

State of California PY 2006 Workforce Information Grant Annual Report

September 30, 2007

Introduction

The Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), has sponsored annual grants to support development of specified "core products" by labor market information (LMI) programs in each state since FFY 1995-96. Core products have typically included infrastructure and product development such as electronic systems, employment projections, occupational research and career materials.

This grant is an important fund source to support the many value-added labor market information activities not sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Among the activities in California sponsored by the Workforce Information Grant are:

- Regional industry cluster data, trends and analysis to support the California Regional Economies Project and other customer needs;
- Support of California's two Workforce Innovations in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) regions
- Visual analysis of data using geographic information systems (GIS) technology;
- Information packaged to respond to the differing needs and capacities of primary customer groups;
- Delivery of easily accessed and interpreted information through the Internet;
- Collection and delivery of fundamental data from which to base analyses of the economy, including agricultural and small-county data collection and analysis not funded by the Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- Identification of customer needs through the LMID's customer input network; and
- Ongoing communications with and support of a wide range of customers: workforce development partners, employers, educators, economic developers, planners, career seekers and more.

We are pleased to share our accomplishments for the program year 2006-07!

A. Core Products and Services Accomplishments

1. Continue to populate the Workforce Information (formerly America's Labor Market Information System (ALMIS)) Database with State and Local Data

In California, the Workforce Information System (WIS) database serves as the primary data repository for the California Web site, *LaborMarketInfo* (www.LaborMarketInfo.edd.ca.gov). This is the California version of the Workforce Informer Consortium's Internet delivery system.

- **Activity:** Maintain and keep current the core tables of the California ALMIS database and any tables necessary for the Workforce Informer Internet application.

Summary of accomplishments: Completed. Data are updated as frequently as daily or monthly. California's WIS database currently contains about five gigabytes of data.

- **Activity:** Develop and maintain the necessary applications to efficiently load data into the ALMIS database and quickly respond to data requests from the Local Workforce Investment Boards, career development agencies, and other customers.

Summary of accomplishments: An application to load the data has been used successfully by our On-line Systems Team. An additional application was developed to provide staff access to wage by industry data to more easily and quickly respond to local requests.

- **Activity:** Coordinate the distribution and licensing of the ALMIS Info USA Employer Database CD-ROM set to local workforce investment areas, and other local customers as appropriate.

Summary of accomplishments: Done. The two editions of the 2007 *Info USA Employer Database* were distributed to 25 eligible sub-licensees, as well as 26 copies to our local labor market consultants who assist local customers in mining these data when needed.

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections

- **Activity:** Produce state industry and occupational short-term Projections for 2006-2008

Summary of accomplishments: Submitted to ALMIS web site on June 15, 2007

- **Activity:** Publish state short-term industry and occupational projections for 2006-2008 on LMID web site

Summary of accomplishments: Published on LMID web site for July 31, 2007

- **Activity:** Produce long-term sub-state industry and occupational projections for 2004-14 for 33 local areas, and load them on our web site;

Summary of accomplishments: Completed and published projections for the 24 largest local areas; remainder are in process for completion in 2007-08. As in prior years, we plan to complete local projections over a two year period, focusing first on the largest areas, and in the second year, completing local projections for the smaller areas.

- **Activity:** Attend ALMIS-sponsored projections training to help accomplish these objectives.

Summary of Accomplishments: No training was scheduled by the Projections Managing Partnership during 2006-07. We have approval to attend two out-of-state training sessions in 2007-08, and are working to bring training to California so more staff can attend.

3. Publish an annual economic analysis report for the governor and the SWIB

- **Activity:** Update the economic and labor market analysis prepared for the California Workforce Investment Board's two-year strategic planning process.

Summary of Accomplishments: Completed the updated economic and labor market analysis for the use of the California Workforce Investment Board, as well as prepared and distributed an executive summary of that analysis. At the request of the State Board, extracted the economic and labor market analysis from their two year plan, and published the document (including the executive summary) as a stand-alone analysis on our www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov web site as well.

4. Post products, information and reports on the internet

- **Activity:** Maintain and enhance the *LaborMarketInfo* on-line application. Continue to expand portal pages targeted toward specific customer groups, offering launch points to information of interest to a particular customer group in one location. Prepare articles and content to populate the site. Coordinate Web site content development review and approval through the division's Editorial Board to ensure that Web articles are easily readable and have a consistent look and feel.

Summary of Accomplishments: Continued to prepare articles for publication on each of the portal pages and data as available. Continue to incorporate established usability standards to enhance the customer's ability to use the Web site.

- **Activity:** Participate in the Workforce Informer (WI) Consortium to recommend future enhancements to better meet our customers' needs.

Summary of Accomplishments: Took the lead within the WI Consortium to improve the job seeker's tool to make the process of finding possible employers using the *InfoUSA* database more user-friendly. This is now a feature on our web site, as well as the sites of the other 13 states in the WI consortium.

- **Activity:** Maintain the *CALMIS* Web site and develop applications to provide functionality not initially available through the *LaborMarketInfo*.

Summary of Accomplishments: The continued existence of *CALMIS* was important to the extent that the vendor for the *LaborMarketInfo* site controlled the display of information on the site, and *CALMIS* gave us the flexibility to expand on the display and functionality of the site within California's technology environment. Effective May 1, 2007, LMID's on-line staff has taken over the maintenance of the *LaborMarketInfo* site, and Department of Technology Services has taken over the hosting of the site. Staff has integrated the *CALMIS* Web site with the *LaborMarketInfo* site. Among the applications that staff developed this year using *CALMIS* as the venue are an intranet application for LMID staff that allows one to search the WIS database for industry-specific occupational wages (e.g. median wage for computer operator in the temporary help industry vs. economy-wide), and an internet application that allows community college instructors to enter the taxonomy of programs (TOP) code for their course, and connects the course code with occupations for which the course might prepare students, the outlook for those occupations, and additional career information if desired.

- **Activity:** Maintain and enhance the LMID's Intranet Customer Database (ICDB) Web site to track customer requests, provide contacts for product marketing, track customer satisfaction, and track product inventory.

Summary of Accomplishments: We continue to maintain the ICDB for the purpose of tracking customer requests and contacts, customer satisfaction and product inventory. This year we added a feature that allows us to track Executive Requests, for executive reporting purposes.

- **Activity:** Maintain *WorkSmart* (both English and Spanish versions). Develop and add information as requested by job seeker customers and the intermediaries who serve them. Keep data updated.

Summary of Accomplishments: *WorkSmart* continues to be accessed by about 30,000 visitors a month. Occupational wages and projections data for the 50 occupations displayed on the site were updated as appropriate during the year.

- **Activity:** Enhance delivery of our career products via the Internet, including dynamic update of time-sensitive data such as employment projections and wages.

Summary of Accomplishments: LMID staff has made considerable progress towards this goal, including conducting customer focus groups, developing enhancements to the ALMIS database to support the planned application, developing prototypes of the application and dynamically generated reports, and continuing staff analysis to ensure the reports deliver the right information to on-line customers. Due to the loss of a key programmer, the product is not completed, but work continues and the product should be available for testing during Fall 2007.

5. A. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards

- **Activity:** Provide Public Information Services

Summary of Accomplishments: These are ongoing services. Staff responds to approximately 500 calls a quarter to assist customers in interpreting labor market information, as well as a similar number of e-mailed requests. (We have found that since virtually all our data are available on the internet now, we get somewhat fewer calls, but the nature of requests continues to become more complex.)

On an annual basis, produce customized web-based *Planning Information Packets* for local workforce investment boards. Local Boards use these publications for program planning and targeting of services. These packets contain local summary data on public assistance recipients, lower living standards income levels, and economically disadvantaged persons—completed.

On an annual basis publish on-line *County Snapshots* for each of California's 58 counties—completed.

On an annual basis publish an on-line *Size of Business* report reflecting business size by employment ranges and industries for California and Metropolitan Statistical Areas—completed.

5. B. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards

- **Activity:** Coordinate customer outreach and marketing—direct staff efforts to assess dynamic customer information needs. Direct ongoing customer input into upgrading existing products and develop new products and information services.

Summary of Accomplishments: Through the planned use of customer satisfaction (CS) data, obtained from our CS survey process, targeted customer surveys; and conducted four customer focus groups. The Division continues to be positioned to respond to customer insights and expected outcomes that will result in more customer focused and demand driven products and information services—ongoing.

5. C. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards

- **Activity:** Collect and Deliver Agricultural Employment Data

Summary of Accomplishments: LMID continues to publish the *California Agricultural Bulletin* on our web site, highlighting recent quarterly data. The Web site also includes links to more detailed regional monthly data found in Excel spreadsheets located in the Data Library portion of the web site. This data series continues to be the most current, up-to-date agricultural employment data available.

5. D. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards

- **Activity:** Produce Small County Industry Employment Data

Summary of Accomplishments: Continuing the production of these small area industry employment estimates allows the partners in the workforce development system to have access to consistent sub-state industry employment data across the State to assist them in making strategic and operational program decisions. This outcome is in keeping with the ETA's strategic goal of generating the most current and local information, and also supports the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative that requires the analysis of industry data in order to identify high growth areas.

Summary of Accomplishments: LMID continues to produce timely monthly estimates for these small areas that are released at the same time as the larger Metropolitan Statistical Areas in the State.

6 A. Conduct special studies and economic analyses

- **Activity:** Conduct original labor market research—facilitate labor market research, independently and in partnership with public and private research entities, to: advance the study of challenging issues such as labor supply and demand; mine administrative data; and conduct other research of interest to policy makers.

Summary of Accomplishments: This past year, the Division's Applied Research Unit (ARU) has taken on more of a consultant's role, working with customers to identify and extract data for their research needs. The ARU also provided consultant services to customers, identifying appropriate research methods and techniques to be used in their research efforts and to evaluate the effectiveness of those techniques in helping customers accomplish their research goals. This included work with California's participants in the first- and second-generation WIRED Grant initiatives and an in-depth evaluation of the WITS tool, as well as research organizations performing work on behalf of the federal Small Business Administration and the NOVA WIB, tracking Silicon Valley high-tech workers through the recent boom-bust cycle. Members of ARU's staff also participated in an effort to build tools that the Division's Regional Consultants and their customers can use to study local and regional economies. Finally, ARU assisted in the development of a new formula to determine local WIA Dislocated Worker allocations.

- **Activity:** Upon request, prepares custom data runs for economic development, planning and research.

Summary of Accomplishments: The ARU continued to prepare numerous custom data tabulations in response to requests for a wide variety of

customers. Included among those requests was the development of a formatted data file of annual industry employment and wage data (1990 to 2005) for the State and each county for use in the California Regional Economies Project and several custom tabulations for WIRED Grant participants.

6. B. Conduct special studies and economic analyses

- **Activity:** Produce maps for One-Stop decision makers—continue to produce static maps and geo-spatial data analyses for Workforce Investment/One Stop decision-makers and others; review methods for making interactive maps available which will allow users to customize maps by focusing on areas and data layers of interest; continue to evaluate new sub-county data sets from other sources such as the Department of Education that may be made available through our GIS services.

Summary of Accomplishments: A new series of static maps was issued, one map for each local workforce investment area (LWIA). Each map shows the LWIA, surrounding LWIAs, One-Stop locations, and major roads. The maps were provided to the California Workforce Investment Board (CWIB) in electronic format, and, for the first time, are now available on the LMID website: www.LaborMarketInfo.edd.ca.gov.

Updated statewide maps of LWIAs and One-Stop locations were created in three sizes, and are now also available on the LMID website.

LMID researched the feasibility of using *ArcGIS Publisher* to create easy-to-use interactive maps. *ArcGIS Publisher* converts map documents to published map files which are viewable through *ArcReader*, a free downloadable product from ESRI. Published electronic interactive maps can be shared on CD, over the network, or via the Internet. Customers can zoom into areas of interest, turn on data layers, and export or print their maps.

An interactive map created with *ArcGIS Publisher* was demonstrated to CWIB staff, and modified to include requested data and features. The final interactive map was provided on CDs for distribution to all board members and local boards. The map includes One-Stop locations, Regional Occupational Programs, Community Colleges, cities, major roads, Local Workforce Investment Areas and counties. The layers can be turned on or off to display or hide the data. Zoom and pan tools can be used to zoom into an area of interest and move around the map. The Identify tool can be used to view data about map elements. Additional tools include a tool to locate features on the map, a tool to measure distances, and hyperlinks to Local Workforce Investment Area and Regional Occupational Program websites.

Information on obtaining copies of the CD can be found on the LMID website. A help document was prepared and included on the CDs. The basic map tools are explained and short videos were created to show the use of the tools interacting with the map and data.

Over 100 maps have been completed this year to date for customers including One-Stop decision makers and local workforce investment boards. Staff also conducted analyses using GIS, conducted geo-coding in support of mapping requests, provided mapping assistance, and prepared data files for use in all projects. Examples of the above include producing maps of local workforce investment areas with One-Stop locations; producing maps of agricultural employment, and other employment, unemployment, and county commute patterns; and, calculating employment at various geographic areas such as Congressional and Assembly districts, fire districts, and city boundaries.

We are evaluating the use of sub-county data sets, including data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) by various geographies, and Unemployment Insurance Claims by ZIP code for use in interactive maps that may be accessed with *ArcReader* software. An interactive map was created for the Los Angeles and Ventura Job Service program. The map contains regional areas, including LWIA boundaries, and office location data along with QCEW data on employment and business establishments, Census data, city boundaries and roads.

B. Customer consultations—findings and recommendations

Methods for collecting customer satisfaction information and interpreting the collected information:

California's Labor Market Information Division implemented a marketing program and customer satisfaction survey process in the mid-1990's to ensure that consultation with our customers is an essential component in improving the usefulness of and satisfaction with the LMI disseminated through the workforce information system. The Division maintains a demand-driven system by actively seeking ongoing feedback from our customers on how we can improve our products and information services, as well as identifying emerging information needs. Activities associated with our customer outreach and customer satisfaction efforts, particularly for our primary customer sectors, include:

- Print-based customer satisfaction surveys,
- Focus Groups,
- Online customer satisfaction survey,

- LMI Advisory Group, and
- Interaction and participation at over 400 meetings, conferences and workshops attended by more than 18,000 LMI customers

The Division's Customer Satisfaction Assessment process includes customer surveys sent to all customers who receive a product from us, and to a sampling of customers who receive our services. These surveys are quantitative, asking customers to rate products and information services on a five-point scale, with five being the highest possible score.

The surveys include our "core questions" which ask about the customers' satisfaction with the Division's products and service overall, satisfaction with the specific product they have recently ordered, and the helpfulness of the product in making an informed career or business decision. Each response is rated on a scale of one (low) to five (high). In addition, for each customer, we ask them to identify with a customer type, tell us how they will use the product and provide any written comments they wish. Monthly reports are generated and reviewed by Division managers.

Customer satisfaction with products is tracked in the Division's Intranet Customer Database (ICDB) by product, customer type and rating, and linked to information in our ICDB about customer orders for these products (how many products were ordered by which customer groups, for instance). Staff can access reports providing each of these information elements for any product through the ICDB. The database also easily provides staff with lists of customers who have ordered the products, creating a contact list for focus groups or more detailed surveys.

The Division also relies on focus groups, one-on-one customer interviews and the insights of the LMI Advisory Group to obtain customer input into the outcomes and expectations they seek from the use of our products and services. These activities are each ongoing. To enhance our understanding of our customers' needs, and how we might better address them, LMID maintains both a Marketing and Customer Outreach Guide that describes appropriate customer outreach efforts for our staff, and Customer Group and Product Profiles that are housed in the Division's ICDB and provide select satisfaction ratings and information by customer group or individual product.

Assessment of the principal customers' satisfaction with the product and service:

During 2006-07, LMID's website: www.LaborMarketInfo.edd.ca.gov, disseminated LMI products and publications primarily via electronic format. The website provides our customers the opportunity to create a "personal page", that provides us with added insights into the customers' interests and satisfaction.

The website's "How Are We Doing?" online survey enables customers to rate their overall satisfaction with the website. In 2006-07, more than 4.2 million individuals visited our website. During this period, our customers downloaded more than seven million copies of our products, and were provided with in excess of 45,000 printed products.

On-line surveys in 2006-07 indicate that more than half of our customers are "satisfied" to "very satisfied" (the top two of six satisfaction categories) with the new website. Customers expressing dissatisfaction were often complaining about difficulty accessing other department services beyond our control (for instance, getting through to a "real person" on the unemployment insurance claim telephone line) rather than expressing concern with labor market information or services. During this same period, we have received over 400 e-mail contacts from customers via the Internet. Many of these are data requests, but they also provide useful comments on our website itself.

Survey results for this same period indicate that our customers' overall satisfaction with LMID products and services rating was 4.2 out of five possible. Nearly 83 percent of our respondents indicated that they were either "satisfied" or "very satisfied".

Activities to be undertaken to add customer value to the product or service, where needs for improvement are identified.

We are focusing our attention to enhancing access to our on-line career information as described in Section A. 4. above, gathering customer input on content, functionality and usability, and developing an application that will take advantage of our WIS database to dynamically update data.

C. Recommendations for changes or improvements to the required grant deliverables

- **Recommendations based upon accomplishments**

Our customers highly value the products and services we provide. Sixty-two percent of our customers' on-line activity (1.2 million page views per quarter) is to access our State and locally-based occupational and career publications and data. The California Regional Economies Project sponsored by the California Economic Strategy Panel has depended upon our career research in high-growth industries to support the industry studies the Panel has conducted—these products have been among the most accessed products. The Economic Strategy Panel staff is disappointed that the 2006-07 WIG funding did not continue to support our career research in high-growth industries. Given the huge customer demand in California for occupational products and information,

we recommend that the core products be amended to continue to support state and local career research and publications.

- **Recommendations based on customer satisfaction assessment findings**

As indicated, customers we do hear from are very satisfied with the products we produce, whether on-line products or ad hoc reports and services. However, with a delivery base which is primarily on-line, we find it increasingly challenging to engage a broad range of customers to respond to surveys. We continue to explore every avenue to assess customer satisfaction—using mail and on-line surveys, focus groups, in person services, attendance at conferences and other public events, and regular meetings of our LMI Advisory Group. Therefore, we are exploring opportunities this year to improve and enhance our collection of customer satisfaction information online, and to respond to customer input.

- **Recommendations based on consultation with customers**

The more products and services we offer to our customers, the more they want from us—more customized analysis, more career information, more in person services—this comes at a time when we are experiencing funding cuts in both the WIG and our leveraged fund sources. Partners to whom we might turn for leveraged funding are also experiencing funding cuts. A 12.3% cut in WIG funds in 2006-07, and additional cuts in 2007-08, put us in an extreme bind to respond to these expanded customer requests. Our recommendation is that in order to respond to the growing numbers of customer requests for information and services, WIG funding be reinstated to 2005-06 levels.