

**STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA
PROGRESS REPORT FOR WORKFORCE INFORMATION GRANT
July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008**

In accordance with Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) #29-06, Job Service North Dakota submits the following Progress Report on Workforce Information activities for the period July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2008. This report is organized into three sections as directed by the TEGL. Section A describes the accomplishments for each core product or service. Section B presents a summary of the Customer Satisfaction Assessment. Section C contains recommendations for Improvements or Changes to the Suite of Core Products.

A. CORE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

1. Continue to populate the Workforce Information Database with state data:

The Workforce Information Database (formerly known as the ALMIS Database) is the foundation of the workforce information applications for North Dakota's electronic delivery system. It provides an expansive data storage system from which other data delivery systems may retrieve pertinent workforce information. As such, it is important that this database contains the most current and accurate data possible. The LMI Center updated the Workforce Information Database core tables with new data as it became available, populated new tables, and tested for data integrity. In addition to the basic ETA core tables, North Dakota also populates and maintains the following data tables: building permits, census labor force, commuting patterns, consumer price index, license history, transfer payments, program completers, educational programs, taxable sales, higher education institutions and eligible training providers, short term state industry projections, short term state occupational projections, educational and training completers, tax information, producer price index, oil production.

North Dakota is using the Workforce Information Database version 2.3, which is the version that Geographic Solutions (the vendor for our electronic delivery system) is currently using for its systems. We will upgrade to 2.4 when we receive the next version of the VLMI from Geographic Solutions, which is scheduled for first quarter 2009.

The LMI Center loaded the most recent version of the employer database from InfoUSA as soon as the CD was available. The database provides users with a current listing of employer data that can be accessed by firm name, city, county, industry, or firm size. The use of the InfoUSA database allows us to provide employer-specific information to our customers without release of confidential employer data from our UI Tax or QCEW files.

2. Produce and disseminate industry and occupational employment projections:

The LMI Center has updated the NAICS history files in both the short-term and long-term industry employment projections programs. As a small state, North Dakota's CES program does not provide adequate industrial and geographic detail to be utilized as the basis of the industry time series. Instead, North Dakota opted to use the QCEW which provides much more detailed data. However, QCEW data was not available until April 2008. As a result, the statewide and sub-state long-term industry projections for the 2006 to 2016 period were completed in May 2008. These industry projections were then posted to our LMI website in June 2008. Statewide long-term occupational projections were then completed in June 2008 and were submitted to the Projections Management Partnership. These 2006-2016 occupational projections were then posted to our website in June 2008.

After completion of the 2006-2016 industry and occupational projections, the LMI Center has begun work on the short term 2007-2009 industry and occupational projections. These are scheduled to be completed and posted to our website in the fall of 2009

North Dakota has also produced short and long term occupational projections at the sub-state level for each of the three MSA's and for the balance of state. However, the extremely small OES sample in many of the sub-state industry cells can result in weak or non-existent occupational staffing patterns in some area/industry cells. As a result, we are evaluating these sub-state occupational projections for the various sub-state areas to see if they are reliable enough to publish.

The LMI Center has developed several products utilizing the projections data. The *North Dakota Employment Projections to 2016* which provides the full occupational and industrial detail for the 2016 projections was published in the summer of 2008.

In the previous program year, the LMI Center developed a new product designed for students. The *Occupational Trading Cards* utilized information from our occupational projections and our OES wage information in a colorful baseball card type format. Each of the nine trading cards contains information on wages, training requirements, number of annual openings, and employment for specific occupations within that occupational family. The cards have been extremely popular with schools, career fairs, career counselors, and even in our One-Stop resource rooms. After several reprints of the original trading cards, the LMI Center will be updating these cards the fall, giving them a brighter look and updating them with the new 2016 projections data and the most recent occupational wage data.

The LMI Center has also developed a series of occupational group brochures. These new brochures, designed to complement the *Occupational Trading Cards*, were developed to provide older students and adult job seekers with pertinent occupational information such as the new 2016 projections data, wage data, training requirements, skill requirements, etc., in an adult format. These occupational brochures were printed and distributed in September 2008.

The LMI Center again provided projections and wage data to the CRN for the *Career Outlook*, an annual tabloid provided to high school students, their parents, career guidance counselors, One-Stop resource rooms, etc. In addition, Marcia Slag from LMI has been involved with NDCRN in assisting with the layout and content of the *Career Outlook*.

3. Publish an annual economic analysis report for the governor and the SWIB.

In odd numbered years when the Governor's Workforce Summit is held, the Workforce Development Council (WDC) is responsible for the development of the State of the Workforce Report. This report also serves as the center piece for the Governors Workforce Summit held in October. Last year, the LMI Center was heavily involved in the planning and organizational meetings for this report. However, the WDC contracted with a consultant, Workforce Associates Inc. led by Dr. Richard Judy, to produce this report for North Dakota.

At the organizational meetings, representatives from the LMI Center and other state data sources provided input on the content, scope, and processes needed to develop this report. The LMI Center then provided information on demographics, wages, industry and occupational employment, labor availability studies, employment projections, LED, and a variety of other labor market information at the statewide and sub-state levels to the consultant.

Representatives from the LMI Center were involved in the review and critiquing of the draft report. The final report was released at the Governor's Workforce Summit on October 10, 2007.

In the even numbered years, the LMI Center is responsible for developing its own version of the State of the Workforce Report to meet the ETA core product deliverable. This year's version will contain economic data for the state of North Dakota, the eight governors planning regions and the fifty-three counties. Work began on this project last winter and is expected to be completed in early fall. However, in consultation with our ETA's Federal Project Officer (FPO), we have received permission to extend the deliverable due date for publication of the State of the Workforce Report until November 2008.

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

Last year the LMI Center launched NDWIN (North Dakota Workforce Intelligence Network), our new electronic delivery system which was purchased from Geographic Solutions. This system has been very well received. We have received very positive feedback from our customers on the capabilities of the system, ease of use, and overall appearance of NDWIN. During this past, we have continued to make improvements to and add new data items and products to NDWIN.

In addition to the Analyzer portion, NDWIN contains a Publications Section which contains PDF's of all our publications. A third section called the Resource Center contains links to FAQ's, a glossary, list of acronyms, methodologies, contact information, and a related sites section. These sections were designed and populated by the LMI Center's web team. Recently, two new items web developed and added to the Resource Center. An online interactive wage calculator was developed which allows the user to type in an hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual wage and convert it to hourly, weekly, monthly, or annual. A *Methods for Counting Jobs* piece was also developed and added to the Resource Center. This matrix displays the five different employment series (CES, QCEW, LAUS, OES, and Census) and describes the differences among them as far as coverage, data source, frequency, geography, inclusion & exclusions, time delay, advantages, limitations, etc.

The LMI Center conducted basic training on NDWIN for each of our One Stop offices, and several other partner agencies and user groups during the summer of 2007. In addition, an advanced training using case studies and actual data requests was provided to our One Stop offices in the early winter.

The LMI Center has developed several new web-based products for our customers and is continuing to explore ways to utilize the web to minimize the costs and increased turnaround time associated with printing and hard copy distribution. As an example, the *Compensation Guides*, *Demographic Profiles*, and *Affirmative Action* publications are available only on our website. Because of the limited shelf life of some products and the many area/industry combinations of others (i.e. users can pick from over 160 area/industry combinations for the *Compensation Guides*, about 75 areas for the *Demographic Profiles*, and all 53 counties for the *Affirmative Action* publications), the use of PDFs was the most efficient and timely method of delivery. All of these web based products can be accessed at the Products Section of NDWIN.

5. Partner and consult on a continuing basis with workforce investment boards.

The LMI Center continues to work closely with the Workforce Development Council (WDC). (The WDC is North Dakota's only Workforce Investment Board.) Designated staff have attended the WDC meetings and LMI staff members have made several presentations to the WDC and its subcommittees during the past program year. We have provided technical expertise to the WDC in the development and design of new surveys to provide valuable information on labor availability and occupational skills needs in the workforce.

The LMI Center partnered with the WDC and the Department of Commerce to conduct Labor Availability Studies in 24 North Dakota communities/areas. This was the fourth round of these very useful and highly requested surveys. The Social Science Research Center at the University of North Dakota completed the telephone survey in the spring of 2008. The LMI Center then compiled the results and provided the analysis and narrative reports to the 24 communities.

In collaboration with the WDC and the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association (BMDA), the LMI Center completed work on an Employer Needs Survey and Labor Availability Study in August 2007. This unique combination of concurrent studies allows civic leaders in Bismarck-Mandan to compare the workforce needs of the businesses in their areas with the available labor supply in their vicinity.

The LMI Center held monthly economic briefing meetings to discuss monthly employment and unemployment data releases, other new workforce information, current economic conditions in the state, and a variety of related topics. Representatives from the Department of Commerce, Tax Department, Workforce Development Council, Office of Management and Budget, Governor's Staff, Dislocated Worker Unit, FINDET, and our Job Service Executive Director are invited to attend.

With the support of the WDC, Job Service North Dakota has joined the LED partnership with the Census Bureau. The LMI Center assembles the history files of wage records and QCEW data and submits them to the Census Bureau each quarter. In return, the Census Bureau provides us with Quarterly Workforce Indicators for the state and each county in North Dakota. The LMI Center provided a link to this very useful LED data on NDWIN. The LMI Center also provided training to key users, such as the Governor and his staff, Department of Commerce staff, Workforce Development Council staff, Job Service senior management and customer service office staff, and local economic developers. North Dakota is anticipating the release of the updated 'On the Map' package from LED in September 2008.

The LMI Center worked closely with the Workforce Development Council on three other major WDC projects. As a part of the group that put together North Dakota's WIRED grant application, LMI worked closely with the grant writer to provide the information for the workforce intelligence segment of the WIRED grant proposal. A second project involved providing labor market information and assisting in the writing of the RIG grant application for the Wahpeton area, in response to the closing of a major manufacturer in that community. We were also heavily involved with the Workforce Development Council in formulating the State's Two Year Strategic Plan. LMI staff provided a variety of workforce information and helped to write specific sections of the plan relating to workforce information.

As a part of North Dakota's Talent Initiative, the LMI Center has worked with the WDC, Department of Commerce, and several other partner agencies in developing the workforce intelligence items needed for this initiative. Staff from LMI worked with individuals from the Department of Commerce and Workforce Development Council to identify the specific NAICS codes to be included in the Governor's five targeted industries, and develop the criteria for the high wage/high demand industries. Additional workforce intelligence items including occupational staffing patterns and occupational skills needs requirements for the targeted industries have been developed to support the Job Service Talent Initiative. As members of the various workforce intelligence teams,

the LMI staff continues to work to develop intelligence on potential labor pools, employer needs, and job seeker needs.

The LMI Center led the effort to collect information on Potential Labor Pools in North Dakota. Given North Dakota's tight labor market, more information was needed on those pools of under utilized labor such as older workers, Native Americans, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, TANF and other program participants, etc., in order to develop strategies to get them into the employed ranks.

Representatives from the LMI Center have been involved with the WDC initiative to organize a state Workforce Intelligence Council. LMI staff participated in the strategic planning processes to set up the Council and now serve on both the Workforce Intelligence Councils Steering Committee as well as the overall Council.

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

6. Conduct special studies and economic analysis.

In addition to the special studies and economic analysis products previously mentioned in core products 2-5, the LMI Center has produced a variety of other workforce intelligence products during the past program year.

HOT JOBS, one our newest and perhaps one of the most widely used publications ever developed in the LMI Center was published in early June 2008. This publication displays the top 40 occupations in North Dakota, based on a weighted formula that included average wage, projected percentage growth, and number of employees. *HOT JOBS* displays the current and projected employment, number of projected openings, educational requirements, and the top three skills for each occupation in colorful high quality 11x17 bi-fold publication. In the short time that this publication has been out, we have been overwhelmed by the demand. This has been used by schools, community colleges, One Stop offices, Career and Technical Education, the Student Loan Department of the Bank of North Dakota, the Workforce Development Council, Interim Legislative Committees, North Dakota Youth Council, etc. The initial printing was gone within a couple of weeks, and the second printing ran out within a couple of months, a third printing is now being distributed. A PDF version was placed on NDWIN.

In response to the huge demand for the hard copy version of *HOT JOBS*, the LMI Center created an online interactive version of the *HOT JOBS* on NDWIN. Located in the Products Section of the North Dakota Workforce Intelligence Network (NDWIN), this publication lists all 71 occupations that met the *HOTJOBS* criteria. By clicking on any occupational title, the user can view a variety of additional types of information about that occupation. In addition, all of the job openings for that occupation currently listed on

VOS (our North Dakota Job Service Labor Exchange Website) can be displayed by clicking on the Job Search link.

The annual *North Dakota Employment and Wages* was published in August of 2007. This publication displays covered employment and wage data at various industrial and geographic breakouts in an updated format.

Another of our most popular publications, *Wages for North Dakota Jobs*, came out in March 2008. This publication provides detailed occupational wage and employment information for the state of North Dakota, the three MSA's, and four substate regions. Based on customer feedback, the format of the publication was changed to list the wage information from all the areas (statewide, MSA's, and substate regions) together for each occupation.

Conversations with our local One-Stop offices, economic developers, and business customers indicated a need for occupational wage and fringe benefit information at a local and industry level. In response to this need, the LMI Center developed *Compensation Guides* specifically targeted to individual cities and industries. These guides provide data from our fringe benefit surveys, occupational wage and employment data, occupational descriptions, and related information in one easy-to-use publication. Each guide provides information for those occupations employed by a particular industry in a specific city or area. *Compensation Guides* for over 160 industry/area combinations were created and were put in PDF format on our website. Since these *Compensation Guides* debuted in April of 2004, they have become extremely popular. The LMI Center updated these Compensation Guides again this program year with new occupational wage and fringe benefits information in May 2008.

The LMI Center conducts Fringe Benefit Surveys in 13 North Dakota cities and areas. During this program year, surveys were completed in all of these 13 cities and for the balance of the state. The results of these surveys were compiled and published in PDF format on our website.

In addition, the LMI Center developed the *North Dakota Benefits Guide*. This glossy brochure contains a compilation of fringe benefits information from the 13 cities. The format for this new publication allows easy comparisons of fringe benefits information from city to city, industry to industry, or by size of firm. This publication has been in high demand and print quantities were raised to meet the growing number of requests for this pertinent information.

In the fall of 2003, the LMI Center developed a new product entitled *Local Area Profiles* in support of local economic development efforts and our local One-Stop offices in 13 of our largest cities. The *Local Area Profiles* utilize data from the QCEW program and other sources to provide data on industry employment and wages, number of firms, firm size, census information, and other related information for the current year and the previous year. The response we received from local economic developers, Chambers of Commerce, our business services representatives in our One-Stop offices, and other local

civic and business groups was extremely positive. While these profiles have been beneficial to all cities in promoting their communities, those cities that are not MSAs, and as a result do not have any other source of employment information, found it especially valuable. Printing of the 2007 edition of the *Local Area Profiles*, which contains updated QCEW information, census information, new tax data, and the new top fifteen employers listing for each city, was completed in November 2007. The statewide *Local Area Profile* was also updated and printed. The LMI Center began assembling information for the 2008 edition of the *Local Area Profiles* late this summer.

Based on comments from our customers, the LMI Center developed a series of Career Posters on topics such as Jobs in Demand, How Education can Affect Your Wage, High Wage Two Year Degree Jobs, Jobs in Demand, and High Wage Industries. These posters have been utilized in the resource rooms of our One-Stop offices, schools, libraries, etc.

The 2008 Largest Employer Listing was updated on our website in September 2008. This annual listing provides a ranking of the top 100 employers in North Dakota based on total employment. In addition, we updated the listing of largest employers for each of the 14 largest cities in North Dakota.

Using the “IMPLAN” software, the LMI Center has done several impact analysis studies. These studies have varied from the impact of plant closings and major layoffs to the potential impact of new manufacturing plants locating in a community. The LMI Center recently purchased an updated version of IMPLAN and sent an analyst to IMPLAN training.

In response to requests from local economic developers and Native American tribal leaders, the LMI Center completed work on *Demographic Profiles* in August of 2004. Based on the most recent census information, the *Demographic Profiles* contain general demographic information, selected social characteristics, selected economic data, and housing characteristics available in PDF format on our website. Profiles were developed for all the North Dakota counties, reservations, MSAs, selected cities, and the state as a whole. Since no new Census information was available, the guides could not be updated this program year.

To better explain all its products and services, the LMI Center has developed a brochure entitled *Your Guide to LMI*. In addition to being a promotional piece for our LMI Center, this guide provides a brief explanation of all our LMI publications and NDWIN and provides an order form for customers to request publications. This Guide, which was distributed in August 2007, will be utilized by our One-Stops in their resource rooms, at career fairs, workshops, and in business services activities.

The LMI Center has also utilized these grant funds for training purposes. Several of our LMI staff have attended national conferences and training sessions to maintain currency in the national trends, identify best practices in other states, learn new statistical programs and software, and network with their counterparts from other regions of the country. All

of these training activities have added to the knowledge base and technical abilities of the LMI Center staff. This in turn has and will continue to manifest itself in many new and innovative products and services for our customers.

The training of our customers is also a very high priority in North Dakota. Members of the LMI staff have provided over 50 presentations or training sessions for various customer groups during the past program year. These ranged from formal in-depth training sessions of two or three days to short presentations to specific customers groups.

In conjunction with the launch of our new website NDWIN, the LMI Center has conducted a series of training sessions in each of our One-Stop offices, the Commerce Department, NDCRN, FINDET, Career and Technical Education, Job Service staff and a variety of other customers. The lab type training sessions provide an explanation of all the features of NDWIN as well as an explanation of the information contained in NDWIN.

Several LMI presentations were made to the Workforce Development Council, as well as to the North Dakota Youth Council, the Governor's staff, North Dakota Commerce Department, North Dakota State Tax Department, North Dakota Interim Legislative Committees, and Job Service Senior Management. Many other local presentations/training sessions were provided to a wide range of customer groups such as Career Fairs at Dickinson and Belcourt, the University of Mary, the University of North Dakota Council of Deans, the Fargo-Moorhead Human Resources Association, the State Human Resources Association, the Dickinson Manufacturers Roundtable, the Council of United Way Agencies, the Bismarck-Mandan Development Association, Bismarck State College, etc. In other cases, the LMI Center provided PowerPoints, speaker's notes, and supporting information for our One-Stop staff members to make presentations to local civic or business associations.

All of the publications listed above have been loaded on our LMI website as PDFs.

B. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION:

North Dakota feels very strongly that customer feedback is extremely important in planning for and developing an efficient and comprehensive workforce information delivery system. North Dakota used a combination of strategies to obtain feedback on customer satisfaction with existing workforce information and services, as well as suggestions for developing new products and improving existing products. As mentioned in the discussion of our activities for the various core products in Section A, the LMI Center has utilized the feedback we have received from our customers to develop several new products and delivery formats. This customer feedback will continue to be the key element the LMI Center will use in evaluating current LMI products and services and in the planning for future LMI activities.

1. Customer Satisfaction Surveys:

The LMI Center completed a customer satisfaction survey late in the PY '06. However, with our emphasis on training our customers on our new NDWIN system, it was decided to forego a formal customer satisfaction survey this year. Instead, an emphasis was placed on obtaining customer feedback at the NDWIN training session and from informal focus groups, presentation evaluations, and one-to-one conversations with our customers.

2. Informal Focus Group and Meetings:

During the past year, staff members from the LMI Center made an effort to sit down and visit several of our key customers about products and services in a very informal focus group/discussion group-type setting. In addition, we have had several one-on-one sessions or group discussions with One-Stop offices, North Dakota Career Resource Network, WDC staff, Commerce Department, and local economic developers. These conversations have been invaluable in discovering their workforce information needs and how we might be able to help them.

3. Feedback From Presentations and Training Sessions:

As previously mentioned we have received valuable feedback from participants in our NDWIN training sessions and other presentations. We closely review the evaluation forms we receive from training sessions and have often received very timely ideas and suggestions from informal discussions with individuals during or after these sessions.

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

- Really like the new look of LMI publications.
- Looking forward to using NDWIN.
- Can you give us a lay person's explanation of LED?
- Interactive Hot Jobs on NDWIN is amazing.
- The Occupational Trading cards are a hit at school job fairs.
- We appreciate the help the LM Center provided for our RIG application.
- Occupational wage data on oil field occupations is out of date by time we get it up here.
- HOT JOBS is great. We have schools calling for more copies.
- Can you put out a publication on 'green jobs'?
- Like to new look and usability of NDWIN.
- Like new colorful layout—doesn't look like a stuffy government agency put it out.
- LMI Staff is great to work with, very responsive and professional
- Very few people in our office actually use the Analyzer in NDWIN, they just go to the publications page.
- Methods of Counting Jobs is very helpful in explaining employment difference to customers.
- New LED information has a lot of potential for economic developers.
- Can we get a HOT JOBS for two year degree or less occupations?
- Could use information on skills needs.
- Need to be mindful that not all areas (i.e. rural, tribal reservations) have access to internet.
- New look of the products make us (One-Stop Staff) look professional with our customers.
- Great job on NDWIN. It looks great and is easier to use.
- Love the idea of being able to link to current job openings for each occupation in HOT JOBS.
- Demographic Profiles very useful in Turtle Mountain.

- Can Compensation Guides be printed for each office?
- Need advanced training on NDWIN. Can it be tailored to our local office activities.
- Like recent changes in LMI publications.
- LMI staff has always been very helpful to me.
- Darin & Marcia did an amazing job on the NDWIN training.
- Some publications are too overwhelming –could we get summary sheets.
- The new LMI publications ROCK!!
- Can LMI develop a template that we can use to put together customized packages of local labor market information for businesses looking to locate in our area?
- Miss the analysis the LMI used to provide.
- Does LMI actually use our comments in designing publications?
- Appreciate the support we got from Michael and Warren, I have them on my speed dial.
- Some data is old by the time we get it.
- Why aren't more skilled trades or blue collar jobs on the HOT JOBS list?
- Need more localized products.
- Can we get more products—posters, brochures, etc on occupations that do not require a four year degree.
- Great new publications—you are on the right track.
- Can you get us information potential worker pools?
- People like to see graphs, charts, bullets, --it's easier for them to understand.
- Work with local office staff in evaluating new ideas.
- Utilize local office staff in tracking down nonrespondents to largest employer listing.
- We do not always hear about it when new publications come out.
- Could CSA IV host a focus group of local economic developers and LMI?
- Can LMI provide city documents similar to what is done in Rolla Local Office?
- Thank you for coming out and asking us for feedback.
- Would like to see more mapping of data.
- Can you add the Air Force Bases to your mailing lists?
- It's nice to have something professional looking to give to businesses when we call on them.
- Should have LMI products and services info and links to our info, on mini-CD's for handouts
- Would like to see us there (local office) on a more regular basis.

C. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS OR CHANGES TO THE SUITE OF CORE PRODUCTS:

The list of core products and services for the Workforce Information Grant has evolved over the past few years. The current suite of core products provides a relatively concise grouping of the most common categories of products produced by most states while allowing individual states the flexibility to tailor products to the most critical needs in their state. Although it is important for several of the products, such as the Workforce Information Database and Projections to be consistent across the nation, the many differences from state to state require that individual LMI departments maintain this flexibility to address the workforce information needs unique to their state.

As such, North Dakota does not have many recommendations for changes to the suite of core products. The following are a few observations we have made based on conversations with our various customers.

The need for fringe benefit information is becoming more and more of a critical need for our business customers. Fringe benefit surveys should be able to identify differences in fringe benefit packages offered by the geographic area, industry, and size of businesses. North Dakota currently conducts its own fringe benefits surveys as a part of core product 6, but this is one item that not all states currently produce.

Our customers are constantly requesting more localized products and services. Individual communities are looking for workforce information that they can use to measure the health and growth of their communities and that they can use to promote their areas. We believe that each state needs to develop some series of localized products.

As we have developed new products and services and made existing ones more useful, our customers are becoming very reliant on many of the products we produce under the Workforce Information Grant. Accordingly, it is critical that adequate funding continues to flow to the state LMI departments through the Workforce Information Grant so that these customers will continue to have access to the workforce information they need and have come to depend upon us to produce.