

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA  
PROGRESS REPORT FOR WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT  
July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006**

**In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) #33-04, Job Service North Dakota submits the following Progress Report on Workforce Information activities for the period July 1, 2005 to June 30, 2006. This report is organized into three sections as directed by the TEGL. Section A describes the accomplishments for each core product or service. Section B presents a summary of the Customer Satisfaction Assessment. Section C contains recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Suite of Core Products.**

**A. CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES**

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

The ALMIS Database is the foundation of the workforce information applications for North Dakota's electronic delivery system. It provides an expansive data storage system from which other data delivery systems may retrieve pertinent workforce information. As such, it is important that this database contains the most current and accurate data possible. The LMI Center updated the ALMIS core tables with new data as it became available, populated new tables, and tested for data integrity. North Dakota is currently using the ALMIS version 2.3.

The LMI Center loaded the most recent version of the employer database from InfoUSA as soon as the CD was available. The database provides users with a current listing of employer data that can be accessed by firm name, city, county, industry, or firm size. The use of the InfoUSA database allows us to provide employer-specific information to our customers without release of confidential employer data from our UI Tax or QCEW files.

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

The LMI Center has updated the NAICS history files in both the short-term and long-term industry employment projections programs. As a small state, North Dakota's CES program does not provide adequate industrial and geographic detail to be utilized as the basis of the industry time series. Instead, North Dakota opted to use the QCEW which provides much more detailed data. However, QCEW data was not available until May 2006. As a result, work on the statewide long-term and short-term industry projections were completed in June 2006. Statewide long-term occupational projections were then completed in August 2006. The long-term industry and occupational projections publication was developed and was published in September 2006. The short-term occupational employment projections are being completed and the results will be posted on our website by November 2006.

North Dakota has begun the preparatory work for substate industry and occupational projections. A short-term and long-term NAICS industry employment time series is currently being developed for the three MSA's and the four OES regions in North Dakota. Because occupational staffing patterns were not available for the eight planning regions, a decision was made to switch from the eight governor's planning regions to the MSA's and OES regions as the areas for substate projections. By using these substate areas, we will be able to utilize the existing OES staffing patterns in the projections process. Furthermore, in the publication phase, we will be able to link substate occupational wage data from the OES program with our occupational projections data to produce a much more complete occupational product for these areas.

However, because of North Dakota's small and largely rural labor force, it is still uncertain if occupational projections would be reliable at the substate level. Further testing of substate long-term industry and occupational projections will continue through next winter. Similarly, the substate short-term occupational projections will be tested to see if they are of any value.

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

The LMI Center continues to work closely with the North Dakota Career Resource Network (NDCRN) to develop and disseminate pertinent occupational and career information products. The LMI Center again provided data to the CRN for the *Career Outlook*, an annual tabloid provided to high school students, their parents, career guidance counselors, One-Stop resource rooms, etc. In addition, Marcia Slag from LMI has been involved with NDCRN in assisting with the layout and content of the *Career Outlook*.

The LMI Center and NDCRN have worked with the Georgia CRN to adapt their newly developed OIS product to North Dakota. In addition to the occupational projections and wage information available on the previous OIS system, this new Georgia system will allow searches of training resources by training programs or by training providers and a variety of other occupational information.

In the previous program year, the LMI Center developed a new product designed for students. The *Occupational Trading Cards* utilized information from our 2012 occupational projections and our OES wage information in a colorful baseball card type format. Each of the nine trading cards contains information on wages, training requirements, number of annual openings, and employment for specific occupations within that occupational family. The cards have been extremely popular with schools, career fairs, career counselors, and in our One-Stop resource rooms. This program year the LMI Center updated the occupational wage and projections data on these cards and gave them a brighter look. They were so popular that our supply from the initial printing in the summer of 2005 was quickly gone. LMI did two subsequent reprints of these cards. However, due to the overwhelming demand, these new supplies were also exhausted by the spring of 2006.

Work on the new occupational group brochures began late in this program year. These new brochures, designed to complement the Occupational Trading Cards, were developed to provide older students and adult job seekers with pertinent occupational information such as the new 2014 projections data, wage data, training requirements, etc., in an adult format. The layout and design work for these Occupational Profile Brochures has been completed with printing scheduled for the fall of 2006.

In order to provide the full occupational and industrial detail of the 2014 employment projections, the LMI Center also published the *North Dakota Employment Projections 2014* in early fall 2006.

The annual *North Dakota Employment and Wages* was published in August of 2005. This publication displays covered employment and wage data at various industrial and geographic breakouts in an updated format.

One of our most popular publications, *Wages for North Dakota Jobs*, came out in March 2006. This publication provides detailed occupational wage and employment information for the state of North Dakota, the three MSA's, and four substate regions. Based on customer feedback, the format of the publication was changed to list the wage information from all the areas (statewide, MSA's, and substate regions) together for each occupation.

Conversations with our local One-Stop offices, economic developers, and business customers indicated a need for occupational wage and fringe benefit information at a local and industry level. In response to this need, the LMI Center developed *Compensation Guides* specifically targeted to individual cities and industries. These guides provide data from our fringe benefit 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. Since these *Compensation Guides* debuted in April of 2004, they have become extremely popular. The LMI Center updated these Compensation Guides with new occupational wage and fringe benefits information in April 2006.

The LMI Center conducts Fringe Benefit Surveys in 13 North Dakota cities and areas on a two-year rotating basis. During this program year, surveys were completed in Beulah-Hazen, Bismarck-Mandan, Dickinson, Devils Lake, Grafton, Grand Forks, and Rolette County. The results of these surveys were compiled and published in PDF format on our website. This year's survey included several new questions dealing with health care coverage, due to the LMI Center's partnership with University of North Dakota's Center for Rural Health on this year's Fringe Benefits Survey.

In addition, the LMI Center developed the *2005 North Dakota Benefits Guide* in June 2005. This glossy brochure contains a compilation of fringe benefits information from the 13 cities and areas. The format for this new publication allows easy comparisons of

fringe benefits information from city to city, industry to industry, or by size of firm. This publication received an honorable mention at the NASWA LMI Awards Contest last year. The publication has been in high demand and was also reprinted in this program year.

The LMI Center also conducted a special research study--Religious Employment Survey in North Dakota. The survey shows the employment by occupation, changes in employment by area and by denomination, and a variety of related information for religious organizations in North Dakota. The web-based publication was posted to our website in August 2005.

All of the publications listed above have been loaded on our LMI website as PDF's.

#### **4. Provide information and support to state and local Workforce Investment Board (WIBs) and provide other special demand information products and services:**

The LMI Center continues to work closely with the Workforce Development Council (WDC). (The WDC is North Dakota's only Workforce Investment Board.) Designated staff have attended all the WDC meetings and LMI staff members have made several presentations to the WDC and its subcommittees during the past program year. We have provided technical expertise to the WDC in the development and design of new surveys to provide valuable information on labor availability and occupational skills needs in the workforce.

The LMI Center partnered with the WDC and the Department of Commerce to conduct Labor Availability Studies in 31 North Dakota communities/areas. This is the third round of these very useful and highly requested surveys. The Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota completed the telephone survey in the spring of 2006. The LMI Center then compiled the results and provided the analysis and narrative reports to the 31 communities in summer 2006.

The LMI Center held monthly economic briefing meetings to discuss monthly employment and unemployment data releases, other new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of related topics. Representatives from the Department of Commerce, Tax Department, Workforce Development Council, Office of Management and Budget, Governor's Staff, Dislocated Worker Unit, and our Job Service Executive Director are invited to attend.

The MOU between the Census Bureau and Job Service North Dakota has been signed, and the Census Bureau has obtained additional funding to allow North Dakota to become a member of the LED partnership. Job Service North Dakota had assembled the history files of wage records and QCEW data and submitted them to the Census Bureau. In return the Census Bureau has provided us with Quarterly Workforce Indicators for our review early this spring. The LMI Center provided a link on our data warehouse to the LED data. The LMI Center also began the process training key users, such as the Governor and his staff, the Department of Commerce staff, Workforce Development Council staff, Job Service senior management and customer service office staff, and local

economic developers. The LMI continues to send the Census Bureau the wage record and QCEW files on a quarterly basis.

In the fall of 2003, the LMI Center developed a new product entitled *Local Area Profiles* in support of local economic development efforts and our local One-Stop offices in 13 of our largest cities. The *Local Area Profiles* utilize data from the QCEW program and other sources to provide data on industry employment and wages, number of firms, firm size, census information, and other related information for the current year and the previous year. The response we received from local economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, our business services representatives in our One-Stop offices, and other local civic and business group was extremely positive. While these profiles have been beneficial to all cities in promoting their communities, those cities that are not MSA's, and as a result do not have any other source of employment information, found it especially valuable. Printing of the 2005 edition of the *Local Area Profiles*, which contains updated QCEW information, census information, new tax data, and the new top fifteen employers listing for each city, was completed in September 2005. The statewide *Local Area Profile* was also updated and printed. The LMI Center began assembling information for the 2006 edition of the *Local Area Profiles* this summer.

The 2006 Largest Employer Listing was updated on our website in late May 2006. This annual listing provides a ranking of the top 100 employers in North Dakota based on total employment. In addition, we updated the listing of largest employers for each of the 14 largest cities in North Dakota.

Based on requests from several of our Customer Service Offices, the LMI Center assisted several offices in LMI @ Work type community workforce summaries. Because of differing needs, the Customer Service Offices requested different types and levels of detail in their summary. In some cases, the LMI Center provided assistance in assembling the information and while in others the LMI Center actually designed, compiled, and printed the area summary for the communities.

Using the "IMPLAN" software, the LMI Center has done several impact analysis studies. These studies have varied from the impact of plant closings and major layoffs to the potential impact of new manufacturing plants locating in a community. The LMI Center recently purchased an updated version of IMPLAN and sent an analyst to IMPLAN training.

In response to requests from local economic developers and Native American tribal leaders, the LMI Center completed work on *Demographic Profiles* in August of 2004. Based on the most recent census information, the *Demographic Profiles* contain general demographic information, selected social characteristics, selected economic data, and housing characteristics available in PDF format on our website. Profiles were developed for all the North Dakota counties, reservations, MSA's, selected cities, and the state as a whole. Since no new Census information was available, the guides could not be updated this program year.

The LMI Center has begun work on a *Guide to LMI*. The overall design and content of the brochure has been completed, but we are waiting for the final look and design of the new LMI EDS system to be completed, so that screen shots from the new LMI website could be included in this guide.

The LMI Center has been and will continue to be involved with the BRAC issues associated with the realignment of the Grand Forks Air Force Base. Individuals from the LMI Center are a part of the agency's BRAC group, and have been involved in the planning activities for the NEG grant and in working with the Grand Forks Area leaders. LMI staff provided labor market information on the Grand Forks region, helped to evaluate the various consultant proposals for the BRAC Economic Impact Analysis Study, and provided technical assistance to the Grand Fork BRAC group during the survey design and information collection processes. In the coming year, LMI will be heavily involved with the evaluation of the BRAC consultant's finding, and doing secondary research projects for the BRAC group.

The North Dakota Petroleum Council and Workforce Development Council recently partnered to sponsor a special Workforce Skills Needs Study for North Dakota's Petroleum Industry. The LMI Center has been added to this partnership to provide general labor market information, occupational staffing patterns, and technical assistance to the consultant hired to conduct this study.

Several of the products mentioned in core product #3 have also proved to be very useful by our WDC and its partners.

##### **5. Improve and deploy electronic state workforce information delivery systems:**

The LMI Data Warehouse contains all the information on the ALMIS database as well as additional workforce information items produced only by North Dakota. Data items produced regularly in the LMI Center are loaded upon release into the Data Warehouse. In addition, all hard copy publications have been loaded onto the website in PDF's within a week or two of publication.

As mentioned in core product numbers 3 and 4, the LMI Center has developed several new web-based products for our customers and is continuing to explore ways to utilize the web to minimize the costs and increased turnaround time associated with printing and hard copy distribution. As an example, the new *Compensation Guides*, *Demographic Profiles*, and *Affirmative Action* publications are available only on our website. Because of the limited shelf life of some products and the many area/industry combinations of others (i.e., users can pick from over 160 area/industry combinations for the *Compensation Guides*, about 75 areas for the *Demographic Profiles*, and all 53 counties for the *Affirmative Action* publications), the use of PDF's was the most efficient and timely method of delivery.

Due to this expanded need for an efficient and user-friendly electronic delivery system, the LMI Center is in the process of upgrading or replacing the LMI Data Warehouse. A Data Warehouse replacement work team has been studying how to best replace or

upgrade the Data Warehouse and still maintain consistency with our agency's website and Virtual One Stop. This team investigated the possibility of purchasing special LMI Delivery systems from private vendors such as Workforce Informer from Cyber and Virtual LMI from Geographic Solutions, contracting with an independent website designer, or perhaps doing the redesign internally. The work team put on a Joint Applications Development (JAD) Session with representatives from IT, the LMI Center, and several of our customers to obtain feedback on the types of functionality and data sets needed to be incorporated into the new LMI Electronic Delivery System (EDS). Based on this information, an RFP was sent out, with the Virtual LMI product from Geographic Solutions eventually being selected. The LMI Center, and agency's IT department have worked with GSI to discuss system and data requirements, plan for implementation, decide on hosting and maintenance options, and to begin data conversion and loading for the new system.

This major project is now part of the agency-wide Information Technology Plan and is being managed by our agency's IT department. A project manager from our IT department was assigned to this project. As with many IT projects of this size, North Dakota has experienced some delays due to limited IT resources, other priority projects on the agency's IT Plan, and other unforeseen issues. A major delay occurred when our agency's senior management decided to combine the purchase and implementation of the Virtual LMI product with the purchase and implementation of the Case Management Product also from Geographic Solutions, in order to receive a price reduction from Geographic Solutions. As a result, the implementation schedule for the LMI EDS project was pushed back to coincide with the Case Management Project. Accordingly, the scheduled completion date for the LMI EDS project has now been pushed back to early 2007.

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. The delays experienced in this project have caused a pushback in the actual delivery date in the next program year. As a result, the pooled funds for this major expenditure will be carried over into the next program year.

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

North Dakota's work in this area had two primary focuses: LMI staff development and the training of and presentations to specific customer groups.

LMI staff members attended a variety of training to improve their skills and knowledge, to find out about new developments relating to workforce information, to learn about best practices from other states, and to interact with LMI staff from around the country. The LMI Center utilized the LMI Institute for much of this training. Marcia Slag, Craig Koch, and Michael Ziesch attended the LMI Forum in Norfolk, Virginia, in October 2005. One of our newest analysts, Darin Anderson, attended Basic Analyst Training and

Kevin Iverson attended the Applied Analyst Training. Kevin Iverson also participated in LED Quarterly Workforce Indicators (QWI) training sessions. Our ALMIS database specialist, Darin Anderson, attended the ALMIS Database Training.

LMI Staff members also participated in national and tri-regional conference/training that provided them with updates on new program developments and procedures, new program software, and the opportunity to discuss problems and ideas with national and regional BLS staff as well as their peers. Michael Ziesch, Lisa Knapp, David Young, and Sharon Viton attended the national technical training conferences for the QCEW, MLS, CES, and OES programs, respectively. Michael Ziesch attended the national LAUS technical training conference. In addition, David Young attended special training on the CES Benchmarking process and the ACES Software.

Sharon Viton attended a training session on the IMPLAN software, Lisa Knapp attended Prevailing Wage Training, Kevin Iverson attended the LED National Meeting in Washington DC, and Marcia Slag participated in the Geographic Solutions Users Conference in Clearwater, Florida. Duane Broschat attended the NASWA LMI Director's Conference and BLS LMI Director's Conference.

A variety of other training was utilized for capacity building on the LMI team. Raquel Green attended workshops on Designing Brochures, Developing Writing Skills, and using Photoshop Software. Erlys Paul attended a Proofreading and Grammar training seminar. In preparation for the LMI Data Warehouse Replacement Project, Craig Koch and Marcia Slag attended a SEGUE training course, which taught them how to write test scripts for the implementation phase of the project. Also related to this project, Craig Koch completed a Project Management Course.

All of these training activities have added to the knowledge base and technical abilities of the LMI Center staff. This in turn has and will continue to manifest itself in many new and innovative products and services for our customers.

The second focus of this deliverable is the training of our customers. The training of our customers is a very high priority in North Dakota. Members of the LMI staff have provided over 50 presentations or training sessions for various customer groups during the past program year. These ranged from formal in-depth training sessions of two or three days to short presentations to specific customers groups.

The LMI Center partnered with our NDCRN to put on a series of nine ICDM type training sessions throughout the state. This computer lab based training was designed to train career guidance professionals in utilizing LMI in the career decision making process. These training sessions were very popular and plans are to do another round of these next winter.

With the roll out of the LED program, the LMI Center did a series of presentations and training sessions on the LED program. Presentations/trainings were done for the

Governor's Office, Department of Commerce, Job Service North Dakota Senior Management Staff, and each of the Job Service Customer Service Offices.

Our local Customer Service Offices utilized members of the LMI staff to present information on various LMI topics at six different local Employer Workshops. Staff from the LMI Center also provided training to our One-Stop Office's Rapid Response teams in how to use LMI in working with individuals affected by significant layoffs.

Several LMI presentations were made to the Workforce Development Council, as well as to the North Dakota Youth Council, the Governor's staff, North Dakota Commerce Department, North Dakota State Tax Department, and the Job Service Senior Management.

LMI Staff members made presentations to staff from eleven of our One-Stop offices on how to utilize our LMI products in working with businesses and job seekers. Many other local presentations/training sessions were provided to a wide range of customer groups such as Career Fairs at Dickinson and Fort Yates, the Fargo-Moorhead Human Resources Association, the Dickinson Manufacturers Roundtable, the Council of United Way Agencies, the Fargo-West Fargo Public Schools, the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association, Basin Electric Power Cooperative, Bismarck State College, Gateway to Opportunity, Marketplace Outreach Conference, etc. In other cases, the LMI Center provided PowerPoints, speaker's notes, and supporting information for our One-Stop staff members to make presentations to local civic or business associations.

## **B. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION ASSESSMENT:**

North Dakota feels very strongly that customer feedback is extremely important in planning for and developing an efficient and comprehensive workforce information delivery system. North Dakota used a combination of strategies to obtain feedback on customer satisfaction, with existing workforce information and services, as well as suggestions for developing new products and improving existing products. As mentioned in the discussion of our activities for the various core products in Section A, the LMI Center has utilized the feedback we have received from our customers to develop several new products and delivery formats. This customer feedback will continue to be the key element the LMI Center will use in evaluating current LMI products and services and in the planning for future LMI activities.

The LMI Center completed a customer satisfaction survey late in the previous program year. As a result, it was decided not to do another survey this program year, but wait until program year '06 to do another formal customer satisfaction survey. Instead, an emphasis was placed on obtaining customer feedback from informal focus groups, presentation evaluations, and one-to-one conversations with our customers.

### **2. Informal Focus Group and Meetings:**

During the past year, staff members from the LMI Center made an effort to sit down and visit several of our key customers about products and services in a very informal focus group/discussion group-type setting. In addition, we 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. Listed below are notes from some of these discussions.

**General comments:**

- Really like the new look of LMI publications
- Like new colorful layout—doesn't look like a stuffy government agency put it out
- LMI Staff is great to work with, very responsive and professional
- Very few people in our office actually use the Data Warehouse, they just go to the publications page
- New LED information has a lot of potential for economic developers
- Could use information on skills needs
- Need to be mindful that not all areas (i.e. rural, tribal reservations) have access to internet
- New look of the products make us (One-Stop Staff) look professional with our customers
- Demographic Profiles very useful in Turtle Mountain
- Can Compensation Guides be printed for each office?
- Like recent changes in LMI publications
- LMI staff has always been very helpful to me.
- Some publications are too overwhelming –could we get summary sheets
- The new LMI publications ROCK!!
- Can LMI develop a template that we can use to put together customized packages of local labor market information for businesses looking to locate in our area?
- Miss the analysis the LMI used to provide
- Does LMI actually use our comments in designing publications?
- Appreciate the support we got from Michael and Warren, I have them on my speed dial.
- Some data is old by the time we get it.
- Need more localized products
- Great new publications—you are on the right track
- People like to see graphs, charts, bullets, --its easier for them to understand
- Work with local office staff in evaluating new ideas
- Utilize local office staff in tracking down nonrespondents to largest employer listing
- We do not always hear about it when new publications come out.
- Could CSA IV host a focus group of local economic developers and LMI?
- Can LMI provide city documents similar to what is done in Rolla Local Office?
- Thank you for coming out and asking us for feedback
- Would like to see more mapping of data
- Can you add the Air Force Bases to your mailing lists
- It's nice to have something professional looking to give to businesses when we call on them.

**Comments on New/ Proposed LMI Products:**

- Staff had a number of positive comments on the new look of the LMI products, liked the bright colors, and thought they looked appealing to customers.
- Could we get a Career Poster for those occupations requiring a 2 year degree?
- Like the look of the new Area Profiles, much more appealing than the old red, white, and blue ones.
- State Benefits Guide--more analysis on what it means
- New publications don't look like they came from state government agency
- Looking forward to new Occupational Trading Cards—old ones were very popular
- Guide to LMI is great idea
- Love the new format for the Wages for North Dakota Jobs—Having the occupational wages for each area listed under the individual occupation saves a lot of page turning.
- Like the look of new calendar—very professional
- How about a poster on high demand jobs
- Don't need a poster on high wage counties
- Put posters on web so they can be printed out and used as handouts.
- Can we still get an occupational brochure that summarizes all occupations?
- Could we get occupational posters in smaller size?
- Could you print out city specific benefits guides?
- Keep up good work on new design of publications--new colorful look, graphics, etc
- Like this idea of having occupational brochures for resource rooms
- I see us handing out Guide to LMI as we make employer visits
- Can you provide a schedule when these new products will come out?
- New LMI Guide should help to cut down on number of publications we take with us on employer visits
- Like the spiral binding on larger publications like Wage Book and Projections
- Several of our customers are still asking for the old style planner type calendars

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

- Compensation Guide very useful for business customers
- Use Labor Availability Study with my local economic developer
- Wage Survey booklet—really like new format
- Area Profiles, Wage info
- New Benefits guide is so much easier to use and understand.
- Demographic Profiles, Census Info
- Baseball cards are a big hit at Career Fairs
- Compensation guides work well
- Useful in a more generic way
- Wage and Benefits information is most requested
- Area Profiles—being used in Fargo by Chamber, even real estate companies.
- Use Wages book often, as it is easier to use than the Data Warehouse
- Use Projections trifold a lot
- Benefits Survey, Wages, LES
- Schools just love the trading cards
- Area Profiles info useful for economic developers

**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

- What compensation package do I need to offer to attract and retain qualified workers in my industry and in my area?
- 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?
- Need localized information on wages
- 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
- Local information for small towns
- 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
- Occupational Supply/Demand by area (openings vs. applicants)
- More publications for smaller towns and counties
- Wage and Benefit info for their area/industry
- 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

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

- Really need training on LED
- It would be good to have periodic training on new products
- 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

**Website (specifically Data Warehouse):**

- It would be great if you could have career videos on website

- 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
- Staff need to become more familiar with data available
- Can we get an alpha search or keyword search on the new EDS system
- Like idea of being able to generate reports on the web for current and historical data
- Most people only use the publications page on the website.
- 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)
- 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

#### **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

### **3. Feedback From Presentations and Training Sessions:**

We have also received valuable feedback from participants in our training sessions and presentations. We closely review the evaluation forms we receive from training sessions and have often received very timely ideas and suggestions from informal discussions with individuals during or after these sessions.

### **C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OR CHANGES TO THE SUITE OF CORE PRODUCTS:**

The list of core products and services for the Workforce Information Grant has evolved over the past few years. The current suite of core products provides a relatively concise grouping of the most common categories of products produced by most states while allowing individual states the flexibility to tailor products to the most critical needs in their state. Although it is important for several of the products, such as the ALMIS Database and Projections to be consistent across the nation, the many differences from state to state require that individual LMI departments maintain this flexibility to address the workforce information needs unique to their state.

As such, North Dakota does not have many recommendations for changes to the suite of core products. The following are a few observations we have made based on conversations with our various customers.

The need for fringe benefit information is becoming more and more of a critical need for our business customers. Fringe benefit surveys should be able to identify differences in fringe benefit packages offered by the geographic area, industry, and size of businesses. North Dakota currently conducts its own fringe benefits surveys as a part of core product #3, but this is one item that not all states currently produce.

Our customers are constantly requesting more localized products and services. Individual communities are looking for workforce information that they can use to measure the health and growth of their communities and that they can use to promote their areas. We believe that each state needs to develop some series of localized products.

As we have developed new products and services and made existing ones more useful, our customers are becoming very reliant on many of the products we produce under the Workforce Information Grant. Accordingly, it is critical that adequate funding continues to flow to the state LMI departments through the Workforce Information Grant so that these customers will continue to have access the workforce information they need and have come to depend upon us to produce.