



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROBERT BENTLEY  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF ALABAMA

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FITZGERALD WASHINGTON  
SECRETARY OF LABOR

September 16, 2016

Mr. Les Range  
Regional Administrator  
U.S. Department of Labor  
Employment and Training Administration  
61 Forsyth Street, SW  
6M-12  
Atlanta, GA 30303-3104

Attention: Melissa Keels

Dear Mr. Range,

Enclosed you will find a copy of Alabama's Annual Performance report for the Workforce Information Grant PY 15.

Please advise us if additional information is needed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Fitzgerald Washington".

Fitzgerald Washington, Secretary of Labor  
Alabama Department of Labor  
SWA Administrator

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George Clark, Chairperson  
Alabama Workforce Investment Board

STATE OF ALABAMA  
ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
LABOR MARKET INFORMATION DIVISION

## **WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT REPORT PY 2015-2016**

During PY 15, a wide array of activities has occurred involving workforce development in the state. Besides the challenges of implementing the new Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Alabama's leaders are pushing to strengthen workforce development through various new strategies. Behind many of these changes is the new Alabama Workforce Council (AWC), which consists of industry leaders across the state. Some members of AWC are also members of the newly formed WIOA state board. Together, these groups are making great strides toward a statewide Alabama Workforce System.

As labor market information is a vital piece of the puzzle in workforce development, the LMI division has participated in all meetings of the AWC and WIOA board. Changes in the operation of workforce development are likely to affect labor market information data. One change that will greatly alter data collection and publication is a change of workforce development regions in the state. The decision was made to change the regional configurations from 10 regions to 7 regions. Legislation in 2016 was passed to fund an executive director position for each region out of the education budget. The new regions will be implemented on October 1, 2016. The announcement of these new designations came in February of 2016. LMI was working on long term occupational projections during this time. Once the announcement was made, LMI staff from all programs had to make a decision about a time schedule to begin publishing data for these new regions. While LMI is aware that customers will want data for these regions quickly, it is important that the data is accurate and consistent across datasets. The decision was made to wait until Spring of 2017, after annual benchmarking, to begin publishing data for the new regions. As a result, only statewide long term projections were completed this year.

In addition to all of these changes, the Workforce Development unit of the LMI division experienced some challenges. The WIG manager was promoted, and has taken on a higher role, but the previous position has not been filled. Furthermore, for most of the program year, the unit was down one staff member. It was extremely challenging to merely maintain the regular products with updates, much less accomplish loftier goals of developing new resources. The division has been looking for opportunities to save money in the current budget to allow another person to be hired. There have been meetings to try to leverage funds to pay for the annual workforce report, so far without success. One change that should eventually relieve some funding for additional staff is revision of the LMI website. The division has made the decision to revise the entire website, including its virtual LMI, using Tableau software. The website staff are using Maine's example to improve the website's functionality and data access with Tableau. The goal is to drop the geographic solutions contract by the end of PY 2016. This would hopefully allow the workforce development unit to add another staff member.

While there have been challenges, WIOA has created some opportunities for LMI. The requirements for the unified state plan allowed LMI to be more actively involved with WIOA partners than ever before. An LMI representative attended the WIOA national convening and had the opportunity to get to know the leaders in all of the partner agencies and the chair of the state WIOA board. LMI's participation for the first time in both the annual adult education state conference and the annual career technical education state conference are a direct

result of more consistent interaction with WIOA partners. The WIG manager has attended more workforce meetings during PY 15 than anyone in LMI has ever done. LMI is experiencing the positive impact of this personal involvement and realizes that staff needs to continue to stay actively involved in workforce meetings. One goal for the upcoming program year is to attend the regional workforce board meetings on a regular basis.

Great changes are occurring in the State of Alabama. These new initiatives are going to change workforce development for the benefit of Alabama's employers. The challenge is continuing to make sure partners look to the state's LMI division for data to drive their training decisions. It is important that they see LMI as a partner that has vital data to guide their strategic plans. Many regional boards are pursued by private data vendors who promise data that the LMI office cannot provide. Furthermore, many of these regional boards and individual associations around the state conduct their own surveys. ETA could support Alabama's LMI office by stressing to the WIOA leaders the importance of partnering with their LMI staff, and including them in any plans to conduct surveys to gain more knowledge of the needs of employers in the state.

## DELIVERABLES AND ACTIVITIES

### I) WORKFORCE INFORMATION DATABASE (WIDb)

#### OUTCOMES FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

The Workforce Information Database (WID) was converted from version 2.5 to version 2.61 in 1st Quarter 2016. Prior to that date, all core tables including crosswalks were updated with the latest available information according to consortium guidelines. LMI staff has continued to participate in training opportunities through webinars and conference calls to stay abreast of additional information that needed to be added to the database and of changes made to the WID system. The WID system is progressing through data visualization via Tableau and is expected to be fully implemented by the end of PY 16.

### II) INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT PROJECTIONS

#### OUTCOMES FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

In October 2015, staff began working on industry employment projections for 2014-2024. During PY 2015, there were many changes occurring in workforce development statewide. The goal of ensuring that workforce training was occurring regionally in partnership with local industries led to a realignment of workforce regions in the state. During most of the program year LMI was unaware of what the new definitions would be. In February, it was announced that the 10 workforce regions would be changed to 7 regions. Those 7 regions would not be official until October 1, 2016. After much deliberation and conversation with BLS program managers and Census partners, the decision was made to postpone regional projections until the normal deliverable date of June 2017. LMI proceeded with the statewide industry and occupational projections, making sure to deliver the data to all required locations by the end of the program year. The decision was made to publish the 2014-2024 projections data on our LMI website, but also leave the 2012-2022 projections on the site. This would allow customers who need regional projections to be able to compare it with the statewide.

Many of the products that LMI normally updates after projections are updated have been put on hold until the regional projections are also produced for 2014-2024. LMI staff normally completes both state and regional projections at the same time to make sure the data is as accurate as possible at the regional level. Often when working at the regional level, the data will not add to the state if it has already been determined. As a result, once LMI begins work with the newly developed 7 regions, we anticipate some slight changes in our statewide projections for the period. If we do have changes to our statewide projections, we will resubmit those projections to the proper organizations, and publish an updated version that will reflect the summation of the regional projections data.

In January of 2016, LMI staff worked with the University of Alabama, Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) to gain access to their economic model for short term industry and occupational projections. LMI completed short term projections for 2015-2017 by the end of February 2016, and submitted them to all required organizations.

### III) ANNUAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS AND OTHER REPORTS

#### OUTCOMES FOR THIS OBJECTIVE

The Alabama Department of Labor, Labor Market Information Division, along with other public and private partners, such as The Alabama Department of Commerce, Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education, and Alabama Industrial Development Training has continued its partnership with the University of Alabama, Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) to produce State of the Workforce Reports. CBER produces one State of the Workforce Report each year for ADOL/LMI. ADOL/LMI continues to work closely with CBER to provide them with essential data in order to provide recommendations to planners, policymakers, developers, and educators on how to move the economy in a positive direction. Using the labor market information data from ADOL, The Alabama State Data Center, and various other resources, reports are produced for the State of Alabama, Jefferson County Workforce Board, Mobile County Workforce Board, and the ten regional workforce boards in the state. LMI staff partner with CBER staff to present information from this report and new products from the LMI division to each of the workforce development regional boards. The most recent report was completed April of 2016. The most current State of the Workforce Report is available in a downloadable PDF file on the LMI website at the following link; <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/WorkforceReports/Alabama.pdf>. LMI will redesign and begin producing the LMI regional products using CBER data with the newly designated workforce development regions, upon completion of the 2016 benchmarking process.

During Program Year 2015, the LMI division has continued to produce monthly reports based on data collected from the Help Wanted Online (HWOL) data series. The division continued to explore additional ways to use occupational data offered by The Conference Board, Wanted Analytics, and the Help Wanted Online Data Series. Monthly historical data for all counties continues to allow customers to see the trend of online job ads for specific occupations, both total ads and new ads, allowing workforce development planners to determine demand for specific occupations and how that demand changes over the years, and since the recession. LMI staff continue to explore some additional data features in the Wanted Analytics data module. The reports are available on the LMI homepage at <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/default.aspx> and the following link provides an example of the statewide 2-page report

<http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/WORKFORCEDEV/HWOL/AL.pdf> . In addition to the report for the State of Alabama, monthly reports are also published for each of the twelve metropolitan areas and ten workforce development regions. Special HWOL reports are generated monthly at a county level for specific councils and boards, often being presented during monthly board meetings. After each LMI presentation, there was more interest in HWOL reports as indicated by an increase of website hits and reports generated particularly by educators and career coaches/counselors. The division plans to conduct additional analysis and publish even more customized reports with data provided through this resource.

The Business Employment Dynamics (BED) Newsletters continues to be updated on a quarterly basis, and posted on the LMI website at <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/BEDPR.pdf> . This report has a nine-month lag period.

ADOL/LMI produces valuable reports in alignment with the economic development strategic plan for the State of Alabama called *Accelerate Alabama*. (Copy of the strategic plan is located at <http://www.madeinalabama.com/assets/2013/03/AccelerateAlabamaPlan.pdf> ). This plan identifies eleven industry clusters for planners, developers, and policymakers to target in the state's economic development efforts through 2015. To assist the Alabama Department of Commerce with these efforts, ADOL/LMI continues to analyze the industry clusters associated with the plan, and also explore additional datasets that are valuable in analyzing the progress of these efforts. A downloadable PDF document for each of the targeted clusters is available on the ADOL/LMI website under the title *Accelerate Alabama* at <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/default.aspx> . (An example of the Automotive Report is available at <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/AccelerateAL/Automotive/Automotive.pdf> ). The latest reports were updated in June 2015 and made available to the Alabama Department of Commerce, who have updated them on their website, [www.madeinalabama.com](http://www.madeinalabama.com), under the information on the respective industry clusters. The Accelerate Alabama reports are scheduled to be updated in PY 16 to reflect data from the 2014-2024 projections just completed.

#### IV) CUSTOMER CONSULTATIONS

Workforce development continues to focus improvement efforts in the areas of supply gaps, training issues, and high wage, high demand occupations and industries. The LMI division supports these measures by providing information on high demand occupations that require an associate degree and under, statewide, regional and county commuting patterns, comprehensive county profiles, and detailed educational and training data by occupation and/or industry. Continuation of LED program (cooperative program with U.S. Census Bureau) and quarterly updates to LED are ongoing. LED reports also make information available on workers by age and stratification within industry. Industry and occupational analysis of workforce advisory areas and exploration continue as data becomes available.

Customer consultation in Alabama has continued to be evaluated using employer groups, workforce investment partner reviews, requests for publications, training events, and anecdotal information received from customers. During this upcoming year, ADOL/LMI staff will continue to extend the public's knowledge of labor market information and its benefits to the workforce and economy of the state.

There has been continued interest in information and training provided by the Labor Market Information Division. There has been a steady increase in the number of customers requesting speakers and/or trainers at various conferences and meetings. LMI staff conducted training at high schools, SHRM meetings, workforce and economic development meetings, career technical education training, and industry association meetings. Information requests came from a wide range of customers such as workforce development, researchers, economic developers, employers, secondary education, postsecondary education, etc. During PY 2015, LMI staff answered over 354 requests for information made by phone, fax and email. Many of these phone calls involved technical assistance as callers search for reports, data, and navigational directions of our online resources. LMI staff plan to conduct training targeted to specific customer groups during PY 16 through both in person training and webinars.

ADOL/LMI continued to see an increase in requests for LMI printed materials following events where LMI staff were present (i.e., Workforce and Economic Development Council meetings, Career Fairs, Conferences, Training and Presentations, etc.). Nearly 38% of the specific data requests have come from economic developers. More resource requests come from education. During this program year, 210 sets of posters, over 11,000 sets of career cluster brochures and over 27,000 Hot 40 posters were disseminated to ADOL/LMI customers and Career Centers. The career centers increased their requests and distribution of the new regional Workforce Development Region Hot 40 posters and career cluster brochures, and distributing over 9,000 of the new regional High Demand Occupations Requiring Associate Degree & Under reports to their customers during the program year. This increase was partially due to the WIOA Grant requirement to utilize and disseminate LMI information and the efforts of LMI staff to encourage customers to develop relationships with their local career centers for access to LMI resources.

During PY 2015, LMI staff attended various meetings to gain a better understanding of the needs of industry and workforce development initiatives in regions around the state. ADOL/LMI staff also gave presentations to many groups, such as adult education, workforce development, vocational rehabilitation, and others. Finally, ADOL/LMI staff participated in multiple planning consortiums.

## **MEETINGS ADOL/LMI ATTENDED**

### **Consortium Participation**

- Served on the Department of Youth Services District 210 Committee and Career Technical Advisory Council.
- Served on the Selma & Dallas County Economic Development Authority's Planning Council.
- Served on the Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) National Policy Council, representing the southeast region of the country.
- Served on the new Alabama Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Planning Committee.

### **Membership Associations and Organizations**

- Extended Membership to the LMI Institute partnered with C2ER

### **Meetings Attended**

- Alabama Building and Heavy Construction Survey Meeting with USDOL Wage & Hour Division
- Alabama Local WIOA Board Meeting
- Alabama Postsecondary Education Ideas meeting
- Alabama Small Business Commission meeting
- Alabama State Advisory Committee Meeting for Commerce and Information Technology
- Alabama State Data Center Conference
- Alabama State WIA Board Meeting
- Alabama State WIOA Board Executive Committee meeting (WIOA Plan)
- C2ER 56th Annual Conference and LMI Institute Annual Forum
- Economic Development Outlook Conference
- Local Alabama Workforce Investment Area (Local AWIA) Region meeting
- New Alabama State WIOA Board Orientation and Meeting
- Occupational Employment Statistics (OES) National Meeting
- Selma & Dallas County Economic Development Authority's Quarterly Council Planning meeting
- Southeast Employment & Training Association (SETA) 2016 Annual Spring Conference
- WIOA National Convening, Washington, DC

### **Meetings Where LMI made Presentations**

- 2016 Adult Education Summer Conference (member on 2 panel discussions, 2 workshops)
- Adult Education Director's meeting
- Alabama ACT State Organization Conference
- Auburn/Opelika Local SHRM Chapter
- Calhoun Community College
- New Career Coaches Training
- Telamon Corporation
- Training for Career Tech Teachers
- University of West Alabama Career Technology

### **Meetings Where LMI Displayed and Offered Information at an Exhibit**

- 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Northeast Alabama Human Resources and Manufacturing Conference
- 12th SFL-TAP Fort Rucker Job Fair
- 2016 Alabama SHRM State Conference and Exposition, BJCC
- 2016 Birmingham Job Fair for Veterans, BJCC
- 2016 Gateways to Opportunities Career Exposition, Selma
- Baldwin County College and Career Day
- Brookwood Job Fair
- Bullock County High School Career Fair
- Chattahoochee Valley Community College Annual Career Fair
- Gadsden Job Fair
- Geraldine High School Presentation

- Glenwood High School Presentation
- Greene County Job Fair
- Hale County Job Fair
- Macon County Job Fair
- Made in DeKalb Career Exposition
- Mobile County Job Fair
- Monroe County 3rd Annual Career Expo
- Perry County Job Fair
- Walker County Job Fair
- WBRC-Fox 6 Regional Job Fair, BJCC
- West Alabama Congressional 2015 Job Fair
- Wilcox County Job Fair
- WSFA Job Fair - Montgomery

#### **Workforce Board Meetings Where LMI Staff Presented**

- WDR 1 Board Meetings
- WDR 2 Board Meeting
- WDR 4 Board Meetings
- WDR 6 Board Meetings
- WDR 7 Board Meetings

#### **Personal Visit and/or Training to the Following Career Centers in the State**

- Anniston Career Center
- Birmingham Career Center
- Dallas County Career Center
- Demopolis Career Center
- Greenville Career Center
- Montgomery Career Center
- Rainsville Career Center

#### **ALABAMA LMI WEBSITE LEVEL OF DEMAND**

Website hits by *category* for the LMI website at [www.labor.alabama.gov/lmi](http://www.labor.alabama.gov/lmi) July 2015 - June 2016:

Help Wanted Online (HWOL) Monthly Reports	5,177
Accelerate Alabama Industry Cluster Reports	10,104
Projections – Industry	751
Projections – Occupational	26,918
Industry Employment by Age (State and Regions)	3,008
Alabama Underemployment Report	18,900
Alabama Underemployment Forecast Report	542
Turnover Rates by Industry Sector Report	744
Net Job Change by Industry Sector Report	482

Commuting Patterns Report	10,773
County Profiles Report	1,979
Older Worker Report	3,169
Webinars	5,986
Career Videos	33,153
Career Cluster Brochure	7,007
HOT40 Demand Occupations Poster	112,495
Career Cluster Poster	1,438
Career Exploration Guide	94,414
Licensed Occupations Guide	26,615

Approximate Total Visits during the period July 2015-June 2016 for the following websites:

<a href="http://www.greenjobsinalabama.com">www.greenjobsinalabama.com</a>	47,719
<a href="http://www.alabamavlmi.com">www.alabamavlmi.com</a>	41,618

## PRODUCT USAGE

### Resource Requests

- Career Cluster Posters 321 sets of 16 (from AL Career Centers and customers)
- Career Cluster Brochures 24,017 sets of 16 (from AL Career Centers, schools, and customers)
- Hot 40 posters 2,218 (English and Spanish, combined)
- Career Exploration Guides 449
- Licensed Occupations Guides 421
- Career Website Guides 10,023
- Metropolitan Statistical Area Maps and Workforce Development Regions Maps 165
- High Demand Occupations Requiring Associate Degree & Under Reports 11,300

Usage by the Alabama Career Centers throughout the state is expected to significantly increase upon release of the next publications and usage from WIOA Grant activities.

## CUSTOMER QUOTES AND ACCOLADES

*“Wow! Thanks so much for providing this additional data! Yes, this is very helpful and useful data to our traffic study of the I-10 Mobile River Bridge that we are conducting for ALDOT. Any data we can get about drivers crossing Mobile Bay is always useful. “*

**Laszlo Medgyesy, AICP**  
**Project Manager**  
**CDM Smith**

*“Outstanding!! Thank you so much - I really appreciate the quick turnaround. You are awesome. Have a great weekend.”*

**Laura O’Conner**  
**Mobile Chamber**

*“Thank you for the vital role you played in making our 5th Annual Congressional Job Fair a huge success! I greatly appreciated your willingness to assist with this event. It would not have run as smoothly without your incredible help, and I hope you had a positive experience with the pool of applicants attending the event. The response to the Job Fair reflects a critical need to connect the hardworking citizens of Alabama’s 7th Congressional District with local employers. We are happy to be building great relationships between local employers and our community. Moreover, I am truly proud that my office is able to partner with you in working to address the unemployment crisis in our state. Through more common-sense solutions like the Annual Congressional Job Fair, my office will continue to promote greater economic opportunities for our constituents. Once again, thank you for being so instrumental in this event.”*

**TERRI A. SEWELL**  
**U.S. Representative Member of Congress**

*“Thank you! This is excellent information and I appreciate you getting it to me so quickly.”*

**Cynthia McCarty**  
**Jackson State University**

*“On behalf of West Alabama Works, West Alabama Chamber of Commerce, and Region 3 Workforce Development Council--I want to thank you for pulling this information together. It’s incredibly helpful to me and our team as we put the final touches on our grant proposal. I’m proud to be a part of a state where people like you will interrupt their schedule to support the work of folks like us. Thank you very much.”*

**Bob Johnson**  
**West Alabama Works**

*“WOW, this is great. Thank you so much. I feel sure Mr. Hutchinson can pull plenty of information from all these reports. We are all working really hard for Lowndes County and we appreciate your assistance.”*

**Janice N. Grayson, Manager**  
**Greenville Career Center**

## V) ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN TO MEET CUSTOMER NEEDS

Many of the new products developed by the LMI division are a direct result of personal interaction with customers. The LMI division tries to anticipate the needs of various customer groups by making data available on the website that are requested on a regular basis. The division receives a large number of data requests by phone and email. These often require additional work for the staff to put together special packages of data, especially those for economic developers. In addition, it is widely known that customers want data that is current and geographically local, at least down to the county level and sometimes to the city level. As a result, LMI’s goal is to continue to provide as much accessible data on the website as possible to meet these regular customer needs. Below are some of the most recent activities and projects to meet customer needs.

ADOL/LMI made the decision during PY 15 to update the LMI website using Tableau software. This software will create data that is more easily accessible, downloadable, and updatable. It will also eventually save

money that has been spent on private vendors. Customers have often asked for data that can be downloaded as spreadsheets. This application will provide more of those options to customers. The current goal is to have the website redesign completed by the end of PY 16.

Alabama continues its partnership with the US Census Bureau, LEHD program. LEHD data is extremely valuable, for it is the only data that provides commuting patterns, demographics of the workforce, and employment trends using actual employer data provided through the Unemployment Insurance program. Alabama has updated commuting pattern reports as soon as new data is published. LEHD has run behind with those updates, and as a result, Alabama updated reports twice during PY 15. Presently, *2014 Commuting Pattern* reports are available on the LMI website for the state, workforce development regions, counties, and cities. <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/Commuting%20Patterns%20Pres/Default.aspx>

Customers in both education and economic development have often asked for county specific data, so in PY 14 the division developed county profiles. During PY 15 those profiles were updated, and a new feature was added. The profile now includes a table indicating the 20 occupations that had the most online job postings throughout the previous year. This gives customers a good idea of occupations that were potentially in demand at a county level during the year. An example of the county profile for Autauga County is follows: <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/CountyProfiles/Autauga%20County.pdf>

HWOL data allows the division to show real time employers that are potentially hiring and also occupations that potentially have openings, through only job postings. At a local level, such as the county level, customers can recognize employers that show job postings. This makes this data very meaningful at a local level. HWOL reports are updated on a monthly basis for Alabama, metropolitan areas, and workforce development regions. HWOL data is provided to customers at a county level upon request only. LMI realizes it would be beneficial to provide these reports at a county level on a monthly basis, but it would take a more efficient process due to limited staff.

The division continues to align with the state's economic development strategic plan, Accelerate Alabama by producing data for the 11 targeted industry clusters. Accelerate Alabama reports are updated annually, and are distributed to the Alabama Department of Commerce for their website, and are also provided on the LMI website. The division has produced these reports for 3 years, and anticipate in the coming program year to be able to add a page that will show the change in the industry clusters since the state strategic plan was implemented in 2011. One of the targeted clusters, Aerospace, is located at <http://www2.labor.alabama.gov/workforcedev/AccelerateAL/Aerospace/Aerospace.pdf>

All of LMI's regular products are updated and published as soon as new data becomes available. Once reports have been updated, staff publicize the updates on the website and send mass email announcements to customers on our distribution list. Posters, brochures, books, etc. are immediately distributed to career centers when they are updated with new data. Customers are given the opportunity to call and request additional materials, and LMI will provide those. Education customers, such as career coaches, teachers, guidance counselors, etc. often request large numbers of materials to help students with career guidance. LMI has begun using local career centers as locations for education customers to pick up these materials, so funds can be saved on shipping costs.

LMI makes presentations to a large variety of customers groups. Often presentations lead to additional presentations. LMI staff make it a priority to make themselves available to provide any type of training or involvement in planning that is possible. Additionally, the staff make sure to provide all customers with special data packages that they may not be able to pull directly from the website.

## VI) NEW TOOLS AND RESOURCES

At the end of the previous program year, ADOL/LMI staff developed an online (via Intranet) LMI Product Ordering System for the Alabama Career Center System. This new ordering system provides much needed access to LMI products and publications for Career Center staff to distribute during claimant profile and food stamp interviews, to walk-in clients, educational customers, as well as workforce and economic development customers. This system has proven very beneficial for LMI to monitor production and costs relating to product usage. The *Career Cluster Brochures*, *High Demand Occupations Requiring Associate Degree & Under* reports and Hot 40 poster series have become a very popular throughout the Career Center System, as well as the outside LMI customer base. LMI will redesign and begin producing Hot 40 posters for the newly designated workforce development regions, upon completion of the 2016 benchmarking process.

LMI staff developed the comprehensive *County Profile* report as a means to provide a thorough depiction of each county's demographics, labor force labor demand, occupational wages, and industry employment and trends. The reports also include vital data relating to postsecondary education statistics, online resumes by occupation, annual online job postings by occupation, and the annual county commuting patterns. The *County Profile* report generates much interest during presentations and training events resulting in a multitude of requests via phone and email. LMI continues to add new elements to the report based on repeated county related interests. The LMI Division will produce the *2015 County Profile* reports during PY16.

The LMI division continued its efforts relating to in-depth studies into the data offered by The Conference Board, Wanted Analytics, and the Help Wanted Online Data Series and continually research the potential for new LMI products from these resources that could benefit LMI customers. For instance, LMI recently generated an extensive Montgomery Manufacturing Talent Sourcing Report for a customer utilizing the Wanted Analytics data system. The report provided manufacturing talent data relating to hiring scale, market salary, demand, candidate supply, skills and certifications, employers' competition, historical hiring, educational attainment, various trends, etc. LMI will redesign and begin producing HWOL monthly and historical reports for the metropolitan areas and the newly designated workforce development regions, upon completion of the 2016 benchmarking process.

Research continues on new ways to use O\*NET to produce data for occupations that have certain specified work activities that would be appropriate for people with disabilities. Such reports provide base employment, projected employment, and average annual wages. LMI staff plan to work directly with Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, staff to design or create more of these specialized reports and products in the upcoming program year.

## VII) EFFORTS TO CREATE AND SUPPORT PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

The enactment of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) has been instrumental in providing additional opportunities for LMI to be more involved with workforce partners in the state. LMI had representation at all meetings regarding the state WIOA plan, and provided all of the data and narrative for the economic analysis part of the plan. This work with other agencies shed some light on the importance of the LMI office. Some direct affects are that LMI was asked to participate in two statewide annual conferences that it had never been a part of before; The annual Adult Education Conference, and the annual Career Technical Education Conference. Participation in these statewide conferences allows LMI to reach more people in one location, which makes efficient use of resources.

The combination of WIOA implementation and all of the new efforts in the state to improve workforce development have pushed LMI WIG staff to become more personally involved in planning. The plan to create 7 local WIOA boards beginning officially at the beginning of PY 17 has pushed LMI staff to attend more regional board meetings. Attending these meetings is imperative so that board executive directors and voting members create close relationships with LMI staff and understand the importance of using LMI data. LMI staff began this effort during the PY 15, attending several regional board meetings even if they were not presenting to the board. One of the staff lives in one of the more rural workforce development regions and has been heavily involved in the activities and planning of that workforce board. The WIG manager has already seen some benefit to attending these meetings, as some board members have had questions that LMI staff can answer. Unfortunately, attending quarterly meetings for 7 local areas is tough for staff with limited funding. But the goal is to attend as many of these local board meetings as possible in the coming program year.

LMI still has plans to work with the Alabama Library Association to ensure that all libraries have labor market materials, but unfortunately this initiative has not gotten off the ground due to staffing shortages during PY 15. LMI also anticipates more involvement with our partners in Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services, vocational rehabilitation, providing career materials that are specified to people with various types of physical or mental challenges.

In addition to involvement in ongoing WIG deliverables, LMI WIG manager is heavily involved in the ongoing plans to develop a longitudinal data system in Alabama. LMI staff have insight about data collection and reporting, not only from a state level, but from a national level. LMI staff will continue to pursue any grants that could help fund a longitudinal system. During the program year, Governor Bentley designated members of the advisory board for the longitudinal data system. They will meet for the first time in August. LMI staff will continue to work with the board through the upcoming program year to support the development of the system, and provide any information that may be needed to get legislation passed in the next session that will provide sustainable support in the form of codification.

Over the program year the LMI division has made many positive strides to build partnerships with agencies involved in workforce development. There are still many challenges that need to be addressed. One of the biggest needs for LMI is to create some partnerships that allow LMI to leverage some additional funding opportunities. LMI works very hard to provide materials to all partners, specific to their needs, but receives no additional funds to create, print, or update these materials. It is the hope of LMI staff that ETA regional staff can help LMI leverage funds from some of these partners so that LMI can continue to provide quality customer

specific materials that are updated on a regular basis, because without additional funding, it is likely LMI will not have the staff to be able to do this.

## VIII) ACTIVITIES TO LEVERAGE WLMI FUNDING

Since the guidelines for the WIG began requiring an annual economic analysis report, The Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER), in partnership with the LMI office, has been producing this report. Included is a survey conducted by the Institute of Social Science Research (ISSR) at the University of Alabama on underemployment in the state and workforce regions. This survey is very valuable to determine an added dimension of labor supply in the state. LMI expends a portion of the WIG to fund this annual project. However, a majority of the cost for this project is funded by other partner agencies, such as the Department of Commerce, Alabama Industrial Development Training (AIDT), and the administering agency of WIOA. For years, this has been the only project that the LMI division has technically leveraged funds from other sources.

During PY15, our LMI staff worked with Alabama Employment Service staff to create a system for career centers to use when ordering LMI materials. It was necessary to develop this system because the LMI division produces and updates materials on a regular basis so many variations of data geographically. During this transition, LMI staff leveraged from the Employment Service Wagner-Peyser funds to pay for LMI products for the career center staff. In addition, with the acquirement of the RESEA grant, the career centers are required to use more LMI products to serve these specific clients for profiling. This presented a good opportunity to begin leveraging funds to pay for these products, while freeing LMI funds to use for other projects.

Many states are in similar positions as Alabama's LMI division is. Some states don't leverage any funds at all. The WIG guidelines strongly encourage leveraging funds. WIOA guidelines are clear that all decisions for training must be data driven, and goes as far as mentioning labor market information throughout. The question is, "do the TEGs for the three main programs administered by WIOA encourage those program managers to work with their state LMI offices, and partner with the state LMI offices to help fund additional data collection where gaps occur." Encouraging WIG administrators to leverage funds without guiding the WIOA managers through the official TEGs basically gives them free reign to use any data sources they deem meets their particular needs.

### FUTURE LMI GOALS

- LMI will be working to develop a partnership with the Alabama Library Association to ensure that LMI products are available in all public libraries across the state. Libraries are often the best source for customers to do job searches, so having our information available is imperative.
- LMI plans to create a better partnership with Alabama Department of Rehabilitation Services (ADRS). ADRS is a partner in WIOA, and LMI needs to try to provide information on occupations that are in high demand that will meet the needs of people with various physical and mental challenges that can be strong members of the workforce.
- The division is currently exploring methods of saving WIG funds so that the unit could potentially hire an additional staff member and conduct additional research. One step that is in process are converting the LMI website to a new design which uses Tableau software, which will allow the division to save over \$50K

a year on the present vendor. In addition, the division is working with the Center for Business and Economic Research (CBER) to get their assistance in leveraging funds from other agencies for the annual State of the Workforce Report, so that the LMI division can be relieved of its \$50K a year contribution.

- LMI staff will be attending all meetings relating to WIOA and any state workforce development activities. This includes regional workforce board meetings.
- LMI plans to conduct targeted training to economic development data researchers so that they know how to pull data to help draw new industries into the state. Furthermore, LMI will conduct the same training to career center managers and career center business reps, because economic developers often call local career centers for information.
- LMI will continue to be at the table through the implementation of a statewide longitudinal data system.

## IX) RECOMMENDATIONS TO ETA FOR CHANGES AND IMPROVEMENTS TO FUTURE WIGS REQUIREMENTS

With the enactment of the new Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act (WIOA), ADOL/LMI would appreciate more communication from ETA on the changes this new act will mean for the Workforce Information Grant, with respect to both funding and deliverables. Furthermore, it would benefit states to have more specific guidelines concerning the extent to which all agencies in respective states that receive any portion of Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act funds should work together on a regular basis in order to meet the desired outcomes of the act.

The multitude of changes in workforce development in Alabama are definitely going to create some new challenges. LMI staff have emphasized to state and regional workforce boards the role that the state LMI office plays in the provision of WIOA. Presently, there are workforce regional boards with executive directors that often do not use the state LMI data. When these boards become local WIOA boards, beginning in FY 17, the concern is that they will continue conducting their own surveys and spending thousands of dollars on vendors to provide data. It would be extremely helpful for ETA to strongly recommend that all the WIOA local boards use their state LMI office data. Furthermore, ETA could bring light to the guidelines which state that LMI is also a partner in workforce development, and should be included as such. The more LMI is included in projects and planning in the local areas, the better served the regions will be through the data products that are offered. This issue is not specific to the State of Alabama. Several states experience these challenges. ETA could help a multitude of state LMI offices participate as intended with workforce partners with some education and guidance. The best case scenario would be if ETA would include some directives in the TEGLS for the WIOA programs that they partner with state LMI offices to ensure that they are making data driven decisions.