

**Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant**  
**Annual Performance Report**  
**Program Year 2007**  
**Labor Market Information Division**  
**Employment Security Commission of North Carolina**

**Accomplishments by Deliverable**

**A. Continue to Populate the Workforce Information Database with State and Local Data**

**Outcomes:**

The Labor Market Information Division (LMID) of the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina met planned milestones as specified in the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant. The core tables of the most current version of the Workforce Information Database were continuously populated with updated state data in accordance with guidelines and set schedules. The database provided the latest labor force, industry, occupation and wage information for use with the LMID's Internet-based delivery systems. The Workforce Information Database was also utilized to create data extractions in order to respond to requests from state, regional and local workforce boards, economic development and governmental entities. As required on a biannual basis, licensing data files were updated with 2008 data and submitted to the National Crosswalk Service Center in June 2008.

**B. Produce and Disseminate Industry and Occupational Employment Projections**

**Outcomes:**

The 2006-2016 long-term industry and occupational projections were completed for the state of North Carolina and for each of the 24 Workforce Development Board (WDB) areas. Short-term projections for 2007-2009 are currently being produced at the statewide level. Employment projections provide critical information for determining demand occupations for funded training. A new use of regional projections emerged this plan year. One WDB used projections to not only plan training opportunities, but to plan bus transportation routes to accommodate the locations of the training opportunities. Attractive area-specific brochures containing information on the fastest growing occupations and industries by geographic area were developed and made available in print or .pdf on the LMID web site. The projections link was populated with the 2006-2016 data for interactive use on the web site.

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/occupational/occupationMain-new.asp>

Occupational employment and wage projections data was made available for inclusion into the annual update of *Career Choices in NC* career information publication for youth and adults.

<http://www.soicc.state.nc.us/soicc/products/publications.htm>

In North Carolina, projections information is widely utilized by Workforce, Educational and Economic Development partners. Professionals statewide have made it an essential part of workforce development planning, program/budget planning, public policy planning and career exploration activities. To assist in the accurate interpretation of this information, LMID staff members assisted customers in understanding and reviewing projections through consultation, presentations and workshops provided to workforce development professionals, economic developers, curriculum planners, career counselors, local and state government officials, researchers, policy makers, Chambers of Commerce, educators, businesses and the general public.

### **C. Publish an Annual Economic Analysis Report for the Governor and the State WIB**

#### **Outcomes:**

Workforce and labor market conditions and trends within North Carolina were analyzed and published in a comprehensive report for the governor, state and local Workforce Investment Boards, and all other WIA partners. The report analyzed workforce dynamics on a statewide basis, with particular attention to industry mix and occupational changes. The report includes population, labor force factors, industry employment change, gross domestic product, per capita income, consumer price index, occupational projections and educational opportunities. The final report will be posted on the web site under the Publications section.

### **D. Post Products, Information, and Reports on the Internet**

#### **Outcomes:**

The dissemination of Workforce Information resources via the Internet is a critical component to reaching a wide variety of customer groups. During the plan year, the LMID's web portal page was reorganized in order to assist customers with locating and utilizing the various workforce information products and data series.

The redesigned home page featured new sections that more accurately reflected the type of information found in the LMI data links. Links were organized by: Workforce, Industry and Occupational Information. The interactive Information Access Tools were grouped into one section. Career Management Tools were placed in an expanded section and a revised *Career Resources Network* web site link was added.

All LMID publications were organized under a new heading: Publications, Research & Reports. Publications specific to each of the 24 WDBs were grouped by name for easy access. For the first time, a large variety of North Carolina maps depicting population density, industry concentrations and other information relevant to a specific geographic area were made available in the Maps section.

LMID staff members developed a new data access tool — the Demand Driven Data Delivery System (D4). The D4 system allows users to select a specific geographic area and display or download the most current labor force, industry, occupational wage and business closings information. An additional feature allows the displayed data to be downloaded and printed in an attractive report format. A tutorial was developed to assist customers with use of the new system.

North Carolina is a participating state in the Local Employment Dynamics (LED) program. Quarterly data files were submitted to the Census for processing and loading into the LED site. North Carolina's redesigned web portal page contains two links to assist customers with locating and utilizing the LED On-the-Map and Quarterly Workforce Indicators functions.

Links to other workforce information web sites including the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), US Census Bureau, NC LINKS, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Development plus many more, were placed in an easy to utilize list in the Statistical Links section on the portal page.

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/default.asp?init=true>

## **E. Partner and Consult On a Continuing Basis with Workforce Investment Boards and Key Talent Development Partners and Stakeholders**

### **Outcomes:**

North Carolina implemented an outreach and marketing program in the mid-1990s to ensure that consultation with our customers became an essential component in improving the usefulness of and satisfaction with the information disseminated through the workforce information system. The division has continually employed two staff members dedicated to providing outreach services, marketing products, consulting and training within the Workforce Development system and all its partner agencies. LMID's staff members consult with the 24 Workforce Development Boards, attend board meetings and, attend and participate in some of the boards' strategic planning retreats.

One need that emerged through this consultation was the need for additional geo-spatial and mapping products. An LMID staff member was trained in the use of ArcGIS software and geo-coding methods in order to create customized maps for specific needs of the workforce development entities. The addition of mapping capability in LMI divisions throughout the ETA region was discussed at a regional meeting where examples of North Carolina's maps were utilized.

Due to the responsiveness displayed by LMID staff, the demand for information, reports, products, surveys and services from all customer groups continued to grow and expand.

### **Regional Targeted Services:**

Outreach services were provided to the 24 WDBs primarily by two Workforce Information Specialists each assigned responsibility for 12 boards. These staff members attended the WDB board meetings, conducted training on LMI products and services, served as guest speakers at local functions and were responsible for understanding and interpreting the information found in publications created specifically to summarize the current economic picture of each Workforce Development Board area. These *LMI Quick Facts* publications contained information selected by each board and were produced on a schedule set by each board.

Research staff members assisted the Piedmont Triad WIRED staff and the Advantage West Economic Development Partnership as they sponsored or conducted research on the regional needs in their economies.

The LMID has been a key information source in two additional regional efforts: *Vision East* and *Streamline*. *Vision East* is a regional collaboration among eight of North Carolina's Eastern Workforce Development Boards. The goals of *Vision East* are to build and enhance collaborations across the eight WDB's, focus on growing industries and help attract business investment. Staff from North Carolina's LMID worked in collaboration with ETA's Federal Project Officer to provide information and presentation materials to assist in the *Vision East* initiative.

*Streamline* is a regional effort which extends across state borders. The *Streamline* region covers the area from Southside Virginia to the Upper Piedmont Triad in North Carolina and includes several WDB's in both states. The West Piedmont Workforce Investment Board in Virginia is the recipient of a Regional Innovation Grant (RIG). The RIG planning team is co-chaired by the West Piedmont WDB director from Virginia and the Kerr-Tar WDB director from North Carolina. The RIG is intended to help the region develop a transformation plan in response to significant layoffs and closures in the region's manufacturing sectors. The RIG will be utilized to fund the development of short and long term strategies for improving and maintaining economic health of the region by preparing the workforce for jobs in the new economy. Staff from the LMID are an integral part of the *Streamline* planning team. LMID staff analyzed information regarding the regional economy, developed informational materials and delivered a presentation to the other members of the RIG planning team. Information included information regarding the region's: infrastructure, educational institutions, existing industrial structure, existing laborforce, commuting patterns, registred applicants by occupation, unemployment trends, business closings and layoffs, industry and occupational projections and information regarding approved training programs. As the *Streamline* project continues LMID staff continue to play an integral part of the project team.

## **Presentations and Training:**

LMID's Outreach and Training staff worked in collaboration with the various customer groups to develop training and materials targeted to meet specific customer needs. Full-day PC lab hands-on training for WIA partners was sponsored four times by the North Carolina Division of Workforce Development Training Center. In addition to the outreach staff, several other LMI staff conducted presentations, training sessions and workshops. Training ranged from one hour to day-long sessions as appropriate and included overviews of LMI data, use of the web site, use of and interpretation of projections, unemployment trends, job seeker interactive tools, career counselor assessment tools, wage and industrial data for business professionals and use of a NC developed product, ShOW-IT, which affords the ability to create occupation and industry clusters for analysis and comparison to state and national data.

Staff made presentations and conducted workshops at 17 local, State or national conferences for workforce development professionals, WIA partner agencies, economic developers and the business community. Five exhibits offering printed products and demonstrating interactive tools were displayed. Thirty-two other presentations were provided to further customer understanding and use of labor market information. Participants included: JobLink Career Center and One Stop staff, Community College counselors, Piedmont-Triad WIRED staff, Vocational Rehabilitation counselors, HR professionals, private employers, Woman's Employment Re-entry groups, Ex-offender employment Re-entry groups, middle and high school students, University resource librarians, Women in Technology, ETA regions II & III regional meeting, regional and national forums and the LMI Training Institute.

## **F. Conduct Special Studies and Economic Analyses**

### **Outcomes**

Special studies continued to be an important activity funded under the Workforce Information Core Products and Services Grant. During the program year, the demand grew steadily. LMID remained strongly committed to working with state, regional and local entities and provided current research focused on areas of topical concern. For customers contemplating or conducting research activities themselves, technical assistance was provided. Research staff assisted these customers by reviewing survey instruments, advising on methodology and on methods of gathering and compiling data from a variety of sources.

Requests were received almost daily from Workforce Development Boards, local economic development entities, partner agencies, members of the press and other customer groups. Requests were usually for an aggregate measure of available labor supply and average wages by area and industry. Reports containing information regarding the numbers of jobseekers looking for employment in occupations demanded by prospective employers were of great interest to economic developers as were commuting patterns

Monthly and quarterly publications relating to current economic conditions and topics of interest, as determined by user requests, continued to be published. Each month, the state's economic trends and their implications were analyzed and a summary report for use by the Governor, Legislators, heads of state agencies, workforce development officials, economic developers, county commissioners, other policy making officials and the public was prepared. The report, published as the *NC Today*, was formatted with graphs, charts and speaking points for quick, easy reference. Topics included employment and unemployment statistics, industry employment and wage measures, business closings and permanent layoffs, unemployment insurance benefits paid accompanied by trust fund activities, and quarterly updates on employer cost for employee compensation.

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

As accompaniment for the release of monthly state and county labor force statistics, *Labor Market Conditions*, provided an expanded overview of State and county labor force, employment, and unemployment data presented in narrative and graphic format comparing current month data to the previous month and year. *NC Labor Market Conditions* was released mid month with the statewide unemployment rate press release and *NC County Labor Market Conditions* was published with the monthly county and Metropolitan Statistical Areas press release.

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

Topical articles researched and written by LMID researchers were provided to customers quarterly in the *Insight* publication. Article topics included: NC's Manufacturing Industry in Transition, Emerging Industries of Plastics and Wine, the Housing Market in NC, the Religious employment survey results and the emerging multigenerational workforce.

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

*Employment Service and Unemployment Insurance Operations* published monthly along with *ESC Monthly Activity Reports* provided "Highlights" of Unemployment Insurance Claims activity as well as selected ESC Employment Service activity.

<http://www.ncesc.com/lmi/publications/publicationMain.asp>

In support of regional partnerships, LMID staff gathered and analyzed economic and workforce data for a newly developed regional partnership calling themselves *Vision East*. Eight workforce development boards, four economic development partnerships, leaders of six metropolitan statistical areas and forty-two counties joined to collaborate and develop regional strategies to meet their common goals. The infrastructure, educational institutions, existing industrial structure, existing laborforce, commuting patterns, ESC registered applicants by occupation, unemployment trends, business closings and lay offs, industry and occupational projections and the top instructional areas of WIA approved training programs were summarized.

Support of regional partnerships extended across state borders in April 2008 when five Southside Virginia workforce investment boards and two upper Piedmont Triad North Carolina workforce development boards joined to focus on regionally based workforce talent development. The project, *STREAMLINE*, sought a RIG to fund the development of short and long term strategies for improving and maintaining economic health of the region by preparing the workforce for jobs in the new economy. The LMID analyzed information across twenty VA counties and five NC counties. Information included: infrastructure, educational institutions, existing industrial structure, existing laborforce, commuting patterns, ESC registered applicants by occupation, unemployment trends, business closings and lay offs, industry and occupational projections and the top instructional areas of WIA approved training programs.

Special Labor Availability and Employer surveys were developed administered and the results summarized for two economic development partnerships and one workforce development board. Results from these surveys indicated that employers have concerns regarding attracting qualified workers, training employees and providing competitive benefits.

In July 2003, North Carolina experienced the largest mass layoff event in the state's history when the Pillowtex Corporation closed. The closure impacted over 6,000 workers nationwide and over 4,800 workers in North Carolina. North Carolina's LMID has been undertaking a longitudinal study of 4,820 former Pillowtex workers. Through the use of administrative data from North Carolina's Workforce Development System partners, North Carolina Unemployment Insurance Wage files and other Workforce Information resources, the study has been focusing on the post-layoff employment patterns, educational experiences and participation in workforce development programs and services. This information has been utilized in several presentations and to help to respond to requests from stakeholders, policy makers, and reporters. In addition, this information played a critical role in the invited testimony of an LMID staff member before the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission in September of 2007.

### **Customer Consultations**

Customer consultations were conducted primarily one on one through on-site visits, discussions following presentations and training, phone calls, at conferences, other meetings and via email. LMID outreach and marketing efforts have yielded a comfortable, collaborative working relationship with the state and local workforce development boards and other WIA partners. The increase in requests and contacts from new partners has helped to demonstrate that our outreach and marketing efforts are working. These included increased requests for ad hoc analyses, in-depth analyses and presentations. In addition, two on-line surveys were conducted however, response rates were fairly low. The responses received were very favorable.

### **Recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Deliverables**

Efforts will continue to deliver information via electronic means while maintaining high standards of data quality and integrity. Increased automation of products will allow better geographic coverage with less production time. Enhancements will continue to be made to the LMI Website to include additional mapping capability and area profiles. Reports available through use of the LED data will be enhanced. The policy of responding to all requests for improvement and additional products will be continued within the funding and staffing limitations.