

STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PROGRESS REPORT FOR WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT
July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012

In accordance with the Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) #30-08, Job Service North Dakota submits the following Progress Report on Workforce Information activities for the period July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2012. This report is organized into four sections. Section A describes the program deliverables. Section B presents a summary of customer consultations. Section C describes partnerships/collaborations established, and resources created through/supported by collaborations. Section D contains recommendations for improvements or changes to the deliverables.

A. PROGRAM DELIVERABLES

1. Populate the Workforce Information Database (WIDb) with State and Local Data

The Workforce Information 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 WIDb core tables with new data as it became available, populated new tables, and tested for data integrity. In addition to the basic ETA core tables, North Dakota also populates and maintains the following data tables: building permits, census labor force, commuting patterns, consumer price index, license history, transfer payments, education program completers, training and education programs, taxable sales, higher education institutions and eligible training providers, short term state industry projections, short term state occupational projections, tax information, food stamps, producer price index, and oil production.

North Dakota is using the WIDb version 2.4, which is the version that Geographic Solutions (the vendor for our electronic delivery system) is currently using for its Analyzer product. We will upgrade to 2.5 within the next two version upgrades of Analyzer from Geographic Solutions.

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 statewide and sub-state long-term industry projections for the 2010 to 2020 period will be completed in July 2012. These industry projections will be posted to our LMI website in

July 2012. Statewide long-term occupational projections will be completed in July 2012 and submitted to the Projections Management Partnership. The 2010-2020 occupational projections will be posted to our website in July 2012.

The LMI Center is also completing work on the short-term 2011-2013 industry and occupational projections. These will be completed and posted to our website in July of 2012.

North Dakota has also produced short- and long-term occupational projections at the sub-state level for each of the three MSA's and for the balance of state. However, the extremely small OES sample in many of the sub-state industry cells can result in weak or non-existent occupational staffing patterns in some area/industry cells. As a result, we evaluated these sub-state occupational projections for the various sub-state areas and found they were not reliable enough to publish.

The LMI Center has developed several products utilizing the projections data. The *North Dakota Employment Projections to 2020*, which provides the full occupational and industrial detail for the 2020 projections along with a variety of other occupational information will be published in July of 2012.

Short-Term Employment Projections will be published in July of 2012, which attempt to identify business cycle patterns and gauge their effect on job openings in the local labor market for 2011-2013. Projection results cover more than 100 industries and 500 occupations.

Careers in North Dakota was published in September 2010 and is a comprehensive publication that covers nearly everything job seekers would want to know about career opportunities in North Dakota, including employment projections, wages, core tasks, work activities, skills, knowledge, and typical education/training requirements. *Careers in North Dakota* will be updated with the 2010-2020 long-term projections and will be released fall of 2012.

The LMI Center again provided projections and wage data to the ND Career Resource Network for the *Career Outlook*. The annual publication, which is now in a magazine format is provided to high school students, their parents, career guidance counselors, One-Stop resource rooms, etc. In addition, Marcia Slag and Susan Simonson from LMI have been involved with NDCRN in assisting with the new layout and content of the *Career Outlook*.

3. Conduct and publish relevant economic analyses, special workforce information, and/or economic studies determined to be of benefit to the Governor, state and local WIBs.

In odd numbered years when the Governor's Workforce Summit is held, the Workforce Intelligence Council (WIC) is responsible for the development of the state of the workforce report. This report is also used for the Governor's Workforce Summit held in October.

In September 2011, the LMI Center produced the *North Dakota Workforce Review* for its customers. Along with some new expanded analysis of the state workforce supply and demand, this report will again contain a wide variety of workforce information on the state of North Dakota, the eight Governor's Planning Regions, and the 53 North Dakota counties.

4. Post products, information, and reports on the Internet.

Four years ago, the LMI Center launched NDWIN (North Dakota Workforce Intelligence Network), our new electronic delivery system which was purchased from Geographic Solutions. This system has been very well received. We have received very positive feedback from our customers on the capabilities of the system, ease of use, and overall appearance of NDWIN. We continue to make improvements to and add new data items and products to NDWIN. In November 2011, North Dakota implemented the newest version (11.0) of Geographic Solutions Analyzer product. In April 2013, North Dakota is scheduled to implement version 12.0.

In addition to the Analyzer portion, NDWIN contains a Publications Section which contains PDF's of all our publications. A third section called the Resource Center contains links to FAQ's, a glossary, list of acronyms, methodologies, contact information, and a related sites section. These sections were designed and populated by the LMI Center's web team.

The LMI Center has converted all products to web-based products for our customers as a way to utilize the web to minimize the costs and increased turnaround time associated with printing and hard copy distribution. Because of the limited shelf life of some products and the many areas to choose from (i.e. regions, counties, etc.), the use of PDFs was the most efficient and timely method of delivery. All of these web based products can be accessed in the Products Section of NDWIN.

The LMI Center continues to produce a variety of workforce intelligence products in addition to special studies and economic analysis during the past program year.

The *Online Job Openings Report* was released in May 2010, to provide a timely overview of the current supply/demand dynamic of North Dakota's labor market. It is available as a web-exclusive product and it involves the monthly collection and dissemination of online job openings and candidate activities.

The *Local Employment Dynamics (LED) Report* is a web-exclusive report updated quarterly. The LED Report supplies statistical measures on a local area's rapidly changing economy and labor market. Some of the stats include job creation, turnover, and industry earnings by age and gender.

The *Economic Dashboard* debuted in June 2011 and is updated monthly as a web-exclusive publication. It is an interactive Excel document highlighting the latest labor market information including unemployment rates, job counts, and initial unemployment claims.

Careers in North Dakota was released in September 2010 and is a comprehensive publication that covers nearly everything job seekers would want to know about career opportunities in North Dakota, including employment projections, wages, core tasks, work activities, skills, knowledge, and typical education/training requirements. Additionally, we've tagged those occupations that are high demand, high wage, and belong to one of five skill clusters. Also, there's the ability to cross-reference each occupation with a Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) code, career cluster, or general interest area. It is updated with the long-term projections as they are released.

The *Labor Market Information News Alert* made its debut in July 2010. It is an electronic newsletter to help customers stay on top of the latest happenings in workforce intelligence. Published at least twice a month, it provide updates on the latest economic data available on NDWIN, as well as information on recently released LMI publications and products. Customers can sign up for the *LMI News Alert* by going to the NDWIN home page.

The annual *North Dakota Employment and Wages* was published in June, 2012. This publication displays covered employment and wage data at various industrial and geographic breakouts in an updated format. This is one of the very few sources for employment and wage information for our rural counties.

Another of our most popular publications, *Wages for North Dakota Jobs*, was released in April, 2012. 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.

The *North Dakota Employment Projections to 2020*, which provides the full occupational and industrial detail for the 2020 projections along with a variety of other occupational information, will be published in July of 2012.

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The LMI Center conducts a Fringe Benefits Survey every two years. Based on feedback from our customers, the survey was designed and sample selected in a way that would allow LMI to publish fringe benefits data by area, by industry, and by size of firm. Accordingly, the LMI Center will develop the *North Dakota Benefits Guide* to present the results of this survey in 2012. This glossy brochure contains a compilation of fringe benefits information at the

statewide level and in a format that allows easy comparisons of fringe benefits information from city to city, industry to industry, and by size of firm. This publication has been in high demand and print quantities were raised to meet the growing number of requests for this pertinent information.

In support of local economic development efforts and our local One-Stop offices in 13 of our largest cities, the LMI Center continues to produce the *North Dakota Area Profiles*. They 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 groups continues to be extremely positive. While these profiles have been beneficial to all cities in promoting their communities, those cities that are not MSAs, and as a result, do not have any other source of employment information, found it especially valuable. The 2011 edition of the *North Dakota Area Profiles*, which contains updated QCEW information, census information, new tax data, and the new top fifteen employers listing for each city, as well as a statewide profile, was completed in October 2011.

The *2010 Largest Employer List* was updated on our website in August 2011. 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 13 largest cities in North Dakota.

Job Service North Dakota was able to new the license for an occupational analysis tool called TORQ with ARRA funds in October of 2011. LMI staff have utilized this software to create new *Skills Transfer Analysis (STA) Reports* tailored for specific occupations in major layoffs events in North Dakota. The *STA Reports* have been utilized by rapid response teams to help laid off workers identify related occupations for which they might qualify with little training, along with related occupational information on job openings and wages.

To better explain all its products and services, the LMI Center has developed a brochure entitled *Your Guide to LMI*. In addition to being a promotional piece for our LMI Center, this guide provides a brief explanation of all our LMI publications and NDWIN and provides an order form for customers to request publications. This Guide, which was originally distributed in 2007, has been updated to reflect some of the new publications we have recently released and the changes to NDWIN. These Guides are being utilized by our One-Stops in their resource rooms, at career fairs, workshops, and in business services activities.

The LMI Center has also utilized these grant funds for training purposes. Several of our LMI staff have attended national conferences and training sessions to maintain currency in the national trends, identify best practices in other states, learn new statistical programs and software, and network with their counterparts from other regions of the country. 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 training of our customers is also a very high priority in North Dakota. Members of the LMI staff have provided over 25 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 customer groups.

Several LMI presentations were made to the WDC and the WIC Steering Committee, as well as to the North Dakota Youth Council, the Governor's staff, North Dakota Commerce Department, Interim Legislative Committees, and Job Service Senior Management and One-Stop Offices. Many other local presentations/training sessions were provided to a wide range of customer groups such as Career Fairs and classes at colleges and universities throughout the state; Vocational Rehabilitation Conference; Business Services Conference; the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association; Red River Valley Regional Economic Group; 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.

5. Consult on a continuing basis with Workforce Investment Boards and other key workforce and economic development partners and stakeholders.

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 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. In addition, the LMI Manager is a member of both the Workforce Intelligence Council and the Workforce Intelligence Council Steering Committee, which meet quarterly and monthly, respectively.

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, WDC, Office of Management and Budget, Governor's Staff, Congressional Staff, Dislocated Worker Unit, the University System, and our Job Service Executive Director were invited to attend.

With the support of the WDC, Job Service North Dakota has joined the LED partnership with the Census Bureau. The LMI Center assembles the history files of wage records and QCEW data and submits them to the Census Bureau each quarter. In return, the Census Bureau provides us with Quarterly Workforce Indicators for the state and each county in North Dakota. The LMI Center provided a link to this very useful LED data on NDWIN. The LMI Center also provides training to key users, such as the Governor and his staff, Department of Commerce staff, WDC staff, Job Service Senior Management and Customer Service Office

staff, and local economic developers. The updated 'On the Map' package from LED has shown to have great potential in providing LED type data at a variety of geographic areas.

The LMI Center worked closely with the WDC and the Workforce Intelligence Council (WIC) on several other projects. LMI provided the WIC Steering Committee with relevant occupational employment, wage, and projections information for various projects. The LMI Center was also heavily involved with the WDC in the formulating the State's WIA Strategic Plan. The LMI staff provided a variety of workforce information and wrote the economic overview section of the WIA plan.

The LMI Center has been actively involved in the writing of North Dakota's grant application for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative. As members of the multi-agency grant application team, LMI staff were utilized in the planning stages and later to provide LMI data and technical input in the grant writing process. Job Service North Dakota wage data will be a critical component as will the data extractions we build for the Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI). North Dakota was one of just eight states selected to be awarded this competitive grant.

The LMI Center continues to handle a variety of ad hoc requests from the WDC for workforce intelligence items, special research projects, and statistical methodologies expertise.

The LMI Center has also become an important contact and reliable trusted data source for the press. This has generated increased awareness of workforce opportunities in the growing economy of North Dakota.

Several policy makers and disaster responders used flood/employment maps produced by the LMI Center. The maps were developed to allow for preparedness of the level and types of assistance needed.

Several special LMI studies and products have been created in support of the state Workforce Development Councils initiatives, which are included in section 4.

B. CUSTOMER CONSULTATIONS

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.

1. Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The LMI Center completed customer satisfaction surveys in the past. However, due to low response rates, it was decided to forego a formal customer satisfaction survey. Instead, an emphasis was placed on obtaining customer feedback at the NDWIN training sessions and 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, WIC, Commerce Department, the University System, and local economic developers. These conversations have been invaluable in discovering their workforce information needs and how we might be able to help them.

3. Feedback From Presentations and Training Sessions

As previously mentioned we have received valuable feedback from participants in our NDWIN training sessions and other 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.

Listed below is a summary of the comments we have received from our customers through various informal focus groups, one on one conversations, training evaluations, and other methods of collecting feedback from our customers.

- The News Alert is a great product! What an effective way to keep us up-to-date on new products and resources.
- STA reports are very helpful in working with laid off individuals.
- Need more training on NDWIN.
- How can you do all this with just the funding from the Workforce Information Grant?
- Can we get more information on Vets?
- Dashboard products are great idea, can't wait to see finished product.
- Love the new Careers by Education.
- LMI staff have been invaluable in putting together our strategic plan.
- The LMI info you provide for Rapid Response events has been extremely helpful to our clients.
- State of Workforce Report is very helpful for rural areas like ours—it's the only workforce data we have for our county.

- Really like the new look of LMI publications.
- We are using NDWIN more all the time.
- Careers by Education are great resource for career exploration classes.
- We appreciate the help the LMI Center provided for our RIG application.
- Careers by Education is great. We have schools calling for more copies.
- Like to new look and usability of NDWIN.
- 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.
- Methods of Counting Jobs is very helpful in explaining employment difference to customers.
- 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.
- Great job on NDWIN. It looks great and is easier to use.
- Demographic Profiles very useful in Turtle Mountain.
- Good to see LMI staff visit local offices, we learn so much from them.
- Like recent changes in LMI publications.
- LMI staff has always been very helpful to me.
- Marcia did an amazing job on the NDWIN training.
- 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?
- Largest Employer list is very popular with local civic leaders.
- Great new publications—you are on the right track.
- Can you get us information potential worker pools?
- People like to see graphs, charts, bullets, --it's 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.
- Could CSA IV host a focus group of local economic developers and LMI?
- Thank you for coming out and asking us for feedback.
- Would like to see more mapping of data.
- It's nice to have something professional looking to give to businesses when we call on them.
- Should have LMI products and services info and links to our info, on mini-CD's for handouts.
- Would like to see us there (local office) on a more regular basis.

C. PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

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 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. In addition,

the LMI Manager is a member of both the Workforce Intelligence Council and the Workforce Intelligence Council Steering Committee, which meet quarterly and monthly, respectively.

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The LMI Center continues to handle a variety of ad hoc requests from the WDC for workforce intelligence items, special research projects, and statistical methodologies expertise.

Several tools and resources were developed and/or improved upon throughout the program year as a result of requests or collaborations with the state and local entities mentioned above:

The *Online Job Openings Report* is released on a monthly basis, to provide a timely overview of the current supply/demand dynamic of North Dakota's labor market. It involves the monthly collection and dissemination of online job openings and candidate activities.

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D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OR CHANGES TO THE DELIVERABLES

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 Workforce Information 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 deliverables.

The following are a few observations we have made based on conversations with our various customers:

- 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 to the workforce information they need and have come to depend upon us to produce.
- Over the past year, the LMI Center made the necessary changes to shift from printed products to web-exclusive products. We gradually made that change over the last couple of years with a few products and this year, we moved the remaining products to web-exclusive. What we expected to be somewhat of a difficult transition for some customers, actually proved to be quite the opposite. We believe there is more acceptance of the fact that the products can be just as user-friendly online and have received support through this transition.