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Cost-Reimbursable Grants
One-Stop Labor Market Information Funds

Progress Report
Period Ending June 30, 2004

Texas Workforce Commission
Labor Market and Career Information Department

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The following information is provided in accordance with the requirements of the Training and Employment Guidance Letter for the PY2003 Grant to document progress made and milestones completed during the PY2003. This status report lists each ETA identified activity, planned LMCI projects and activities, and those milestones and achievements that occurred during the program year.

This status report differs from previous year submissions due to the reorganization of the TWC Labor Market Information (LMI) unit, which previously served as the primary contractor for the DOL/ETA One Stop Grant. Beginning September 1, 2003 the LMI unit was merged with the Career Development Resources (CDR) unit within TWC to created a single Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) department. The LMI Director and Deputy Director retired effective September 1, at which time the former Texas LMI Director, Mark Hughes, and the former CDR Director, Richard Froeschle, took over the leadership reins of the new organization. This department was newly located within the TWC External Relations division as a result of an Agency-wide restructuring.

The new LMCI department has experienced a mix of positive synergies and challenges. The product mix expanded significantly, as did the funding leverage and diversity of funding sources. Some identified project activities in the ETA plan submission were de-prioritized as a result synergies achieved in the merger. In other words, in several cases, such as the delivery of occupational and career information, the merger resulted in an extraordinarily rich litany of products and services as a result of prior CDR work activities. In addition, the LMCI department took on new challenges in the realm of economic development as the TWC moved to support such efforts from the Office of the Governor. Although organizational challenges remain as we move into PY2004, the turmoil resulting from the restructuring has been overshadowed by the synergy and opportunities created as former LMI and CDR staff begin working together toward common goals, supported by the state Workforce Division and local workforce boards.

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Status of LMCI Planned Product Activities for PY2003 Under the ETA TEGL for PY2003

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(1) Continue to populate the ALMIS database with state data.
Description: The Labor Market and Career Information (LMCI) Department will update and maintain the ALMIS Database and continue to populate the database with state data and available National data. All tables designated as core tables in accordance with guidelines issued by the ALMIS Database Consortium will be populated and maintained. Staff assigned to work on the ALMIS Database activity will coordinate the ALMIS initiative in Texas with the ALMIS Database Consortium.

Milestones Completed: Texas is compliant with the most current version of ALMIS, which is Version 2.2. The 16 core tables, designated by ETA, are updated as new data becomes available. The tables are updated monthly, quarterly, and annually, depending on the availability of the specific data items. In addition, Texas takes the initiative to populate an additional eight tables: Building (housing starts), Sales, Programs, Schools, Commuting Patterns, Consumer Price Index, Mass Layoff Statistics, and Short-Term

Projections. Due to upcoming changes in the BLS programs, Texas is aware that changes will need to be made to the Lookup Tables in the beginning of 2005.

Texas attended an ALMIS Database Consortium meeting on April 14, 2004 in Tampa, Florida. During that meeting, Texas asked to be considered for active membership.

Outcome: The database has been regularly updated and has been available to the public via the TRACER web application (www.tracer2.com). Core tables are updated within 14 days after data updates are received. Texas has remained in contact with the ALMIS Database Consortium to monitor progress on current and upcoming initiatives.

(2) Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.

Long-term Employment Projections
Description: To produce and disseminate employment projections by detailed industry and occupation from 2002 to the year 2012 for Texas and the 28 Workforce Development Areas (WDAs).

Milestones Completed:
Development of NAICS 4-digit employment time series for Texas and WDAs
 Review of time series for reasonableness
 Adjustments for non-covered employment
 Adjustments for compatibility with staffing pattern definition
Using the Long-Term Industry Projection System, pre-projection analysis has been completed for the statewide time series.

Milestones That Need to be Completed: The following milestones were not completed due to several unforeseen factors: (1) delayed release of the BLS Employment Projections in February 2004 which delayed the release of the Long-Term Industry Projection System; (2) delay in receiving the TEGL and the delay of full funding to states in regard to under-expenditures; (3) realignment and reduction of projections staff.
 Development of industry projections for Texas and WDAs
 Review of industry projections by internal and external experts
 Review of the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey staffing patterns
 Development of occupation projections for Texas and WDAs
 Review of occupation projections by internal and external experts
 Finalize employment projections
 Dissemination of employment projections

Outcome: The project will be completed in the first quarter of 2005.

Short-term Employment Forecasts
Description: To produce short-term employment forecasts for Texas and 28 WDAs.

Milestones Completed:
Development of NAICS 3-digit employment time series for Texas and WDAs
 Review of time series for reasonableness
 Adjustments for non-covered employment
 Adjustments for compatibility with staffing pattern definitions
Using the Short-Term Industry Projection System, industry forecast has been completed.

Milestones That Need to be Completed:
Review of industry forecasts
Review of the Occupational Employment Statistics Survey staffing patterns
Development of occupation forecasts for Texas and WDAs
Review of occupation forecasts
Finalize employment forecasts
Disseminating employment forecasts

Outcome: Project will be completed in the first quarter of 2005. While the Agency sees potential in the short-term projections program we will take a cautious approach in the review and assessment of the results internally and distribute on a limited trial basis to ascertain the intuitive relationship between forecasts and indigenous regional wisdom. If pilot projects are successful, short-term forecasts will be integrated into the LMCI web presence and distributed.

(3) Provide occupational and career information products for public use.
A. Occupational Information

Description: The integration of the former Career Development Resources with the LMI unit has significantly increased the synergy and product mix in this category. Accordingly, our organizational offerings in this category have expanded several fold over the original plan submission. Moreover, our realignment has resulted in a great deal of the leverage--so highly valued now by the ETA national office. Nowhere is this leverage more obvious than in this ETA component. Products developed and funded through the U.S. Department of Education (ED) under the America's Career Resource Network (ACRN) can now be marketed and enhanced as joint activities between ETA and ED. Highlights of this synergy will be included below.

Based exclusively on the 2003-04 ETA plan submission, LMCI provided a link through TRACER2 to the O*NET taxonomy and database providing on-line customer access to the assessment tools and occupational profiles. We have maintained the currency of TRACER2 which continues to provide the career assessment tools, career information, employment trends by occupation, wages by occupation, major employers, training and educational requirements by occupation, skills needed, and licensed occupations.

LMCI had originally planned to provide the printed *Occupational Highlights* brochure customized for all 28 workforce board areas and the State. Challenges related to maintaining inventories of print stock for each of 28 Boards caused us to rethink the delivery medium for this item. To alleviate the problem, staff create Adobe Acrobat .pdf file versions of each brochure. As requests for the brochures were received staff would send the Adobe .pdf file from the appropriate region and allow the local Board to print as many copies as needed. In the event a customer was unable to print their own, LMCI staff reproduced the brochures in-house.

ETA customers also benefited from products formerly distributed by Career Development Resources before the merger. Among some of the more noteworthy contributions to world of occupational information contributed by CDR:
1. Over 100 in-service presentations to a broad audience of workforce board and local center staff, teachers, counselors, economic developers, employers. Among those presentations were

over 20 certification sessions for teaching a new LMCI developed Career Orientation curriculum.

2. Distribution and support for Texas CARES, complete with in-service training, data and system updates for an install base of over 3,500 sites statewide.

3. Creation of 2 new on-line tools; the Reality Check Budget Calculator and the On-line Graduation Planner.

4. Operation of the toll-free Career Information Hotline, funded by the Texas Education Agency, which provided custom college and career information to over 15,000 callers in PY 2003-04. The former CDR website also provided an electronic portal to the iOSCAR occupational system, with full access to the many tools available within that system.

5. Distribution of a library of hardcopy publications including tabloid newspapers, A Texas Job Hunters Guide, A College Selection guidebook, and a myriad of other brochures and magazines.

Milestones Completed:
All planned projects completed. In addition, the TRACER2 LMI inquiry tool was migrated from the 3rd party hosting service to the LMCI server network, giving us complete control of future data updates and system modifications.

Milestones That Need to be Completed:
None

Outcome:
The two greatest synergies to thus far emerge from the CDR and LMI merger are in the area of IT consolidation and the delivery of occupational and career information. The funding and data leverage contributed by CDR, in combination with the occupational wage and employment projections programs operated by the former LMI shop, will only increase the diversity, quality and variety of delivery mechanisms over the coming years.

B. JVS Workgroup
Description: LMCI will stay involved in the job vacancy survey workgroup. LMCI will participate in meetings and implement new procedures, software, and methodology as they become available.

Milestones Completed: LMCI continued correspondence with the job vacancy workgroup. Although some local workforce boards asked for a job vacancy survey to be conducted in their area, the delay in the TEGL and the delay of full funding to states prevented us from committing to these projects. In August 2003, James Dossett wrote an article for the department's newsletter, *Texas Labor Market Review*, entitled "Job Vacancy Surveys: A Valuable Component to Labor Market Analysis."

Outcome: LMCI continued to stay involved in the job vacancy survey; however, travel restrictions prevented staff from attending workgroup meetings.

C. Quarterly Active File Compilation
Description: LMCI will make quarterly compilations of the local active file by geographic areas (office locations) and by occupation. The focus is to provide occupational information in support of local workforce boards and economic development activities.

Milestones Completed: The Quarterly Active File Compilation was completed each quarter. Upon its completion, it was loaded on TRACER. The data is received from the UI department within three weeks after the completion of the quarter. While data is available during that time and available for

dissemination upon request, LMCI staff takes an additional two weeks to prepare the materials in an easier, user-friendly format to load on TRACER. Preliminary discussions were held during this past year to automate this process for better efficiency.

Outcome: LMCI is able to supply information regarding the Quarterly UI Active File regarding the availability of workers in specific occupations within 30 days after the end of the calendar quarter. Current information can be found on the LMCI website at the following address: http://www.tracer2.com/admin/uploadedPublications/586_2004_2Q_Active.pdf

D. Career Videos
Description: LMCI will provide updated career videos for the website and for the local workforce development boards as the videos become available. Spanish language videos will also be provided.

Milestones Completed: Texas CARES (Career Alternatives Resource Evaluation System), a multi-media career information system, provides the capability of playing videos from the new Occupations Career Clusters Digital Video Show CD-Rom program in Version 6. The new version also allows users to search through detailed career information enhanced by occupational, Texas college and career preparation videos. In addition, OSCAR (Occupation and Skill Computer-Assisted Researcher) is a career exploration product, which enables users to view Occupational Career Cluster Videos.

The new Career Clusters Digital Video Show includes 360 English language and 197 Spanish language videos. Over 1,500 copies were provided to local Board and career and technology education teachers as part of the First Generation Career Orientation training initiative funded by TEA. For the past six years, LMCI staff have actively participated as a member of the DOL/ETA career video consortium headed by New Jersey. We took lead project responsibilities for translating the California Spanish language videos developed in QuickTime format into Windows Media Player format to facilitate wider distribution of the videos.

Milestones That Need to be Completed:
All milestones completed.

Outcome: Currently, the LMCI department supports OSCAR (Occupation and Skill Computer-Assisted Researcher), the Career Clusters Digital Occupational Video Show and Texas CARES (Career Alternatives Resource Evaluation System) through outside leveraged funding. This is another example of synergistic leveraging. The videos were developed by DOL/ETA and integrated into a career information system, Texas CARES, which was originally funded by the Texas Education Agency and the Higher Education Coordinating Board and now is a self-sustaining effort. The Digital Video Show development was funded by the Dept. of Education/ACRN grant that also supports the in-service training for both products.

(4) Provide public electronic access to the ALMIS Employer Database.
Description: This need is currently being filled by the InfoUSA Database, which the Department will continue to receive. The database is accessible through TRACER (Texas Rapid Access to Career and Economic Resources), a Workforce Informer Consortium product. Activities associated with this function include prompt loading and maintaining of the employer database as it is received from InfoUSA.

Milestones Completed: LMCI purchased a set of InfoUSA CD-ROM's for each of the 28 workforce boards in the State and several partner agencies, such as TWIC and the TWC Workforce Division, for a total of 32 set licenses. These were distributed in June 2003 at the LMI Conference. This enabled the

local LMI Specialists to get greater functionality from the employer databases than they can get over the web. The focus was to provide specific employer data not elsewhere available in the workforce system.

Updates to the InfoUSA database were received in October 2003. These were also distributed to the local LMI Specialists in each of the 28 workforce boards in the State.

In addition to distribution as separate data sets and through TRACER2, the InfoUSA/ALMIS database is incorporated into the SOCRATES regional planning software, Texas CARES, and Texas Industry Profiles. In addition to basic look-up features by industry, region and size class, LMCI has introduced a keyword look-up table and has reorganized employers by industry sectors and the Governors six competitive clusters to make the data more responsive to state economic development initiatives.

Outcome: We continue to receive updates of the InfoUSA database two times per year. We incorporate the updates on the TRACER website and all other LMCI automation products.

(5) Provide information and support to state and local Workforce Investment Boards and produce other special demand information products and services.

A. Information to the Local Boards
Description: LMCI is providing essentially all of its data online so that the Local Workforce Development Boards can access it at any time. LMCI will supply information about labor market dynamics and how to access LMCI data, products, and services to the local Workforce Development Boards.

Milestones Completed: LMCI reprinted the Job Search posters. In addition, the Wage Conversion poster was redesigned to be in the same format as the Job Search posters. The data wheels were distributed during conferences and forums. Texas continues to be an active participant in the LED consortium and has pilot tested the new LED Employer and WDA modules of the national LED Internet application.

LMCI produced a visual presentation that loops for use at exhibitor booths. The initial loop focused on labor market information. Due to demand for wage data, a second loop was created, focusing on wage data and the WIN system. Both of these loops have been beneficial to participants at conferences. At two recent conferences, LMCI had PC's available to the participants. This allowed staff to demonstrate products and services on-line.

The local workforce boards are required to identify targeted industries and occupations for purposes of classroom training and produce job placement in regional demand industries and occupations. To accomplish this task, the Boards are required to use the SOCRATES Internet application, a tool developed and maintained by LMCI. During PY2003 LMCI staff updated all SOCRATES data sets, modified several functionalities at the request of local Boards and state TWC Workforce Division staff, and provided training and technical assistance in the use of the product. LMCI staff were also involved in the review of the labor market plan component of the Board strategic plans, which is essentially a final SOCRATES narrative report.

Milestones That Need to be Completed: LMCI was not able to provide Spanish-language versions of the Products and Services brochure, the job search posters, and the Wage Information Network (WIN) website. In hindsight, we do not believe translating the Products brochure into Spanish was a value-added activity. Given the new organizational alignment, more energy will go into producing products and services that address specific workforce and economic development planning needs.

Outcome: LMCI continues to participate as a vendor at the Workforce Forums and other TWC conferences. In addition to displaying our products and services, LMCI staff is also available to answer questions. Products are monitored for quantity control. Updates to products are made as needed.

B. Industrial Profiles

Description: Using internal as well as external data resources, the LMCI Department will continue to update a series of special industrial profile reports. These reports will contain the detailed information necessary in tracking the employment trends and patterns for the specific industries that are shaping today's labor markets across the state.

Milestones Completed: The industrial profiles were modified to add all North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industries, with the exception of NAICS 814 Private Households. In the summer of 2003, we converted 62 profiles from a 2-digit SIC structure to a 3-digit NAICS one. By the summer of 2004, industrial profiles were expanded to include 94 three-digit industries. The new profiles contain revised size class breakouts and reformatted CES and QCEW data. Each profile contains covered employment and wage data, current employment statistics, size class data, historical CES data, a 5-digit component breakout, and an industry description.

Outcome: Industrial Profiles are updated quarterly as QCEW data becomes available. The CES data is updated monthly. The profiles are available on TRACER. Recent agency requests have warranted the creation of a new website in our department, Texas Industry Profiles (texasindustryprofiles.com). This website also houses the industrial profiles under the section of Industry Employment Snapshots. The Texas Industry Profile website provides industry-based information and regional analysis tools to assist local workforce and economic development professionals to better understand, clearly describe, Texas regional industry structure and workforce dynamics. The site addresses aspects of industry dispersion, employment dynamics, labor supply, industrial clustering and related analyses to provide a foundation for Texas economic development activities.

C. Workforce Board Report
Description: LMCI will continue to publish a monthly workforce development board report.

Milestones Completed: The two-page workforce board report is completed for each of the 28 Workforce Development Board areas. Several requests were received during the last year to include Top 20 Employer Lists on the second page of the report. The list was included beginning in 2004.

The LMCI department conducted a recent survey, asking the local LMI specialists about changing the format of the report. Approximately, 85% responded that they liked the format of the reports and did not want any changes made to it.

Outcome: The workforce board reports continue to be made available every month on release day on the TRACER website.

D. Texas Labor Market Review
Description: The Department will continue to publish a monthly newsletter in both hardcopy and electronic formats. The newsletter will remain the flagship publication of the LMCI Department.

Milestones Completed: The LMCI Department's newsletter, *Texas Labor Market Review*, continues to be published in hardcopy and electronic format. It is the official release of economic data for the State and the 27 Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs). It continues to be available on release day at 9:00 a.m. Approximately 6,000 copies of the newsletter were distributed each month to various customers.

Outcome: The TLMR was reduced from a 16-page format to a 12-page newsletter due to increased printing costs. On release day, the front page of the TLMR is faxed or e-mailed to our customers, notifying them that the newsletter is available on our TRACER website.

E. Dissemination
Description: LMCI personnel to disseminate information to users, deal with the media, and otherwise handle requests and retrieve data. Staff will be involved in the activities listed above as well as writing for the newsletter and other publications, and handling the usual functions associated with serving the customers of the LMCI Department.

Milestones Completed: LMCI personnel continues to disseminate information to users on an ongoing basis via e-mail or telephone contacts. Ad hoc requests are completed timely. LMCI economists dealt with an increased number of internal TWC data requests, a likely result of a workforce system that increasingly is becoming market-driven in Texas and which demands more data analysis. Release of Census files STF 3 and 4 during the year also increased demand for detailed census data both inside and outside the Agency. Requests range from the application of census data for Board composition to data preparation for substate formula allocation purposes to thematic mapping of Agency grant activity.

The department's newsletter, *Texas Labor Market Review*, was prepared and published each month and was available on the website on the scheduled day of release. The monthly data releases for 2004 were scheduled by December 18, 2003. Dissemination unit staff continues to serve as a point-of-contact for handling the printing of the newsletter and other publications. They maintained a good rapport with print shop personnel.

Outcome: All milestones completed. Dissemination unit staff met 2-3 times during the past year to discuss dissemination issues and to share information. These meetings proved useful in preparing for release day activities, especially in March 2004 when revised data was available.

F. Special Needs
Description: Initiatives to explore improving access to data for individuals with special needs will be undertaken. We will also have a Spanish-speaking employee available to answer requests from our Spanish-language customers. LMCI will continue to fund a toll-free number for customer seeking job market information and a toll-free career information Hotline for students and counselors.

Milestones Completed: The LMCI department uses two websites to disseminate information to the public. They are www.tracer2.com and www.cdr.state.tx.us. The department also has available two hotline numbers. The labor market information hotline is 512/491-2222 or 1-866-938-4444. The career information Hotline is 1-800-822-PLAN. Both hotlines are manned from Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

A Spanish-speaking employee is available to answer requests from our Spanish-language customers. During the past year, three television interviews were given with Univision on Texas' current labor market information. In addition, approximately two telephone interviews were conducted with radio stations. LMCI also has staff who can speak other languages as well.

LMCI completed negotiations with the TWC Workforce Division to translate three publications: Texas Job Hunter's Guide, Your Next Job, and Succeed At Work into Spanish. Texas Job Hunter's Guide is partially completed at this time. All three publications will also be revised at a lower reading level and web-enabled as tutorial courses using a "learning management systems" approach. Funds for this activity will come from WIA Reemployment Grant monies.

Outcome: LMCI continues to explore improving access to data for individuals with special needs. The milestones listed under Special Needs are being met on an ongoing basis. No problems were encountered during the past program year.

G. Benefits Survey
Description: LMCI will stay involved in benefits surveys as much as possible with a limited travel budget.

Milestones That Need to be Completed: LMCI have investigated several alternate approaches to conducting a statewide benefits survey. At this stage of our investigation those approaches deemed technically are also cost prohibitive. We are exploring joint program arrangements to try to reduce the cost, including contacts with the Texas Business Council. The delay in receiving the TEGL as well as the delay of full funding to states in regard to under-expenditures prevented the department from being involved in benefit surveys during this program year.

Outcome: LMCI is planning on conducting a benefits survey during the next program year at a statewide level, if a reasonable, cost-effective approach can be identified.

H. Global Insight Consortium
Description: LMCI will stay involved in a state data consortium that subscribes to economic publications from Global Insight.

Milestones Completed: During this past program year, the LMCI Director, Deputy Director, and a Program Manager met with representatives from Global Insight. Discussion focused on LMCI's needs, the products and services that Global Insight have available, their customized services, and what they have to serve current needs in our department.

As a result of the meeting with Global Insight representatives, several LMCI staff were set up on an e-mail list. Global Insight is now sending e-mail notifications concerning upcoming presentations, which might be of interest to the department. On February 20, 2004, some LMCI staff attended Global Insight's presentation on Energy Outlook.

LMCI also continued to stay involved with the State Data Center Consortium. We continue to respond to the State Data Center's surveys or review materials as requested.

Outcome: LMCI continues correspondences with Global Insight and the State Data Center Consortium. LMCI has also taken advantage of our participation in the consortium and ordered additional regional value of sales data and industry input-output Use and Make table coefficients from the consortium. Combined with state industry multipliers obtained through the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), these data should substantially improve our ability to estimate the economic impacts of exogenous shocks to the Texas economy and impacts to the labor market.

I. Customer Satisfaction Initiatives

Description: The focus for all of these initiatives is to solicit feedback on LMI products and services. LMCI maintains a toll-free hotline and e-mail address for customer service that are fully manned Monday through Friday from 8am-5pm. The number and e-mail address are easily found in TRACER and all of our publications. In order to gauge our level of customer service and quality of all our products, LMCI will continue to conduct a customer satisfaction survey that is sent to customers who have contacted our Department for information.

Milestones Completed: The department has available two hotline numbers. The labor market information hotline is 512/491-2222 or 1-866-938-4444. The career information hotline is 1-800-822-PLAN. Both are manned Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

The LMCI department also uses two websites to disseminate information to the public. They are www.tracer2.com and www.cdr.state.tx.us. Customers can also e-mail the department at lmi@twc.state.tx.us. This e-mail address is also monitored closely from Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m.

During this program year, 34 customer satisfaction surveys were received. All of them had favorable comments regarding the customer service they received from the department. A few comments were "Excellent job" and "Appreciate the prompt response." When a customer wrote that they encountered problems locating data on the website, we called promptly to discuss the problem.

The TRACER website averages about 5,200-5,300 on the number of daily unique visitors. OSCAR averages about 5,100 on the number of monthly visitors. With the implementation of Work In Texas, TWC's employment website, TRACER and OSCAR have been accessed at a high rate using Work In Texas links. Approximately 1,813 individual, customized data requests were completed this past year by LMCI economists. An additional 15,000 student information requests and 1,800 counselor packets were handled through the toll-free career information Hotline.

Outcome: LMCI strives to maintain good customer relations. Either working directly with customers or using specialized committees, we obtain input to guide product development and training needs.

J. Local Employment Dynamics

Description: LMCI is responsible for the management of the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Program. The department will represent Texas's interest on national LED initiatives.

Milestones Completed: The QCEW and the Unemployment Insurance files for the second quarter 2003 are the most recent files submitted to the U.S. Department of Census for the LED project. Currently, LMCI has reviewed the output from the second quarter 2003 file. The U.S. Department of Census delivers quarterly workforce indicators (QWI), providing information about the state economy at a detailed industry level and geography.

The U.S. Department of Census often asks for commentary on the website as well as methodology. Texas continues to correspond, offering feedback when needed. In addition, we have responded to internal and external ad hoc requests.

Outcome: Texas did not include the LED project in the original submission of the TEGL. However, since Texas continues to be involved in the project, we are including documentation for work conducted this past program year for this program. Since the LMCI Director reconnected with lead national LED

staff we have become more proactive members of the consortium. Staff participated in a review of the new Employer and WIB focused modules, soon to be available on the LED website.

Texas is compliant with the schedule for submitting data to the U.S. Department of Census. Texas continues to be involved in the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) Wage Record Subcommittee. Due to travel and budget restrictions, we have not been able to attend a meeting in the last two quarters; however, we still maintain e-mail correspondences with the committee on various initiatives.

(6) Improve and deploy electronic state workforce information delivery systems.

A. Data Warehouse and Internet Initiatives
Description: The focus for all of these initiatives will be to provide universal access to labor market data and analysis. LMCI will seek to improve the quality of and increase the access to labor market information through the Internet and an ad hoc reporting system.

Milestones Completed: As mentioned previously, one of the most significant early results of merging LMCI with CDR is the creation of a new, integrated IT unit. That unit has combined the talents of database administrators and applications programmers to support the new array of LMCI automation products. Despite a key staff loss, the LMCI data warehouse has been fully maintained. During the last year, the Wage Information Network (WIN) has been moved from an outside vendor and is now hosted in Texas. This has allowed the department to expand the uses of WIN in other websites, including Texas Industry Profiles. The TRACER2 system was also moved in-house from the 3rd party vendor effective August 1, 2004. As a result of the merger, LMCI now offers TRACER2 as a data inquiry tool, SOCRATES as a regional planning and workforce program targeting tool, iOSCAR as a skills transferability tool, and Texas Industry Profiles as a tool for economic development. Underpinning all these end-user applications are data extracts from the ALMIS database and the LMCI data warehouse. Over the next program year our IT staff will work to fully integrate these programs, provide a single front-end for access to all system functionalities from a single web point of contact, and migrate the former CDR web presence into an inclusive LMCI web site.

The documentation and data dictionary for the department's Data Warehouse has been reviewed and updated during the past year. Documentation is being made on BLS guidelines to ensure that the ad hoc reporting is meeting those guidelines.

Outcome: During the past year, the department has added personnel to back-up the Data Warehouse programmer. In addition, we have hired a data base administrator. With these recent additions, LMCI has strengthened the knowledge and skill levels for supporting Data Warehouse and Internet initiatives.

B. Hardware and Software
Description: Two PCs (with CD writers) are needed in the LMCI Dissemination Unit to facilitate the preparation and distribution of information to LMI users. One color plotter is needed to prepare maps and other information for viewing. We will also order 24 tapes for backing up the data warehouse databases on a routine basis as part of an agency risk management initiative. Software we will order will include additional licenses for Microsoft SQL Server for the data warehouse. The equipment will be used primarily to support information delivery systems. The focus is to bolster the infrastructure for data analysis, presentation, and delivery.

Milestones Completed: The agency was involved in a "PC Refresh" program during this past year. Personal computers with CD writers were obtained for everyone in the LMCI Dissemination Unit as part of an Agency-wide migration from owned to leased computers. Approximately 50 tapes were ordered for backing up the data warehouse databases on a routine basis. Additional licenses for Microsoft SQL Server were purchased.

Preliminary preparations for a color printer were begun in June 2004; however, due to delays in agency approval, the actual paperwork was not approved until July 2004. By August 2004, the color plotter was delivered to our department. Most LMCI printers and copiers will be replaced by multi-function peripherals as part of an Agency-wide effort to reduce disparate vendor peripherals and streamline hardware maintenance agreements.

Outcome: LMCI has already either purchased or has the purchase in process for all hardware and software.

C. Workforce Informer Consortium
Description: LMCI will participate in the Workforce Informer Consortium.

Milestones Completed: As mentioned previously under the first core product, Texas attended an ALMIS Database Consortium meeting on April 14, 2004 in Tampa, Florida. During that meeting, Texas asked to be considered for active membership.

Outcome: Texas has remained in contact with the ALMIS Database Consortium to monitor progress on current and upcoming initiatives.

D. Geographic Information Systems
Description: LMCI will expand the GIS capacities of the Department. The Texas Industry Profiles system will contain a significant GIS display capability. The focus will be to fill a data gap that involves the visual presentation of data and enhance analysis.

LMCI will complete an interagency agreement with the Texas Department of Public Safety to obtain drivers' license files with address, gender, race, and birthdate data. This information can then be cross-matched with unemployment insurance wage records and geocoded.

Milestones Completed: LMCI purchased the full MapInfo desktop software library. This included the software marker as well as the latitude and longitude software identifier. Using WIA statewide activities funds designated for the creation of the Texas Industry Profiles website, LMCI procured a complete MapInfo internet suite, including the Map Extreme and Map Marker packages essential to displaying single point GIS on the Internet. The interagency agreement with the Texas Department of Public Safety has been completed. LMCI staff attended Advanced GIS training during this past program year.

Outcome: LMCI has expanded the GIS capacities. Recent software purchases, along with Advanced GIS training, have enabled the department to offer GIS capability to users. A significant investment will be made during the next program year to enhance on-line GIS thematic mapping and point data display through the Texas Industry Profiles web site.

(7) Support state workforce information training initiatives

A. Outreach Efforts
Description: LMCI has designated an outreach specialist to be a liaison with the WDAs and provide them technical support. This person is responsible for responding to Board requests and for providing technical support on site. The goal of the outreach effort is to provide training to agency and board employees on the products and services offered by LMCI, particularly the TRACER product. The outreach specialist will be supported and complemented by other LMCI employees conversant on our products and services.

Milestones Completed: LMCI has two outreach specialists; one deals primarily with career information and the other deals mostly with labor market information. The LMCI department conducts various outreach efforts. One of these is the Career Orientation Curriculum, which is designed to demonstrate data-driven career development products to public education and post-secondary students and guidance counselors. Another outreach effort involves visiting local workforce boards and training them on labor market information products and services. At times, these may also involve individual or group technical assistance. LMCI regularly provides booths at conferences to display publications and software products and to answer attendees' questions.

An outreach initiative involves serving as a vendor at conferences and forums. During the past program year, LMCI was invited to be an exhibitor at five separate events. The total number of participants for the five events was approximately 2500.

LMCI continues to support and work with the Employment Statistics Committee (ESC). This committee, comprised of LMI specialists from the 28 Workforce Development Areas, provides valuable insight into future data needs. LMCI staff met with ESC members on the afternoon of April 8.

Outcome: Outreach efforts remained a major part of LMCI's initiatives. Approximately 125 workshops, presentations, and/or trainings were made at different intervals by various LMCI staff during the past program year.

B. Capacity Building
Description: In order to provide the best instruction and information for LMI users, LMCI will send staff to training conducted by the **LMI Institute**. The Department will provide training for as many employees (Labor Market Analysts and Economists) as reasonable through the LMI Institute. LMCI will also attempt to send additional staff to computer software training as it becomes available. This training has been particularly useful for many of our analysts and allows them greater access and versatility in dealing with mainframe and PC databases.

Milestones Completed: The Department hosted a pilot Data Mining class from the LMI Institute in the spring of 2004 in Austin. In addition, LMCI staff attended the following computer software trainings: GIS, SQL Server, Data Base Administration, Visual Fox Pro, Internet and Web Development.

Outcome: LMCI recognizes the importance of staff attending various training. Due to the recent reorganization of IT staff, particular emphasis has been placed on computer-related training.

C. TRACER Computer Based Training (CBT)
Description: LMCI will have a computer-based training developed for the TRACER web application. This training will help career center staff and other data users become familiar with the full capabilities of the system. The focus is to provide training on using the TRACER website.

Milestones Completed: The department's newsletter, *Texas Labor Market Review*, ran four feature articles from May 2003 through August 2003, explaining the features in TRACER. The series were titled "Ask the Webmaster" and contained information about navigating in TRACER.

Milestones That Need to be Completed: Although LMCI did not develop a computer-based training for the TRACER web application, the department was involved in other initiatives regarding TRACER. The most important one involved moving the website from a private vendor, NSR, to our own servers. With more direct control over the TRACER functions, LMCI staff will likely rework many of the existing functionalities and flows. From a training perspective staff will make greater efforts during the next program year to develop more scenario based technical assistance guides.

Outcome: Effective August 27, 2004, the TRACER website is now hosted by Texas. LMCI will be making changes to TRACER in order to accommodate customers' needs.