

ARKANSAS: WORKFORCE INFORMATION PY' 06 ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administrations' Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 3-06, this is Arkansas' annual report of accomplishments on the six core products and services contained within this grant.

CONTINUE TO POPULATE THE WORKFORCE INFORMATION DATABASE WITH STATE AND LOCAL DATA

All mandatory core tables of the Workforce Information database, version 2.3, were updated by June 30, 2007. This is a continual project, as we update the information in the Workforce Information database as it is made available. Arkansas also populates many of the Workforce Information database's non-required demographic and economic tables and is building tables that will power local WIB Area profile reports in the "Discover Arkansas" system. We maintain the Uniform Resource Locators (URL) of <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> and <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>, both being official Web site addresses for our Internet delivery of Workforce Information database information.

The 2007 version of the *Directory of Licensed, Certified, and Registered Occupations in Arkansas* database files was updated and submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center on June 29, 2007, with the first printed version being released on July 26, 2007. This publication can also be viewed and downloaded at http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/742_DLO.pdf

PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Long-Term

The sub-state Industry and Occupational Employment Projections for 2004-2014 were successfully completed and the file sent to the Projections Management Partnership Consortium and placed on "Discover Arkansas", on April 26, 2007. The Long-Term Projection's workforce investment area publication should be ready for release by August 31, 2007. Sub-state long-term projections can be viewed and downloaded from our Workforce Information database Web site at <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> or <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>.

Short-Term

The statewide Industry and Occupational Projections for the 2006-2008 period, utilizing a base period of 1st quarter 2006 and projected out to 1st quarter 2008, have been completed, and the necessary files sent to the Projections Management Partnership Consortium. Printed versions of the 2006-2008 statewide short-term projections were released on August 1, 2007.

Arkansas completed the 2006-2008 sub-state Industry and Occupational Projections on May 17, 2007 and submitted for inclusion in the Workforce Information database on July 18, 2007. Printed versions of the 2006-2008 sub-state short-term projection should be released by October 1, 2007.

State and sub-state level Short-Term Projections can be found through our Workforce Information Database Web site at <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> or <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>

PUBLISH AN ANNUAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS REPORT FOR THE GOVERNOR AND STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

The Labor Market Information section of the Department of Workforce Services will release its first *Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report* on the Workforce Information Database on August 10, 2007. Printed versions of the report will be submitted to Arkansas' Governor and State Workforce Investment Board at their next meeting on September 11, 2007.

POST PRODUCTS, INFORMATION, AND REPORTS ON THE INTERNET

Major deliverables, besides Projections, Directory of Licensed Occupations, and the Economic Analysis Report, can be viewed through the Internet at:

Discover Arkansas (www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov): "Discover Arkansas" is the state's Web-based LMI delivery system supporting the WIBs, business, education, other agencies, and the public, utilizing information in Arkansas' Workforce Information database. This fully ADA compliant system was officially released on January 31, 2005, and is continually updated with new information, reports, and consumer products.

ArkOSCAR (www.arkoscar.org)*: Through collaboration with the Texas LMI Department, we've developed an Arkansas-specific Web version of the popular Occupation and Skill Computer-Automated Researcher (OSCAR). ArkOSCAR is a

powerful O*NET-based application that allows Arkansas Workforce Centers and schools to assist dislocated workers, youth, and other job/career seekers in their career exploration by leveraging O*NET data with current state LMI (Wages, Occupational Growth Projections, Job Openings, Demographic data, and more). The system contains seven different ways to help users explore job and career possibilities, including automation of the first two O*NET Assessment tools. ArkOSCAR displays an engaging window into the powerful O*NET database and is an excellent way for users unfamiliar with O*NET to learn about occupational possibilities. The system was updated with the latest labor market information on August 7, 2007.

*To visit ArkOSCAR, from the sign-in page (www.arkoscar.org), select "Out-of-State" from the "LWIA or EDS" drop down menu, and then type in "54321" in the "Password (Zip Code)" window.

2006-2007 Career Watch (www.careerwatch.org): Arkansas distributed approximately 100,000 copies of this very popular tabloid-type career magazine in PY'06. *Career Watch* provides students (and their parents) over 20 areas of interests in exploring the world of work. Topics covered included career planning, resumes, apprenticeships, work ethic, military opportunities, top occupations, occupational profiles with wage information, scholarship information, financial aid programs, higher education in Arkansas, and more. The 2006-2007 *Career Watch* magazine is also available for viewing and downloading at www.careerwatch.org.

High Demand Targeted Jobs – National Governor's Association (NGA) Skills Matching System: To provide information on the skill needs of jobs/occupations in Arkansas, we created a skills matching prototype system, through the support of the NGA "Pathways to Advancement Policy Academy". This tool will be updated with the newest information by October 31, 2007, and will continue to be incorporated into the "Discover Arkansas" LMI portal, and links Arkansas' growth industries to the nationally recognized Educational Career Clusters. It also identifies if a growth industry is a targeted industry by the Arkansas Department of Economic Development (ADED) or an industry that has been identified by the Department of Labor's High Growth Job Training Initiative. The tool identifies occupations related to each growth industry and career pathway and provides information on skills, projections, wages, training programs, licensing requirements, and notes if it is a high demand occupation in Arkansas. The LMI Department is currently working with ADED and their consultant in helping them in the process of defining the newest list of Arkansas' Targeted Jobs. After those are defined, we will update this valuable system.

Career Interests, Training, and Job Outlook System

Working with the Department of Workforce Education and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, Arkansas developed this system to simplify the alignment of the Career Cluster/Cluster Pathway organizational system with occupational specialties, standard occupational codes (SOC), and classified instructional program (CIP) data. Also included are long-term projected job openings and average annual wages for the

state of Arkansas. This information will be extremely valuable to schools that are planning curriculum additions or changes, as well as to individuals seeking career changes. Arkansas' system was seen by CIBER, Inc, the Workforce Informer developer, as a breakthrough for information sharing in the Career Cluster and Pathway arena and based a huge portion of their new "Career Clusters" tool in the Workforce Informer on this system, which can be viewed on "Discover Arkansas" at http://www.discoverarkansas.net/aspdotnet/career/CC_AreaSelect.aspx. However, CIBER's new "Career Cluster" tool left out the SOC and CIP coding systems for occupations. At present, Arkansas feels this is an important feature for career clusters and pathways and has decided to leave our current Career Interests system running on "Discover Arkansas". This system can be viewed on "Discover Arkansas" at <http://www.discoverarkansas.net/?PAGEID=67&SUBID=161>

Affirmative Action (www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov): In support of the SWIB and LWIBs, business, education, economic development, other agencies, and the general public, the "Discover Arkansas" Web site contains an entire Affirmative Action section with statewide, MSA, and county tables that can be downloaded onto the user's PC.

Real-Life Arkansas (www.real-life.arkansas.gov): In support of our partners in Education and Employment, Arkansas' Labor Market Information section released *Real-Life Arkansas* on January 31, 2007. This is an interactive "lifestyle budget calculator" for students and job seekers and can be found at the Web address of www.real-life.arkansas.gov. The site helps users discover how education impacts earnings and to learn about different occupations. The site's objective is to inspire students, through a "real world" exercise, to take education seriously and pursue higher education/training after high school.

Users of the site have three options to determine the costs and careers associated with their desired lifestyle. By identifying monthly living expenses in "Get a Real Life Check," the user finds out what careers provide the salary needed to cover those expenses. With "Future Salary," the user enters a salary and chooses a desired education and occupational category. The occupations with that salary are then displayed. "Occupation Direct" is similar to "Get a Real Life Check" but allows the user to choose an occupation first. The living expenses for a desired lifestyle are then subtracted from the occupation's salary to check whether the occupation's wages will cover those expenses.

The Future Awaits : Arkansas continued its distribution of this publication, which focuses on teaching young adults pre-employment basics, including resume preparation, how to apply for jobs, appropriate dress, interview tips, and even basic guidance on how to complete federal tax forms. Due to many requests, we have reproduced the "*Pocket Resume*" out of *The Future Awaits* into a stand-alone workforce tool for citizens to use in their everyday work search. *The Future Awaits* can be viewed and downloaded from

“Discover Arkansas” at

http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/347_Future_Awaits.pdf

Arkansas Consumer Reporting System (ACRS) (www.arkansascrs.org): Arkansas unveiled the first nationally recognized WIA certification system in operation in December 2001. ACRS streamlined a paper system, which averaged 90 days for WIA provider certification, into a 24-hour automated approval process. ACRS provides an interactive, customer driven, search engine to review all educational entities within state boundaries.

Projected Employment Opportunities List (formerly the “Demand Occupations List”): Arkansas continues to produce this publication that identifies future job opportunities and links them to training programs with the state. The publication presents information in two columns, with the first providing the occupation's code, title, and a Statewide estimated average annual wage. The second column lists the corresponding training code and title for the occupation. A list is included for the state and each of the 10 Local Workforce Investment Areas. This product is distributed to help the workforce system and its users make better training decisions. It can be viewed and downloaded at http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/397_Projected_Employment_Opportunities_List.pdf

Workforce Area Profiles: Arkansas has created localized labor market profiles for each of its local workforce investment areas. The profiles contain the local demand occupations with local wages and key important economic information for each local area. These can be found on “Discover Arkansas” (www.discover.arkansas.gov or www.discoverarkansas.net) as a left column heading of “Local Workforce Investment Area Statistics”.

Other Printed Publications with Web Access: During this past year, the Department of Workforce Services’ Labor Market Information section has produced various other LMI-based publications, such as the popular *Arkansas Wage Survey*, *Arkansas Labor Market*, the *Projected Employment Opportunities List* (formerly known as the Demand Occupations List), *Arkansas’ Hot 45* and other reports, publications and information. Most of our publications are accessible on-line from the LMI Publications page of “Discover Arkansas,” while information and reports are scattered throughout the Web site at www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov.

Estimates Delivery System (EDS): Though EDS is not a Web accessed tool for the public, it does provide extensive information that we use on “Discover Arkansas” and other Web products.

PARTNER AND CONSULT ON A CONTINUING BASIS WITH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

The Labor Market Information section is located on the same floor of the Department of Workforce Services building as the staff of the State Workforce Investment Board. This arrangement allows for almost constant contact and association with the Board's staff to identify and produce needed information in an ever changing economic arena. The LMI section also has a representative attend each State Board meeting which allows us to keep in touch with informational needs of the Board. Almost daily, a LMI staff person is in contact with staff from one of the 10 Local Workforce Investment Boards providing information on a multitude of subjects from demand occupations that designates a WIA training requirement to labor supply information for a proposal to a new company considering locating in one of the Local Workforce Investment Board Areas (LWIB).

CONDUCT SPECIAL STUDIES AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Throughout PY'06, the LMI section of the Department of Workforce Services has made itself available to provide information and has conducted more than 50 special studies for our various customers. These include utilizing the Local Employment Dynamic (LED) system and the Estimates Delivery System (EDS) to answer most of the questions and concerns that different customers had about the State or Local Area labor market, economic condition, and special initiatives. Some of these concerns and questions were:

- Where are the workers in my industry and county?
- How much are workers like mine paid?
- How does the job turnover for other firms in my industry compare to the turnover at my workplace?
- Where are the jobs in my WIB area?
- How much do the occupations in my WIB area pay?
- How long can I expect this type of job to last in this WIB area?
- Where are the jobs where I live?
- How much can I expect to be paid in different industries?

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT

Below are the results of our efforts during this Program Year, the grading scale, and reports of the customer satisfaction surveys that were sent with each of our LMI publications.

Satisfaction

Very Satisfied

Satisfied

Indifferent

Dissatisfied

Very Dissatisfied

Usefulness

Very Useful

Useful

Fair

Not Very Useful

Not Useful At All

Grade

A = 4 pts. / 3.8-4.0

B = 3 pts. / 3.0-3.7

C = 2 pts. / 2.9-2.0

D = 1 pt. / 1.5-2.8

F = 0 pts. /Below 1.5

Breakdown of Satisfaction and Usefulness by Publications

Directory of Licensed Occupations			
Satisfaction		Number	Percent
Very Satisfied		27	79%
Satisfied		7	21%
Overall Score	3.79=B		
Usefulness		Number	Percent
Very Useful		26	81%
Useful		6	19%
Fair			
Overall Score	3.81=A		

Long-Term Projections			
Satisfaction		Number	Percent
Very Satisfied		17	56%
Satisfied		11	37%
Indifferent		2	7%
Overall Score	3.50=B		
Usefulness		Number	Percent
Very Useful		14	50%
Useful		14	50%
No Answer		2	
Overall Score	3.50=B		

Short-Term Projections			
Satisfaction		Number	Percent
Very Satisfied		26	38%
Satisfied		40	58%
Indifferent		3	4%
Overall Score	3.33=B		
Usefulness		Number	Percent
Very Useful		22	32%
Useful		40	58%
No Answer		7	10%
Overall Score	3.35=B		

Wage Publication			
Satisfaction		Number	Percent
Very Satisfied		89	80%
Satisfied		22	20%
Overall Score	3.80=A		
Usefulness		Number	Percent
Very Useful		89	80%
Useful		22	20%
Overall Score	3.80=A		

Career Watch Magazine			
Satisfaction		Number	Percent
Very Satisfied		416	88.70%
Satisfied		53	11.30%
Overall Score	3.89=A		
Usefulness		Number	Percent
Very Useful		402	85.70%
Useful		67	14.30%
Overall Score	3.86=A		

SUMMARY

Arkansas' LMI Section has been relentless in its pursuit to accomplish all of our certified deliverables and as of this writing we have obtained 100 percent of our timed goals for PY'06. Working with our many varied customers throughout the year, which includes LWIBs and the SWIB, we've learned that sometimes we are more technical than the customers prefer. A glaring example of this from the information we gathered is that some of our publications are too numbers oriented. We tried to address it this year, but we still have further to go. So in the future, we still intend to incorporate more graphs and charts into our publications, both hard copy and Internet related. Another area that we put effort into, but could have done better during PY'06 year, was our contact and communication with the Local and State Workforce Investment Boards. To correct this, we are asking that each area submit their meeting dates to ascertain the possibility of having a LMI staff person present as often as possible. We continue to strive for excellence in developing our product mix, but our main goal will be furnishing the citizens of Arkansas with good, reliable, and accurate labor market information no matter whether they are individuals, employers, agency partners, or local and state workforce entities.