

# Massachusetts PY 2005 Workforce Information Grant Plan

## A. Statewide Workforce Information System Overview

Massachusetts' Workforce Development system is administered by the Department of Workforce Development (DWD). The Workforce Information products and services funded through this grant are provided by the Division of Unemployment Assistance (DUA) and the Division of Career Services (DCS) under the administration of DWD.

- **The process used to ensure that the 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 products and services in this grant were coordinated with the Department of Workforce Development as well as the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Workforce Investment Board (MWIB), to ensure that our workforce information systems are consistent with the Commonwealth's workforce policies and customers' needs. The Executive Director of the MWIB or his designee will be provided with updates on the status of each of the deliverables and provided the opportunity to offer suggestions and recommendations during the year. Additionally, the MWIB Executive Director will participate as a member of the Workforce Information LMI Advisory Group, comprising representatives from the local workforce boards, career centers, and state and local workforce development partner agencies and organizations.

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

Our design and use of workforce information systems has always been guided by how they do or will support the state's Two-Year Strategic Plan. The core products and services are designed to meet previously identified customer needs and offer the flexibility for adjustments with changes to the Commonwealth's strategic plan.

- **How the grant activities are consistent with the strategic vision of the Governor and the MWIB.**

Information produced through this grant's funding provides the Governor and other state and local policy makers with labor market information profiles, expected job vacancies and likely demand occupations. In addition, we have recently reorganized our agency to better perform our stated functions, and to align these functions with the Governor's Strategic Plan, and also with the stated vision of the MWIB.

- **The strategy of the SWA and the MWIB for consulting with local workforce investment boards and stakeholders in the workforce investment system to determine customer needs for workforce information.**

The Massachusetts Workforce Board Association represents each of the sixteen Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). Regular meetings have been held with representatives of this group to develop state and area LMI and workforce profiles. We will continue to meet with them to coordinate our efforts and ensure that we address their needs and concerns. In addition, the Workforce Information LMI Advisory Group of stakeholders will meet two to three times during the year to discuss customer needs and align products and services to identified needs.

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

Our goal is to provide timely and accurate information to our various customers in the forms that best suit their varied needs, even if this entails redundancy or overlap in our provision of data and information products.

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

Specific LMI and data, and occupationally-specific LMI, are available online to Career Center staff working directly with customers and to the general public through the agency's websites. Employers, policy makers, workforce development partners, economic developers and clients, at home or in the Career Center resource rooms, may also obtain any needed LMI information online from the agencies websites which include immediate 24/7 access from time of release to all Labor Market (LMI) and Workforce Information (WI), access to MASSCIS, a career information delivery system, or from Mass Stats, a geography based LMI delivery system. We also provide specific training to Career Center staff on how best to use LMI to serve their customers. Every Career Counselor will receive training on how to use MASSCIS to obtain the LMI needed to serve their customers. Additionally, MASSCIS and/or LMI training will be provided to Career Center staff working with veterans, the ex-offender population, and the disabled and welfare communities.

- **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.**

For those accessing the web, an on-line customer service tool has been added to gather feedback and suggestions from customers accessing LMI and WI. Enhancements in presentation and content will be made based on information provided through this on-line customer satisfaction tool. We will use focus groups of customers to discuss specific information products, e.g. MASSCIS. Customer satisfaction surveys are conducted following each LMI and MASSCIS training session provided to Career Center and workforce partner agency staff. Our Workforce Information LMI Advisory Group, comprised of stakeholders, will provide us with useful feedback.

- **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 PY 2005 including how the plan addresses inadequacies or gaps identified by users.**

New web applications are being developed and added this year based on feedback from customers who use the survey tool and from those who e-mail or phone in seeking information or customized data products. The expanded products include additional summary information from the Quarterly Employment and Wage, Local Unemployment Statistics and Mass Layoff Statistics programs.

Customer satisfaction was evaluated with two focus groups, where the participants were volunteers who had attended a Labor Market Information (LMI) workshop. This format allowed for a free exchange of ideas regarding the workshops and ways to add to, improve or change the format and/or the handouts presented in the workshop. In response to participants' suggestions the following plans have been implemented:

Finally, in response to the suggestion for a way to increase LMI workshop awareness, research continues on a way to do a broadcast e-mail to alert all Managers, Job Specialists or Career Counselors of upcoming workshops, and to encourage participation. This broadcast would be in addition to the notice sent by the Training Department. Additionally, we promote training activities on our massworkforce.org web site that is targeted to workforce development professionals working throughout Massachusetts.

- **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.**

Carryover funds from PY 2005 will be utilized to fund staff costs for the Job Vacancy surveys and MASSCIS, and for non-personal services (NPS).

## **B. Core Products and Services**

### **State Workforce Agency and Labor Market Information Deliverables:**

Arrayed below are the plans and the direct cost estimates for the core products and services that will be delivered during PY 2005. These cost estimates exclude the AS&T charges which come off the top of the grant. The total costs including the estimated AS&T costs are noted at the end of this section.

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

All core LMI and required ALMIS Database tables will be populated for immediate public use at time of release. Files are updated for all monthly and quarterly releases for core programs providing employment, wages, and labor force and unemployment information. We will continue to move to the most recent version of the ALMIS Database after the receipt of the new version and updates to applications. All formats and core tables are developed in accordance with the ALMIS Resource Center (ARC) guidelines. The ALMIS Database is the cornerstone for our information delivery systems and we are working with other States and BLS program staffs to ensure all new products utilize a common database format. Additional information used in the LMI web applications will be populated and maintained in common database formats. New or enhanced applications and tools will be developed using these core tables. Requests for customized information and/or formats will be handled timely and where possible provided in customer requested formats.

During PY 2005 we will explore options for enhancing the agency's web site for compatibility to XML formats, allowing us the opportunity to use new products currently being developed by the Workforce Information Council and ETA for sharing LMI and WI across state boundaries.

Additional tools and/or database formats will be developed based on customer needs that are consistent with the Massachusetts WIA/Wagner-Peyser two-year strategic plan and the needs of policy makers and economic developers. Customer requests come from the web customer satisfaction tool, e-mails and phone calls and from the Division of Career Services who are responsible for coordinating and providing information and services to workforce and Career Center customers daily.

Principal customers include all workforce partners, staff and their customers, policy makers, economists, economic developers, researchers and the general public who have 24/7 access to LMI and WI applications, customer satisfaction surveys and e-mail support.

Key outcomes include immediate on-line access to information at time of release, access to QCEW and LAUS data at the Regional Competitive Council's (RCC) geographies to assist in expanding economic development, access to QCEW annual 2004 information in both old and new metro geographic areas, consistent information on all applications at time of release, enhanced applications and web tools based on customer demand and new ALMIS database formats for the expanded QCEW and MLS files.

Estimated costs: PY 2005 Funds -- \$84,964 for staff PS/PB  
PY 2004 Funds -- \$3,569 for software upgrades.

## **2. Develop Long-Term and Short-Term Projections.**

The DCS will develop and publish the 2004-2014 statewide long-term industry and occupational projections by March 2006 using the methodology, software tools and guidelines developed by the Projections consortium and the Projections Managing Partnership. The DCS will also develop and publish 2005-2007 statewide short-term projections by June 2006.

Massachusetts' estimates of job growth and replacement needs are widely used by educators, career counselors, policy makers, government agencies and businesses. As the state's workforce ages and health shortages develop, the projections information will become even more widely used.

Estimated Costs: PY 2005 Funds - \$85,791 for staff PS/PB  
PY 2004 Funds - \$13,750 for direct NPS (software, printers, travel)

## **State Workforce Investment Board (MWIB)/State Workforce Agency (SWA) Deliverables**

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

Results of the spring 2005 job vacancy survey will be published in fall 2005. Two job vacancies surveys will be conducted during PY 2005 for the state and the 7 regions. The first will be conducted in fall 2005 to collect 4<sup>th</sup> quarter hiring information, with results and analysis published in spring 2006. The second survey will be conducted in spring 2006 to collect 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter vacancies, with results and analysis published in fall 2006.

With data available from multiple survey rounds, DCS will begin analyzing the variance in job vacancies by area, industry, and size class and use this information to draw better samples and obtain better job vacancy estimates. An evaluation of industry/area response rates will be conducted and we will weigh the costs of collecting data from industries that find it difficult to respond to the survey.

Estimated Costs: PY 2005 Funds - \$100,000 -- \$10,000 for postage and \$90,000 for contracted help.  
PY 2004 Funds - \$203,805 for staff PS/PB.

During the year, DWD will disseminate customer-focused occupational and career information. Developed in cooperation with customers and other stakeholders, the career information will again be O\*NET based. It will include occupational skill requirements, user-friendly descriptions, wages, and current and forecast employment by occupation. The latest Occupational



comparisons for most recent monthly and quarterly information; installing the latest version of MassStats, the MA version of North Carolina's web SARAS; expanding linkages to LMI/WI tools directly from state web pages; exploring upgrades to the agency's web pages that can support state-of-the-art technology to expand customer access to, and our ability to respond to, workforce partner and MWIB needs and requests. The on-line customer satisfaction survey tool will be enhanced to collect more product requests and to allow for follow-up to specific customer requests. We will explore implanting applications developed by WIC, ETA and other states that facilitate customer access from other states.

Milestones include: quarterly assessments of workforce customer request and suggestions provided by DCS and DUA and establishing implementation plans; establishing plans for implementation of interactive web applications, utilizing XML formats and tools for customers to store and receive updates on the specific LMI/WI they access regularly; additional at-a-glance tools for the accessing LAUS, QCEW, CES and OES information, based on customer requests; publication of annual employment and wages for the private non-profit sector; and implementation of an enhanced on-line customer satisfaction tool. Key customers are the workforce partners, MWIB and LWIBs, economic developers, researchers and the public.

Estimated costs: PY 2005 Funds - \$47,891 for staff PS/PB.

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

LMI-101, a training course designed for counselors and One-Stop Career Center staff will be enhanced and delivered on a regular schedule during the year. The enhancement will include suggestions and recommendations from evaluations and previous focus group panels. The courses will be offered to Career Center and Workforce Area counselors, business specialists, and staff in December 2005 and March 2006. Four introductory training sessions on the utilization of labor market information for program planning, job development, placement and career counseling will be provided. Additionally, DCS will develop and deliver an LMI program for local workforce boards, based on input from the local boards. Also, DCS will provide special presentations and customized workshops based on customer demand with input from local workforce boards and career centers to ensure that they are given priority for limited staff resources. Principal customers include Workforce Area staff, Career Center staff, and workforce development service providers.

Estimated costs: PY 2005 Funds - \$84,112 for staff PS/PB,  
PY 2004 Funds - \$1,000 for travel.

### **C. Consultation and Customer Satisfaction Assessment**

Responsibility for consultation with customers and customer satisfaction assessment is shared by both the Statewide Workforce Information System along with the staff involved in delivering workforce information products and services to Massachusetts' workforce development partners, including Career Centers and LWIBs. This responsibility entails day-to-day contact with Career Centers, LWIBS and their staff and information requests; surveying the partners to determine their needs for additional services and products; and providing quarterly information on customers needs. Customer satisfaction surveys are done following each LMI and MASSCIS training session, and the surveys are used to enhance the courses

and to develop new sessions. Additionally, we will conduct two focus groups with customers during the PY to assess the desirability of maintaining or enhancing our electronic information tools. The LMI web site pages include a customer satisfaction tool that allows all users to provide feedback on the information and the tools, and to request customized information. This information is used to assess the need for additional tools or changes to the site.

Estimated costs: PY 2005 Funds -- \$12,275 for staff PS/PB.

**Total Funding:** The estimated total costs including AS&T for PY2004 and PY2005 funds that will be used to supplement the production and delivery of the core products and services are arrayed below.

<b>PY 2005</b>	<b>\$508,779 PS/PB; \$185,000 Direct NPS; \$37,921 Other NPS; \$49,951 AS&amp;T Total = \$781,651</b>
<b>PY 2004</b>	<b>\$436,935 PS/PB; \$24,217 Direct NPS; \$39,518 AS&amp;T Total = \$500,670</b>