

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**  
**WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT PLAN NARRATIVE**  
**Program Year 2004 (Fiscal Funding Cycle July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2006)**

**In response to Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 1-04, Job Service North Dakota (JSND), with the approval of the North Dakota Workforce Development Council (WDC), submits the following proposal. The proposal is organized in three segments, as required by the TEGL. Section A describes the Statewide Workforce Information System. Section B describes the Products and Services to be provided with these funds. Section C presents the Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment.**

**A. STATEWIDE WORKFORCE INFORMATION SYSTEM**

The Labor Market Information (LMI) Center at Job Service North Dakota has been designated as the entity for employment statistics in North Dakota. In line with the North Dakota Five-Year Strategic Workforce Development Plan, the LMI Center has taken a “customer focused” approach toward providing a comprehensive employment statistics program.

The LMI staff has been seeking input from a wide variety of customer groups and workforce partners to obtain valuable information on their workforce information needs. Extensive one-on-one consultations, informal focus group discussions, user surveys, and other communications with customers have emphasized the importance of utilizing the feedback obtained from workforce information customers in planning for and developing products that are useful and timely. Members of the Workforce Development Council, local and state economic development professionals, state agency partners, One-Stop Office personnel, businesses, and individuals have all been involved in providing feedback on both the type of information that is needed and the format that is most understandable and useful.

**The process used to ensure that the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) can exercise its responsibility for ensuring that state workforce information policy is responsive to the needs of the state and local workforce investment system.**

The WDC is one of the LMI Center’s key customers and, as such, we have always valued and incorporated, as appropriate, the input we have received from the WDC in planning for our workforce information products and services. Even before the change in the technical guidance from ETA, the LMI Center had been involved in the WDC discussions on workforce information issues and has partnered with the WDC and other stakeholders on several workforce information projects.

The LMI staff collaborates with North Dakota’s Workforce Development Council (WDC) in a number of ways. (Because we are a single Service Delivery Area state, North Dakota has only one statewide Workforce Investment Board—the Workforce

Development Council.) Designated LMI staff attend WDC meetings, make presentations on LMI to the WDC, provide LMI to the WDC, and partner with the WDC to plan for and conduct special research studies to meet specific needs of WDC. As an example, the LMI Center has partnered with the WDC, the North Dakota Department of Commerce, and the Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota to conduct Labor Availability Studies in North Dakota communities. The LMI Center is currently partnering with these and other agencies again this year on a WDC-sponsored occupational skills needs assessment survey. In the past, the LMI Center has conducted a statewide job vacancy study in conjunction with the WDC, North Dakota Department of Commerce, Board of Higher Education, and other state agencies.

This fall the LMI Center will be involved with the Workforce Summit being put on by the Governor, North Dakota Department of Commerce, and the WDC. LMI staff will conduct workshops on pertinent workforce information topics, and will provide informational products on the current economic state in North Dakota. In further support of the five-year state Strategic Workforce Development Plan, we continue to provide answers to labor market related questions to the WDC on an ongoing basis, and have also provided our expertise in survey design and statistical methodologies to support other special studies proposed by our various partner agencies.

This year the LMI Center has consulted with the WDC Director, the Board Chair, and Planning Subcommittee of the WDC in developing the plan for the Workforce Information Grant to ensure that the state and local needs are being met. These individuals have reviewed and provided input on drafts of this plan, which has been incorporated into the final version of the plan. The WDC approved the content of the plan and the workforce information products and services to be provided in accordance with this plan.

**How the state workforce information system supports the goals of the state’s WIA/Wagner Peyser Five Year Strategic Plan for state and local workforce development.**

Labor Market Information (Workforce Information) is listed consistently throughout North Dakota’s Strategic Five Year Plan. Labor Market Information and statistical data are used to identify key economic trends shaping the environment of the state and to support the strategic initiatives in response to those trends. The implications of the trends on overall availability of employment opportunities are quantified with a variety of occupational and related employment information. Most of the workforce information used throughout the state’s Strategic Five Year Plan is produced by the LMI Center.

The need for reliable workforce information products to aid in the decision making processes associated with the workforce investment system is perhaps best summarized in Strategy 3 under Goal 4 of the state plan. “Provide a timely, accurate, and comprehensive labor market intelligence system that meets the needs of employers, economic developers, education and training providers, employees, students, and the North Dakota Workforce Development Council.”

The value of the LMI Center in providing workforce information is also very apparent in Section “d” in the “System Infrastructure” portion of the strategic plan. This section outlines in detail the “state's current capacity” for producing workforce information. It describes all of the major workforce information products and services provided by the LMI Center and how stakeholders can use them. Each of the LMI Center’s publications is listed along with the website address for the LMI Data Warehouse.

Current and relevant workforce information is essential to evaluating the current health of the state and local workforce and in monitoring the effectiveness of the workforce investment strategies. To that end, the LMI Center continues to evaluate its products and services to ensure that it is meeting the needs of the North Dakota workforce investment system.

### **How the grant activities are consistent with the strategic vision of the Governor and the SWIB.**

We are constantly evaluating our workforce information products and services in light of national changes in direction and points of emphasis from ETA and by observing national trends and the best practices of other state LMI shops. This national direction has been incorporated with the strategic vision of the Governor of North Dakota, the Economic Development Foundation, and the WDC for job creation and retention in North Dakota. In line with these trends and points of emphasis, we have begun to shift our focus from a broad “one size fits all” strategy of providing products to a targeted and focused approach. We are now designing products and services that are tailored to meet the unique needs of specific customer groups involved in job creation and retention. For example, we have developed local *Area Profiles* to aid state and local economic developers and local business groups in trying to recruit new businesses to their areas. In addition, we will be updating the local area and industry *Compensation Guides* that debuted last spring. These very popular guides were designed to assist businesses and One-Stop Offices in determining what salary and fringe benefits are necessary to attract and retain qualified workers in their area. We have recently developed *Demographic Profiles*, based on recent census information, that local economic developers have found to be very useful in conveying the characteristics of their local workforce to potential employers.

### **The strategy of the State Workforce Agency (SWA) and the SWIB for consulting with local workforce investment boards and stakeholders in the workforce investment system to determine customer needs for workforce information.**

North Dakota is a single Service Delivery Area state. Our SWIB (the Workforce Development Council) functions both as the SWIB and as a Local Workforce Investment Board. As such, the State Strategic Plan also serves as the local WIA plan. Because of the local representation on the WDC and the Council’s efforts to identify and address

local concerns, the input we receive from the WDC indeed represents local concerns as well as statewide concerns.

The LMI Center has also made a point to get out into the communities to consult with local economic developers, Chamber of Commerce officials, businesses, One-Stop offices, and other local civic and business associations in order to obtain a local perspective on the workforce information needs. In addition to formal customer service/customer needs surveys, we have had informal focus group type sessions, extensive one-on-one conversations, and feedback from presentations and training sessions the LMI Center has been involved with throughout the state. The information we have received from these sessions has been invaluable to the LMI Center in determining if our current products are meeting needs in the local areas and in providing suggestions on what types of products and services are still needed to address unmet local workforce information needs. Recently, the LMI Center has developed a group of local contacts that provide ideas for new products, help to critique new products in the developmental stage, and make suggestions on improvements to existing products and services.

### **The broad strategic approach for workforce information delivery to principal customers.**

The feedback we have received from our primary customer groups, such as the WDC, local economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, One-Stop staff, employers, counselors, job seekers, the North Dakota Career Resource Network (NDCRN), Department of Commerce, other state agencies, etc., has been extremely valuable in evaluating and planning our LMI products and delivery system. Based on customer input, the LMI Center has revamped our products to make them more customer-friendly and to introduce new informational products and services to meet the identified unmet needs. Several publications have been completely redesigned to make them more visually appealing and easier for our customers to understand and use. Some publications that were somewhat general in scope were discontinued and replaced with new products targeted to meet the needs of a specific customer group.

To more efficiently utilize resources, we are creating and delivering more products and services via our web delivery system. Several of our newest and most popular products such as the *Compensation Guides*, the *Demographic Profiles* and the *Affirmative Action Guides* are web based. In addition, the LMI Center has created on-line LMI training tutorials that have been utilized by One-Stop staff and local economic developers.

We continue to make improvements to our web delivery system, the LMI Warehouse, to make our data easier to access and to present the data in a user-friendly format. The LMI Warehouse contains all our LMI products, including current and historical data series, PDFs of our LMI publications, links to other information sources, and the functionality to allow users to see the data displayed in charts, graphs, and maps.

In the current fiscal funding period, we are planning to replace our LMI Data Warehouse with a new comprehensive system, which will retain the wealth of historical information and diverse functionality needed by our advanced customers, but will be much easier for the beginning customers to use.

The LMI Center holds monthly economic briefing meetings and invites Department of Commerce, Office of Management and Budget, Governor's staff, and Tax Department. These meetings discuss the monthly employment and unemployment data releases, new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of other related topics. In addition, the LMI staff will continue to make presentations to the WDC, One-Stop staff, civic and business associations, conferences, and other customer groups.

We will continue to work in close coordination with the NDCRN to provide workforce information to job seekers, career guidance professionals, educational institutions, and students. The LMI Center collaborates with NDCRN by providing occupational information, assisting in the development of the Occupational Information System (OIS) and the NDCRN publications, putting on joint training sessions, hosting the OIS on the LMI Warehouse, and assisting with the FINDET program.

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

We feel strongly that the staff members of the One-Stop Offices in North Dakota provide a critical role in the effective delivery of workforce information to job seekers and business customers. The One-Stop staff has daily contact with both user groups. Hence, they are in a great position not only to market our products and services, but also to explain how this workforce information can be effectively used in each customer's particular situation.

Accordingly, the LMI Center has been seeking ways of better integrating our workforce information delivery system with the One-Stop activities. Representatives from our One-Stop Offices and the LMI staff attended joint training sessions conducted by Melanie Arthur from Gregg Newton Associates on how to effectively provide workforce information to One-Stop clients. The LMI staff provides on-site training on how to use LMI products and recently created an on-line training package for One-Stop staff.

Based on discussions we have had with One-Stop staff, the LMI Center is currently working on providing new specialized products for use in the resource rooms and to assist businesses and economic developers in making sound business decisions. We have utilized and will continue to utilize One-Stop staff members to evaluate prototypes of new products and to provide suggestions for improvements. Several of our new products were developed based on customer feedback we received from One-Stop Offices.

As an example of the coordination between the LMI Center and One-Stop staff members, the LMI staff put together a PowerPoint presentation and instructor notes based on our

*The Balancing Act: Challenges for Today's Working Women* publication. Individual staff members from our One-Stop Offices have used this product to put on special workshops on working women's issues for their areas. LMI staff has also partnered with One-Stop staff members in presenting LMI information at re-employment seminars in communities where significant layoffs have taken place. In addition, LMI staff has either made presentations in person or provided PowerPoints and speaker notes for One-Stop staff members to use in presenting local LMI to local civic and business groups.

**A description of the customer consultation and satisfaction assessment method(s) to be used to collect and interpret customer satisfaction information and the principal customers to be consulted.**

North Dakota has used a combination of strategies to obtain information from our customers on their satisfaction with the workforce information and services provided by the LMI Center.

We have had extensive one-on-one conversations with many of our customers. In addition, we have found informal focus group type discussions with various customers to be extremely valuable. These discussions with customers provide great feedback to the LMI staff on such things as which products are useful, which are not, how they can be improved, what workforce information customers need to do their jobs, suggestions for new products or services to address unmet needs, how we can best train users, etc. In addition, the feedback from attendees of our LMI presentations, both through evaluation forms and informal discussions with the attendees, helps to provide insight into the usefulness of our products and services.

The LMI Center conducted a customer satisfaction/customer needs mail survey as well. A sample of businesses, economic developers, job seekers, One-Stop staff, educational institutions, other partner agencies, and customers on our LMI mailing list received survey forms. This survey asked questions about the usage of the various products or services, types of formats that are most useful, timeliness of information, suggestions for improvements, evaluations on the helpfulness of LMI staff, etc. In addition, the survey asked respondents to identify the types of workforce information that they need but that is currently not available, the levels of detail and geography necessary, how they would use this new information, and suggestions on how this new information or services could best be delivered. The results of this survey were compiled and used in conjunction with the other modes of customer feedback for planning and evaluation purposes in the LMI Center.

An LMI planning team sorted through the results of the customer satisfaction/customer needs mail survey as well as summaries of the informal focus group discussions, one-on-one conversations, participant evaluations and feedback, and anecdotal comments various staff members had received from customers. This group then identified the products and services that were well received by our customers as well as the needs of certain customers that may not have been met. This team is now in the process of developing

new products and services and improving existing products and services to fill those unmet needs.

**A concise summary of customer satisfaction findings for the most recent survey of products and services and the effect those findings had on the planned products and services for PY2004, including how the plan addresses inadequacies or gaps identified by users.**

We were very encouraged by the results of our most recent customer satisfaction/customer needs survey which was conducted last winter. Overall, our customers had a very high approval rating for our products and services. When respondents rated our various publications individually, the rate of those either satisfied or very satisfied ranged from 93 percent to 97 percent. Ninety-four (94) percent of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with our website—the Data Warehouse.

Survey respondents overwhelmingly considered the LMI Center to be “the source” of reliable workforce information, and felt that the staff was extremely knowledgeable and accommodating to their needs. The survey showed that the majority of our customers found most of our publications easy to understand and useful. However, there was some concern about the timeliness of some of the products. Results also showed that while paper copy is still the most popular format, many customers requested that all products be available electronically. (To that end, we have put PDFs of all publications on our website.)

Based on these survey results and the feedback we have received from informal focus groups and conversations with our customers, we have begun to develop new products to meet the unmet needs for customers. In working with business, economic development, and One-Stop business representatives, it was apparent that they needed to know “what compensation package employers needed to offer in order to attract and retain qualified workers in their area and their industry.” We have since developed *Compensation Guides* for over 160 industry/area combinations in North Dakota. These guides provide wage information for the occupations employed by a particular industry in a specific city or area, along with fringe benefit information specific to that industry and area. Local businesses, economic developers, civic leaders and One-Stop business representatives had asked for employment and wage information at the local (city) levels. In response to that need, this spring we debuted the *Local Area Profiles* for 14 cities, and will be revising/upgrading the *Profiles* in the coming year. We have also recently developed *Area Demographic Profiles* based on needs expressed by economic developers and Native American tribal leaders. The aforementioned Labor Availability Surveys and Skill Needs Study also address the needs expressed by customers for information on available labor supplies in particular areas and occupational skill requirements for particular industries.

Several products are being developed to meet the needs of business and economic development customers. In line with the strategic vision of the Governor and the WDC for job creation and retention, our surveys and conversations have also indicated a need

for more job seeker type products. To meet that need, we will develop occupational guides in the coming year. Customer feedback has also indicated a need for better training on what workforce information products and services are available and how they could be used by various customers in their unique work settings. The LMI Center will be addressing that need in this plan year by developing and conducting LMI training tailored to specific customer groups.

**Identify funds leveraged or matched from funding sources other than these grant funds and how these funds will enhance delivery of products and services as part of the state's workforce information system.**

The North Dakota Labor Availability Studies and North Dakota Skills Needs Surveys are excellent examples of the leveraging of our workforce information grant dollars with those from other sources. Under the leadership of the WDC, the LMI Center has collaborated with several partners to produce quality workforce information products that address significant data gaps as identified by the WDC.

The LMI Center is partnering with the WDC, Department of Commerce, Social Science Research Institute (SSRI) at the University of North Dakota, and local economic development groups to conduct Labor Availability Studies in 22 North Dakota communities. The local communities, Department of Commerce, and the WDC contributed roughly \$140,000 to have SSRI do the data collection for this household telephone survey. The LMI Center will provide the survey and sample design, the compilation of the statistical tables, the analysis of the data, and the narrative of the reports for these 22 studies.

The Workforce Skills Needs Assessment is a partnership with the WDC, the University System, Department of Commerce, and the State Board for Career and Technical Education. These partner agencies contribute to the survey mailing costs, while the LMI Center provides the technical expertise and analyze and compile the results. However, for this Skill Needs Survey, the LMI staff will conduct the survey.

In the past year, the LMI Center has partnered with the WDC and the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association to conduct an Employer Needs Survey, and with several other funding agencies to work on an Information Technology Study.

Since the cost of doing these projects alone would be too great for any one entity to take on, the pooling of funds and expertise has been a win-win situation for all the workforce partners involved. The LMI Center will continue to look for opportunities to leverage our resources with other funding sources to enhance the scope of workforce information products and services available.

**B. PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

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



Description: The ALMIS database is the foundation of any labor market information delivery system. In order to promote a standard method for delivery and maintenance of occupational and labor market information, North Dakota will focus on continuing to update the core tables in the ALMIS database, upgrade software, populate any additional tables, and test data integrity. This will provide customers access to clean and accurate information no matter what program is used to extract the information. North Dakota will update and maintain the licensing data through the National Crosswalk Center. Job Service North Dakota will implement Virtual One-Stop (VOS) Version 6.0 developed by GeoSolutions. As a part of that implementation, the ALMIS database version 2.2 will be implemented. We will continue to do further testing of the ALMIS database and will work with GeoSolutions to fix any problems.

North Dakota uses a customized method of delivering the ALMIS Employer Database information to the public by means of the Internet. By loading the employer database purchased from InfoUSA on our website, the employer information can be provided in a number of ways. The public can access pertinent employer data by firm name, city, county, industry, firm size, etc. Updated employer databases will be purchased from InfoUSA and will be loaded on the website twice a year as they become available. The use of the InfoUSA database allows us to provide this information without release of confidential employer data from our UI Tax or QCEW files.

The focus of this activity is developing an expansive data storage system from which other delivery systems may retrieve pertinent workforce information.

Customer Support: Very few people outside of LMI know how the ALMIS database is used. As a result, we have received very little input, except from the data users who see the products created from this database.

However, the ALMIS Employer Database is more visible and is highly used. The feedback we have received from customers has been very positive. Most are pleased with the multiple ways of sorting and accessing the employer information from InfoUSA.

How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan: ALMIS is the foundation of all the workforce information applications in the agency's new NDWORKS/Virtual One-Stop delivery system. The state five-year plan does not address the ALMIS database directly, but speaks of LMI in general terms, to give the LMI Center some latitude to meet customer needs.

The ALMIS Employer Database is used extensively by One-Stop staff for job search, job development, and career exploration purposes. Job seekers operating from resource rooms or working on-line from home have found this product very useful.

Principal Customers: Although not directly used by external customers, the ALMIS database is an important storage mechanism for our web site and delivery system. When combined with our web site and North Dakota's new NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop system, a wide range of internal and external customers will access the ALMIS data.

There are a wide variety of users for the ALMIS Employer Database from InfoUSA: LMI staff, One-Stop Offices, workforce investment partners, government agencies, local economic developers, chambers of commerce, businesses, job seekers, guidance counselors, and students learning about jobs and careers all make use of this database.

Projected Outcomes and System Impacts:

The LMI Center will have 75 percent of the North Dakota data in the ALMIS core tables updated by December 31, 2004. The ALMIS Employer Database will be updated within 30 days of receipt of the new CDs from InfoUSA.

Planned Milestones:

ALMIS core tables updated as needed	Ongoing
ALMIS historical database updated as needed	Ongoing
Resolve problems with GeoSolutions implementation	December 2004
The employer database will continue to be maintained and will be updated twice a year as new CDs are received from InfoUSA	

Estimated Cost: \$51,773

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

Description: North Dakota will use the methodology, software tools, and guidelines developed by the Projection Consortium and Projections Management Partnership to complete the work on the long-term projections for the years 2002 to 2012. The historical industry employment time series has been converted to NAICS and will be updated with the most current year's data as they become available and additional preparations will be made for the development of long-term industry and occupational projections.

However, the new Projections Software Suite from the Projections Consortium and Projections Managing Partnership was delayed in being released. North Dakota decided to wait until we received a stable version of the new Projections Software Suite before beginning work on the 2002-2012 projections. In addition, this allowed us to obtain a complete third year of NAICS-based occupational employment data from the OES program, resulting in more accurate and more disclosable occupational projections data.

States are also required to produce substate, long-term projections every two years. However, because of North Dakota's small labor force, obtaining useable data at a substate level is questionable. North Dakota will test various levels of substate data to see if the data are of value.

Similarly, North Dakota will use the methodology, software tools and guidelines developed by the Projections Consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership to complete the short-term projections for the years 2003 to 2005. Short-term industry employment projections will be made on a statewide basis and for each of the eight

Governor's Planning Regions. North Dakota publishes these short-term industry projections on the LMI Data Warehouse. North Dakota will also begin working on the 2004 to 2006 short-term projections in May 2005 when the fourth quarter 2004 QCEW file becomes available.

Again, in preparation for the development of short-term projections, the NAICS-based historical industry time series will be updated as new quarters of data become available. Since the Projections Suite Software release was delayed, North Dakota decided to wait until we received a stable version of the new software before beginning actual work on the short-term projections. In addition, this allowed us to obtain a complete third year of NAICS-based occupational employment data from the OES program, resulting in more accurate and more disclosable occupational projections data.

States are also required to produce substate, short-term occupational projections every two years. However, because of North Dakota's small labor force, obtaining useable data at a substate level is questionable. North Dakota will test various levels of substate data to see if the data are of value.

Customer Support: Career guidance professionals, educational and training program planners, and One-Stop staff have found the occupational projections information invaluable. We have received fewer comments on the industry projections. Some customers have requested mid-range (i.e., 5-year) projections rather than long-term (10-year) projections. Occupational projections customers have requested that projections products be formatted so that they are easy to use. Several of the customer groups we have had discussions with feel that the short-term projections are of more value than long-term projections. For example, due to our legislative schedule, most state agencies in North Dakota operate on a two-year budget cycle and find short-term projections meet that need. Because of shifting occupational patterns, some educational planners feel that two-year occupational projections are more useful as well.

How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan: The state five-year plan was designed to be broad in terms of LMI, to give the LMI Center ample leeway to meet customer needs. The occupational projections are an integral part of the educational and career planning through the One-Stop Career Resource rooms and the educational and counseling structure. In addition, the short-term occupational forecasts can be used by WDC and staff, educational planners, and One-Stop staff to determine training needs, and to guide job seekers toward occupations for which there is a demand.

Principal Customers: The principal customers for the industry projections are the businesses, economic developers, and state and local government agencies that use these projections to analyze business trends and make decisions about expansion and plant locations. The occupational projections are used by school and vocational counselors, educational planners, the WDC, the NDCRN, students, One-Stop career resource rooms, and other individuals making career choices.

Projected Outcomes and System Impacts:

After the statewide long-term projections are completed, the information will be available to the public within 90 days. After the statewide short-term industry projections are completed, the information will be available to the public within 90 days.

Planned Milestones:

Update NAICS historical industry time series for the long-term projections as needed.

Update NAICS historical industry time series for the short-term projections as needed.

Long-term industry and occupational projections completed within six months after receiving a stable version of the Projections Software Suite.

Long-term industry and occupational projections publication completed within nine months after receiving a stable version of the Projections Software Suite.

Short-term industry projections completed within six months after receiving a stable version of the Projections Software Suite.

Short-term industry projections for the state and eight Governor's Planning Regions, published on the LMI Data Warehouse within nine months after receiving a stable version of the Projections Software Suite.

Short-Term Occupational Projections will be completed within six months after the receiving a stable version of the Projections Software Suite.

Short-Term Occupations will be published on the LMI Data Warehouse within nine months of receiving a stable version of the Projections Software Suite.

Test substate long-term industry/occupational projections by June 2005 to see if they are usable.

Test substate short-term occupational projections by June 2005 to see if they are usable.

Estimated Cost: \$60,000

**3. Provide occupational and career information products for public use:**

Description: The LMI Center will work with NDCRN by providing occupational projections and wage data and by assisting in the preparation of the *North Dakota Career Outlook*. The *Career Outlook* is an annual tabloid provided to high school students, their parents, career guidance counselors, One-Stop resource rooms, etc. It contains information in a student-friendly format on occupational descriptions, occupational demand, wages, training programs, etc., along with a variety of articles on how to find a job and how to make career choices.

North Dakota will also work with the North Dakota Career Resource Network (NDCRN) to create an Occupational Information System (OIS). This is a web-based program that would allow users to access projections data (supplied by LMI) by occupation, industry, or occupational clusters. The system would also allow searches of training resources by training programs or by training providers and a variety of other occupational information.

North Dakota conducts fringe benefit surveys for each city in which we have One-Stop Offices. Fourteen cities are surveyed with one-half of the cities surveyed during the

even-numbered years and one-half surveyed during the odd-numbered years. Data are collected on a variety of fringe benefits related to paid time off, insurances, retirement, salary policies, and other miscellaneous fringe benefits. The fringe benefits survey results for each city are published in PDF format on our website as that city's survey is completed. In addition, a statewide summary publication comparing all the cities and industries is produced in hard copy.

The 2005 edition of the occupational wage survey publication, *Wages for North Dakota Jobs*, will be published in early spring. This publication, which has been revised based on customer feedback in order to make it more useable, provides detailed occupational wage data for the state as a whole, the three MSAs, and four other substate regions.

Conversations with our local One-Stop offices and business customers have indicated a need for occupational wage and fringe benefits information at a local area and industry level. In response to this need, the LMI Center has recently developed *Compensation Guides* specifically targeted to individual cities and industries. These guides provide data from our fringe benefits surveys, occupational wage and employment data, occupational descriptions and related information in one easy-to-use publication. Each guide provides information for those occupations employed by a particular industry in a specific city or area. *Compensation Guides* for over 160 industry/area combinations were created and were put in PDF format on our website. In the short time that these guides have been available, they have become extremely popular. During this plan year, the LMI Center will update each of those guides with new occupational wage and employment information and with new fringe benefits data from our most recent surveys.

Based on our customer needs survey, there is a need for more comprehensive information for job seekers. Accordingly, the LMI Center is working on two new products designed for job seekers and individuals involved in career decision making. First, we are planning to develop a series of occupational group brochures for use in One-Stop resource rooms, schools, and similar settings. Each of the occupational group brochures would include information from O'Net (skills, abilities, work activities) and information on wages, 2012 occupational projections, top employing industries, training providers, lists of related occupations, etc. Second, the LMI Center is also working on a series of career trading cards, designed to provide students with pertinent career information in a student-friendly format.

North Dakota will publish the detailed industry and occupational projections in the *North Dakota Industry and Occupational Projections to 2012* publication in fall 2004. Detailed short-term industry and occupational projection for the years 2003 to 2005 will be published on the LMI website. We are currently evaluating the need for a special paper product for the short-term projections.

The LMI Center also developed a series of career information posters depicting occupations that were fastest growing, highest paying, requiring various educational levels, etc. These career information posters were developed primarily at the request of our One-Stop offices, for use in their resource rooms.

North Dakota does special LMI research studies relating to the various aspects of the labor market and then develops a publication describing the findings of each study. This past year's study entitled *The Balancing Act: Challenges for Today's Working Women*, was extremely popular and won a national award from NASWA as the best one-time/special research product (print category). As a result, we will be doing reprints of this publication and will be making presentations to various groups on the issues facing women in the workforce.

This year, the LMI Center is conducting a special study of Religious Employment in North Dakota. Religious organizations in North Dakota will be surveyed to determine their employment by occupation. A publication detailing the findings of this study will be published by December 2004.

The LMI Center will also produce other related publications. The annual *Employment and Wages* publication received a makeover and provides covered employment and wage data by various geographic and industry (NAICS) levels. Other related LMI publications are described in Section 4 of this plan. All publications produced by LMI are loaded on our LMI website as PDFs.

Customer Support: As mentioned in the description above, our customer satisfaction/customer needs surveys indicated a need for some of the new products we have recently developed or are in the process of developing. The feedback we have received regarding our new *Compensation Guides* has been extremely positive. The redesign and changes in format of our publications was the direct result of customer feedback. Customers wanted data in a much easier to understand format, and we have incorporated those changes into the revamping of our publications. Comments we have received from customers indicate that these redesign and format changes were very well received.

How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan: One-Stop Offices use these products extensively in labor exchange activities (i.e., career resource rooms, working with special populations such as WIA participants, students, or dislocated workers, working with businesses, etc.). Educational planners, WDC and staff, businesses, local economic developers, and state agencies also use some or all of these publications. North Dakota's five-year plan does not address specific products, but speaks of LMI in general terms, in order to give the LMI Center the latitude it needs to develop specific products to meet identified needs of their customers.

Principal Customers: This information is used by a wide range of customers. The users include career guidance counselors, One-Stop staff, WDC and staff, job seekers, businesses, educational and training planners, students, WIA participants, and other state and local government agencies.

Projected Outcomes and System Impacts:

Seventy five (75) percent of the milestones will be completed by the end of the grant year. The remaining milestones will be completed by December 31, 2005. At least six fringe benefits surveys will be completed and the results published as PDFs on the website in the grant year.

Planned Milestones:

<i>Employment &amp; Wages</i> publications revised & published annually	Aug 2004
Provide data for and assist NDCRN with publishing <i>Career Outlook Compensation Guides</i> updated	Fall 2004
<i>Industry &amp; Occupational Projections to 2012</i> publication	Sept 2004
<i>Religious Employment</i> publication	Nov 2004
2005 Edition of <i>Wages for North Dakota Jobs</i> published	Dec 2004
Career Trading Cards	May 2005
Occupational Group Brochures	Feb 2005
Career Information Posters	Mar 2005
Reprints of <i>Balancing Act</i> publication	Winter 2005
	As needed

Fringe Benefits Surveys will be conducted on a two-year rotating basis in fourteen cities. The surveys will be published throughout the year as they are completed.

Estimated Cost: \$60,000

**4. Ensure that workforce information and support required by state and local workforce investment boards are provided.**

Description: North Dakota's LMI staff continually seeks ways to provide pertinent workforce information for the Workforce Development Council (this is North Dakota's only Workforce Investment Board). Our staff works regularly with the WDC to determine workforce information needs and to disseminate information. Designated LMI staff attend WDC meetings, make presentations to the WDC, and the LMI Center partners with the WDC to plan for and conduct special research studies to meet the special needs of the WDC not covered in our standard package of LMI products.

The LMI Center will partner with the WDC, the North Dakota Department of Commerce, and local economic development groups to conduct Labor Availability Studies in North Dakota communities/areas. The data collection will be conducted by the Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota. However, the survey and sample design, the compilation of the statistical tables, and the analysis and narrative of the reports for these studies will be performed by LMI staff with input from the WDC.

The LMI Center will also partner with the WDC, University System, Department of Commerce, and State Board for Career and Technical Education to conduct a Workforce Skills Needs Assessment for key industries in North Dakota. This new survey, which will identify the current and future occupational skills needed by targeted industries, is scheduled to be completed by December 2004. The LMI staff will provide the survey

and sample design, do the mailing and data entry of the survey, compile and analyze the results, and provide an executive summary at the Workforce Summit 2004.

This fall, the LMI Center will work with the Governor, the WDC, and other partners in putting on a Workforce Summit. LMI staff will conduct workshops on pertinent workforce information topics and will provide informational products on the current economic state in North Dakota.

At the request of the WDC, local economic developers, and other state and local government agencies, the LMI Center has performed several impact analysis studies for various areas in North Dakota. Using the "IMPLAN" econometric input-output model, the LMI staff has studied the potential impact of new businesses moving into a community or of major employers closing in the community.

We will conduct other special studies for WDC as time and budget allow. In addition, we will continue to provide our expertise in survey design and statistical methodologies to support other special studies proposed by WDC and other partners.

North Dakota received letters of endorsement from the WDC and the Economic Development Foundation in support of our efforts to become a member of the LED partnership with the Census Bureau. The MOU between the Census Bureau and Job Service North Dakota has since been signed. We are now in the process of assembling a history file of wage records and QCEW data for submittal to the Census Bureau. Once the Census Bureau receives these files and begins processing, North Dakota should have access to a variety of pertinent quarterly workforce indicators from the Census Bureau within about six months. This information has been highly sought after by the WDC and many other users.

The LMI Center will hold monthly economic briefing meetings and invite representatives from the Department of Commerce, OMB, Governor's staff, and Tax Department. These meetings discuss the monthly employment and unemployment data releases and other new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of other related topics.

In support of local economic development efforts and our local One-Stop offices, the LMI Center has recently developed new *Local Area Profiles* for those cities in which we have One-Stop Offices. Utilizing data from the QCEW program and other data sources, this brochure will provide data on industry employment and wages, number of firms, firm size, census information, and other related information for the current year, and enable comparisons to the previous year. The annual publication has been very beneficial to those cities as they promote their communities. However, the *Local Area Profiles* have been especially useful to those cities who are not MSAs and do not have any other source of employment related information available for their city. This plan year, the LMI Center will produce a series of new-look *Local Area Profiles* with updated employment and wage information. In addition, based on feedback from our customers, we will develop a statewide version of the *Local Area Profiles*.



Also, in support of our local One-Stop Offices and local economic developers, we will investigate the possibility of providing county workforce information summaries for selected North Dakota counties similar to those in the LMI @ Work training sponsored by NASWA.

The LMI Center will update the Largest Employer Listing on our website. This listing provides a ranking of the top 100 employers in North Dakota by total employment. In addition, we provide separate listings on our LMI Data Warehouse of the top 10 employers for each of the 14 largest cities in North Dakota.

The LMI Center continues to be a state repository for census information. One of our LMI members is the Governor's census liaison and is heavily involved with the local dissemination and interpretation of census information in North Dakota.

In response to requests from local economic developers and Native American tribal leaders, we will develop *Demographic Profiles* publications based on the most recent census information. These publications will contain general demographic information, selected social characteristics, selected economic data, and housing characteristics and will be available in PDF format on our website. *Demographic Profiles* will be produced for all North Dakota counties, reservations, and MSAs and for selected cities and the state as a whole.

The LMI Center also receives a number of requests for Affirmative Action information. As a result, we will compile the most recent census information and create *Affirmative Action* packages for each of North Dakota counties and the state as a whole. The *Affirmative Action* package will be published as PDFs on our website.

In addition to these special products and services provided in collaboration with the WDC, the LMI center provides many other ongoing products and services designed to meet the needs of the WDC and its local partners. In some cases, core products from the BLS programs have been modified or repackaged to meet the specific needs identified by the WDC, such as the local *Economy at a Glance* publications. Several of the publications described in Section 3 of this plan are also widely used by the WDC and its partner agencies.

Other special research projects will be done on an ad hoc basis, to meet the needs of customers.

Customer Support: The customer input we have received from the WDC and related customer groups has been very positive. LMI is recognized as being responsive to their workforce informational needs and as a solid producer of accurate and timely data. Our partnership with the WDC and Department of Commerce on various special surveys has been a win-win situation.

How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan: The workforce information provided has helped to identify and quantify trends in North Dakota's workforce and provides information for the decision making and strategic planning efforts of the WDC. In addition, many of the special surveys and studies we have done in partnership with the WDC have been extremely valuable to our One-Stop Offices as well. In particular, the special localized surveys on labor availability, job vacancies, skills needs assessments, fringe benefits, local employment, and IMPLAN studies have been used extensively by local One-Stops.

Principal Customers: The primary customers are the state WDC members and staff and those individuals who work closely with the Council, such as other state agencies, program administrators and planners, One-Stop Offices, Governor's office, and legislators.

Projected Outcomes and System Impacts:

The LMI Center will complete work on the labor availability studies by August 2004. Seventy-five (75) percent of the milestones will be completed by the end the grant year.

Planned Milestones:

Attend WDC meetings	As scheduled
Make presentations to WDC	As requested
Provide assistance and expertise on survey design and methodology	As requested
Monthly economic briefing meetings	Monthly
Complete new round of Labor Availability Surveys	Summer 2004
Provide Wage Record and QCEW files to Census Bureau for LED	Summer 2004
Update Largest Employer Listings on website	Aug 2004
Develop <i>Demographic Profiles</i> and post on website as PDFs	Aug 2004
Update <i>Local Area Profiles</i> for 13 Largest Cities (Annual)	Sept 2004
Develop a statewide <i>Local Area Profile</i>	Sept 2004
Develop <i>Affirmative Action</i> packages and post on website as PDFs	Sept 2004
Complete work on WDC Occupational Skills Needs Assessment	Dec 2004
Investigate Possibility of LMI @ Work type workforce summaries	July 2005
Economic Impact Studies (IMPLAN)	As requested

Estimated Cost: \$60,000

**5. Maintain and enhance electronic state workforce information delivery systems.**

Description: One of the primary methods of disseminating workforce information in North Dakota is through our LMI website, the LMI Data Warehouse. The LMI Data Warehouse contains all the information on the ALMIS database as well as additional workforce information items produced only by North Dakota. We are constantly making improvements to our website by trying to make the data easier to access, to allow our customers to obtain information in a format most useful to them, and by allowing our users to see graphs, charts, and maps related to our data.

All data items produced in the LMI Center will be published on the LMI website. All hard-copy publications are loaded on the website as PDFs, and all current and historical data series are available in detail. We are continually seeking additional pertinent labor market information that we can add to our website.

The LMI website is integrated with the overall Job Service North Dakota website [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com). In coordination with this website, Job Service North Dakota implemented NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop, an enhanced on-line services system for job seekers and employers. NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop will contain basic information on occupational and industry projections, wages, employment, unemployment, employers, schools, demographics, occupational licenses and other workforce information taken from the ALMIS database. However, Virtual One-Stop will provide only a limited number of data items for the most current time period. NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop users will be able to link to the LMI Data Warehouse for more detailed, complete, and historical information. In addition to going directly to the LMI Data Warehouse or going to the LMI Data Warehouse through [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com), users will now have a third way of accessing LMI—through NDWorks/Virtual One-Stop.

Job Service North Dakota's new redesigned agency website, [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com), was unveiled last fall. This website has a cleaner look and integrates and displays the LMI links in a more user-friendly way. Users can now access the LMI Data Warehouse, LMI publications, LMI contact information, etc., in a more intuitive manner through this website. The LMI Center will continue to make suggestions to improve the access to LMI-related data on [jobsnd.com](http://jobsnd.com).

North Dakota will continue to make enhancements to its electronic workforce information delivery system to make the system more user-friendly. New and updated data will be added to the LMI Data Warehouse as they become available.

During this grant year, North Dakota will begin the process of replacing or upgrading the LMI Data Warehouse. A Data Warehouse replacement work team is now studying how to best replace or upgrade the LMI Data Warehouse and still maintain consistency with our agency's website and Virtual One-Stop. This team will investigate the possibility of purchasing special LMI delivery systems from private vendors such as the Workforce Informer and Virtual LMI from GeoSolutions, contracting with an independent website designer, or perhaps doing the redesign internally. This major project, which is now a part of the agency-wide Information Technology Plan, is tentatively scheduled for completion in December 2005. (This date is subject to revision, depending on which strategy is chosen for the replacement project.)

Because we are a small state with limited resources, we have been strategically planning for this major project for some time and have consulted with ETA's LMI Federal Project Officer (FPO) on numerous occasions. As past grant savings opportunities have arisen, we have pooled the dollars associated with those savings with the long-term goal of upgrading the infrastructure of the major delivery mechanism for our workforce information.

Customer Support: Based on extensive consultations with internal and external customers, and an independent web consultant group hired by the agency, the LMI Data Warehouse is generally felt to be an excellent delivery system. However, some users felt it might be a bit too technical or contain too much data for some users. Customer input will be used to enhance the look and usability of the LMI Warehouse and jobsnd.com site. The same customer feedback will be utilized by the LMI Data Warehouse replacement team in planning for the new LMI electronic delivery system.

How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan: The electronic workforce information delivery system is integrated into Job Service North Dakota's web delivery system and, as such, is the core system for all the Wagner-Peyser and WIA activities in North Dakota. Although not specifically addressed in the five-year plan, an efficient LMI delivery system is implied as necessary for the LMI Center to meet customer needs.

Principal Customers: The electronic workforce information delivery system is used by a wide variety of customers. Job Service North Dakota administrative and One-Stop staff, LMI staff, WDC, businesses, job seekers, partner agencies, local and state economic developers, planners, students, teachers, counselors, private researchers and consultants—in short, anyone with access to a computer and in need of workforce information will utilize this system.

Projected Outcomes and System Impacts:

The LMI Center will have PDFs of all LMI publications loaded on the website within 30 days of publication.

Planned Milestones:

Continue to make improvements to current LMI website as needed	Ongoing
Update data items and add new items to current LMI website	Ongoing
Load all LMI publications on current LMI website in PDF	Ongoing
LMI will study options for upgrading LMI Warehouse	Aug 2004
Installation of new electronic LMI delivery system (tentative)	Dec 2005
Testing of new electronic LMI delivery system (tentative)	Jan-Apr 2006
New electronic LMI delivery system operational/online (tentative)	May 2006

Estimated Cost: \$72,665 from current grant year.

The estimated cost of the LMI Data Warehouse Replacement project including purchase, installation, and testing of new electronic delivery system is \$175,000. The balance of the cost of the LMI Data Replacement project will come from planned funds from our previous multi-year Workforce Information grants.

**6. Support state workforce information training activities:**

Description: There are two primary components to this activity: The continued training of the LMI Center staff and the expansion of training activities designed for our internal and external workforce information customers.

LMI staff will continue to attend training to improve their skills and knowledge, to learn about best practices from other states, to interact with other LMI staff members from around the nation, and to find out about program changes relating to workforce information development. Staff members will attend LMI Institute sponsored training, the LMI Forum, specialized workshops on using new software systems such as GIS, design and layout software packages, statistical analysis packages, wage record analysis, use of occupational descriptors, etc. North Dakota is a member of the LMI Institute Consortium and one of our staff members (Nelse Grundvig) teaches Beginning Analyst Training, Applied Analyst Training, Data Mining, and LMI for Workforce Investment Boards classes for the LMI Institute and is involved with the development of other Institute-sponsored training. We will utilize Nelse to provide special training to LMI staff and our customers.

We feel it is extremely important to provide training opportunities to LMI staff members in the latest research techniques, software, and national program changes as well as offering personal development opportunities, so that we can continue to be on the cutting edge as an LMI department. Because of our emphasis on becoming more customer focused in LMI, we have utilized Melanie Arthur from Greg Newton Associates on two occasions to train LMI staff and business services representative from our One-Stop Offices.

The second facet of this activity is providing training to our internal and external customers. The LMI staff provides a variety of training sessions and presentations to various groups including business associations, WDC groups, One-Stop staff, economic developers, career counselors, civic associations, Commerce Department staff members, etc. on an ongoing basis.

In addition to in-person training sessions, the LMI Center is designing an on-line training package for One-Stop Office staff. This training package, which will be available initially via the agency's Intranet, uses a case study approach for using the workforce information on the LMI Data Warehouse in working with business customers and job seekers.

The LMI Center will also develop a specialized training package designed for local economic development professionals. This training package will use actual case studies to show local economic development professionals how workforce information can be utilized in putting together proposals to attract potential businesses, how to interpret the data, which types of data should be utilized for specific purposes, etc.

The LMI Center will partner with our One-Stop Offices in making LMI presentations to special groups. For example, an LMI staff member will team with One-Stop staff members in providing the LMI portion of re-employment workshops in the cities where

significant layoffs have occurred. Other collaborative presentation/training sessions have been made to local economic development groups, civic and business groups, Job Corps staff, and educators. In cases where the LMI staff is not doing the actual presentations, they will provide local One-Stop Office staff with PowerPoints, speakers notes, and supporting information for their presentation.

In partnership with the NDCRN, State Vocational Education Department, and possibly ETA from Dallas, North Dakota's LMI Center will put on a LMI Users Training Conference designed primarily for career counselors and related professionals. This lab-based LMI training is intended to show career counselors how to use the various LMI products and services in assisting their clients in making informed career decisions.

The LMI Center will continue to be available for ad hoc types of presentations and training sessions for a variety of customers groups as time and budget allow.

Customer Support: The LMI staff provides input on what types of training they feel is necessary for them to best do their jobs. We also rely heavily on the evaluations and discussions we have had with our customers in planning appropriate LMI training. Based on feedback we have received from our customers, we have revised the ways we are doing some of our LMI training. The revised Improved Career Decision Making (ICDM) training, on-line training modules for One-Stop staff, and training for local economic developers resulted from suggestions from customers.

How the deliverable supports the goals of the state's WIA/Wagner-Peyser Five-Year Strategic Plan: Since the One-Stop Offices provide LMI products directly to businesses and job seekers, they are one of the primary targets of our training efforts. It is important for One-Stop staff to be well trained in the LMI products and services we provide, so that they can integrate those products and services into their service delivery. The five-year plan was designed to be broad in terms of LMI training in order to give the LMI Center the flexibility it needs to meet the training needs of its staff and its customers.

Principal Customers: The primary users of this activity are LMI staff, One-Stop Office personnel, the Workforce Development Council and staff, business groups, guidance counselors, personnel for other state agency partners, and generally anyone using workforce information.

Projected Outcomes and System Impacts:

LMI staff will conduct a minimum of ten training sessions or LMI presentations to various customer groups. At least one LMI staff member will attend an ALMIS Institute training session and at least two LMI staff members will attend the LMI Forum.

Planned Milestones:

LMI Staff to ALMIS Institute Training	Ongoing
LMI Staff to Other Training as needed	Ongoing
LMI staff to LMI Forum	October 2004
Training and presentations to customer groups	Ongoing

LMI User Training Conference	March 2005
Develop On-line LMI Training Modules	Fall 2004
Develop Specialized Training Package for Economic Developers	Fall 2004

Estimated Cost: \$30,000

### **C. CONSULTATION AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT**

As previously mentioned, we feel strongly that customer feedback is extremely important in planning for and developing an efficient and comprehensive workforce information delivery system. Accordingly, North Dakota will use a combination of strategies to determine customer satisfaction with the workforce information and services provided by the LMI Center.

We will have participants of training sessions and attendees of our LMI presentations provide feedback via evaluation forms. These forms will be reviewed to ensure customer needs and expectations are met and that the goals of the training/presentations are met. Also during these sessions, informal discussions with the participants or audience will help to provide insight into the usefulness of our products and services.

North Dakota will visit with several of our key customers about our products and services in an informal focus group/discussion type setting. LMI staff will have one-on-one or group discussions with personnel from several One-Stop Offices, North Dakota Department of Commerce, state and local economic developers, WDC staff, NDCRN, businesses, and representatives from other state agency partners. To begin the dialog, we will ask for their specific comments, evaluations, or suggestions on such things as: what products are useful, which are not, how to improve products, suggestions for new products or services to meet unmet needs, how we can best train users, etc. We will discuss possible solutions or actions we can take based on this feedback.

North Dakota will conduct a customer satisfaction/customer needs mail survey as well. A sample of businesses, job seekers, and partner agencies will receive a customer satisfaction/customer needs survey. This survey will ask questions about usage of the various products or services, types of formats that are most useful, timeliness of information, suggestions for improvements, evaluations on the helpfulness of LMI staff, etc. In addition, this year's survey will also ask respondents to identify the types of workforce information that they need but that is currently not available, the levels of detail and geography necessary, how they would use this new information, and suggestions on how this new information or services could best be delivered. The results of this survey will be compiled and used in conjunction with the other modes of customer feedback for planning and evaluation purposes in the LMI Center.

Listed below are the results from some of our previous efforts to obtain customer feedback

# Customer Satisfaction Survey

## Sample Frame

The mailing list for the *Labor Market Advisor* was selected as a sample frame. The reasons for this selection include a belief that this is our most diverse audience and the publication has traditionally been a means of announcing new products and services.

## Response

A survey was sent to 979 entities, of which 235 surveys were returned. There were 209 usable responses for response rate of 21.3 percent.

## Who Responded

Respondents* (%)	
Manager/Owner	30.6
HR Staff	19.6
Researcher	15.3
Counselor	13.4
Staff	10.5
Business Group	6.7
Public Official	6.2
Teacher	5.7
Job Seeker	2.9
Media	1.9
Student	0.0

\*Multiple Responses were possible

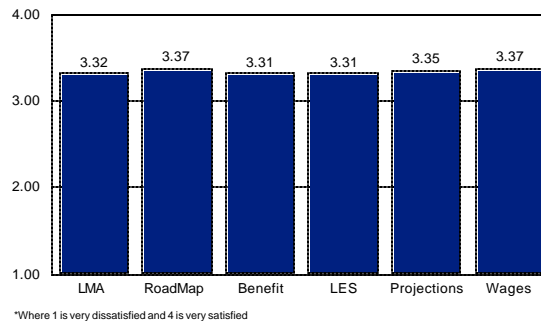
Of those who responded, almost one-third (32.1 percent) work for a government entity. Other readers came from private business, 23.9 percent; education, 22.5 percent; non-profit entities, 14.8 percent; economic planning groups 5.3 percent; and 1.4 percent of the responders claimed to be members of the media.

## Satisfaction with Publications

### Regular Publications

Respondents were asked their opinion on some of our regular products (*Labor Market Advisor*, *RoadMap*, *Benefit Surveys*, *Local Employment Surveys*, *Employment Projections 2008*, *Wages in North Dakota*, and *Covered Employment and Wages*). In general, our customers were satisfied with our publications with all the publications listed having less than 7 percent of the respondents expressing dissatisfaction. The highest level of satisfaction was found with two products, the *RoadMap* and *Wages in North Dakota* publications with a mean score

Average Satisfaction Measure\* of Specific Products



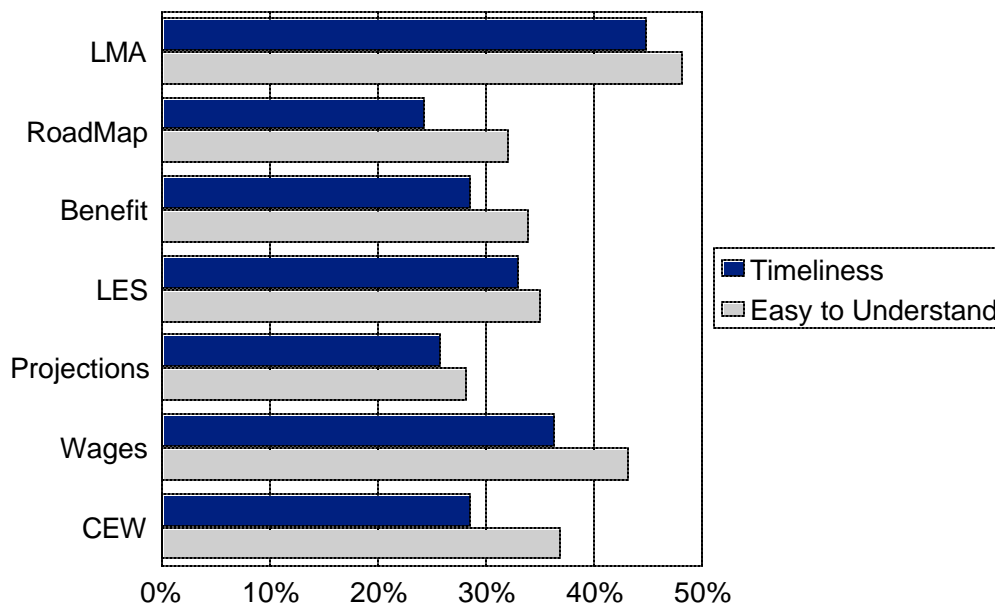


of 3.37 (on a scale of 1 to 4). The publications that were subject to the most criticism were the *Covered Employment and Wages* publication, with 6.5 percent reporting some level of dissatisfaction, followed by *Local Employment Surveys* with 4.9 percent reporting some dissatisfaction and *Wages in North Dakota* with 4.8 percent of the respondents stating they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

The disparity of our readers finding the most satisfaction with the *Wages in North Dakota* publication and the most responses of dissatisfaction may be due to the readers' expectations and how those expectations are met. When they can find the wage information they want they are very satisfied, but when they cannot, they are very dissatisfied. For example, in the course of gathering the data, one respondent called the primary researcher (after they had responded to the survey) and voiced frustration on finding wages for drug counselors. Drug counselors are not listed in publication; however, after being informed that these individuals are coded as substance abuse counselors (which is a broader category) the respondent became very satisfied with our publication.

Readers were asked to consider the timeliness and whether our publications were easy to understand. As shown in the following chart, the least timely documents were the *RoadMap* and *Employment Projections 2008*. The timeliest publication was the *Labor Market Advisor*. The easiest to understand publications were the *Labor Market Advisor* and *Wages in North Dakota*.

## Attributes of Specific Products



### Special Topics

On occasion, the Labor Market Information Center (LMI Center) prepares special reports. These products are varied and are done in response to the needs of our customers; examples would include *The Balancing Act*, *Labor Availability Studies*, and impact analysis for specific areas or projects. Due to the general nature of the study and the fact that it has been available for approximately a year, *The Balancing Act* was included in the survey.

Readers reported a high degree of satisfaction (99.5 percent were either very satisfied or satisfied) with *The Balancing Act* with an average score of 3.31 (where very dissatisfied was coded as a 1 and very satisfied was coded as a 4). By their nature, special projects require additional effort to plan and prepare. Nevertheless, almost one in five (19.2 percent) considered *The Balancing Act* a timely document and 23.1 percent considered the report easy to understand.

### **The Data Warehouse**

Readers were asked to offer their opinion concerning the Data Warehouse as a product. More than 94 percent were either very satisfied or satisfied. The Data Warehouse compared favorably to our specific publications with an average score of 3.17. Almost one in five (19.1 percent) found the data on the Data Warehouse timely and 21.5 percent found the information posted easy to understand. The Data Warehouse is designed to be a clearinghouse of information for researchers and others who need specific labor market information. When asked, 92.8 percent of the respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied finding information inside the Data Warehouse. However, not everyone used the Data Warehouse, as less than half, 45.5 percent chose not to respond to this question.

### **Accessing Our Products**

#### **Preference**

As a rule, the majority of the respondents prefer hard copy versions of our products, with the most popular being the *Labor Market Advisor* (69.9 percent). The least popular publication was *The Balancing Act* with 26.3 percent having received a hard copy, 12.4 percent having read the publication on-line, and 1.4 percent having downloaded the publication. Nearly one in five readers read the following publications on-line: *Labor Market Advisor* (19.6 percent), *Covered Employment and Wages* (18.7 percent), and *Wages in North Dakota* (18.2 percent). *Wages in North Dakota* was the most popular publication downloaded, at 4.8 percent.

#### **Who is Contacted for Labor Market Information**

The most common contact for Labor Market Information is our web site with 39.2 percent, followed by the local office staff (33.0 percent), and LMI Center (24.4 percent). Job Service North Dakota is considered uniquely qualified to be the source of Labor Market Information with 0.5 percent of the readers accessing other websites and no other

agency (0.0 percent). Of those who contact the LMI Center, 7.7 percent contacted us more than 15 times in the past year.

## Quality of the Contact for Information

When the LMI Center is contacted, 93.5 percent have found us to be either always or mostly helpful, with only 1.1 percent reporting we have never been helpful. In addition, we are considered timely when providing information to our customers, with 97.8 percent have reporting we are always or mostly timely with our responses.

## Comments

### Comments about Products and Services

Am not familiar with *The Balancing Act* and the Data Warehouse. Others pieces are excellent.

Data Warehouse was confusing in past - now much improved

Difficult for college students to translate info - maybe using inappropriate resources?

Discontinue the *Labor Market Advisor*

Do not receive the ones I did not mark. I usually contact Nelse for data.

Drug Counselor wage data is not available.\*

Duane & staff very helpful providing info to Bismarck/Mandan United Way agencies

Excellent job on publications - especially getting majority on web -outstanding service

The staff has a great deal of expertise and is customer focused

Great job

Haven't seen the Data Warehouse but will look for it

Haven't seen any of above products lately (if ever) except *Labor Market Advisor*

I work with Warren Boyd. He is awesome!

Job Service North Dakota LMI Center routinely produces outstanding products that continue to evolve towards improvement

Love the *Economy at a Glance!*

More timely posting of jobless info on website

NA means unfamiliar with product. Greatly appreciate data I have used.

Need a keyword search capability, the present process is too cumbersome.

Nice if small towns had better coverage of their workforce

Information is not real easy to find for some clients

Unsure of what is being measured with the different income categories off the website - several available

Please update & improve job categories in surveys

I find your products not widely used; the education job listing site is frustrating – and not user friendly

Rely on Job Service North Dakota staff to direct me to products and publications that I need

*RoadMap* is excellent summary of North Dakota employment and economic trends. Very useful document.

Satisfied using local Job Service North Dakota office to assist with new entry-level hires

Search feature or listing of topics for *Labor Market Advisor* and a summary of *Covered Employment and Wages* publications.

Specific information by cities other than the three metropolitan areas.

Surveys and wages are published a year or two after they are gathered. The data are simply not current.

Our counselors find the publications listed are more usable than I do.

Unemployment rates do not appear to be posted in a timely manner

Used your information as reference material.

Would like to see local employment surveys done more frequently

**\*Note** The researcher was contacted by the individual who sent this comment, after some discussion, the individual was able to find the information needed.

## **Desired Information and/or Services**

Annual Wage Surveys

Average wage info by city, county online

A breakdown of Native Americans in Rolette County living in poverty? Where would I find this?

Characteristics of the insured workforce (possibly combine with DOT)

Cut staff, save state some money. Eliminate some of these surveys.

Don't know until I need them

Graduate follow-up county-state information

Have online - thanks

Information related to turnover rates/retention status

Labor availability surveys

Labor Surveys

Like to see more on growth industries and trends

Local labor analysis

Methods to do a local skills survey

New publication (shared with Marcia)

Nothing specific but always know I can call and ask

Specific information for the community of Bismarck

Students need something that would help them understand likelihood of working in North Dakota

Survey in Bismarck for Development Corp.

Trained workforce trends for specific areas/cities. Projections based on skill sets

Training on how to use the "new" format on web site

Tribal information, land base, enrollment, unemployment, labor market supply

Underemployment surveys, low to moderate income stats, part-time versus full-time

Updates on current wage information employment projections on a monthly basis.

Updated and localized information for the following communities: Oakes, Lamoure, Valley City & Jamestown

## **B. Local Office Feedback**

**During the past year, staff from the LMI Center has made an effort to sit down and visit with several of our key customers about our products and services in a very informal focus group/discussion group type setting. In addition, LMI staff have had several one-on-one sessions or group discussions with One Stop offices, North Dakota Career Resource Network, WDC staff, Commerce Department, and local economic developers. These conversations have been invaluable in discovering their workforce information needs and how we might be able to help them. Those results follow as well.**

### **Local office feedback summary**

*\*Based on discussions with office staff in Bismarck, Grand Forks, Fargo, Wahpeton, Jamestown, Valley City, Dickinson and Williston*

### **LMI products currently using/most useful:**

- Useful in a more generic way
- Liked the info on The Wire
- Use Wages book often, as it is easier to use than the Data Warehouse

- Use Projections trifold a lot
- The Wire contained too much info...nothing stood out
- Several staff weren't familiar at all with the LMA
- RoadMap, LMA (particularly for businesses), Benefits Survey, Wages, LES
- View RoadMap as more of a general publication
- LMA info useful for economic developers and to get unemployment rate info

### **Review template**

- Good start
- Economic developers may use more than businesses
- Businesses, economic developers really don't have a need for something like this, unless they are considering expansion or relocation
- Could use info on the template such as number of people in labor market, skills, wages, commuting patterns, job training
- Could start within a 100 mile radius of city, then become more detailed in info as radius is shortened
- Prefer local office staff do this type of work as it is needed; feels staff need to know the Data Warehouse info
- Like the LMI @ Work template
- Our template should be a Word or Excel file, or something other than PDF, so it can be revised by local offices
- Build template based on most common local office requests
- Need to do more industry-based products/info (be more specific to them)
- Templates for industries, regions, and job seekers (career planning)
- Add where training is available for certain occupations and the success rate for training facilities
- Add number of job openings
- Break down occupational info
- Change language so it is easy to understand (i.e. mean)
- Add projections, wages and info from projections trifold for job seeker template
- Would like something like this accessible online
- Should focus on the industries where there is the most demand
- We could develop a template for local offices to hand out to economic developers to give them an idea of the different types of info that could be provided
- Could also use the template as an info piece for local offices when they are out at meetings or giving presentations
- Businesses need immediate, customized results – can't necessarily wait for us
- Template could be a nice info piece for them to hand out
- Majority of requests need to be customized, within a short time period

### **Employer discussions/questions:**

- #1 request is wage ranges by industry
- Employers need immediate answers
- Work with economic development associations on a regular basis
- Staff does limited analysis to support general info of labor force
- Wage related data and benefits are most common requests
- Mainly ad hoc requests
- Requests for job descriptions
- Staff is asked about doing training needs evaluations for businesses – could we do this throughout the state?
- Census data
- Most common complaint is that the info is not up to date

**What do businesses ask for that is not currently available?**

- More current wage data
- Retention info
- Different pieces of our publications (that they view as necessary) rolled into one piece, specifically for a business
- Turnover rates
- We are already providing a lot of the info they need
- Information such as what we proposed in the template
- Easily accessible labor availability info and wages
- Occupational wages within more immediate area

**What kinds of tools or aids would you like to see developed that might help you in working with employers?**

- Customized packages
- Pieces of info from different publications combined into one
- Template we proposed
- Ability to generate their own reports
- Specialized publications specific to their area – similar to LES, but more often
- Info more specific to their area

**Would businesses/economic developers be interested in specialized LMI training? (i.e. how to find info on LMI Warehouse, etc.)**

- Set up sessions every month, then advertise to employers
- Something their staff can handle
- They don't get a lot of requests for this
- Could develop packaged presentations for specific groups
- Not many requests
- Economic developers need to know how to use the info and more importantly, how to find it
- Businesses may not want to take the time to learn this, when it should be a service JSND provides for them; economic developers may be a more likely candidate
- They don't get too many requests for individual presentations, but it could be a possibility at a higher level; i.e. economic developers convention (migration pattern, projections, wage changes)
- Local office targets audience with their own presentations, as they have an understanding of what is needed
- It would be hard for them to use a standard presentation developed by us; LMI should do the presentations
- Could develop packaged presentations for specific groups
- Dickinson is in the process of lining up some presentations and would like for us to be a part of them
- Presentations such as this should be geared more toward economic developers

**Does local office staff need LMI training and to what extent?**

- Should train local office staff before any employer sessions – perhaps twice per month
- They are working on developing their own scripts to use on LMI based common questions
- They will use the tutorial for job seekers and businesses for a review
- Could possibly use yearly (very general) LMI course for local office staff
- Staff need to become more competent in using and finding info on the Data Warehouse
- Like using tutorial that was developed for job seekers side and business services side
- Yes - they don't use it daily
- It is hard for them to understand the different pieces of information available and how it can be used
- They would like to see us do scenarios in a lab setting, so staff can actually walk through it themselves
- They would like to see us more often

**If local offices develop a welcoming kit for new employers, what type of LMI could be included?**  
(discussed at Customer Service Coord. Team rally)

- See a use for economic developer packages, not necessarily for businesses
- Welcoming kit would be too general of a piece to use; they are going to focus on becoming more involved in specifying information based on customer needs
- Probably won't develop a welcoming kit, but rather customized packages based upon their requests for info

**Website (specifically Data Warehouse):**

- Staff need to become more familiar with data available
- Like idea of being able to generate reports on the web for current and historical data
- More efficient use of scroll down screens – you lose the titles on top
- Should be able to open a description off of the occupational and alternative titles (i.e. Programmer Analyst II)
- Suggested using GIS to apply to LMI site
- Customizable reports where businesses could select their own data elements
- Don't like look of Data Warehouse boxes
- Hard to find titles (option for alternate titles would help)
- Need keyword search
- Primarily uses web to find info, not the publications quite as much
- Have to click twice to get to the employer's site on the List of Employers page (could have that additional info with the employer name on the first page to avoid 2 clicks)
- JSND banner should stay on top no matter what other site you click to from our home page
- Provide link to O\*Net code of occupational info
- Would like to see customized, self-services available through LMI site
- Make LMI fully functional in VOS
- LMI section on VOS not useful – should have link to Data Warehouse, to avoid confusion
- Data Warehouse not easy to understand
- Find it difficult to find what they need – info is “all over the board”
- Data Warehouse is not a user-friendly tool for someone other than LMI staff
- Hope our new program (to replace Data Warehouse) will be easier to navigate

**Use of Local Employment Surveys**

- Businesses find useful
- Would like for them to be done annually
- Make LES a more timely publication
- Like the idea of the new format
- Still want areas such as Wahpeton to have their own LES
- Could we provide data on quarterly basis?
- Would it be possible to post on web
- Prefer annual averages on an annual basis
- Still need largest, smallest employers listed alphabetically (could be done as a special request)
- Would like for us to provide more info on their specific area

**LMI's role in CSA's CuSCoT plan**

- Help staff to understand our info and present it in correct format
- Assist in developing customized packages
- Suggested getting copies of each CSA's plan to help us determine our role
- Work closely with local offices

- Need LMI expert on their staff
- More training in local offices

**Other comments:**

- Do we need to date the info on the website – can there be a “Most Current Data” button and a “Historical Data” button? Employers see the dates on the most recent data we have, and think that our website has not been updated.
- Started following Melanie Arthur’s economic analysis use
- Need to help enable staff to understand LMI for self-sufficiency
- Would like to see us develop data elements for geographic areas in the form of narrative reports and high-quality power point presentations (i.e. Balancing Act)
- Grand Forks is co-locating with SBA, SBDC which will be an opportunity for joint marketing efforts and to serve as a joint resource area
- In mailing publications, we need to identify and send specifically to people in local offices
- LMI posters were well-received; would like to see more developed
- Like both the wheel and Products and Services booklet ideas as products
- Would like to see something like “Regional RoadMaps” developed
- Could use an LMI presentation on power point for resource room staff – mainly FAQ’s
- Screen saver in resource room would be useful
- Suggested doing ongoing labor availability studies
- SBA centers in each CSA would have some helpful suggestions
- Develop focus groups rather than advisory groups to capture different people at different stages
- Notify local offices of major changes immediately (i.e. discontinuation of publications)
- Would like for us to provide customized info in PDF format
- Add instructions in wage books, etc. on how to use or find info in Data Warehouse
- Should have LMI products and services info and links to our info, on mini-CD’s for handouts
- Would like to see us there on a more regular basis

## **C. Feedback From Presentations and Training Sessions**

**We have also received valuable feedback from participants in our training session and presentations. We closely review the evaluation forms we receive from training sessions and often received very timely ideas and suggestions from informal discussions with individuals during and after these sessions. Information from each of these sources is extremely valuable in evaluating our existing products and services and in developing plans for the future.**