

ARKANSAS: WORKFORCE INFORMATION PY' 07 ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administrations' Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 29-06, this is Arkansas's annual report of accomplishments on the six core products and services contained within this grant.

CONTINUE TO POPULATE THE WORKFORCE INFORMATION DATABASE WITH STATE AND LOCAL DATA

All mandatory core tables of the Workforce Information database were updated by June 30, 2008. This is a continual project, as we update the information in the Workforce Information database as it is made available. Arkansas also populates many of the Workforce Information database's non-required demographic and economic tables and is building tables that will power local WIB Area profile reports in the "Discover Arkansas" system. We maintain the Uniform Resource Locators (URL) of <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> and <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>, both being official Web site addresses for our Internet delivery of Workforce Information database information. In keeping with WID version policy, we have worked with the regional ETA office since April 2008, to find a solution to Ciber's setback with programmer retention working on Version 2.4 of the Workforce Information Database. Hopefully, with Ciber's recent hires, this should cure itself by January 2009, for all Workforce iNFORMER states.

The printed version of the 2007 *Directory of Licensed, Certified, and Registered Occupations in Arkansas* was released on July 26, 2007. This publication can also be viewed and downloaded at http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/742_DLO.pdf

PRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

Long-Term

The state Industry and Occupational Employment Projections for 2006-2016 were successfully completed and the file sent to the Projections Management Partnership Consortium and placed on "Discover Arkansas", on June 23, 2008. The Long-Term Projection's State-wide publication should be ready for release by October 15, 2008. State-wide long-term projections can be viewed and downloaded from our Workforce Information database Web site at <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> or <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>.

Short-Term

The statewide Industry and Occupational Projections for the 2007-2009 period, utilizing a base period of 1st quarter 2007 and projected out to 1st quarter 2009, have been completed, and the necessary files sent to the Projections Management Partnership Consortium on June 26, 2008. Printed versions of the 2007-2009 statewide short-term projections should be released by October 15, 2008.

Arkansas completed the 2007-2009 sub-state Industry and Occupational Projections on June 12, 2008 and submitted for inclusion in the Workforce Information database on August 11, 2008. Printed versions of the 2007-2009 sub-state short-term projections should be released by November 1, 2008.

State and sub-state level Short-Term Projections can be found through our Workforce Information Database Web site at <http://www.discoverarkansas.net> or <http://www.discover.arkansas.gov>

PUBLISH AN ANNUAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS REPORT FOR THE GOVERNOR AND STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

The Labor Market Information section of the Department of Workforce Services released the second edition of the *Arkansas Labor Market and Economic Report* on “Discover Arkansas” on September 30, 2008. Printed versions of the report will be submitted to Arkansas’s Governor and State Workforce Investment Board at their next meeting on October 14, 2008.

POST PRODUCTS, INFORMATION, AND REPORTS ON THE INTERNET

Major deliverables, besides Projections, Directory of Licensed Occupations, and the Economic Analysis Report, can be viewed through the Internet at:

Discover Arkansas (www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov): “Discover Arkansas” is the state’s Web-based LMI delivery system supporting the WIBs, business, education, other agencies, and the public, utilizing information in Arkansas’ Workforce Information database. This fully ADA compliant system was officially released on January 31, 2005, and is continually updated with new information, reports, and consumer products.

ArkOSCAR (www.arkoscar.org)*: Through collaboration with the Texas LMI Department, we’ve developed an Arkansas-specific Web version of the popular Occupation and Skill Computer-Automated Researcher (OSCAR). ArkOSCAR is a

powerful O*NET-based application that allows Arkansas Workforce Centers and schools to assist dislocated workers, youth, and other job/career seekers in their career exploration by leveraging O*NET data with current state LMI (Wages, Occupational Growth Projections, Job Openings, Demographic data, and more). The system contains seven different ways to help users explore job and career possibilities, including automation of the first two O*NET Assessment tools. ArkOSCAR displays an engaging window into the powerful O*NET database and is an excellent way for users unfamiliar with O*NET to learn about occupational possibilities. The system was last updated on August 7, 2007, with another update anticipated when the system is moved to the “Discover Arkansas” website in late December of 2008.

*To visit ArkOSCAR, from the sign-in page (www.arkoscar.org), select “Out-of-State” from the “LWIA or EDS” drop down menu, and then type in “54321” in the “Password (Zip Code)” window.

2007-2008 Career Watch (www.careerwatch.org): Arkansas distributed approximately 100,000 copies of this very popular tabloid-type career magazine in PY'07. *Career Watch* provides students (and their parents) over 20 areas of interests in exploring the world of work. Topics covered included career planning, resumes, apprenticeships, work ethic, military opportunities, top occupations, occupational profiles with wage information, scholarship information, financial aid programs, higher education in Arkansas, and more. The 2007-2008 *Career Watch* magazine is also available for viewing and downloading at www.careerwatch.org.

High Demand Targeted Jobs – National Governor’s Association (NGA) Skills Matching System: To provide information on the skill needs of jobs/occupations in Arkansas, we created a skills matching prototype system, through the support of the NGA “Pathways to Advancement Policy Academy”. This tool was updated with the newest information on September 15, 2008, and will continue to be incorporated into the “Discover Arkansas” LMI portal, and links Arkansas’s growth industries to the nationally recognized Educational Career Clusters. It also identifies if a growth industry is a targeted industry by the Arkansas Economic Development Commission (AEDC) or an industry that has been identified by the Department of Labor’s High Growth Job Training Initiative. The tool identifies occupations related to each growth industry and career pathway and provides information on skills, projections, wages, training programs, licensing requirements, and notes if it is a high demand occupation in Arkansas. The LMI Department worked with AEDC and their consultant in helping them in the process of defining the newest list of Arkansas’ Targeted Jobs. Those are now listed within the High Demand Targeted Jobs system found at:
<http://www.discoverarkansas.net/?PAGEID=152>.

Career Interests, Training, and Job Outlook System

Working with the Department of Workforce Education and the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges, Arkansas developed this system to simplify the alignment of the

Career Cluster/Cluster Pathway organizational system. Included are long-term projected job openings and average annual wages for the state of Arkansas. This information will be extremely valuable to schools that are planning curriculum additions or changes, as well as to individuals seeking career changes. Arkansas' original system was seen by CIBER, Inc, the Workforce Informer developer, as a breakthrough for information sharing in the Career Cluster and Pathway arena and based a huge portion of their "Career Clusters" tool in the Workforce Informer on this system, which can be viewed on "Discover Arkansas" at

http://www.discoverarkansas.net/aspdotnet/career/CC_AreaSelect.aspx.

Affirmative Action (www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov): In support of the SWIB and LWIBs, business, education, economic development, other agencies, and the general public, the "Discover Arkansas" Web site contains an entire Affirmative Action section with statewide, MSA, and county tables that can be downloaded onto the user's PC.

Real-Life Arkansas: In support of our partners in Education and Employment, Arkansas's Labor Market Information section developed and released Real-Life Arkansas in 2007. We continue to update Real-Life Arkansas with the latest LMI, with the last update done on August 28, 2008. This is an interactive "lifestyle budget calculator" for students and job seekers and can be found at the Web address of www.real-life.arkansas.gov. The site helps users discover how education impacts earnings and to learn about different occupations. The site's objective is to inspire students, through a "real world" exercise, to take education seriously and pursue higher education/training after high school.

Users of the site have three options to determine the costs and careers associated with their desired lifestyle. By identifying monthly living expenses in "Get a Real Life Check," the user finds out what careers provide the salary needed to cover those expenses. With "Future Salary," the user enters a salary and chooses a desired education and occupational category. The occupations with that salary are then displayed. "Occupation Direct" is similar to "Get a Real Life Check" but allows the user to choose an occupation first. The living expenses for a desired lifestyle are then subtracted from the occupation's salary to check whether the occupation's wages will cover those expenses.

The Future Awaits : Arkansas continued its distribution of this publication, which focuses on teaching young adults pre-employment basics, including resume preparation, how to apply for jobs, appropriate dress, interview tips, and even basic guidance on how to complete federal tax forms. Due to many requests, we have reproduced the "Pocket Resume" out of *The Future Awaits* into a stand-alone workforce tool for citizens to use in their everyday work search. *The Future Awaits* can be viewed and downloaded from "Discover Arkansas" at

http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/347_Future_Awaits.pdf

Arkansas Consumer Reporting System (ACRS) (www.arkansascrs.org): Arkansas unveiled the first nationally recognized WIA certification system during December of 2001, which we actively maintain and provide customer service for on a daily basis. ACRS streamlined a paper system, which averaged 90 days for WIA provider certification, into a 24-hour automated approval process. ACRS provides an interactive, customer driven, search engine to review all educational entities within state boundaries.

Projected Employment Opportunities List (formerly the "Demand Occupations List"): Arkansas continues to produce this publication that identifies future job opportunities and links them to training programs with the state. The publication presents information in two columns, with the first providing the occupation's code, title, and a Statewide estimated average annual wage. The second column lists the corresponding training code and title for the occupation. A list is included for the state and each of the 10 Local Workforce Investment Areas. This product is distributed to help the workforce system and its users make better training decisions. Last updated on July 1, 2008, it can be viewed and downloaded at http://www.discoverarkansas.net/admin/uploadedPublications/397_Projected_Employment_Opportunities_List.pdf

Workforce Area Profiles: Arkansas has created localized labor market profiles for each of its local workforce investment areas, which we update constantly with new information, with the last update being performed on August 12, 2008. The profiles contain the local demand occupations with local wages and key important economic information for each local area. These can be found on "Discover Arkansas" (www.discover.arkansas.gov or www.discoverarkansas.net) as a left column heading of "Local Workforce Investment Area Statistics".

Other Printed Publications with Web Access: During Program Year 2007, the Department of Workforce Services' Labor Market Information section has updated and produced various other LMI-based publications, such as the popular *Arkansas Wage Survey*, *Arkansas Labor Market*, *Arkansas's Hot 45*, *Career Watch Teacher's Guide*, and other reports, publications and information. Most of our publications are accessible online from the LMI Publications page of "Discover Arkansas," while information and reports are scattered throughout the Web site at www.discoverarkansas.net or www.discover.arkansas.gov.

Estimates Delivery System (EDS): Though EDS is not a Web accessed tool for the public, it does provide extensive information that we use on "Discover Arkansas" and other Web products.

PARTNER AND CONSULT ON A CONTINUING BASIS WITH WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

The Labor Market Information section is located on the same floor of the Department of Workforce Services building as the staff of the State Workforce Investment Board. This arrangement allows for almost constant contact and association with the Board's staff to identify and produce needed information in an ever changing economic arena. The LMI section also has a representative attend each State Board meeting which allows us to keep in touch with informational needs of the Board. Almost daily, a LMI staff person is in contact with staff from one of the 10 Local Workforce Investment Boards. We provide information on a multitude of subjects from demand occupations that designates a WIA training requirement to labor supply information for a new industry proposal that's considering locating in one of the Local Workforce Investment Board Areas (LWIB).

CONDUCT SPECIAL STUDIES AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

Throughout PY'07, the LMI section of the Department of Workforce Services has made itself available to provide information and has conducted numerous special studies for our various customers. These include utilizing the Local Employment Dynamic (LED) system and the Estimates Delivery System (EDS) to answer most of the questions and concerns that different customers had about the State or Local Area labor markets, economic condition, and special initiatives. Some of these concerns and questions were:

Where are the workers in my industry and county?

How much are workers like mine paid?

How does the job turnover for other firms in my industry compare to the turnover at my workplace?

Where are the jobs in my WIB area?

How much do the occupations in my WIB area pay?

How long can I expect this type of job to last in this WIB area?

Where are the jobs where I live?

How much can I expect to be paid in different industries?

CUSTOMER CONSULTATION SUMMARY

Arkansas' LMI Section continues to be relentless in its pursuit to accomplish all of our certified deliverables and as of this writing we have obtained 100 percent of our timed goals for PY'07. Working with our many varied customers throughout the year, which includes the Local Workforce Investment Boards and the State Workforce Investment Board, we've learned that sometimes we address information in a more technical way than the customers prefer. A glaring example of this from the information we've gathered is that some of our publications are too numbers oriented. We continue to

address this issue and realize that we still have further to go. Therefore, in the future we will incorporate more graphs and charts into our publications, whether hard copy or Internet related. Another area that we have put effort into, but could still do a better job in the upcoming PY'08 year, is our personal contact and communication with the Local and State Workforce Investment Boards. To adjust for this, we are asking that each LWIB area submit their meeting dates for us to ascertain the possibility of having a LMI staff person present as often as possible. We continue to strive for excellence in developing our product mix, but our main goal will be furnishing the citizens of Arkansas with good, reliable, and accurate labor market information no matter whether they are individuals, employers, agency partners, or local and state workforce entities.