

**Washington State  
WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT  
ANNUAL PLAN FOR  
PY 2002**

**Introduction:** Funding is requested under PY 2002 Wagner-Peyser One-Stop LMI authority for the development of core LMI products and services to support the America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) and One-Stop Service (WorkSource) initiatives in Washington State. All of the work on the following eight priority objectives, as well as the customer satisfaction assessment work, will be performed by One-Stop Grant funds. As additional Federal and State funds become available they will be used to supplement the accomplishment of this work. The performance period for this work will start with date of submission and go to December 31, 2003.

**Part I. THE STATEWIDE EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS SYSTEM**

The Revised Code of Washington (RCW 50.30.050) designates the Employment Security Department as the official source of Labor Market Information (LMI) in Washington State. The Department accomplishes its task through the Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch. That Branch is currently staffed by 77 permanent employees who develop and disseminate data and analysis at both the state and local levels. In addition to the Administrative Support Unit, the Branch is organized into four basic sections. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Programs; Economic & Policy Analysis, ESD Program Support, Data and Delivery Systems, and WorkSource Program Support. The BLS Section conducts surveys (OES), process UI quarterly reports (ES-202) develop industry employment data (CES) and produce labor force estimates (LAUS.) The other sections support the Workforce Investment Act by creating and disseminating Branch products and services and providing analysis to job seekers, employers, planners, program administrators, the general public and the State Legislature. Out-stationed and central office staff economists accomplish this through a combination of electronic systems, publications, and in person LMI delivery. Some specifics regarding LMEA's planed activities in support of the State's workforce investments are as follows:

1. Each of the twelve Workforce Development Areas has differences in how they operate and what their needs are. To ascertain those needs, telephone and in-person contacts will be made, with appropriate individuals, by both central office staff as well as our out-stationed economists. In addition, and where it is possible, the regional labor economists and central office staff will also work with employer groups such as the Chamber of Commerce and local EDCs to determine their needs and interests. Individuals and workforce development professionals will be surveyed to determine their information needs at conferences and while accessing our electronic LMI delivery systems.
2. Washington's employment statistics system supports the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five Year Plan by providing planning data on the electronic delivery system for direct access to the most current data available and by preparing special reports as requested during the planning process. In PY 2002 LMEA will also conduct, its first ever, vacancy survey. This survey is in direct response to the interests and needs of local Workforce Development Councils.

3. Washington's strategy is to provide electronic one-stop self-service LMI to all three principal customer groups: the business community, individuals and the state's workforce development system. In addition to our Workforce Explorer, LMEA will continue to produce some hard copy publications such as the Washington Labor Market, the Labor Area Summaries, County Profiles and Occupational Outlooks. As it becomes feasible to create and disseminate the information in those publications on the Workforce Explorer LMEA will provide hard copy printouts of requested data for those who do not have access to the Internet.

4. The Workforce Explorer is Washington State's principal delivery system for labor market data and analysis. That system is accessible at all one-stop WorkSource Service Delivery Centers in all twelve of the State's Workforce Development Areas. To promote its use, LMEA is developing posters and bookmarks for distribution to clients at the WorkSource Centers. In addition, as it is requested and as time permits, LMEA is providing training for local staff on how to navigate and understand the system.

## **Part II. PRIORITY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

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

Washington State's Labor Market and Economic Analysis (LMEA) Branch will continue to populate and maintain all ALMIS database tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the ALMIS Database Consortium. As necessary, we will also draw on information and technical support provided by the Consortium in order to continue improving that database. It will be maintained in the ALMIS 2.2 structure, and in SQL Server 2000. Along with the core tables, we will maintain other tables such as the occupational licensing and education provider information. The licensing data will also be submitted through the National Crosswalk Service Center for inclusion on the America's Career Information Network (ACINet) site. Maintenance on lookup and crosswalk tables will also occur consistent with data table dependencies.

Maintenance activities include routine backup of production and development databases, verifying data integrity, validating data quality, and all data formatting and manipulation necessary to accomplish the above tasks. Enhancements include expanding time periods or geography types for tables, expanding amount of details, such as levels of industries available, or providing more routinely updating process to certain data sets. We will also begin to populate the database with NAICS based industry information.

The Workforce Explorer is Washington's principal data delivery system and is intended to serve employers, job seekers, planners and everyone else who can access the Internet. For those who can't, LMEA will provide hard copies of the requested material.

The focus of this activity will be to develop its Workforce Explorer data delivery system to allow customers easy public access to the State ALMIS Database and allow them to compare information from interstate labor market areas and across multiple States.

In PY 2002 LMEA will focus on consulting with the State Board and the Workforce Development Councils concerning the deliverables in this plan.

The products and activities of the ALMIS database and the Workforce Explorer delivery system will support the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser strategic plan by providing a wide variety of LMI data for program planning, administration and evaluation.

The main measurable outcome of this deliverable will be the number of "hits" recorded on the various sections of our Workforce Explorer. Since this will be the first year of implementation, we will be setting the baseline on which to improve with customer feedback.

This work is expected to continue throughout the program year. However, much of the intensive work of moving everything from our current web site to the Workforce Explorer is expected to occur in July and August 2003.

Grant funds will be used for equipment, applications development, database development, training and staff. Approval will be requested from the ETA Regional Office for any equipment purchase of \$5,000 or more per unit cost. LMEA will also participate in "Basic ALMIS Database Training" through the LMI Institute as needed for new staff.

Estimated Cost: \$80,000

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

In PY 2001, LMEA developed medium and long-term industry and occupational projections for 2000-2005-2010 for the State and all twelve Workforce Development sub-State areas. Due to delays with the MicroMatrix release we used direct inputs of data and directory files from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The occupational staffing patterns from OES surveys were available only for the two of the three years of survey cycle.

In PY 2002 LMEA will update both long-term industry and occupational employment projections for the State and all twelve Workforce Development Areas (WDA) using methodology and guidelines developed by the Long-Term Employment Projections Consortium as well as available tools and software. For industry projections we will use the intermediate results for year 2001 and part of 2002 in order to improve the quality of the predictions. For occupational staffing patterns we will use data from the full three-year survey cycle. We will put the significant effort into the development of adequate staffing patterns for the State and the sub-State areas based on an evaluation of the initial OES survey results. We will use the NAICS based historical industry employment series for the industry projections. We will populate the ALMIS Database with the industry and occupation projections and disseminate them through our Internet web site and other available electronic data delivery systems such as the Workforce Explorer.

The principal customers are expected to be: students, curriculum planners, job seekers, Workforce Development planners, administrators, businesses, as well as the general public with access to Workforce Explorer, Internet and our hard copy publications.

The focus of this project will be to give individuals and educational institutions information on what to expect, in terms of industry and occupation changes, and to help them plan their activities for those changes.

The industry and occupation projections will be shared with the State Board and educational institutions as well as the Workforce Development Councils. Feedback will also be solicited to see how the information provided meets the states needs.

The industry and particularly the occupational projections will serve the WIA/Wagner-Peyser Plan in providing information that is not available from any other source in Washington State.

The measurable outcomes will be the number of "Occupational Outlook" publications distributed and the number of "hits" for this information on the Workforce Explorer.

The projections work will continue throughout the program year with most progress on the long-term and medium-term projections expected to be during the third and fourth quarter of PY 2002.

Estimated Cost: \$150,000

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

In PY 2001, LMEA completed the 2001-2003 projections. In PY 2002 LMEA will produce and disseminate short-term industry and occupational employment projections for 2002 to 2004 using methodology and guidelines developed by the Short-Term Employment Projections Consortium and the MicroMatrix User's Group as well as available adequate tools and software. The short-term forecasts will be made using calendar year 2002 as the base year with projections to 2004 using NAICS based historical data. These projections will be produced for the State and all twelve Workforce Development sub-State areas. LMEA will populate the ALMIS Database with the industry and occupational forecasts and will make them available to all users on our Internet home page, the Workforce Explorer and in any other format as developed by Short-Term Forecasts Consortium in consultation with ETA.

Washington's new Workforce Explorer will allow users to directly access and extract data from the core ALMIS tables. It will also have other advanced features such as creating custom homepages, graphing, and integrated data displays.

The principal customers are expected to be: "Training Benefit" and "WorkFirst" program administrators, students, job seekers, Workforce Development planners, administrators, employers, as well as the general public with access to our web sites.

The principal focus of this product will be to provide information for short term planning, especially for individuals in the "Training Benefits" (TB) program who will need to know what industries are growing and declining and what jobs may be available at the completion of a 12 to 18 month training program.

Consultation on this product will be with the WDCs and the WorkSource (One-Stop) Service Delivery Center staff's which administer the TB program.

The industry and occupational projections will serve the WIA/Wagner-Peyser Plan in providing information that is not available from any other source in Washington State.

The measurable outcome for these products will be the number of times this information is accessed on our electronic data delivery site. Additional input will be sought at meeting and/or conferences of program administrators. .

These projections will be completed in the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of PY 2002.

Estimated cost: \$105,000

#### **4. Develop occupational analysis products:**

In PY 2002 LMEA will produce and disseminate an occupational supply and demand analysis for each of the 12 Workforce Development Areas. This analysis will be based on occupational employment projections and unemployment claimant data and will be available in the first quarter of 2003. The model will be updated with education data during the summer of 2003. This analysis will be used to provide forecasts for use in the allocation of training benefit funds in the state. Extensive consultation will be undertaken with Workforce Development Councils in the development of the lists for the allocation of training benefit funds and for use in other programs.

In PY 2002 LMEA will produce a SOC based "Occupational Outlook" publication to highlight careers and skills in demand by Workforce Development Area. In the spring of 2003, a new occupational outlook for each of the 12 Workforce Development Areas will be produced to include information on new and emerging occupations and on career ladders.

In response to a growing need for such information, LMEA will also conduct in PY 2002 a statewide vacancy and benefits survey. However, much of that survey will be funded with other resources.

The principal customers for this product will be Washington's "Training Benefits" administrators, "WorkFirst" clients, and the general public including job seekers, employers and planners.

The focus of this effort will be to provide "Demand/Decline" occupational information for each of the 12 Workforce Development Areas for use in the administration of the Training Benefits program.

Extensive consultation will be undertaken with Workforce Development Councils in the development and maintenance of the "Demand/Decline" lists for the allocation of training benefit funds and for use in other programs. Designations will be changed as economic events change occupational employment outlook.

The product supports WIA and is indispensable for the administration of the Training Benefits program in each Workforce Development Area.

The main measurable outcome will be the number of times this information is accessed on our electronic data delivery system.

Planning milestone: The "Demand/Decline" information will be updated during the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2003 and after a local review, will be put on our electronic delivery system for that information.

Estimated cost: \$72,000

#### **5. Provide an employer name and address list that can be accessed by the public:**

Washington's LMEA Branch will make available through our Internet web site the ALMIS Employer Database. Updates will occur as detailed in the "infoUSA" licensing agreement, currently twice a year. The employer database will be integrated with our ALMIS database, in accordance with the ALMIS Database Consortium, and will be delivered through the Workforce Explorer.

In addition, LMEA will be supplementing this information with additional Internet links to sites that provide information on employment opportunities in each local labor market area. As time permits, LMEA will assemble a special listing of e-mail addresses for use by job seekers to contact major employers in each of the state's twelve Workforce Development Areas.

Major Customers for the name and address information will be job seekers, career counselors, and employment program administrators.

The focus of this product will be to provide employer information to people looking for jobs or in a counseling capacity assisting clients in their job search. The name and address file will be linked to industry and occupation information to make job searches more efficient and productive.

LMEA will consult with staff in the WorkSource Service Centers on the usefulness of this product and will be soliciting input on our web site.

This product will support the State's WIA Plan by providing counselors and program administrators information to assist job seekers with specific skills in finding work in a specific area.

The usefulness of this information will be measured by the number of times this information is accessed on our Workforce Explorer.

Planning milestones: The latest version InfoUSA employer name and address database will be converted to ALMIS format and put on the Workforce Explorer in March 2003.

Estimated Cost: \$8,500.

#### **6. Provide information and support to Workforce Investment Boards and produce other State information and products:**

In Washington State, our Regional Labor Economists (RLE) and the Workforce Explorer - our primary electronic LMI delivery system, will provide local area support to the Workforce Investment Boards (WIB) and other data users. In PY 2002 the regional economists will be devoting a large share of their time in working directly with the WIBs and local WorkSource (One-Stop) Service Centers in order to support local planning activities and meet local LMI needs. In addition, we expect that each economist will provide periodic economic briefings to the WDC members in order to keep them current on changes in local labor market conditions. Since each area has its own distinct way of achieving its employment and workforce development goals, we do not have a blanket strategy for meeting local needs. Each RLE will work with local planners and program administrators to identify their needs and to provide the necessary information.

Because of budget and staffing level concerns we have not re-filled two vacant RLE positions. So, in PY 2002, LMEA will be reorganizing area assignments in order to continue to provide direct support to all the Workforce Development Councils (WDC) and their WorkSource Service Center (one-stop) staffs. (LMEA now has eight Regional Labor Economists.)

One of the newest products for local area use will be the data provided by our statewide "Vacancy and Benefits Survey." Another product LMEA is working on is a Spanish language version of the "Occupation Outlook" publication. It is intended to provide occupational information to the Limited English Proficiency (LEP) clients in central Washington where Spanish is the language of a relatively large LEP population.

Major Customers will be Workforce Development Council planners and administrators, and WorkSource Center clients including employers, students, job seekers, analysts, reporters, and economic development planners.

The product focus will be on local needs for current vacancy and benefits information as well as the specific needs of the large Spanish population in our state that has Limited English Proficiency (LEP.)

Consultation with local planners preceded the development of the "Vacancy and Benefits Survey" and follow up interviews will be conducted to determine if the survey product met the WDC needs. Further, the Occupational Outlook publication will be developed in consultations with local Spanish language experts in order to make sure that the proper Spanish dialect is used.

The indicated products will support WIA/Wagner-Peyser plans by providing information that will assist planners in their training and employment efforts as well as provide tailored information for Limited English Proficiency (LEP) clients.

The measurable outcomes will be publications that address the specific workforce information needs of WIA planners and occupational information reports for Limited English Proficiency clients. A follow up to the WDC and WorkSource Center service delivery staff, in the central Washington area, will seek to determine the usefulness of these products.

Planning milestones: This LMI delivery and support work will continue throughout the year. Currently, all WorkSource Centers have electronic access to our data delivery web sites and have LMI publications in their “resource rooms.” The timing of specific enhancement activities will depend on local WorkSource readiness and ability to use our new electronic LMI delivery system features such as “My LMI.” The “Vacancy and Benefits Survey” report is expected to be completed in March 2003. The first Spanish language Occupational Outlook will be delivered to the field during the third quarter of PY 2002.

Estimated Cost: \$145,000

## **7. Support the development of State-based workforce information delivery systems:**

Washington will continue to deploy and maintain our Internet flagship, the Workforce Explorer, which supports the dissemination of the state workforce information core products. Costs will include application and server related improvements, deployment issues, and enhancements that improve functionality or usability. Improvements will be derived and validated through direct customer feedback, and solutions will be presented to stakeholders for validation.

The Workforce Explorer will expand to include three primary methods of collecting customer feedback. First, articles will include a question at the bottom that will ask the reader to rate how well the article met their needs. A comment box will also be available for them to provide additional comments. Second, questions and feedback opportunities will be placed randomly on the site to solicit feedback from users. This information will also be collected and analyzed to improve the site. Third, we will conduct a comprehensive web site survey

In addition to the Workforce Explorer, LMEA will maintain and populate another electronic data delivery site called the “Occupations of the Unemployed.” It provides weekly and monthly information on the occupations and industries of the UI Program “covered” unemployed. During the second and third quarters of PY 2002 that system will be enhanced to provide additional characteristics of that population. Eventually, we expect that this additional information will be directly available on the Workforce Explorer. However, that is not expected to occur during this program year.

LMEA will also continue to publish monthly and periodic hard copy publications such as the Washington Labor Market, the Labor Area Summaries, County Profiles and Occupational Outlooks. During the second and fourth quarters of PY 2002 we will survey the readership to determine the feasibility of producing and distributing these publications strictly on the Workforce Explorer.

Principal customers of the Workforce Explorer, Washington’s one-stop electronic LMI service delivery center is intended to serve all clients including program planners, administrators, employers, job seekers and career counselors.



Product focus will be to provide current and comprehensive information to a broad range of customers and to develop the system, based on client feedback that is both rich in content and “user friendly.”

In order to achieve our content and access goals, LMEA will be consulting with all clients to get their input on the usefulness of what we have and ideas on how to do better. Much of this will be gathered at the point where clients are accessing our electronic systems. LMEA will also work to form a “focus-group” in order to evaluate the current system and get ideas on how to improve the Workforce Explorer.

The Workforce Explorer is being developed to support the LMI needs of the WIA/Wagner-Peyser program’s five year plan and to serve as the one-stop LMI service delivery system for the citizens in Washington State.

Measurable outcome will be a fully functional system that is used extensively by the citizens of Washington State. The tally of “hits” and feedback from clients accessing the system will measure the extent to which it is used.

Planning milestones: The development of this system will continue throughout the year. However, the main switch from the current LMEA home page to the new system with all of the current and additional data and analysis will be done in June and July of 2003.

Estimated Cost: \$131,962. Approval will be requested from the ETA Regional Office for any equipment purchase of \$5,000 or more per unit cost.

#### **8. Support State workforce information training activities:**

Washington State will use PY 2002 Grant money for training of LMI professionals and conduct training sessions for LMI users. For LMEA staff, training will be funded to upgrade computer and analysis skills, as well as communication techniques for delivering LMI through the WorkSource (One-Stop) service delivery system. In addition, LMEA plans to send staff to ALMIS sponsored training courses dealing with industry and occupational projections as well as courses dealing with area analysis skills. Additional software training courses will be scheduled locally, as they are needed for new and existing staff to enhance their proficiency and productivity.

Training and technical assistance for new LMI users will be provided, whenever possible, by LMEA staff working with locally based trainers and regional labor economists. LMEA will present an Economic Symposium for economists, planners, program staff and other LMI data users. Most of the Symposium's content will be determined using a survey of potential attendees. As usual we will also highlight recent economic developments and promote the use of our Workforce Explorer. .

Major Customers: LMEA staff, WDC’s, Agency staff, employment counselors and a broad range of public and private customers interested in accessing and using the labor market information produced by the LMEA Branch.

The focus of the training effort will be to increase staff and customer understanding of workforce information and to assist customers in accessing that information.

All training will be done in consultation with the appropriate clients

This activity will support WIA/Wagner-Peyser program by providing training to program delivery staff and assisting clients in accessing LMI to assist them in their career planning and job search.

Measurable outcomes... During this funding period LMEA expects to conduct 45 training events for about 500 staff members in WorkSource Service Centers around the state. In addition about fourteen training events are planned for about 200 K-12 and community college counselors. Additional training will be provided in conference settings as requested by LMI clients.

Planning milestones: The Symposium, which has been held annually since 1995, is planned for the second quarter of PY 2002 while the training is expected to occur in all quarters of the program year. The regional labor economists will provide technical assistance to the staff of the Workforce Development Councils (WDC) and WorkSource Centers as the need for such training is identified.

Estimated Cost: \$50,000

### **Part III. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT**

Washington's Labor Market and Economic Analysis Branch recognizes the importance of customer satisfaction assessment and its role in improving current products and services, and in meeting new and emerging needs. During the past year, we have made some progress in that field. We have solicited feedback and ideas from conference participants; we have surveyed publication readers, and have solicited input from electronic LMI delivery systems users.

In PY 2002 we will intensify that effort to consult with customers about the usefulness of the information disseminated through the statewide employment statistics service, products and electronic delivery system in order to achieve continuously improvement and responsiveness to changing needs. (Our new "Vacancy and Benefits Survey," which is currently under way, is an example of what we are doing in response to client inputs.)

LMEA will use a multiple approach to reach out to clients primarily through: mail surveys, web-based questionnaires, telephone surveys and in-person contacts. Mail surveys of publication readers will be conducted in order to assess the usefulness of the publications and to explore the feasibility of moving their production and dissemination to the Internet. Web-based questionnaires and input opportunities will be used to determine the effectiveness of our Workforce Explorer and the Occupations of the Unemployed electronic delivery systems and to solicit input for improvements. This opportunity will be available to everyone who accessed those systems - including the three principal customer groups: employers, job seekers, and employment service & training providers. Telephone contacts and in-person visits will be used to get customer satisfaction assessments and improvement suggestions for WIA and other program administrators and front line employment service professionals.

The managers of the appropriate section will evaluate all satisfaction survey results and steps will be taken to address any deficiencies indicated in those surveys. Suggestions

for new products and services will be reviewed by Branch management and evaluated as to their feasibility under current staffing and funding levels.

LMEA will also share a copy of our PY 2002 work plan with the WIA Workforce Development Councils in order to help them develop realistic expectations and, at the end of the year, be able to give us an evaluation on "How did we do to meet their LMI needs?"

This plan will also be provided to: ETA's National Office [es-in@doleta.gov](mailto:es-in@doleta.gov) for posting on an ETA supported web site.