workforce development professionals through contacts and information exchanges within the state's Higher Education Policy Commission, the Division of Rehabilitation Services and the Division of Technical and Adult Education Services, as well as staff in local workforce offices and One Stop centers across the state.

2. How the statewide employment statistics system supports the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan for state and local workforce development.

The Division of Research, Information and Analysis supports the state's WIA/Wagner Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan through its role on the Governor's Workforce Investment Division's Labor Market Information Work Team. In this capacity, the division has a key responsibility in initiating and cooperating with other work group members in research information development along the lines of the Work Team's seven-step plan:

(a.) Economic Forecasts

Economic Forecasts and associated analysis are divided into short-run and long-term. Short-run forecasts would be issued annually for the state and regions for use in their strategic planning. Long-run forecasts (5-10 years) for the state and regions would be more detailed in terms of industry sectors and would be released I even years for use by the Bureau of Employment Programs occupational projections.

(b.) Labor Market Studies

Annual analysis of state and regional labor markets will be used In the strategic planning process. In 2002 there are some regional boards that have completed or commissioned labor market studies for use in strategic planning.

(c.) Industry Studies

West Virginia's major industry sectors are often located in several regions of the state. Continued competitive pressures and new opportunities necessitate the established of periodic comprehensive studies of these industries for use in planning multi-regional workforce development. Among the industries are chemicals, steel, travel and tourism, health care, wood products, high technology and other areas.

(d.) Cluster Analysis and Special Studies

Within regions there are specific business clusters that may present opportunities for consortium-based and strategic workforce development to capitalize on future economic growth. In 2002 there are some regional boards, which have completed or commissioned cluster studies for use in strategic planning; however, others need to be commissioned. Among the special studies are (1) West Virginia's border economies, (2) shadow and underground economies and implications for the potential labor availability, (3) role of fringe benefits including health care access and disparity, (4) labor productivity studies at 3 digit level, (5) impacts of key policy initiatives on labor productivity, (6) regional data gaps for policy making, and others to be determined.

(e.) LEHD Studies

The Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LEHD) program, U.S. Census, creates an opportunity for additional labor market studies in the even West Virginia is added to the program. With many surrounding states either current or projected to be members of the LEHD program, research can begin focusing on the interstate linkages of labor markets. In particular, members of the LMI work team will identify additional data products, research reports and associated activities once West Virginia has been selected for inclusion in the program. These studies support policy development in a number of areas beyond labor market policies. For example, LEHD data are particularly critical in transportation infrastructure development. Thus, we propose that the potential for

extending these studies to other agencies be considered early in the LMI research initiative.

(f.) Performance Measurement and Program Evaluation

Integral to the development and execution of workforce development programs is the establishment of the measure for the evaluation of the program. Without well-designed performance measurement and independent evaluations, it is very difficult to evaluate the short-term and long-term success or failure of programs. With limited resources, the use of well-established manpower planning evaluation techniques can assist in fully understanding the benefits and costs of the programs. Technical assistance to WIBS by neutral third party evaluators at MU and WVU is essential in understanding the effectiveness of workforce programs.

(g.) Training of WIB Boards and Staffs

Integral to the provision of various data products, forecasts and studies is the use of this information by the various boards and staffs. Through structured training programs, participants will learn how to make effective use of the information in developing their strategic plans, workforce development programs, and evaluation.

3. The broad strategic approach for workforce information delivery to the systems three principal customer groups—the business community, individuals and the state’s workforce development system.

As discussed under number 2 above, the division enjoys a good reputation in the state’s business community as an accurate and efficient source of the varied information it seeks. Businesses are a steady and consistent customer group of our services. We also have a fine working relationship with media throughout the state by responding to immediate requests, by adding depth to topics of interest and by substantiating material for them.

In order to sustain this relationship and to expand upon it, the division will introduce into its customer service measures queries and further dialogue with business users of the information we produce. Additionally, we will explore the development of new products and services of value to the employer community. Employers will likewise benefit from the availability of Virtual LMI that also will be a centerpiece of our service to individuals and to One Stop service centers. Services provided through this system can be tracked and evaluated. Employer members of local workforce boards will have an opportunity to receive special assistance in the many uses of this information and will be solicited for their suggestions as to when and what types of information they find most useful.

The division’s strategic approach to individual services is to continue its successful and frequently used telephone accessibility, to promote and operate the Virtual LMI system, to continue producing those publications in hard copy that are data users prefer in that format while moving other publications and material to our Web Site in appealing and usable configurations. Based upon our individual data users’ evaluations of services and information that they have been provided, we will examine the form, content and utility of this information for improvement.

4. How workforce information and services are delivered to customers through the state's One Stop service delivery system.

Workforce information and services are delivered to the clientele of the state's One Stop service delivery system in a number of ways. Most prominent is our division's web site which offers a diverse amount of occupational information, including industry and occupational, and much other regionally specific information. The division cooperates with the state's Higher Education Policy Council and supplies them much information and assistance in the preparation of their annual Career Tabloid which is available at each One Stop Center. All hard-copy labor market information publications produced by the division are available at these centers as well.

The division is a cooperating partner on our intra-agency committee involving the implementation of the Mid-Atlantic Career Consortium (MAC) system which will be the key operating system in One Stop Centers and Job Service offices in the state. Because of our role in MAC planning, we have identified and will have operational and analytical access to applicant and job opening data which can be used to provide other dimensions of analyses for workforce investment managers and board members as well as employers in general.

Division staff regularly assist individuals who make direct contact through e-mail or telephone inquiry for career information and One-Stop Centers are often the source of these referrals.

Part B. Products and Services

As a condition for receipt of funds in support of the development and maintenance of a comprehensive system of labor market information, West Virginia will perform the following activities during Program Year 2002.

1. Continue to populate the ALMIS database with State data.

The current database version in use is 2.1 with population of the core tables 100% complete. Towards the end of PY 2002, selected optional tables will be complete. The projected date for conversion to 2.2 will be late in calendar year 2003. Updating licensed occupations with current data on occupational descriptions, licensing requirements, licensing boards and agencies, comparative occupational wages, and projections of employment expectations for each occupation will be comprehensive and include the following database files: license.dbf, llicauth.dbf and lichist.dbf. Upon completion of this update, the licensing data will be transmitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center (NCSC) for inclusion on the America's Career Information Network (ACINet) site. Primary consumers will have access to the Employment Statistics website where the information will reside and is readily accessible. These consumers will include

government and public education officials, private educational professionals, job and economic development staff, state and local workforce investment officials and staff, secondary, vocational and higher education students, employment counselors, training providers, job seekers, unemployed persons and others. Milestones for completing the above: 100% completion of ALMIS and 100% of licensed occupations.

2. Produce and disseminate long-term industry and occupational employment projections.

Industry employment projections for the state and seven workforce investment areas will be produced for the period 2000-2010. These key projections will be produced in conjunction with occupational projections and will be accessible on the Employment Statistics web site with analysis in narrative composition. This will be the first set of projections done under the new Standard Occupational Classification which directly compares to the O*Net and 2000 Census classifications as well as to the occupational employment and wage data which we have published for the past several years. These projections will be produced using Consortium and MicroMatrix methodology and software. In addition to immediate availability on the Employment Statistics web site, selected versions of these projections will be made in hard copy for use in specific presentations and for use in training. We are currently involved in complete and precise geocoding of the Charleston/Kanawha MSA under special grant from BLS and projections data will be a component of reports issuing from this project as well. Target customers are those identified under the preceding ALMIS section. Milestones will completion of the projections early in calendar year 2003 with this information appearing on our web site soon after.

3. Produce and disseminate short-term industry and occupational employment forecasts.

Short-term industry employment forecasts will be created as an element of producing short-term occupational employment projections. Like the long-term industry projections, these will be made available on the Employment Statistics web site. Versions of the short-term projections will be produced for the state and seven workforce investment areas utilizing consortium/MicroMatrix methodology. Principal customers will include those listed under the ALMIS section above. Production milestones will include the statewide industry forecast initially with the completion of the seven workforce areas soon after. All short-term projections will be completed early in calendar year 2003. Like the long-term projections, they will be used as a component of our geocoding products for the specific areas they embrace. Milestones for this effort will be completion of this information in early calendar year 2003, to appear on our web site soon after.

4. Provide occupational and career information products for public use.

Occupational analysis and career information products are now available in the form of comparative employment and wage levels for each occupation within each workforce investment area. This wage information is updated quarterly with new wage levels. With the completion of both long and short-term occupational projections, analysis will be included with regard to such factors as growth rate (or decline) with an emphasis on practical, long-term and career employment potential. There will be analyses with regard to types of industries preferred for economic development as well as training and research needed to attain a ready workforce for these industries. A determination will be made of the best occupations for specified types of training according to duration and intensity of training. Target customers will be those listed under the ALMIS heading above. Milestones for completion of this activity will be on-going updates of area wage comparison estimates, best career-type occupations in terms of growth or numerical stature, best jobs within industries preferred for economic development, and best jobs for length and depth of training resources.

5. Provide an employer name and address list that can be assessed by the public.

The employer list involves the creation and maintenance of a link to a list provided on America's Career InfoNet. The link is in position on our Employment Statistics web site and is active. Primary customers are those listed under the ALMIS section above.

6. Provide information and support to Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and produce other state information products and services.

The Research, Information and Analysis Division will support fully and work together with the Governor's Workforce Investment Division (GWID). The division director is a member of the West Virginia Labor Market Information Work Team established by the GWID and contributes information and guidance. The division will prepare labor market information on demand as requested by the GWID and the seven workforce area boards and staffs. Additionally, we will confer with GWID and our other partners on the work team to identify and produce new products and assistance. Training materials and opportunities will be developed and offered to state and local workforce personnel on the best uses of labor market information and new informational products. Principal customers for this task will be the state workforce investment division and seven local workforce investment boards. Milestones for achieving this activity will be measured in the number and types of new information and efforts identified by the work team to be undertaken and completed.

Additional activities and services include sustaining the WIA/Wagner-Peyser 5-Year Plan, completing at large information requests, supplying information for internal and administrative purposes and generating monthly and annual news releases and publications (which we are in the process of revamping and expanding). Services to the business community are a large and important part of our labor market information activities. These will benefit particularly from the geocoding efforts we are making first in the Charleston/Kanawha area (Workforce Investment 3) and as we then move into Workforce Investment Area 2 (Cabell/Huntington and surrounding counties). Milestones will be completion of geocoded ES-202 files for Charleston/Kanawha and publication of analytical results.

7. Improve and deploy electronic state workforce information delivery systems.

The Research, Information and Analysis Division maintains an expansive and ever-growing web site devoted to employment statistics and labor market information for the State of West Virginia and its sub-divisions, with particular emphasis on a full selection of products for the seven local workforce investment boards. As such, this web site has been the state-based workforce information delivery system for West Virginia. It is a fundamental exploration tool at one-stop centers, and is a repository of nearly all information produced by the division. This year we have instituted a counter mechanism to monitor the number of hits it receives.

We intend to move beyond our web site efforts during this program year and acquire, install and launch the Virtual LMI system as our state workforce information delivery system. Adoption of Virtual LMI promises to benefit all of our customers—the business community, state and local workforce investment entities, and individuals. Virtual LMI

In the interim, priority on our web site development is given for all new monthly, quarterly or annual information releases to appear first on this site, as well as all data series such as employment and wages, occupational employment and wage estimates, projections, county profiles, youth, veteran, workforce investment area data, and links to other national, state and local data sources. Milestones are completing the separate projects of adding, updating, changing and refining this web site which is a year-round process as new information becomes available. Final installation and testing of the Virtual LMI system before actual deployment will be an expected milestone before the end of calendar year 2003. Principal customers for both the web site and Virtual LMI are those described under the ALMIS section above.

8. Support state workforce information training activities.

Training sessions can be conducted within each of the state's seven workforce areas over the course of the year, or training could be done en masse or in combined

locations. The training needs and schedule is at the determination of the West Virginia Labor Market Information Work Team and GWID. Training would include all elements of labor market information available to the state and to these seven areas and can be specifically tailored to board members, board staffs, etc. Trainers are LMI professionals and the training itself would be multi-media, lecture and participatory.

Sessions can range from full to two days per sessions and would be offered to all workforce area board and staff members, as well as to state board and staff members and any other interested parties. Emphasis will be on occupational information and career exploration. Milestones will be gauged by the completion and success of each training session.

Part 3. Customer Satisfaction Assessment.

At present customer satisfaction is measured from a response option on our web site and by our analysts on telephone and other direct information requests. We are also doing a mail-in response card for subscribers to our monthly *Economic Summary*. We intend in the course of this year to broaden our methods of obtaining customer satisfaction measures and will work through the Labor Market Information Work Group of our state workforce investment as one means of doing so. When we have Virtual LMI operational on the Internet as our career information delivery system, we will utilize all customer service and satisfaction aspects it offers.