

**Illinois Department of Employment Security
Economic Information and Analysis Division**

PY12 Workforce Information Grant Annual Performance Report

July 1, 2012 - June 30, 2013

1. Populate the Workforce Information Database (WIDb) with state and local data.

Maintained the most current version of the WIDb and updated all core tables as required and according to guidelines. Through the search engine utilized in Illinois, the Workforce Info Center (WIC) (<http://illinois.virtuallmi.com/>), this database supported informed local and regional workforce analysis and employer services. Staff review of feedback and costs on the delivery of workforce information via the WIC have resulted in our plan to switch to the LMIInformer Consortium with a go live date on or about Oct. 1st in the new program year (PY2013), although we used Geographic Solutions the entire PY2012 year. (The WIDb search engine is generally accessed through <http://www.ides.illinois.gov/>, the redesigned IDES website through the Workforce Partners and Data & Statistics tabs.)

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections.

- ▶ Reviewed and posted statewide 2010-2020 and substate (Local Workforce Areas) long-term industry and occupational employment projections.
- ▶ An extensive external review of the substate 2010-2020 long-term industry employment projections for Illinois' reconfigured Local Workforce Areas (see <http://www.ides.illinois.gov/custom/library/statistic/EmploymentProjections/DefinitionsOfWorkforceInvestmentAreas.html>) will be completed by the end of 2013. IDES will utilize the extra time to incorporate input from our Statewide and 5 Regional Manufacturing Learning Exchanges on the industry employment projections for their sector (part of the Illinois WIF/Accelerated Training in Illinois Manufacturing (ATIM) Project.
- ▶ Completed short-term 2013-2015 statewide industry employment projections. Distributed the projections report to the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors and posted on the Employment Projections page at <http://www.ides.illinois.gov/lmi>.
- ▶ Customer contact via email or phone for assistance with the analysis and interpretation of projections data continues to be the principal source of feedback on projections data.

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

Based upon ongoing consultations with state and local workforce board and partner agency staff, education and workforce development partners under the auspices of the P-20 Council, and our WDQI and WIF partner agencies and private sector partners, during PY12 Economic Information and Analysis staff leveraged resources to conduct workforce analyses to address several critical education, workforce and economic development strategies in Illinois.

Illinois did not produce one annual report, but produced several reports focused on local questions or specific customer requests. These include:

After the Recession: Employment Status and Earnings Recovery of Illinois Workers
<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/publications/ILMR/PostRecovery.pdf>

North Central Region Showing Signs of Recovery
<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/publications/ILMR/NCRegion.pdf>

Economic Impact of the 2012 Drought
<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/publications/ILMR/AgriculturalDrought.pdf>

A Tale of Three Counties -- Revisited
http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/publications/ILMR/three_counties.pdf

UI Claimant Data Available by Legislative District (quarterly publication)
http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/publications/ILMR/leg_dashboard.pdf

Illinois invested heavily in **real-time data analysis tools: HWOL and TORQ** a few years ago and the demand for these tools has increased. The Conference Board's HWOL online job ads provide information on current demand for employment by occupation and industry. Occupational demand provides useful input to current and future job seekers in that people train for occupations, not industries. Thus, it is important to know that demand exists for computer programmers, not whether the programmers will be hired in state government or banks. The HWOL data is available by detailed geography and we are often asked to depict the demand for various occupations within very small local areas. Educators and job seekers are aware that the job market may be broader than a single county. Consequently, our monthly HWOL list of jobs in demand is compiled by Economic Development Region (EDR). There are 10 such regions in Illinois. Based on analysis of usage, we have revamped our publications to meet the needs of our customers.

<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=2518>

<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/Statistic/HWOL/snapshot/jun13.pdf>

http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/Statistic/HWOL/edr1_jun13.pdf

This is an example of how we used HWOL in looking at Job Vacancies and the demand for certain skills.

<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/Custom/Library/publications/ILMR/HWOL2.pdf>

Workforce Associates' TORQ, which stands for Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient is a tool that can be used in Rapid Response, Economic Development and simply when job seekers are job hunting and need to shift gears in their occupational choices when demand for occupations change due to the economic environment.

Incidentally, TORQ is primarily a tool for employment services specialists and workforce partners, but utilizes Illinois-specific labor market and career information. Consequently, an EI&A staff person is the TORQ administrator at IDES and she conducts numerous web training sessions throughout the year. In addition, the labor market economists around the state act in a "train the trainer" capacity as needed in the local offices.

TORQ has gained prominence across the state as IDES Director Jay Rowell has promoted its use along with the labor exchange tool, Illinoisjoblink.com. In addition, TORQ is widely used in the field as IDES works in conjunction with DCEO, ICCB and other regional partners in the Workforce Innovation Fund Grant.

Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI)

Over the course of the past year (July 1, 2012 through June 30, 2013), senior EI&A staff met regularly with our partners from the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), and state education agencies to discuss ways that we would share educational longitudinal data in combination with workforce longitudinal data.

Together with IDES and DCEO, the agency partners at state secondary and post-secondary education agencies have worked together to establish a common vision and plan of action for building a cost-effective education and workforce longitudinal data system under the direction of a statewide governance body. A governance document was signed by all the agencies by June 30, 2013.

During the year, Illinois state agency partners confirmed the approach established in the prior year that the Illinois workforce and education agency partners would take responsibility for building and maintaining their own longitudinal data systems internally or with university partners. Agency partners agreed to enter into standardized agreements with one or more agency partners to exchange data in cooperation with university intermediaries as needed for approved long-term initiatives as well as more short-term projects. To make this distributed approach work effectively and efficiently, all education and workforce agency partners will use a shared Identification Management System to ensure consistently high levels of quality, reliability, and security in matching and managing individual-level data across all agency and university partners. These agencies and their university partners will adhere to common data quality and privacy/security requirements for managing longitudinal data systems that meet the most rigorous federal and state requirements for education and workforce data.

At the Illinois Department of Employment Security, we continue to work with our university partner (Illinois State University) and are continuing to build and refine an infrastructure to house UI Wage Records, Claimant Benefit data, IllinoisJoblink.com (job seeker data), and Employment Services data. These data sets will allow us to provide more robust information to IDES Operations staff to target employment services where they are most needed. In fact, UI Claimant Data by Legislative District Report came out of this database. Each quarter, we provide 1 statewide report; 18 U.S. Congressional District Reports; and 59 Illinois Senate District Reports. (The Illinois House District is too small and could potentially reveal personally identifiable information. Consequently, we supply only the Illinois Senate District Reports.)

<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=3605>

Workforce Innovation Fund Grant

From our WIF Scope of Work: “The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Illinois Department of Employment Security (IDES), and the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) will work together to scale up and sustain regional sector partnerships to address the growing skilled worker shortages in manufacturing. These agency partners will implement innovative state economic development, workforce development and education policies and systems to scale up proven models of regional public-private sector partnerships and make these partnerships an integral part of the public workforce investment system. This initiative will use an evidence-based regional partnership model that includes key features of leading regional partnership models that have been proven to meet employer needs as well as expand opportunities for the most vulnerable populations served through the public workforce investment system including low-income adults and long-term unemployed and dislocated workers. This model will be applied first to manufacturing but will be designed for application in other key sectors.”

How will Economic Information and Analysis help with the WIF grant in Illinois? From the beginning, labor market economists around the state helped local areas gather relevant labor market information in order to apply for one of the six to eight regional partnership grants. As it turned out, the best proposals came from those regional groups that incorporated the most relevant labor market information (we had recused ourselves from the selection process to avoid conflict of interest).

After selection, labor market economists continue to work with the regional partnerships to provide appropriate labor market information for the project. In some cases, TORQ was the perfect tool. Says Vicki Niederhofer who is closely involved in this process:

“TORQ is the fastest way to determine suitability for the ATIM project, taking literally 5-10 minutes. The tool is a relational database using the O*Net database. With the Personal Employment Planner, a counselor is able to look at the Gap Analysis page and determine the status of an individual’s Knowledge, Skills and Ability match. If the potential enrollee has a gap of 54 percent in the Knowledge area, but scores 88 in Skills and 94 in Abilities we know that training will close the Knowledge gap. All of the potential enrollees will receive a TORQ analysis as part of the protocol.”

To assist ATIM grant coordinators, IDES provides HWOL information for manufacturing positions on a monthly basis. This data allows coordinators to assess real time occupation demand for manufacturing position. HWOL data also provides the grant recipients with information on which industry sector is posting manufacturing positions and if those positions are full-time, part-time, or contract. The list of employers posting the most ads enables the grant coordinators to direct efforts to involve employers in the ATIM efforts and assist participants in job placement.

The Economic Information and Analysis Division is also closely involved on the employment projection side. Strategy 3 from the Workforce Innovation Fund Scope of Work reveals how the IDES/EI&A employment projections team will work in conjunction with the partners to produce projections and incorporate feedback from the partners to supply the most accurate employment and skill projections.

Strategy 3: Enhanced Labor Market and Management Information Systems

Activity 3.1: Enhance Employment Projection and Job Opening Systems. IDES will work with the Manufacturing Learning Exchange to enhance the current IDES projection system based on national models that provide structured input from employers in projecting job growth and openings in critical occupations for major career pathways at the state and regional levels. They will then work together with DCEO to incorporate the pathways and skills framework into the job opening system on the Pathways website so employers can use a menu to describe skill requirements for the most critical job openings in the region based on the Manufacturing Learning Exchange career pathways framework. IDES will work with the State Manufacturing Partnership Team to provide training and support on the system as needed. Output: Enhanced System and Ongoing Training and Support.

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

To assist partners and local stakeholders to achieve the State Workforce Investment Plan’s goals of economic self-sufficiency and business growth, IDES’ online labor market and career information systems continue to provide access to tools and services that enable customers to make informed career and occupational decisions.

In order to insure accessibility to all stakeholders in the Illinois Workforce Development System, IDES' web sites maintain their linkages to Illinois workNet and provide analysis of employment trends, educational, training and skill requirements, wages, career advancement opportunities, and labor market conditions with a demand-driven focus on major employing industries in the state. As a result, in PY12 403,000 customers visited Illinois' labor market and career information web sites.

- ▶ The updated 2012-2013 Career Information System (CIS) and CIS Junior were released to the Web as scheduled in September and December 2011. Number of unique visitors, CIS = 104,446; CIS Junior = 13,121. In addition, the CIS web portal on the IDES website had 140,580 page views. These would include the visitors to the CIS server as well as visitors to the CIS web page which contained additional career information.
- ▶ The primary point of access to labor market data for most customers is the 'Data and Statistics' page of the IDES homepage. Number of page views = 121,841.
- ▶ Illinois' Workforce Info Center serves as the WIDb platform. Number of unique visitors = 12,194.

5. Collaborating and consulting on a continuing basis with WIBs and other key workforce and economic development partners and stakeholders to improve LMI-WI products, tools, and information services to meet evolving customer needs.

- ▶ Again this program year, IDES continued to expand and enhance the incorporation of the Career Information System and the most frequently requested labor market information into Illinois workNet as part of our partnership with the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) and Illinois Workforce Investment Board (IWIB).
- ▶ Provided monthly Local Area Unemployment Statistics (LAUS), Current Employment Statistics (CES), Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) summary reports and Mass Layoff Statistics (MLS) data, in requested formats, by Economic Development Regions (EDRs) and Local Workforce Areas (LWAs) to Governor's Office, DCEO, IWIB, and to all Local Workforce Investment Boards.
- ▶ Local Labor Market Economists provided technical assistance to local and regional economic and workforce development partners and their constituents by:
 - Serving on Local WIB Youth Councils, advisory committees, and standing committees.
 - Compiling data for reports and presentations for/to economic development professionals, Chambers of Commerce, Boards of Education, and local elected officials.
 - Assisting local and regional Rapid Response teams in their efforts.
 - Preparing data for site selection packages to support local business attraction efforts.

This year, we requested the **labor market economists** to share in their own words how they view their role in the field.

Norman Kelewitz works in the Aurora, IL office and covers: Bureau, DeKalb, Fulton, Henderson, Kane, Kendall, Knox, Lake, LaSalle, Livingston, McLean, Marshall, Mason, Peoria, Putnam, Stark, Tazewell, Warren, Woodford

What **type of customers** did you serve?

- Schools, WIA's, private employers, economic develop agencies, other units in IDES (Revenue, Field Audit and Job Service), other state agencies and community organizations

What **kinds of questions** did you get?

- Wages, affirmative action, LAUS, employer lists, veterans employment, NAICS codes and occupational projections

What **tools did you use?**

- One Source (IDES Website) and American Community Survey

Did you get requests from **new clients**?

- Yes, new customers this past year include:
 - Delnor Hospital (private) -- nonag by industry
 - Lake County Veterans Assitance Commission (gov)-- labor force status of veterans
 - Allied Barton Security (private)—LAUS
 - Kane County Office of Community Reinvestment (gov)-- LAUS

Did you serve the **same clients month after month?**

- I have a mailing list that I use to mail out LAUS data each month.
- Old customers with new requests
 - WIA 16 (gov)-- affirmative action
 - DeKalb County Economic Development Commission (economic development)-- definitions of labor force terms
 - Kiswaukee Community College (schools)—wages
 - Peoria Local Office (other IDES)-- labor force status of veterans
 - Woodstock Local Office (other IDES)-- employer list

Ron Payne works in the Springfield, IL office and covers: Cass, Christian, DeWitt, Greene, Logan, Macon, Macoupin, Menard, Montgomery, Morgan, Sangamon, Scott

- The customers I deal with include chambers of commerce, economic development agencies, partner state agencies, local governments, local WIA staff, school districts, businesses and individuals. Most of these customers are seeking labor market information with the most requested being labor force and jobs data. There are also many calls dealing with wage data and projections data as well. On occasion I get questions concerning population, educational attainment, commuting and I also have helped various entities working on site-selection packages to help attract potential employers to local areas and statewide. Many of the customers are what I would term “regular customers” that contact me either monthly, quarterly or annually for updates to new data. However, there always seems to be new customers that have questions about data on our website (or have no idea where to go to find data) or many times they are referrals from some of my more regular customers.
- When I talk with my customers I usually ask several questions to find out exactly what it is that they need, which helps me determine what type of program data that would work best for their needs. The most frequently used data sets are the LAUS, CES, and OES Projections and Wages. In addition, when working with the education community I often use educational attainment data from the Census Bureau and the LED program and when working with individuals, the Career Information System. One other program I should mention is the “On the Map” website that I have become fairly proficient at using. There is a wealth of data on this site including very up-to-date commuting data, as well as block level industry data, labor pool and labor shed data, earnings data, worker race and ethnicity data, and educational attainment data.

Vicki Niederhofer works in the Belleville, IL office and covers: Bond, Calhoun, Clinton, Jersey, Madison, Monroe, St. Clair

What type of customers did I serve?

I work in a Job Center, so in addition to my customers at the community colleges, economic development professionals, Local Workforce Investment Board staff and Federal Parole office and Scott Air Force Base staff, I work with jobseekers. In order to provide better service, I organized a weekly Job Club with my colleagues from Southwestern Illinois College and the Department of Human Services Division of Rehabilitative Services and LWIA. Our LWIA partners shared their testing/orientation room with us and we were able to demonstrate our online resources during presentations. As our reputation spread, the AARP Executive Director for St. Louis attended and incorporated Job Club into her training program for the senior workers. Later, she donated more computers to the effort and later the WinWay Resume program was installed on two of the computers. We now have some technology available to the individuals in the group who need assistance with our labor exchange, Illinois Job Link and the Career Information System, including Jobseeker Success Mindset Training. We have customers who are military spouses from Scott Air Force Base, recruited when I provide workshops at the Airman and Family Readiness Center. Other customers include formerly incarcerated from the East St. Louis Federal Parole office and St. Clair County Department of Probation, unemployment claimants who require help with online job searches, long-term unemployed and discouraged workers and recent graduates who are looking for their first job or people facing a career change due to a disability.

With the closing of the East St. Louis office March 1, 2013 the traffic in the Belleville local office increased dramatically. The challenges brought opportunities to focus on how to improve our operations in the busiest One Stop south of Springfield. We continue to develop better relationships with our community partners. Computer literacy is now required since unemployment claims must be filed online, so we have Southwestern Illinois College, the Urban League and Lessie Bates Davis Neighborhood Centers working with our customers to develop

their job skills on the computer. The online claim provides excellent motivation to learn for our most computer adverse customers. The online job search is a challenge as well so we provide help with that at Job Club.

What kinds of questions did you get?

My customers frequently request employment projections, census data, career information and wage data. Once, a mother came to my office with her son to compare wage data and develop the next interview strategy before the young man accepted a job offer.

What tools did you use?

TORQ, Help Wanted Online, Career Information System, On the Map, O*Net, My Next Move, My Skills, My Future

Did you get requests from new clients?

Some of the new relationships that developed this year include:

- * present information to graduate students in the counseling department at Lindenwood University in Belleville.
- * work with the East St. Louis Housing Authority's Sustainability officer to assist residents with career planning and job search
- * recruit for Urban Weatherization Initiative through job club
- * presented Job Skills workshops to the Urban League in Fairview Heights

Did you serve the same clients month after month?

Yes, I send monthly reports to my regular customers and add new clients each month, as well. Our Workforce Information News Release, the Help Wanted Online reports for Economic Development Regions. I send a weekly report on job postings to partners in workforce development from Help Wanted Online and America's Job Center's federal contractor job postings.

Tom Austin works in the Rockford, IL office and covers: Adams, Boone, Brown, Carroll, Champaign, Douglas, Ford, Hancock, Henry, Iroquois, JoDaviess, Lee, McDonough, Mercer, Ogle, Piatt, Pike, Rock Island, Schuyler, Stephenson, Vermilion, Whiteside, Winnebago

What type of customers did you serve?

- Workforce Investment Areas: My areas are provided with monthly CES and LAUS customized reports to help them assess the local economy. Projections data is also customized to assist LWA 3 and other LWAs in their training program approval process. Career counselors and job placement staff receive HWOL Real Time data to support Employment Projections data in career advisement and training selection. For special projects, such as promoting GED efforts, US Census data is provided to determine local need,
- Economic Development Agencies: Monthly updates of CES and LAUS, along with Census, WARN, and UI Claims data assists EDCs in their employer attraction efforts.
- School districts and related organizations (employment projections, wages)
- Businesses (wage data, laus and ces to measure local economy)
- I serve on the LWA 3 Program Oversight Committee, which uses IDES employment projections and wage data, HWOL, and administrative data from workforce investment programs to approve local training programs for WIA participants.
- Chicago Federal Reserve Board: I provide analysis each month as part of their local survey on local economic conditions.

What kinds of questions did you get?

- Wage data
- Changes in labor force and employment by industry
- Census data: educational attainment by employment status and population, population data)
- What jobs are advertised (HWOL)

What tools did you use?

- Haver for local, state, and national data--this has been a great tool for data management
- HWOL
- Projections

- CIS
- ONET online
- On The Map
- To respond to State of Wisconsin UI determination requests, I developed a database to provide a customized report to their staff. To respond to questions about occupational and wage data, I set up a data base that provides a customized report to WIA staff. In addition, I utilize the State of Illinois Workforce Development system data on training programs and number of individuals in training by CIP, to assist in LWA 3 program approval process and evaluation process.

Did you get requests from **new clients**?

- Yes, clients see the monthly report I send out to clients and ask to be added to that monthly e-mail.
- I also get clients who are looking for local information and use our web site to find out which LME serves their area.

Did you serve the **same clients month after month**?

- I have list of clients in each of my areas that receive a monthly update of labor force and employment by industry changes for their specific area. To provide my customers with a quick reference table to compare counties in their region, I also have a summary of change in total nonfarm and labor force data as dashboard report.
- HWOL data is provided to LWA, Partner, and IDES staff

Dennis Hoffman works in the Mount Vernon office and covers: Alexander, Clark, Clay, Coles, Crawford, Cumberland, Edgar, Edwards, Effingham, Fayette, Franklin, Gallatin, Hamilton, Hardin, Jackson, Jasper, Jefferson, Johnson, Lawrence, Marion, Massac, Moultrie, Perry, Pope, Pulaski, Randolph, Richland, Saline, Shelby, Union, Wabash, Washington, Wayne, White, Williamson

Type of Customers:

The type of customer continues to be a wide range of users from across the spectrum of private and public organizations. This has been the situation for many years, even decades. The list of users would include private businesses especially manufacturing firms, consultants, news media, local government agencies, all levels of educational institutions, health care providers, economic development firms and organizations, job seekers, and IDES staff. The Human Resources departments of the larger employers are always regular LMI users.

Kinds of Questions:

Many of the questions are concerned with the source and explanation of the LMI data for Wages, Industry and Occupational Projections, Local Area Unemployment Statistics, Workforce Availability, Current Employment Statistics, Employer Listings, and Quarterly Employment and Establishment Data. Often, questions are about accessing the website and where the data is located on the website. In addition, questions about locating Census Data and other economic data are frequently asked.

LMI Tools Used:

The LMI tools used included the Employment and Occupational Projections, Career Information System, Current Employment Statistics, Workforce Availability, and Wage Data. TORQ was used for specific projects involving mass layoffs. Career Information System (CIS) is often promoted at presentations and conferences, especially at educational institutions. The addition of the HWOL data has been extremely helpful for users looking for jobs and career decision making. Commuting Pattern data from the Census has also been effectively used to discuss economic trends.

New Clients:

Every year there are a number of new clients and they are from all areas of business, government, and individuals. New clients are generally very pleased when they discover a local labor market economist presence in their region.

Continuing Clients:

Many of the clients have been LMI users for many years and are often regular contacts. Having been a labor market economist for many years, I have established many business relationships with many LMI users on a monthly or yearly basis. This consistency has been a good benefit as I have become a trusted resource to many

LMI users. Many of the long-time regular LMI users include news media reporters, human resource directors, economic development directors, educators, grant writers, bankers, and government employees.

Central Office

The majority of the Economic Information and Analysis Division is located in Chicago. This includes all BLS program staff as well as the Employment Projections staff; other research economists and our publications editor. We utilize all the economists in the Central office to help with requests from our customers not only in Chicago but around the state. For example, Dave Bieneman is our specialist on Veteran's issues having done research in the past several years on the transition of Illinois veterans from military discharge to civilian employment.

Illinois' LED specialist, Allan Ross, also works in Central Office. He regularly attends U.S. Census-sponsored LED conferences in Washington D.C. on behalf of the Division. In conjunction with his expertise of the LED mapping tool, On the Map, he has become the specialist on Geographic Information Systems and utilizes ARC-GIS in his work.

General unemployment statistics questions are usually answered by Richard Reinhold, who heads the BLS/LAUS Program in Illinois (and is also the state co-chair of the LAUS Policy Council). Mr. Reinhold also handles all high unemployment area certification requests. In Program Year 2012, Illinois had 110 requests for such letters certifying high unemployment areas in order to get EB-5 Visa approvals by the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services.

<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=3665>

LMI Director Evelina Loescher has participated on various outreach events including meetings Workforce Investment Board leaders and a newly-formed LMI Peer Learning Exchange sponsored by the Chicago Community Trust.

Economic Information and Analysis group responds to legislative requests as well as questions from the Governor's office. George Putnam and Evelina Loescher participate on the Governor's Council of Economic Advisors quarterly.

Central office requests are varied and numerous. From the Central Office perspective, we probably serve more state government officials than the other local areas. We use all the tools at our disposal from HWOL to TORQ to CIS to Employment Projections to all forms of traditional labor market data.

Evelina Loescher is a Board member of the Projections Managing Partnership, PMP (established in 2012) which recommends national policy to the Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration. George Putnam, a founding member of the PMP consortium, is a technical advisor to the PMP Board.

Waleed Almousa, in his capacity as the Program Manager for the BLS Occupational Employment Statistics Survey, attended training on utilizing the EDS (Estimate Delivery System) in June 2013. Illinois has used this system for several years, but nonetheless benefitted from the training as Mr. Almousa discovered several potential uses of this system that would be beneficial to Illinois and that would allow us to provide additional labor market information products. For instance, minimum wage studies, industry and occupational clusters could be produced (given sufficient resources). Also, short term occupational employment projections could be created out of this system to assist the employment projections unit. Currently, Illinois uses the EDS system to create wage estimates for local areas: we create estimates for LWIAs, economic develop regions, counties and MSAs. We would not be able to provide the detailed information without the EDS.

Ewa Gallagher, in her capacity as Manager of UI Claims Statistics and Forecasts, produces weekly indices on UI claims volume and quarterly forecasts for regular and extended UI claims volume. Ewa, Darnell Cloud, and George Putnam enhanced the UI Trust Fund solvency models for use by the Agency's senior management. In addition to the IDES proprietary model, they have created auxiliary forecast models on UI weeks paid and state labor market conditions. Moreover, they are working towards implementation of the USDOL Benefit Funding Model for Illinois.

Customer Service Highlights

It is always a pleasure to collect some of the notes of appreciation our staff gets each year for helping job seekers, economic developers, career counselors, government policymakers and others by providing labor market and career information.

- A participant in a recent Job Club meeting sent the following email to LME Vicki Niederhofer:
"I have finished the on-line exercises in ReNew that you asked me to complete on interest assessment and was wondering if we could meet to further explore my career options...This website that you told me about is wonderful! I am learning about myself and getting direction and encouragement!" (Karen Paape)
- After hearing positive feedback, Rick Stubblefield (Mid-America Wf Inv Bd Director) requested a write-up on the local Job Club so that he could post it on the Illinois workNet and Mid America Workforce Investment Board websites.
- LME Tom Austin received the following email regarding his membership and service to "Alignment Rockford":
Please accept my thanks for preparing the economic data that was shared Tuesday at the Academy Pathways Selection meeting. I just got a note from Venita Hervey who expressed appreciation for the good information provided and the participatory process employed. Not often does one get thank you's from people who participated in all-day meetings. Your contributions really helped! I've appreciated your support all along the way. Thanks so much! (Laurie Preece)
- LME Vicki Niederhofer recently received the following email:
"We greatly appreciate everything you do for our workforce area and will continue to utilize your LMI expertise. Thanks again." (Matt Jones, Asst Exec Director, Madison County Employment & Training.)
- Jeanne Gustafson, City of Centralia sent this note and information she requested to one of her customers:
"Vicki Niederhofer's contact information is below. She is the area specialist on labor information for the region. You may want to discuss the information and services available for our employers. I've used their services on many occasions on other projects for screening and data collection. We have the local office across from the post office but I use Vicki for all of my statistical information."
- For a local presentation, DCEO's Office of Regional Economic Development, Southwest Region Manager requested recent economic highlights and labor market information. Upon receipt, she replied with this message:
"Thanks for your help and quick response on this. Data was valuable. My speech went well." (Edie Koch).
- In response to the following request for additional job listings from Wanted Analytics records in the Help Wanted Online (HWOL) database, Metro East LME V. Niederhofer compiled and provided the combined cross-state data for the entire St. Louis metro area.
"Is there any chance that you have access to the Employers on the Missouri side of the River. If we could get access to the lists like you sent today on the Metro East Side, why it would be like Heaven on Earth. But it is Heaven on Earth with the list you have on the Metro east side, so maybe that's enough anyway."
The customer replied via email, *"Fantastic. You're the Greatest !!"*
(Mark Augustine, Employment Specialist, IL Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitative Services)
- In response to staff training on the Career Information System (CIS) and its use in counseling clients so that they can make a better informed career decision, an attendee replied via email:
"I want to commend Troy for doing a phenomenal job on training us on CIS yesterday. It was one of the best training sessions I have ever attended. I learned a lot about CIS that I can incorporate into my workshops and other field activities."
(Rudeley Herron, Employment Security Specialist III, Re-Entry Employment Services Program)
- In response to receiving their requested data, a local economic development professional replied via email:
"Again, thank you for sending the information to me. Much appreciated."

(Sandra Trusewych, Community Development Department, Two Rivers Regional Council of Public Officials)

- Following a well-received demonstration of the Transferable Occupation Relationship Quotient (TORQ) system for IDES Regional Office Managers and key staff, Employment Services Field Operations leadership asked that a Personal Employment Plan (PEP) be developed for the Intermittent Employment Reps that were being non-scheduled. The report and an account link to TORQ were created with 10 alternative occupations identified as potential job search opportunities. (Amit Singla, Executive Deputy Directory, Office of Service Delivery, Illinois Department of Employment Security)
- In response to Metro East LME V. Niederhofer's collaboration with local partner agencies in a Job Club and the use of TORQ and HWOL tools, the Job Club organizer from DHS emailed:
"Biggest Job Club success: It has given customers with disabilities an opportunity to become active with their job search by gaining the information that is provided by 1. The four partners conducting the job club, 2. The opportunity to Network with other job seekers participating at the sessions, 3. Provides the elements to keep the participants motivated during this period of stress and uncertainty searching for a job which is probably more difficult than performing the job once they obtain a position."
(Mark Augustine, Employment Specialist, Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Rehabilitative Services)
- During a presentation on CIS and its uses to graduate students in Career Counseling at St. Xavier University, one comment overheard was "I'm mad I haven't heard of this before." (Note: All but two of the students were already working in high schools in northeastern Illinois. The other two were working with special populations.)
- In response to a consultation meeting with the four Adult Education Planning Directors at Southwestern Illinois College providing a demonstration on how to locate projections, wage data and an overview of the regional economy via the IDES website, one emailed:
"Thanks so much for taking time to come to our campus. You are a wealth of knowledge and interesting to listen to. I did access your website and have found useful information. I enjoyed listening to the 4 R's, rivers, roads, runways, and railroads. Very interesting and useful. Thanks again." (Carol Gaa, Southwestern Illinois College)
- After receiving a link to the new Legislative District Dashboard, Sen. Toi Hutchinson replied: Perfect! Thanks! Good to know IDES updated data and unemployment stats each month for each district.
- "Thank you so much for offering such a quick turnaround time, esp. given the holiday. We will start our review on Monday, so getting this info on Monday or Tuesday would be great! We love IDES...your staff is always so helpful!" Marisa Lewis; Director, Research & Strategy; Chicago Workforce Investment Council (CWIC).
- Congratulations to Lola Lucas, the career resources specialist in IDES' Economic Information and Analysis Division. On Friday November 9th, Lola was presented with the Illinois Career Development Association's Advocacy Award for outstanding service to the profession of counseling for training teachers and counselors on the Illinois Career Information System (CIS) throughout the state. In a luncheon ceremony at the Illinois Counseling Association 64th Annual Conference in Springfield, the award proclamation lauded Ms. Lucas: "For over 20 years she has traveled the state training counselors, teachers and agency staff members on career information."
- After receiving an annual update on mass layoffs in Illinois, DHS staff replied, "Thank you so very much Ron. Your assistance on this is always greatly appreciated and the data provided is very helpful." (Gerrah L. Caldwell, Manager; IDHS Emergency Food Program; Bureau of Homeless Services & Supportive Housing)
- In response to the Illinois Labor Market Review article on the Belleville Area Job Club, Local Workforce Board partner and Southwestern Illinois College administrator Bill Gagen wrote: "*Great article Vicki I am passing it on to our Public Information and Marketing Office if you don't mind.*"

- In response to a presentation, LME Norman Kelewitz received the following email message: “Just a note to thank you for your terrific presentation last Friday at our Local Office Manager’s Meeting. Your information was valuable and we all learned quite a bit! Thanks so much!!” (Pat Marko, IDES; Assistant Region Manager; Northern Region.)
- In the Acknowledgements section of the McHenry County Workforce Board’s Comprehensive Labor Market Report, it reads “Special thanks to Troy McMillan of the Illinois Department of Employment Security for help with HWOL (Help Wanted On-Line).”
- Upon receiving a publishable list of Illinois’ largest employers, staff of the Illinois Attorney General replied, “Thank you for your assistance and your insight!” (Arthur Mitchell, Legislative Affairs, Office of the Illinois Attorney General)
- Highlights of comments from session evaluations at the Transitions Conference were among the highest rated (in part, because use of My CIS Portfolio solves a recently discovered potential legal problem for special educators) and included:
 - “Great tool to use to assist students as they prepare to transition to adult life.”
 - “The wealth of free resources that is available to all of us.”
 - “Great web site (one of the best I have been to).”
 - “Great site to help our students.”
- A client sent the following message to Belleville LME V. Niederhofer:

“Thank you so much for getting job club up and running. I have had such a good experience with it. There is a wealth of information and resources that are available that I would have not known about had I not started attending. Not only that, it has been an opportunity to network with others in my situation, and has helped me realize that I am not the only one facing unemployment issues.” (name withheld for confidentiality)
- Upon quick receipt of 2012 annual average unemployment statistics for all Cook County townships, staff in Sen. Durbin’s office replied “Thanks very much for this.”
- A customer of the Belleville Job Club sent the following thank-you:

Vicki and Janet,
I just wanted to let you know that I got a job today. I start working at McDonalds tomorrow. While it is not my "dream job", I will be getting full time hours (30-40 hr/week). It is something to get me off unemployment, and back into the working arena while I go to school. Thank you both for all of your help and for pointing me toward other resources. I am not sure how I would have handled all of this otherwise! If I am not working early every Wednesday, I will drop in once in a while to say hello.
Melissa Wilke
- The February 2013 TORQ usage report indicated a 43% increase in project creation. Project creation is one of the direct results of working with a job seeking client. Creating an individual TORQ personal employment plan for a job seeker puts into action a plan to help the job seeker’s goal of obtaining employment. Congratulations to the Northwest region in general and Margaret Stone of the Ottawa office in particular for their strong showing in February. The Northwest region pulled ahead of the Southern region for the first time since we started producing this report last year. The Southern region remains strong and this month Vicki Neiderhofer (Belleville LO LME) created 64 projects.
- In response to session at recent Connections Conference, a review of the evaluations showed positive responses. “Excellent! The hands-on time was so valuable!” Attendees were excited about having a free system which is more extensive than Career Cruising and that compares well with Bridges and Naviance. They were particularly interested in Illinois-specific wage and outlook data.

- After receiving updated profiles for each of the STEM areas with new employment and wage data [<http://www.ides.illinois.gov/page.aspx?item=4468>] (from LME R. Payne), DCEO partner staff replied: “Mitch: I would like to thank you and your team for pulling this update together. This is great work.” (Jason Tyszko, Dep. Chief of Staff, DCEO)
- Note from Nikki White, Co-Op teacher at Collinsville High School: *“The Career Information System is awesome for high school students. I have used the program with my high school students with disabilities and have had great success. Very user friendly and the “Reality Check” is a must do!”*
- *“Hello Vicki,
Thank you for giving the Career Specialists an opportunity to observe the Job Club. As we discussed, we would like to establish off shoots in each of the outer offices. Do you think it would be possible for you to visit each of the outer county offices and train the Career Specialists in their environment with their participants? I know this is last minute, but we will have all of the Career Specialists in your office tomorrow morning for a staff meeting. If possible, I would love to be able to schedule some time for you at each office. Please let me know your thoughts. Thank you.”*
(Rick Stubblefield, Business Services Director, Mid America Workforce Investment Board)
- In response to technical assistance with demographic and labor market data for use in a grant application, Tom Austin received the following email:
“The Grant has been submitted (YEAH!!) and now we wait for results.
Thanks to all of you for helping get the information we needed to submit the grant including Manufacturing and Health Care as additional vocational offerings. We’ll know the outcome sometime in May or June and I will contact you to start the planning work.
Again, thanks for all the help in getting this application together.”
(Dan Danielowski, Assistant Executive Director, Comprehensive Community Solutions, Inc.)
- In response to several presentation sessions at Stillman Valley High School, we received the following thank-you:
“I just wanted to take a minute of your time to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for a job well done by Tom Austin at the Stillman Valley High School freshman class Career Information Systems presentation today.
As both an IDES Local Office Manager trying desperately to do whatever we can to develop and improve our local workforce and as a President of the School Board trying to do whatever we can to maximize the opportunities available to students to improve their lives and chances of being successful in their future, it was a successful event.
I had received phone calls from within the district even before getting back to my office expressing appreciation of Mr. Austin's presentation and his willingness to come to the district to present.
It is, in my belief, the epitome of the most important work we do; to develop and improve our workforce. It's especially important to reach down to those who are still coming up and undecided or uncertain and provide them with the means to enter the workforce at a level they wouldn't have realized otherwise.
Thank you Tom, Your time and expertise were sincerely appreciated.”
(Bruce E. Larson, IDES Sterling Office Manager)
- After receiving the requested TEA certification letter, the frequent customer replied: “As always, thanks for the prompt and efficient response.” (Rich Reinhold)
- “Thank you both Illinois WorkNet and IDES for updating this information on the website. It makes a difference and we appreciate your time and attention.” (Jason A. Tyszko, Deputy Chief of Staff, DCEO.)
- “Thank you very much for taking time last Tuesday to come to SVHS and present to our students. The information they received was valuable to them and hopefully will be put to good use. I really appreciate

your time and effort and making our students day a little more meaningful.” (Stillman Valley High School Counselor Michael _____).

- “A major thank you to IDES for compiling data and sharing so much Labor Market and Career information through the IDES website. Our Library staff, Counselors and Advisors, Faculty and Students here at College of DuPage are guided to use many of these resources . . .

When we have career fairs for Criminal Justice, Technology/Manufacturing, Health careers and more, the Library prepares guides to popular careers using data from **CIS Quick Click** on basic skills and education, plus **IDES information on outlook and wages** for either LWA 6 (DuPage) or by the county name itself. We credit these sources and provide the web link URLs on the sheets so that students can explore further using the IDES website.

When Vocational Skills students with mild to moderate cognitive impairment (Vocational Skills is a post-high school employment skills program here at College of DuPage) come to the Library for career information, we use the easy-reading **CIS Junior** to help them find basic career data.

Most of all, we use the **Career Information System** for everything from Career and Skills testing, to “Reality Check” to give students a true picture of living expenses, to School Sort to find schools nationwide that offer a particular major or program with additional limiters, and, of course, the Occupations section to find extensive career data plus outlook and wages for DuPage, Cook and other Illinois regions. The only thing that would make this section better would be to prominently feature the date of the information (a constant question from students and faculty members using CIS). Currently the data for outlook is for 2008-2018 (which you learn if you scan to the text below the table) and 2011 for Illinois (and local?) wages. I assume that the recently reported 2012 wages will be uploaded as time and resources allow and that we will need to use the state and metro area wage tables from O*Net to give more current wage data.

Thank you for offering these excellent resources.” (Marjorie Peters, Reference Librarian)

- Upon receipt of handouts, a PowerPoint and information on CIS assessments, a Div. of Rehabilitation Services counselor - Alicia Rentmeister - replied “I can’t believe you answered so fast—I expected to have to wait for a week!”
- Each month EI&A receives lots of brief thank you notes; here are some of them:
 - “Thank you so much for your timely reply with this information, Tom! This will really help us!” (Laurie S. Wurster, Regional Manager, Furst Staffing);
 - “Thank you, it will help tremendously!” (Crossroads Workforce Investment Board staff); and,
 - “Thank you soooo much for your help with the annual plan. I just finished everything up and it is ready to go.” (Anne Schneider, Director, Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance).
 - “You rock! Great job! . . . for his quick work in compiling the attached list” of relevant healthcare occupations for the Friday meeting. (Julio Rodriguez/Bob Sheets, DCEO)
 - “Thank you so much for your help.” (Nancy Bishop, Northbrook Public Library)
 - “Yes! This is what I was looking for. Thank you.” (*Pamela S. Fettes, Business Account Manager, Boone & Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board*)
 - “Thanks so much. You saved the day.” (Steve Ernst Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP))
 - “*Thank you. Always helpful!*” (Patrick McKeehan, SIU-E);
 - “*Thanks so much! You’re wicked awesome!*” (Alice Bunjan, Lewis & Clark Community College);
 - “Thanks so much for doing this. You don’t know how much I appreciate it!” (**Brenda Patterson**, Administrative Services Director, Land of Lincoln Workforce Alliance);
 - “Thank you!!! We appreciate all of your time on this!” (Donna Meachum, Workforce Investment Solutions, Decatur); and,
 - “Thank you so much!” (*Caroline L. Portlock* , Executive Director, Grundy County Chamber of Commerce & Industry).
 - “You rock! Great job! . . . for his quick work in compiling the attached list” of relevant healthcare occupations for the Friday meeting. (Julio Rodriguez/Bob Sheets, DCEO)

- “Thank you so much for your help.” (Nancy Bishop, Northbrook Public Library)
- “Yes! This is what I was looking for. Thank you.” (*Pamela S. Fettes, Business Account Manager, Boone & Winnebago Counties Workforce Investment Board*)
- “Thanks so much. You saved the day.” (Steve Ernst Rockford Metropolitan Agency for Planning (RMAP))
- “Perfect! Thank you.” (Mark Denzler, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, Illinois Manufacturers' Assn.)
- “Thank you for responding so quickly.”(C. Mark Williams, Exec. Dir., Growth Dimensions for Belvidere & Boone County)
- “Thank you for your presentation at the Regional Office of Career and Technical Education last Friday (3/1). I always appreciate your presentation. The information is vital to what I do and I always leave having a better sense of direction than when I arrived.” (Nada Broderick, M. Ed., MSW, College Counselor, Glenwood High School, Chatham)
- “WOW! You are wonderful. Thank you so much.” (Patricia A. Fera, Manager Workforce Investment Board of Will County, Joliet)
- “Thanks for this valuable info.” (Michael J. Williams, M.S., Exec. Dir., Rock River Training Corporation, Rockford)
- “Thanks again for your help and patience.” (Vicki L. Haugen, Pres. & CEO, Vermilion Advantage, Danville)
- “Thank you for your help.” (Kathleen Repass, Henry County Economic Development Partnership Director (HCEDP), Cambridge)