

Workforce Information Core Products and Services Annual Performance Report

PA Department of Labor and Industry

Center for Workforce Information & Analysis

Program Year July 1, 2005 – June 30, 2006

Pennsylvania's economic future depends on a workforce able to compete in today's global economy. In order for the Commonwealth to be economically competitive and for our workers to acquire careers that pay family-sustaining wages, Pennsylvania is working to ensure that its workforce development system is efficient and is directing funding toward worker training that responds to employer and employee needs. A skilled and well-trained workforce can be achieved through an efficient, customized and focused workforce development system. The Rendell Administration's goals for ensuring Pennsylvania's success with its workforce development system focus on service to its clients, which include employers, job seekers, and workers.

A. Accomplishments

(1) ALMIS Database

Pennsylvania's commitment to consistency within the national labor market information system is achieved through its ALMIS database and its Internet application (PA Work Stats) which is a full implementation of the ALMIS structure. The Center has, and will continue to, populate all designated core database tables and other tables not designated as core. The Center also includes state data and, where available, data for regions and counties. The Center is under contract to Geo Solutions, Inc. and has obtained an upgraded Internet application to access the ALMIS 2.3 structure.

Updates to the ALMIS database will continue to be ongoing.

To the extent to which actual expenditures for any specific function can be calculated, Pennsylvania has spent the estimated \$110,000 staff costs.

(2) Industry and Occupational Projections

Work on the long term (2004-2014) statewide industry and occupational projections was completed in early June 2006, slightly ahead of schedule. Data will be posted to the web site shortly. Completion dates for Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) and Workforce Investment Area (WIA) long term industry and occupational projections are well ahead of schedule – August 2006 and October 2006, respectively. The delivery mechanism for all projections is the Center's web site.

Pennsylvania short term (2005-2007) industry and occupational forecasts were also completed in early June and are in the process of being posted on the CWIA web site.

To the extent to which actual expenditures for any specific function can be calculated, Pennsylvania has spent the estimated \$220,000 staff costs.

(3) **Occupational and Career Information Products**

- (a) **Occupational Analysis of Statewide Industry Clusters:** CWIA, in cooperation with LWIBs and state workforce development partners, has developed an initial occupational analysis of high priority occupations for each cluster. This analysis is a companion to the targeted industry cluster analysis completed the prior year and accompanied the Workforce Choices project.

The cluster analysis is 100 percent complete, while the entire Workforce Choices project is approximately 75 percent finished.

- (b) **Database for Demand Occupations:** The Center has reviewed past methodologies for producing demand occupational lists. A new methodology was completed approximately March 2006 and is being used to produce a new list known as “ High Priority Occupations.”
- (c) **Career Guide:** The **Pennsylvania Career Guide 2005-06** has been completed and complementary **Resource Guide** will be completed by the end of September. Hard copies of each publication will be delivered during October 2006 and will also be posted to CWIA’s web site at that time.
- (d) **Pennsylvania Occupation Outlook Handbook Update:** Updates for this publication are well under way and are expected to be complete no later than the end of September 2006. All information will be published on the Center’s web site no later than the end of calendar year 2006.
- (e) **Occupational Brochures, Posters, Reports, and Publications:** Through interaction with customers, the scope of this project has grown since inception. The Center is in the process of producing a several hundred career ladder-type posters that will initially be distributed through the Resource Centers in the statewide CareerLink centers. These products are targeted for completion by the end of September.
- (f) **Career Exploration Tool:** The Career Exploration Tool has taken a back seat to other projects due to resource and information technology issues. However, the Center has completed a draft mock-up which is being reviewed and critiqued. Work on this project will remain ongoing.

- (g) **Career Education Products:** The Center has been actively supporting the Commonwealth's 720 Project. This project was named for the 720 school days available during grades 9-12, during which time students are being given increased direction and information regarding training and job choices, with emphasis on making selections as early as possible to maximize high school training relating to specific occupations. The Center assembled appropriate labor market information and has completed a PowerPoint product to assist school guidance counselors in making recommendations.

- (h) **Interactive Web Page to display occupational information:** Some progress has been made on this initiative. To date, users of the Center's web site (PA Work Stats) are able to create individualized reports by selecting occupational or location information criteria, and one-page profiles have been posted on the Department of Labor and Industry's workforce development web site. Goals for the future include an on-line Occupational Outlook Handbook, but a lack of IT support for this project has hindered its progress.

To the extent to which actual expenditures for any specific function can be calculated, Pennsylvania has spent the estimated \$209,525 costs.

(4) **Provide Information and Support to WIBs**

- (a) **Supply/Demand Analysis:** In 2005, CWIA produced two reports forecasting the 2010 nurse shortage. These reports, the *Registered Nurse Workforce in Pennsylvania Supply and Demand Report* and the *Licensed Practical Nurse Workforce in Pennsylvania Supply and Demand Report*, were prepared in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Center for Health Careers. CWIA committed to updating the reports as requested, but as of this writing the current publications are still adequate for the Center for Health Career's needs.

- (b) **Technical Assistance to WIBs:** The Center provides labor market information, including industry cluster and high priority occupation data, as well as technical assistance to assist all local WIBs in becoming high performing. In addition, the Center provides local WIBs with labor market information to develop their annual plans, helps them interpret the data if necessary, reviews local plans to ensure that the information was accurately used to define the WIBs' local situations, and verifies WIA performance levels. This activity is ongoing.

- (c) **Local Employment Dynamics (LED):** CWIA continues to be a member of the pilot group for the LED Mapping Tool, providing LED data in a user-friendly mapping format for customer usage. In addition, LED data is used in responding to ad hoc requests and various research projects. This activity is ongoing.
- (d) **Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** CWIA continues to use GIS to produce thematic maps using Census data, industry employment data, and other data containing latitude and longitude information. Staffing and other resource limitations as well as priority assessments have precluded significant expansion in this area, but efforts remain ongoing.
- (e) **Outreach:** CWIA works continuously with the SWIB to provide data and information necessary to support the workforce system. Where appropriate, CWIA works on committees that support the SWIB such as the Pennsylvania Center or Health Careers. CWIA provides LWIBs with data, tools and expertise in industry clusters, high priority occupations, and other labor market information. In addition, this year, the Center's target group for outreach was workforce professionals – CareerLink, WIB, Corrections, and Welfare workers as well as educators or others who may be on the “front line” preparing clients to enter, or achieve higher levels of success in, the labor pool. This activity will remain ongoing.
- (f) **Customer Service:** CWIA's Customer Response Team and its Outreach and Training Team consist of staff members dedicated solely to providing products and services to all customers, including LWIBs, educators, employers and the general public. Activities include responding to oral and written requests, participating in meetings, and delivering workshops and presentations. Work will remain ongoing.
- (g) **LMI Research Team:** CWIA's LMI Research Team consists of staff members dedicated solely to providing direct support to customers for projects in the form of analysis and synthesis of labor market information. This past year, projects focused on the health care industry, WIRED grants, Keystone Research Group initiatives, re-entry of the poor into the labor force, SEWN (Strategic early Warning Notice, a means of identifying employers which may be in trouble, using claims and changing employment/wage levels), and the increase of the minimum wage.
- (h) **Benefits Survey:** CWIA had planned to conduct a statewide benefits survey of employers in select targeted clusters using the methodology and process developed by the National Benefits Consortium. However, this project was not undertaken because other endeavors had higher priorities, and there was no demand for this information within the organization or from workforce development partners.

- (i) **Vacancy Survey:** CWIA planned to conduct a job vacancy survey of the health care industry using the methodology of the BLS and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. However, this project was not undertaken because there was no support within the organization or from workforce development partners, and other initiatives took precedence.

To the extent to which actual expenditures for any specific function can be calculated, Pennsylvania has spent the estimated \$331,689 costs.

(5) Maintain and Enhance Electronic State Workforce Information Delivery Systems

- (a) **LED Skinning:** The Center planned to “skin” the Census Bureau’s web site to display Pennsylvania census data and accommodate queries in PA Work Stats, but other web site issues precluded this project and there was not sufficient expertise to undertake this work. The project will remain on the “to do” list for the upcoming year.
- (b) **Total Integration of Customer Satisfaction Surveys on Web Site:** CWIA regularly reviews and monitors customer satisfaction surveys on its web site to determine if adequate feedback is being obtained and to obtain ideas for other products/services to meet customer demand. To date, a new design has been developed to improve this process, but actual analysis of the information available using this process and implementation/integration of new services has not yet been completed. This activity will remain ongoing.
- (c) **Use of GIS Capabilities on Web Site:** CWIA customers frequently ask for various simplifications and enhancements regarding the display of data or ability to manipulate data on PA Work Stats. In partial response to such suggestions, the Center has proposed the use of GIS to display thematic maps. This project has been explored but not implemented due to a lack of capacity. The Center plans to move this project to the fore by obtaining the requisite additional staff training. No specific completion date has been assigned but work will remain ongoing.
- (d) **Enhancements and Upgrades to PA Work Stats:** CWIA worked with the system vendor, Geo Solutions, to obtain and load version 7.0 (formerly 6.0) in February 2006. Currently, version 8.0 is being pursued, with an implementation target date of November 2006.

- (e) **Enhancements to Navigation Capabilities:** In response to customer feedback, CWIA continuously receives, analyzes and coordinates the implementation of navigation improvements through the web site vendor. Multiple enhancements were finalized during the last several months including, but not limited to, simplifying the ability to access occupational data simply through the entry of SOC codes. This process will remain ongoing.
- (f) **New Products on Web:** CWIA developed several new products for web-based delivery. These include, but are not limited to a “top 50” list of employers, statewide and by county; one-page industry cluster publications; 2012 Pennsylvania demographic information; and industry/occupation charts. New product development will remain ongoing.

To the extent to which actual expenditures for any specific function can be calculated, Pennsylvania has spent the estimated \$175,000 costs.

(6) Support State Workforce Information Training Activities

Internal Customer Training

- (a) **LMI Training – CWIA Staff Training:** The Center takes pride not only in training staff relative to their specific assignments, but also takes every opportunity to provide education about the programs, initiatives and processes of the Center so that its personnel can broaden their horizons on programs and activities. These take the form of Center-wide meetings, smaller scale staff meetings, “Schoolhouse Learning” sessions, mentoring sessions, and CWIA “Newslines” e-mails to all staff. Wider knowledge can result in staff requesting reassignment to other programs, which the Center accommodates where possible, since cross training is a benefit to the organization, and possible upward mobility is desired by individuals. Broader knowledge also helps staff put data and experience in context, helping them to better serve customers in interpreting and applying labor market information. This training will remain ongoing.
- (b) **Customer Response Team Training:** Participating on the customer service line is an excellent means of obtaining broad knowledge of Center activities, and volunteers are always welcomed. New participants are given a formal orientation/introduction where duties are discussed, sample questions are posed, and sources for information are explained (web site, program staff, manuals, data files, etc.). Following this, a new member will spend three hours with the team leader (or experienced member) to observe the leader in responding to customer inquiries. The member will then spend three hours doing the work in concert with the leader, following which the member will respond to customers solo, with the

leader observing and providing guidance when necessary. All members attend a bi-weekly meeting in which individual members make presentations on their experiences or special requests, and formalized topical instruction is provided to the team as required. This training will remain ongoing.

- (c) **LMI Analyst Training:** To move beyond on-the-job or BLS program training, the Center often takes advantage of the in-depth training provided by the subject matter experts in the Labor Market Information Training Institute. Those most often selected include the Basic Analyst, Applied Analyst, Marketing LMI, and Database training courses.
- (d) **GIS Training:** Geographic mapping is a convenient, simple and powerful means of depicting data. GIS capabilities are limited only by one's experience with the technology. During the last year, several staff members attended training provided by ESRI, coordinated through the Office of Administration's Bureau of Geospatial Technologies. The Center uses its expertise to provide mapping services for workforce development partners and others within the Department of Labor and Industry on demand.
- (e) **State and National Conferences:** Staff participate regularly in conferences and workshops which focus on CWIA's products and services, including demonstrations of their proper use and application. Not only do customers benefit, but staff have the opportunity to network with other LMI specialists and can exchange ideas and share innovative practices. In addition to these routine events, executive staff attend national conferences and participate on committees, including the NASWA LMI Committee and the LED Steering Committee.

External Customer Training

- (a) **WIBs:** CWIA provided technical training for local WIBs in the use of LMI and to address their data concerns. The training was originally envisioned to involve group sessions, but instead involved individual meetings for about half the 23 local WIBs in the state. The subject matter focused on the Center's Regional Data Analysis Tool, industry clusters, and high priority occupations and the process for developing them. The Center did hold one group session in State College in June which was attended by representatives of 15-18 local WIBs and focused on confidentiality (ensuring such data is not disclosed or shared with inappropriate sources); subtopics involved the Center's support role, development of data, training available, and product development.

- (b) **Educators:** The Center provided support to the educational community in several arenas. As already mentioned, in support of the “720 Project,” a PowerPoint presentation was developed on the job market and career opportunities to aid guidance counselors or advising students. The Center again participated in the Capital Region Career Education Partnership, a consortium of schools, businesses, government and community agencies from South Central Pennsylvania. Center staff participated in various events including the PA Department of Education’s Integrated Learning Conference as well as other miscellaneous meetings, workshops or job fairs conducted through the state’s CareerLinks. Again as mentioned, occupational posters depicting career pathways have been developed, the PA Occupational Outlook Handbook has been updated and will be uploaded to the Center’s web site. Individual ad hoc requests remain ongoing, and the Center provides routine support to Education’s Bureau of Career and Technical education with regard to high priority occupations and other requested data.
- (c) **One Stop:** This year, training was again provided to several hundred front line CareerLink staff members to supply them with a working knowledge and basic understanding of labor market information so that they can in turn provide assistance to one-stop customers. Additionally, Business Service Teams were provided training on best practice methods to help CareerLink business teams develop information for purposes of reaching out to and registering targeted employers to use CareerLink services, and to expand the business team’s understanding of employer needs and the structures of their industries in order to best serve them.
- (d) **Agency Personnel:** Center staff continually provide members of Labor and Industry’s Bureau of Workforce Development Partnership with necessary support. This involves running program measures, performance reporting, ASU searches, reviewing local workforce development plans, reviewing training approved under WIA Title 1, consulting on eligible training providers’ performance, and conducting information/training sessions.

All of the above activities will remain ongoing. To the extent to which actual expenditures for any specific function can be calculated, Pennsylvania has spent the estimated \$150,000 costs.

B. Customer Satisfaction Assessment

Customer satisfaction information is collected in various ways. Feedback on the Center’s web site, with regard to the information and products displayed there, is obtained electronically. For presentations and workshops, written evaluations are solicited for assessment, and outreach and training staff often obtain valuable

insight in sidebar conversations with workshop attendees. Customer service staff receive and document comments and suggestions from callers which are discussed at staff meetings with an aim to improve processes or services, or suggest the creation of new products or services which are frequently requested. Also, CWIA receives direct face-to-face feedback from local partners regarding what their requirements are and what enhancements to products or processes are necessary or desirable.

On the whole, customers who know about the Center and have had relationships with Center staff are quite satisfied. The focus needs to be, and is becoming, marketing -- reaching out to others to make them aware of what the Center is and what it can provide, in order to broaden its customer base. In terms of a target audience, the emphasis this year has been on workforce professionals – helping them locate information on the web site, or providing them with products or services to help in their decisionmaking processes.

C. Recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Suite of Core Products

(1) Flexibility in the Grant

The flexibility that the grant allows in the support to WIBs as well as occupational and career information products is critical to CWIA's ability to provide support to workforce development in Pennsylvania. The Center's data and the development of products and analysis have been the foundation for the workforce development system in the commonwealth. Short-term industry and occupational forecasts should be made discretionary.

(2) Customer Service

Individual service, an enhanced web site, and training are critical for CWIA's customers. Customers continually tell Center staff that the organization's phone accessibility allows them to get clarification on the data. Additionally, they like the flexibility of CWIA's web site. Products are continually expanded/dropped according to customer demand.

(3) Tutorials

Customer levels/understanding differ – CWIA has been concentrating on workforce professionals so they can deliver to their customers. The Center has been asked for tutorials from some of these professionals.