

WORKFORCE INFORMATION ANNUAL PLAN
STATEMENT OF WORK – PY2002
CONNECTICUT

This statement of work identifies the information products and services that the Connecticut Department of Labor's Office of Research is planning to produce to support the State's workforce investment system. The One-Stop Career Center/America's Labor Market Information System funds provided for this purpose are critical to the development of the workforce information on which Connecticut's strategic workforce investments are made, as well as to the decisions made by the workforce development professionals and customers of the State's workforce investment system.

The Workforce Investment Act provides a valuable framework through which to organize and coordinate a broad range of undertakings to support State and local workforce investment activities and Connecticut is making every effort to fill as many of the identified information needs as possible with the funding available. To that end, following is (a) a description of the employment statistics system, (b) a description of the products to be developed and services to be offered with the funds provided, and (c) a description of the strategy to be employed for assessing customer satisfaction with the workforce information produced.

a) The Employment Statistics System

Strategy for Consulting with Workforce System Professionals and Customers

Since the initial implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, our strategy for consulting with the Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC, the State workforce investment board) and the local workforce investment boards (local Boards) has been to continuously engage them concerning the needs of the State's system. We regularly attend CETC committee meetings, actively participate in workforce system matters that require or can be enhanced with relevant workforce information, and provide progress reports on LMI activities to support the State's workforce development initiatives. We also consult with the staff of the CETC in the Office for Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) to discuss the information needed to meet the planning requirements of the system. This has included such areas as WIA funding allocations to the local Boards, the list of WIA-eligible training programs, system performance measures for the CETC's annual report to the State legislature, the occupations most needed to be filled by employers, and a proposal for implementing a job vacancy survey. We also meet annually with local Board planners to review their planning information needs and modify our products to meet their needs accordingly.

We consult directly with representatives of the business community through CETC committee meetings, job fairs, phone contacts for information, and LMI Web site emails. We have also directly participated in Agency-sponsored employer focus groups. We further identify business needs through meetings with local Boards and CTDOL Business Services staff, and have provided LMI training to each group. Valuable secondary sources of

information on business needs have been obtained from surveys conducted by the State's largest business and economic development organizations, by various national associations and organizations, and by other states.

The information needs of the individuals served by the State's workforce development system are most effectively obtained through the professionals that serve them. Nevertheless, along with feedback from the front-line employees of the *CT Works* system, direct contacts with individuals are made through job fairs, telephone and email requests for information.

We maintain frequent contact with workforce development professionals, as it is through them that the needs of the system are constantly being assessed. In addition to the high-level meetings with the State and local Boards, with the CTDOL administrators of the public employment service, with the Job Center Directors and other such groups, we have provided LMI training to all front-line workforce development system staff and have received valuable feedback in the process. We have established an advisory committee of career counselor experts from the Job Centers to review and improve the *Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion* Web site. We also conduct an annual conference for career and education counselors and regularly provide presentations and training on LMI resources to State and local organizations and agencies involved in providing workforce assistance to individuals and businesses. Included among them are individuals from the education community, welfare client service providers, rehabilitation services providers, and the corrections system.

Support for the State's Five-Year Strategic Plan

The economic, workforce and career information gathered from many sources and disseminated throughout the State's workforce development system provides the core information needed by system administrators and service providers to plan, evaluate and continuously improve the system, and to effectively serve the business and individual customers of the system.

Workforce information is provided for planning and staying abreast of the services delivered by the State's workforce investment system. Career exploration resources are available and used by individual customers of the system and the counselors that assist them, as well as by training providers to identify the programs needed to meet the current and emerging training needs of employers. Also available is a comprehensive source of education and training programs offered throughout the State that both individuals and employers use to find the training of their choice. Providing the fuel for continuous improvement, system performance evaluation measures are produced and used to assess the success and progress of the State's workforce system investments.

These uses of workforce information for planning, delivery of services and evaluation are key components of Connecticut's *Strategic Five-Year State Workforce Investment Plan*. Included in the Plan are direct references to Office of Research products that supplied the information needed for the workforce development system needs assessment, including

information on economic and workforce trends over the last decade, identification of the industries that are growing in the State and the occupational demand from that growth that the workforce system will need to address, and information on the supply of education and training graduates that can be matched to the demand for workers so informed decisions can be made on the need for expanding, reducing, or initiating new occupational programs.

Also in the Five-Year Plan are products and information supplied by the Office of Research for determining funding allocations to the local Boards, for providing electronic access to occupational information (*Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion*), for developing an eligible training provider list and accompanying consumer report information, and for producing workforce system performance measures. These contributions of the Office of Research have played a significant role in Connecticut's effort to establish and advance the State's workforce investment system.

Delivery of Workforce Information to Customers

We are focusing efforts on developing and enhancing Internet accessible tools and resources targeted to specific user groups for identified purposes, while continuing to acknowledge the need to maintain paper products. With resources limited, advances in the delivery of workforce information electronically is needed to enable the workforce investment system to serve its many customers as efficiently and effectively as possible.

Among the Internet-accessible workforce information resources currently available are a career exploration tool for job seekers and students, an education and training search tool for individuals and businesses, and a data supply site for planners, policy-makers and other data users. In conceptual stages are information resources focused on the needs of education and training providers and businesses.

We work directly with the State and local Boards to meet their system planning and management needs, as described earlier. We also supply many types of hard copy products to the One-Stop Centers for use in serving their customers and continue to work directly with front-line workforce development service professionals to meet the needs of the broadest range of business and individual customers of the State's workforce development system. The information and service needs of the system are broad and varied and need to be addressed in a multifaceted way. To do so, in addition Internet information delivery systems and paper products, we provide training to facilitate the understanding and use of workforce information, and implement numerous customer outreach initiatives through job fairs, conferences, and targeted (direct mail/email) and broadcast (media) communications.

To meet all of the information needs of the workforce system as effectively as possible, the Office of Research maintains ongoing collaborative relationships with the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development, the State Department of Education, the Connecticut Department of Higher Education and the University of Connecticut. The Office of Research houses the Connecticut Career Resource Network, and through it maintains regular contacts with, and provides significant support to the products and services

delivered to, the local education community. Finally, in addition to the State and local Boards, we have established working relationships with the Wagner-Peyser, TANF and WIA program administrators, the State University System, the Community College System, the Connecticut Economic Resource Center, and other partners in and contributors to the State's workforce investment system.

b) Products and Services

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

Since the mid 1990s, America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS) has become a dynamic system that produces quality, standardized labor market information and tools in a wide variety of media and formats to job seekers, employers, and the workforce development community. It provides the critical infrastructure to support the workforce investment system nationwide with the primary goal of serving the customers of the local one-stop service delivery system. A key piece of that infrastructure is the ALMIS Database.

We are currently populating version 1.1 of the ALMIS Database, but we are beginning to explore alternative applications that are newly available and use a more current version of the database. These include systems offered by the Workforce Informer Consortium, Geographic Solutions, Beyond 20/20, and those that would take advantage of the advances made by the ADAM project.

We continue to participate in national research and development workgroups such as the ALMIS Database Consortium, addressing the data needs of our customers. We remain involved in the development of the database structure through this effort. The Consortium is also responsible for training and support to the states in the implementation, population and updating of State-specific data in the ALMIS Database.

During PY2002, Connecticut licensed occupation information will be updated and supplied for inclusion on the ACINet Web site with the addition of O*Net SOC codes to the file. ALMIS Database training will be attended if considered valuable to build experience among staff.

2. Long-Term Projections: *Produce and disseminate long-term industry and occupational employment projections.*

The Office of Research will continue development of State-level, long-term industry and occupational employment projections for 2000 to 2010. Projections for the State's five sub-state forecast regions are also planned to be produced. We note that these efforts are highly dependent on our ability to successfully run the new projections system. We will also begin the development and testing of the NAICS-based historical industry employment series for use in future projections. When completed, the new projections data will be published in

various ways in print format and on our Web site, and will be submitted for further public dissemination following procedures established by the Projections Managing Partnership.

3. **Short-Term Forecasts:** *Produce and disseminate short-term industry and occupational employment forecasts.*

The Office of Research plans to produce State-level, short-term industry forecasts twice in PY 2002, once in October 2001 and again in April 2002. The industry forecasts will be published in print format and electronically through our Web site, and will be submitted for further public dissemination following procedures established by the Projections Managing Partnership. We will also begin the development and testing of the NAICS-based historical industry employment series for use in future forecasts.

Short-term occupational forecasts will be addressed as time and projections system issues permit.

4. **Occupational Analysis Products:** *Develop occupational analysis products.*

The Workforce Investment Act emphasizes the importance of high quality, accessible, and relevant information about the labor market for making sound decisions. The provision of labor market information is one of the core services required by the Workforce Investment Act. Our Office is addressing this requirement by providing career and labor market information materials in print, and through the World Wide Web. We will use a variety of resources, including our involvement in national development efforts, to understand and make best use of new and existing automation technologies for collecting, analyzing, and distributing LMI.

The Office of Research has developed two award-winning Internet applications, the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* (www.ctjobandcareer.org), and the *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* (www.cttraining.info), which have become key resources for the State's workforce investment system. The success of these products can be attributed to our extensive work with the State Departments of Education and Higher Education, workforce investment boards, *CT Works* partners, and others, resulting in Web applications designed to best serve users.

The Office of Research will continue to enhance its Web applications to include up-to-date data and new features. Working with the aforementioned partners, we are planning to enhance the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* to include an improved mapping system to integrate multiple search criteria, expanded career videos and licensing information, jobs from *Connecticut's Job Bank*, and the implementation of industrial and occupational classification updates (NAICS and O*NET SOC). We intend to upgrade the *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* to include more comprehensive program and provider information, such as cost details, program prerequisites, and student completion rates.

In addition to the *Connecticut Job and Career ConneCTion* and *Education and Training ConneCTion*, the Office of Research is considering the development of several new customer-focused Internet resources targeted to data users, employers, and education and training providers.

Workforce information will continue to be provided to customers in print format as well. Among them is the popular *Career Paths* publication, of which 125,000 copies are printed and distributed annually throughout the State. Developed through our association with the Connecticut Career Resource Network, the *Career Paths* is targeted primarily for secondary school students and is delivered directly to those schools. However, it also is widely distributed to the local *CT Works* centers, community-technical colleges, correctional facilities, and others. Through funding from the Agency's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, we plan to produce an additional 25,000 copies targeted for the State's community and non-profit training providers.

Another product, *Soaring to New Heights*, will be updated with the latest outlook on occupations in demand. This publication highlights the top occupations available, organized according to the education and training that is required. A three-page leaflet, it is designed to be an eye-catching and informative glimpse at jobs for persons at whatever their level of experience or educational preparation, and is a popular handout at One-Stop Centers and job fairs. It will also be available on our Web site.

We will revise our *Writing Your Résumé for Success* and *Your Job Search Guide* publications. Among the changes, we plan to add new information on posting résumés, accessing job search tools, and strategies for aiding the job search process. Both publications will be available electronically on the Office of Research Web site and in print format.

5. **Employer Name and Address List:** *Provide an employer name and address list that can be accessed by the public.*

Most people agree that the process of finding a new job or career can be a long and often discouraging one. Through interactions with the *CT Works* partners and our customers, we recognized the need for a single system that would include occupational information, education and training opportunities, job search listings, and employer contact information specific to Connecticut.

The *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion (JCC)* uses the *infoUSA* database – an extensive listing of over 140,000 employers in Connecticut. This feature displays contact information for Connecticut companies that are likely to hire persons in the occupations in which the job seeker is interested. Job seekers can either search by an occupational keyword, occupation groups, or company name. The *JCC* references the same database to allow users to find health care and housing information.

With the current contract with *infoUSA* ending, the Office of Research, through the ALMIS Database Consortium, will play a lead role in the review of prospective employer data

providers, and the establishment of a new contract for a publicly releasable list of employer names and addresses. The objective is to select the data provider that offers the most comprehensive, best quality business information available for use in workforce investment activities.

6. **Information and Support to Workforce Investment Boards:** *Provide information and support to State and local Workforce Investment Boards and produce other State information products and services.*

State and local Workforce Investment Boards are important customers of the workforce information system. They need information for strategic planning and program development, and for evaluation of their service efforts. Feedback from the local Boards indicates the need for timely labor market information in the most useful format possible.

To address this need, the Office of Research will continue to meet with the Workforce Investment Board planners on an annual basis to discuss their LMI needs. The Office's *Information for Workforce Investment Planning (IWIP)* publication, which is used by local Board planners for developing their local plans, is a result of this relationship. The *IWIP* will be updated and redesigned to include bar charts and additional data tables. This new format addresses the Board planners' recommendations, and will result in a more streamlined publication.

With increased demands upon our limited resources as a result of the successes we have had in meeting workforce information needs, we have given priority to developing state-of-the-art Internet applications. As time allows, we plan to create a Web-based application that includes economic profiles for each of the State's five Workforce Investment Areas. The proposed *WIA Region-at-a-Glance* will contain up-to-date local industry and workforce information and serve to keep the local Boards informed of current conditions in their local regions.

Our Office will continue to play an important role in the transition of the *Workforce Investment Act Eligible Training Provider List (WIA-ETPL)* registry and certification system to the new *CT Works Business System (CTWBS)*. Further efforts are planned to incorporate the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* and *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* applications into the *CTWBS*.

The Office of Research has collaborated with federal, state and local entities on a wide variety of efforts. It has long-standing relationships with the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and the University of Connecticut Economics Department to develop and disseminate economic information. With these partners, we will continue to produce our widely disseminated monthly publication, *The Connecticut Economic Digest*.

The Office of Research will continue its involvement in public events such as conferences and job fairs. Through partnerships with local chambers of commerce, business

organizations, educational institutions, and the media, the Department has become the leading provider of job fairs in Connecticut. In PY 2002, we anticipate scheduling 10 job fairs throughout Connecticut bringing more than 500 companies and 15,000 job seekers together.

7. **Workforce Information Delivery Systems:** *Improve and deploy state workforce information delivery systems.*

The Office of Research remains committed to providing universal access to important labor market information. We will assist the State's workforce investment system to streamline services by providing access to labor market information electronically and in print format through One-Stop Centers.

A goal of the Office of Research is to develop electronic information resources that integrate with the *CT Works* system and bring workforce services closer to the customer. The *Job and Career ConneCTion* and the *Education and Training ConneCTion* are our premier electronic information resources. They have gained widespread acceptance within the State's workforce investment system and are planned to be seamlessly integrated with the new *CTWorks* customer contact management system currently under development.

The Office of Research will continue to explore ways to enhance its Labor Market Information Web site to deliver information in an expedient and efficient manner to our business and job seeker customers. All of our most requested publications, such as the *Connecticut Economic Digest*, *Connecticut Career Paths*, and *Information for Workforce Investment Planning*, will continue to be added to the site.

The Office of Research is considering the development of several new customer-focused Internet resources. One such product is intended to provide businesses, researchers, planners, policymakers, and other data users with a single source for local economic and workforce data. Another would be a resource for Connecticut businesses, through which employers would be able to identify and compare themselves with the characteristics of other employers in their industry and use this information in making relevant business decisions. Still another would be a planning resource for education and training providers, which would allow education-planning professionals to quickly and easily view workforce needs for occupational skills in a variety of ways and compare this demand to the number of programs and graduates available to meet those needs. It is uncertain which of these will be pursued, but significant value to State workforce development efforts would clearly be provided by each.

8. **Workforce Information Training:** *Implement workforce information training initiatives for LMI professionals and for LMI users.*

Local capacity building has been identified as a critical element for the successful implementation of Connecticut's overall workforce investment vision and the rollout of the new system under the Workforce Investment Act. As part of the State's WIA capacity

building effort, we will work with the Office for Workforce Competitiveness to increase the LMI knowledge of the workforce investment system's front-line staff serving both individual and employer customers of the One-Stop system. With recent staff reductions, this effort will be essential to developing an understanding of LMI concepts and terminology, and to foster the ability to use LMI comfortably. Through this training, participants will be better able to recognize the various LMI publications, the content of each, and their availability as information resources. Hands-on instruction in use of the Internet applications will be presented as well.

We will give Office of Research staff the opportunity to attend the training sessions made available by the LMI Institute. Where applicable, we will continue to incorporate the materials presented in the training into our ongoing capacity building efforts directed to field staff. These sessions have been valuable training and informational mechanisms for providing LMI professional staff with better understanding of the role of labor market information in the workforce investment system.

As time permits, our Office will participate in outreach activities such as seminars, workshops, and similar efforts. This also includes the support of Agency efforts to provide LMI training to specific groups outside of One-Stop Center operations when requested.

**Summary of Products and Services
Significant Milestones, Estimated Costs and Measurable Outcomes**

<u>Product/Service</u>	<u>Milestone</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Measurable Outcome/Demand</u>
ALMIS Database		\$16,000	
• Populate Database	Throughout year		Web site user sessions
Long-Term Projections		\$90,000	
• State & sub-state industry	1/02		Publication requests via mailing list, call-ins, and Web site downloads
• State occupation	1/03		
• Sub-state occupation	6/03		
Short-Term Forecasts			
• State & sub-state industry	10/02 and 4/03		
• State occupation	6/03		
Occupational Analysis Products		\$88,227	
• Web-based products (see Information Delivery Systems)			Publication requests via mailing lists, call-ins, and Web site downloads
• Career Paths	3/03		
• Writing Your Resume	4/03		
• Your Job Search Guide	5/03		
• Forecast 2010	1/03		
• Soaring to New Heights	6/03		
Employer Name & Address List			
Incorporated into Web application (see Information Delivery Systems)			
Semi-annual updates	11/02 and 5/03		
Products for Boards & Others		\$105,000	
• Information for Workforce Investment Planning	9/02		Feedback at annual meeting
• Job Fairs/Conferences	Throughout year		Exit surveys
• CT Learns & Works Conference	4/03		Exit surveys
• WIA Region-at-a-Glance	6/03		Publication requests via mailing lists, call-ins, and Web site downloads
• CT Economic Digest	Monthly		
Information Delivery Systems		\$212,000	
• Job & Career ConneCTion	Ongoing		Web site user sessions
• Educ. & Training ConneCTion	Ongoing		Web site comments
• LMI Web Site	Ongoing		JCC advisory committee feedback
• Connecticut DataSource	As time allows		
• Business Resource	As time allows		
• Educ. & Training Planning	As time allows		
Workforce Information Training		\$33,000	
• LMI User Training			Participant surveys
• LMI Institute Training	As available		
• LMI Forum	10/02		

c) **Customer Satisfaction Assessment**

The Office of Research conducts numerous workshops, seminars, and other presentations to a variety of groups each year. Collaborative efforts are also initiated with other State agencies, education, business, and others. The voiced and written response, as well as the continued high participation rate by both employers and job seekers, has indicated the high value these have achieved. Customer feedback on all the Office's products and services is regularly gathered and used as important input to the further development of similar efforts that meet user needs.

The Office of Research will continue to solicit and respond to feedback from customers to improve and enhance the delivery and content of products and services to make them meaningful and practical for users. Each of our Web sites contain feedback links that make it easy for users to submit questions, comments and suggestions. Each year we solicit comments from customers on our mailing lists regarding the products they are receiving. This feedback is used to identify subscriber demand and to generate ideas for improvements to the publications. We also meet with local workforce board planners annually to review their needs for planning information and how the content and design of *Information for Workforce Investment Planning* publication can be changed to better meet their needs.

The impact of a Web product is determined not only by the usefulness and applicability of the content, but by its layout and design. From the initial stage of development, the Office of Research gathers potential user groups to review elements of the site's design and content. This enables our Office to produce Web applications such as the *Connecticut Job & Career ConneCTion* and the *Connecticut Education & Training ConneCTion* that can be used by a variety of customers with varying degrees of computer literacy.

We regularly review Web site user statistics for each site. From this information, we can identify user tendencies in order to optimize the performance of the particular site. We give particular attention to the number and length of user sessions, types of users and popular Web site segments. This information is very useful in demonstrating the level of service provided to various types of customers, especially to job seekers, business and others in the workforce investment system.

The success of the career fairs can be attributed to their commitment to customer satisfaction. Employers and job seekers complete exit surveys that capture such data as their overall rating of the job fair, areas for improvement, and recommendations. Recent feedback contributed to the enhancement of the career fairs Web site. From this site, employers can register on-line and job seekers can view lists of participating employers and the occupations for which they are hiring.