

Workforce Information Core Products and Services Annual Performance Report Program Year 2011

During Program Year 2011, the Research, Information and Analysis Division of WorkForce West Virginia continued to meet its goals of producing and disseminating labor market information in accordance with requirements outlined in the Workforce Information Grant. Working closely with workforce investment boards, economic development authorities, state lawmakers, and vocational and career counselors, the Division has conducted studies and offered assistance to those putting West Virginians back to work. Frequent contact with workforce investment boards has enabled RIA to become familiar with the needs of the customers served by these boards, and thus tailor products such as industry growth and decline and demand occupations to assist these customers.

Publish an annual economic analysis review

An annual economic review is prepared for the Governor and the state workforce investment boards. This report is made available to other economic development groups and policy makers as well. The report is distributed in printed format to its primary users, but is accessible to anyone via the Division's website. The latest completed report contains:

- A summary of state economic activity
- Economic indicators, Gross Domestic Product and per capita income data
- Nonfarm payroll employment
- Civilian labor force for the state and counties
- Employment and wage data
- Industry employment projections
- Demand Occupations for West Virginia 2010-2020
- Detailed economic data for each of the seven workforce investment areas including demographic, census, labor force, nonfarm payroll employment, wage data, largest employer listing, occupational demand, industry employment projections showing growth and decline

Conduct special studies and economic analyses

Essentially, LMI users and customers provide the impetus for unique studies and analysis of economic movement or interest. Workforce investment boards, the Governor's office, and varying government policy groups continue to seek reliable, quantifiable information that supports decision making for legislative action or valid business assessments. The State's Labor Market Information office remains the most reliable source for that data. Prominent studies and analysis conducted in the past fiscal year are listed below.

- An economic review for the Governor's office profiling the existing economic fitness of the state, including historical data and prospects for the future.
- Quarterly reports are prepared for the legislature measuring unemployment insurance activities such as initial claims, weeks claimed, weeks compensated, and benefits paid and their impact on the unemployment insurance trust fund.
- A database is prepared and maintained that measures and describes education to employment conduits for students.
- Occupational data and particularly demand occupations remain a vital topic to workforce investment areas. Reports are produced regularly and disseminated in the monthly Economic Summary and encompass topics extending from fundamental statistics to the more diverse information of demand occupations.
- A survey of apple orchards in the state's eastern panhandle is conducted each year measuring the status of wage scale equity.
- A study on workforce commuting patterns for each workforce investment area was conducted using the LED On The Map tool.

Continue to populate the Workforce Information Database

- We have completed the upgrade to version 2.4 of the WID.
- Virtual LMI (VLMI) allows clients (internal and external) access to the information in the WID.
- Upgrade to version 11 of the VLMI software completed.
- In the process of recreating and rebranding our website using more graphic and visual interactive tools to view the WID data.
- Core tables of the WID are populated according to consortium guidelines and updated as data are available.
- Populated non-core tables are updated as data are available.

Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections

The Research, Information and Analysis Division of Workforce West Virginia has produced employment forecasts for the state and all workforce investment areas (WIA). Projections staff produced several simulations and analyzed numerous scenarios during the projection cycle. Unfortunately, unanticipated staffing issues led to a slight delay in the analysis and publication process. As a result, 2010-2020 projections for West Virginia and all workforce investment areas were completed in August 2012 and posted to the WorkForce West Virginia website. The deliverable was submitted to the appropriate entities on August 16, 2012. These projections and corresponding analyses have been included in the agency's State Plan.

Short-term projections for the state and all seven workforce investment areas lagged behind due to staffing issues. The 2011-2013 projections were completed and disseminated in late August 2012. The designated Employment and Training Administration representative was provided the deliverable for short-term projections on August 23, 2012 and short-term projections were published to the LMI website shortly after.

Because of the value of occupational forecasts and the significant interest, projections data for the state and all workforce investment areas are showcased frequently in the monthly Economic Summary. A separate and distinct article highlighting economic trends and forecasts for the projections data is produced annually and published in the monthly Economic Summary.

Post products, information, and reports on the Internet

Research, Information and Analysis has maintained a website for nearly 17 years, a site which received approximately two million hits last year. Products, information, and reports that are posted on the Division's main site include:

- Latest monthly data for counties, state, and nation
- Data releases announcing updates on economic data, including top employers, wages, and unemployment rate
- Employment/unemployment data including historical for nation, state, counties, workforce investment areas, metropolitan statistical areas, and micropolitan and consolidated statistical areas
- Data from Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW)
- Data from Business Employment Dynamics
- Occupational Data and Projections
- Industry Projections, both short-term and long-term
- Data from Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics (LED)
- Data from Occupational Safety and Health

- West Virginia's monthly Economic Summary in PDF
- West Virginia County Profiles including Workforce Investment Areas
- Consumer Price Index
- Top 100 private employers in West Virginia
- Top 10 employers by WV County
- Top 25 employers by Workforce Investment Area
- Per Capita Personal Income

Contact information for customer comment and input is prominent on the LMI website and is provided on all published information and anytime our staff interacts with customers. The LMI shop offers options for more contact and data by providing numerous links, as well as an online survey soliciting feedback.

Customer consultation of workforce information and products

Partnership between the state labor market information staff and the local workforce investment boards continues to produce vital information on regional labor market conditions. Labor market information is provided to the boards through both core products and frequently tailored data and analyses supplied upon request. The core products of occupational, industrial, employment and unemployment data are fundamental tools for the local boards in their support of the regional economies. Examples of the specialized data products are Demand Occupations, Industry Projections, Labor Sheds, and Commuter Analysis, all adapted to the specific economic development effort of the requesting agency. Research, Information and Analysis also works closely with the West Virginia Development Office, State Economic Development Authorities, the West Virginia Department of Education, the Regional Intergovernmental Council, and city governments.

Pertinent labor market information is essential to local boards in their efforts to identify, attract and foster emergent and growing industries and businesses. Forecasting future economic trends is inherently difficult, but armed with adequate labor market information, local workforce boards are able to focus on developing promising industries and businesses. Local boards request labor market research and analysis in support of their development efforts.

Particularly in changing economic conditions, the education and training of the local workforce is a crucial element in strengthening a local economy. Local boards frequently request, and are provided, occupational and industrial analysis identifying occupations expected to grow at the greatest rate, produce the most openings, and allow a standard of living at a level of self-sufficiency.

Local workforce investment boards frequently focus on high-tech businesses seeking workers with suitable skills and education. Labor shed analysis assists in determining

how industries match with the available labor pool. Similarly, such analysis can identify characteristics of the local workforce and provide a business insight necessary for refinement of recruiting efforts.

In PY 2011, Research, Information and Analysis employees began planning a series of industry sector analyses. These studies will focus on particularly important sectors of the economy, such as mining, health services, and technological industries, and will provide detailed statistics on these industries. Among the data highlighted will be employment and wage data and industry projections. The first industry sector analysis produced will be for the oil and gas industry, due to intense interest sparked by the Marcellus Shale field.

Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards

WorkForce West Virginia frequently consults with all seven workforce investment boards, some on a nearly weekly basis, in order to supply data and meet requests. Requests frequently involve wage data, commuting patterns, and labor pool information. Workforce investment boards have participated in the development of innovative and progressive endeavors. Research, Information and Analysis is occasionally asked to sit in on and contribute to workforce investment board meetings, roundtable discussions, etc. PY 2011 contained four such meetings with workforce investment council members and Research, Information and Analysis staff.

WorkForce West Virginia also works closely with the West Virginia Development Office, providing information to assist employers who wish to locate in the state. Research, Information and Analysis is contacted by the Development Office as frequently as several times a week.

Much data (such as Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, top employers, unemployment rates) at one time produced for counties and metropolitan statistical areas only are now produced for workforce investment areas as well, thus creating a database of labor market information for each board. Demand occupations by workforce investment area have been well received by the statewide boards, and tend to be the most frequently requested data by WIA employees.

Work has begun on a redesigned website for West Virginia's labor market information. The new site will implement a data visualization tool (Tableau), allowing users to combine and format numerous pieces of data to create customized analyses and reports. The new site will have a cleaner, less cluttered look, with a simple, easy to navigate interface.

Accomplishments

Training and/or discussion of LMI data was presented at four sessions with Division of Rehabilitation Services, Employment Service representatives, Department of Health

and Human Resource counselors, Worker's Compensation staff and Workforce Investment Council members. Attendance totaled over 120.

Limitations

Because West Virginia LMI has no state funding and is 100 percent reliant on federal funding, financial limitations create difficulty in recruiting new staff. The bulk of the Workforce Information Grant is spent on personnel costs, which limits the ability to send staff to offered LMI training, reduces the frequency with which we can offer workshops, and decreases the amount of money we have to spend on value-added products such as printed publications and website tools. West Virginia LMI staff members must wear many hats and manage time delicately.