

**ARKANSAS
WORKFORCE INFORMATION CORE PRODUCTS
AND SERVICES GRANT
PY 2004**

A. STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INFORMATION SYSTEM

In accordance with Section 309(e) of WIA, the Arkansas Employment Security Department (AESD) is the designated State Workforce Agency (SWA) responsible for the overall management of the Workforce Information System in Arkansas. Through this responsibility, we consult on issues with and manage Labor Market Information (LMI) requests from the State and Local Workforce Investment Boards, private business, individual citizens, and workforce development professionals. To bring collaboration and functional efforts for the workforce system in Arkansas to the forefront, the employees of the LMI Section of AESD work in an operational capacity through the auspices of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board (AWIB). This has provided a direct communication link concerning State workforce issues and informational dialogue for the AWIB to exercise its responsibility to ensure that state workforce information policy is responsive to the needs of the State and Local workforce investment system.

The AESD, through the LMI Department, supports the primary goals of the State's Five-Year Strategic Plan through designing, developing, and coordinating efforts, reporting systems, and workforce information products to avoid duplication of efforts/services in achieving a seamless strategy that supports the Governor's and State Board's vision. This has been accomplished, through the great foresight of State Agency Directors and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board, by combining the efforts of the LMI Department under the dual functional control of the State Workforce Agency and the State Workforce Investment Board. These actions have "set the stage" to allow the LMI Department to supply deliverables and activities to the citizens of Arkansas that meet the strategic vision of the Governor and State Board of having a globally recognized Arkansas workforce that is educated, trained, and skilled to excel in a changing economy.

To maintain a "local" communication effort, we continue having quarterly meetings with Local Workforce Investment Board staff, LMI Users Conferences/Seminars, and a "by request" speaker's bureau to schools, public and private organizations, and Chambers of Commerce. This activity is enhanced by participation in state and local sponsored job fairs, training sessions, and conferences. As the administrative entity for the Workforce Information System in Arkansas and with the help of the AWIB's business relations personnel, we continually provide standard and specialized information, services, and products to private citizens, businesses, and non-profit organizations. To better determine local customer needs, we've planned to utilize small focus groups to enhance our ability to establish, create, change, and disseminate locally desired information and products.

As with any system involved in continued informational changes, we realize that more information must be developed and new information disseminated to all users of labor market information. This continued dissemination involves our current structure of producing and releasing labor market information via printed format and an ongoing effort to increase our capacity through Internet delivery services.

As Arkansas has done in the past, we will continue to supply all labor market informational products (whether Internet, printed or CD based) through the One Stop community for dissemination to the business community, citizens of Arkansas, and the State Workforce Development System. With the Workforce Centers and their resource rooms as a focal point for information delivery and customer satisfaction, we will be able to continue meeting the needs of our customer base by producing specialized customer driven informational packages.

To achieve better insight from our local and state customers, in determining the need and scope of information and products produced through this grant, we will utilize small information/product specific focus groups made up of our local and state customers, including industry/employers, eligible training providers, State WIA partners, LWIAs, Workforce Center Resource room personnel, students, teachers and counselors, and private citizens. These focus groups will determine and share their informational needs, to enhance our ability to establish, create, change, and disseminate local and state desired information and products. All grant produced publications and CDs will continue to be sent out to our customers with an enclosed Customer Satisfaction Survey. When these are sent back, an appointed Analyst will record the findings of the survey and provide the LMI Manager with Quarterly/Yearly results of the findings. The LMI department managers will meet Quarterly to review the overall results of each product and determine whether revisions of any product needs to take place. This information will then be shared with the State Workforce Investment Board. We will create an on-line Customer Satisfaction Survey that will be applied to all LMI web pages and Internet products. The completed survey information will be sent electronically to the appointed Analyst, who will record the findings. The LMI Managers in their Quarterly meetings, following the same scenario as above, will also analyze these reports and share the results with the State Workforce Investment Board.

Due to internal staffing problems, our efforts to produce complete findings from product customer satisfaction survey have been limited in scope for PY'03. However, the creation of the Top 10 Occupations by Educational Level CD was a direct result of feedback from customers wanting to know the top projected occupations in Arkansas and the skills and education that each occupation required. With that information, we created a CD displaying the top 10 occupations in each educational level (high school/OJT, Associates Degree, and Bachelor's Degree or higher) and included for each of the occupations:

The short-term occupational projection
 The mean occupational wage from the OES Wage Survey
 The top 10 skill requirements from the O*Net database
 The USDOL sponsored career video for the occupation

From the 207 surveys that were returned by our customers that received one of our surveyed publications or CDs (Wage, Top 10 Occupations by Educational Level, Career Watch, Career Watch Teacher's Guide, Short-term Projections, Long-term Projections, Directory of Licensed Occupations, and the Future Awaits), the results are as follows:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>		<u>Product Usefulness</u>		<u>Recommend to Others</u>
70%	Very satisfied	69%	Very Useful	95.5% Yes
27%	Satisfied	29%	Useful	1.5% No
1%	Indifferent	1.5%	Fair	3% Did Not Answer
0%	Dissatisfied	0%	Not Very Useful	
0%	Very Dissatisfied	0%	Not Useful At All	
2%	Did Not Answer	0.5%	Did Not Answer	

Other sources of funding, within the Workforce Information System in Arkansas, currently being leveraged or matched to produce the various types of labor market information and deliverables of the Workforce Information Grant for the citizens of Arkansas are:

America's Career Resource Network
 Bureau of Labor Statistics
 Workforce Investment Act
 Wagner-Peyser Act

B. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1) CONTINUE TO POPULATE THE ALMIS DATABASE WITH STATE DATA

Arkansas will continue to maintain and populate all designated core tables of its ALMIS Database, in accordance with guidelines issued by the ALMIS Database Workgroup. We are currently utilizing the 2.2 database structure for this grant period to store information for the purpose of information delivery, labor market research, and product development. If a new structure is released, the State will make every effort to conform to the new structure within a reasonable timeframe. The State will utilize the ALMIS Resource Center and its web site at <http://www.almisdb.org> for data updates, tools and training relating to the ALMIS Database.

The 2005 version of the Directory of Licensed Occupations in Arkansas will be published in PY'04 and the updated database files will be submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center by July 2005, for viewing through the America's Career Information Network (ACINet) site and on the State's LMI web site. For the 2005 version, we will continue using the O*Net/ SOC taxonomy. The process of updating the information for the 2005 Directory of Licensed Occupations in Arkansas will commence in January 2005.

Customer support for these deliverable products remains very good, but due to staffing problems over the past year limited numbers of customer satisfaction surveys were processed to users. Of the 38 surveys that were submitted for the Directory of Licensed Occupations publication, the results are as follows:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>		<u>Product Usefulness</u>		<u>Recommend to Others</u>	
66%	Very satisfied	61%	Very Useful	97%	Yes
34%	Satisfied	37%	Useful	0%	No
0%	Indifferent	1%	Fair	3%	Did Not Answer
0%	Did Not Answer	0%	Did Not Answer		

Customers for ALMIS Database information and activities (including licensing information) are private individuals, public and private businesses, the media, local workforce boards, libraries, Chambers of Commerce, educational entities, and vocational/technical institutes.

These efforts conform to the Governor's and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board's strategic vision, in the State's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, of having a globally recognized Arkansas workforce that is educated, trained, and skilled to excel in a changing economy.

ALMIS Database information will be delivered to customers via the upcoming Workforce Informer Internet delivery product. Licensing information is provided in a publication, as well as, through America's Career Information Network (ACINet) site and the State's LMI web site.

The continued updating of the ALMIS Database and the producing of a new Directory of Licensed Occupations allows us to maintain and update existing informational products and create new products to serve Arkansas customers. One of those new products to serve the informational needs of Arkansas citizens will be the Internet based "Discover Arkansas" (Workforce Informer) program to house information from Arkansas' ALMIS Database.

The core tables of the ALMIS Database will continue to be updated in a timely manner to reflect the most recent publications and data releases. Licensing data is updated every two years. The 2005 Directory of Licensed Occupations in Arkansas will be updated starting in January 2005,

with 50% completed by April 2005. The completed database files will be sent to the National Crosswalk Service center by July 2005.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Cost estimates associated with populating the ALMIS Database with State data deliverable	\$ 34,926.07

2) PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Arkansas will produce sub-state long-term industry and occupational projections that will utilize 2002 employment estimates and 2012 projections of employment. These are prepared as an extension of the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) program of the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics. The process involves three major steps: 1) The OES program surveys employers in each industry segment in Arkansas and estimates staffing patterns for those industry segments; 2) Projections of industry employment are developed using the Long-Term Industry Projection software; and 3) Occupational employment projections are developed using the MicroMatrix software. A historical NAICS based industry series has been developed and will continue to be refined for use in long-term industry projections. The 2002-2012 projections will be comparable to the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics National Industrial and Occupational Projections. Projections staff will attend training offered by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership relating to the Long-Term Industry Projection software and the MicroMatrix system.

Arkansas will produce state level short-term industry and occupational projections for the 2004-2006 period. Industry projections will be developed using the Short-Term Industry Projection software, and occupational projections will be developed using the MicroMatrix software. A historical NAICS based industry series has been developed and will continue to be refined for use in short-term industry projections. The NAICS based projections will use the base period of 1st quarter 2004, projecting to 1st quarter 2006. When the statewide revisions are complete, sub-state industry and occupational projections for the Workforce Investment Areas (WIAs) will be initiated by the State. Projections staff will attend training offered by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership relating to the Short-Term Industry Projection software and the MicroMatrix system.

Customer support for these deliverable products remains very good, but due to staffing problems over the past year limited numbers of customer satisfaction surveys were processed to users. Of the 40 surveys that were submitted for all projections publications, the results are as follows:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>	<u>Product Usefulness</u>	<u>Recommend to Others</u>
27.5% Very satisfied	27.5% Very Useful	95% Yes
70% Satisfied	67.5% Useful	2.5% No
2.5% Indifferent	2.5% Fair	2.5% Did Not Answer
00% Did Not Answer	2.5% Did Not Answer	

These efforts conform to the Governor's and Arkansas Workforce Investment Board's strategic vision, in the State's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, of having a globally recognized Arkansas workforce that is educated, trained, and skilled to excel in a changing economy.

Customers for long-term and short-term projections include State Workforce Centers, Chambers of Commerce, industrial facilities, educational entities, vocational/technical institutes, the media, and the varying industries (public and private) in Arkansas. Many national customers use this information as well, particularly educational facilities, libraries and newspapers. This data has also been made available to international outlets for use by individuals and corporations who have an interest in employment trends in Arkansas.

Arkansas will produce publications for both sub-state long-term and state short-term industry and occupational projections. The current projections, as well as all future projections, will be included in the ALMIS Database and be made available to users by electronic media, which includes the State's LMI web site. Also, the statewide short-term occupational projections will be submitted to the Projections Management Partnership Consortium for inclusion in the Career One-Stop and State Occupational Projections web sites.

These projections will allow us to update existing and create new products utilizing the most recent projections for customers to analyze. Some of those updated products include ArkOSCAR, Top Ten Occupations by Educational Level, and the Career Watch Magazine.

State level long-term industry and occupational projections for 2002-2012 was completed in July 2004, and the publication will be ready for distribution by September 2004. Sub-State long-term projections will begin in August 2004 and will be made available for distribution by local area in March 2005. The long-term occupational projections will be submitted to the Projections Management Partnership Consortium for inclusion in the Career One-Stop and State Occupational Projections web sites within 30-45 days after the data is finalized.

The production of state level short-term projections will begin in November 2004 and will be approximately 80% complete by late-January 2005, with a 100% completion by mid-March 2005. The state level short-term publication will be ready for distribution by May 2005. Sub-state short-term projections will begin after the final release of the state level projections and will

be made available in publications for distribution by September 2005. The short-term occupational projections will be submitted to North Carolina for inclusion in the Career One-Stop and State Occupational Projections web sites within 30-45 days after the data is finalized.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Costs associated with producing long-term and short-term projections	\$ 41,250.99

3) PROVIDE OCCUPATIONAL AND CAREER INFORMATION PRODUCTS FOR PUBLIC USE

The Occupational/Career Information staff produces and disseminates many customer focused occupational and career information products. All publications can be found on the State of Arkansas' LMI website at <http://www.arkansas.gov/esd/LaborMarketInfo>. All of our products are SOC-based and developed in consultation with intended customers. Below is a description of each product, unless it has been described elsewhere within this grant narrative:

Projected Employment Opportunities List is a listing of training programs for occupations that have been determined to be in demand for the State and each Local Workforce Investment Area. The list is derived from the LMI section's Short-term Occupational Supply projections. It is a guide to assist customers in locating and obtaining training for occupations that are currently listed as occupations with projected employment opportunities within Arkansas and by Local Workforce Investment Area. A focus group, composed of industry/employers, education, and labor, met on August 25, 2004 and finalized the proposed methodology and name change of Arkansas' demand occupations list. The new Projected Employment Opportunities List will be taken to the State Workforce Investment Board for approval. After approval, the LMI staff will hold meetings with each of the 10 Workforce Investment Areas to explain and negotiate each area's local list.

The Projected Employment Opportunities List supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Prepare the state's unemployed and underemployed for rewarding, well paying jobs by providing information on training programs that lead to employment opportunities on a statewide and local basis;
- 2) Supporting the workforce training needs of employers, including facilitating communication with training providers by providing a reliable list of training programs that are in demand; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Customers for this product include dislocated workers, the unemployed, educators, counselors, students, parents of students, Chambers of Commerce, educational entities, vocational/technical institutes, the media, and local workforce boards in Arkansas.

The Projected Employment Opportunities List will impact the training considerations of Arkansas citizens by showing projected opportunities of employment within the state and local areas. The Projected Employment Opportunities List also meets the mission statement of the State's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, of "establishing a unified, flexible, accountable workforce training system implemented through the collaboration of business, industry, labor and citizens, and characterized by accessible and responsive one-stop career development networks."

We anticipate the final Statewide and Local Lists for PY'04 will be released around October 15, 2004. The yearly produced Projected Employment Opportunities List will be released by June 1st, hereafter.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the Projected Employment Opportunities List	\$ 1,891.69

The Occupational Employment and Wage Data publication provides detailed wage and salary information. The publication identifies occupation and wage profiles statewide. The LMI website also has occupation and wage profiles by the metropolitan statistical areas of the State. The wage information found in this publication is collected by BLS' Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) Survey. Beginning with the 2002/04 OES survey, two surveys a year are conducted. Arkansas will produce one yearly publication utilizing 3 years of data (6 panels) and will include the 4th quarter survey panel (2003/04).

Customer support for this deliverable product remains very good, but due to staffing problems over the past year limited numbers of customer satisfaction surveys were processed to users. Of the 9 surveys that were submitted for all wage publications, the results are as follows:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>		<u>Product Usefulness</u>		<u>Recommend to Others</u>	
33%	Very satisfied	22%	Very Useful	100%	Yes
67%	Satisfied	78%	Useful	0%	No
0%	Indifferent	0%	Fair	0%	Did Not Answer
0%	Did Not Answer	0%	Did Not Answer		

The Occupational Employment and Wage Data publication supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Prepare the state's unemployed and underemployed for rewarding, well paying jobs by providing information on training programs that lead to employment opportunities on a statewide and local basis; and
- 2) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Customers for this product include dislocated workers, the unemployed, educators, counselors, students, parents of students, Chambers of Commerce, industrial facilities, educational entities, vocational/technical institutes, the media, local workforce boards, and varying industries (public and private) in Arkansas.

The planned outcome of this publication is to provide Arkansas citizens and employers with methodologically sound wage information for the State that will increase their awareness of wages being paid in the workforce and meet one of the challenges of the Five Year Strategic Plan of making Arkansas citizens "aware of the availability of higher-paying jobs for people who receive increased education/training", and to help in their career exploration efforts.

The anticipated release date of the yearly publication is December 2004. The website wage data will be updated at the end of each survey panel or twice per year.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the Occupational Employment and Wage Data publication	\$ 1,891.69

Arkansas Affirmative Action Data is fully published through our web site every 10 years and contains three tables of affirmative action information. Table 1 (Population by Race and Gender) and Table 3 (Summary Occupations by Gender and Race) are based on Bureau of Census information available from the latest census. Table 2 (Employment Status by Race and Gender) is updated on the website annually.

While no customer satisfaction survey is done for this product, we continually are asked for this information from businesses, grant writers, and our educational and state partners.

The Arkansas Affirmative Action Data supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Improving and expanding the system of cooperative projects and over-all efforts between employers and schools; and
- 2) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

The primary customers for this information are employers, grant writers, and our educational and state partners.

Providing Arkansas specific affirmative action data will allow many users of this information an opportunity to plan and meet their hiring goals and meet requirements of many of their State and Federal grant proposals.

The release date is dependent on when the Census releases this data, but anticipate updates of this information in the Spring of 2004.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the Arkansas Affirmative Action Data	\$ 1,891.69

The Future Awaits is a guide for instructors to teach young adults that are entering the workplace. It is designed to instruct those entering the job market, in the "pre-employment preparation" basics, (e.g. resume, job application, appropriate dress, interview tips); as well as explaining federal tax forms.

Customer support for this deliverable product remains very good, but due to staffing problems over the past year limited numbers of customer satisfaction surveys were processed to users. Of the 2 surveys that were submitted for all Future Awaits publications, the results are as follows:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>	<u>Product Usefulness</u>	<u>Recommend to Others</u>
100% Very satisfied	100% Very Useful	100% Yes
0% Satisfied	0% Useful	0% No
0% Indifferent	0% Fair	0% Did Not Answer
0% Did Not Answer	0% Did Not Answer	

The "Future Awaits" publication supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Ensure that high school graduates have the basic skills needed for further education or work;
- 2) Provide access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

The primary customers of this publication are instructors in schools and community-based organizations that are teaching workplace readiness skills. Others who utilize the publication are high school students themselves, recent graduates, other young adults, the unemployed and underemployed. This publication is also utilized in the Workforce Centers for readying citizens for job interviews and used as an instructional tool at the various job fairs held within the State.

The "Future Awaits" addresses several of the major challenges to the Vision statement in the Five Year Strategic plan and will help in the development of:

- 1) Inadequate education/skill level of the workforce; and
- 2) Lack of work ethic in some workers, particularly in categories including low-wages jobs and youth entering the workforce

This publication is updated as the need arises and distributed upon requests of customers.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the "Future Awaits" publication	\$ 2,341.69

Labor Market Information Resources is a booklet detailing Arkansas's LMI products and whom to contact to receive the different types of industry and occupational information.

Since this is an informational booklet of LMI's different resources, no customer satisfaction survey is done.

Since each product listed within this grant proposal is listed within this resource guide, it supports the overall goals and objectives of each product.

The primary customers of the Resource Guide are any Arkansas citizens needing the many different types of LMI products produced by the State's Workforce Information Agency.

The major impact of the Labor Market Information Resources booklet is a duplication of the previous paragraph, where we try to provide a catalog of the different types of LMI products to Arkansas citizens to help them in their informational pursuits.

This publication is updated as the need arises and distributed upon request and at all training sessions, job fairs, and conferences.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the LMI Resources booklet	\$ 1,891.69

The Career Watch magazine is an annual publication containing profiles of Arkansas occupations, including job descriptions, average pay, growth rate, and educational and scholarship information. Of all the publications and products we produce, the Career Watch magazine receives the largest positive response from all areas of our customer base. Currently we have a customer circulation of about 115,000 copies per year. We continually receive extremely favorable accolades from dislocated workers, the unemployed, educators, counselors, students, and parents of students, for this deliverable product, but due to staffing problems over the past year limited numbers of customer satisfaction surveys were processed to users. Of the 108 surveys that were submitted for the Career Watch magazine, the following are the results:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>	<u>Product Usefulness</u>	<u>Recommend to Others</u>
91.7% Very satisfied	91.7% Very Useful	100% Yes
8.3% Satisfied	8.3% Useful	0% No
0% Indifferent	0% Fair	0% Did Not Answer
0% Did Not Answer	0% Did Not Answer	

To achieve this success, we have developed a network that promotes collaborative effort among several State agencies. These are the Arkansas Department of Workforce Education, Arkansas Department of Economic Development, Department of Education, Department of Information Systems, Department of Higher Education, Department of Human Services, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, and the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. Representatives from this group meet, and provide editorial advice and content to the publication. LMI staff maintains sole responsibility for drafting, editing, publishing, and distribution of this highly successful magazine. It is through this multi-agency collaborative effort that the 2005/2006 edition will remain a highly professional Arkansas publication that features colored glossy pages, in-depth job related articles, necessary skills, assessment articles, and factual information on many different occupations.

The Career Watch magazine supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, as well as, addresses some of the major challenges of the Plan, these are:

Challenges

- 1) The inadequate education/skill level of the workforce
- 2) The sometimes inefficient, ineffective, and unresponsive K-12 and non-baccalaureate education and job-training system
- 3) The lack of motivation to increase skill and education level
- 4) Duplication of services and programs, which create an inefficient system; and
- 5) The failure of job-seekers and employers to make optimum use of existing workforce development programs

Goals

- 1) Ensure that high school graduates have the basic skills needed for further education or work;
- 2) Provide access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Even though the principal users of the Career Watch magazine are dislocated workers, the unemployed, educators, counselors, students, and parents of students, we have strived to make sure of its availability to all the citizens of Arkansas through the Workforce Centers and public libraries. We've also made it available for downloading from the Arkansas Career Watch web site located at: <http://www.careerwatch.org>

The Career Watch magazine will continue to impact Arkansas' Workforce system and its customers in helping to fulfill the vision statement of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board by providing information to the workforce in Arkansas, to be globally recognized – educated, trained, skilled – with the character and work ethic needed to excel in a changing economy.

Work will begin on the 2005-2006 Career Watch magazine in February 2005, with 50% completed by mid-April 2005. We will submit the completed document to the printer by July 2005, with distribution to customers to be completed in October 2005. Once the 2005/2006 Career Watch is delivered to us from the printer (late August 2005) and distributed, it will be updated and made available for downloading from the Arkansas Career Watch web site. In addition, our popular "Teacher's Guide" will again be produced and delivered to the career orientation teachers and school counselors, within the same time frame. The "Teacher's Guide" is a complement to the Career Watch Magazine and includes activities and worksheets to reinforce the philosophies and ideas presented in the magazine for enhancement to Arkansas students.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the Career Watch Magazine	\$ 31,234.63

Arkansas will continue to replicate and distribute the USDOL sponsored Career Video Library, which contains a collection of 350-career video clips on nine CDs, produced by the New Jersey Department of Labor. Currently, we have replicated and distributed over 400 sets (9 CDs per set) of the Career Videos. The videos are additionally available in an open captioned version for the hearing impaired and in a Spanish language version.

While we have no customer satisfaction findings for this product, it remains a highly sought after product from counselors and teachers providing career exploration tools for Arkansas students. At the July 22-23, 2004 State Career Orientation Conference held in Hot Springs, Arkansas, we received orders for more than 50 sets of the videos.

The Career Video CD sets supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Ensure that high school graduates have the basic skills needed for further education or work;
- 2) Provide access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

The distribution of the Career Videos has primarily been focused on the Workforce Centers and educational entities (Career Orientation Teachers, High School Counselors, Libraries, Educational Cooperatives, and 2-year colleges) within the State.

The major outcome of providing the career videos has been and will continue to be in educating the students and citizens of Arkansas on the needed qualifications and skills required in their occupational exploration. The ability to view an actual person performing the duties of a job enhances their ability to comprehend the details and requirements of the occupation.

This is a continuing project and distribution is ongoing by request. Distribution is supplemented by requests made during educational conferences and job fairs.

Estimated costs of producing Career Video CDs	<u>PY 04 Funds</u> \$ 3,060.05
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The “Top Ten Occupations By Educational Level”, which utilizes our duplicator technology, incorporates the top ten occupations by educational category deemed through Arkansas’ short-term projections and combines this information with each occupation’s OES median wage data, primary skill requirements from O*Net, and career video.

Customer support for this new product has been excellent, but due to staffing problems over the past year limited numbers of customer satisfaction surveys were processed to users. Of the 6 surveys that were submitted for the Top 10 Occupations CD, the following are the results:

<u>Product Satisfaction</u>		<u>Product Usefulness</u>		<u>Recommend to Others</u>	
50%	Very satisfied	17%	Very Useful	67%	Yes
33%	Satisfied	50%	Useful	33%	No
17%	Indifferent	33%	Fair	0%	Did Not Answer
0%	Did Not Answer	0%	Did Not Answer		

The “Top Ten Occupations by Educational Level” CD supports several goals of the state’s WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Ensure that high school graduates have the basic skills needed for further education or work;
- 2) Provide access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

The primary customers of this informational product are instructors in schools and community-based organizations that are teaching workplace readiness skills. Others who utilize the CD are high school students themselves, recent graduates, other young adults, the unemployed and underemployed. This deliverable is also utilized in the Workforce Centers to provide a career exploration tool for citizens and used as a search tool at the various job fairs held within the State.

The "Top Ten Occupations by Educational Level" addresses several of the major challenges to the Vision statement in the Five Year Strategic plan and will help in the development of:

- 1) Inadequate education/skill level of the workforce; and
- 2) Lack of work ethic in some workers, particularly in categories including low-wages jobs and youth entering the workforce

This deliverable will be updated after the 2003-2005 Short-term Projections and the 2003/04 panel of the OES Wage Survey is completed and will be 50% completed by January 2005 with final distribution in March 2005.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of producing the "Top Ten Occupations by Educational Level" CDs	\$ 2,627.85

The 2004-2005 Occupational Outlook Handbook (OOH) is the leading nationally recognized source of career information, designed to provide valuable assistance to individuals making decisions about their future work lives. Revised every two years, the OOH describes what workers do on the job, working conditions, the training and education needed, earnings, and expected job prospects in a wide range of occupations. The LMI Department intends to supply an OOH to the resource room of each Workforce Center in Arkansas.

Through a survey of Workforce Centers, during June 2004, we had requests for 62 Occupational Outlook Handbooks from the Center Resource Rooms.

The Occupational Outlook Handbook supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Provide access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 2) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

The primary customers of this publication are the Workforce Centers in providing Arkansas citizens with a tool for career and occupational exploration and information.

By providing the OOH, the LMI Department is coordinating with the local area Workforce Centers in their efforts to supply informational products. This will increase the possibility of their customers making wise career decisions and help in guiding them to their desired occupational field.

The Occupational Outlook Handbooks will be ordered by August 15, 2004, with the LMI Department receiving the books by September 1, 2004. All OOH's will be distributed to the Workforce Centers by October 1, 2004.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs of purchasing and disseminating the Occupational Outlook Handbooks	\$ 2,720.05

4) ENSURE THAT WORKFORCE INFORMATION AND SUPPORT REQUIRED BY STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS ARE PROVIDED

With the dual functional control of the Labor Market Information Department's employees shared with AESD and the State Workforce Investment Board, LMI has been brought into the arena as an active major contributor in the Workforce Center implementation in the State of Arkansas. Because of our close collaboration and location, an opportunity has been provided for quality information sharing on the thoughts and processes taking place in the State. As the "eyes and ears" for career development and LMI products in the State, labor market information staff continually meet with the Local Workforce Investment Board's staff to determine localized needs, provide training, provide input on existing and innovative LMI products and measure consumer services. To meet the standards being vocalized through the Local Boards, we have set quarterly meetings with the Local Board's staff to examine problems and offer solutions to informational questions. A LMI staff person attends State Workforce Investment Board meetings and we participate in as many Local Board meetings as possible to remain at the forefront of all questions concerning labor market information. With this continual feedback of offered suggestions, we are better able to create or modify products for the good of the State's users of LMI.

The LMI Department continues to provide expertise to the educational community through our commitment to educational cooperatives, school counselors, and administrators. Our continued presence will include participating in educational conferences, hosting and participating in training events, serving as judges in State contests for students (such as SkillsUSA), and speaking at Career Fairs, Senior's Day, and Parent's Night. Specific activities for training our educational partners, are the statewide Career Orientation conference held every year in Hot Springs, Arkansas and the yearly Arkansas School Counselors conference in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. During the Career Orientation conference, the LMI staff gives training and information on Arkansas' career delivery system (ArkOSCAR) and has sessions throughout the conference on ACINet and O*Net.

To pursue a more active role in the business sector, we've taken a proactive approach to stay in contact with the local Chambers of Commerce, in different areas of the State. At some of their monthly meetings, we've presented training sessions on the use of wages, trends, educational opportunities, economic data, and other items found in the "Provide Occupational and Career Information Products for Public Use" section of this grant. To the degree possible, to provide

this information on a continual basis, we have assigned a staff person with this responsibility. To meet the requests of employers from across Arkansas, we have a staff person responsible for the distribution of localized wage information gathered through the Estimates Delivery System (EDS) and continue to explore new ways of presenting this information. We have also updated our Geographic Information System (GIS) to the newest version of ArcView. With this done, and with continued internal staff development, we are hopeful that we'll be able to pursue some of the non-complex employer requests for specific geographic data. Currently, we have designated one staff person with this responsibility and as the geo-coding information is made known to our customers; we anticipate this workload will increase.

With our Internet based Arkansas Consumer Report System (ACRS), the local workforce investment boards are finding a more user-friendly system for reviewing and approving Eligible Training Provider applications. This system also has both pre-defined reports built in and the ability to run ad-hoc reports. These reports have allowed the LMI staff the opportunity to provide the Local WIBs with detailed system statistical and informational reports. With the data warehouse available within the system, historical reports can also be generated.

Arkansas, in consultation with the State Workforce Investment Board, public and private educational providers, and public and private businesses are currently in the process of revising the Projected Employment Opportunities List. This listing determines which educational programs may be eligible to be added, by the local workforce investment boards, to the State's Eligible Training Provider Listing. The new list will be released around October 15, 2004.

Arkansas continues to actively pursue its partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Census in the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) study. We anticipate by using the current information coming out of the Labor Market Information Department and combining it with the latest statistics from the Bureau of Census, we will be able to generate additional timely geographic specific information for employers and other customers of labor market information. Preliminary discussions have taken place and we will be sending one LMI employee to attend an LED training session in September 2004. To pursue our endeavor with the LED project and to meet the specialized product and informational needs of all our clients, we have formed a new unit of 2 people to be responsible for coordinating, researching, and developing special LMI products that are tailor made for individual customers.

The activities listed above conform to the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan concerning labor market information. Additional information concerning these activities can be found in Sections 3, 5, and 6 of the Core Product deliverables.

PY 04 Funds

Cost estimates associated with ensuring that workforce information and support required by state and local workforce investment boards are provided \$ 8,556.99

5) MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE ELECTRONIC STATE WORKFORCE INFORMATION DELIVERY SYSTEMS

The Labor Market Information Department continues to maintain and update the Arkansas Consumer Report System (ACRS) which provides post-secondary education and training providers with an internet application in which they can enter information about programs they provide to potential students, both WIA and non-WIA eligible. These providers can also use the ACRS system to generate WIA Training Provider applications in order to become certified Eligible Training Providers. Local Workforce Investment Boards can use the system to review applications and assign an approval status. This system is able to report informational data about training programs by institution to Arkansas citizens to help make educated career and occupational decisions. This product can be found on the Internet at <http://www.arkansascrs.org>.

The ACRS system was built with a tremendous amount of input from state and local users of training and training provider data. Through quarterly meetings with the local areas, to determine local needs or system upgrades, we continue to improve the system. No actual surveys are done for this system, since the primary users have almost daily access to the LMI staff to address any system failures or upgrades. Since July 1, 2003 through June 30, 2004, almost 36,000 informational accesses to the ACRS database files have been made by Arkansas citizens, with more than 1900 program applications being made to the ACRS database.

The Arkansas Consumer Report System supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Prepare the state's unemployed and underemployed for rewarding, well paying jobs by providing information on training programs that lead to employment opportunities on a statewide and local basis;
- 2) Supporting the workforce training needs of employers, including facilitating communication with training providers by providing a reliable list of training programs that are in demand; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

ACRS also correlates to the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan Vision Statement, of providing: "A globally recognized workforce in Arkansas – educated, trained, skilled – with the character and work ethic needed to excel in a changing economy".

Customers of ACRS include not only the state and local workforce investment boards, but also dislocated workers, the unemployed, educators, counselors, students, parents of students, educational entities and vocational/technical institutes in Arkansas.

The Arkansas Consumer Report System will impact the training considerations and informational knowledge of Arkansas citizens by providing training/program results and outcomes within the state and local areas. This allows the citizens to be highly involved when planning and making their educational and career decisions about their futures.

Since ACRS database is an ever-changing platform of training information, it is continually being upgraded with new educational training programs, costs, and performance measures. It is the LMI staff's goal to maintain this system with few, if any, delays to the citizenry of Arkansas of getting complete and accurate educational training data. To obtain this goal, we will continue meeting quarterly with state and local WIA staff to determine informational problems and fix any programming problems within 3 working days.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs associated with the Arkansas Consumer Report System	\$ 71,525.24

The Arkansas LMI Department continues to update and maintain the Arkansas' Career Information Delivery System (CIDS) known as the Arkansas OSCAR (ArkOSCAR) through the developer, the Texas Workforce Commission. Of noteworthy performance is that ArkOSCAR was the first Internet version of OSCAR produced in the United States. ArkOSCAR showcases the O*Net database, with emphasis on providing assessment tools to assist dislocated workers to new careers and students in their career exploration endeavors. It was designed with a user friendly "look and feel" to avoid intimidating any person who might not be familiar with computers and their menus and toolbars. This product also includes features for our educational partners by using the Department of Education's career clusters in describing the various jobs contained in ArkOSCAR. To help the citizenry of Arkansas determine their interests toward different types of activities, an interest profiler was developed. ArkOSCAR also contains the various labor market information that the State's Labor Market Information Department puts out to the public.

Since its inaugural kickoff on July 1, 2002, the career orientation teachers and school counselors have been the primary customers of ArkOSCAR. Due to continued training in LMI training conferences, the Workforce Centers are now becoming heavy users of the product to accomplish the assessments needed under the Workforce Investment Act. From July 1, 2003 until June 30, 2004, 16,320 individuals accessed ArkOSCAR.

ArkOSCAR supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Prepare the state's unemployed and underemployed for rewarding, well paying jobs;
- 2) Ensure that high school graduates have the basic skills needed for further education or work;
- 3) Providing access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 4) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Customers of ArkOSCAR include not only the state and local workforce investment boards, but also dislocated workers, the unemployed, educators, counselors, students, parents of students, educational entities and vocational/technical institutes in Arkansas.

The ArkOSCAR System impacts the informational and career exploration knowledge of Arkansas citizens as they explore the possibilities of the world of work. The system provides assessments outcomes, occupational descriptions and includes Arkansas specific labor market information. This allows the citizens to be highly involved when planning and making their career decisions about their futures.

ArkOSCAR will be updated with new information after the 2003-2005 Short-term Projections and the 2003/04 panel of the OES Wage Survey is completed and new school information is received from the Arkansas Department of Education. We anticipate that this will be 50% completed by January 2005 with final updates made by late February 2005.

Estimated costs associated with the ArkOSCAR system

PY 04 Funds
\$ 4,886.62

Arkansas is currently in the developmental stage, with Ciber, Inc./National Systems Research Company (NSR) in the deployment of Arkansas' Workforce Informer Portal; know as "Discover Arkansas". This is an Internet based system that Arkansas will use for the delivery of its ALMIS database. We currently have reserved the Uniform Resource Locator (URL) domain name of <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> as the website for our Internet version of the ALMIS database.

The "Discover Arkansas" project has been a culmination of over three years of work in cooperation with the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board. To identify customer satisfaction of the system, an Internet customer satisfaction survey is being built into the product that will interface with the ALMIS Database Administrator. We feel this will give us a good idea of customer likes and dislikes within the system.

"Discover Arkansas" supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Prepare the state's unemployed and underemployed for rewarding, well paying jobs;

- 2) Supporting the workforce training needs of employers, including facilitating communication with training providers; and
- 3) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

The primary customers for this information will be any Arkansas citizen that utilizes or needs information. This list includes employers and grant writers to educational and state partners to students and the unemployed.

It is anticipated that the “Discover Arkansas” deliverable will provide people one stop access for all of their labor market needs, whether it be unemployment rates, educational data, tax revenue summaries, localized information, or specialized articles.

The information contained within the development site of “Discover Arkansas” is currently being loaded and informational articles developed. The system should be 75% complete by October 15, 2004, with a live release date set for November 1, 2004.

Estimated costs associated with “Discover Arkansas”	<u>PY 04 Funds</u> \$ 29,663.02
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Arkansas continues to actively pursue its partnership with the U.S. Bureau of Census in the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) study. Once LED is established in Arkansas, we plan to add the quarterly measures to the LMI portion of the AESD web site. We then plan to visit the local WIA sites and help set up LED web site presence for their areas. We anticipate establishing a free service for new prospective employers to help determine optimum locations for their specific type of business in a community by utilizing LED data. By utilizing informational employer data from infoUSA (if allowed through our cooperative agreement) we plan on developing a publication that will show 3-digit industry locations by density maps of 15 and 30-mile radius around approximately 300 cities in Arkansas.

Since LED is still in the planning stages waiting on action from the U.S. Bureau of Census, there is no way to estimate what the customer satisfaction appeal will be. However, the Arkansas Department of Economic Development (ADED) has shown favorable interest in this project.

The LED project supports the vision and mission statement of the state’s WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which is:

Vision Statement

A globally recognized workforce in Arkansas – educated, trained, skilled – with the character and work ethic needed to excel in a changing economy.

Mission Statement

To establish a unified, flexible, accountable workforce training system implemented through the collaboration of business, industry, labor and citizens, and characterized by

accessible and responsive one-stop career development networks. The system will offer employers a resource for workers in existing and emerging occupations and empower Arkansans to receive employment services as well as job-specific training.

Principle customers for this deliverable will include economic development organizations, businesses, industry, Chamber's of Commerce, and State Workforce Centers.

A major outcome of this project will be to provide the Arkansas Department of Economic Development maps and associated data on potential labor supply for their economic recruitment of prospective new employers to the State and local areas.

Density maps and the potential labor supply data will begin by September 15, 2004, and will be an ongoing process through PY'04. The LED data is currently dependent upon getting Memorandum of Understanding agreements signed with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration to obtain name data. This is currently being worked on, but date of outcome cannot be estimated.

Estimated costs associated with the LED Project	<u>PY 04 Funds</u> \$ 67,347.62
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The Arkansas Employment Security Department and Arkansas Workforce Investment Board began the process of identifying requirements of Arkansas' new labor exchange program in July 2003. On June 8, 2004, the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board gave final approval to replace the current AWIS (Arkansas Workforce Information System) and ODDS/ENDS systems with the new America's Job Link (AJL) system, a web-based system. Local Workforce Centers will use the system to manage WIA Title IB programs and provide reports, and AESD and other Workforce Center partners use it as a labor exchange system that matches job seekers and employers and provides reports on the process and results.

The total effort of bringing in a new labor exchange system to the State has been completely customer focused and driven and supported by AESD/AWIB and their partners.

AJL supports several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Offering labor market information that is current and accurate.
- 2) Developing and implementing a statewide management information system that simplifies intake, case management, data collection, and reporting, as well as allows for comparative analysis; and
- 3) Supporting the workforce training needs of employers, including facilitating communication with training providers.

Principle customers of the new labor exchange system will be State and Local partners of WIA, job seekers, unemployed, employers, and others needing labor exchange information.

AJL will allow Workforce Center partners to exchange client information with their permission without requiring additional forms. It will also allow agencies to track clients' progress and determine their success or when further assistance is needed. Partners will use one labor exchange system to benefit both employers and jobseekers. This system will also be linked to LMI web sites and "Discover Arkansas".

The Purchase Order to obligate funding and purchase the AJL system was issued on July 21, 2004. The system implementation date is scheduled currently for December 2004.

To assure that "Discover Arkansas" and the AJL system is linked properly and to maintain the "look" and "feel" in alignment between both systems, we propose to dedicate the following monies towards this mission.

Estimated costs associated with the AJL system	<u>PY 04 Funds</u> \$ 3,069.62
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A new product that Arkansas is currently exploring is the Reality Check developed by the Texas Workforce Commission. This system allows individuals to match their anticipated wages or occupations against indicators of personal living costs, to determine whether the salary for their chosen occupation will be enough to provide individual sustainability. Through this process, it makes the individuals aware of "real life" choices that they will have to make in their lives.

The Texas program was reviewed by a 20-member focus group at the Career Orientation Conference held in Hot Springs, Arkansas, in July 2004. All members gave the program a rating of 10 out of 10 on the grading scale.

The Reality Check program would support several goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Improve and expand the system of cooperative projects and over-all effort between employers and schools; and
- 2) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Principle customers for this deliverable will include students, teachers, counselors, parents, the underemployed and unemployed, and community based organizations.

Making citizens knowledgeable of occupational wages that are paid in Arkansas compared to the living costs within the State should create a new awareness of the need for increased training or higher levels of education.

After a review that will take place in January 2005, we will then decide whether to continue with this project. It is anticipated that after the review, work on an RFP will begin in February 2005, with money obligated to begin the project by May 2005.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs associated with the Reality Check project	\$ 10,069.62

Arkansas' Estimates Delivery System (EDS) is a system for producing and publishing employment and wage data derived from the Occupational Employment Statistics program. In 1999, when BLS decided to supply Statewide and MSA estimates out of a centrally run system, it ended the state's ability to run estimates. With the evolution of WIA and other programs, we and other States maintained the need to produce estimates for areas other than Statewide and MSAs. Due to these needs, EDS was created in the latter part of 1999 and AESD has maintained its information and program since.

Every year we produce specialized reports for Arkansas customers and usually ask them to fill out customer satisfaction surveys of the information provided. Due to staffing problems over the past year, we have not maintained a reliable collection of these surveys. For PY'04, we will require processing a survey with each individual request for this specialized information.

The EDS program supports one goal and addresses a major challenge of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, these are:

Major Challenge

Lack of awareness of the availability of higher-paying jobs for people.

Goal

Offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Principle customers for this deliverable will include economic development organizations, businesses, industry, Chambers of Commerce, education planners, the employment projections and ALMIS database units of AESD, and State Workforce Centers.

The outcomes for EDS is to produce the following information to our customers:

- 1) Occupational employment and wage data for customized geographies such as Local Workforce Investment Areas and counties
- 2) Occupational employment and wage data for NAICS-based Industries
- 3) Occupational wage level data (i.e. average, entry, experienced, percentiles)
- 4) Non-standard statistics (i.e., Employment estimates for a given wage, employment and wage estimates for a combination of ownerships and size classes)

We will continue to meet the needs of providing the above information to Arkansas users and will update the information within the EDS system within 5 days of receiving new data content.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs associated with the Estimates Delivery System	\$ 1,886.62

The AESD/AWIB agencies are adopting MicroSoft's .NET platform to convert our current Microsoft products and projects to the new Microsoft framework. This will put us in great shape to move into the future with all Microsoft product developments.

Both agencies see this as a way for us to maintain a high level of Customer support by providing up-to-date platform services both for our internal and external customers. While this deliverable may not be seen, it will allow more versatility in the programs and products that are produced.

While this deliverable works underneath the framework of many of our activities and products, it supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan by providing and maintaining a platform that can be utilized in a more efficient manner by our other products and deliverables. Therefore, all the goals, the vision and mission statements that are mentioned in this grant narrative supports the .NET conversion.

Customers will be all users of computer software developed for internal office use and external customers whom use our product mix on the World Wide Web.

The major impact of the .NET conversion will be that our current and future systems can support our automation and be fully supported by the new technology direction set by MicroSoft. MicroSoft has stated that any growth in MicroSoft architecture would be utilizing the new .NET framework.

At this time we are finalizing our study of this project. Plans are to begin this process around January 2005. The restructuring of the current Web Farm will take place one month from the beginning of the project. The creation of new Software Management Controls will be in place two months from the beginning of the project. The conversion to M/S Server 2003 should be in place three months after the project is started, with a completion of the conversion to .NET approximately one year from the beginning of the project.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Estimated costs associated with LMI's portion of the .NET Conversion	\$ 6,069.62

6) SUPPORT STATE WORKFORCE INFORMATION TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Given the dynamic world of Labor Market Information (LMI), it is imperative that our agency serves as the LMI authority for the State. It is important to maintain a properly trained staff in order to provide information and technical assistance to Local Workforce Investment Boards. While our staff develops many LMI products, others are produced on a national scale. Products such as the CareerOneStop and O*Net Online are examples of cutting edge, Internet web sites that provide access to LMI. Other products are being developed in a rapid and ever changing manner. It is important that we take advantage of opportunities to experience and understand how local area staff can utilize these new products to better serve clients. Clients can use this invaluable information to enhance their current careers through additional training opportunities or seek new career avenues. Providing access to LMI and communicating how to use LMI remains part of our primary mission.

In an effort to provide the basis to successfully execute this mission, AESD and State WIB staff will participate in the following training activities sponsored by the Agency:

Three staff members will attend the Advanced Access Training.

Three staff members will attend the PowerPoint Training.

Two staff members will attend the Advanced Excel Training.

One staff member will attend the GIS Training.

All Analyst staff members will complete Interpersonal Skills and Customer Service training.

One staff member will begin Agency management training (18 month course of studies).

Three staff members will begin Certified Employment Manager program training (1 year course of studies).

Up to Four members of our staff will attend the 2004 LMI Forum, in Portland, Oregon.

The appropriate Staff will participate in other specialized training that may be offered related to the production of short-term and long-term employment projections.

Encouragement will continue to be given to staff to increase their knowledge and abilities in utilizing various software and computer applications by supporting their attendance at other training seminars and classes, not listed above, offered by local training companies.

Arkansas plans to hold a LMI Users Conference in the Fall of 2005. State and Local WIB and Workforce Center staff members will be trained during this 1-1/2-day event. All state and federal LMI products will be discussed in detail, as well as, a “hands-on-training” on O*Net, ArkOSCAR, ACINet, and “Discover Arkansas” utilizing the agency’s computer lab. On the final day of this training, focus groups will be formed and asked to offer suggestions on several LMI products.

Arkansas continues to sponsor and lead in LMI training to all partners of the WIA community. We anticipate providing at least 10 individual LMI training activities or events by July 2005. These will include career fairs, one and two day seminars, conference meetings, and special meetings of WIA partners. The LMI staff will also present product informational sessions at each of the monthly meetings of the Arkansas Workforce Investment Board.

These training activities support several goals of the state’s WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan, which are:

- 1) Prepare the state’s unemployed and underemployed for rewarding, well paying jobs;
- 2) Supporting the workforce training needs of employers, including facilitating communication with training providers;
- 3) Providing access to career planning and preparation services for all interested Arkansans; and
- 4) By offering labor market information that is current and accurate.

Our customers in the State of Arkansas range from business and educational partners to the Workforce Centers to the private citizens of the State.

With a better-trained LMI workforce we are better able to meet the needs of all our external and internal customers alike, which provides system development for the One-Stop delivery system in Arkansas.

For all training activities sponsored by the LMI Department, participants will be asked to fill out a specialized training survey. All other training activities (career fairs, speaking engagements, conferences, seminars) will be handled on an as needed basis.

	<u>PY 04 Funds</u>
Costs associated with Supporting State Workforce Information Training Activities	\$ 24,474.00

C. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

Throughout sections A. and B. of the grant narrative, we have given customer satisfaction assessment statistics for the PY '03 grant year deliverables.

We have incorporated several of the suggestions our customers made into several of the product deliverables. In PY '04 Arkansas will remain relentless in its pursuit to furnish the citizens of Arkansas with good, reliable, and accurate sources of labor market information. We will continue to strive for excellence in our products' customer satisfaction assessment and will continue to adapt our information using suggestions from these surveys, through future Workforce Information grants.

As Arkansas strives to satisfy the needs for labor market information to the users within the State, we will constantly look for ways to improve the information disseminated through the workforce information system. To help achieve this goal, we will continue to insert customer satisfaction surveys with each published (paper/CD) product we disburse. We will log the number of surveys by product, along with the number of surveys returned. We will obtain the information by category (business, education, citizen, etc...), reflecting their satisfaction with the product reviewed. Also collected will be the customer's opinion of the "usefulness" of each product and their ideas will be solicited on how to make the publication more beneficial for their purpose. As seen in Sections A. and B. of the grant narrative, we will continue to use the following grading scale for our surveys in PY 2004:

Satisfaction Usefulness Grade

- + Very Satisfied Very Useful A = 4 pts.
- + Satisfied Useful B = 3 pts.
- + Indifferent Fair C = 2 pts.
- + Dissatisfied Not Very Useful D = 1 pt.
- + Very Dissatisfied Not Useful At All F = 0 pts.

We will develop an aggregate average from all returned surveys, as an independent measure of the categories of satisfaction and usefulness to give an overall customer assessment (evaluation).

This statement reflects AESD's attempt at meeting the customer satisfaction assessment in this grant. On issues affecting other programs or deliverable products, work groups or focus groups may be employed to get a better gauge on the thinking of outside groups. Members of such groups may include representatives from Business, Workforce Center employees, Local and State WIB staff, school counselors and teachers, and Arkansas citizens.