



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Labor and
Workforce Development**

Administrative Services Division
Research and Analysis

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November 3, 2016

Ms. Virginia Hamilton
Regional Administrator, Region 6
U.S. Department of Labor
Employment & Training Administration
90 Seventh Street, Suite 17-300
San Francisco, CA 94103-1516

Dear Ms. Hamilton,

The Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development respectfully submits our PY14 Workforce Information Core deliverables and activities grant performance report. During PY15, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Research and Analysis Section completed work in all nine of the core products and activities outlined in TEGL 39-14.

- Workforce Information Database (WIDb)
- Industry and occupational projections
- Annual economic analysis
- Customer consultations
- Activities undertaken to meet customer needs
- New tools and resources
- Efforts to create and support partnerships and collaborations
- Activities to leverage funding
- Recommendations to ETA for changes and improvements to WIGS requirements

Alaska's detailed performance report is attached.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Heidi Drygas".

Heidi Drygas,
Commissioner
Alaska Department of Labor
and Workforce Development

Enclosure

cc: Carol Padovan, Federal Project Officer

**State of Alaska PY 2015
Workforce Information Grant**

Performance Report

July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016

Introduction

During Program Year 2015, the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Research and Analysis Section (R&A) met the requirements of the Workforce Information Grant to States, outlined in TEGl No. 39-14, as detailed below.

I. Workforce Information Database (WIDb)

R&A updated the Workforce Information Database (WIDb) core tables with all of the required data sets, which were also used internally to deliver data and analysis to state users in a variety of formats and special reports.

The WIDb was updated to version 2.6 prior to June 30th, 2016.

The Alaska Career Information System (AKCIS) is an example of an Internet product that uses several WIDb data sets in a standalone career information delivery system. The WIDb provides Alaska wages, employment projections, and licensing information. AKCIS links these state-specific occupational and educational figures in one place, creating an interactive, Web-based education and planning tool for career seekers.

The AKCIS portal is at: https://acpe.alaska.gov/PLANNING/Education_Planning/AKCIS.

II. Industry and Occupational Employment Projections

Alaska met its short-term and long-term occupational forecast deliverables prior to the deadline set by the Projections managing Partnership.

R&A used the occupational industry projections to create a healthcare workforce study available here: <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/occ/pdfs/healthcare.pdf?1474571065187>
R&A also used long-term occupational and industry projections in a number of presentations to industry and educational audiences, and the AWIB used them extensively in its ongoing effort to establish a consistent method for determining priority occupations.

R&A publishes the industry and occupational projections on its Web site and has incorporated them into many R&A product Web pages, presentations, and special reports.

III. Annual Economic Analysis and Other Reports

Workforce Information Grants to States (WIGS) funding helps support data and analysis for R&A's monthly economic publication, *Alaska Economic Trends* (labor.alaska.gov/trends/). R&A distributed more than 30,000 copies to subscribers in 2014, and *Trends* articles were downloaded 55,400 times.

Trends frequently cites data produced under WIGS deliverables in its industry and geographic profile articles and the entire issue is devoted to new long-term projections when they are published.

In recent months, R&A has published articles:

- Analyzing the performance of Alaska's individual industries fared in the 1980s, when the state experienced its last large-scale recession due in part to a similar decline in oil prices: <http://labor.alaska.gov/trends/sep16.pdf>
- Utilizing new data on personal consumption to detail how Alaskan's spend their money: labor.alaska.gov/trends/aug15.pdf
- Comparing the least participated in occupations of men and women by wage, industry, number of workers and more: <http://labor.alaska.gov/trends/may16.pdf>

R&A's Web site (laborstats.alaska.gov/) is the section's primary dissemination tool for its products, reports, and data. WIGS funding plays an important role in funding both data production and dissemination. In PY 2014, R&A's Web site had more than 664,000 visits and 184,700 downloads of publications and products.

IV. Customer Consultations

Alaska uses several methods to collect and interpret customer needs and satisfaction.

- **Customer satisfaction survey:** R&A maintains a Web-based user survey. Of the customers that completed the survey, 83 percent said they were mostly "somewhat satisfied" or "very satisfied" with the products and services that R&A offers. Of those who were familiar with the data they were seeking or using, all expressed satisfaction with the Web site. (Some people reported difficulties finding data or information that isn't produced by R&A — for example, information on how to file for unemployment insurance.) Some customers offered suggestions for displaying additional data or data in different formats, to which R&A responded.
- **Informal discussions and collaboration:** R&A worked closely with its primary user groups — including AWIB, employers, and the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Division of Employment and Training Services — to meet data needs. Alaska's principal customers expressed strong support for R&A and its services and products.

- **Information requests:** R&A receives and responds to hundreds of requests for information a year from industry, administration officials, state legislators, the media, economic consultants, and the public.

V. Activities Undertaken to Meet Customer Needs

As noted above, there is substantial communication between users and R&A as the section publishes and disseminates data and analyses. R&A often simplifies, amends, or enhances its Web pages in response to those exchanges.

R&A regularly monitors Web traffic, including by individual article for *Alaska Economic Trends*. Topics that generate significant traffic are noted and more likely to be revisited or explored further. Research requests from state and local government officials periodically become *Trends* articles. Questions about Alaska's current economic state and the effect of low oil prices and restricted state budgets, for example, resulted in an article examining the fate of Alaska's industries in the 1980's: <http://labor.alaska.gov/trends/sep16.pdf>

R&A's core values are to provide accurate, objective, and clear data and analysis, and the section is always looking for ways to improve in those three areas in particular, whether in response to issues raised by users or to problems identified internally.

VI. New Tools and Resources

R&A conducts 50+ presentations a year to a variety of audiences. Although many of the presentations have common elements, each is customized by the economist conducting the presentation. This updated information — foundational economic metrics such as job numbers by industry and occupation, occupational and industry projections, etc. — is one of the principal new “tools or resources” that WIGS funding helps make possible every year. A number of these presentations have been added to the R&A website here: <http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/presentations.cfm>

WIGS funding also supports ongoing development and maintenance of R&A's online “Alaska Training Clearinghouse,” which attempts to provide comprehensive and up-to-date information on job training available in the state: live.laborstats.alaska.gov/atc/index.cfm. Several webpages were also created in PY 2015 including pages regarding the 2020 Census and the Consumer Price Index. The Consumer Price Index page was updated to include web applications for price inflation and deflation calculators. The page also underwent an overall simplification to increase user-friendliness.

VII. Efforts to Create and Support Partnerships and Collaborations

R&A works regularly with the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) and other partners to provide presentations, reports, and customized data.

R&A also collaborates with other state agencies and the University of Alaska to conduct surveys and analyses. Examples from PY 2015 include:

- Collaboration with other sections of the Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development to implement new Workforce Information and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requirements and recommendations.
- Collaboration with the University of Alaska Anchorage on an evaluation of the state's healthcare workforce, including a survey of employers to determine the occupations that are most difficult to fill and an analysis of tenure by occupation.

R&A also receives several reimbursable services agreements (RSAs) from other parts of Alaska state government to provide data and analysis that depend on occupational projections and data collected to populate the Workforce Information Database. One example is an RSA with the University of Alaska to provide data that helps them evaluate student outcomes and programs.

VIII. Activities to Leverage LMI-WI Funding

Though many of the work products referenced in this report benefit from WIGS funding, either in the production or use of data or the resources used for dissemination, the WIGS funding alone is not sufficient to cover the costs of developing and disseminating these products.

R&A leverages funding from data users and its public and private partners to conduct the more in-depth analysis used in *Trends* and its other deliverables. Most of the partnerships referenced in Section VII have funding agreements that are used to help leverage WIGS funding and produce the best information possible.

R&A received a Workforce Data Quality Initiative (WDQI) grant in PY 2014 and continues to utilize the funds to modernize its cross-agency data management system and produce special reports on nonresident employment in the state and on the gender gap in earnings. The grant application was strengthened by being able to point to WIGS funded projects and data production as examples of capacity and competency.

IX. Recommendations to the ETA for Changes and Improvements to WIGS Requirements

R&A does not recommend any specific changes or improvements to WIGS requirements. The WIDb and projections that WIGS funding supports are worthwhile, and the flexibility to use the remaining funds for projects that are most in-demand within the state is an effective way to maximize the value of WIGS funding.